



Sunday press conference

It was a jubilant trio who braved the darkness - and the fireworks - to face the media for the Singapore Grand Prix post-race press conference.

Present were Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes), Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull), and Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull).

Q: Lewis, did or dream or think this would be the result today?

Lewis HAMILTON: Of course, I was dreaming it last night but you never really think it's going to happen. I just want to say a huge thanks to my team. What they've done this year is absolutely incredible and to be able to arrive here knowing that we have a car we can fight with, and just the feeling I had through the race, it's... I couldn't do it without them. Thank you guys.

Q: We know you've won seven races this year but the talking point is how big a pressure was on you in that last pit stop? That's what we wanted to know.

LH: Ah, it wasn't that bad.

Q: Well you sounded totally paranoid up there I have to tell you!

LH: No, I think at the time it was just not really knowing what the situation was. I knew I had a big gap but if a safety car comes out, what does that mean, but then when I came in and knew that I had to fight the guys on a long, long, run-down tyre, I knew that we would have chance to get by, so I felt kind of comfortable.

Q: Well, we'll come back to you because we have lots more questions but ladies and gentlemen, Sebastian Vettel, four times world champion, his best result of the year! Sebastian, what is it with Singapore and you? You seem to be a night raider or something like that. Every time there's a night race you do remarkably well. Obviously on the podium again this year.

Sebastian VETTEL: Yeah, kid did well! It's a circuit that I really enjoy, I really like. The atmosphere is great. You know, on the drivers' parade there are already so many people in for the race. It's great. It's a tough one, it's two hours and again we went to the full two hours. I had a good start, got past Daniel and then I think we had a decent race. We played a little bit with strategy and then the safety car came in the worst possible moment for us. So we tried to obviously stay out with the last set of tyres and make them work, which was very, very much borderline. I had a lot of pressure from Daniel and also from Fernando behind, but very happy obviously to make it P2.

Q: A lot of red faces up here - the dehydration, the heat, the temperature. A huge race here is it? Is it very, very difficult?

SV: Yeah, it's quite hot. The cars are sliding a lot, so you have to focus quite hard. It's definitely a race we all enjoy as drivers because it's such a big challenge and to stand up here and get a cool glass or bottle of champagne is quite nice.

Q: Well, your best race of the season, your best result and we know what you've done here before. Now, ladies and gentlemen, the pride of Australia, Daniel Ricciardo! Almost like a home race really?

Daniel RICCIARDO: Yeah, feels like a home race. Singapore to Perth is pretty much as close as Melbourne to Perth, so for West Australia it's like another home race.

Q: I need to ask you the question: do you think that when Fernando gave up the place to Sebastian, do you think he should have given up the place to you?

DR: To be honest, I'll have to have a look. Obviously he went off, that was clear. I knew he would give it back to Seb [but] whether he had to give it back to me, I'll have a look at that. I was just sort of focused on regrouping from the start really. To get on the podium I guess is not a bad result, good for the team and at least we've got some Aussie flags.

Q: We see a lot of Aussie flag, you're the pride of Australia. Lewis, things have changed, really, haven't they, for you?

LH: Absolutely.

Q: Big smile on your face.

LH: Yeah, I was so excited to have... I was looking for that clean weekend and this has been it. It's been fantastic. It's not perfect for the team because Nico didn't finish and we're always striving to get both cars finishing 1-2. I don't think anyone has finished one-two before and that was our goal. So there are things we can still work on. I also want to say a big thanks to all the fans. Incredible support today, so thank you guys.

Q: Lewis, your second victory in Singapore, your seventh of the season and a very popular win, it would seem, with the crowd - but there was clearly a tense moment for you after the safety car when you knew you had to stop again and it was clear the four or five cars behind you didn't - but the strategy team stayed calm, you stayed calm and you're now leading the Drivers' Championship. Just tell us about the rollercoaster of emotions and the way you feel leaving Singapore tonight.

LH: Coming here and to the last six races with a great race in Monza, knowing that we had a car to compete here, obviously yesterday in qualifying it was very close between everyone so I didn't really know what to expect today - but got off cleanly. Of course it would have been a hardcore race if Nico was in the race with me as the car was feeling very good and we would have been very strong. But, yeah, later on in the race, I think for me I was a bit unaware of what I needed to do. That second-to-last stint, I extended it as long as I could and then they said "we need 27s." And that was still six seconds I needed more, and my tyres were dropping off, so I didn't really understand why. And I was also nervous that, if the Safety Car came out, would that cause me big problems? So anyway, fortunately we got to where I needed to go and we pitted. I came out, and I saw Sebastian going past but straight away I knew they would be on... they were obviously doing a two-stop, I would have good pace. So, took it easy the first lap. It was actually a bit of a tight gap, maybe I should have overtaken him somewhere else but fortunately Sebastian was very fair and I got by. After that it was quite straightforward. Amazing job from the team and the guys back at the factory. The car was really spectacular in the race.

Q: Sebastian, clearly the start was decisive for you. A fantastic initial getaway up into second place, you got the place back from Fernando. You were also a little bit sceptical when it came to the strategy, saying "that's not my plan," to go to the finish. So, tell us about the thinking at that point and how the race played out from your mind.

SV: As you mentioned, the start obviously was good for me. Quite weird to stop with no car ahead but not being on the first row. But it helped,

obviously, because I had no car in front and I could get side by side and get straight into second place. After that I think we had a good race. Not ideal, in terms of timing with the safety car. Obviously, before that we lost a position to Fernando because we stopped too late – but we decided to go on the primes and we were hoping for no safety car to come out, which came out, so not ideal! But yeah, after that, obviously after the restart, we knew it was difficult with 27 seconds to make up on older tyres than everyone behind – it's probably impossible. So, obviously to get the best result we knew we have to get to the end. I wasn't very confident that we can do it, simply because of the wear we had the sets before. Obviously for one lap I was in the lead. As Lewis touched on, the overtaking manoeuvre, I wasn't quite sure what he was doing. I thought that I give him all the space to pass me on the inside for the next corner but it seemed like he couldn't wait to get back in the lead. It was quite tight but I saw him, obviously, so I had to back-off and let him through. There was no point fighting him at that stage because I didn't have the tyres to match him. Nevertheless, to finish P2 obviously was the best we could do. We had the oldest set of tyres in the last stint, so it was quite tricky managing those to the finish line with not much tread left. Obviously very good result for the team.

Q: Daniel, I guess the opposite for you. Not a great initial getaway, you lost the initiative to Sebastian there, which is why you finished behind him in the end. Tell us whether you expected the attack from Alonso at the end because obviously he had pitted under the safety car, was on much fresher tyres than you. Were you surprised the attack didn't come? What was going through your mind?

DR: Yeah, I think the closing stages, I could see after the restart for the safety car, he wasn't attacking as much as I thought with a new set of primes, so I thought he was holding back and was going to make a late charge at the end. I think we all just piled up. I caught the back of Sebastian, he caught the back of me and we were all in a train and not really any real opportunities arose for any of us. So, it was what it was. I probably did expect him to come on a get stronger at the end but I think once you start following and trying to get the pedal down a bit harder to set up a pass, then you start hurting the rears and you all fall into each others' pace. The start initially wasn't too bad but just before Turn One we had a bit of an issue and I think we lost a bit of power. Whether we could have held on or not... who knows? But then yeah, Fernando went wide and then gave the place back to Seb and the race from there was fairly straightforward. Encountered a few other issues and bits and pieces here and there – so we'll have to look into that. See how much it cost us in the end. But obviously it was nice to get on the back of Seb and try to put him under a bit of pressure but I think for all of us here it was follow-the-leader a bit and not much else to do.

Q: (Lennart Wermke – Bild) Lewis, is there anyone you dedicate your victory to?

LH: I've not really thought of it. There are only a few of the race wins which I've really dedicated to anyone. Maybe to my fans, I think. I met a couple of really special people last week – they'll know who they are – and just generally to all the fans. They're sending me messages and all that, really just saying that we win or we lose together and also being here with all the British flags, it lifts you up so much that probably they don't even realise, so this is for them.

Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action and National Speedsport News) Daniel, you were on the radio during the race saying that you were losing power and I believe gears. What was happening and was the team able to help you correct those matters?

DR: Yeah, we had quite a bit going on during the race so yeah, power was coming and going and from the safety car onwards it was pretty consistently down on power and basically, coming up through gears, I would get a bit of power and then it would drop and then it would come again. So we definitely had a few issues and we tried fixing them but to be honest we didn't quite clear it all up. I guess it did cost us a bit today but obviously we still got it to the end but obviously we will definitely look at what the cause was and if we can fix it. Normally, if we have those glitches after a couple of laps we clear it but this one pretty much carried through all race. I guess I was a bit frustrated, bit concerned as well that we wouldn't get it to the flag but luckily it held on and as I said, we'll just look at it and I'm sure we'll fix it for Japan.

Q: (Michael Schmidt – Auto, Motor und Sport) To Seb and Daniel, what was the plan to have the harder tyre, the prime tyre, in the third stint rather than at the end, because at that moment, I don't think you could know that the safety car would come out?

SB: I guess in my case Fernando undercut us, it was quite obvious, and then I think it was pretty pointless to do the same as him so we tried to do opposite and then get him back obviously, in the last stint of the race, I think that was the plan. With hindsight, we should have obviously stopped earlier, tyres were at the end of their wear life anyway so I think that was the plan. It was obviously high risk because of the safety car. In the end, we got lucky because the tyres held up but at that stage it didn't look like it.

Q: (Don Kennedy – Hawke's Bay Today) Lewis, you said on the podium that Mercedes were hoping for a one-two finish but in terms of the championship, can you say, in all honesty, that you're sorry that Nico didn't finish?

LH: Well, of course the points are something... I came here hoping to really gain those seven points and anything more than that was just a bonus, so today, of course, those extra points are a huge help. That's several DNFs we've had now on either car and we want to continue getting those one-twos still. I know that the team will not be 100 percent happy today because we want to win collectively, we want to get those one-twos, we want to be the dominant team all together, so by not getting that result, they'll be going back to the drawing board trying to figure out what happened. They're constantly coming up to things and perhaps other people are starting to be a bit more reliable than us so that's an area that we can still definitely improve on.

Race report

Lewis Hamilton delivered a sterling performance under the lights of the Marina Bay Street Circuit to win the Singapore Grand Prix for Mercedes and reclaim the lead of the 2014 World Drivers' Championship.

The Briton was aided in his championship lead by the lap 14 retirement of teammate Nico Rosberg, something that looked to be an inevitability before all 22 cars had lined up on the Singapore grid on Sunday evening. There was a flurry of mechanics working on Rosberg's car, swapping steering wheels and attempting to reboot electronic systems, but when the cars pulled away for the formation lap the German racer was stranded on the grid and forced into a pit lane start.

While Rosberg was able to run briefly, his car was beset with issues throughout, and when he came into the pits for his first stop – and eventual retirement – he was already 75.6 seconds behind race leader Hamilton.

With the championship standings now open for a fair fight between the two Mercedes drivers – each of whom have suffered two mechanical retirements this season – and Hamilton zooming off into the distance, all eyes were on the chasing pack, particularly championship outsider Daniel Ricciardo.

Passed on the first lap by both teammate Sebastian Vettel and Ferrari's Fernando Alonso, Ricciardo kept his head down and spent much of the evening running in fourth place as part of a tight pack comprised of the driver pairings from Red Bull, Ferrari, and Williams, all of whom were involved in a best-of-the-rest battle taking place out of sight of Hamilton's rear wing.

It was when the long Safety Car came out on lap 31 that Ricciardo's fortunes changed. Despite being one of the first to pit under the Safety Car Alonso lost position, and found himself staring at the gearboxes of both RB10s when racing finally resumed on lap 38. The long stint behind Bernd Maylander – caused by Sergio Perez' front-wing debris following a collision with Adrian Sutil – not only narrowed Hamilton's lead but also forced a rethink on tyre strategy from several of the front-running teams.

Red Bull and Williams both elected to keep their drivers out to the end, as did Ferrari, and the decision to move from expected three-stops to a two-stop strategy kept the race tense despite Hamilton's superior pace, with the Briton opening up a 3.2s lead over the course of the first post-Safety Car racing lap, having gained an astounding 1.4s over Vettel on the restart alone.

Hamilton continued with his planned three-stop strategy, and while the Briton was able to pull out a strong lead over the chasing pack his radio traffic was filled with rubber concerns. At one point Hamilton begged to be allowed to box, claiming that rear degradation was so bad he was concerned his tyres could explode. But the pit wall strategists kept their driver out for as long as they could, hoping to gain enough of a lead to pull off a free stop and keep Hamilton in the lead. It was not to be, and he emerged from the pits after his third stop with a 1.3s deficit to Vettel, but within a lap the Mercedes had passed the Red Bull and went on to win the time-capped 60 lap Singapore Grand Prix.

Both Vettel and Ricciardo were able to keep their rubber alive to the finish, while Massa and Alonso also hung on gamely. But neither Bottas nor Raikkonen were as fortunate, with both Finns losing track position in the closing laps as their rubber decayed rapidly. Bottas dropped out of the points completely, an undeserving finish to a stellar performance that had seen the Finn race well on rubber that was 38 laps old by the time the chequered flag fell, while Raikkonen's 35-lap-old tyres saw him drop to eighth.

The closing minutes saw a series of breathtaking overtakes by Jean-Eric Vergne, who collected two five-second stop/go penalties for violating track limits on Sunday evening. The second was issued after his final stop, so the French racer went hell for leather as he passed all and sundry in his attempt to ameliorate the penalty, taking the flag in sixth.

Singapore Grand Prix race result

1. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 2h00m04.795s
2. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) + 13.534s
3. Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull) + 14.273s
4. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) + 15.389s
5. Felipe Massa (Williams) + 42.161s
6. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) + 56.801s
7. Sergio Perez (Force India) + 59.038s
8. Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari) + 1m00.641s
9. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) + 1m01.661s
10. Kevin Magnussen (McLaren) + 1m02.230s
11. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) + 1m05.065s
12. Pastor Maldonado (Lotus) + 1m06.915s
13. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) + 1m08.029s
14. Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso) + 1m12.008s
15. Marcus Ericsson (Caterham) + 1m34.188s
16. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) + 1m34.543s
17. Max Chilton (Marussia) + 1 lap

Jenson Button (McLaren) RET
Adrian Sutil (Sauber) RET
Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) RET
Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) RET

Kamui Kobayashi (Caterham) DNS

Saturday press conference

Despite one of the most closely fought qualifying sessions of the season it was the three usual suspects who turned up to the post-qualifying press conference in Singapore.

Present were Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes), Nico Rosberg (Mercedes), and Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull).

Q: Lewis, pole position once again for Singapore and you saved the best until last it seems?

Lewis HAMILTON: Yeah, that's always the plan. It doesn't always go to plan but yeah, quite an exciting qualifying session. I wasn't expecting... I guess no one was really expecting to see so much difference and how close everyone was. I did some good laps in the first and second qualifying sessions and saw the Ferraris were very, very close and then obviously for it to end up the way it did is good obviously for our team. My last lap, I locked up into turn one and lost a bit of time but still managed to pull it back later on in the lap. So, at that point I honestly thought that perhaps it was... I lost over a tenth and a half or was two tenths down but I just kept going and it just got better and better throughout the lap.

Q: Were you surprised when you saw Felipe Massa on provisional pole after the first runs?

LH: I wasn't really trying to look at it too much because there was so much happening. I don't know what it ended up as but obviously it was very close. But a great effort by the team. To come here at very much a downforce and engine dependent circuit to have the performance we have I think it's a fantastic performance by them.

Q: Very well done. Nico you missed out by the smallest of margins, I think seven one thousandths of a second. Your radio message at the end on the cool down lap there said it all: "Damn it!"

Nico ROSBERG: Yeah, because seven thousandths, you know, when I think back at the lap, seven thousandths it's nothing, a little bit here or there, you know, like "come on!" I could have done it. But OK, that's the way it is. Lewis did a good job to get pole, fair play. And second place is OK, obviously first would be better but it's a long race ahead and, yeah, it's fine.

Q: Tell us about the Q2 session? You were in sixth place in the closing stages there and you obviously felt you needed to run again so you did an extra lap?

NR: Yeah, because we changed brakes going into qualifying and I got into a rhythm with the other brakes and so that was a challenge. I mean we expected it to be, but it always is a bit of a challenge. So it took me some time to get into qualifying. And the balance was also very different because the track had cooled down relative to the session before qualifying, which was hotter. There was a lot more understeer now, in the rear we had a lot more grip, so had to complete adapt settings and it just took us some time to get into the qualifying. That's why I'm pleased that in the end I was able to push flat out and put in a good lap time.

Q: Daniel, a tenth-and-a-half behind the Mercedes: can you race them from here?

Daniel RICCIARDO: It's definitely encouraging. Coming into the weekend I thought if we could be within two or three tenths it should give us a bit

more optimistic chance in the race to stay with them, so, yeah, I think we ended up a bit closer than we thought we would, particularly after yesterday. So I think it was a good day. Yeah, it was good fun out there. The track was really improving so you had to adapt a lot during the session. Street circuits normally tend to be like that, so it keeps you on your toes. Yeah, good fun.

Q: There was a big roar from the grandstands when you took provisional pole. Have you brought a few thousand of your closest friends from Perth?

DR: I've got a few mates here this weekend and there's probably a few more here that I don't know about. Yeah, it's close to home and it's nice to see a few Aussie flags. Yeah, hopefully keep it up there tomorrow and try and see a better view from the podium.

Q: Lewis, tyres have obviously been a big part of the story throughout this weekend, particularly today and it's obviously going to have an impact on tomorrow's race. What kind of race can we expect tomorrow?

LH: I think coming into the weekend we had a certain opinion about how the tyres would behave, and obviously when we got into the long runs yesterday we saw quite a big difference from what we had thought was going to happen. So, I think tomorrow's going to be a really interesting race. Looking after these tyres is not easy but I think it will be a great race to watch for the fans. I think there's going to be a lot going on.

Q: Lewis, one of the things I think is interesting about how today has evolved, that might surprise a few people, is that Mercedes hasn't really shown too much. FP3, then you weren't really at the top of the timesheets throughout qualifying. You mentioned "that's the plan", about saving the best to last. So, what was the strategy today?

LH: I just mean that, as a driver through the weekend you plan to have the last lap as your fastest lap because that's when the track is at its best. That's when you've got the configurations as close to perfect. That's really the lap you want to do it on. The others have just obviously taken a step. It's a real, real surprise. I'm sure the team are surprised, I'm sure we are just as surprised to see Ferrari really competing on a lap, which is great to see. Also with Williams, also with Red Bull. I think for racing it's great. It makes it... that's probably the most exciting qualifying session I've had for a long time, where there's a lot of people really in the mix and you have to be spot on. I was almost there with that.

Q: Nico, there was a radio message for you: "look after these, these are the race tyres." Obviously there is a consideration there: you have to take some performance out of them because you need the lap time but you've also got to use them tomorrow. How do you see the use of them tomorrow playing out?

NR: Tomorrow is going to be a tough race in terms of tyres. They have a lot of degradation but I'm confident because I had some really good long runs on Friday, so I'm well prepared for the race and feeling good about it.

Q: Daniel, are you fully able to recharge the energy system around this lap? One or two drivers are saying it's been a bit of a struggle. Are you completely on top of that side of things with Red Bull?

DR: Yeah. Yes we are. We're not having any issues there. I think for such a long lap, a little bit on what Lewis touched on, it's amazing how close we are, y'know. Monaco is a street circuit but it's a lot shorter lap so you can expect us to be closer but this one, yeah, it's pretty cool how many cars are within half a second or a second. So, it's going to be a fun race tomorrow definitely. I think tyres will be key, as always, but particularly here. It's not going to be as straightforward as Monza with a one-stop. So, it should be fun.

Q: (Silvia Arias - Parabrisas) Daniel, we saw you doing a wonderful lap, it was unbelievable watching it on TV. Do you have the same feeling when you're going to the limit? Your feelings about this lap please?

DR: Yeah, street circuits are fun. I think all us drivers enjoy them. You jump across kerbs, you brush near the wall, it's a little bit like the closer you get the more you want to risk and I guess that's why we race, we love that rush, that adrenalin. It's like speed, we wish we could go faster. It's a bit like that when you come to a street circuit, you just really enjoy handling the car, playing with fire, so to speak. It's not always the quickest way when it's sliding around but I think you've got to take hold on a street circuit so that's where I get the enjoyment.

Q: (Michael Schmidt - Auto, Motor und Sport) Lewis, Nico just explained why, on the last lap, he was quick enough to be on the front row. How was it with you because you also did your fast lap only on the last lap? I guess you didn't go slowly beforehand intentionally. Did you have any problems before?

LH: I just didn't really have a clean lap through the whole of qualifying. The last one was the cleanest. When you do the first lap, you get your lap time. The next time you go out you have a delta so you know whether you're up or down on that lap. I locked up into turn one and missed the apex and so I was down 0.18/two tenths by the time I got to turn five. At that point, I was thinking this is going to be almost impossible to regain that but the previous lap there were a couple of corners where I lost out as well so I fixed those and got back the time. It's great that there's still potential there and with a perfect lap it's a good place to be.

Q: (Don Kennedy - Hawke's Bay Today) Lewis and Nico, if I understand the restrictions on radio use, how important is that going to be in terms of this race and information about how each other is doing in terms of your position on the track and what tyres you're on and so on? Do you think it's going to affect your battle for the championship?

NR: I don't think it's actually going to make too much of a difference tomorrow. There's just a few bits and pieces... you know they can't tell me 'OK, work on turn seven because that's where you're losing some time' or something like that or 'turn twenty is good, keep doing what you're doing.' That's the main difference, so actually for tomorrow's race really, I don't think it's going to be too much of a thing.

Q: Lewis, anything to add? The starts, obviously, you're going to be able to be talked through all the things you need to do still, that's still permitted.

LH: Yeah, obviously coming into the weekend there was a plan of zero being able to say to us but I think there's a just a few things (that are banned). We're all in the same boat so I'm quite excited about that.

Saturday report

Fernando Alonso went fastest for Ferrari in FP3 at Singapore's Marina Bay Street Circuit, closely followed by Daniel Ricciardo for Red Bull. Frequent polesitter Nico Rosberg was unable to finish higher than third, while Mercedes teammate Lewis Hamilton was down in P6. But any predictions that Mercedes would be unable to challenge for pole during Saturday's qualifying session were rather wide of the mark.

Early on in Q1 Nico Rosberg struggled with his brakes at Turn 8, locking up the rears and making use of the escape road. The car was unscathed.

Despite an early strong lap from Valtteri Bottas, once the representative times had popped up on the Q1 timesheets it was Lewis Hamilton who was on top with a 1m47.847s lap, chased by Esteban Gutierrez who was out of position in P2 thanks to an early run on the supersoft compound.

An odd characteristic of the opening session was the extent to which even the more experienced drivers came close to collisions. Had the full proposed radio ban been in force, it might have been a demonstration of the need to keep drivers informed of approaching traffic. Under the circumstances, however, it was simply bizarre.

The mass switch to supersofts in the dying minutes of Q1 made it all change on the board, with Kimi Raikkonen and Alonso leading Hamilton and Jenson Button, with previously P2 Gutierrez already down in P12. In the dropout zone as the chequered flag fell were Adrian Sutil, Pastor Maldonado, Kamui Kobayashi, Jules Bianchi, Max Chilton, and Marcus Ericsson.

The Ferraris continued to be strong at the beginning of Q2, with Alonso leading Raikkonen, followed closely by Daniel Ricciardo and Nico Rosberg. But with his first timed lap Hamilton went straight to the top of the timesheets, albeit with a very narrow margin to Alonso - a mere 0.04s, something that would have been unthinkable only two short weeks ago.

Williams have spent the weekend seeing both drivers running up and down the timesheets like a mountain-obsessed jogger, and with five minutes remaining in Q2 both Bottas and Felipe Massa were firmly ensconced in the dropout zone, sharing that perilous space with Nico Hulkenberg, Sergio Perez, Esteban Gutierrez, and Romain Grosjean. But Grosjean and the Williams pairing ran on used supersofts, while all other runners were out on fresh prime rubber.

The top ten shoot-out was a surprising affair, with Massa top of the pops once all ten runners had times on board, chased by Ricciardo and Alonso. It was a battle of rubber strategy, with some teams electing to set early bankers on new rubber while usual front-runners Mercedes sent Rosberg and Hamilton out on scrubbed supersofts for the banker, saving the new tyres for the last-gap run.

With all to play for the final two minutes all ten runners were out on track. But Raikkonen, who had run well all session, lost power and with it all of the hard work he and his engineers had done over the course of the weekend, dropping from P4 to P7 once all times had been posted.

Ricciardo claimed provisional pole as one of the first men out of the pits, with Massa in provisional P2. But Rosberg knocked Ricciardo down a spot before being demoted by Hamilton's 1m45.681s effort, 0.007s faster than the championship leader.

Provisional grid

1. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1m45.681s
2. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1m45.688s
3. Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull) 1m45.854s
4. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1m45.902s
5. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1m45.907s
6. Felipe Massa (Williams) 1m46.000s
7. Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari) 1m46.170s
8. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) 1m46.187s
9. Kevin Magnussen (McLaren) 1m46.250s
10. Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso) 1m47.362s

11. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1m46.943s
12. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1m46.989s
13. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) 1m47.308s
14. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) 1m47.333s
15. Sergio Perez (Force India) 1m47.575s
16. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1m47.812s

17. Adrian Sutil (Sauber) 1m48.324s
18. Pastor Maldonado (Lotus) 1m49.063s
19. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) 1m49.440s
20. Kamui Kobayashi (Caterham) 1m50.405s
21. Max Chilton (Marussia) 1m50.473s
22. Marcus Ericsson (Caterham) 1m52.287s

Friday press conference

Team radio, sanctions against Russia, and the identity of Caterham's new owners were the hot topics at the senior team personnel press conference in Singapore on Friday night.

Present were Eric Boullier (McLaren), Monisha Kaltenborn (Sauber), Vijay Mallya (Force India), Manfredi Ravetto (Caterham), Franz Tost (Toro Rosso), and Claire Williams (Williams).

Q: If I could I begin with a question to all of you? Obviously there have been changes today to the team radio ban. The FIA met with the media earlier today but I wonder if we could get a perspective from the teams: why the changes were needed and what it was like today to manage the relationship between the pits and the drivers? Monisha, maybe you would start?

Monisha KALTENBORN: The change comes from complaints that were raised by the fans that the drivers receive too many instructions and are just, in a way, carrying out whatever instructions they have been given. That's something we as teams of course understand and that that's not exciting for the event and for the show. So I think it was the right decision to say that we should try to stop these type of instructions and that the drivers do more on their own. As a team, we were a bit surprised to see what extremes the first clarification went to, because we felt that it went into areas that could have raised other concerns as well. So we're quite happy that the FIA has now taken this position to really just cover areas that were meant to be covered, performance of the driver and not, as such, the entire car.

Q: Franz, can I ask you, because obviously you've got a 20-year-old in your car and next year you've got a 17-year-old. So to what extent is it a disadvantage not being able to quote-unquote 'coach them'?

Franz TOST: The changes are absolutely not necessary and I still don't understand why because all these information are also entertainment for the people in front of TV, to hear a little about the communication between the team and the driver. And for us, of course the more inexperienced a driver is the more information you have to give him and it requires a lot of work during the week to work out the programme and we still have the possibility within the regulations to communicate in a proper. For me it's absolutely nonsense what we are discussing here, because in all the other kinds of sport a coach gives some information, instructions to a footballer player on the sidelines or whatever. This does not mean that the sportsman is not able to do his job. He can do his job, he does do his job, but maybe he can do it in a better way. It's just a performance improvement, therefore I don't understand it.

Q: Manfredi, what's your view on this? You too have got a rookie in your car. Do you share Franz's view?

Manfredi RAVETTO: First of all, I have to say, it's remembers us a little bit of the good old days. I think so many nice pages of motor sport history have been written without pit to car communication. Having said this, we take it easy. It's a decision from FIA and we have to accept and respect it.

Q: Vijay, you're active in many sports, you car a lot about the show. What do you think about this?

Vijay MALLYA: You know, the FIA rule has always existed: that the driver should drive unaided. But despite that rule being in existence, teams have

taken pit wall to car communication to a certain level and now we have been asked to pull back. It's as if we have been abusing the regulation in one form or another. This is not Playstation. Whatever you may say from the pit wall, the amount of influence it actually has on the driver and the excitement of the race and the race result is something that is highly debatable. But then, the FIA makes the rules and it's the obligation of every team to abide the rules. So I guess we will abide by the rules that were fortunately clarified to a more practical extent this morning.

Q: Claire, you've got one of the more experienced drivers in the field, how has it been for you?

Claire WILLIAMS: I think it's been OK. I think it's an adjustment for everybody, but as Vijay said, they are the new regulations, they have been put forward in an effort to make the show more exciting. But I'm pleased that the new directive that came out this morning has adjusted what is and what isn't allowed to be said and it has clarified that. From our perspective, as long as we are able to communicate messages around safety and reliability to our drivers, that's the most important thing. But we're racers at heart and we want our drivers to be going out there and driving the cars.

Q: And Eric, your feelings? You've obviously always been very involved in this side of things, do you have any concerns about what is and what isn't allowed?

Eric BOULLIER: Yeah, obviously we had some different messages internally during both free practices, like 'shall we say this' or 'shall we not say that'. So we had to police a little bit, or monitor what we wanted to say. In the end I think most has been said by my colleagues. The only thing which was worrying a little bit is to change the regulations during the course of the season, which is never a nice thing to do, even if we obviously listen to the fans and obviously respect the decision of the FIA. Happy as well that they clarified a little bit what can be said and not. And obviously happy that we can still say or deliver some message about safety or reliability of the cars.

Q: Coming back to you Monisha. Can you give us an insight at the heart of the team at the moment? Do you need to shake the tree to break this cycle that you have got into this season? And also, can you tell us what the latest is about Sergey Sirotkin and whether he'll run in free practice one?

MK: Well, we're probably having the worst season we have had in the history of the team so far. We know the reasons for it. We've been trying to make changes, which not easy when you have certain limitations that you have work within. We're step by step coming out of it. The steps in my view could be bigger sometimes, that they are a bit more measurable. But the direction is right. So, we have to be patient, focus on the right things and hopefully get out of it. Coming to Sergey, we have announced that he will be driving F1 in Sochi. That's one of the milestones we have agreed with him and then we'll see where we go from there.

Q: Thanks for that. Vijay, coming back to you, you're neck-and-neck with McLaren for fifth in the Constructors' Championship. How do you deploy the resources then from here for the rest of the season. Do you want to develop hard this year and try to beat or have you also got one eye also on 2015?

VM: As you rightly said, McLaren is just one point ahead - literally as well, as we sit. Having said that, it is my intention to reverse that. We will do everything possible to achieve that by the end of the season. I'm sure they are developing their car and so are we. Unlike previous years I think all developments done this year will, in fact, carry over to next year's car. So whatever investment is made I think it's not lost on 2014 alone. But we enjoy tough racing - I'm sure McLaren do too - and we'll have some fun and let's see in Abu Dhabi who's ahead of whom.

Q: Coming to you Manfredi. Changes again in the management structure at Caterham, the third different team boss in the course of the season. Can you tell us a bit about Christijan's departure, the structure as it is now and your plans for the development of the team?

MR: First of all, I must say thank you to Christijan Albers, because he supported us, coming on board in a very crucial stage. His decision is a very private and personal one, but it is kind of a natural cut-off with the end of the European season, because he wanted to stay closer to his family and the flyaways are not the best option in this case. Having said that, there is a new structure in place. The main goal is to stabilise the company, on the financial side as well as on the technical side. We are very much focused on getting the best out of the current 2014 car but we are also working very hard on 2015. We are enjoying an excellent co-operation with Toyota and its wind tunnel in Cologne, where our next year's car is already testing. Unfortunately we inherited... when I say we, I refer to new ownership and new management... a quite difficult situation. The situation was difficult to such an extent that previous ownership decided to pull the plug and therefore whatever we do we see it as an achievement.

Q: Franz, last time you were with us in one of these Friday press conferences you were on a good roll of top-10 qualifying and race results. It seems to have thinned out a bit. I think you've had two top-10 finishes in the last four races. What's been going on to cause that, and also can you give us an update on Max Verstappen's development?

FT: I think here this weekend I expect a good performance and I expect that both cars are in qualifying three and I expect that we score points. Max Verstappen did, last week, a test in Adria. He finished by doing 396km without any problem. People were really impressed with his performance and now it's in the hands of the FIA whether he gets a Superlicence to do the Friday P1 session in Suzuka and then we will see. We will prepare him step by step and I am convinced that he is the correct driver for us for 2015.

Q: Do you know when you will get answer on the Superlicence?

FT: It must be soon as the next race is already in Suzuka.

Q: Claire, obviously now third in the Constructors' Championship after that result in Monza, can you catch Red Bull, do you think, for second? And can you tell us what this renaissance for Williams has meant for the spirit inside the team?

CW: It would be lovely to catch Red Bull but as I was told by my team when I last said 'we're after Red Bull' I got into a lot of trouble. I think now the position for us is very much to consolidate where we are in the Championship - which is obviously in P3 - to build hopefully that gap between us and Ferrari, I think. From where we were last year, obviously we finished in P9, it's a really great turnaround for everybody at Williams. Probably not one, if you'd said to us last year, this is where you're going to be this time next year, we would have believed you - but a lot of hard work has gone into that turnaround from changing our power unit, bringing in new personnel, bringing in Felipe Massa and obviously some new commercial partners to support us as well. That's all contributed to a great new atmosphere at Williams. I think if you just come to our motorhome, you get a sense of revival and a refreshed spirit about what we're doing. We've always been here to race. Obviously the past few years have been really challenging for us. It hasn't necessarily dampened the spirit but there is a real galvanised effort now within the team. Everyone believes that we can win and we can go on to fight for a seventeenth world championship.

Q: Eric, in a little over four months from now by my calculations, you'll be hitting the track with a McLaren-Honda in pre-season testing. It doesn't sound like very long when you say it. Where are you in the development programme for that? And is it looking like the current drivers will be the ones driving that car.

EB: There is obviously a lot of work behind the scenes with our new partner for next year. We have not exactly defined when and where we will test first, to be clear about some discussions and rumours. There is a lot of work going through and, to be honest, as per the original schedule, everything is fine so far. Regarding the driver line-up, wait for the decision and the announcement.

Q: (Abhishek Takle - Middy) Bernie Ecclestone has once again raised the possibility of three car teams, perhaps as soon as next year. I wanted to ask you, how real is the danger that we might lose three teams before the start of next season and, specific to Monisha and Manfredi, how confident are you that your teams will be on the grid in Melbourne next year?

MK: Well, as I said, we are having the worst season of our history, of our team, and yet at the same time, we are more than 21 years in Formula One and we do get that question often and every time we say, 'well we'll be around'. I'm going to answer the same way, we'll be around next year as well.

Q: Manfredi, do you share Monisha's confidence?

MR: All I can say is that we are very relaxed in this respect. I mean, everybody knows the situation in which we found this team, in which state it was

and, well, we are just trying to keep it alive to improve and we are working, as I said before, also providing you with some details on the programme for next year. This is what we are targeting. Of course we want to be on the grid in Melbourne next year – that is definitely our goal.

Q: Vijay, I guess you're in the part of the grid that doesn't like the idea of three-car teams too much?

VM: No. I'm a firm believer, as I've always said, that every effort should be made to make sure all teams, big and small, survive and race. That's part of the DNA of Formula One. But the regulations and the agreements do provide that, if the grid is less than 20 cars, then participating teams will race a third car. That's something everybody signed up to as well. I hope it never comes to that. As I said, I think the DNA of Formula One should be preserved. I will repeat once again that I will try to persuade the decision makers – the commercial rights holders – that they should look very seriously at a more fair and equitable revenue-share model so that we don't have to answer such questions all the time.

Q: Eric, I guess you would be one of the teams that would be looked at to provide a third car. What are your thoughts on this situation?

EB: Well, it's a little bit like Vijay said. We obviously all look for what will keep all the teams onboard. That's the first priority. There are some mechanisms that, effectively, if some teams were not on the grid, we would maybe run three cars to keep the grid at a decent number. But I don't think we are there yet, as I said before.

Q: Claire, your views?

CW: Yeah, I agree with what everybody has said. I think that to be having this conversation now shows where we are as a sport. We need to be working harder to ensure that we protect the teams that we have on our grid to ensure that competition that I don't necessarily think having three-car teams brings. I think we want to have a healthy grid of ten teams all fielding two cars. Not four teams fielding three cars. For Williams, that's not the DNA of our sport.

Q: Franz, what would it mean for you?

FT: I hope that all the teams which are now taking part in the Formula One World Championship will be on the starting grid next year in Melbourne, and then it's not necessary to discuss a third car.

Q: (Ralf Bach – Sport-Bild) A question to Mr Ravetto. Can you give us some background to your financial situation at the moment, starting maybe from Silverstone to now, and the status quo now?

MR: Yeah. Thanks for asking this question. In reality I believe our team was not set-up to race in Silverstone. This is the truth. Since new ownership came on-board, since new management has been established, I think we managed not only to race in Silverstone but also to arrive to Singapore. I must say it's not a very easy task. The financial situation is not one of the easiest. I only have to repeat myself when I said even before, we inherited a situation which was more than critical. I do not know what the reasons are for this, maybe you should ask the previous owners.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Another topic that's reared its head this weekend is the possibility of an engine un-freeze for next year. I believe it was discussed this morning in the team bosses' meeting. None of you produce your own engines. Accordingly you're either customers or partners. Where do you stand on this issue, particularly where potential cost increases are concerned?

MK: If we look at this year's season we're seeing that there's such a big disparity between the different engines. And Formula One is not just about different engines, engines do play a role there but the gap should not be that big. We do support the idea that development of an engine is allowed within certain given parameters but it not necessarily leads to the fact that we, as customers, should actually bear the costs for that. Because that's something that is always taken for granted, that the moment we talk about engine development it's just a logical step next to say 'it'll get more expensive'. As a customer we say 'why should it?' because actually the supplier is doing it first of all for his own team. Not for us. We are benefitting from it, of course. We are also paying a lot for the engines. Yes, we as a customer, support that – within the parameters. But we should be getting the same spec at the same cost.

Q: Do you share that Vijay?

VM: Well, you know the engines for 2014 are already a lot more expensive than in previous years and if unlimited engine development in-season is allowed, I agree with Monisha, that that the teams, those sat around this table, shouldn't be burdened with these additional costs. But on principle, maybe I would agree to support maybe one in-season update of the engine in a very controlled and limited way but I think it would not be appropriate to allow unfettered in-season development.

Q: Claire, it's one of the secrets of your 2014 success. Would you welcome teams being able to upgrade their engines?

CW: No! Because, as you say, we've got the Mercedes power unit and fortunately they've done a great job this year. I look back over history in Formula One when we have these kinds of conversations and, you have to enter the season with your race car and, if you haven't done a good enough job, then why change the regulations? Why should teams be allowed to do that? However, if it is part of the conversation, then fine, we'll be involved in that conversation and we'll support it – but only based around what Monisha has already said: as a supplied team, we don't believe those costs should be passed on to us. If the manufacturers want to spend that money developing their engines, then fine – but as a customer team we want to receive the same specification that the manufacturers provide, and at the same cost that we have now. The cost of changing to this year's spec engine have been considerable. We're paying about £20 million for our engine in a period when we're trying to control costs in Formula One. We're now looking at a period where engine development costs are going to increase significantly – and I'm not sure that's the conversation this sport should be having.

Q: What about you, Eric, because next year you go back to being a works engine team again, but it will be a first generation Honda hybrid turbo versus second generation Renaults, Ferraris and Mercedes, so where do you stand? Presumably you would like to be able to upgrade.

EB: No, we would like obviously to make sure there is a... I like to use as reference that first comment of Monisha, a regulation which makes the possibility for all engine manufacturers to have a fair, let's say, trade, to make sure we can be as equal as possible. I think that's very important for the show, obviously as well, as there was a lot of stories written about the engine since a long time, a lot of complaints as well about the fans, a lot of positive as well because the racing was good and it's just a normal discussion, let's say, going forward to make sure there is more equity between the engine powers.

MR: Regarding a lift of engine freeze, I believe that generally speaking everybody deserves a second chance in life so why not applying this to engine manufacturers? Having said this, I have to emphasise that the most important thing for a small team like Caterham is to keep costs under control. I remember times when we were using 60/70 engines per year instead of the number we are using now and the bill was very similar, so there must be something to readdress.

Q: Franz, you remember those times as well? Where do you stand on this?

FT: No, first of all I must say that the parity of the performance of the engines is fundamental to increase the show. It cannot be that two cars are one-to-two seconds ahead of the rest of the field. Fortunately and nevertheless we've had some very interesting races but the engine manufacturers should have the possibility – if they want – to come up with modifications but only if the additional costs will not come to the customers, because this is unacceptable, but generally, I think it's good that Ferrari and Renault can come up with new modifications for next year.

Q: (Kate Walker – crash.net) I've got a question for Claire and Eric as members of the F1 Strategy Group. I know you can't give us too much information about the meetings that you have; however, Charlie's said that the radio decision was made at the Strategy Group meeting in Monza. What kind of pushback did the teams present with regard to the rules, and why was it such a surprise that the recently-cancelled radio rules were quite so strict as they were?

CW: I think the conversation came out of a need to improve the show as we talked about earlier but I think our concerns were around the reliability

and safety and so Charlie was asked to go away and have a look at that and obviously that's what's come out this week and the directive that came out this morning addressed and clarified what we were and weren't allowed to say. So that was as much of the conversation as I would want to talk about.

EB: Yup, nothing to add. Just a discussion which we obviously had in Monza and as you say, it was raised and just based on the regulation, there was some adjustment that was proposed and just to make sure that in such a short term there was back and forth discussion.

Q: (Ian Parkes – Press Association) Vijay, over the past couple of months, we've read a lot about your financial troubles in India, court issues etc. How much is that impacting on you personally, at a personal level? How much is that impacting on your personal running of the team and is there any carry-over financially for the team? And secondly, Roy Sahara has his own personal issues: does he still play an active role with the team or are you now looking for other investors to take over from him?

VM: Sahara Group have problems relating to funds raised from the public which the Securities and Exchange Board of India have determined were not raised as per regulations and need to be refunded. Sahara claims that the investors have been refunded and claims to have provided the necessary proof of refund to the Securities and Exchange Board of India. They don't seem to be able to verify the facts provided by Sahara, therefore the current situation. As far as my situation is concerned, I'm not a borrower, I have not borrowed any money from any bank and therefore all that you read about may contain my name but has to do with one of our companies which is Kingfisher Airlines but of course, if you continue to refer to me in my personal capacity, it conveys the wrong impression that I'm a debtor in a sense, which I'm not. The agreement between Sahara and myself is that they're shareholders in the team, they continue to be shareholders in the team. I have asked them if they would like to change the situation and they said no, they want to stay in. I've always run and managed the team which is doing better than it ever has in its history and we're going forward from here.

Q: (Chris Lyons – AP) It seems that the ban on messages about car performance – not driver coaching but car performance – will come in at the start of 2015. Is that your impression or is this something that is going to be argued and debated more between now and then?

EB: I think it's going to be discussed further. There's clearly been a pushback on part of the allowance for the messaging which has been postponed for now and the article 20.1 of the sporting regulations is quite clear, even if there is always some room for interpretation, so that's why there will be some more debate.

Q: (Graham Harris – Motorsport Monday) Monisha, without going into the politics about whether we should or shouldn't be going to Sochi, obviously Sergei is being backed by Russian money. Are any of the new sanctions that have been put in place by the EU and the US affecting that money coming into you or do you expect it to be affecting you, and any general questions about that?

MK: It's not affecting it.

Q: (Graham Harris – Motorsport Monday) So it's not Russian money coming to you.

MK: I never said that. You asked me if it's affecting it and I said no.

Q: (Graham Harris – Motorsport Monday) And do you expect it to affect you in the future as sanctions get tighter?

MK: If you look at the sanctions which at least apply to Switzerland, it wouldn't really affect us so we wouldn't fall within that ambit. What happens in the future we don't know.

Q: (Stuart Codling – F1 Racing) Manfredi, just to follow up from Ralf's earlier question, there seems to be a new name on the nosecone of your car this weekend. Could you clarify whether that's a change of your operating company or whether there's a new company?

MR: No, no, no, definitely not, this has nothing to do... Basically, it's not there is a new name. The team has always been identified by the abbreviation of CFl. You write it also in your comments. By the way, the entrant is and stays One Malaysia Racing team and One Malaysia Racing team is a conglomerate of companies which are working on different tasks and it stays like this.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Another question to you Manfredi, particularly about the structure of your team. I'd like to give you a second chance of answering this question: your investors, the Swiss-Middle Eastern investors, your team has consistently refused to identify them. In this paddock, one gets suspicious so is there a reason why they are keeping such a low profile?

MR: It's impolite to answer with a question but who's the beneficial owner or ownership of an investment fund? Who's the owner of Blackstone, just to make an example? So the ownership behind our team is a group of investors, it's a club of investors. They just want to make the best out of their investment and they don't need to have any kind of personal visibility or publicity. By the way, it's something they refuse. They are very much business-driven and investment-orientated. I hope it helps.

Q: (Kate Walker – crash.net) Another question for you, Manfredi. If you're not able to tell us who the investors are, could you please tell us what other items might be in their investment portfolio?

MR: I'm not supposed to know this in detail. It's a group of wealthy individuals and I'm just trying to make my best in running this team, together with a very nice group of people. That's my main concern. All the rest, I'm really not supposed to go more in detail.

Friday report

Fernando Alonso topped the timesheets for Ferrari during FPI in Singapore, a welcome success for a team currently struggling to perform as expected. But when FP2 came to an end under the starry skies of Marina Bay it was Lewis Hamilton who claimed the fastest time of the day.

Despite the close walls and lack of run-off that characterise the Marina Bay Street Circuit, FPI was a remarkably calm affair. There were a raft of mechanical failures and issues affecting much of the pack, but the drivers themselves were able to keep their machines just close enough to the walls while managing to avoid contact.

Nico Rosberg had issues with gear selection, but was still able to top the timesheets for much of the early part of the session. In contrast, Jean-Eric Vergne lost an hour of running early on as the team worked to swap out the Frenchman's battery, and shortly before the chequered flag fell insult was added to injury when his Toro Rosso suffered ERS failure, curtailing what was already a very limited run.

Another late-session failure saw Sebastian Vettel stop his RB10 shortly before the end of FPI with what looked to be another engine failure of sorts, pushing the German ever closer to the inevitable grid drop penalties that come of going over the annual power unit allotment.

Kimi Raikkonen also lost out on running, with his FPI curtailed by what a press release might describe as brake failure but which involved flames pouring from the Ferrari's front brake ducts.

The second practice session was a far more chaotic affair, with Pastor Maldonado bringing out the red flags when he overcooked it going into Turn 10 and ended his day's running by making mincemeat of his Lotus.

Maldonado's shunt had a massive impact on the timesheets, with a number of drivers seeing their qualifying simulations ruined by the timing of the red flag. Rosberg, who ended FP2 13th on the timesheets, lost out on his qualifying attempt due to the stoppage, and then went straight into long runs

with his true pace unseen. Alonso, who managed second in the standings when running was over, had been similarly affected.

Of particular note was Vettel's performance. The Red Bull driver was forced to sit out much of the session following his F1 engine failure, and on his first flying lap - set with around five minutes remaining before the chequered flag - popped up in fifth on the timesheets, six-tenths slower than pace-setting Hamilton.

F1 times (unofficial)

1. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1m49.056s [16 laps]
2. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1m49.178s [23 laps]
3. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1m49.205s [24 laps]
4. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1m49.874s [27 laps]
5. Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull) 1m50.122 [21 laps]
6. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1m50.539s [11 laps]
7. Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari) 1m50.783s [19 laps]
8. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1m59.22s [21 laps]
9. Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso) 1m50.922s [26 laps]
10. Sergio Perez (Force India) 1m51.131s [23 laps]
11. Kevin Magnussen (McLaren) 1m51.217s [24 laps]
12. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) 1m51.604s [23 laps]
13. Felipe Massa (Williams) 1m51.953 [20 laps]
14. Pastor Maldonado (Lotus) 1m52.125s [25 laps]
15. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) 1m52.146s [19 laps]
16. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) 1m52.171s [15 laps]
17. Adrian Sutil (Sauber) 1m52.237s [22 laps]
18. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1m52.906s [26 laps]
19. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) 1m54.113s [15 laps]
20. Marcus Ericsson (Caterham) 1m54.475s [26 laps]
21. Kamui Kobayashi (Caterham) 1m54.607s [21 laps]
22. Max Chilton (Marussia) 1m55.170s [17 laps]

F2 times (unofficial)

1. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1m47.490s [25 laps]
2. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1m47.623s [28 laps]
3. Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull) 1m47.790s [28 laps]
4. Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari) 1m48.031s [29 laps]
5. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1m48.041s [5 laps]
6. Kevin Magnussen (McLaren) 1m48.358s [33 laps]
7. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1m48.435s [30 laps]
8. Sergio Perez (Force India) 1m48.653s [30 laps]
9. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) 1m48.751s [31 laps]
10. Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso) 1m48.770s [31 laps]
11. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1m48.800s [33 laps]
12. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1m49.062s [33 laps]
13. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1m49.075s [30 laps]
14. Pastor Maldonado (Lotus) 1m49.139s [13 laps]
15. Adrian Sutil (Sauber) 1m49.170s [34 laps]
16. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) 1m49.290s [37 laps]
17. Felipe Massa (Williams) 1m49.361s [29 laps]
18. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) 1m49.971s [28 laps]
19. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) 1m50.612s [24 laps]
20. Max Chilton (Marussia) 1m51.558s [21 laps]
21. Kamui Kobayashi (Caterham) 1m52.075s [33 laps]
22. Marcus Ericsson (Caterham) 1m52.936s [31 laps]

Thursday press conference

It was a short and sweet drivers' press conference that opened the Singapore Grand Prix weekend.

Present were Marcus Ericsson (Caterham), Pastor Maldonado (Lotus), Sergio Perez (Force India), Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari), Adrian Sutil (Sauber), and Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso).

Q: First of all, a question to all of you about the ban on large amounts of radio traffic between the team and the driver. What's your reaction to this? Sergio, perhaps you could start.

Sergio PÉREZ: Hi everyone. I don't think it's ideal that they, suddenly from one race to another, they change it dramatically that you cannot get certain calls. But it doesn't influence it much. I don't see it as a big deal, it's something that we as drivers need to get more used to. We will have, definitely, more information and we're going to be a bit more busy throughout the race to basically try to keep everything under control - fuel loads and engine modes, all that kind of stuff. I don't see a problem to get used to, it's just a dramatic change from the last race to this one.

Q: Kimi, you famously told the team "leave me alone, I know what I'm doing." Does that mean you welcome this change?

Kimi RÄIKKÖNEN: Well, obviously we don't speak a lot on the radio in my case usually, when there are no issues - but obviously it might get quite complicated if there are some problems with the car and you have to change certain things to try to finish the race. I don't know how the rule goes at those times. Obviously it makes it more complicated for us but it's part of the game so it's OK.

Q: Pastor, your thoughts on it?

Pastor MALDONADO: For sure it's not a great thing, especially with all the complex systems we have at the moment - but it's the same for everyone so it doesn't matter.

Q: What about from a rookie perspective. Presumably there's been quite a lot of coaching going on over the radio Marcus, so far this season. Are you going to miss it? Particularly on the approach to the start, getting everything prepared for a start, for example?

Marcus ERICSSON: No, I think... I like the idea, to be honest. I think it's good to get the drivers more in focus. I think it's good. But for us as a small team I think it's a bit more trickier because our steering wheel, we don't have a big display. A lot of the other teams, I think they have a big display, so they can show a lot of stuff on this, whereas we have a very small one. So it'll be a bit more tricky – but yeah, like I said, I like the idea and I think it's good to make us drivers a bit more in focus.

Q: Jean-Eric, are you supportive as well?

Jean-Eric VERGNE: I don't mind it. I think it will be more or less the same as before. I like to do things by my own and many times this year I changed the settings before my engineer told me, so yeah, I will be a bit more lonely on the radio – but it should be fine.

Q: Adrian?

Adrian SUTIL: No problem really. I think all manageable. It's a bit more work but we'll handle it.

Q: Kimi, coming back to you, obviously this season hasn't been quite what you expected it to be – but did you expect to have your problems sorted out by now? And what's your focus for the remaining six races or so?

KR: Obviously to do as well as we can and have good results for the team and for myself. I expect it to be difficult. Probably the team didn't expect to have such difficulties over all. We expected to be more stronger overall. It's part of the game and we have to try to sort things out. I think we have done pretty good improvements – compared to where we started – as a team and obviously then I'm getting more happy with things but obviously still not where we want to be in the end. Still a lot of work to do.

Q: Pastor, front row qualifier here two years ago with Williams, it's always been a strong Lotus track – so is there some optimism there for a top ten result maybe this weekend?

PM: I hope. For sure, the qualifying pace is always a bit tricky for us but during the race, for any reason we are able to recover the pace and sometimes we are much more competitive. So hopefully here we can be a bit more competitive than Monza for sure but it's difficult to say something before we get in the car.

Q: Sergio, you've scored points in all three of your appearances here at Singapore and you've come off the back of two strong results, so your thoughts on this race and also how close you are to committing to Force India for another season?

SP: I think things are settling down and I think we should be very close to committing for next year with the team but you never know: I have experience from the past so you never know what's going to happen. Yeah, we are really optimistic for this weekend. We have a good upgrade package and I believe we can be competitive and definitely our target is the McLarens which we are fighting with really closely and hopefully we can score more points than them this weekend with both cars and the upgrade package gives us some boost.

Q: Adrian, like Sergio you've scored points in your last three races here in Singapore but there's no getting away from the fact that Sauber is yet to get into Q3 this season, so what's the rescue package and what lies ahead for the rest of the season?

AS: We have a good package here, the last one, but it should give us a little bit more speed. We have to try it out on Friday. We're not so far away – especially in qualifying – from the group in front and it's just missing a little bit to the top ten normally but Monza was quite tricky, especially in the race. We were losing a bit too much time and our performance was a bit slower but this track is very special and very different so I hope it suits our car. There's a lot of work, we need some points and this is the main target for the moment.

Q: Marcus, since the last round, obviously the team principal has moved on so can you tell us a bit about the structure now at the team and the plan for upgrades and so on?

ME: We're still pushing hard like we've done the last couple of races and bringing some more updates for here, so not much has changed. Obviously Christijan left which is a shame, we got along very well, but still I think the team is pushing on quite a lot and it's a positive atmosphere from everyone. We just have to wait and see this weekend, see how it suits our car but in general I have a good feeling. I had a really strong race last time out on a street track so I think hopefully we can try and repeat something similar to that.

Q: Jean-Eric, still six races to go but you've already scored points more times this year than you did last year so what's the plan now for you for the rest of this season and what about next season? Have you made any progress yet with your plans for 2015?

JEV: Yuh, talking about this weekend and the race and the season, I really want to end the season strongly. I think we should have had a lot more points with our team if we didn't have so much bad luck but I think now that's behind. I really want to make the best out of the last six races with Toro Rosso and then find a good option for next year.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Kimi, it's two hours in very humid conditions: Nico Rosberg said that the last laps are always very painful here because it's physically so demanding. How painful are they for you?

KR: I don't know. Everybody has their own feelings so I can't know how they feel like but in the past it hasn't been a problem. It doesn't feel as hot or humid in the last years unless the course has slowed in the race, so I don't see why it should suddenly be a problem.
