

F1 Brazil Blog - Sunday press conference

Despite an embarrassingly awful podium interview it was a delight to see Mark Webber in attendance at the final post-race press conference of his F1 career.

Present were Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull), Mark Webber (Red Bull), and Fernando Alonso (Ferrari).

Q: Sebastian Vettel, you just broke two records..

Sebastian VETTEL: No, please start with him. Start with Mark.

Q: OK! Mark Webber, that's your last race in Formula One, today is a very emotional day for you. You have over 200 races in your career.

Mark WEBBER: Yeah, it was a very good finish to my career, a good fight with all the guys I've enjoyed fighting with for most of my career: Seb, Fernando, Lewis, Nico, all the guys who have been in the window for the last five or six years. I want to thank the team, I enjoyed the last few laps. It was a very nice way to finish. I want to thank everyone in Australia. I wouldn't be here where I am without the support in the early days. It's been a thoroughly enjoyable career. A great journey, one of which I'm proud of, and there's been so many people who have played a special role in my career. They know who they all are - thank you very much if you are watching and...yeah... enjoy watching Formula One next year with these guys, but off to Porsche and looking forward to it.

Q: Sebastian, so, you just made [equalled] two records, the most consecutive wins - nine - and the highest number of wins in a single season: 13. So, what do you feel?

Sebastian VETTEL: Well, I'm actually quite sad that this season comes to an end. I think the last couple of races, really since the summer break, to win every race is unbelievable. The car has been phenomenal. Just kept getting better. I think today was a very interesting race. I had a poor start but then I was able to come back straight away in the first lap, build a gap which was nice to control then. But in the pitstop, obviously, I was waiting for my tyres again. I think it was a bit of a confusion going on because we had both cars coming in at the same time. Fortunately I got all the tyres in time ready to go. Mark was behind and then, yeah, the last laps, very difficult with the rain because you could see the fog is coming, [then] it's leaving, so it was very difficult to judge but yeah, for sure, extremely proud. Big, big thank you to the team, big thanks to Renault. I think there's a couple of guys that stand out. First of all Mark, obviously it's his last race, we've been team-mates for a very, very long time. After all we didn't have the best relationship but I think we always had tremendous respect for each other. And together I think we've been very, very successful for the team. And then there's one other guy, he's working on my car. His name is Tom Batch and unfortunately he's leaving so farewell Tom, all the best for the future, and who knows, maybe we'll meet each other again in the future.

Q: Fernando, since Singapore this was your first podium. Now the season is over and today was a tough race because like he said, the rain came and gone, came and gone. A light rain all the time. So how was it there?

Fernando ALONSO: Well it was a difficult race for everyone, unfortunately the rain didn't come: I think we were more competitive in wet conditions but again, it seems as if it's going to rain in any moment but it didn't, so it was a shame for us but at least we're in the podium, so ending the season on a high and hopefully for next year we start with a completely new direction and a positive trend. I'm looking forward.

Q: I know you're missing Felipe Massa. Today was his last race with Ferrari.

FA: It was a shame, sad that he had this drive-through because I think the podium was very close for Felipe today. When I saw him fourth I said this would be a very good celebration for him. Sad for this race but happy for the last four years: he has been an amazing team-mate - inside the circuit with very competitive skills and also like a person. We build a friendly relationship in the last four years, a lot of time together. We'll see him in the paddock next year with different colours but always he will remain a very good man.

Q: Sebastian, lots of things really to talk to you about but just tell us about the race - give us some idea. Bit of a voyage into the unknown for all three of you in terms of tyres as well but also the start, the pitstop...

SV: Yeah, obviously we didn't have any dry running, which was quite exciting when we started: bit of an adventure to find braking points, etcetera. Start was obviously quite bad for me. I had lots of wheel-slip and didn't get the initial launch off the line as good as I was hoping for. Nico passed me straight away, Fernando was closing in. I was lucky that as soon as I got on the KERS I could recover a little bit and then it's not a long way to Turn One - which helped today. So, lost the position, saved some KERS for the end of the lap. Was hoping to get him back up the hill which worked well, so I managed to get back in the lead straight away and was basically benefitting I think from Nico probably a little bit slower than the cars behind - Fernando and Mark - so I could open a gap and control that for more or less the rest of the race - until we came in for the second stop, which was a last minute call. I think we were afraid of a safety car at that stage. I came in, hoping everybody was ready. I think I had three wheels on the car but I was waiting for the front right. For some reason, last year and this year, it seemed to be the front right that... yeah, they let me wait for a little bit. I saw that obviously Mark was queuing behind me and I wanted to go and there was a bit of chaos in the pitlane but it was obviously fine to get the right tyres in the end, get out again and I still had a bit of a gap. We obviously lost to Fernando at that stage, both of us, but was still able to have a little bit of a gap and control that until the end which was very helpful to get through traffic and with the rain coming in and going - you could really see it from the car. The fog was coming and the rain clouds. You didn't know how strong the rain was and, yeah, in the end it was fine all the time to stay on dries but a little harder rain and it could have been a different story so, yeah, lucky to get away with that.

Q: Mark, a great end to your Formula One career. I hope you're happy with it as well. How did it go?

MW: Yeah, I was happy with today. Tricky grand prix for all of us as you say, straight into dry conditions for a Sunday afternoon race. Maybe it's

what Bernie should do! He should just have Sunday afternoons mate, just turn up for Sundays and just race from there because it was a pretty good start to the grand prix, I think, all of us getting into the groove with no dry running: challenging for the teams and the drivers. So we all got there in the end. Both Seb and I had tough starts, I was happy to lose only to Lewis actually. I had a good little scrap in the first lap: Fernando and Lewis were having a good battle and then we settled into it. It looked like the Mercedes were struggling to hold the tempo of Fernando, myself and Seb, so we had to clear the Mercs as best we could. And then it was coming up to Fernando, so, managed to pass Fernando as well. There was some really nice moves and some good racing and I think for the team to get a one-two today with obviously not their cleanest day in the pitlane – which we can let them off every now and again, because they've had a superb season in the pitlane – so we gave the red guys a sniff but we managed to respond each time. Very proud to have raced with these guys at the end. I mean I raced pretty much all four or five of them at some stage in the race today – apart from Seb, obviously who was a little bit down the road – but the pace... it was a good battle for all of us. It's been a real pleasure for me to finish today's race like this. Yeah, and also to finish on the podium with arguable the two best guys of the generation we're in at the moment. I hold them in very high esteem. I'm happy with the finish and I'm happy to go and do something different now. It was a special day for myself, all the people that helped me get here. Australia. And the team, of course, had a nice car to finish. Renault as well, a 1-2 for them, last time with the V8s. Lots of things which are special, so thank you very much.

Q: Fernando, obviously a good result for you. As Glenda said on the podium, first time on the podium since the Singapore Grand Prix. Nice to go out with a podium?

FA: Yeah, definitely. I think to finish the season on a high is always better. We missed this podium finish from many races and today we had a chance. Obviously maybe with rain conditions, a wet race, maybe we had a little more performance than on the dry but at the end to finish behind the two Red Bulls today is the maximum we could achieve and I'm happy for that. The last race for Mark as you touched on now. We will miss him, that's for sure. A great driver and a great person. Last race also for Felipe in Ferrari, which we wanted to help in whatever way to try to celebrate a podium finish with Felipe or something but he get a drive-through unfortunately. But, y'know, mixed emotions today but happy to finish 2013 which has been an amazing year in terms of fighting and the number of points we achieve, I think. We didn't win the championship, which is the goal every year and for next year we reset again, start from zero and new motivations.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – O Estado de Sao Paulo) Mark, what will you miss most and what won't you miss most?

MW: What will I miss most about Formula One? I think there are some special circuits which we race on: obviously Suzuka, Spa, Monte Carlo, Silverstone, even here to a degree. There are some really nice circuits which, when you have the car in the window, particularly in qualifying, there's not much that can please a driver more than having the car on the edge and having yourself on the edge in the ultimate machine and that is something which I will miss. But you also have to respect that you want to make sure that you're getting the best out of yourself in that scenario. If you think you're a little bit off, then it's not as rewarding as it once was. I will miss those scenarios. I will miss, I think, also the perfection that goes on in this game, especially with a team like Red Bull, the amount of work that goes in, the details. It's quite inspiring to watch the relentless approach with the work, that's something which I've learned a lot and I will take it to future challenges around the corner. What I won't miss: looking to pull the travel back down a little bit, spending a bit more time with my people that helped me to get to where I am. I'm not young but I'm not old, I'm in the window, it's a good time for me to get that balance, a little bit less intensity in the private life and also in the professional life. It doesn't mean that I'm not going to be pushing hard with Porsche, obviously. I will be pushing very hard with those guys but in this game, you need to be on it all the time and I'm finding that more and more difficult. It's a chance for me to finish strongly, which I've done. That's some of the things I'll miss. I think I answered that right.

Q: (Frederic Ferret – L'Equipe) Mark, what is your schedule now, are you going to take some holiday, just like retire or are you working for Porsche as soon as possible?

MW: No, I'm going to have a few weeks out, for sure, doing nothing. I love putting the fire on at home, chopping some wood, putting the fire on and maybe a bit of red wine and chill out with some chocolate. Also my Tasmania Challenge is on which I can't get to this year, it's just too busy to get to my charity event, so I hope that goes well for everyone taking part. It starts on Wednesday but I just can't get to Tasmania from here, it's just been a relentless year and quite difficult so I'm looking forward to just having a bit of a break. For sure there is some Porsche stuff in the background. Obviously there is a chance I can do some stuff with them before the year is out, which Red Bull have been very good with and then it will be a steady loading into January as it will be for all of us.

Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action Australia and National Speedsport News) Mark, tell us about taking your helmet off on that last ever lap and savouring it? Your eyes seem to be tearing a bit: maybe that was just the wind in your eyes.

MW: Yeah, it was the wind, Dan, I was tearing at that time. Look, it's not easy to get the HANS device system away from the helmet so I spent half a lap trying to get the left hand side off, so I finally got it there but the cars are bloody noisy with no helmet on, I know that much, so it was really noisy, all the vibrations and you can hear lots of things that you don't want to be hearing with the helmet on, that's for sure. It was good to get it off, obviously the marshals, the fans, to see... in this sport, it's not always easy to show the person that's behind the wheel. We can in lots of other sports but in Formula One we've always got the helmet on so it was nice to drive back with the helmet off. Only time you're seen with the helmet off is on the podium if we have a good day which we did both, so nice to get it off. In the last sector, I got it a little bit jammed, so I think the marshals were a little bit worried that I couldn't turn left but in the end, no it was fine, it was a nice moment to come back, a little bit of a different touch to bring the car back.

Q: (Michael Schmidt – Auto, Motor und Sport) Sebastian first, when did you tell your team that you wanted to come in? Was it because of a potential safety car, and to Mark, do you think it would have been better for you if the team had left you out for one more lap and then go in, because you obviously had to wait for Seb?

SV: I didn't decide to pit. Obviously with the weather it was critical, we were trying to go as long as possible because we didn't know... when it starts to rain and you pit one lap before, you lose a lot of time because you have to come in again to fit inters (intermediate tyres). So basically, I was told, exit of turn 12, box if I can. I had enough time to get ready. Arguably the team was on the limit and obviously they were preparing a stop for both cars so they had to get both set of tyres out, mine and Mark's, and I think it was just a little bit of a rush, because I think the team was afraid of a safety car. Obviously I didn't know what was going on around the track: the team is obviously able to monitor much better... to see the whole track, whereas I'm very good at judging what's going on where I am right now but not five, six corners down the road. I think that was the reason why I got called in but unfortunately it got a bit messy.

MW: I got the pit call quite early in the lap, they were worried about a safety car as well. I think Maldonado had been off or something had happened. When I braked for the pit lane line, I looked on the big screen and I could see that Seb was in the box, saw on the TV that he was pitting and I thought 'I hope it's a replay' but it wasn't. When I got over the top, he was in the bloody box so I thought 'shit, we've got a bit on here now'. In that case, mainly we were losing time, that's the biggest thing but then just the rear jack guy remembering to get out of the way. Obviously I'm going to stop but I have

to wait for him to move out of the way so I thought it was obviously a complete surprise, uncharacteristic of the team to do something quite tricky and risky, when there wasn't a huge amount to risk but it turns out obviously that there was an issue at the start of Seb's stop which snowballed into me and then we had the little Spanish lion on the back of me again, so it was a good recovery but the team... I'm sure they want to do that part again. In the end, we recovered well and cool heads...

Q: (Cristobal Rosaleny – Car and Driver) Seb and Fernando, Mark is going to take off some weeks for relaxing but you have to race next year and Formula One is changing a lot next year. What are you going to do until Christmas?

SV: Nothing. Obviously there are some things you have to attend to in December which is also nice, but mostly try to relax. Obviously Mark is retiring from Formula One but he's not retiring from racing so, as he said, he will obviously get ready, probably has a little bit less pressure because the season may be starts in a different way but I think for us it's the same thing as the previous years. Obviously a lot of changes for next year but in terms of rhythm it is probably largely the same. Potentially you start a week or two earlier in January, to prepare the tests a little bit more. Equally, you can't prepare so much because you need to wait for the first day on track, to know and see where we are.

FA: Obviously until Christmas time we are quite busy at Ferrari with some events with the sponsors and there are many activities in Maranello around Christmas time with the people working there at Ferrari, with their families etc and we will use those days while we are already in Italy to spend some time on the simulator and to do some work, looking at next year's regulations. Christmas time will probably be the first time that we completely stop, so until the 21st of December, I think, we are on, still.

Q: (Flavio Vanetti – Corriere della Sera) To Fernando and Sebastian: Seb, what do you feel having reached Alberto Ascari's record with nine victories in a row, a driver who comes from the distant past of Formula One, and to Fernando, do you feel more optimistic for 2014 after this result?

SV: Well, I think it is very very difficult for me to realise probably now and in the next couple of weeks what we have achieved again, and in particular this year at the end of the season. I think in terms of a certain record with Alberto Ascari you can't really compare it, it's at a completely different time. If you consider the fact that in the fifties the races were much longer and there were a lot of things that were breaking down, much more than nowadays where it's very professional, reliability is exceptionally good for everybody. I think his record still stands out a lot. So at the end of the day, as I see it now, it's just a number but hopefully one day, when I've got less hair and chubby then it's probably something nice to look back to.

FA: Nothing changed, to be honest. I'm still optimistic for next year because I trust my team, I trust Ferrari preparation and philosophy for the 2014 car. We will be a contender, always, even this year when we haven't been competitive and we only won two Grands Prix, we were off the podium for the last six or seven Grands Prix etc, we finished second in the World Championship, so with whatever the car that Ferrari do, normally, better or worse, you are a contender. That's my optimistic point for next year, not because today we are on the podium or not on the podium.

F1 Brazil Blog - Race report

Sunday's paddock was filled with journalists wearing tee-shirts bearing the logo #MADEMYMARK, and during the Brazilian Grand Prix F1 retiree Mark Webber did just that, finishing in second place at his last grand prix, his eighth podium finish of the season.

It was Sebastian Vettel who claimed the win on Sunday afternoon, once again taking part in his own race as the other 21 competitors took part in a grand prix going on behind. But for the first time in recent memory Vettel stuffed his start, losing the lead to Nico Rosberg going into the first corner. It was not to last, however, as the Red Bull and Mercedes crossed the line side by side to begin the second lap of the race. Eighty seconds later, as lap 3 began, Vettel had his customary 1.4s lead and the normal order of things was restored.

Behind the German was an action-packed grand prix made all the more tense by the constant threat of rain, although when drops started to fall in the closing stages of the race it was a light affair that did not affect the order of things.

In the opening stages of Sunday's race it was clear that the Mercedes were struggling. Not only did Rosberg lose the lead to Vettel, but Lewis Hamilton – who was running in third place on the first lap – lost position to a charging Fernando Alonso on lap 2. Two laps later, Webber – who had dropped to fifth off the start – was able to take the Briton for fourth place in a decisive manoeuvre that put the Australian in line for a podium finish.

Despite their obvious struggles, both Hamilton and Rosberg put up a good fight, with both men running in the top five for much of Sunday afternoon. In the first phase of the Brazilian Grand Prix it was Rosberg who was in the greatest trouble, battling more with his tyres than he was with his rivals. When his teammate got close on lap 11, the pragmatic Rosberg allowed Hamilton to slip past for fourth, a position he would hold until making his first stop on lap 21.

The Briton returned to the track behind the Ferrari of Felipe Massa, and the two men immediately engaged in a 13-lap battle that ended only when an irate Massa was called to serve a drive-through penalty when it emerged that he had crossed the white line at the pit entry.

From then it was clean sailing in fourth for Hamilton until he was called to serve his own drive-through on lap 52 having caused a collision while trying to lap Valtteri Bottas that saw the Williams driver knocked out of the race. On the back foot with less than 20 laps remaining, it was all a floor-damaged Hamilton could do to salvage ninth place, finishing two spots behind Massa.

Further up the pack it was a series of clean fights between Alonso and Webber that provided much of the interest on Sunday afternoon. Having recovered from yet another less than stellar start, Webber chased down first Hamilton and then Rosberg to run in third by lap 7. Four laps later, the Australian was giving chase to Alonso, the two men delighting spectators with a two-lap dice that ended when Webber slipped past the Ferrari at the beginning of lap 13, holding second until he pitted at the end of lap 23.

Emerging from the pits behind Alonso, Webber again gave chase, eventually reclaiming second on lap 26. The Asturian fought back, but was no match for the Red Bull. Webber managed to hold on to P2 despite losing time in the pits during his second stop, as the unprepared team struggled to find Vettel's fourth wheel, costing both their drivers time in the process. But such was their lead by that point in the race that Vettel and Webber left the pits in first and second, with Alonso behind in third. The top three would stay in that order until the end of the race, despite the best efforts of a charging Alonso.

2013 Brazilian Grand Prix results

1. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1h32m36.300s
2. Mark Webber (Red Bull) + 10.452s
3. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) + 18.913s
4. Jenson Button (McLaren) + 37.360s
5. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) + 39.048s
6. Sergio Perez (McLaren) + 44.051s
7. Felipe Massa (Ferrari) + 49.110s
8. Nico Hulkenberg (Sauber) + 1m04.252s
9. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) + 1m12.903s
10. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso) + 1 lap
11. Paul di Resta (Force India) + 1 lap
12. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) + 1 lap
13. Adrian Sutil (Force India) + 1 lap
14. Heikki Kovalainen (Lotus) + 1 lap
15. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) + 1 lap
16. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) + 1 lap
17. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) + 2 laps
18. Giedo van der Garde (Caterham) + 2 laps
19. Max Chilton (Marussia) + 2 laps

Charles Pic (Caterham) RET
Valtteri Bottas (Williams) RET
Romain Grosjean (Lotus) RET

2013 Formula One season results

World Drivers' Championship

1. Sebastian Vettel 397 points
2. Fernando Alonso 242 points
3. Mark Webber 199 points
4. Lewis Hamilton 189 points
5. Kimi Raikkonen 183 points
6. Nico Rosberg 183 points
7. Romain Grosjean 132 points
8. Felipe Massa 112 points
9. Jenson Button 73 points
10. Nico Hulkenberg 51 points
11. Sergio Perez 49 points
12. Paul di Resta 48 points
13. Adrian Sutil 29 points
14. Daniel Ricciardo 20 points
15. Jean-Eric Vergne 13 points
16. Esteban Gutierrez 6 points
17. Valtteri Bottas 4 points
18. Pastor Maldonado 1 point
19. Jules Bianchi 0 points
20. Charles Pic 0 points
21. Heikki Kovalainen 0 points
22. Giedo van der Garde 0 points
23. Max Chilton 0 points

World Constructors' Championship

1. Red Bull 596 points
2. Mercedes 360 points
3. Ferrari 354 points
4. Lotus 315 points
5. McLaren 122 points
6. Force India 77 points
7. Sauber 57 points
8. Toro Rosso 33 points
9. Williams 5 points
10. Marussia 0 point
11. Caterham 0 points

There was a certain sense of ennui about the final post-qualifying press conference of 2013, with all and sundry having run out of questions for Sebastian Vettel several races ago.

Present were Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull), Nico Rosberg (Mercedes), and Fernando Alonso (Ferrari).

Q: Congratulations Sebastian, another excellent qualifying for you, your 45th pole, your second here, and your ninth this year. But what a margin as well, that's incredible.

Sebastian VETTEL: Yeah, big surprise. I was so happy after the quali, obviously, especially Q3, it took a long time for us to get out. There was a lot of rain after Q2, already at the end of Q2. Yeah, we need to wait. If there's too much water it's a shame for the people who wait for us to come out, but there's too much water and the risk of aquaplaning is too high. So it took a long time and then got out. I was surprised by how much of the water had gone. I went straight on intermediates and was able to get a very, very good lap in straight away. Tried again in the second to beat that. It was very close, so with both my laps I was very happy. Surprised by the margin. When I was told I was very happy. I even mixed up Spanish and Portuguese. I was on the radio saying "olé, olé" but olé is Spanish so I don't know the expression in Portuguese but maybe someone can tell me today and hopefully I'll have another chance tomorrow. But great in these conditions to get it all right., We had very little practice and still got the car where we wanted it to be in the end so very happy.

Q: Nico, your best qualifying here, ever. You wanted to give the Red Bulls a hard time, well, second is a good effort. What are your feelings?

Nico ROSBERG: It was a good day today. Everything went to plan. It's always extremely tough in these conditions because it's just all over the place and you need to make sure you don't get caught out. But the whole team, we all did a good job and perfect strategy also in the end doing those two consecutive laps with the inter, got a good lap together, so happy with that. Surprised about the gap to Sebastian, that's very big. Definitely would have been difficult, even getting everything perfect to come close to him. That's fine. Optimum we're second place and got that, so it's OK. It's a great place to start tomorrow - front row of the grid.

Q: And Fernando, your equal best grid position this year. A bit of a surprise or not?

Fernando ALONSO: Well, we know that in wet conditions normally we improve a little bit our performance. We were waiting for wet races this year but it came only in the last in Brazil. I have mixed feelings to be honest. I'm happy to be so up on the grid, finally, because we start between seventh and tenths in the last five or six grand prix, which is not ideal. So being in the first three is good, but not totally happy with my lap. I lost a lot of time. Not obviously to beat Seb, he's too far in front of us. But I think for second place it was not difficult. I lost something like seven or eighth or tenths in Turn Four, off the circuit in the paint area, losing a lot of time there. I think second could be possible but obviously I'm not sad with third and all the opportunities in front of us in tomorrow's race starting up at the front.

Q: Sebastian, facing the race tomorrow with so much wet running but not so much dry running, what sort of conditions do you want? What is ideal for you?

SV: Well, I don't think we had that many laps in the wet, to be honest, because we were all of us trying to save tyres as much as we can. Especially yesterday, we only had one set, and this morning. But... yeah, very pleased with the result, first of all. Tomorrow, I think Nico touched on it, it could be 50:50. It looks to be the best day that we have out of the last two but, yeah, we don't know, anything is possible here. We saw in the race last year how quickly things can change. So, yeah, looking forward to the race in general. It's great to start from pole. Very happy with the laps I had in the end in these tricky conditions. Hopefully we can carry that momentum into the race, no matter what the conditions.

Q: Nico, you've been quickest in both sessions yesterday, what sort of conditions would you like for the race itself?

NR: I don't mind. Whatever. Whatever is OK. It can be dry or wet. Maybe in the wet I have a little bit of a better chance against Sebastian but anyway, it will be tough either way. Maybe a mix will be good for a little bit of an opportunity.

Q: And Fernando, what would you like?

FA: Yeah, I think mixed conditions would be the best thing - and that's what it's going to be, probably, with the weather forecast we have and we saw also today how quickly it goes from extreme to nearly dry, so tomorrow will be fun.

Q: (Michael Schmidt - Auto, Motor und Sport) Nico, in comparison to Sebastian you lost four tenths in the last sector which is a pretty straightforward one and Fernando, I think you lost six tenths in the middle sector. You said something before, I couldn't understand it. Can you explain what happened?

NR: I finished my KERS unfortunately, for the last sector. That's just a compromise because of doing two consecutive laps in these wet conditions and so it was to be expected and we chose to do it that way but for sure, that cost some lap time so it was down to that.

FA: I went off in turn four. I braked very late and I missed the corner and then I was on the extra circuit that is painted and obviously very slippery and I arrived braking more or less with zero on the target in the lap time, compared to the lap before and I exited with eight tenths slower so I lost these eight tenths, which obviously aren't enough for pole but maybe it was enough for second place. That's the way it is. The lap was not completely clean today.

Q: (Flavio Vanetti - Corriere della Sera) Fernando, how do you see the fight for second place, is it good news for the team to have the Lotus behind, because they could try to overtake Ferrari?

FA: Yeah, definitely. I think it's going to be tough. Obviously the second place in the Constructors' is getting very difficult and the Mercedes were very strong all weekend so I expect them to be very strong tomorrow as well. But yeah, you are right, we cannot forget Lotus, that they have been scoring a lot of points in the last races and they are also a threat for third in the Constructors' so it's good to have them behind. It's also good to have Felipe performing well today, with both Ferraris in Q3 and hopefully tomorrow both Ferraris can be in good points and I can help, failing anything, to have a very good last race with Ferrari.

Q: (Carlos Miguel - La Gaceta) Fernando, do you think victory is a possibility tomorrow or maybe it's very difficult?

FA: Well, I think it's going to be very difficult. Obviously every Grand Prix you go to, inside, even in a small percentage, you have to think of victory, because we are competitors and we like to win every race we go to. But we also need to be realistic and don't tell our fans, our team, our people that tomorrow we have a high chance to win the race. That is not true, so we will try to do our best, we see whatever the position is at the end, what we have to do is to maximise what is available and for sure, comparing the last five or six events we've been through, there was probably zero chance to win the race. Tomorrow there's maybe a small chance but very small.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – O Estado de Sao Paulo) To all of you: if we have a dry race tomorrow which is possible, what will be the impact of being on the wet conditions all the days and then immediately in the race on dry tyres and dry asphalt?

SV: Well, first of all I think we all have new tyres so that helps but obviously the track is very green because we didn't have dry conditions before, so I think that will make it tricky. And then I think it's important that whoever has the best guess coming here, in terms of set-up, to ensure that your car is fine, not just for one lap in the wet conditions but also that the performance is there in the dry, first of all, and you are able to look after the tyres. It's a long race, seventy laps here. We've seen in the past that it's not that easy to make the tyres last, depending on your strategy so it will be difficult if it's dry but then again, it will be same for everyone.

NR: There are a lot of other things like balance, like your front wing setting, your seventh gear – you might on the limiter for a hundred meters if you get it wrong – your engine temperatures are difficult to predict, so we might have opened too much and tomorrow we realise, oh damn, we're running too cold so we lose performance. There's a lot of things like that.

FA: Nothing more to add, I think.

Q: (Cristobal Rosaleny – Car and Driver) For all of you, how much did you compromise your set-up for maybe a wet race tomorrow?

SV: Well, I think to be honest with you, the typical wet set-up doesn't exist any more, at least for us. In the past, the races that we had, there's not that much difference. For sure we tried to go a little bit in a direction that helps us for wet conditions after the first or second practice yesterday but I wouldn't call it a wet set-up, because usually in the wet you put more wing on, you lift the car, things like this but to be honest, the last couple of years, it has been pretty frozen when you went from dry to wet set-up, or dry to wet conditions.

NR: Same.

FA: Same.

Q: (Rodrigo Franca – VIP Magazine) Sebastian, the Brazilian fans cheered a lot for you in the 2008 race. It was in pretty much the same conditions that we had today and you were at Toro Rosso and if you were ahead of Lewis Hamilton it would help Felipe to be champion, so a lot of people cheered for you in that race. Do you think you have a special relationship with Brazilian fans and also with Interlagos?

SV: Well, I finished in front of Lewis as far as I can remember, so I tried to help the Brazilians but I think it's a special place. I think all of us have had at least one race that was complete chaos in either direction, especially if I look at last year, the final race, fighting with Fernando for the championship. If you look at the highlights it has been an absolutely crazy race. My car was very damaged, I was facing the other way after turn four on the first lap but for some reason it seems to be a circuit – and together with the conditions – where you are able to create something out of nowhere. Equally, you might be on the safe side and something can happen. Surely, I have a special memory when coming here and yeah, you always believe something can happen here because the chance is there, as I described.

F1 Brazil Blog – Saturday report

The final practice session of the Brazilian Grand Prix weekend – and the 2013 season – took place in the wet, with only one timed lap set in the first 35 minutes. At the end of the hour, Mark Webber topped the timesheets for Red Bull.

Thanks to the heavy rain expected later on in Q1, all 22 cars left the pits in the first minutes of the session, with few drivers brave enough to risk a run on mediums. Lewis Hamilton was the first man to cross the line with a 1m25.342s lap that will prove hard to beat in the worsening conditions.

Before five minutes had elapsed, all 22 drivers had times on the board, with Hamilton closely followed by Sebastian Vettel and Nico Rosberg. While teams were pushing their drivers to switch to slicks, the feedback from those out on track was that the rain was still too heavy for the gamble to pay off. By the ten minute mark, even the pit walls were beginning to acknowledge that the rain was increasing, with sector two the worst-affected part of the track.

With five minutes remaining, track action increased as those at risk of dropping out braved the rain for last-ditch attempts at a place in Q2. The greatest improvement came from Heikki Kovalainen, who was quickest in the final sector and jumped up to P5. Out with the four usual suspects were Pastor Maldonado and Esteban Gutierrez.

The rain had reduced to a drizzle in time for Q2, creating the perfect conditions for Red Bull to dominate. Again, all 16 runners had left the pits on inters in the first two minutes, leading to heavy traffic on the short Interlagos circuit. Rosberg set the pace with a 1m26.626s, followed by Hamilton who was four-tenths slower. But Vettel topped the timesheets as expected with his first effort, a 1m26.515s lap. Mistakes from Mark Webber and Nico Hulkenberg saw the pair at the back of the pack after their first runs.

Webber's second effort was good enough to split the Mercedes, but Hamilton responded with a P3-worthy time. Hulkenberg continued to struggle, and was at risk of dropping out alongside the McLaren and Force India pairings, plus Valtteri Bottas.

Despite worsening conditions in the closing minutes, Romain Grosjean blew away the competition with a 1m26.161s lap, a remarkable achievement given that the Frenchman was not fastest in any of the three sectors. As Grosjean dominated, temporary teammate Heikki Kovalainen was knocked into the dropout zone by an improving Hulkenberg.

After the chequered flag fell, Sergio Perez hit the wall in a desperate attempt to make Q3, spinning after running over the slippery painted lines. Nevertheless, the Mexican managed to out-qualify his teammate.

Increasing rain led to the start of Q3 being delayed by ten minutes, before a second ten minute delay was added after the Safety Car had completed exploratory runs of the track. A third ten minute delay was added, and then a fourth. After 45 minutes of delays, Q3 finally got underway.

All ten runners left the pits on full wets, and the rooster tails on display as they skittered their way around the circuit were impressive to see. Webber was the first to cross the line in 1m29.215s, complaining of low grip, while Vettel bettered his teammate's effort with a 1m28.82s lap. Rosberg split the

pair, while Grosjean aborted his first lap, instead choosing to pit for inters while Hamilton popped up in P3.

Grosjean's move triggered a swap to inters from Webber and Vettel, who were followed by the rest of the pack. It turned out to be a ballsy move from Grosjean, who set a new Q3 benchmark of 1m27.773s with enough time remaining for two further attempts. Webber then went marginally faster, followed by Vettel who crossed the line in 1m26.479s.

Timing proved to be everything in the closing two minutes, with the Mercedes pair caught out by new rain at the end of the lap, improving on their first Q3 efforts but still far behind Vettel. Fernando Alonso was a surprise P3, while pole belonged to Vettel.

Provisional grid

1. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1m26.479s
2. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1m27.102s
3. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1m27.539s
4. Mark Webber (Red Bull) 1m27.572s
5. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1m27.677s
6. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1m27.737s
7. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso) 1m28.052s
8. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1m28.081s
9. Felipe Massa (Ferrari) 1m28.109s
10. Nico Hulkenberg (Sauber) 1m29.582s

11. Heikki Kovalainen (Lotus) 1m27.456s
12. Paul di Resta (Force India) 1m27.798s
13. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) 1m27.954s
14. Sergio Perez (McLaren) 1m28.269s
15. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1m28.308s
16. Adrian Sutil (Force India) 1m28.586s

17. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) 1m27.367s
18. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) 1m27.445s
19. Charles Pic (Caterham) 1m27.843s
20. Giedo van der Garde (Caterham) 1m28.320s
21. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) 1m28.366s
22. Max Chilton (Marussia) 1m28.950s

F1 Brazil Blog - Friday press conference

It was the last senior team personnel press conference of the 2013 season, and the questions were suitably weighty.

Present were Cyril Abiteboul (Caterham), John Booth (Marussia), Eric Boullier (Lotus), Ross Brawn (Mercedes), and Stefano Domenicali (Ferrari).

Q: I'll start with you Cyril. One last chance to try to snatch that 10th place in the Constructors' table? From Caterham's perspective, how costly would finishing last in the championship be? Can you afford that to happen?

Cyril ABITEBOUL: As you know, I can't answer that question. I think it will be essentially costly for the morale of the team. Everybody believes that we deserve it. All due respect, I think we both have done a good job, but the figures tend say we deserve it just a little bit more than those guys. So, I mean that will be a race. I think whatever the result we are committed to the sport, so it's not going to make a huge difference. I mean that will give a bit of a headache to my financial director but apart from that it's not going to change our entire strategy to Formula One.

Q: How has the morale been in the team? From what we were hearing yesterday the rain dance was being performed on a regular basis by your drivers.

CA: Yeah, well it has to be performed again on Saturday. It's been a drier season on Sundays. We've had quite a few events with some rain on Friday, sometimes on Saturday as well, and each time we've had rain on Saturday in particular we've been able to do something, in Spa and in Monaco, where we managed to qualify in Q2. So it's a good memory. We like rain, so let's see on Sunday.

Q: We'll come to you in a moment John for your thoughts on this battle, but the big changes, Cyril, coming up next season with the regulations. How beneficial would it be to have a more experience driver at your team, a Heikki Kovalainen for instance?

CA: For instance! First of all I need to make sure that Lotus is not going to keep him. But apart from that, it will be a good thing to have some experience. But everything is changing next year. So, how much experience matters when everything is changing is one question. Having said that what we really want to have, because development, iteration, will be very fast at the start of next year in particular, you need a driver that all engineers, all the team can rely upon. So you want to have proper feedback, accurate feedback to be able to improve the car on an event-to-event basis. So that's what we need. We need a driver who is transparent in the way that he is driving the car and providing feedback to everyone.

Q: John, 10th place in the Constructors' Championship: can you afford to lose that 10th place this weekend?

John BOOTH: I think I pretty much agree with Cyril on his take on it. There may be a small financial consideration. But it's the sporting matter that is more important. We are the smallest team, we operate with the smallest budget, but we are racers and we want to improve. Tenth place would be a massive plus for the guys in the factory.

Q: I'm sure you don't agree with Cyril when he says that Caterham deserve that 10th place more.

JB: It's been a good scrap this year. There has been a large spell in the middle of the year when Caterham looked much stronger than us. We had a

good race last week and we think we're getting on top of our issues. But it's been a long, long season. We took that 10th place in Malaysia. The last update we brought to the car of any significance was Barcelona, so it's been a long old season hanging on to that 10th place and it's been pretty nerve-wracking to be truthful.

Q: With the updates that haven't been coming since Barcelona, where do you see the improvements that have been made at the Marussia team?

JB: We've brought some small improvements and we've worked very hard at optimising what we have. I think we have gone forward but it would have been better to have two or three large upgrades through the season. But we are the smallest team and to build a 2014 car that has to be on the track in Jerez in January was a big feat for us and we've had to concentrate on that very hard.

Q: Thanks very much. Eric, if I can come to you. The fight is on for you for second place between yourself, Ferrari and Mercedes. Off the track, the fight continues to try to attract extra investment to the Lotus team. Can you give us all an update on where you stand with that on this Friday afternoon in Brazil?

Eric BOULLIER: Well, there is still some discussion ongoing, especially now between bankers. The process is not fully completed but I think part of it has been done, which is obviously a good sign for the weekend and we hope that everything is closed by early next week.

Q: When you say backers, you refer to Quantum Motorsports?

EB: Yes, sorry. But about the fight for the championship, I think second place, or even third place we need a little bit of help to get there. But maybe thanks to the funny weather we have we can expect the best of it.

Q: Looking ahead to 2014. With the uncertainty over the extra investment to the team, how has that hindered your chances of attracting the right driver to the team, the driver you see as the man you want to partner Romain Grosjean?

EB: Obviously you need to have the right package to get the right driver. But obviously sometimes the right driver is with the right package. So we will do our best to keep our force all together. That for me is the main point. Make sure the team is sticking all together. Keep, let's say, the best expertise we have onboard and make sure we can deliver the right cars and the right package on track, that's the most important point.

Q: Still confident you will get the man you want in that seat?

EB: I'm still confident I will get one of the guys I want, yes.

Q: Stefano, you bid farewell to Felipe Massa this weekend, eight years that you've worked together with him at Ferrari. How would you sum up Felipe and what have been your highlights of the last eight years with him?

Stefano DOMENICALI: Well, first of all let me say one thing before going to the question, that is to express my solidarity to the Italian population of Sardinia that has been hit very deeply by flooding and the hurricane. Our thoughts are with those families and this population that is suffering a lot in this moment. Going to Felipe, I think Felipe is leaving with an incredible weekend here, today in this city because, you know, we have the tendency to pass through everything without thinking. I think that what Felipe did with Ferrari has an incredible history. We had incredibly moments together. Difficult too, of course – but he is an incredible guy who deserved what he had and even if it seems a little bit too personal, I consider him a world champion 2008 because he deserved that title here in São Paulo. So, I think what I can say is that he has always shown his dedication to the team, to the Ferrari family and we wish to him all the best success for his future because he's young – but for sure he will bring Ferrari in his heart forever.

Q: In terms of that second-placed fight, what would it mean to take that second place in the championship, to make up the 15 points to Mercedes and what would it say about your season if you didn't end up as runners-up?

SD: Well, first of all, we are fighting with a very strong team and we will not cheer like hell if we be second and we will not be depressed if we will not be in second position because of course in sport you try to do the maximum that you can. Unfortunately this year it was not possible to fight for first position as we were last year. This year, we have the duty to try to do the maximum, knowing that it is not easy. But in this condition everything is possible. So nothing will change in our approach and we will stay focussed up until the end. And of course, we will try to do that up to last lap – but it will unfortunately change so much the consideration on a very difficult season that has been the case for us this year.

Q: Finally Ross, it's not often in your career that you'd celebrate second place in the Constructors' Championship but I'd suggest if you finish runners-up there would be a wry smile on your face. Are you happy with what you've achieved at Mercedes?

Ross BRAWN: I think happy with the progress. Obviously I hope this is not the end. I hope there's more progress in the next few years because certainly our ambition is to win the championship, win the Drivers' and Constructors', so second place would be a boost for everyone in the team, particularly as we came from fifth last year and I think the improvement in the performance of the car has been quite significant this year. We've scored over 300 points so far this season; we scored 140-something last year, so it's a substantial improvement over where we were and I think everyone can be pleased – or reasonably pleased – with that. Of course it's not where we ultimately want to be, so we need to have a measured response if we're able to finish second.

Q: You've assembled quite a team at Mercedes, on and off the track. With consistency over the winter, is it possible to challenge for the championship and be on a par with Red Bull?

RB: We believe so. They're very, very strong competitors. They don't forget. You can't forget the things you know. They were very impressive in the second half of this year. The progress they've made in the second half of this season has been very impressive but it is shaken up a bit next year and I think the fact we made a commitment almost two years ago now to start the 2014 programme... we are a team similar to Ferrari where we do an engine and a chassis and I think that's a significant benefit for next season. The engine has been very much designed alongside the chassis to get the best integrated package. I think the engine is going to be one of the differentiators next year. I don't think it's going to be the only one but I think it's much more significant than the engines have been the last few years. So, there is scope to be mildly optimistic that we can have a run next year.

Q: Finally, with regard to 2014 and specifically the tyres, you didn't really get a chance to try out the prototype tyres today because of the rain. With Pirelli requesting a December tyre test with at least one of the teams, is that feasible for a team like Mercedes or for any team on the grid? And is it vital, before the first proper pre-season test?

RB: I think whatever flows now has to be fair for all the teams. I think we're in a very delicate position. I think we all want to help Pirelli provide the best tyre they can next year but it would be unfortunate if one team had the benefit of running a tyre to the exclusion of all the other teams. Today would have been the ideal situation for everyone to get a first look at the 2014 tyre, take the data away, and that would have been reasonably fair. I think if we end up with only one team running the 2014 tyres before next year, with no provision today or no ability today to run the tyre, that could

end up a pretty unfair situation, that someone's going to have an insight into what the tyre does and how it works. So, I think we have to look at that very carefully, how we can do something that is fair and proper for all the teams.

Q: (Luigi Perna – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Stefano, regarding exactly the last question, tyres, Pirelli is claiming more tests before the start of the season. This year tyres had an effect on the game and you were affected by that. Are you worried that kind of situation can be reproduced in the future?

SD: Well, for sure the tyre situation has had an effect on this championship because with the change of specification, for sure something that never happened came in place this year. I think that we always give our will to help Pirelli in order to find the best solutions, in order to find very competitive tyres that can be used in all the conditions, where the drivers can push and show their driving skills, so on our side we have given our will to help them in all the conditions that they can. I agree with what Ross said about being able to be balanced and having the equality within the teams but it will reach a point where for sure if there's no kind of test, the negative hit of not having a test will be really important, so I think that in the next days we need to decide what to do for the future in this very hot topic.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Eric, Kimi was third in the Drivers' championship and this year he's not in the top three; how would you rate his season: was it worse or better?

EB: Well, sportingly I think it has been better obviously. Last year he was just re-joining the F1 field so maybe he needed a little bit of fine tuning at the beginning of the season, even if he was scoring good points. I think this year he started with a win, so obviously he had a much better start and I think overall it was better.

Q: (Tariq Panja – Bloomberg News) I'm not really a Formula One reporter but I'm a sports reporter based in Brazil. This country will have two of the major sporting events, the World Cup coming next year and the summer Olympics in 2016. Ross and Stefano, you've been coming here for many years, what do you think of Brazil's preparedness for these mega events? Has it been improving over time as you've been coming to this track, for instance?

RB: I think there's a number of things we enjoy about Brazil. There's always a great passion here for sport. The crowd is always incredibly enthusiastic and that feeds through to the teams. We enjoy racing here. It's fair to say that these are not the best facilities we enjoy during the season but I think the enthusiasm and passion for the sport compensates for that and we do enjoy coming here. We don't have any problems in terms of organisation and preparation here, everything turns up, all goes through customs OK, we don't have any dramas that are unusual, so we have a good race here and we don't have any unique problems.

SD: I couldn't agree more with what Ross has said. On our situation, it's really great, we enjoy being here and I can understand the situation of the Olympics and World Cup is different because you may have people coming from abroad, you have different locations, different logistical problems but on that, honestly, I'm not in a position to comment because I don't really know the situation. What I can say is that what we are experiencing is a unique atmosphere, when the passion is one of the key factors and I'm sure that will also happen in the events that will come in the future here in Brazil.

Q: (Ian Parkes – Press Association) Question to John and Cyril: speaking to Christian Horner yesterday, he remarked that even for a team of their resource and their standing given they're four times World Champions, that trying to find the additional cost for next year, which he estimated to be around £20m was proving incredibly difficult. He did also note that if it's difficult for them, it must be exceptionally hard for you guys. So can you give us an idea as to the troubles you've been going through, trying to find those kind of resources for next year?

JB: I'd love to be struggling as much as Christian is struggling at the moment, that's for sure. We have known about the cost of the powertrain for many months now, so it shouldn't come as a surprise for anybody and everybody I assume has planned accordingly. As far as we're concerned, we knew about the cost and we think we have a manageable business for next year and going forward.

CA: Not much to add; obviously it's something we anticipated and that has even affected our strategy of spend for this year because we knew that there would be so much to invest both from a factory perspective in terms of engine costs, contractual costs but also in terms of car build, so that we have a cash flow that is structured in order to absorb all of that. We are going through that now. But there is a reason why, to do a degree, we have started development quite early; it was precisely to absorb those costs.

Q: So basically cut down this year and leave yourselves room for next year?

CA & JB: Yup.

RB: I think it is challenging next year, but we all have to remember that if we cut the budgets in half we would still go racing. It's the standards of which we want to go racing that causes the pressure on the budget. It's not that there's insufficient money, it's the fact that we all want to compete at the highest possible standard, and that means that we push the budgets as hard as we can. If everybody's budget tomorrow was reduced by 50 percent, it wouldn't make any difference.

Q: Can you see that ever happening?

RB: No. But that's a fact. It wasn't so many years ago that we were able to come to every race at every track with reliable cars for half of what we are spending now. That's the nature of Formula One.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – RacingLines) Gentlemen, customer cars have been a contentious issue recently. Given what you're just discussing about budgets and costs and whatever, there are constant rumours about teams going out of business or possibly going out of business. I believe that Formula One is possibly looking at three car teams, eight three car teams for a 24 car grid as opposed to five As and five Bs. How do you people feel about that, because it will affect you all differently?

EB: Well, obviously nobody has a crystal ball. I think everybody agrees that for the future, as ratio costs for the new costs or inverse revenue costs has to change, and it's true that customer cars was brought in to the discussion. I personally don't think it's the right path to go, it's against the DNA of F1 I think and it may create some other issues which to find the funds to run customer cars, to run modern or current cars, I think if F1 needs to go one path, it is to guarantee a number of cars on the grid and obviously a number of teams running three cars would be, for me, a better solution.

JB: I think I'm correct in saying that under current regulations if the numbers of cars on the grid falls below a certain number then certain teams are required to run three cars but as far as I know there's been no discussion about three car teams in the near future. Certainly I've not been part of the discussions and I assume it would need a big change in regulations to achieve that.

Q: Is that something you would welcome, though, or not?

JB: We're finding two cars tough enough without running three.

CA: Well, personally, I'm just like Eric and most of the teams, I believe. I'm not in favour of customer cars. Having said that, I think the situation we have is not necessarily sustainable. Clearly an analysis must be made regarding what to do and make sure that we anticipate that correctly and there is also a gliding path to whatever solution is retained, whether it's a budget cap, RRA. I take the point, of course. If we're all at fifty or one hundred million budget, the show will be no different at all so I think that we need to be sensible about that, make sure that we are doing the right thing. If a third car is one thing to do, why not, but in your example there were only eight teams so I would like to hope that we are not one of the three teams that will be out of the game.

Q: And this will be the problem, Ross, if you have eight teams of three cars, then three teams would have to make way.

RB: Well, I don't think it would be that way round. I think it would be if we had some teams drop out and the number of entrants, the number of cars entered dropped below a certain level, then we do have to support extra entries. We're not a supporter of customer cars, we think the identity of the teams is important, the fact that the teams design and build their own cars is important but however if Formula One faced a situation where we didn't have sufficient cars on the grid, then of course a three car team is a possibility, but only in those circumstances.

SD: I agree. First of all we need to see what we want for the future of Formula One. We are in a situation where for sure we are different in philosophies with the teams that are in the championship, there are different situations, so I think that solution, that situation can be driven really if some teams will not be there in the future. Because also now, when we discuss about cost-cutting measures, of course the goals that we have in mind are different and maybe with the goals that we have in mind, we don't expect... we don't even reach the half of what the expenditure of a small team, so we really need to understand what is the future of Formula One, what are the objectives that can be discussed in a common way because otherwise you can cherry-pick different measures but you will not really have a clear focus on what should be the focus of Formula One and this is really a point of discussion that we have on the table since many many years. I'm sure that very soon this will be the most important topic of discussion.

Q: (Kate Walker - GP Week) Eric, my question regards your potential investor, Mansoor Ijaz. A cursory Google-search of his background shows a few problematic business dealings including the use of value-less companies as collateral for loans. I was wondering what proof you've been given of the existence of his money and whether or not any due diligence had been done.

EB: Fortunately we don't have to base our judgement only on Google, with all respect to Google for what they are doing. To answer the question, yes, we have very serious proof of funds and good compliance of what is Quantum Motorsport.

Q: (Ian Parkes - Press Association) Ross, given what you said, the fact that you could race on half the money and the show wouldn't change, if the FIA were ever to potentially look down the route of a budget cap again, is it something that potentially could be considered somewhere down the line, or has the RRA proven that it's something that could never ever work, given certain other teams' objections to the way teams work?

RB: Well, I think the conclusions for me for the RRA is that there was a structure of a system that could work but quite clearly wasn't a system that could work with self-regulation from the teams themselves. It was a system that had to be policed, we believe by the FIA but it seemed that we couldn't get enough agreement within the teams that that should happen, so it failed on that basis. I don't think it failed because it wouldn't work, in my view it failed because we couldn't engage the governing body in policing the system. I think whatever system we have is going to affect the competitiveness of teams and therefore it has to be controlled by the sporting body. It can't be controlled by the teams themselves and I think any attempt to have self-regulation of something so important as budget and resource is futile, because of the nature of the teams. We're very competitive and will always be looking to push the boundaries. If you look at the technical regulations, we push the boundaries all the time, quite rightly, and then we have a governing body that taps us back into place, and also a governing body that we can get a reference from. If we have a query, we can go to them, we can ask them, we can argue and we can get an opinion on whether something is legal or not. Unless you have that process with the financial control, it can never succeed because one team's interpretation of a regulation will be different to another team's interpretation of a regulation so you have to have this process going on where you introduce a constraint, a control and then a mechanism to police it and a mechanism to answer queries and regulate queries and questions on the regulations to refine the regulations because no set of regulations will be a hundred percent perfect from day one, they need refining. We draw the analogy with the technical regulations: it works pretty well, we occasionally have a big blow up about something but most of the time it's good and if we had the same with the financial regulations, I think that would be the only way forward, because I can't see any other way. Attempts to change the technical regulations to reduce the costs have historically failed. They can push it back a bit for a while and then the teams find something else to spend the money on so the budgets never really change.

Q: (Kate Walker - GP Week) I wanted to refer back to Dieter's earlier question about the potential of three car teams, because it seemed to me that the three of you in the back row were aware of the concept whereas it was new to the two of you in the front row, I believe, I got from John's answer. Could you please tell me, John and Cyril, what level of communication you've had from the teams in the strategy commission and how much you are aware of the formal and informal discussions they've been having?

CA: I think we have had the same minutes as they have had.

Q: So you have received the information?

CA: We have received as much information as they have received after the meeting.

Q: Same for you, John?

JB: Yup.

Q: So no complaints about that, then?

JB: No, that's not wholly true. I think Cyril's statement is absolutely correct but to say that there is no complaints wouldn't be accurate.

CA: To be a bit more... to develop that just a bit, we have an FI commission actually in a few days and we are also circulated the agenda of the next FI strategy meeting so I wouldn't be concerned too much about that because ultimately we have a seat, we have a voice. Obviously we are outnumbered, we are one or two, just a couple but still, Formula One knows very well that it cannot really live without everyone, so maybe the process is a bit less inclusive than it's been in the past. There is also a meeting of the FI strategy group so for me it's more the goodwill and the agenda in general of the FI strategy group rather than who is sitting in it that will make a difference.

Q: (Pablo Juanarena - Marca) It's a question for Stefano but could be for Ross or Eric: today, Red Bull has used the 2014 tyres, one lap for Sebastian. It seems that they are always a step ahead. Do you think it's that way?

SD: What I can say is that they are in a situation that if they had crashed today nothing would have changed for them, so I think that they took... not a risk because that's maybe not the right word but they want to take some measurement in that condition. If they were happy to do it in that way I

don't think it's a matter of being a step ahead. It's a matter of decision or a possibility considering the conditions that they have... they are in this specific weekend.

Q: Was there a possibility that you would run a car on the slick tyres, even just for one lap this morning?

SD: No.

RB: We always work on the principle that bad information is worse than no information. With all due respect, Red Bull may well have found something out that we don't anticipate but we couldn't understand what you could learn in those conditions, even though it looked like they were trying to take profiles of the tyres and so on, it was difficult to see how it could be useful and certainly our conclusion was there was no use for us with what we wanted to do to run the tyre this morning.

Q: (Dieter Rencken - RacingLines) The two things one can never have enough of: power and sponsors yet if I have a look at your shirts, if I'd gone back a year, your shirts would look identical with the exception of one or two stickers or logos on your shirts. Formula One hasn't really attracted any major sponsors for the last three or four years. Is there a fundamental problem in Formula One, because other sports are certainly attracting them?

EB: We have attracted some blue chip brands, Microsoft and Burn, which is the Coca Cola group. But it's true that the biggest deals have been done with FOM recently which is quite an achievement. I think the question is that everybody knows the world economic situation is not as brilliant as ten years ago so I don't there is some big comparison or let's say some conclusion to be drawn today.

SD: From our side, I have to say that we have attracted a new sponsor, a big one like UPS for example this year. We have basically renewed with all our major sponsors, major partners so we have quite a solid base of partners that are really investing with us and of course they are with us because there is a win-win situation. So far, I would say that I don't see that directly because maybe Ferrari has different options to exploit with the partners for sure but I think that in general, in a situation where there is this economic crisis it is important not to devalue too much the sale of what you have, if you can, of course. Otherwise then when the economy will start again, it will be more difficult to keep the level of investment that is valid for the Formula One World Championship.

JB: I think there's been a trend in motor sport in general, particularly Formula One over the years that it's two or three years behind the world economy and the initial crash of the economy didn't seem to affect Formula One whereas three years later it is starting to bite. As the economy recovers, I'm sure we will be two or three years behind, picking up again. And maybe we should ask ourselves if we're offering the right exciting package to the viewers as well.

CA: On our side, we are quite lucky to have some nice brands associated to us because I think in general the Caterham project is something that is quite exciting and attractive for sponsors and investors, but I think now we have a duty to deliver because they have not let us down, we should not let them down so performance is what can buy interest in that sport so that's what we need to focus on. More generally on Formula One, I believe that it also goes back to the question of performance. We need to make sure that the grid in general is in the right window and that also the TV coverage which obviously focuses on people that perform, is distributed in not a fair manner because there must be a winner, there must be a loser and we are losers right now but we must make sure that we are part of the show and we've been missing to be part of the show because of the facts, so it's one thing to be getting back to the economic model and the regulation structured, we need to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to be in the show.

RB: Well, we've been quite fortunate; perhaps our people have worked very well and the number of our partners have improved or we have improved our deals with them. Blackberry was new for us, we know Blackberry faces some challenges at the moment, but that's a major sponsor that came to the team this year. But no, we've seen some reasonable upsides with most of our partners but it is very tough and as John said, there is a lag in the system that is impacting motor sport and Formula One, but hopefully with the improved economic environment that some countries are experiencing we can pick it up and get it going again.

F1 Brazil Blog - Friday report

The Brazilian Grand Prix weekend got off to a rain-soaked start on Friday, with heavy rain making the timesheets a matter of timing over pure pace.

The wet Friday morning was a curse for Pirelli, who had hoped to use the session to acquire data on some of their 2014 compounds. But Sebastian Vettel was the only driver to leave the pits on next year's slicks, and the Red Bull driver boxed for inters after a solitary – and slippery – lap.

For the bulk of the wet morning session, inters were the preferred compound, while heavier rain in the afternoon saw a number of runners out on full wets. It was only in the brief interludes between showers in FP1 that the teams were able to acquire much relevant data on the 2014 components already being track tested.

The undoubted star of the show in FP1 was Daniil Kvyat, who will be partnering Jean-Eric Vergne at Toro Rosso next season. The young Russian excelled in difficult conditions, finishing the session eighth on the timesheets and half a second faster than the more experienced Vergne.

At the end of the ninety minutes, Nico Rosberg topped the times for Mercedes, followed by teammate Lewis Hamilton. The times were unremarkable, as was the session itself, punctuated by the spins and loss of grip that are only to be expected during a wet session.

If anything, FP2 was wetter still, forcing drivers onto a combination of wets and inters that lasted for the full ninety minutes, with no slick running in evidence. Times were around three seconds slower than those set in the morning.

Several drivers spent the bulk of the afternoon in their garages, with Vettel one of those electing to wait until the last ten minutes before setting a timed lap. Very little happened on track until that final ten minutes, at which point the marginally improved conditions prompted a flurry of pre-flag runs spearheaded by Vettel.

Rosberg remained on top of the timesheets after a last-ditch effort in the dying moments, but the times set on Friday afternoon speak for themselves – it was a session spent gingerly feeling one's way around the circuit, and the teams' plans for fast-paced runs and aerodynamic evaluation of 2014 components came to naught.

FP1 times (unofficial)

1. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1m24.781s [14 laps]
2. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1m25.230s [13 laps]
3. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1m25.387s [17 laps]
4. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1m25.391s [25 laps]
5. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1m25.593s [13 laps]
6. Mark Webber (Red Bull) 1m25.797s [17 laps]
7. Sergio Perez (McLaren) 1m25.946s [15 laps]
8. Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso) 1m26.064s [17 laps]
9. Heikki Kovalainen (Lotus) 1m26.133s [31 laps]
10. Nico Hulkenberg (Sauber) 1m26.232s [17 laps]
11. Felipe Massa (Ferrari) 1m26.248s [15 laps]
12. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) 1m26.326s [28 laps]
13. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1m26.570s [28 laps]
14. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1m26.593s [22 laps]
15. Adrian Sutil (Force India) 1m27.115s [25 laps]
16. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) 1m27.269s [23 laps]
17. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) 1m27.358s [23 laps]
18. James Calado (Force India) 1m27.436s [9 laps]
19. Giedo van der Garde (Caterham) 1m28.107s [18 laps]
20. Charles Pic (Caterham) 1m28.199s [17 laps]
21. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) 1m30.004s [24 laps]
22. Rodolfo Gonzalez (Marussia) 1m32.646s [19 laps]

FP2 times (unofficial)

1. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1m27.306s [12 laps]
2. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1m27.531s [10 laps]
3. Mark Webber (Red Bull) 1m27.592s [18 laps]
4. Heikki Kovalainen (Lotus) 1m28.129s [13 laps]
5. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1m28.147s [9 laps]
6. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1m28.405s [11 laps]
7. Felipe Massa (Ferrari) 1m28.540s [9 laps]
8. Nico Hulkenberg (Sauber) 1m28.560s [20 laps]
9. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso) 1m28.739s [20 laps]
10. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1m28.891s [12 laps]
11. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1m28.928s [10 laps]
12. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) 1m29.049s [17 laps]
13. Paul di Resta (Force India) 1m29.174s [11 laps]
14. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) 1m29.717s [13 laps]
15. Adrian Sutil (Force India) 1m29.783s [7 laps]
16. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) 1m30.425s [15 laps]
17. Sergio Perez (McLaren) 1m30.748s [8 laps]
18. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) 1m31.061s [18 laps]
19. Giedo van der Garde (Caterham) 1m31.118s [16 laps]
20. Charles Pic (Caterham) 1m31.165s [15 laps]
21. Max Chilton (Marussia) 1m31.211s [19 laps]
22. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1m31.770s [6 laps]

F1 Brazil Blog - Thursday press conference

For the last time this season, six drivers were called to face the media at the FIA Thursday drivers' press conference. For at least one of the attendees, it was the last Thursday F1 press conference of his career.

Present were Max Chilton (Marussia), Felipe Massa (Ferrari), Charles Pic (Caterham), Giedo van der Garde (Caterham), Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso), and Mark Webber (Red Bull).

Q: I'll start with you Mark: 215th and final grand prix start this weekend. I know you've had time to come to terms with your retirement from Formula One but when you climb into that Red Bull for one last time, it's going to be emotional isn't it?

Mark WEBBER: I think on Sunday it will be a little bit different but it still feels like a normal race at the moment, so looking forward to Sunday in many ways, in terms of obviously pushing for a good result, but also I'm ready to stop and looking forward to the extended winter that I'll have and the new challenges around the corner. Getting out of the car Sunday there will be a few things that will be for the last obviously in terms of Formula One, but I'm pretty relaxed at the moment and looking forward to the race.

What do you think you might miss most of all?

MW: There are certain situations in Formula One that are super rewarding. Obviously driving the car on the limit at certain venues is still very satisfying, no question about it. You've got Suzuka, Spa, Monte Carlo, come qualifying day and even racing, at certain circuits it's very challenging and rewarding. So I'll miss some of that. But I'm on a little bit of a slippery slope now, in terms of... you've got to be careful not to test it too much in terms of performance and what you used to be able to do. I still think I'm driving well but I don't want to be around not driving well. So it's inevitable that

you're going to miss certain parts, for sure the adrenaline and working with people like Adrian Newey. Stuff like that you don't get to do that often obviously. That'll be something I'll miss a bit. But there comes a time when you've got to let go and I'll still have good adrenaline next year obviously with Porsche and that'll be a good balance.

So many highs and lows from your association with Formula One. Which period have you enjoyed driving the least and which period have you enjoyed driving the most.

MW: I think the hardest and most difficult cars to driver were in the mid-2000s, when we had all the refueling and the tyre war. Those cars were tricky and you had to push every time you went out. There was no such thing as pacing at any point really, in qualifying, practice or Sunday afternoon. So it really was a tight envelope for a grand prix driver in those eras to operate but that's what we trained [for] and we aspire to do. They were good times. Obviously a lot of power too, the V10s had plenty of horsepower. So the lap times floating around then were pretty impressive, and in the early 2000s as well to a degree. We've had a lot of changes in the last three or four years. The racing has gone through some boring phases, so we've introduced some DRS, things like that, things that have been of benefit to the sport. It's taken a little bit of the tradition out of it I suppose, some of the passing moves and things like that, which probably which are not as difficult to achieve as in years gone by. They are achievable now. That's a little bit fabricated but good for the neutral at home. Tyres - we've had some challenging times on those as drivers, and as teams, trying to understand particularly the new brand of heavily modified pace during races is probably not as rewarding as it was. But you can't always have it. I've driven in so many different regulations... one championship but with so many different scenarios but generally you just have to enjoy it, it's your job.

Q: I'm sure you'll be greatly missed by everyone here in the paddock. Good luck for the future. For you, Felipe, it's the end of an era too. Your association with Ferrari, which begun in 2006, comes to an end and what a place for it to come to an end - your home race, at Interlagos.

Felipe MASSA: Yeah, definitely. It's a fantastic place to race and to finish an incredible time with Ferrari. It's a very long time. It's our eighth championship but I've been inside Ferrari even before Formula One, so it's a long time and I need to say thank you to all of them - everyone who worked together in Ferrari. Stefano as well. You know that he is a big friend and he did a lot for me as well, Domenicali. Everybody, everybody I worked with together. I hope we can enjoy the last race here in Ferrari and having a lot of fun and having a good result as well to have even more emotion at the end.

Q: Do you pinch yourself when you think back that you spent eight years with Ferrari, the team that every boy racer dreams of racing for?

FM: Yeah, I mean I think Ferrari is a dream for all the drivers. I remember, one of the first go-karts I had was red. My first overall was red, so I was always supporting Ferrari as a kid. So racing eight years for Ferrari is definitely a dream come true. So, getting old as well! But also it's another re-start for my career. I'm really happy and looking forward to my future in Williams, a different team. So really, a lot to do still in Formula One.

Q: How important for your morale was it that Williams had the faith in you to extend your Formula One career, to take you on and try and restart a period of success that they'll be hoping for from next season? And also, how important is it for the sport that a Brazilian driver still stays in Formula One.

FM: First of all, I really believe I can do a lot with Williams. Everything is changing, brand new rules for the championship so I think it's also a good time that we start something new, different. You never know, you're doing a good job in a team that has also all the infrastructure to do - like Williams has - everything inside the company to do a good car. So everything is possible. They believe in me so I'm really happy and motivated to drive for them, to work and to do everything I can to help the team to be competitive again, which I'm sure everything is possible.

Q: And how important for a Brazilian to stay in Formula One?

FM: It's very important. We know how important is Brazil in Formula One: the history for so many drivers, so many championships, so many victories. For Brazil, Formula One is very important. We have motor racing in the blood. So, it's very, very important to keep Brazilian drivers in Formula One, and also, we're not having a great time in Brazil for the small categories, so I think it's important to give a push and help for our future - because for the moment it doesn't look very nice. I'm trying to help and give some good ideas for the Federation to help and pushing for our future.

Q: Jean-Eric, your second full season in Formula One. How difficult has this year been for you? Off the track when Mark announced he was retiring there was the hope of a Red Bull seat, tantalisingly close but it never ultimately came your way.

Jean-Eric VERGNE: It was a difficult season. I have to say that I've been quite unlucky in many races, not finishing when I should have been in the points. We had a really good car to start off the season with but then I guess with the introduction of the new tyres, everything went a little bit more difficult for us and, yeah, we were out of the points for a long time. It has been really tough. Obviously there was the Red Bull seat opportunity. They went for Daniel. It was, of course, a big disappointment for me as a racing driver. You want to win races, be one day a world champion and obviously it's the team to be in to do this, to succeed. But, you know, I try to look at the positive. I guess if Red Bull choose Daniel that means there are things I haven't done good. I have to look at myself in the mirror, try to understand the reasons and try to get better. The challenge with Toro Rosso next year will be massive. I'm really happy to stay in that team and everything is possible. Even staying in this team, it's not a back-up plan or whatever. I really believe in this team and I want to grow as a racing driver with this team that is growing a lot too.

Q: When you miss out on a big seat is it difficult to keep your head high, is it difficult to keep your morale and your focus.

JEV: For a few races it has been difficult because I think I was doing really good races and I was on a good run from Monaco, Canada and Silverstone was going to be really good as well but obviously I had the big tyre explosion and then there was the call of Red Bull to put Daniel in the Red Bull for the young driver test and straight away I understood that this seat was not going to be for me even though I tried to do my best. And then there were a couple of really difficult races in terms of pace, everything, so it was quite difficult to manage it, I guess.

Q: Giedo and Max. Question for you both. We know where Mark's going to be next year, we know where Felipe and Jean-Eric are going to be - but you two, we're not sure at the moment. Max first, what can you tell us about the future?

Max CHILTON: I'm not going to speculate any more than people already have. We've had some good discussions over the last couple of weeks and I'm happy with those conversations, they've gone quite well so I'm just looking forward to hopefully being back next year and having a bit of a better chance.

Q: No doubt in your mind that ideally you would like to stay with Marussia.

MC: Yeah. Marussia have been great to me. They gave me the chance to get into Formula One and it's not easy for us where we are but this year I think

we've done a pretty stunning job with what we've got. It's not over yet – we learnt that last year here with five laps to go – so we're kind of... we're fingers-crossed hoping that it can finish well but the car's looking strong for next year. When big rule changes tend to come into Formula One it gives the smaller teams a bit of a chance. So looking forward to Australia hopefully next year.

Q: Giedo, what does the future hold for you?

Giedo VAN DER GARDE: Well, I can tell you nothing yet. The management is very busy at the moment. Hopefully they can do a good job. I think I've proven myself during the last part of the season and I think I've been doing a very good job so hopefully I will be there next year.

Q: Is it easier to have those negotiations after a season of Formula One do you think – or is it easier to make more of an impression with your results from the junior categories, trying to get in for the first time?

VDG: I think after a season it's better to negotiate – because then you've shown already what you can do. I think we've shown already this year what I did. Let's see.

Q: So, tell us about the battle this weekend. 13th place will be good enough to Caterham in the Constructors' Championship if there's no Marussia car ahead of them. At the moment Marussia have that tenth place and with it the financial benefits of tenth. How are both camps feeling? Let's start with Max first. It's a massive weekend for both teams.

MC: Yeah, for sure. We know how important this weekend is, coming into it. The worst thing is to start panicking because you start not concentrating on the right things. The best thing to do is treat it like a normal race weekend and try to get the most out of the car. If we can do that, and we can race well, then there's nothing that we can be sad about because we gave it the best shot we can. We've done that every race this year and it's worked. But with the weather in Brazil it's never over until that chequered flag.

Q: Does that mean then, Giedo, that Caterham are praying for rain?

VDG: Absolutely! Because by pure speed it's going to be tough in dry conditions and we need some luck. We need some other cars maybe to have a collision or maybe to have a mechanical failure – but rain will help a lot. And our car seems to work quite well in the rain. And also our car is quite competitive here also in the dry. We have to give it a big push, the last chance, and hopefully we can do the same as last year.

Q: (Flavio Vanetti – Corriere della Sera) Felipe, which was your happiest moment at Ferrari and which was the toughest one? Can we say the toughest one was after losing the championship here, or the period after the accident in Budapest?

FM: I would say the happiest moment was, I think, the first time I won in Brazil, 2006, with the green and yellow overalls. I think that was definitely the best moment for me. You know how important it is for a Brazilian to win at home. If you remember well, Senna was more happy to win in Brazil than to win a championship so you can see how important it is for a Brazilian to win here. It was a very special moment, not just that time but even 2008 was a special moment. I won the race here, it was Sao Paulo, quickest lap. It was other championships, not here in Brazil, you know, before. I think the toughest moment was... definitely the accident was not a great moment and maybe the race in Hockenheim, 2010.

Q: (Marc Surer – Sky Germany) Mark, you must be very pleased next year that there are no standing starts any more for you. I hardly remember a perfect start from you. Can you explain us what is so difficult about starting a modern Formula One car?

MW: Austin was very good. Austin was a great start. Austin was a good start.

Q: Sadly the Frenchman behind you got a better start.

MW: That's right. I think that my reaction... first of all, we are not completely in a position like Ferrari with their clutches. We know they have a very very good start system so they're stronger than us on the initial...

FM: If you want we can change the downforce...

MW: So yeah, our initial starts, the initial part has not always been consistent and then I think my reaction to this inconsistency is not as good as it could be. So when you go for the second lever, when you go for the KERS, when you go for the slip control, especially on the Pirellis... with the Bridgestones, you could slip the tyre a little bit more and you get no penalty. With the Pirellis, you slip the tyre a little bit and you lose time so I think that... We've never seen Sebastian go through the row in front either. We're either holding position or losing and Seb has got the starts just OK because I think he can manage some of the problems but for me, it has not, particularly in the last few years. The Bridgestone years we were fine, 2010 was actually pretty good but in the last few years it has not been our strength and it has not been a strength of mine. But I enjoy the starts. I'm relaxed on the grid, I could sing a song to the guys, it's not something which... when the lights are on, it's a great part of the Grand Prix but of course, it's a part of the weekend that, if you look at Austin, it's a big part of the weekend that needs to... Maybe I should have done 'bike racing because in 'bike racing you can overtake but in Formula One now, it's less easy to recover because in traffic with the tyres, blah blah blah it's a big part.

Q: Before we continue with our questions from our journalists here, I'm pleased to report that Charles Pic has managed to join us this morning. Thanks for coming along. We asked Max and we asked Giedo about their futures in Formula One: it would be wrong not to ask you about next season and how negotiations are going?

Charles PIC: Yeah, sorry, first, for the delay. I was doing the trackwalk because we had a mistake with the scheduled programme. For next year, I think the logical thing for me would be to stay at Caterham but it's not sure. I think there are still many seats available for next year so nothing is sure for the moment so we will see.

Q: How difficult is it for a driver and a driver as young as yourself to be thinking, 'do you know what, if it doesn't go right with the negotiations, that might be my time in Formula One and it might have come and gone so, so quickly?'

CP: Yeah but you say that every year, no? So, at the end, I don't think it's changing a lot. We try to be focused on the races we are on, so it's Brazil this weekend and give our best this weekend, try to get good results for the team and then we will see what happens for next year.

Q: Thirteenth or better on the track might help those negotiations along for this weekend and helping Caterham maybe to tenth in the Constructors' championship. Giedo was saying that the team is praying for rain. Do you believe that the shock result is possible, even without the rain?

CP: I don't know if it will help the negotiations but for sure it would help the team and it's the target so we will go for it and see.

Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action and National Speedsport News) Mark, would you like to send a message to Australia and a thank-you to the legions of Australian fans that have supported you ever since that first race with Minardi?

MW: Yeah, well obviously Formula One down there is not the easiest sport to follow, or wasn't particularly when I was growing up. It's always on in

the middle of the night, there was no internet, blah blah blah. These days it's a little bit more easy to follow. Obviously we've been very very lucky to have an Australian Grand Prix since '85 in Adelaide and then at Melbourne, so that's a real tonic for our country to follow the best single-seater category in the world - obviously the pinnacle is Formula One so they are always happy to have the best drivers and the best teams in the world to come down there to compete in Australia and that's evident with one of the best organised events of the year. So, when they have an Australian racing, that's a super bonus and when they have an Australian challenging for good results, for them it's been a good period in the last few years so it's been phenomenal the amount of support that I've had from there, not always easy for them to understand the sport at times but they do what they can and they are very passionate behind their sporting people. I believe that I've competed in a way which they would be proud of and I just want to thank them, obviously, for all their amazing messages that I've had over the last few weeks and specially this week, it's been incredible. I look forward to spending a little bit more time down in Oz in the future, I haven't seen a huge amount of my country since I left there as a young lad so I'm looking forward to spending a bit more time down there, have a look around and I always represented and was proud to race for Australia throughout my career, so the Australian national anthem and the flag for me was very important because I always knew it was not often... there's only been three race winners so it's not exactly easy for us to compete at this level and get over to Europe. It's very special to race for Australia.

Q: (Patricia Sanchez - Motorpasion F1) Mark, already we ask you what are going to miss now you're leaving, is there something you're happy to leave behind, maybe us journalists?

MW: Well, I wouldn't be leaving if there wasn't things that I'm not happy to leave behind. Obviously if there's more positives than negatives then obviously I would stay, so there's more negatives than positives so for me, it's something that I want a fresh change, a new chapter in my life. Basically I'm ready for that, personally and professionally. Obviously the journos have to do their job, obviously I have a good relationship with quite a few of them, also the photographers for me have been very good for me over the years. Some of the snappers in the room here have been with me for my first test, for example in Estoril in 2001. You strike up good friendships with a lot of people, not just the drivers but other people. Obviously there's some shit magazines that have to do shit journalism and that's normal but in the end, you've got to deal with those as well but in general it's a good professional tennis match and that's how we always like to play it. The journos, I don't feel negative about the journos at all, they're doing their job but sometimes they test you of course.

Q: (Luigi Perna - La Gazzetta dello Sport) Felipe, considering all, do you think that Ferrari will miss you in future?

FM: I hope so. For sure, it's not part of my thinking. I've tried to do the best in my career so I really hope Ferrari can have a good future as well, so I have nothing really to complain about, to say. We have had a very good time together and I hope I can have a fantastic future in a different team and I hope it's the same for Ferrari. I have had zero frustration in my life and I think that's the way it is.

Q: (Ben Edwards - BBC Sport) Max, your thoughts going into this race, a chance of finishing every single Grand Prix of your rookie season, is that something you're already thinking about?

MC: Yeah, for sure it's something I'm proud of, a good achievement so far to finish 18 races. I think it's broken Tiago's (Monteiro) record already of 16 but I'm trying not to look into... I'm a little bit superstitious. If you start looking around I feel that I will tempt fate. It's something I would quite like to keep up. Obviously if I'm put in a position where I have to really fight as hard as I can to keep that 13th and screw the keeping it on the track I will do whatever I can to keep that tenth. It would be nice if I could finish the race on Sunday but it's not the end of the world if not.
