

Fl Montreal Blog - Sunday press conference

After a surprisingly sun-drenched Canadian Grand Prix, Sebastian Vettel claimed the top spot of the Montreal podium for the first time in his Fl career.

Present at the post-race press conference were Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull), Fernando Alonso (Ferrari), and Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes).

Q: Three World Champions, I'm spoilt for choice here. What a great win, a text book win, pole position, you seemed to win it at ease. Tell me about it.

Sebastian VETTEL: Thank you. Thank you everybody. I think it wasn't that bad for us, I think. Yeah, great race, I had a very good start, which was important and then I was able to really go with the car and yeah, obviously on the supersoft we saw the tyres were falling apart but I think we were just as good as everybody else. I was able to build a gap and then kept that gap basically the whole race. At some stages we had a full pitstop on hand and it's a little bit easier then to control the race, control the gaps etcetera. Great race, great job by the team. I had perfect pitstops even though we had some time on hand. And also for North America, I think it's a great race for Infiniti. All in all, a very important race for us to win. Finally we get it off the list. Very proud of that. The sun came out today. Couldn't get any better. Racing in front of the crowd here is always...

Q: ...I have to ask you about that because it seems quite unbelievable to us that you've never won here before, nor indeed has Red Bull. So what does it mean to get the monkey off the back?

SV: Yeah, obviously we've had good races before but it didn't come together to win. Two years ago I was very close. I lost it in the last lap, it was my mistake, so made up for it today. Great feeling, as I said. Great car today by the team and I think we were able to really pull away from the rest of the field, which was most important to then control the race. I could really enjoy every single lap. Difficult at stages through the traffic but as I said, great and ...

Q [to Alonso] ...When I read your report yesterday when you said that you thought you may have a chance to come from sixth position to hopefully get a win here, I was saying 'how's he going to try and do that?' And you nearly did it. Magic, magic tenacious drive.

Fernando ALONSO: Hello everybody first of all and bonjour. Yesterday obviously we didn't have a good qualifying, I didn't put the lap together and also the conditions didn't help but we knew that the pace in dry conditions of the car on Friday was good, so we had some hopes. Obviously we are fighting with top drivers and I have a very good fight with Mark, with Nico, with Lewis at the end. And it's not easy. Even if you have a little bit more pace, they are super-talented ones and it was difficult race. But at the end I think the second place has a victory taste because we scored some good points after a very difficult weekend.

Q: You seem to have a lot of fans here Lewis.

Lewis HAMILTON: I have a great time here every year, and thank you for all the support, I have a great time.

Q: I've got to ask you, we all were enthralled how clean, how correct and yet how exciting the fight was with Fernando. What did you damage on the car?

LH: I think some small part of my wing came off. It was very, very close, we had a good battle, he was very, very fair and I hope we can get a bit quicker in the next race.

Q: You qualified in front of your team-mate, you raced in front of your team-mate. That must have been a bit of a help after Monaco, I presume. You feel really good about going forward with this team?

LH. Yes, the car's getting better and the guys are doing a fantastic job, so we just need to keep pushing to close the gaps to these guys.

Q: Well done Sebastian that must be, not a relief necessarily, but you must be very happy first of all to have won here finally and for Red Bull Racing as well. But there were a couple of moments where you very nearly touched the wall and you went wide as well. What happened in those two instances?

SV: Obviously I was pushing very hard at the beginning to get away and open a gap and yeah, I think it's Canada, you obviously go close to the walls here or there, sometimes a little bit closer than I wanted but fortunately I didn't brush the walls. I'm really just trying to just open as much of a gap as I can. I felt I had more pace in the beginning of the race, it's difficult to foresee what's happening later on, when you swap tyres, also in terms of range - how far we were going to get on each set of tyres. We weren't sure if it was a one-stop or a two-stop. So all these things you don't know so it's good to have a little bit of time on your hands, which was the reason why I pushed very hard in the beginning. Obviously it was clear quickly after the first stint that we had a good gap and controlled it. Obviously it was difficult with the traffic etc, but I think we had a great car and we always had enough pace on hand to react and control the gap. In the end I went straight in turn one. I think I could have saved or caught the car, but I didn't want to risk a spin. So I decided, should I stay should I go, then I decided to cut the corner, slowed down. Obviously there was traffic again with a backmarker, so I let him by to really make sure I rejoined the track in a safe way, which cost a lot of time. But yeah I was just a bit too late in the first corner heating the brakes.

Q: Well done. Fernando, you had some great battles and it took quite a while to get past Lewis. Was it just the speed coming out of the hairpin? It took quite a while, even with DRS.

FA: I think it was the pace difference was very, very small. With other battles we did maybe I was a little bit more fast, a little bit faster than the people I was catching. With Lewis we were really very close on the pace and there was some moments going out of turn eight to see who had the

detection point and then in turn 10 the same thing, at the last chicane, so there was some action there. But it was nice to have these battles, particularly this race with so talented drivers, so intelligent drivers, that, you know, you fight wheel-to-wheel at 315km/h and you feel safe. You feel you are racing and you are competing. It can go your way or it can go the other way, but this is real racing. So, very happy to see this back after Monaco. It's a little bit different.

Q: Lewis, once again on the podium here in Canada. We thought you might be trying to get Fernando back again. Was that a possibility?

LH: Clearly not, because I didn't get him. He was massively quick and it was very difficult to keep him behind. I tried my best. I got close once he got past me, but he was just generally took quick for me. But you know, it's still a good result for me considering that these guys are massively quick.

Q: (Dan Knutson - Auto Action and National Speedsport News) Lewis, earlier this week you talked to us about your brakes. How were they in this race, maybe the best they've been all season?

LH: No. Not really. Generally, again, very similar to other races. Still need to improve and that's where Fernando was really catching me everywhere.

Q: (Paolo Ianieri - La Gazzetta dello Sport) Fernando, how much has yesterday's qualifying been hurting you because starting sixth getting to second was a big race. Could you have done better, do you think, if you had started on the first or second row?

FA: I don't know really. I think you will never know. Qualifying is qualifying and it's better to be on pole position but I think the last pole position in dry conditions was September 2010 so it's not the strong point of the team. On Sunday, we normally pick up the pace a little bit about which we are happy because the points are gained on Sunday, but it's true that at some races, if you start too far behind, it's difficult to recover, but we will try to improve next time.

Q: (Kate Walker - GP Week) Sebastian, you had a dominant victory today. You've won three of seven races so far this season and you're leading both Drivers' and Constructors' championships, but despite all this, you've probably been the most vocal critic of the tyres. I was wondering if you had revised your opinions on the rubber, given your performance and your continuing strength.

SV: Well, I think it's pretty simple. The criticism we had or I expressed was not based on performance. I think it was based on safety and I'm sure if you ask other drivers, maybe they weren't that strong in the press, maybe they think they have an advantage with this sort of tyre, but we had some occasions this year where the tyre suffered delaminating, the top layer came off for not exactly known reasons, probably debris but you will always have some pieces on the track. I think it's not possible to have an entirely clean track everywhere and I think that has been the criteria. Every time I complained about balance or the tyres and their behaviour, every time as I said as well that on that day there were other people doing a better job and first of all we had to get to their level to start complaining about performance but obviously when you say something, it's in fashion, these days to take what you like instead of probably publishing the whole answer.

Q: (Nicolangelo Cioppi - Cittadino Canadese) Sebastian, what happened again on lap 52, I don't understand exactly?

SV: As I said, I was a little bit too late into the first corner, lost the rear on the way in. I could have stayed on the track but I wasn't sure. It was quite tight, obviously you have the right hander following immediately and I didn't want to risk a spin so I decided to cut and make sure. I lost four or five seconds in that corner compared to normal, so I think it was fine. It just seemed to be the safer option to avoid the spin and carry on that way. I was just a little bit too fast. That's what happens. Fortunately there was no wall so I was lucky.

Q: (Nicolangelo Cioppi - Cittadino Canadese) Fernando, in Monte Carlo we talked to one another and you were very confident for Montreal, and you said to me 'I'm going to be on the podium.' Congratulations, and I would like you to say something to the Italian community here because there's a very very big Italian community.

FA: In Monaco we were not competitive for different reasons. In a way, we were not competitive here on Saturday, maybe for the same reasons, for the conditions that we need to do a better job compared to the others. In some conditions we are not competitive enough, so we need to work on that. And then for the Italian people here in Montreal, I think they support Ferrari all the time, they enjoy Formula One. You see the atmosphere in this race is very very unique, not only here on the track but from the time you land at the airport, you see a very enthusiastic people about this race. You put the TV on, they are talking about the meteo for the Grand Prix. They're talking about the qualifying, the practice, the shops on the streets are full of flags, Ferrari flags etc, so it's very nice to race here. We didn't give them a win today but I think we put on a good show for everybody and hopefully we give a win for them in the next one when they are watching TV.

Q: (Carlos Miguel Gomez - La Gaceta) Fernando, are you worried for the British Grand Prix, with your pace in qualifying because normally it's cold weather; do you believe you can be OK in Silverstone?

FA: I believe so. I think it's a different circuit, completely different asphalt, generating a lot of stress in the tyre: Silverstone, Nurburgring compared with very easy tracks on tyres like Monaco, Canada where you are looking for one or two stops. Silverstone will be different, I think. We know that the temperature is not helping us at the moment, but we cannot say anything because there are other people going very fast in those conditions, so it's up to us to improve. We have some ideas and hopefully at Silverstone we can improve on that.

Q: (Bill Beacon - Canadian Press) Sebastian, after you took the chequered flag, you sounded that you were very pleased to finally win in Montreal. Was that important to you and the team?

SV: Yeah, I think it is important to us, but not because... I wasn't desperate to win here. I think we've had strong results in the past and I wasn't ashamed coming here having not won this race, so I wasn't desperate when I got up this morning and thought 'I have to win, I have to win.' But I was very pleased because it's a very nice race. I think Lewis had the privilege to win here three times and I think that in terms of atmosphere - Fernando touched on it - the whole city enjoys the Formula One Grand Prix. We have a lot of spectators. I think it was good today to have sunshine, it was quite bad in terms of weather yesterday, but there were still a lot of fans and obviously today, again, a fantastic atmosphere and to me this race belongs one hundred percent to the calendar, because I think for all of us drivers we enjoy a lot seeing grandstands completely sold out, a lot of enthusiastic people, the whole town living the Grand Prix. I think it's similar to the Grand Prix in Melbourne in a way which is also not a race track, it's in the middle of the city as well, so I think we enjoy that, and I think that's why we were very happy or we are very happy today.

Q: (Jeff Pappone - Globe and Mail) Fernando, when do things started getting desperate? Seb seems to be gaining points at every race now and you're falling further and further behind. When do you really have to start winning?

FA: I think we are eighty or eight-five points behind. It will be a very critical situation, which is more than three races. In the past - I touched on this in Australia or Malaysia - in the last six or eight years, there were people recovering from more than 30 points on the old points, which is three races

so it's 75 or 80 points. So hopefully we're going to arrive to that number.

Q: (Jordan Irvine – NextGen Auto) Lewis, Mercedes dominated second position for 63 laps of today's 70 lap race and then you lost out with seven to go to Fernando. Was there any one thing that you didn't have that meant to you lost that position with so little time left?

LH: I guess it's just grip, just lack of grip. The car was fantastic, I'm assuming those guys had even better than that. But generally it's been really good. I was just lacking a little bit of grip in the lower speed... perhaps the chicane. Fernando seemed to be particularly quick in the lower speed corners.

Q: (Massimo Lopes Pegna – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Sebastian, how important is this win today; beside the win, how important is to gain seven points in the standings and maybe to get quicker to the critical point that Fernando was talking about?

SV: To be honest with you, I care for the win today. Obviously you don't have to be a genius to know that you get more points than anybody else for that result but as Fernando said, the championship is still long and obviously I was in a different position last year at this time and I was able to catch up quite a lot towards the end. I had very strong races. Fernando was a little bit unlucky here and there and we were able to beat him, so we were able to come back but this was ten races from where we are now so I think there are so many things that can happen at that stage of the championship, I'm happy to stand on the grid and focus on the race, trying to win, and the rest we will see later on if we are still in a strong position. I think there's enough of you reminding us if we're not, you are there as well.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – O Estado de Sao Paulo) Lewis, OK, the last two circuits were not demanding in terms of tyre wear. It looked like Mercedes made a step forward in terms of the tyre wear, that was the weakest point you had. Can you explain this development you've made on the car, what happened exactly to make this step forward?

LH: I think it's just been a work in progress. We haven't really... we haven't cured anything, it's not been a long period of time since Barcelona where there was big trouble. I guess we've just been to two tracks where it's not got high speed corners, so therefore it's not really been a problem. We've worked on a couple of techniques to look after the tyres a bit more, brake cooling and all that kind of stuff has been added as well, which helps.

F1 Montreal Blog - Race report

Traditionally, the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve plays host to one of the most exciting races on the Formula One calendar. The Wall of Champions claims its victims, the changeable weather shakes up the action on track, and Safety Cars are (almost) a given.

But the 2013 Canadian Grand Prix was rather less exciting than its predecessors, delivering fans with a lights-to-flag victory for Sebastian Vettel that was livened up by some exciting battles further down the grid.

Lewis Hamilton and Fernando Alonso were behind some tense moments in the closing stages of the grand prix, as the former teammates battled for P2 while delivering a master class in respectful wheel-to-wheel racing. Kimi Raikkonen battled his way back up into the points after a botched pit stop obliterated the Finn's chances of a podium, while Paul di Resta made the most of an aggressive tyre strategy to finish ahead of teammate Adrian Sutil despite starting from 17th on the grid.

It was a faultless performance from race winner Vettel, who finally conquered one of the few tracks that has eluded him in victory. The Red Bull racer and defending world champion didn't put a foot wrong all afternoon, pulling out a two second lead over the course of the first lap and extending it with every subsequent tour of the circuit.

There were a few tense moments on the Red Bull pit wall as Vettel pushed his car to the very limits of the circuit, skimming walls as he danced across the kerbs, but by and large it was shades of 2011 all over again – dominant is the only word for it.

Hamilton managed to hold second place behind the Red Bull for 90 percent of the afternoon, but the Mercedes driver was unable to hold off a charging Alonso in the closing stages of the race, eventually losing position on lap 63 as the Ferrari driver – who had been reeling the Briton in for the preceding ten laps – made it past following a series of near misses at the hairpin and along the main straight.

Yet again, it was the tyres that proved to be the Mercedes' Achilles heel – while Hamilton was able to lap competitively all afternoon, at the end of the day he lacked the grip necessary to push the duel with Alonso to the limit of both man and machine.

Hamilton's case was hindered, not helped, by a petulant performance from Adrian Sutil in which the Force India driver deliberately ignored waved blue flags when being lapped by the battling Alonso and Hamilton. Sutil was given a drive-through penalty for his efforts, which were widely perceived as being 'retribution' for the bad blood that has existed between the pair since the after-effects of the 2011 Chinese Grand Prix.

It was a disappointing afternoon for Sutil, who – in addition to his penalty – was outshone by his teammate despite having started five rows further up the grid. Force India elected to put Paul di Resta on the medium compound tyre at the race start – a strategy mimicked by both Marussia drivers and Lotus' Romain Grosjean – with a view to using a long first stint to gain track position. In di Resta's case, it worked like a charm.

The Scotsman made his one and only pit stop on lap 56, by which point he had enough of a gap to Sutil behind that he was able to change tyres without losing track position. Over the course of 70 laps of the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve, di Resta made light work of his tyre preservation, picking off the opposition one by one before taking the chequered flag in seventh place. Sutil secured the last of the points.

Special mention should be made of Raikkonen's impressive recovery following his troublesome first pit stop. The Finn lost valuable time as his team struggled with the right rear tyre, and emerged from the pits in P14, a loss of eight places. It took Raikkonen the best part of twenty laps to return to the points, where he was able to climb to ninth place before the chequered flag called time on the Canadian Grand Prix.

2013 Canadian Grand Prix results

1. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1h32m9.143s
2. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) + 14.408s
3. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) + 15.942s

4. Mark Webber (Red Bull) + 25.73ls
5. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) + 1m9.725s
6. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) + 1 lap
7. Paul di Resta (Force India) + 1 lap
8. Felipe Massa (Ferrari) + 1 lap
9. Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus) + 1 lap
10. Adrian Sutil (Force India) + 1 lap
11. Sergio Perez (McLaren) + 1 lap
12. Jenson Button (McLaren) + 1 lap
13. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) + 1 lap
14. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) + 1 lap
15. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso) + 2 laps
16. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) + 2 laps
17. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) + 2 laps
18. Charles Pic (Caterham) + 2 laps
19. Max Chilton (Marussia) + 3 laps

Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) RET

Nico Hulkenberg (Sauber) RET

Giedo van der Garde (Caterham) RET

F1 Montreal Blog - Saturday press conference

After a chaotic qualifying sessions in ever-changing conditions around Montreal's Circuit Gilles Villeneuve there was a brand new face making his debut in the post-qualifying press conference.

Present were Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull), Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes), and Valtteri Bottas (Williams).

Q: Sebastian, you seemed to be on top of those extraordinary conditions all the way through qualifying. Was that the case?

Sebastian VETTEL: Well it was very, very tricky, especially because you never knew what the conditions were like the next time you were out. So obviously it was intermediate tyres throughout but extremely tricky to adapt, especially in the last qualifying section. We decided to have two runs, we thought the second run will be quicker because we had a new set of tyres left but it started to drizzle, in the last sector in particular, in the last chicane. I went straight on one lap and then the second lap I had a mistake somewhere else, so it turned out that the conditions were best for the first run. So that was a bit of a surprise because obviously you target on a set of new tyres to push a little bit harder. Very happy the first lap was good enough. It was very tight with Lewis. I think at the end everybody was improving in the first two sectors but then the last one was... yeah, those last two corners didn't allow anyone to go quicker, which surely I didn't mind but I think it was showing how difficult the whole qualifying session was for everyone. Congratulations to Valtteri, I think he did an extraordinary job putting the Williams on P3 but for us, extremely happy with the result and looking forward to the race tomorrow. I think we had strong pace yesterday so no matter the conditions, we should be in decent shape.

Q: Lewis, is that what cost you right at the end? Was that the rain in the final sector?

Lewis HAMILTON: I don't know really... no, I was doing a pretty good lap, I think I was six or seven tenths up, even so I went wide. I don't know whether I would have kept it but all I needed to keep was a tenth or so, a bit unfortunate - but I'm still happy to be here for the team.

Q: Valtteri, congratulations. What does this mean, to be in the top three?

Valtteri BOTTAS: Thank you. Of course it means a lot. It's way more up in the grid than what we really could ever imagine. It's been so difficult, the first six races for us and it will be a nice boost for the team. We really got everything quite right today.

Q: Sebastian, as you say, no points today. What chances tomorrow? As you said, you don't really fear any of the conditions. Are you worried about rain or not?

SV: Well, I don't know if there's anybody who can give a precise forecast for every corner. As we saw today, it was really tricky in some places, then drier than expected in other places and the next lap was completely different. So, yeah, a bit difficult to foresee how the weather is behaving tomorrow - but the forecast, I think, looks a little bit friendlier than today. So at this stage - the last thing I heard at least - we expect dry conditions. But we'll see. It doesn't really matter. We have a couple of tyres left, surely lots of slick tyres but also in the rain we should be in decent shape. I think it could be an interesting race with mixed conditions tomorrow. So, a long one, 70 laps here and a lot of things that can happen in every single lap.

Q: Sebastian, well done again. Another consideration is, have you got any Intermediates left? You were saying you might have a couple of tyres left. If it is wet tomorrow, have you got any Intermediates left?

SV: No, we don't have a new set left but obviously it was only a very short run in the last qualifying. I think the sets we used, one was completely new and the other just scrubbed, so yeah, I think it's tricky. Everyone used up their intermediates to qualify as high up as possible but the bottom line is I think we're in good shape regarding tyres for both dry - obviously, just like everyone else - and rain conditions.

Q: It did seem to be an extraordinary session. You had mass starts in the pitlane. It was amazing!

SV: Yeah. I wasn't part of that group and actually I did a mistake there because I was too late getting out in Q2 after the red flag, after Felipe had the crash. Yeah, I didn't want to join the train and get stuck but obviously we left a little bit too late and I didn't get to do a timed lap at all. Fortunately I made it through to Q3. The time we set before was good enough - but we didn't get a run in and we were supposed to, so yeah, I messed up the timing a little bit there but fortunately it didn't cost us anything.

Q: Lewis, did it all go according to plan? Maybe you felt you could have been on pole.

LH: Pole was definitely there, so it's a bit unfortunate but that's the way it goes.

Q: Did everything go according to plan?

LH: No.

Q: Is that what makes you a little unhappy then?

LH: ...

Q: What are the chances tomorrow? What do you feel about the weather tomorrow?

LH: I've not really seen what the weather's going to be like tomorrow. I was told that it's going to be dry – or maybe raining in the morning and drying out for the race. But, as Sebastian said, it's changing and it's going to be good fun. It should be interesting as it has been for the last few years. It's been very tricky – but I hope it's dry.

Q: Valtteri, what do you want tomorrow? More rain?

VB: Definitely! I think the fact is in the dry the car doesn't belong to P3 at the moment, so yeah, of course some rain would help us like it did in the qualifying. Because I think we found, for the Inter tyres especially, a quite good way of how to really work the tyre, the right temperatures and everything – so I hope so.

Q: You did a good job in Monaco keeping it out of the wall – a lot of rookies might have ended up in the wall. You've done the same thing here. You've been a pretty safe pair of hands as far as I can see. Do you feel that? Are you happy with your performances?

VB: I think you can never be totally happy with the situation we are in. I still have zero points and there's still a lot to learn. When I look back there's so many things you always could have done better. It's been OK but it could be always better.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Valtteri, congratulations. Would you have ever dreamed to be on the second row and also could you please describe your lap?

VB: Thank you. I don't think we expected to be on the first or second row. I think everyone in our team was hoping for rain because there's always a chance if you get the timing right, get everything right, you can maybe finish a bit higher than where the car is sometimes. But yes, the race is tomorrow. If it's dry, for sure it's going to be difficult, it's not going to be easy, so let's see.

Q: (Kate Walker – GP Week) Valtteri, we've seen that you're ten places ahead of your teammate. Is this because you like the track, you like the conditions? You're both in the same car.

VB: I think today was very tricky and it was a lot about the tyre getting a good lap, just at the right time, when the track is in the best condition, having good track position, everything, so it's not as simple in this weather, so that's why there can even be ten places between teammates.

Q: (Stefan Barbé – L'Equipe) If it's dry tomorrow, do you think you had enough time yesterday to evaluate the tyres for long run pace in the afternoon?

LH: We did a long run like everyone else, so we have a good understanding what the tyres and the car feels like in the dry and obviously we've had the rain and the wet so we should be set for tomorrow.

SV: I think it was good that practice two yesterday was dry so it allowed everyone to get a read on both soft tyre and the harder or the medium tyre, supersoft and medium.

VB: I think everyone has plenty of dry tyres so we'll see.

Q: (Massimo Lopes Pegna – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Sebastian, are you surprised to see Ferrari so far behind you?

SV: I don't know where they are but obviously I saw Felipe losing the car into turn three so I'm aware that he's not very high up. He obviously didn't take part in Q3. For Fernando, I don't know where he starts but I think generally – as Valtteri touched on – it was quite tricky today and when you were not on the circuit at the right time, then you can be faster than everybody else, for example, but it's not happening. I think we've all experienced it to some extent today. Some, obviously... on average, I think us three up here, we got away with it and mostly used the track in the best condition but you can never really say that you have always been out when it was absolutely at its best, and that makes a big difference. We're talking easily half a second, a second, two seconds per lap.

Q: (Bill Beacon – Canadian Press) Lewis, you've won here three times, conditions are a lot stranger this time around: how confident are you that you can have a fourth victory here?

LH: Well, it's good to be on the front row, that makes it a little bit... brings up the chances a little bit but it's going to be a tough race tomorrow. Obviously Sebastian's very quick, even the Ferraris are very quick on the long runs so I guess it really depends on the conditions and at the end of the day I've got to do the job. As you know, I love it here so, there's a great crowd even though the weather was not so great today. I'm sure there will be even more people tomorrow so let's hope we can put on a good show for them.

F1 Montreal Blog - Saturday report

Qualifying for the 2013 Canadian Grand Prix got underway beneath cloudy skies and a blanket of light rain, with slippery track conditions proving challenging for the less experienced drivers on the grid.

While the initial forays in Q1 saw a number of brave souls leave the pitlane on Pirelli's supersoft tyre compound, after gentle installation laps were complete there was a move to inters to prevent the spins and offs that were a feature of the opening minutes.

The early pace was set by Ferrari's Felipe Massa, but – as is characteristic of sessions on a damp but drying track – ever-changing conditions saw the times changing rapidly, with the benchmark shifting as each man crossed the line. The bulk of the grid made good use of the run-off areas as they struggled to find grip in the conditions, but Q1 passed without serious incident.

By the time Q1 had reached its midpoint, the fight for the top was a four-way battle between the driver pairings from Red Bull and Mercedes, with Fernando Alonso and Adrian Sutil spicing up the action with competitive lap times of their own. Esteban Gutierrez impressed for Sauber, lapping in

the top ten throughout Q1.

At the back of the back, McLaren's Jenson Button spent a worrying amount of time in the dropout zone; the Briton suffered gearbox sensor issues on Friday that prevented him from getting any long runs in before qualifying got underway. But with just over a minute remaining, Button saved himself with a top ten-worthy lap.

The closing minutes of Q1 saw impressive laps from Massa and Valtteri Bottas, while Gutierrez found himself knocked down the order in quick succession before saving himself as the chequered flag fell. Joining the Marussias and Caterhams at the back of the grid were Paul di Resta and Romain Grosjean.

As Q2 got underway, the inters were still the tyre of choice for the bulk of those leaving the pits. Track conditions looked to have improved slightly between sessions, but the constant drizzle kept the track too wet for slicks to be a sensible option. As the session progressed, however, conditions worsened, with Q2's top times dangerously close to the 107 percent benchmark set in Q1.

The timesheets in the second session bore a strong resemblance to Q1, with Mercedes and Red Bull continuing to look strong. But Jean-Eric Vergne delivered a confident performance early on that saw the Toro Rosso driver sitting comfortably in the top five, ahead of Fernando Alonso and Kimi Raikkonen.

Both McLarens continued to struggle for much of Q2, with both Button and Sergio Perez languishing in the dropout zone with Massa, Gutierrez, Sutil, and Pastor Maldonado. Even when Button saved himself with a Q3-worthy lap, the 2009 world champion was only able to put himself in P9, on the edge of the danger zone. A strong lap from Perez knocked Button back into the dropout zone.

With two minutes remaining, Massa brought out the red flags when he lost grip on the wet kerbs, spun, and smacked his Ferrari sideways into the tyre wall at Turn 3. When racing resumed drivers had but one chance to get in a lap that could see them through to Q3. The queue at the pit exit was impressive.

The track improved slightly in the break, but the one-shot lapping made it a challenge for some of the teams to get their tyres up to temperature. Sauber and McLaren saw both drivers knocked out, joined by Massa and Pastor Maldonado. Toro Rosso got both drivers through to Q3, while Valtteri Bottas delivered an impressive performance for Williams to make it through to the top-ten shootout in a comfortable P4 on the timesheets.

Greasy tack conditions persisted into Q3, with the top ten leaving the pits on inters. Given that Sunday's race is expected to run in the dry, all drivers should have a free choice of race tyre if the forecast is proved correct.

Vettel was the first man to put a time on the board in the final session, with his 1m25.425s lap proving impossible to beat in the first run. Bottas impressed with a P3-worthy 1m25.897s, three-tenths slower than Hamilton in provisional P2.

Hamilton's last timed lap looked good for pole, but the Briton made an error shortly before crossing the line, going off track and losing time in the process. The final laps made little change to the early order, with Vettel taking pole position from Hamilton.

Provisional grid

1. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1m25.425s
2. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1m25.512s
3. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) 1m25.897s
4. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1m26.008s
5. Mark Webber (Red Bull) 1m26.208s
6. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1m26.504s
7. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1m26.543s
8. Adrian Sutil (Force India) 1m27.348s
9. Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus) 1m27.432s
10. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso) 1m27.946s

11. Nico Hulkenberg (Sauber) 1m29.453s
12. Sergio Perez (McLaren) 1m29.761s
13. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) 1m29.917s
14. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1m30.068s
15. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) 1m30.315s
16. Felipe Massa (Ferrari) 1m30.354s

17. Paul di Resta (Force India) 1m24.908s
18. Charles Pic (Caterham) 1m25.626s
19. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1m25.716s
20. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) 1m26.508s
21. Max Chilton (Marussia) 1m27.062s
22. Giedo van der Garde (Caterham) 1m27.110s

F1 Montreal Blog - Friday press conference

There was a last minute shock withdrawal from the Friday press conference in Montreal, when Pirelli's Paul Hembery declined to take part on the advice of company lawyers.

Present were Ross Brawn (Mercedes), Stefano Domenicali (Ferrari), Christian Horner (Red Bull), Monisha Kaltenborn (Sauber), and Martin Whitmarsh (McLaren).

Q: Monisha, gentlemen, I'm sure most of my colleagues here would like to hear your views and opinions regarding the tyre test carried out at Barcelona last month. I'm afraid it's ladies first, Monisha: can we start with you?

Monisha KALTENBORN: First of all, to really have a proper opinion you need to really have all the facts, which clearly we all don't, as a team, but from what we know, what we read in the media, it appears that it's not been in line with the rules, what has happened. And from that, of course, we have to consider the possibility: could the team gain an advantage from that. Reasonably, you could imagine that but again, without the facts it's difficult to completely assess that and there we also would have to look not only at what's happened this year, or could happen for this year as a benefit, but also for the following year because this is a time when all of us are defining certain parts of our new car and I think it's important to see if there any benefits could have arisen for the team because that's something which you really can't catch up later on as a competitor. But I'm glad it's gone to the Tribunal and I'm sure they will assess all these aspects properly.

Q: Martin, your views?

Martin WHITMARSH: I think so far we've chosen to keep our views to ourselves. As has just been reported it's gone to the Tribunal and I think they are presumably gathering all the facts and they can take a view.

Q: Christian, your feelings?

Christian HORNER: Well our feelings were fairly clear because we raised a protest about it in Monaco. So we believe that it is the responsibility of the entrant to comply with the regulations, so when it came to light that a test with a current car had taken place, our interpretation of the regulations is that that was in clear breach of them and therefore we raised a protest prior to the race for it to be dealt with as an issue by the FIA. It's really an issue between the team and the FIA. Obviously Pirelli have asked several teams to test, ourselves included but we have declined to do so because we felt that it wasn't in line with the regulations, certainly with a current car. That's the situation. It's gone to the Tribunal and we trust in the FIA to make the appropriate decisions regarding it. I think the important thing is that there needs to be absolute clarity moving forward in terms of what you can do and what you can't do going forward, you know, what is testing and what isn't testing. I think that's more crucial than anything, it is to be fully resolved.

Q: Stefano?

Stefano DOMENICALI: Not a lot to add. There is an enquiry: there is this international Tribunal that will handle the situation. They have all the elements for that. So honestly, nothing to add on what we already discussed and for me it's important that there have been... we were involved in this because we received a lot of questions by the FIA, they have taken their position, so for us it's pretty clear. Therefore, we wait and see.

Q: Ross?

Ross BRAUN: I think, as has been mentioned, the matter has been passed on to the international Tribunal. They will meet presumably in the next few weeks to determine the facts of the case. My personal opinion is that when the facts of the case come out, then people can make a judgment. Obviously we felt we were in a position to be able to do the Pirelli test - it was a Pirelli test, it's very important to note that - and so the Tribunal will be the time at which all the information will become available. A couple of points I would make: there has been an unfortunate branding of the 'secret' test. It was a private test. It wasn't a secret test. I think anyone who believes you can go to Barcelona and do three days of testing, or 1000km of testing, and not have anyone become aware of it is naive. It was a private test, not a secret test and sporting integrity is very, very important to us. Very important to Mercedes. And as I say I think when the facts become apparent then people can make a better judgment of the situation.

Q: (Ralf Bach - Der Spiegel) Question to Ross. Paul Hembery told us in Monaco, when he had informed the other teams this test had never taken place. Can you just make clear why for you the test is legal?

RB: Well, it's a little difficult for me because we've got this process going on now where it's in the hands of the Tribunal. And as was mentioned by the other teams, we trust our process. It's a new process that the FIA have introduced, an independent process and it's the first time it's being tested but I think it has a good structure. As I say, we trust in the Tribunal. So I can't comment, and I don't want to comment, I don't want to anticipate the Tribunal. I think when we get to the Tribunal we'll get the answers to your questions.

Q: (Christian Nimmervoll - Motorsport-total.com) Question to everyone - probably - except Ross, who can of course add anything to it: how much of an advantage do you guys think such a test during the season - 1000km - is, and what is it in particular that you can learn from such a session?

CH: I think that whenever you run the car... when you're not allowed to test, when you have limited mileage, when the rules are written as they are, when you run a current car of course... for the way that Formula One is, with the way that the amount of technology and with the amount of data analysis there is, you're always learning. Whether it be reliability, whether it be endurance, whether it be performance. So, of course... even if you're testing a component for a supplier, you're learning. I think Formula One has moved an awfully long way over the last few years to ensure fairness and equality to all of the entrants. I think that if a team does carry out 1000km of additional testing with a current car, you're going to learn something.

Q: Martin, anything?

MW: Nothing more to add.

Q: (Ian Parkes - Press Association) Ross, part of the debate that's been going on about this test is whether Mercedes gained permission from the FIA as to whether you could run the current car. Are you in a position to state whether you have cast-iron proof from the FIA that will help your case going forward at the Tribunal?

RB: I think we wouldn't have done the Pirelli test unless we believed we could do the Pirelli test and I think when we get to the Tribunal, you'll have your answers.

Q: (Dan Knutson - Auto Action / National Speedsport News) A question for all of you. If there is to be private testing in the future - I stress private, not secret - and even if it is with a two-year old car, would you like it to be announced so we all know about it beforehand?

SD: So far, with out interpretation of the regulation, running with a 2011 car, or two years car, is not testing, as per the Sporting Regulations. So that is pretty clear from our point of view. On that respect, we believe, as you know, we are the ones that were pushing since the old ages, we believe that it is

important to test. So therefore if, after this situation, we will be in a situation where we can test again, as we have discussed within the teams, as you know, it is, I think, fundamental and I think it's the right decision.

Q: Christian?

CH: I think the lack of transparency is disappointing. That you get to learn these things second hand. I think it is important that there is transparency, of course. If a supplier has issues then it needs to obviously deal with them but when all entrants are supposedly equal, it's only right and proper that information is made transparently clear.

Q: Martin?

MW: No, whatever testing happens there should be transparency and the rules should be clear to everyone.

Q: Monisha?

MK: I agree with what's been said. If you look back at the time the testing was permitted, nobody used to make any big deal out of it: everyone knew that there were test teams out there and you were somewhere in Europe testing.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – The Citizen) Obviously the entire situation arose because of the regulations banning testing. Two days before the protest was lodged, I believe the big four teams met in Monaco with Mr Ecclestone to discuss testing next year, eight or nine days, I believe. How do you people see this working and then for Monisha, specifically, how will this impact on the smaller teams, should it be introduced? And also will this alleviate the Pirelli tyre test situation that they have at the moment?

SD: I think that there was this discussion between six teams in Monte Carlo, because as you know, basically, with nothing to hide, we were the ones that were promoting, in a way, to go back to testing because we feel it's important. And I have to say that we were discussing, we find the right balance between, let's say, the request from one side and the need to consider – what was on the table – considering also the issue that the small teams have always presented, and I believe that what was agreed and discussed was a fair, sensible balanced approach that now it's important that we go through and ratify in the new regulations because that's now the key point for the future. Now is the moment to ratify what we have discussed and what I believe is the right compromise for all the entrants in the championship now.

RB: I think – as you say quite rightly – there's been some discussions about testing for next year which will certainly be beneficial for whoever the tyre supplier is in the future but it's structuring that testing to make sure there is a good commitment to the tyre supplier, to get a proportion of that testing and that is quite a difficult thing to do. If there's eight days or ten days of testing, how much of that is available to a tyre supplier, because they need testing, they need to feed off something, so I think that's a point that needs addressing.

MK: Well, I think even as a smaller team per se we are not against testing because it does have a lot of benefits and looking at next year with a new engine coming up, if you look at young drivers, you can give them mileage there or for suppliers when they need to test, so as such it's nothing we're against but for us, it's all linked with the cost, so our ideal would be that if you try to link this to overall cost saving, so you find some other areas where you can bring the cost down, which again brings up discussions about a cost cap or so, that you can do anything within that, that's something we would be looking for but as such we wouldn't really be against testing.

Q: (Paolo Ianieri – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Ross, should Mercedes be found guilty, do you think that your position would be weakened because there are rumours that you might be the sacrificial lamb of this situation and that in this case you might have to leave the team or have a different future?

RB: I think there's been some rumours before and nothing's happened. I think we should say let's wait and see what the Tribunal find and then we can go from there. It was my decision to do the test so that's a fact and let's see what occurs at Tribunal and we go from there.

Q: (Kate Walker – GP Week) Ross, I have two questions for you: first, I was wondering if you could explain why you chose to use your race drivers rather than your test driver in the car, given that it was a test? And secondly, one of the rumours that we have heard going round is that you're in position of an e-mail from Charlie Whiting confirming that you did have permission to do the test. Could you confirm whether or not that e-mail exists?

RB: The e-mail, I don't want to comment on any matters of that sort that relate to what's going to come through in the Tribunal. In terms of running the race drivers, in any form of testing, apart from the young drivers' test, there's no control or limitation on the type of driver you have in the car, so it was natural for us to use the drivers we have. We wanted the most representative conditions we could for the Pirelli test, it was as simple as that.

Q: (Daniel Ortelli – AFP) Ross, you said the test was your decision. Was it connected in any way to the fact that you were disappointed by the result of the race on the previous Sunday, or was it related to the fact you had a guarantee it was tyres for 2014, or both? Was that part of your decision-making?

RB: I can certainly say that the decision was based in no way on the track performance that we had. I think everyone in Formula One is concerned about some of the delamination that we've seen, so I think that's a worthy objective. Certainly nothing to do with the performance of the car, because nothing was aimed at addressing that.

Q: (Ralf Bach – Der Spiegel) Ross, did you inform Niki Lauda and Toto Wolff before the test?

RB: That's not something I want to comment on. I'm sorry to keep repeating this, but you'll get all the facts when we get to the Tribunal.

Q: (Ian Parkes – Press Association) Ross, I just wanted to know how you're feeling generally. You've been accused of being underhand, you've been accused of a lack of transparency. Do you feel saddened, frustrated – cornered, even – by all these accusations and by what's happened?

RB: I won't pretend it's very pleasant at the moment. Again, I'm confident that once we get to the Tribunal the facts will become apparent, and you'll be able to make a better judgement. We're trying to focus on the racing. We had a great result in Monaco; a little frustrated that we lost second place with Lewis, as it would have been an even better result, and we've got a race here to focus on. We're going to try and stay aligned with the things we enjoy, like the racing, and we'll try and keep that in the distance. It's not very pleasant, but that's motor racing. I've been in it a long time, and I've been through these periods before.

Q: (JC Coté – TSN 9.90 in Montreal) Ross, has it been difficult keeping the team and everybody focused on this weekend and last weekend in Monaco given everything that's going on around the circumstances of this test?

RB: You try and bear the load as best you can for the team to make sure that they don't become distracted. There are one or two people in the team – apart from myself – who are involved in this, in terms of preparing now for the Tribunal. But we're making sure that everybody else is left alone to

get on and do the best job they can at the race weekend. You can't deny that it's a distraction, but we'll manage it as best we can. Ninety-nine percent of our people are focused on trying to do the best job they can over the race weekend, and there's one percent of people – including me – that's got to deal with the after-effects of the Pirelli test.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – The Citizen) To the four excluding Ross, please: Formula One is entering virgin territory with this Tribunal, we've never been there before. I believe the process allows interested parties or affected parties to make representations. Will any of the four of you make a representation in the Tribunal at all? In other words, providing your own evidence or input?

SD: As you know, at the beginning of this process we were involved; first they wanted to understand the situation so we presented our documentation. The case has been closed on our side, so we added already our comments.

CH: Obviously it is a new process but again we've been asked questions by the FIA, as have others. I think it's an information-gathering exercise so that the panel of judges can make an informed decision. I think that over the coming days obviously further information may possibly be required. It is a new process, so I think the most important thing is that it's dealt with quickly and we achieve clarity in terms of what's possible moving forward. Are we allowed to test out 2014 engine from our third-party supplier next week? There's certain things that need clarification.

MW: We've responded to the questions from the FIA, but we don't intend to make separate representation in the hearing.

Q: And Ross?

RB: We'll be there!

Q: Of course, apologies. Monisha?

MK: Like the other teams we received questions which we answered. At the moment we don't plan to submit anything on our own to the judicial body, but if the judges want further information we'll comply.

F1 Montreal Blog - Friday report

While Friday mornings are typically the quietest part of a Formula One weekend, F1 in Montreal saw reduced running thanks in no small part to the changeable conditions on offer in soggy Canada.

As the pitlane opened for business, the track was drenched following nearly 24 hours of rain that continued off and on throughout the morning. Track conditions meant that the much-anticipated new Pirelli compound offered to the teams for testing saw very little use, with senior team personnel saying that they needed at least 20 laps of solid running on the test rubber in the afternoon session if they were going to be able to provide the tyre manufacturer with valuable feedback.

Esteban Gutierrez was the man who made the most of his time out on track, completing an impressive 33 laps of the circuit. But at the end of the session it all came down to a final run of flying laps on slick tyres, times changing constantly as the drivers did their best to time their last gasp efforts on a track finally dry enough to let them push their cars to the limit.

When all was said and done it was Paul di Resta who led the pack for Force India, closely followed by McLaren's Jenson Button, a mere 0.088s slower across the line. Complicating matters for much of the pack was Pastor Maldonado, who destroyed the front end of his Williams after smashing the wall at Turn 4, bringing out yellow flags in the process.

Given the track conditions, it was a remarkably incident-free morning, with the only other episode of note coming about thanks to Jules Bianchi, who brought out the yellows when he ran down the Turn 3 escape road and attempted to turn the car and rejoin the track before being warned by the Marussia pit wall that they were concerned about the temperature readings coming from his engine.

The afternoon session took place under overcast skies, but the dry track conditions allowed the teams to put the Pirelli test rubber through its paces, with Ferrari's Felipe Massa setting the fastest lap time on the proposed new construction, which has been developed to prevent the dramatic delaminations seen at several races this season.

When it came to the times set on the tried and tested rubber, however, it was Lewis Hamilton, Sebastian Vettel, and Mark Webber who were setting the pace before Fernando Alonso eclipsed them all with a faultless lap that saw the Spanish racer head the session 0.012s ahead of Hamilton.

The dry track meant that the morning's driver-errors were nowhere to be seen. Instead, the faults were purely mechanical, with morning pacesetter Paul di Resta hampered by a fuel feed issue on his Force India that prevented the Scotsman from getting much running in. Jenson Button also lost track time, although the McLaren driver called a premature end to his session following gearbox sensor issues identified by the team.

F1 times (unofficial)

1. Paul di Resta (Force India) 1m21.020s [10 laps]
2. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1m21.108s [20 laps]
3. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1m21.258s [21 laps]
4. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1m21.308s [16 laps]
5. Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus) 1m21.608s [22 laps]
6. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso) 1m22.068s [18 laps]
7. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1m22.402s [22 laps]
8. Sergio Perez (McLaren) 1m22.587s [17 laps]
9. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1m23.047s [26 laps]
10. Mark Webber (Red Bull) 1m23.131s [16 laps]
11. Felipe Massa (Ferrari) 1m23.341s [13 laps]
12. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) 1m23.352s [17 laps]
13. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1m23.386s [19 laps]

14. Adrian Sutil (Force India) 1m23.417s [19 laps]
15. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) 1m23.957s [33 laps]
16. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1m25.054s [21 laps]
17. Nico Hulkenberg (Sauber) 1m25.354s [22 laps]
18. Giedo van der Garde (Caterham) 1m25.753s [21 laps]
19. Max Chilton (Marussia) 1m25.821s [19 laps]
20. Alexander Rossi (Caterham) 1m27.143s [20 laps]
21. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) 1m27.522s [11 laps]
22. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) 1m29.306s [8 laps]

FP2 times (unofficial)

1. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1m14.818s [48 laps]
2. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1m14.830s [45 laps]
3. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1m15.083s [40 laps]
4. Mark Webber (Red Bull) 1m15.212s [46 laps]
5. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1m15.249s [46 laps]
6. Felipe Massa (Ferrari) 1m15.254s [43 laps]
7. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1m15.280s [41 laps]
8. Adrian Sutil (Force India) 1m15.396s [43 laps]
9. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1m15.422s [29 laps]
10. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso) 1m15.566s [38 laps]
11. Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus) 1m15.599s [35 laps]
12. Sergio Perez (McLaren) 1m15.661s [39 laps]
13. Paul di Resta (Force India) 1m15.855s [22 laps]
14. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) 1m16.319s [46 laps]
15. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1m16.351s [38 laps]
16. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) 1m16.374s [40 laps]
17. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) 1m16.475s [45 laps]
18. Nico Hulkenberg (Sauber) 1m16.929s [35 laps]
19. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) 1m17.070s [41 laps]
20. Charles Pic (Caterham) 1m17.236s [35 laps]
21. Max Chilton (Marussia) 1m17.888s [45 laps]
22. Giedo van der Garde (Caterham) 1m18.392s [39 laps]

F1 Montreal Blog – Thursday press conference

Surprisingly, given the focus of the news since the Monaco Grand Prix, the opening Montreal press conference wasn't all about the tyres.

Present were Pastor Maldonado (Williams), Felipe Massa (Ferrari), Charles Pic (Caterham), Nico Rosberg (Mercedes), Giedo van der Garde (Caterham), and Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso).

Q: Charles, your second Formula One season, now of course with Caterham. What are your feelings about that? Do you feel that you're making progress yourself now that you are in your second season?

Charles PIC: Yeah, of course. The first races were a bit difficult for us and then from China and Bahrain especially we made steps forwards and the car was working much better and I think we are still in this positive mood. We have to keep working like that. Monaco was not an easy one for us. I think the pace and performance was quite good, especially in the race, but then we had this issue with the gearbox. Overall I'm happy with the evolution we have had.

Q: To some extent you are the team leader, in that you have more experience than Giedo. Is the progress with the car being driven by you?

CP: No, I think when you do progress it's driven by everybody in the team. It's a team effort and teamwork, driven by the two drivers and all the team.

Q: Jean-Eric, you've already had a busy morning. What have you been up to already today?

Jean-Eric VERGNE: I was at the Polytechnic school, with the FIA for the Action for Road Safety campaign and we had a bit of a chat with the students about safety, the Golden Rules and it was nice. I drove a simulator, so yeah.

Q: Well, you obviously had a very good qualifying in Monaco and followed it up with a good race, it was the fourth time you've finished eighth in a grand prix. The question is whether the car is suited to here and can you carry over that performance to here?

JEV: Yeah, hopefully. Everything can happen in Canada. Last year wasn't really a good race for me but you know I think we can carry on the momentum. Definitely the car is getting better and better every race. We obviously don't have anything new here but I think the whole package that we have is good enough to make a good race again here. I think the improvement on the car is going to continue for the whole season and I'm really pleased with that.

Q: And the improvement with you in qualifying, that's important?

JEV: Definitely. You know, you need to work really well during the whole weekend and to have a good qualifying, especially in Monaco, is really important. I think I'm just improving race by race, it's as simple as that.

Q: Giedo, a good performance again in Monaco. Here we are at another temporary circuit, but a circuit you don't know. Can you carry over that performance from Monaco to here?

Giedo VAN DER GARDE: We'll see by Saturday. I think so. The progress is going quite well. We knew that our first four races would be tough but the last few ones we made good progression. The relationship with the team is getting better, the work relationship is good, so I think we can do a good job here again.

Q: You said earlier on in the year that you'd need probably a third of the season to find your feet. Are you finding your feet now?

VDG: Yeah, as a rookie it's not easy to come in and the first four races were just to learn as much as possible and now the progress is going really well, the relationship with the engineers is really well, with the whole team. So I'm a happy man at the moment.

Q: Again, this is a new circuit to you. Are you finding it difficult to learn circuits?

VDG: We did some practice on the simulator and I like more or less always a street circuit, so let's see how it goes.

Q: Pastor, a big accident in Monaco, any after-effects from that?

Pastor MALDONADO: No, no, I'm OK. I was OK. It was a reset.

Q: We've had a third of the season. Are you seeing progress at Williams?

PM: Yes. I mean, it was quite difficult to understand the car since the beginning of the season. Especially from the first race. We've been fighting a lot to try to fix the problems. We fix the problems but they are not easy to show. We have been working very hard, 24 hours a day in the factory, especially in the wind tunnel. The problems are coming from aerodynamic. We've been trying to make some progress. I think we understand now a bit more the car and hopefully this race should be much better for us.

Q: What difference should a new chassis make?

PM: The chassis is more-or-less the same. Just some new parts, aero parts. Hopefully we are going to solve... not all the problems... but have a step forward. We have been expecting that for some time.

Q: Felipe, we saw you last in a [medical] collar. And you also have a new chassis here. Tell us a little more about that accident.

Felipe MASSA: It was two accidents actually! It looks really similar, if you look from the television, but it was completely different accident. The first one, it was, I had... just locked the wheels, went over the bumps and then I went straight. I hit the guardrail first and then I went straight. And the second one, I had a failure in the suspension. It was two different accidents in the same place. It looks very similar but it was two different things. The good thing is that I'm fine. I just felt a little bit of pain on my neck after because two crashes on the same place, in the same direction, y'know? But it was just muscles and it's fine. One hundred per cent fine.

Q: And no dent in your confidence?

FM: No. For sure no. One hundred per cent confident for here.

Q: How important is a good result here for Ferrari? Because it wasn't a very good result in Monaco.

FM: Yeah, I think it's very important. We didn't have the weekend we expected in Monaco. Just looking forward to going back to a good weekend - for both: for me, for Fernando, for the team. I hope the car works well on this track and we can fight for another podium again?

Q: Nico, has the euphoria of Monaco finally worn off?

Nico ROSBERG: Unfortunately yes! It goes quite quick in this sport. Already a couple of days afterwards, the focus went completely to Montreal. I mean, first of all understanding what we did right and wrong in Monaco and then preparing for Montreal and trying to get the most out of this weekend.

Q: But you seem to be on a roll with pole positions. What chances?

NR: Yes, well, qualifying has been very good. Our car has been the quickest car in qualifying for quite some time now. So, as a speed, I think we just have a very, very fast car. So I'm confident I'll be quite far up the grid again in qualifying here. It is a different situation a little bit here: it's lower downforce so that could mix things up a little bit, different track and everything so we'll have to wait and see - but qualifying should be good, yeah.

Q: It is a very different circuit in terms of demands; high speed and low grip as opposed to low speed and high grip, so it should be interesting to see if the car works here as well.

NR: Yes - and that's why we need to be a little bit carefully coming here. It could be a little bit of a different situation. Some other teams might be stronger or whatever. But in general we're going to be there or thereabouts.

Q: (Kate Walker - GP Week) Nico, I understand you're not allowed to comment on an awful lot of aspects of the recent tyre test, but one thing that we were wondering is because it was a Pirelli-specific test - you weren't testing new components, anything like that - why were you and Lewis doing the driving rather than (test driver) Sam (Bird)?

NR: Don't know. That was what the team decided. I think also for Pirelli it's better if we are in the car, because it's more representative because Sam doesn't drive much, so for sure he won't be able to go on our pace and bring the Pirellis through the laps exactly as we would, who had the experience of the Grand Prix that weekend. So definitely for Pirelli it's an advantage to have us in the car, I would say.

Q: (Alex Popov - RTR) Nico, there are a lot of completely useless statistics but one that is interesting about Canada is that you have qualified 6-0 here against your teammates and Lewis has qualified 5-0 against his teammates, so how important will it be on Saturday for you?

NR: I didn't know that. It's a track I like, definitely. I enjoy this track. I'm confident coming here and qualifying is going to be exciting and important also, but a little bit less important at this track (than Monaco) maybe because you can overtake and tyre degradation is going to be an issue, so there's going to be a lot happening in the race. But anyway, as in all tracks, even with this statistic or no statistics, it's always a big challenge to try and be ahead of Lewis in qualifying because he's obviously very, very quick.

Q: (Alex Popov - RTR) For everybody, would you comment on Sergio's race in Monaco? Do you agree with Kimi's views or not?

JEV: I'm not going to comment.

CP: No.

Q: (Paolo Ianieri – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Felipe, why have you never got on the podium here, is there a special reason for that?
FM: So, why I never made a podium here? I think my best result was fourth. I think last year was pretty much in the right direction as well, I just spun but I was pretty quick during the weekend. Why, I don't know. But I will try, definitely, one hundred percent.

Q: (Paolo Ianieri – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Nico, if you say it was just a normal test, why were you and Lewis using anonymous helmets?

NR: Don't want to comment on that. Sorry.

Q: (Luis Fernando Ramos – Racing Magazine) Nico and Felipe, the more experienced of the drivers: if it's dry tomorrow you will try these new Pirelli tyres in free practice: is this a track too specific to draw any conclusions or will it be OK, you can draw conclusions from here and use them on other circuits in the season?

NR: For sure you can draw conclusions, yeah. Hopefully we will get a few dry laps and it will be good to try them and understand a bit more of what is to come and what to expect in the next races.

FM: I don't think it will be so easy to have a conclusion. First of all, it's maybe raining; you can forget about a conclusion and you need to see how many laps you can do on the tyres to understand (them), so it's not also an easy track to understand. It's a track that is getting better all the time, during practice, so it won't be so easy to get a conclusion, I think.

Q: (Flavio Vanetti – Corriere della Serra) Felipe, you had a tough moment after the accident in 2009 when you had to come back and drive. Is it easier now or is it almost the same from a psychological point of view?

FM: It's completely different because I don't remember anything about my accident and now I remember everything (about my two in Monaco) but that wasn't the problem. I was fine so I just got out of the car and it was no problem. I think when you are OK you don't have any problem, you just jump in the car and you go out again. It's completely different from 2009.

Q: (Sean Gordon – The Globe and Mail) What are your favourite memories of Montreal, whether it's on or off the track?

FM: I hope it will be this weekend. Well, I think it was a very good race that I did for Sauber in 2004, I guess. I was fourth, so it was a very good race. I think that was the best.

NR: Not sure, maybe the qualifying my first year; I'm not sure if I was fifth or sixth, but it was a great qualifying that year, so maybe that was a good memory.

PM: I have no good memories of this track.

VDG: I think my best memory is in 2001 when I was here for the Kart World Championship. It was my first race in Formula Super A and I won the first race, so it was a good memory. Long way back.

JEV: I don't really remember. Maybe my holidays here. That's it.

CP: Last year it was my first time here. Qualifying was a bit tough for us but we had a good race afterwards, so I think it was last year's race.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Nico, last year after Monaco you were 17 points behind the leader; now you are 60 points behind. Do you think you could still be in a better position for the rest of the season, right now, compared to last year?

NR: Last year, at the same point in time, I was quite confident for the rest of the season, because we were really in a good string of results. I think there were six races where I got the most points so at the same point in time I was quite confident, but looking back, of course, it didn't go well. Now, again, I'm confident, yeah, because the car is very fast at the moment and it's just a matter of getting a better grip on the tyres and trying to understand them better and better and we're in that process at the moment. It's really not easy but I think hopefully we're making some progress. We will see again this weekend. This weekend is going to be a big challenge for that but if we can get a grip on that then it's going to be a good next couple of races so I'm quite confident, yeah, maybe more confident now, then.

Q: (Pierre Durocher – Journal de Montréal) Nico, how concerned are you about the tyre wear on this track?

NR: It will definitely be one of the key aspects of the weekend. We have the supersofts again here, degradation is going to be an issue and possibly that's going to be the decider as to who wins the race, who has the best control over that.

Q: Which would you prefer: a dry or wet race, given the problems you have been having with the tyres?

NR: I don't know. Possibly even wet, yeah, because our car is really quick in the wet. I've been feeling very comfortable in the wet this year, maybe even wet, yeah.

Q: (Ernesto Nigro – F1 Plus.com) In-season testing over the use of simulators: how much more effective would that be and would you welcome it back?

FM: It would be welcomed, definitely. A simulator is always what we have, to try to understand something, but it's always a simulator so when you are in the real situation on the track, you definitely understand a lot better so it would be welcome.

NR: Just as Felipe said, it's so difficult to get the simulator one hundred percent realistic so there are always several things that are better when you test the real car, more accurate.

VDG: I think it's also good for a rookie to have more track time, of course. It's how it is now.

Q: (Olivier Arbour – Radio Canada) To all of you: what do you think about Sergio Perez's driving; do you share Button's view that he should maybe calm down, or are you more on Raikkonen's side?

VDG: If nobody comments I will comment. I know Checco quite well, we were teammates together in 2010. I think he's a real fighter, you know, and he's a guy who wants to win – everybody likes to win – but of course how he raced in Monaco, sometimes he did well, sometimes going over (the top) but I think it's a tough call.

PM: No comment.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – O Estado de Sao Paulo) This subject is old but it's interesting to hear from all of you who never won the World Championship up to now, about the Wall of Champions here. Is there any particular reasons it attracts World Champions there, is there any technical challenge that explains all the incidents we have there?

NR: It's a nice little legend, it's a difficult corner, yeah, because if you go in a little bit too fast you get that second kerb too much and you're in the wall,

so it's a very very challenging corner, but there's no reason to explain why a lot of World Champions have gone in there.

FM: It's two different things: it's a different corner, it's a corner that if you try to be a bit too aggressive you can hit the wall but it's two different things.
