

Fl German Grand Prix – Thursday press conference

With five German drivers at the press conference, talk turned to memories of Hockenheim and the struggles currently being faced by the Nurburgring.

Present were Timo Glock (Marussia), Nico Hulkenberg (Force India), Nico Rosberg (Mercedes), Michael Schumacher (Mercedes), Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull), and Mark Webber (Red Bull).

Nico Hulkenberg, starting with you, but it's a question for all the German drivers – you best memories of Hockenheim. Doesn't matter whether it's a Formula One memory or any other series or even just spectating.

Nico HULKENBERG: Well, actually my first ever formula car race was here, in 2005, with Formula BMW, the opener here at Hockenheim and luckily I won the first race right away, so great memories for me here. I race in Formula BMW quite a lot, in Formula 3, 2010 and Formula One. It's a placing I've been racing at a lot and I really enjoy being here.

Timo, your best memory here.

Timo GLOCK: Definitely in 2006 when I won the GP2 race. On the last lap I think I overtook the leader and won the race, so I think that was the best one. Not the best memory was 2008 when I finished the race in the wall in the last corner and had to go to hospital, so up and down.

Nico?

Nico ROSBERG: Yeah, it's very special to come here. As Nico said also I've been here so many times, testing in the winter and in the summer, testing all the time and driving in so many races. And now coming here as a Silver Arrows driver, which wasn't really the case two years ago, it's great. A lot of friends and family coming and I really enjoy the track and I have high hopes of doing a top result here.

Any particular major memory?

NR: For example, winning the, no... I think was already BMW champion at the time but winning the last two races was a great memory for example.

Sebastian, major memories? Were you a spectator here?

Sebastian VETTEL: Yeah, I remember the first time I came here was with my father in I think 1992. I was five years old and we came on a Friday, it was raining like crazy, on the old track. We were for the cars to come, for Michael to come, but they only did the installation lap but that was already enough because just to hear the cars, the sound, see them, see the spray was unique. So that's a nice memory. A couple of years later I watched again a Formula One Grand Prix, from the main grandstand and it was very hot. I remember they sold water for 10 Deutsche Marks, which was really expensive at the time and later on when we left we found out that they had just refilled the water bottles from the tap, so that was quite a good business. After that, through Formula BMW and Formula 3, similar to the two Nicos, a lot of racing here. It's not far away from where I was born, where I grew up, therefore it's obviously special to come here.

Michael, three wins here, what are your greatest memories?

Michael SCHUMACHER: I guess it's the first one, in 1995, when I stopped at some part of track, because I think I stalled the engine and I got towed back to the pits, which was, in a way, nice because you have lots of time to enjoy the atmosphere, all the fans, the appreciation... I mean they had to wait for such a long time, although in 1994 we already had a race-winning car, but then retired. So yeah, in '95 a German finally won a German race.

Nico, back to you. Vijay Mallya says the team needs more luck. What do you feel is required within the team now – you're scoring points on a regular basis now?

NH: You always need luck, of course. You also need pace and speed and you know you need to be competitive, especially in a midfield that is very tight and very difficult. We see each Saturday and Sunday that one or two tenths can make a big difference and our main rivals have scored some big results, a lot of points. So now we really have to dig deep, keep our heads down to be within reach and keep the momentum up.

Mark, after 99 grands prix with Red Bull Racing, you've re-signed with the team. What does that mean to you to re-sign for them next year.

Mark WEBBER: Yeah, it's been a long relationship and yeah we're going to be working together again next year, which is very exciting, to continue the challenge to stay at the front. This year's obviously going pretty well and there's a big reason to keep the focus on for that as well but the continuation of that moving on to next year is also helpful.

Looking at the last couple of grands prix, Red Bull Racing have been very competitive, you obviously won the last one. How important do you think the Valencia update was and to have it in Valencia rather than introduce it as Silverstone?

MW: Well, it's two different venue and two different temperatures, so it was important for us to get those parts to the track in Valencia to validate a few things and give us a direction. Yeah, it's always nice when you get them a race earlier rather than later as you just learn so much earlier. I think ultimately it was a good decision. Very difficult to get the equipment to the track but the boys did a great job and Valencia was the first step to understanding some new stuff with the RB8. But, as we've seen, it's very, very tight, you need to pull everything together to win and yeah, we want to be at the front again this weekend.

Timo, obviously Marussia's development has been very difficult over the last few weeks – but how much optimism did you get from the update at Silverstone and how is that going to play out in these next two grands prix?

TG: I hope we just have more stable conditions here to learn more about it. It was quite difficult for us to see really what the update gave us – but it definitely felt better in the race, the pace was quite good, so I'm looking forward to a good weekend here, we have some little parts again which should give us a little gain but it's difficult if everyone else makes at the same time, at the same race, an update, or brings an update, then sometimes it's a bit difficult to see the step. But the car did improve and in the next couple of races we should have a couple more bits and pieces coming.

Nico Rosberg, after a very good start to the season things seem to have gone off the boil a little bit, how can you turn that around?

NR: I don't think that's quite right – it's just that we haven't maximised what we had in the last few races and that then eventually finished with the race in Silverstone where yes, the track didn't really suit our car. So, it's maybe not quite the right picture: I still think we have a good car and I still think if conditions suit us and we get a grip on the tyres – like at the track for example, here in Hockenheim, which should suit our car a lot better, I think we should be able to do a much better result.

So you'll be turning it around here?

NR: Yes, for sure.

Sebastian, a very strange statistic that someone's come up with: you've never won in July – and yet you really want to win this grand prix, obviously. Talk to us about that.

SV: My goodness! Then if it doesn't work this year then we move it to August. Or June! I don't know. Yeah, obviously it would be very special to win here, I think first of all to have the chance to race in your home country is something that's very special, and being able to win would be incredible. We try again – but I don't believe in a bad month or a bad date in that regard.

Michael, four wins here, many, many, many times here, your home grand prix, very important for Mercedes, their home grand prix as well. You seem to be on the ascendency as well – what are the chances this weekend?

MS: Well I guess the most difficult race we have behind us. That was Silverstone. Hockenheim will suit our car much more naturally. And obviously I'm a lot more optimistic. Indeed, we want to give it a good show and give the max effort that we always do but anything extra that can be done for all our Mercedes colleagues that we have visited yesterday and they will be here, some of them, for the race weekend, supporting us, crossing fingers for us. We'd love to do well for them and if one of us two could be on the podium, I think that will be great.

Question to all the German drivers – have you ever been to Hockenheim camping, and what are your memories there?

SV: I haven't been camping myself but two years ago, last time we've been here, we've been to the campsite to visit the fans, so yeah, there have been plenty of fans and obviously the atmosphere was very special. I don't know if you have been there already but if you haven't then you should go – I think you will get a beer for sure. So, yeah, it's a good atmosphere, a good vibe, so I think the people come here and enjoy the whole weekend. Hopefully the weather is not like Silverstone this week, otherwise it will be quite poor for them.

I have a question for all of you please, a driver's career is full of highs and lows: I was wondering if you could tell me how you keep your motivation, how you keep your focus in the low periods, so that you can get back up to the highs?

NR: It's really normal in sport, y'know? Sport is all about highs and lows and the lows that are the difficult ones. I for myself have learned to push through them and come back stronger, and that's motivation alone: you want to come back on the other side even better than before and do a very great job.

MW: Adversity comes with the territory. If you have a very low ambition and set your goals very conservative then it might be a bit more stable but when you want to achieve great things or special things, there's going to be some adversity along the way and getting back up from the canvas is part of the rules and sometimes our failure is part of success: we need to have that [failure] to be successful.

MS: In our sport we are privileged to drive these cars and for us it is a big excitement to be involved in this sport and it's natural that you want to do the best that you can do. 'It doesn't matter what happened yesterday' is something that you learn very quickly. It only matters what you do at the moment and you might do in future. That's what it's all about. I guess it's a school that you go through in the early days in karting and that's what you grow up with. Partly it's a character that you have or build up, so to all of us I guess it's very natural.

TG: I think in generally we had that question yesterday from a fan as well. For me it's quite easy. Every day is a new possibility and it's very easy for me to motivate myself. We are in the greatest championship in motorsport and there is no reason to not be motivated.

To anyone who wants to answer this: it's Lewis's 100th Grand Prix this weekend. I'm just wondering what you've made of Lewis's time in the sport up to now, what impact he's had, how you rate him as a competitor and just generally whether he has made the best of the advantages that he's had up to now?

SV: I think a happy 100th, then, and you'd better ask him whether he feels he has done the best or not. You'd better ask him whether he feels he has done the best.

MS: He's certainly been a contender in the championships for many years, so he's one of the stars that we have around. We are, for the fans, so-called gladiators and that's what the fans want to see: to give it all and maybe sometimes exceed limits and to establish yourself. He's been through that in good ways so I think for all of us he's a very serious competitor and it's good to have people like him.

Nurburgring is suffering a lot of economical problems; your comment on that, and what does racing at Nurburgring mean to you, especially as we might not see it there any longer?

TG: I think generally it would be a shame to lose the race. I hope it's not going to happen. For me, it was great, every time, to race at the Nurburgring and I hope we stay there for a bit longer. I have great memories there, so I hope they can sort out the problems.

MS: Yes, equally there is a lot of history relates to the Nurburgring track and race for all of us German drivers. We just wish the situation well and hope that solutions will be found and we will be back there as soon as we can.

SV: I think it would be a real shame to lose Nurburgring as a race. Obviously we hope that the Nurburgring recovers quickly, it's one of the most traditional races we have on the calendar so it would be a big loss, similar, for the Italians, to if we lost Monza for instance.

MS: You could buy it.

SV: Yeah, you could. Your wallet is bigger than mine, so you could buy it.

MW: Yeah, it's a sensational little track and obviously you have the big circuit out the back. I think the Nordschleife is a track which has to stay in the same configuration and stay open for ever. It's such an amazing... one of the most famous bits of tarmac around the world. It's just a beautiful, beautiful circuit, the long track. Obviously the short track is also pretty good but let's hope it continues on the calendar. It's a great little venue.

Mark, at Silverstone you were saying that you'd sort out your contract later on, then two or three days later it was signed. What happened, what changed, why was it so fast?

MW: Well, because I'm not going to tell you guys I'm going to do it in two days, am I? Obviously we get ready to announce things when we're ready, and there comes a date when 'let's announce it', OK, done. For me to keep the situation calm, the tactic worked OK. We have to deal with this stuff in lots of different situations, on many different aspects of our stuff out of the car, and this was just one of them in contractual sense. Pretty straightforward really: stay at Red Bull, move on.

Sebastian, you have 104 points less compared to last year after nine races. How much different is your feeling?

SV: 104! No, it's different, of course. Obviously we had an incredible year last year, good start, a lot of points, a lot of wins. This year we've had two DNFs and all in all, I think it has been a tricky season. Obviously a lot of guys and a lot of cars that are very competitive, so naturally I think it's a different season so far but feeling-wise, I feel as happy as last year really, so looking forward to this weekend, but I think we have a long season ahead of us.

Sebastian and Michael, you took part in the charity football match yesterday. I wanted to know how important it is for you to support kids and maybe also the youth in general?

SV: Obviously we do this many times a year, not just the only time here in Germany together with the Nazionale Piloti team, with a couple of drivers which is always nice. For us, in a way, just to play some football but obviously if we can help, in that case, yesterday evening, help little kids. It's always nice to combine those two things, so we obviously try to raise as much money as possible, to give them a big push. As I said, it's something we do many times throughout the season, a couple of times, and the more drivers who participate the better it is as well. It would be even better if we had more drivers on board, but so far I think it's very important to have... Nico is playing sometimes, Michael is playing... to have a couple of good drivers playing as well.

MS: It's a beautiful combination. We love the sport, we love soccer and to do something that you enjoy doing at the same time we were able to give a little bit of entertainment to the fans, quite a few thousand people wanting to see us and they pay for all these charity functions that we do in many parts of the world, particularly yesterday here in Germany it's certainly been nice for us, to do this at home and see quite a few friends that you have made throughout the years, in different areas, whether it's from the movie business or in other sports. It's good to hook up again and see them and have a little bit of social contact again but the most important thing is to help kids and people in need.

Michael you drove on the old circuit here in Hockenheim; can you make a comparison between the old circuit and the new one from the driver's point of view, car point of view, the challenge?

MS: The old track was obviously mainly about straights and braking, some riding kerbs at the chicanes. It had been a challenge in a certain way but now we have a more normal race track. Do I prefer one or the other? Both were interesting. The main focus and the most enjoyable part for us was when we had the new stadium area, entering the Mercedes Motodrom, seeing all our supporters, that, by the way, is sold out completely. That is obviously beautiful.

Mark, is there any clause in your contract that if you become World Champion it will change the terms of the contract?

MW: It's not really the forum to talk about what's inside my contract.

How stressful or demanding is a Friday for a Formula One driver, and has this unusual season changed anything in your work on Friday?

NR: Friday is one of the most demanding days. It starts quite early with engineering meetings and then you have all the testing all day long, so there's a lot of preparing technically for the weekend, for Saturday and Sunday. That's the most important period of the weekend. What else? That's it really, a lot of technical stuff.

MW: Did you get that? Did you check the radio volume?

MS: 1-2-3! It is certainly the most busy time that we have in the weekend. We come in early and we leave the latest of all the weekend and there's a lot of driving, but there's a lot of analysing and a lot of discussions with the engineers because that's your main focus, the way you prepare the weekend. In between you may have some functions as well, so it's the most heavy duty that we have to perform.

Michael touched on the stadium section of the track; I was wondering if you could talk about how it feels to come into that section with the fans around there?

SV: I think it's one of the best sections we have in the whole calendar, because it's packed full of people. In the past, you were somewhere racing in the woods all by yourself and then you came back to the paddock area, to the Motodrom where the people were. I think it's still incredible today: to turn right and then all of a sudden drive into a kind of stadium makes it very special for us. Hopefully we will see a lot of German flags this weekend and have a great atmosphere.

NR: I had one of my most memorable experiences in the stadium, because it was my father's last race in DTM and I sat on the roof of one of the DTM cars with him to wave goodbye to all the fans and everything, and it was absolutely ram-packed full house and the atmosphere and everything was incredible, and that was one of the days when I decided wow, OK, I want to do this one day.

Mark, in the official press release, has officially admitted he was approached by Scuderia Ferrari, so to the other people here, can you confirm you were in talks with Ferrari too?

[No one answered this question.]

There's lots of history at this circuit; I was wondering if any of you guys has been out to the Jim Clark Memorial at what was the old turn two/three/four?

MW: Yeah, I went out to the memorial when I raced in F3000 in 2000. Yeah, he was obviously an amazing driver with amazing respect for all the people who watched him race. I went out to pay my respects. It was amazing in those days. Obviously they raced different categories, not just in Formula One, they did other categories in between the main championship if you like. It was a sad way for him to go, but obviously a lot of great men lost their lives in those days. It was an amazing circuit out the back there too, obviously very high speed, very risky for all of us. Yeah, I've been out there to check it out.

A non-track related subject, but I hope that at least one of you will want to talk about it: sometimes there seems to be a lot of public interest in your personal lives. How much does that concern you and do you have second thoughts before going out at night, do you think of ways of not attracting the photographers' attention or something like that?

NR: It's part of the job, you know, so you get used to it and it's OK. Sometimes it can be nice, sometimes not so nice. I was at Goodwood recently and I put on my hoody and sunglasses and walked around the whole festival, just by myself, to experience it and not to be recognised and that was very nice also, for a change. So it depends.

SV: I think you learn to deal with the situation. In the end I also think it's up to us, as Nico just described, to do normal things, to lead normal lives. I think in the end it's not that much of a problem. I think it depends largely on who you are, how you act. If you go out, if you go somewhere, then there might be people that recognise you. OK, then you sign something, you do a picture, you talk to them. It's also nice and gives you a lot of energy, but as I said, I think it's very personal and individual how you handle the situation. Ask Lewis. Everyone has different interests, I guess.

MS: Indeed, you would choose places to go or not to go, depending on your wishes. Myself, I'm obviously more focused on living a quiet and private life, so would rather avoid lots of people. If you go to places where it's full house, you know what to expect. If you go there for a function, it's one thing. If you go there for a private event then that is very often difficult and very often I simply inform myself and choose places where to go and try to have a calm and quiet moment, because we all love our privacy, we all want to enjoy life to the point that we can, but we then have to accept that it's not always the perfect combination but what kind of life is perfect? It doesn't exist, but it's probably as perfect as it can be for me.

F1 German Grand Prix – F1 report

After soggy Silverstone, the last thing the F1 circus needed was more rain. There was a new hard tyre compound to test, rafts of upgrades to analyse, and young drivers to give testing time to.

But the German skies refused to cooperate, and the first practice session of the Hockenheim weekend was somewhat damp. At least the rain was more persistent drizzle with heavy spurts than it was the Noah's Ark special.

Of those developments that needed testing, the two most striking were those found on the McLaren and the Lotus.

Lotus used Friday morning to run their version of Mercedes' double-DRS system on Kimi Raikkonen's car; the team have no intention of running with the device this weekend, but hope to get it working by the time the lower-downforce, high-speed tracks come along after the summer shutdown.

The Lotus device appears to work by funnelling air through new intakes on the E20's engine cover, which they then use to stall the wing without activating the FIA-controlled DRS. More details of the system will become available soon, but the team did their best to prevent journalists and TV cameras from getting too close a look.

McLaren have high hopes in their latest raft of upgrades, which include brand new sidepods with revised contouring, new exhaust outlets, a revised rear wing, and (one assumes) all sorts of associated upgrades hidden under the skin.

And while the upgrades don't appear to have been a backwards step for the team, it is too early to say whether or not they've proven effective, despite the team's 1-2 at the end of the session – Friday times are notoriously unreliable, and the changeable weather conditions on offer this morning only make it worse.

Despite the wet and greasy track the session was largely free of incident – spins and brief off-track excursions notwithstanding – until Valtteri Bottas made what may well have been his first error of the season, locking up his rears and planting the back end of Bruno Senna's FW34 into the barriers in the stadium section.

F1 times (unofficial)

1. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1:16.595s [27 laps]
 2. Lewis Hamilton (McLaren) 1:17.093s [22 laps]
 3. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1:17.370s [21 laps]
 4. Michael Schumacher (Mercedes) 1:17.382s [20 laps]
 5. Sergio Perez (Sauber) 1:17.413s [28 laps]
 6. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) 1:17.599s [17 laps]
 7. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1:17.915s [27 laps]
 8. Felipe Massa (Ferrari) 1:17.995s [22 laps]
 9. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) 1:18.020s [20 laps]
 10. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1:18.130s [21 laps]
 11. Kamui Kobayashi (Sauber) 1:18.226s [22 laps]
 12. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1:18.339s [21 laps]
 13. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) 1:18.422s [28 laps]
 14. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso) 1:18.709s [30 laps]
 15. Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus) 1:18.831s [14 laps]
 16. Jules Bianchi (Force India) 1:18.972s [21 laps]
 17. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1:19.039s [34 laps]
 18. Vitaly Petrov (Caterham) 1:19.674s [24 laps]
 19. Heikki Kovalainen (Caterham) 1:19.963s [24 laps]
 20. Mark Webber (Red Bull) 1:20.122s [27 laps]
 21. Charles Pic (Marussia) 1:20.169s [20 laps]
 22. Timo Glock (Marussia) 1:20.539s [18 laps]
 23. Pedro de la Rosa (HRT) 1:21.138s [24 laps]
 24. Dani Clos (HRT) 1:21.740s [27 laps]
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F1 German Grand Prix – FP2 report

Life can be all about the timing. And FP2 life was certainly all about the timing – with a track that was undriveable, suitable for full wets, handy on inters, ready for slicks, and then back again, all in the course of 90 minutes, positions on the timesheets were largely determined by the point in the session at which the run was completed.

Nico Rosberg popped up in P2 after the Mercedes driver was one of the only men able to take advantage of the DRS in the five minutes during which race control deemed that the device was safe to use. He was in the right part of the track, on the right tyres, at the right time.

Of course – that's not dumb luck. In F1, getting the time of your lap right is as important as any other element of race weekend strategy.

The changeable weather conditions and wet-dry track led to all manner of offs and spins – Turns 1 and 6 were particularly troublesome, and seemed to collect the full grid over the course of FP2.

While it looked as though the session would see limited – if any – running, teams and drivers alike were more willing to risk running in wet conditions than they had been during practice for the British Grand Prix two weeks ago. After six minutes of a silent track, Bruno Senna was the first man out on the circuit, although the Williams driver returned to the pits before completing a lap.

There was a concerted effort to get some running in during the early stages of FP2, as heavy rains were predicted. And they arrived bang on schedule, leading to a session that saw drivers go from wets to inters and back again, with a brave few attempting a switch to slicks as the heavens opened for a second time.

The first accident of the afternoon saw Toro Rosso's Daniel Ricciardo beached in the kitty litter at Turn 13, with no real damage except to his underfloor. The biggest shunt came about thanks to Michael Schumacher, who came off at Turn 12, spun into the barriers, and damaged all four corners of his car. With four minutes left on the clock, the session was red-flagged, never to be restarted.

Pedro de la Rosa was sidelined for much of the session with an unspecified braking issue; the HRT driver made it out shortly before the chequered flag was due to fall and logged eight laps in total.

FP2 times (unofficial)

1. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) 1.27.476s [14 laps]
2. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1.27.564s [24 laps]
3. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1.27.902s [24 laps]
4. Sergio Perez (Sauber) 1.28.402s [26 laps]
5. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1.28.420s [20 laps]
6. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) 1.28.495s [22 laps]
7. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso) 1.28.513s [23 laps]
8. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1.28.516s [16 laps]
9. Mark Webber (Red Bull) 1.28.877s [21 laps]
10. Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus) 1.29.327s [22 laps]
11. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1.29.364s [26 laps]
12. Felipe Massa (Ferrari) 1.29.719s [15 laps]
13. Kamui Kobayashi (Sauber) 1.29.785s [28 laps]
14. Charles Pic (Marussia) 1.30.090s [19 laps]
15. Timo Glock (Marussia) 1.30.220s [16 laps]
16. Bruno Senna (Williams) 1.30.291s [22 laps]
17. Heikki Kovalainen (Caterham) 1.30.331s [26 laps]
18. Paul di Resta (Force India) 1.30.437s [14 laps]
19. Lewis Hamilton (McLaren) 1.30.617s [16 laps]
20. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1.31.207s [20 laps]
21. Vitaly Petrov (Caterham) 1.32.241s [22 laps]
22. Narain Karthikeyan (HRT) 1.32.349s [17 laps]
23. Michael Schumacher (Mercedes) 1.32.777s [18 laps]
24. Pedro de la Rosa (HRT) 1.42.566s [8 laps]

F1 German Grand Prix – Friday press conference

Despite the rumours of Giorgio Ascanelli's departure from Toro Rosso, the senior team personnel press conference at Hockenheim failed to provide much in the way of official confirmation.

Present were John Booth (Marussia), Norbert Haug (Mercedes) Peter Sauber (Sauber), Mark Smith (Caterham), and Franz Tost (Toro Rosso).

Mark, if I can start with you. First of all, we've seen a certain number of developments over the last couple of races. How promising were those? Are we going to see further upgrades in the coming races as well?

Mark SMITH: We took an upgrade to Silverstone. We were hoping for some dry running, which obviously was forecast very early on not to happen. That hampered us quite a lot actually. We genuinely believed we'd have the opportunity to have some dry running in Hockenheim and we've had very little so far. So really, we're struggling to develop the car around the updates that we have, predominantly because of the lack of dry running. We know from the running we did at Silverstone we have performance on the car but we probably extracted about 40% of it at most.

You have a team move coming up: how disruptive is that going to be? Obviously it's planned to be as least disruptive as possible but it is mid-season.

MS: It is mid-season, but it is during the two-week shut down, so it's never going to be ideal but I think it will be fairly painless. One of the biggest challenges is probably the IT infrastructure. Work is already underway with respect to that. Things like CFD clusters represent the biggest challenge in that respect. The rest of it? If you think about the race team, they can live out of an F1 facility and operate anywhere in the world fairly self-sufficiently. So for the race team, post-Hungary, they'll go back to Leaffield and the rest of us will move after the shutdown on August 20th. The majority of us.

John, you had updates at Silverstone as well, despite a difficult development period leading up to that. Did they show the promise you were hoping for and will they lift Timo back into the peloton as it were?

John BOOTH: As Mark said, it was pretty difficult at Silverstone and again here to verify where we think we are. The upgrades were substantial and significant in that it was our first upgrade derived from the wind tunnel programme and our partnership with MAT. Some of it looks very promising so we take heart from that and we also have a few more bits here to give Timo that extra boost.

It's been 13 days since Maria's terrible accident and everyone in the press room is very appreciative of the statements you've put out, particularly the last one, but in terms of questions still unanswered, there are still one or two. So where does that leave us, the press?

JB: We had two priorities immediately after the accident, first being Maria's welfare of course, that was foremost in our minds. The second was to start to investigate the cause and clear the car of any part of that of course, with Silverstone coming up. We established that but then revisited our findings straight after Silverstone and now we're 100% confident that the car was not to blame in the slightest. As for the wider investigation, that is ongoing and will be a very long process, as in England it has to be, it's taken very seriously there, as you know. It will be some time before we know the final outcome. It would be inappropriate for me to comment any further on that.

Question for the front row regarding German Grands Prix. We have representatives of Germany, Switzerland and Austria - how important is this German Grand Prix to you?

FT: For me the German Grand Prix is a classic grand prix. In Europe from the history we have four grands prix which are very important. That's Silverstone, one grand prix in Germany at the Nürburgring or the Hockenheimring, it's Monza and Spa... and of course also Monaco. The German Grand Prix has a high level of importance and also, if you think how many German drivers in the meantime in Formula One and also Germany is a very healthy country from the economical side and therefore it's very, very important that this grand prix takes place here in this country.

Norbert, obviously very important for Mercedes...

NH: Yeah, absolutely. It's very special for us. We have more than one home grand prix: we have the British Grand Prix; we have another home grand prix in Abu Dhabi where our shareholder Aabar is at home but this, just 100km from the main facilities of Mercedes, from Stuttgart... I personally have great memories from when I was a young boy already I was here, looking mainly at motorbike races, so Hockenheim is just home turf - and it's of course it's good having a good performance here - we try. I remember winning 2008 with McLaren-Mercedes, Lewis Hamilton, which is a great memory. And yeah, there's a lot of spectators, a lot of guests, the Mercedes grandstand, a great programme there, a very busy weekend for all of us. It didn't start in a typically Hockenheim way: normally it's hot; today it was more the Silverstone way, which we experienced a fortnight ago. So, it seems to be the same tomorrow: rain again, and probably sun on race day - so parallel to what we experienced two weeks ago. But still, a very important race of course.

Peter, is this as close to a home race as you get?

PS: Yes, I think it's a home race - similar to Monza, both grands prix are very close to the factory in Hinwil. But I have a special relationship with Hockenheim. I drove many, many races here. I started I think in 1967 with my first race here, with a Volkswagen Beetle.

Question then to all of you again, on a similar subject: how important is the Nürburgring? It's got problems of its own at the moment, can they be solved? How important is it that they are solved and it remains one of the homes of the German Grand Prix.

FT: The Nürburgring as well has a very, very interesting and important history. Everybody in the world knows the Nürburgring who's involved in motor racing. I just hope that all the politicians find a solution to get the money together that the Nürburgring will survive. Because in the meantime a fantastic infrastructure has been built up around the Nürburgring with all the hotels and, apart from this, there are many workshops where parts for racing cars have been produced. It would be a shame if people would lose their jobs from this. There are many, many races over there: the 24 Hours for example, and a lot of other races, and especially Formula One. I just hope that in future we will also have a race there because the Nürburgring is history for motorsport in general and especially for Formula One.

And a huge heritage again for Mercedes, Norbert?

NH: Yes, absolutely. There is a great heritage and I hope and think it will continue. We definitely have a DTM race at the Nürburgring after the summer break, the 19th of August, so that is confirmed. And I think there are good chances for a grand prix in the future - but it's probably too early to talk about that and to speculate. I think they built great facilities and probably the plan was a good one but it didn't turn out in the right way. I think what is very important to know is that the Nürburgring is booked in a fantastic way - so the industry has lots of bookings there, not only Nordschleife but also grand prix circuit where the Grand Prix takes place. I think this is a positive development for the Nürburgring; I just think they got in financial problems but hopefully they are solvable.

Peter, I'm sure Saubers have raced there. Did the Beetle make it that far?

PS: Not just the Beetle. '86 we won the first sportscar race, together with Mercedes. I think with Pescarolo and Thackwell on the car. I think it's important for this very traditional race track that the responsible people find a solution to save the situation.

Franz, we understand that Giorgio Ascanelli is out of the team or should we say on his way out of the team, and is certainly no longer in active service. Can you confirm exactly what his status is and what the reasons are behind this move, please?

FT: I can only tell you that Giorgio Ascanelli is on holiday and there's confidentiality between the two parties. That's all that I can say to this.

Can you just, in general terms, make any comment as to whether it's sensible to let your technical director be on holiday during a Grand Prix? Obviously we can read into this the fact that there is something clearly going on.

FT: Sorry. I've said everything.

Norbert, the season is wide open - this is a more general question - is this for you more enjoyable or does it put stress on you?

NH: Well, I would say it's positive pressure and you grade your pressure inside the team. None of the guys you see here on the podium doesn't like to be in the best possible position, and the best possible position is ultimately P1, but you need to work very hard. This is a very very competitive environment. We've seen very very good races this year. We've seen surprising results. We saw guys winning who nobody probably thought would win, so it's very good for the spectator. I think we have seven or eight teams that are in a position to clinch podium positions and as far as I can remember, that was never the case in Formula One. All the teams of course want to finally dominate. This is the plan but first of all you have to score points, then podiums then race wins, and it's a very very good mixture for the spectator this year and yes, it is demanding but I think we all do what our destiny is, what we want to do and we are not forced to do this but we enjoy it; not every second, not if you have bad results, if you do not achieve what you wanted to achieve, but this is part of the game. Even more, you can enjoy the good part of it if you really got on the podium, if you get a race win, if you get a feeling like China, with Nico, that's fantastic. I'm sure Peter can describe his feelings from Malaysia, fighting for victory which was a deserved result and a very positive surprise.

To the four team principals: during the Silverstone weekend, an article was published in The Daily Mail in London in which Mr Ecclestone was quoted that commercially the Concorde Agreement was all agreed, saying that the commercial terms for the replacement of the present Concorde had been agreed with everybody. Could you four team principals confirm that you have actually signed a document with Mr Ecclestone, which forms part of the replacement for the 2013 Concorde?

FT: Toro Rosso signed a Concorde agreement.

NH: I'm not one of the four.

PS: I think... we have an agreement with Bernie, yes. We have signed an agreement with Bernie.

JB: We haven't signed an agreement.

Mr Haug, you may not be a team principal but you are here as a Mercedes Benz representative. To the best of your knowledge has Mercedes signed a document with Bernie.

NH: Well, I can only tell you that we are in constructive discussion still, so that implies that we didn't sign yet.

In terms of younger drivers coming up, how actively do you look at the supporting categories and the feeder series and how much interest do you take and how active a part do you play?

FT: From my side, I only look at Formula Three races, Formula Renault races, the two litre and 3.5 litre, GP3 and GP2 of course and to get an overview of skilled drivers, because, as you know, Toro Rosso is a team which is responsible to Red Bull to provide good, young, skilled drivers.

NH: Well, I'm looking at it, traditionally, as much as I have time. I'm following it as well as I can, if I'm not busy.

PS: With Esteban Gutierrez we have a test and spare driver in the GP2 series, but for us, it is not possible to support some drivers and some teams in this series.

MS: As a team we are obviously involved in the formulae and look closely at potential young drivers. As an individual, I have limited time to do that.

JB: Yes, we are actively involved in GP3 and GP2 and in fact we gave our GP2 drivers a run out at Silverstone last week in the young drivers' test, so we watch all categories but particularly GP2 and GP3.

Following on from the young driver testing, I was wondering if the other four guys could talk about where they're planning their young driver test this year. I understand Mercedes is considering running in France. Is that correct?

NH: No. It's probably not finally decided.

PS: We will test in Abu Dhabi, I think so. I hope we can do the test there with three different drivers and with Esteban Gutierrez of course.

FT: As it looks now, we will also drive in Abu Dhabi, but it's not 100 percent decided with which drivers we are running there.

JB: We had a look at the calendar at the end of the year and Abu Dhabi would have meant that the mechanics were working or travelling for five consecutive weeks and five weeks away from home. We didn't feel that we had the necessary manpower or human resource or parts for the car to conduct that kind of the test, so we opted to use Silverstone last week.

MS: We plan to be in Abu Dhabi.

Franz, this season has been a little bit disappointing for Toro Rosso. Could you just give an overview of what you think has gone wrong with the team, and where you can maybe improve to get the kind of results that you would expect?

FT: The season's not over yet. So far we started the season quite well. We scored points at the beginning and then we struggled a little bit. For example, in Monaco, Jean-Eric Vergne was in seventh place ten laps from the end but then it started to rain a little bit and di Resta and some others passed him. In Valencia, Daniel had a good chance to score points but then he had a crash with Petrov. I think that we will come up with some new upgrades for the next races and I hope that it's wet tomorrow here and on Sunday because it looks as if the car and the drivers together are quite competitive in the wet. And I'm quite positive and optimistic for the second half of the season.

Can you comment on Michael's accident at the end of practice, Mr Haug?

NH: He just lost it. He was on the radio and he said 'not fully concentrated.' Things like that just happen, it's not an ideal situation but we can recover, I'm sure.

Norbert and Peter mainly: we're now reaching the middle of the season: how do you see the development? Do you believe that we already have the top three teams in a situation where it will be difficult for the others to catch up? Or do you understand that it's still open as many people say, in terms of winning races?

PS: I think it's still open. It's not so easy for us. Maybe it's easier for Norbert, I don't know.

NH: I think it's still open, and if you look, there were possibilities. I think Peter can tell some stories and has some memories of that. I have some where we didn't score the points which were possible. Probably other people as well. But I would not say that there is a big gap at the moment. You really need to get your act together, get the set-up right and then, as I said before, we can have quite a few cars that are very competitive and I can see the situation not changing in the short term.

Talking about the young driver test - and here I'm talking generally, not a specific, this year situation - but if we have a look at some teams testing at Silverstone, some at Abu Dhabi, I believe that some are going to Magny Cours after Monza, others are looking at Jerez in early December: is it impossible for 12 teams to actually agree on three days out of 365 to go testing?

FT: We were discussing this for a long time and as John just mentioned before, one of the main arguments against Abu Dhabi for some teams was that the mechanics would have been out for five weeks and then we decided, OK, to split the test with Silverstone, because teams which are situated in England wanted to do the test at Silverstone and OK, now a third race track, Magny Cours, has come into the plan and normally we should say OK, let's do the test altogether, three days at the end of the season, but you know we are in a democratic world and therefore it was decided to split it.

F1 German Grand Prix – FP3 report

There were two bits of bad news shortly before the final practice session of the German Grand Prix weekend got underway in Hockenheim. Mark Webber had to use a new gearbox when his exploded on start-up; the Red Bull driver now joins Nico Rosberg and Romain Grosjean in starting Sunday's race with a five-place grid penalty.

The other bit of bad news concerned Marussia's Charles Pic; the Frenchman needed a replacement engine at the last minute, and missed the bulk of the session while the team's mechanics did an impressive high-speed strip, swap, and rebuild of the car. Pic was able to get on track with 15 minutes remaining, but had rather less than 15 minutes' running...

While the vast majority of that final hour on track was run in the dry, the last eight minutes were beset with a mix of drizzle and torrential rain, depending on whereabouts you were on the track at the time. The rain fell just as the bulk of runners had swapped to the soft tyre with a view to completing qualifying simulations, and there was little they could do but tread gingerly back to the pits.

By and large it was a fairly quiet session – drivers ran, tyres were changed, and times fell accordingly. There were no shunts, offs, or serious spins, and little in the way of obvious development work.

Turn 1 continues to be a problem for the drivers, most of whom ran wide on that corner at some point during the session. But special mention should be made of Grosjean, who ran wide at Turn 1 on no fewer than six occasions. After the fifth he was warned by the team that the FIA would penalise him should the Lotus driver run wide again, but there has been no update on that since the session came to an end.

FP3 times (unofficial)

1. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1.16.014s [14 laps]
2. Lewis Hamilton (McLaren) 1.16.091s [21 laps]
3. Sergio Perez (Sauber) 1.16.202s [21 laps]
4. Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus) 1.16.238s [27 laps]
5. Mark Webber (Red Bull) 1.16.447s [19 laps]
6. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1.16.475s [18 laps]
7. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) 1.16.664s [18 laps]
8. Felipe Massa (Ferrari) 1.16.771s [15 laps]
9. Kamui Kobayashi (Sauber) 1.16.807s [25 laps]
10. Bruno Senna (Williams) 1.16.930s [23 laps]
11. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1.16.962s [26 laps]
12. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) 1.17.033s [26 laps]
13. Paul di Resta (Force India) 1.17.148s [24 laps]
14. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso) 1.17.238s [25 laps]
15. Michael Schumacher (Mercedes) 1.17.266s [22 laps]
16. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1.17.419s [23 laps]
17. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1.17.491s [26 laps]
18. Heikki Kovalainen (Caterham) 1.18.366s [21 laps]
19. Vitaly Petrov (Caterham) 1.18.818s [23 laps]
20. Pedro de la Rosa (HRT) 1.19.778s [22 laps]
21. Timo Glock (Marussia) 1.20.235s [22 laps]
22. Charles Pic (Marussia) 1.20.318s [9 laps]
23. Narain Karthikeyan (HRT) 1.20.741s [22 laps]
24. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1.20.914s [25 laps]

F1 German Grand Prix – Q1 report

When the pitlane opened for the first qualifying session of the German Grand Prix weekend, the clouds were menacing but the skies were dry. For now.

As a consequence, the cars poured out of the pitlane en masse when the green light went on. There might be a limited window in which to get a dry lap time on the boards, and no one wants to be the one who was dropped out due to poor timing.

With the first series of times up on the board after five minutes, it was Ferrari's Fernando Alonso who topped the timesheets with 1.16.567s, putting a number of surprising names in violation of the 107 percent rule – and no one from HRT. But those poor times were less to do with slow cars and more to do with driver error on a first lap, and as a result are nothing to get het up about.

By the time the session was half run, the split between Lewis Hamilton's P1-worthy 1.16.221s and Nico Hulkenberg's place at the top of the dropout zone was a mere 1.4s, with the first thirteen drivers covered by a single second. The margins here are tighter than tight.

Hovering in or on the edge of the dropout zone are both Force Indias and both Toro Rossos, with the four drivers from the two teams lapping within two-tenths of each other.

Romain Grosjean continued with his FP3 bad habit of running off the track at Turn 1, with two violations in his first two laps. The FIA warned the Lotus driver that running off excessively would lead to penalty, but they don't appear to have acted against him.

Hulkenberg popped up in a temporary P2 after a 1.16.271s lap, pushing Daniel Ricciardo into the dropout zone. The next two vulnerable drivers on the list are Paul di Resta and Grosjean; Jean-Eric Vergne saved his skin with a 1.16.741s lap.

With less than five minutes remaining, Kimi Raikkonen is sitting pretty atop the timesheets with a 1.15.693s. The Finn's exceptional time has increased the split covering the drivers; now it is the top eleven who are covered by a single second.

It's all change at the edge of the dropout zone at the two-minute mark, with Mark Webber in P18 and on a flyer that could see the P17 Michael Schumacher knocked out. Next up are Bruno Senna and Vergne; the Frenchman is at the greatest risk of being knocked out as he is in the pits while his rivals are all out on track with less than a minute remaining.

Webber saves himself, going up to P15 (but crucially above the not-moving Vergne), putting Schumacher in the dropout zone with only one lap in which to earn a place in Q2.

Neither Red Bull is in a great position; the cars are 0.7s and 0.9s off the pace set by Raikkonen.

Schumacher does it – just – and the man to pay the consequences of sitting in the pits is Vergne, who has not had the best qualifying strategy this season.

Dropout zone

18. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso)
19. Heikki Kovalainen (Caterham)
20. Vitaly Petrov (Caterham)
21. Charles Pic (Marussia)
22. Timo Glock (Marussia)
23. Pedro de la Rosa (HRT)
24. Narain Karthikeyan (HRT)

F1 German Grand Prix – Q2 report

A minute before the pitlane was due to open for Q2, Hockenheim was shaken by a massive roll of thunder. Seconds later, the heavens opened.

But the wet conditions did not deter the drivers, who are well aware that it might get even worse – the earlier you can get a banker in, even if it's slow, the more likely you are to have a time on the board in the unlikely eventuality that the session is called off.

All seventeen drivers were out on track within two minutes of the session starting, the FIA declared a change in climatic conditions and race control disabled DRS.

The lap times are certain to be much slower than those logged in the first session; drivers are feeling their way gingerly around an increasingly slippery track, and there's more than a bit of sliding going on. Jenson Button's first lap was nearly 13s slower than his best effort in Q1 – that's how wet it is.

This session is more about survival than it is outright pace – the Ferraris of Felipe Massa and Fernando Alonso came within millimetres of crashing into each other, and one wet kerb and a tyre wall is all it will take to guarantee a place in the dropout zone.

Michael Schumacher showed off his legendary wet weather skills, taking the top slot five minutes into the session with a 1.38.010s that made up for his less than stellar performance in Q1. But the German rain master was soon dethroned by Lewis Hamilton, himself a wet weather specialist, who was the first driver to break into the 1m37s.

Slowest of the men on track as the session reached its midpoint was Nico Rosberg, driving the same Mercedes that Schumacher put (briefly) at the top of the charts. The younger driver was 3.5s slower than his teammate, and nearly a full second slower than Bruno Senna in provisional P16. With just under seven minutes remaining, Rosberg returned to the pits for a change of rubber before heading out and giving it another shot.

The provisional dropout zone at the six-minute mark is Daniel Ricciardo, Sergio Perez, Kamui Kobayashi, Felipe Massa, Romain Grosjean, Senna, and Rosberg.

With three minutes remaining, the dropout zone looks unlikely to change – despite the best efforts of those soon to be knocked out, the increasingly heavy rain is making it something of a challenge to improve lap times.

Those out on track are running wide like there's no tomorrow, and drivers and teams alike are lucky that we've not seen anyone hit the barriers, or beached in the kitty litter.

With less than a minute remaining, Ricciardo appears to have given up on the idea of breaking out of the dropout zone; the Australian is in the pits and has no time in which to start a flying lap.

Dropout zone

11. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso)
12. Sergio Perez (Sauber)
13. Kamui Kobayashi (Sauber)
14. Felipe Massa (Ferrari)
15. Romain Grosjean (Lotus)
16. Bruno Senna (Williams)
17. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes)

F1 German Grand Prix – Q3 report

While the rain eased off for the final qualifying session in Hockenheim, track conditions were less than ideal. We've got puddles, standing water, and spray so strong it's about to be turned into cranberry juice.

The McLarens were the first to leave the pits, eager to get a time on the board but condemned to creating a dry(ish) line for the others to follow.

Nico Hulkenberg showed just how slippery the track could be, spinning his car at Turn 5 and narrowly avoiding a premature end to his session.

Top of the timesheets at the midpoint was Sebastian Vettel with a 1.44.605s, but the Red Bull driver was displaced first by Lewis Hamilton and then by Michael Schumacher. This last chunk of qualifying is not about who is the fastest driver – in these conditions it's all about who crosses the line last after a clean lap on a drying track.

Vettel claims provisional pole at home with a 1.42.342s lap with two minutes remaining; Schumacher is closest to him with a 1.42.473s lap, and the next fastest man on the boards is Hamilton with a 1.44.186s.

With around thirty seconds remaining, Mark Webber scoops pole from his teammate, but the Australian is quickly beaten by Fernando Alonso with a 1.40.904s.

Hamilton had one last chance at a flying lap, but was two seconds down at the end of the first sector, an unbeatable margin in these conditions. Teammate Jenson Button managed a slight improvement for McLaren, but neither driver will see the front row tomorrow afternoon.

Alonso scoops his second pole of the season with a 1.40.621s lap, crossing the line after the chequered flag fell.

Provisional grid

1. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari)
2. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull)
3. Michael Schumacher (Mercedes)
4. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India)
5. Pastor Maldonado (Williams)
6. Jenson Button (McLaren)
7. Lewis Hamilton (McLaren)
8. Mark Webber (Red Bull)*
9. Paul di Resta (Force India)
10. Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus)
11. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso)
12. Kamui Kobayashi (Sauber)
13. Felipe Massa (Ferrari)
14. Bruno Senna (Williams)
15. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso)
16. Heikki Kovalainen (Caterham)
17. Sergio Perez (Sauber)**
18. Vitaly Petrov (Caterham)
19. Romain Grosjean (Lotus)***
20. Charles Pic (Marussia)
21. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes)****
22. Timo Glock (Marussia)
23. Pedro de la Rosa (HRT)
24. Narain Karthikeyan (HRT)

* Mark Webber was issued with a five-place grid penalty for a gearbox change, and will start Sunday's race from P8, despite qualifying in P3.

** Sergio Perez was issued with a five-place grid penalty for impeding Alonso and Raikkonen in qualifying, and will start Sunday's race from P17, despite qualifying in P12.

*** Romain Grosjean was issued with a five-place grid penalty for a gearbox change, and will start Sunday's race from P19, despite qualifying in P15.

**** Nico Rosberg was issued with a five-place grid penalty for a gearbox change, and will start Sunday's race from P21, despite qualifying in P17.

F1 German Grand Prix – Saturday press conference

It was one of the most climatically varied qualifying sessions in recent memory, with dry, wet, torrential, and drying conditions at different points in the sixty minute period.

Present at the post-qualifying press conference were Fernando Alonso (Ferrari), Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull), and Mark Webber (Red Bull).

Congratulations Fernando, a second successive pole, but we heard on the team radio before the start of Q3 saying it was just too dangerous to go out there. It's stopped raining now so do you want to go back and do it again?

Fernando ALONSO: Well, I think it's still on the limit, the conditions. As far as it's the same for everybody, I think sometimes it's good to check the circuit conditions. But we did Q3, but I think going into turn six it was not easy for anybody – there was a lot of aquaplaning and we are at 280-290km/h. But you know, I think everything went well for us. We got caught a little bit in those aquaplaning moments but the rest of the lap was clean. I also think we made a good strategy call, doing a pit stop in Q3 and then having very fresh tyres in the last minute when the track was in a little bit better condition and I think that helped us a lot to improve the lap time.

Sebastian, second on the grid for you, and the first time you've beaten a team-mate in the German Grand Prix at Hockenheim. You and Mark were running quite close together. You could have gone a bit faster? Were you held up?

Sebastian VETTEL: Well, I lost a lap obviously running into him, but it's difficult in these conditions. You can see nothing in the mirror. He probably didn't see me and then with two laps to go the chequered flag, or the finish line, you can't back off enough to let people go, and get your lap again. So, for sure that lost a little bit but the track was best at the end, so it was the last lap, which not entirely clean. In these conditions it's extremely tricky. You lose the car a little bit over the rivers on the track and you're in a different place than you target to be. So, tricky but nevertheless I think we had the pace today to put the car on pole in the end, I think the lap time was possible. We need to look at what Fernando did at the end, as he touched on, with the strategy. Maybe that was a better way to do it. But overall I think that in these conditions it's always a bit of a lottery as well. You can lose the car without doing any mistake, in aquaplaning conditions. So, fortunately we didn't lose it and yeah we are on the first row which is good, and I'm starting on the inside as well so we'll see what happens tomorrow.

For you Mark, going into qualifying you knew there was a five-place penalty coming your way, so how much trickier did the conditions makes things: knowing that if you did run wide or crash that would totally ruin your race?

Mark WEBBER: Yeah. Tricky for all of us – dodgy conditions, especially when it got wet. Obviously, I did a better job than the other guys who have five-place penalty. It was very, very easy for all of us to not get it right today. So I'm very happy to be quite a long way up. We could have done a bit better here and there perhaps but we did our best out there at that point. We could have maybe done something when Fernando stopped but ifs, but, 'shoulda', 'coulda', 'woulda': it doesn't count. We're third. Eighth now with the penalty for the gearbox but looking to come forward tomorrow.

Back to you Fernando. How confident are you for tomorrow that your Ferrari is the car for all conditions, whatever the German weather might throw at it this weekend?

FA: Yeah, it has been a strange weekend for conditions on the track. I think we have touched on all conditions through the weekend – we've run on inters, extreme and dry tyres both days, and tomorrow the same. If we have to repeat the same thing we will do it. But a dry race: the forecast should be a little bit better for tomorrow so let's see. But I think that the car was performing well in all conditions so we are quite optimistic for tomorrow.

Sebastian, if I could turn to you briefly. We've seen Ferrari and Red Bull [battling for victory] at the last race in Silverstone. Is that a foretaste of the season to come? Is it Ferrari and Red Bull that will be having the closest battles at the sharp end?

SV: I don't think so. I think there are also other teams you still need to be aware of, there's still a long way to go. There's no big difference in points so far. I don't think you can rule out McLaren. They have been extremely quick in qualifying though in the last qualifying on the extremes I don't know quite what went wrong but they were quite a bit far behind. They will be extremely quick tomorrow. Lotus have been extremely quick in the race in the last couple of races. So it's still extremely close I would say. It looks like we are consistent and consistently strong, able to finish in the top three, which is the key. So we try to do our best tomorrow and see what the weather does. I think the forecast looks dry so we'll see where we are.

For your Mark: you can at least do a little bit of overtaking during the race tomorrow. Is this the right track; are these the right conditions; are you in the right car to try to achieve that?

MW: Of course. We'll aim to go forward, for sure. We've shown the car is strong in all conditions and we're going to look to come through. But we have many, many quick cars out there. It's never ideal to put ourselves on the back foot by shooting ourselves in the foot, with some penalties here and there but we'll keep boxing and we're looking forward to the grand prix tomorrow.

Well Fernando, give us some idea what it was like to be out there: fun? Difficult? Incredibly difficult?

FA: Not fun, that's for sure. I think the problem is that you don't know the conditions. It was similar in Silverstone. You wait five, seven minutes in the garage and then you have completely different grip and completely different standing water in places that you don't expect. So in the out-laps you try to memorise a little bit where the water is and how much to push, to feel a little bit with the car the grip. Then you start opening the lap you go surprise after surprise with the car, having moments everywhere, especially with aquaplaning into Turn Six. So, it was not easy qualifying for anybody, and at the end it was a good result but, as you ask, it was not fun for sure.

But hugely satisfying, presumably, to be on pole?

FA: Yeah, very. I think when you have this type of conditions it's very difficult to put a clean lap together and it's very easy to finish in the gravel or to finish in the grass, the wall or whatever. So, those type of conditions are a little bit of a survival moment, that you need to finish the qualifying and see afterwards what position you get. You try to complete the lap, to avoid any problem, and then whatever the position is, you are happy, because you know you were at the maximum, or you felt that you were at the maximum. So when they tell you, you are on pole, it's obviously a very happy moment. But the race is tomorrow, today was good but we need to concentrate for tomorrow and also look at the sky – because the weather has been so changeable at the moment – yesterday and today – and tomorrow we need to be ready for anything.

There was a bit of a worrying Ferrari moment in Q2 there.

FA: It was close. It started raining at the beginning of Q2 and we all wanted to set a time at the beginning of the session because we expected more rain to come. The first or second lap we knew was the best moment to set a time. So we were all in a group. Felipe had a moment in Turn Six and then in Turn Eight and we were very close but it was fine in the end.

Sebastian, does July look a little bit better now?

SV: I think it can't be that bad, I was born in July, so... I said it on Thursday and nothing has changed. I think it was an interesting session, and as Fernando said, things can go completely the other way from what you expect. So, I was not entirely happy with the lap I had in the end when conditions were best. Potentially the strategy Fernando had in the end was a little bit quicker – but nevertheless I think I could have gone a little bit quicker. Whether it would have been quick enough, we'll never know. I will see what we can get tomorrow.

We saw Mark getting frustrated with other cars – was that the case for all of you?

SV: What do you mean frustrated with other cars?

There was obviously somebody ahead of him...

SV: Well, I think the thing is, if you are too close to someone in these conditions you can't see nothing. I was catching up Mark and in the mirrors obviously you can't see nothing, so I guess he couldn't see me. I don't think he had intention to hold me up. Obviously I lost two laps because of that. But, as I said, the fastest was still the last one. And then if you keep catching someone up, even if he's still three, four, five seconds down the road, you go on the straight, the spray comes up, you see nothing, you don't see the rivers and all of a sudden you are sideways. The car is in seventh gear, 280kph and it's a surprise. So yeah, it's on the limit but obviously you have to do your best under these conditions, everyone else is pushing as well, so no choice.

How do you feel about the car in the dry, which we hope it will be tomorrow?

SV: I think it should be dry. Obviously I grew up more or less here in the area. I'm surprised it's that bad actually, in July, because July is always a nice month weather-wise. Yeah, so, I hope for a good race tomorrow, looking forward. I think the car is not bad if we get in the right window – so we need to see what we've done this morning and qualifying. Obviously with the conditions changing so much you never find consistency and you can't really test one thing against another. But I think the speed is there, we just need to find out how the car works best. Obviously now we can't change anything but I think the changes we've made should be a step forward, especially in the dry.

Mark, your best qualifying position here, things look a little bit better for you. It hasn't always been lucky, as we mentioned the other day.

MW: Yeah, as the other guys have touched on, it was an intense, tricky session for drivers, engineers, decisions. Yeah, it was a challenge for us. I think in Q3, definitely to arrive on the straight in seventh gear was sometimes not possible. To use the KERS wasn't possible, there was extremely heavy aquaplaning, so when the cars are having wheelspin at 280ks it certainly gets your attention. So we had to juggle a few balls, and make sure we arrived at the end of each lap in reasonable shape. It was becoming obvious that the times were going to be done at the end but I think there was a few people out there with tyres not in the best shape at the end, so Fernando's strategy looked pretty good. But in the end I was happy with my lap; happy to be up there again. Yeah, would have liked to have been on the front row. Obviously every position I gained was better against the penalty that I have for the gearbox – but eighth is still OK here, we can race from there.

What are you hoping for tomorrow, a podium at least?

MW: A win. No. Well, y'know. We've got to aim to come forward, I mean that's what we've got to do. It's not the best position to start the grand prix, that's clear. To start eighth is not ideal but we have to aim to come forward and let's see what happens at the front, let's see how the race goes. We've had limited running in the dry, there's been snapshots of information for the teams to get some information. I'm positive going into the race and will try to pick some people off over the course of the grand prix.

Fernando, you've had massive performance on dry tyres, on wet, extreme wet; are you happy also with the direction that the car is developing? And the next question is, would you be happy with a podium tomorrow or are you aiming for your 30th victory?

FA: Yeah, the car is performing well in all conditions this weekend, which didn't always happen: we were quick on inters and not extreme and vice versa, sometimes good on wets and not so competitive on dries but it's true that this weekend both Felipe and me were happy with the balance of the car and also quite competitive in all conditions, so overall, until now it's been a very good weekend for us in terms of car performance, but we need to finish the job tomorrow. Tomorrow we will try to do our best; whatever the position will be at the end is difficult to know because we didn't have enough dry running, I think, to know about degradation, tyre performance etc, because Friday we had some rain in FP1 and this morning in FP3 was not a big preparation for the race either, so tomorrow is a question mark for everybody. We will all start the race in the same condition with some things to learn during the race, very open in strategy, very flexible because, as I said, we don't have enough information from the weekend so far.

Fernando, how crucial was it that you changed tyres in Q3; your main rivals didn't do that?

FA: I think it was a very good decision in the end, because obviously I didn't know what timed lap you could do if you kept running but as soon as I put on the second set of tyres, I found a little bit more grip in the car. Also the track was improving obviously, but I think we improved a little bit more thanks to the tyres, not only the track conditions, so I'm happy with the strategy today and I think it was the right call.

Sebastian, can you describe what it is like to drive when you can't see out there? How do you drive, do you hear, do you smell; how is it possible. I can't imagine?

SV: Of course you can see a little bit. It's not as if you could close your eyes and it's the same. Don't get me wrong, but you can't see where the track is going. Obviously you know where it's going, you don't need a map to find out where you are but all you see is just the very first bit in front of your car. There are rivers everywhere and there's probably only two lanes: one for the left hand side, one for the right hand side. If you are in that, you are more or less OK but as soon as you are a little bit left, a little bit to the right, a little bit to the left of that then you are in trouble. As soon as the car aquaplanes you are a passenger so there's not much you can do. Obviously once you start to brake and the spray decreases, it gets much better, but the closer you are to another car the worse it is. Even if you are four/five seconds behind on the straights, it's always worse. If you are the first car out and there's no one ahead of you, it's not a big big problem. You still have to drive your way around the puddles and the rivers but at least you can see where you're going. It's not the nicest feeling but that's how it is.

Fernando, you must be aggressive at the start of the race, because Sebastian makes very good starts this season and last year?

FA: Yes, we will see. Obviously it will depend on how the start is. Sometimes you feel a good start straightaway and you concentrate on the first corner line. If you feel too much wheelspin or too little, you try to cover it a little bit to protect your position, but obviously the race is long, 67 laps in front of us and everything isn't finished at the first corner. So far, our starts have probably been the best this year so I'm not too worried at the moment.

Sebastian, today it was very wet and it's probably going to be dry tomorrow, so how is it to change conditions for your team and for yourself?

SV: Well, I think we had some laps in the dry this weekend but for sure at the start of the race it will be difficult for all of us. Not all of us have done runs on heavy fuel. I think the McLarens did but I don't think Ferrari and us did this morning, so we will see, but it shouldn't be a big problem. We know the circuit pretty well and hopefully we will find the braking point for - not necessarily the first corner but the second corner and then the hairpin and then yeah, you have time to get into the rhythm.

F1 German Grand Prix - Race report

With a commanding performance at the HockenheimRing Fernando Alonso showed the world just why he's considered the most complete driver on a grid bursting with talent.

The Spanish racer started Sunday's race from pole, and was the man to take the chequered flag, but make no mistake - this was no easy lights-to-flag win. Instead, the Ferrari driver was under pressure from Sebastian Vettel and Jenson Button for all 67 laps of the German Grand Prix, and he did well to keep the chasing pack of faster cars behind him.

At no point was it an easy race for Alonso. The Ferrari driver spent the final stint delivering a masterclass in tyre management as the cars behind waited in vain for that inevitable moment when his tyres would fall off the cliff and they would be free to pounce and challenge for the win. But the waiting game doesn't always pay off, as was the case in Germany.

What was particularly striking about the race as a whole was the way it managed to combine being interesting yet dull. There was action aplenty on track - and not all of the passing was DRS-powered - yet the German Grand Prix lacked the sort of tension we're used to seeing emerge from the closing gaps on the timing screens.

But while the race as a whole lacked tension, it didn't lack examples of stellar driving. Particularly good - especially for those whose television feed allowed them to pick their own battles to follow - was the battle between Kimi Raikkonen and Michael Schumacher that took place in and around the first pitstop phase, between laps 17 and 24.

The only retirement of the race came about courtesy of Lewis Hamilton, who celebrated his 100th grand prix with a nightmare of an afternoon. The McLaren driver was passed off the start by Mark Webber, punctured his tyre on debris from Felipe Massa's front wing on the first lap, and then spent the rest of his race fighting through the pack and well out of the points at every stage.

But this was no poor show on the Briton's part. Despite a miserable start to the afternoon - so bad that Hamilton radioed his team to ask if he could retire on lap 4 - the McLaren driver was lapping on a similar pace to the race leaders 65 seconds ahead of him on track. And while he suffered the indignity of being lapped by his own teammate, he was able to cause a bit of trouble at the head of the pack with his efforts to unlap himself.

The lapped but fast Hamilton caused a little bit of chaos - and no shortage of vitriolic comments from Sebastian Vettel - when he put his McLaren between the P1 Alonso and the P2 Vettel in his attempts to unlap himself, conveniently slowing down the Red Bull enough that teammate Jenson Button might have been able to get past.

But Button - who ended the race on the podium, and was promoted to P2 in the aftermath - spent much of the race asleep, and failed to take advantage of the opportunity that his teammate attempted to hand him on a plate.

It was fairly indicative of Button's afternoon as a whole - while his low-performance slump now appears to be a thing of the recent past, the British racer's afternoon was characterised by a string of missed opportunities that cost him and McLaren a possible win.

Despite being within DRS range of Alonso for much of the early phase of the final stint, Button never pounced. Instead, he was waiting - in vain, as it transpired - for Alonso's tyres to fall off the cliff. But while Button is supposed to be one of the kings of tyre management, he was unable to maintain grip for as long as the Spaniard, and instead found himself vulnerable to the swiftly closing Vettel. Vettel eventually made it past by leaving the track at the hairpin...

After the race the stewards issued Vettel with a 20-second time penalty, demoting the Red Bull driver to P5, and promoting Button, Kimi Raikkonen, and Kamui Kobayashi.

German Grand Prix results (unofficial)

1. Fernando Alonso Ferrari 1h31m05.862s
2. Sebastian Vettel Red Bull) + 3.732s
3. Jenson Button McLaren) + 6.949s
4. Kimi Raikkonen Lotus) + 16.409s
5. Kamui Kobayashi Sauber) + 21.925s
6. Sergio Perez Sauber) + 27.896s
7. Michael Schumacher Mercedes + 28.960s
8. Mark Webber Red Bull) + 46.900s
9. Nico Hulkenberg Force India) + 48.162s
10. Nico Rosberg Mercedes + 48.889s
11. Paul di Resta Force India) + 59.227s
12. Daniel Ricciardo Toro Rosso) + 1m11.428s
13. Felipe Massa Ferrari + 1m16.829s

14. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) + 1m16.965s
15. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) + 1 lap
16. Vitaly Petrov (Caterham) + 1 lap
17. Bruno Senna (Williams) + 1 lap
18. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) + 1 lap
19. Heikki Kovalainen (Caterham) + 2 laps
20. Charles Pic (Marussia) + 2 laps
21. Pedro de la Rosa (HRT) + 3 laps
22. Timo Glock (Marussia) + 3 laps
23. Narain Karthikeyan (HRT) + 3 laps

Lewis Hamilton (McLaren) RET

F1 German Grand Prix – Sunday press conference

It was something of a bizarre post-race press conference, as the three men on the podium – and the three who faced the media – were unlikely to be the three men classified as the top three finishers come the end of the day.

Present were Fernando Alonso (Ferrari), Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull), and Jenson Button (McLaren).

Congratulations Fernando, your third win, what do you think of a Spaniard in an Italian car, to win the German Grand Prix in front of all these German people here?

Fernando ALONSO: OK, so I'm not a fan of politics so much but it is true that the situation is not great in Spain but it's fun to drive an Italian car – designed by a Greek man – it's good to win here. But, we enjoyed the race. We were competitive yesterday in wet conditions and today, starting on pole was, I think, the key factor, because it was difficult to overtake. We were maybe not the fastest but we keep the position.

Sebastian, I have a difficult question. First of all you are second, congratulations, but I know that the stewards are looking because Jenson wasn't very happy with the way you passed him. So, what do you think about it?

Sebastian VETTEL: Well, he didn't say anything to me, so... he didn't complain to me so... it was a difficult one, I wasn't sure whether he was still on the inside or not and obviously the last thing you want to do is make contact, so, yeah, because at the angle he's side by side but not really and I can't see him from the inside of the car, so I tried to give enough room and then went wide and obviously we're all struggling with our tyres, Jenson in particular, and that's how I was able to get close and pass him.

Congratulations Jenson, congratulations being third. Quick comment on the pass from Sebastian. Happy about it?

Jenson BUTTON: Well, first of all I want to say thank you to the crowd. It's amazing to see so many people here in the paddock. I had a great race out there. It's nice to be fighting at the front again. It's been a little while. But I had a great race and I don't wish to comment at the moment on the manoeuvre at Turn Six.

Fernando, well done, you were under pressure the whole time, I think the biggest lead you had was two seconds. How tough a race was it?

FA: It was tough, definitely, I don't think it was an easy race because maybe we were not the quickest on dry conditions. But we were quite competitive, enough to maintain the lead. Also it was some good calls by the team in terms of strategy in the first stop and then obviously in the second stop when Jenson pits, we have to react, Sebastian and me, and up to that point I knew it was a long race, 27 laps to the end with Jenson putting a lot of pressure, but I don't know, the car was feeling good, feeling good on traction and top speed, so it was enough to keep the lead into Turn Six. And then after that it is not possible to overtake in the last sector, so you try to control the tyres and, a little bit the race.

How much of a mystery were the tyres?

FA: It was a question mark, I think, for everybody because we didn't test on Friday enough laps to understand the tyres, also last year it was at the Nürburgring so the first time for Pirelli in this asphalt. The predictions, more or less, were right; we were thinking to do two stops and at the end it was two stops. The lap, I think, is very flexible. It depends on when the others stop, especially if you are in the lead, because you just need to cover them. But yeah, it was not big surprises, degradation was quite low, as suspected and it was fine.

Looking back at the last couple of races, and this one now as well, what are you feeling about next weekend?

FA: Well, it's going to be tight again. It's a very short circuit in Hungary again, and as we saw this year, in two- or three-tenths there are eight, nine cars. In Hungary we need to make a perfect preparation again, a perfect qualifying, because you can be starting in 12th or 13th if you make a little mistake, so we need to approach the race in the same way we did the last couple of races, try to maximise what we have in Hungary and hopefully bring in some new parts that can help us in that circuit.

It's a circuit where you have a little history, I think your first win there?

FA: Yes.

Is it a circuit that will also suit Ferrari?

FA: I think so. I think at the moment the car seems OK in all areas, there is not weak points, as maybe we had at the beginning of the season, that we were suffering a little bit on traction and top speed. Now I think that we are OK on that. In Hungary I think with these slow speed corners, traction etc., I don't see any problem with the car and we should be competitive there.

Sebastian, you got very close to Fernando and then there was Lewis Hamilton in there as well. How much did that upset the rhythm of things?

SV: That was not nice of him. I don't see the point why he's trying to race us. If he wants to go fast he can drop back, find a gap and go fast there. But it's a bit stupid to disturb the leaders. He was a lap down so I don't see the point anyways. I think that potentially lost us the position to Jenson. Because

soon after that we pitted, I think only two or three laps after that. So yeah, I think all in all the pace was there but it was extremely difficult once we were close to Fernando, and also in the end closer to Jenson. We seemed to lose quite a lot and not stay close enough to really try something for the following corner or to get close at the straights to try something under braking, so that seemed to be the problem. Yeah, so... ah, not entirely happy. I think we could have been a little bit better in clean air if we would have, yeah, been in clean air for most of the race. But that wasn't the case, so all in all I think we did a good race, especially a good recovery at the end, looking after the tyres and getting past Jenson. It was more a less a question of when to pass him as his tyres were in quite poor shape and he was struggling a lot. So happy to take second in the end.

You needed a little bit of extra circuit as well to do it...

SV: Yeah, obviously I tried to out-brake him, then he released the brake a little bit so he was at the inside and I wasn't sure if he had given up the corner or not. I was thinking 'he's fighting for the position', so I didn't... I was thinking 'he's still there', which I think he was, and I didn't want to close and turn in too early, I wanted to leave him some space and obviously it's difficult to know at that time where exactly he is, so the last thing you want with two laps to go, or one lap to go is to have a crash in both of our positions. So then I decided to go off the circuit to make it safe for both of us. As it turned out his rear tyres had no traction so even on the paint, which is quite a lot more slippery than the asphalt, I was able to stay ahead. Then it was very close braking for Turn Eight, but I was able to stay ahead.

Jenson, what was your version of those events?

JB: There's nothing to say really, I think the TV cameras say it all. I'd rather talk about the race. For me it was a real fun race and I really enjoyed the race. I couldn't quite challenge Fernando in the last stint. When you're in the middle of three people, you really have to push, because you have to watch out for the guy behind and you're obviously trying to get past the guy in front. So I was probably pushing more than these two in the early part of the first stint but I had to, to try and get past Fernando and then when you're in the lead you can cruise it on the places where you can't get overtaking and obviously you have good tyres for the exit before DRS. So, it was a tricky situation but we thought it was best to go aggressive, which we did, but it was just one or two laps really.

And you were getting so close to Fernando as well?

JB: Yeah it was really close. But Fernando knows exactly, as we all do, how to use KERS to keep someone behind you, not just in the DRS zone but in other areas around the lap. I just ran out of steam at the end of the straight. It was a little bit too big, the gap, to get past. I'm a little bit disappointed with that but all in all a fun race and I really enjoyed racing out there today. It's nice to be back on the podium and to get some good points. In the last couple of races, as I've said, I've been very happy with the car – the balance of the car anyway – and my feeling with it, the confidence. The results haven't been there because the pace hasn't been there with the car. This race gives me a lot of confidence and I'm very happy with being up here. I have to say thanks to the guys for bringing good updates here. We're there or thereabouts at the front. Still a little bit more to go maybe. Also big thanks for the pits stops. The second pit stop was phenomenally quick and that's what put us in the fight for the win.

Fernando, it looks like a perfect weekend; yesterday you set your 22nd pole and today it's your 30th victory in Formula One. Did you really expect this much? And secondly, although there is still half of the championship to go, do you think the team and yourself have established the basis for your third world title?

FA: I think before coming here we were not sure about the performance of the car. It's true that we were OK in Valencia, but Red Bull was quicker than anybody there but we took advantage of the mechanical problem that Sebastian had in Valencia and we won the race there. In Silverstone we were OK in wet conditions but a little bit slower than Red Bull in dry conditions and Mark won the race and he deserved it, because he was the quickest. Yesterday, OK, we set pole in wet conditions again which seems to suit our car but in the dry, we again saw that we are still not the quickest. Sebastian and Jenson put a lot of pressure on us, also Hamilton was extremely quick but he had some problems in the race. It's halfway through the season; we made a very good recovery when you think of where we started in the Jerez test where we were maybe two seconds off the pace. In Australia we were 1.6s in Q2 and now we are very happy with the points that we have achieved in the first half but it means nothing, because there are still another ten races in which we need to improve the car. We need to be consistent and we need to keep finishing all the races. One or two drivers always don't finish the race because of mechanical problems or incidents or something, so we need to avoid these problems.

Fernando, don't you think it was risky to fight Hamilton as he was already lapped? You could have lost the race, because you lost some seconds.

FA: For me, yes, I didn't feel any risk to be honest. I knew that if Lewis was close enough and using the DRS and trying to overtake, going for it, I had a problem to leave the space and I knew that he was not in the race, so we didn't want to risk anything. For me, it was a good position to have Hamilton between me and Sebastian because we were approaching the pit stop time and having Hamilton there meant that Hamilton was around a second behind you and Sebastian was another second or 1.5s behind Lewis, so this 2.5s to Sebastian was very good, approaching the pit stop time so I tried to keep Lewis behind.

Sebastian, you were waving your hands at Hamilton; as you just said, you were upset about this. Do you think the rules should be changed, that someone who has been lapped should not be allowed to fight in the race?

SV: I think I've said it before, I don't think we need a different rule. As I said, if you want to go quick and you're a lap down and there's no chance to win the race any more, I think you should respect that and use common sense so I don't think we need a rule. I think everyone is aware. As I said, to be honest I didn't expect him to attack because I didn't see the point, and then I was surprised when he was side-by-side and lost quite a bit. For Fernando it was quite welcome, I think. He didn't mind. Then later on I saw that he was defending against Lewis so obviously he knew that as soon as he gets passed by Lewis he will lose some time, so he tried to avoid that, especially as we were approaching the pit stops.

Jenson, at the beginning of the last stint you flat-spotted the right front; was that a problem for the rest of the race?

JB: No, it gave me a little bit of a headache, but that was about it. It was unusual. I guess they just weren't up to temperature when I hit the brakes that time. We've been very good with front-locking in this race. Normally it's a big issue with the McLaren. In testing we had big issues with front locking. We did some set-up work and we've solved a lot of that, which is great for us. It makes a big big difference having confidence when you hit the brakes, but that was just a one-off time. It did give me vibration but it didn't continuously lock up because of the vibration which was positive.

Sebastian, how frightening was the news in the morning that Red Bull was under inspection by the FIA?

SV: I had the answers on the grid. Our car was on the grid and not in the pit lane so I guess it was fine. There wasn't much I could do, could I, so as I said, as soon as we got the message that it was fine, which I think we were convinced of, then there was no more need to spend any energy thinking about that.

Fernando, at the end of the race were you confident that you could keep the pace and not suffer a repeat of Silverstone when you lost the race in the last six laps?

FA: Yeah, I was more confident. At Silverstone, the problem was that we were with different tyres so we knew that in the last stint we would have a tough time coming because we were forced to put on the option tyre which we thought was the less performing tyre and for sure Webber was a little bit quicker on that. The stint here... stopping on the same lap as the others and putting on the same type of tyre, I was much more confident.

Sebastian, which feeling is stronger: not breaking your July spell in Germany or the happiness about your second place?

SV: Well, as I said, unfortunately there was never really a chance to start a manoeuvre to try to overtake. I think if I was close enough I would have tried for sure, because the target was to win, just as at all the other races, but we didn't have the chance, so, as I mentioned, in some phases of the race, we were quite competitive and very quick, I think quicker than Fernando. I was able to close the gap but then, yeah, not enough to get close enough. I think second place was the maximum we could get today, so I'm very happy with that. It was nice to be on the podium. It's my home Grand Prix and yeah, nice to see the fans and give something back.
