

F1 Singapore Blog - Sunday press conference

After yet another dominant win - and yet another round of boos on the podium - Sebastian Vettel appeared to be blinking back tears as he entered the post-race press conference in Singapore.

Present were Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull), Fernando Alonso (Ferrari), and Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus).

Q: Sebastian, it looked pretty easy from where we were sitting. How did it look from your carbon fibre seat?

Sebastian VETTEL: Obviously the start was quite hairy. Quite difficult with Nico having a good start, better than me. I didn't get going initially and then had to keep the inside clear to him but fortunately he went in a little bit too deep and I could get him back which was crucial because then we had some very good pace, controlled the first stint, with the safety car obviously it was difficult but then we seemed to come back. As soon as the safety car came in we had a very, very strong pace in the car. The car was incredible. I said to the team, you know this doesn't just happen like that, by accident or by luck. There's hard work behind, which I appreciate and it's just a pleasure to drive it around this crazy track.

Q: You could just take off at will, whenever you wanted to. It seemed to be the only man who could beat you today had the slowest car on the track, the safety car. It was the only thing that was going to stop you.

SV: Yeah, well I mean this is a long race, it seemed to go on forever, so there's a lot of things that can go wrong, the walls sometimes get really, really close, sometimes closer than you think. So you can't really afford to lean back. Obviously towards the end I was controlling the gap. It was helping that I was on fresh Options compared to these guys who were on very old Primes at the time, so we could control the gap to see the chequered flag.

Q: And physical? You're looking pretty sweaty up here. Was it a tough race?

SV: I think we're all sweating, not just the champagne men are wet, I think we all sweat a lot. As I said, it's hard work out there. It's quite hot but we like it. It's one of the toughest challenges all year and it's a very good feeling when you cross the line as a winner.

Q: Fernando, you're there. As always, you're right there. You made a lot of fans very happy again. Tell us about your start, it was electric.

Fernando ALONSO: Yeah, it was a fantastic start. We knew that we didn't have the pace today so we have to invent something. The first possibility was the start, then different strategy compared to the others. We did both things: a very good start and a different strategy. I think it paid off at the end. A fantastic podium, a second place that tastes like a victory for us.

Q: You pitted on lap 25 and put on the tyres that you ran to the end of the grand prix. When was that decision made? And how do you keep your tyres in when we saw the McLarens and many other drivers struggling with hopeless grip by the end?

FA: Yeah, it was a risky move but as I said, we are in a position in the championship where we have nothing to lose. To finish second in the race or to finish fifth: it doesn't matter too much to be honest so we push, we take care of the tyres, the car was performing really well in the race. And the fans pushed us a little bit to gain some extra tenths today.

Q: This man [Vettel] had some speed you just couldn't live with though.

FA: Yeah, they were too fast all weekend and we have to congratulate them for a fantastic weekend and next time we will try to do better.

Q: Kimi, you had a back problem in qualifying. Has that affected you during the race?

Kimi Räikkönen: Luckily not too much but now afterwards it's not 100 per cent but it doesn't matter: we have two weeks' time to rest and get it right. I think we did the best that we could and finished third, so I don't think we could have achieved much more today.

Q: You had to be patient through that race. You really had to believe that you could still be there at the end and take the places when they were there and not make mistakes.

KR: Yeah, I think I had pretty OK speed and then I could overtake a few people and then in the end I was following Jenson and I could see that his tyres were going off so I just gave some pressure and then I have to get past him because obviously some people changed to new tyres and they were catching us quickly. I managed to pass him and pull away and luckily nobody managed to catch me in the end. So not too bad.

Q: You say very calmly "I managed to pass him" but it was around the outside at Turn 14. It was at tricky one.

KR: Yeah, maybe it looks more tricky. Obviously you have more grip when you brake on the line and you know more or less where you have to brake. Much easier than inside. So, not an easy one but we managed to get past and that's the main thing.

Q: Sebastian, it's looking pretty good isn't it? But it's always this man [Alonso] who seems to be chasing you, up here on the podium with you.

SV: Yeah, it's incredible but to be honest with you I'm not really looking at the championship too much. Obviously we're in a very good position, very strong position but I'm enjoying the moment. Days like today, like yesterday when you can feel the tension. I'm enjoying the moment. I love racing and the car's fantastic and it doesn't happen, as I said, by accident. Whilst there's a lot of people hanging their balls in the pool very early on Fridays, we're still here working very hard and pushing very hard so that we have a strong race. Days like this it's just a pleasure to be in the car. The guys are completely committed, fully behind us, so it's great.

Q: Sebastian, as always, Singapore, a safety car features somewhere, it cut your lead early on, it obviously presented an

opportunity in terms of strategy for others around you – but you used the word ‘control’ in your message to the team on the slow-down lap and I guess that’s really what today was really all about. An incredible demonstration – the whole weekend – of control.

SV: Yeah, well, I mean it doesn’t happen just like that. It was surely not easy to get everything right all weekend. Extremely happy though. I think the whole team can be extremely proud. I know how much work is going in. Here obviously we have a funny rhythm. When it’s nine o’clock the curfew kicks in. That’s when our mechanics leave the track on Saturday morning. They are flat out checking everything on the car they can. Same with the engineers, late hours in the office here but also in the factory. So there’s a lot of team effort going in. If we have results like today where we have the luxury to control the race at some stage, then it’s because of those late hours, because of the commitment that goes in from everybody. It’s just a privilege to be part of the team and be part of that. To enjoy the moment completely. It’s one of my favourite races here. I’ve won here three times in a row – which is incredible – so I’m just extremely happy with that and extremely happy to be with the team at this stage.

Q: Obviously the decisive moment of the race was the start. Rosberg initially got ahead of you but then you managed to come back around the back of him and get him into Turn Three. Can you give us that from your point of view in a little detail?

SV: The lights went off, I thought I reacted pretty well but was a bit lazy to get off the line. I thought that Nico might still be there. He was and we were side-by-side, kind of, so I had to give him room. But fortunately he was braking quite deep into Turn One and I was able to come back on the inside to get the position. Fortunately the next corner was a left-hander so I got in front and from there we had a very, very strong pace. Safety car didn’t help but also I think didn’t hurt us. In the very end obviously we had a new set of Supersoft, compared to those guys, they were obviously on very old Primes so by then we could control the race. Don’t forget there is 1.5s difference between the tyres.

Q: Fernando, another Alonso special. Seventh on the grid, second at the finish. Obviously your brilliant start contributed to that but also the strategy and a brave call to pit under the safety car and go to the finish on a set of mediums. What is that? 36 laps? How did that feel in the cockpit?

FA: It was not easy, obviously, to finish the race with those tyres but we commit to that strategy when we pit under the safety car and we were controlling the pace all through the last stint thanks to the gap that we managed to build. Yes, the start again was very good and I was lucky to choose the right line. On Turn One there is always people going on the left, people going on the right in every circuit. We’ve managed so far to choose the right one. And then we were third which was already a good result for us. But when we didn’t stop Rosberg pitting in the safety car, we decided to pit and to try something different. We were too slow this weekend. We were not in a level that we should be. We try a little bit different things and it pay off at the end with a fantastic second place. For us it tastes like a victory today.

Q: You say you were too slow. You bought updates this weekend hoping it would get you closer to the pace of the Red Bull. That hasn’t come through. You’re now 60 points behind with six races to go. Does it feel like kind of a water torture? Do you have a trick? Do you have any thoughts on how you can turn this around?

FA: Well obviously we have to be realistic. A few races to go already, the gap is still increasing every weekend and now it’s sixty points. So, as I said, we need to be honest with ourselves and knowing that we need a lot of luck. We don’t need luck in Korea: we need luck in Korea, in Japan, in India, in Abu Dhabi... we need luck every weekend if we are one second off the pace. We need a lot of luck. On the other hand, we are a very uncomfortable opponent, I think, because if we get that luck, we will be there.

Q: Kimi, when you put those tyres on, did you know you were going to try to go on the finish on them – and what in your mind did you think was possible at stage?

KR: We had a plan and we know that what moment, if the safety car comes, we try to go until the end, so I knew what will happen and luckily some other teams couldn’t do it and had to pit. I was kind of stuck behind Jenson for most of the race but then I tried to give him some pressure and keep him pushing so I noticed that he started running out of his tyres and I could start to get in closer and closer. In the end I decided to try to pass him and managed to get past – because there were people who stopped for the fresh tyres who were catching very quickly but luckily once I got past I could push a bit more and keep the gap big enough to end it in third place. After the weekend where we had some problems with myself and not the ideal setup with all those things and where we were yesterday, finishing third, I don’t think we could have asked much more.

Q: Can you describe the back problem you’ve been suffering from and how do you feel right now?

KR: I didn’t feel it too much during the race but obviously afterwards it’s not ideal and yesterday it was pretty bad. I almost didn’t drive, so between that and finishing third I think we have to be happy – and hopefully we can sort those problems for the next race. It’s not the first time. For a long time there have been some issues with my back. I know that I have some work to do at the end of the year so we have to see what we do.

Q: Abhishek Takle – Mid-Day) Fernando, another strong drive, another strong second place but Seb just keeps extending his lead. Is there some sense of inevitability or perhaps acceptance on your part that you have to wait yet another year for that first world title with Ferrari?

FA: Well, as I said, there’s nothing we can do. Obviously we try our maximum, we’re trying to improve the car for every race and we are doing it but obviously not enough compared to our opponents. They are doing a better job than us, they are fantastic every weekend. They are winning and they deserve those wins. This is a sport, someone always has to win and the best one wins and we are not the best ones at the moment but we will keep working.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Kimi, was this the most painful race weekend you have ever had?

KR: Yes, I had some pain yesterday but for sure there have maybe been some more painful ones where something goes wrong, it doesn’t always have to be physical pain, there can be something... you don’t finish the race which is more painful in a way. Other things sometimes happen like this weekend and you have to live with it.

Q: (Jacob Polychronis – FIPlus.com) Sebastian, very sadly the boos returned this year. This was perhaps expected at Monza because it was Ferrari’s home race and the fans are very passionate, but this is like the tourist Grand Prix, people are from all over the world, it’s no home Grand Prix.

SV: It’s called travelling, they are on a tour, they come to every race. Fortunately we keep winning so they’ve got a reason to boo.

Q: (Jacob Polychronis – FIPlus.com) Sadly perhaps they are going to stay on tour. Is this something that is very sad for you, are you concerned, is it mentally exhausting even?

SV: It's not nice but I think you should look around the grandstands. Most of the fans are dressed in red, Ferrari has a very strong fan base for a reason: they have a lot of tradition in Formula One, they've been around longer and won, and they've been more successful than any other team. There's more and more blue people – more and more people dressed in blue so we are doing a good job on that front but obviously they are quite emotional when they are not winning and if somebody else is winning, they don't really like it and as it seems, as I said, they are on a tour and they come back to... they are wealthy enough to go to a lot of races, Monza or take the flight to come here to Singapore. As long as they keep booing, we are doing a very good job so that's the way I see it. It's not people from Singapore or from one country only. It's normal in sports if some people support one driver then they don't like another driver to win. Equally there were a lot of German flags around the track, there are a lot of Germans here in Singapore, it's a very international city. The parade lap was quite nice and also the lap after the chequered flag there were a lot of people cheering. Obviously I didn't give them the most exciting race but on days like this, I really don't mind.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – O Estado de Sao Paulo) Fernando, you did 36 laps with the same set of tyres: did you have any reference that the tyre could support the race conditions or were you just playing the game?

FA: We didn't know exactly how long the tyres would survive. We were maybe not expecting that long but... We are sixty points behind in the championship, if it works OK, if it doesn't work maybe we don't finish second, we finish fourth or fifth. It's nothing really... what we can do. There was a small chance that if Rosberg, Webber and Hamilton were not that slow after the safety car, maybe Sebastian didn't get the 28 seconds necessary to exit in front of me but Nico, I think, had a problem with the front wing, Webber was without tyres and Hamilton pitted very late, the last. So when I had a free track and Seb pitted and exited in front of me already so we had a small chance to maybe lead the race but obviously very difficult to keep Sebastian... probably in the last part of the race with new tyres and we with a very slow pace. But we tried, nothing to lose and I think that will be the strategy in the last part of the championship. We are not as fast as they are in qualifying or in the race so we will try something different.

Q: (Carlos Miguel – La Gaceta) Fernando, a lot of people are talking about how this championship is finished. What's your mentality, no surrender? Do you think there are some tracks where you can try to win? What is the situation?

FA: Well, as I said before, it's very difficult. Nothing changed too much over the last two or three Grands Prix. We need to be very lucky but not only in one weekend, we need to be lucky for the last six races if we want to win the championship. We have a points deficit which is a big gap and we have a performance deficit which is a big gap so we need to be very lucky. We saw today, again: Webber stopped on the last lap. If this happened to Sebastian one weekend, we have to be there, in second place. If we cannot win the race, we need to be right behind and try to take any opportunity but being realistic, we know that we need to be very very lucky.

Q: (Lim Say Heng – The New Paper/People Singapore) Sebastian, you said before that the race in Singapore is probably the toughest in the calendar. Now that you have won here, would you say that the toughest part of this year's title race is now over?

SV: Well, the toughest race in terms of physical challenge, I think – at least, that's the way I feel. A couple of years ago, Fernando asked for the race to be a bit shorter. It's quite long, to be honest. Obviously it depends where you are in the race but I think from a physical point of view this is the most challenging, not because there are so many high speed corners but it's a long lap, there are a lot of corners, no room for mistakes, very bumpy, it's very humid, artificial lights – all this makes it a very tough combination. It's then even sweeter to be successful here.

FA: I think it's long, obviously the only race where we have two hours, every single year. We're running 1m 55s and it's 61 laps so it's very easy to do the calculation that it will be two hours all the time. In Monaco, that is also a slower, street circuit, it's not 300, it's two hundred and something, it's more or less a reasonable time. So it's something that we may think for a year but they don't, they don't consider it's OK. It's five years that we race for two hours, last year was 59 laps, it was not 61 because we reached the two hours before the 61st lap and we need to check with the federation, but happy with any decision.

Q: (Paolo Ianieri – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Fernando, whose call was it to try to stay out? Was it your call or was it from the team to try to stay out and to change the strategy?

FA: It was the team. I asked how many laps to go and they told me 36 and they said we will pit and then we will decide. At that moment, we lost only two positions with Webber and Hamilton so if we pit we will have new tyres for the restart and then looking at the safety car it was quite long etc, they were telling me 'our aim is to go to the end' so from the restart, taking care of the tyres for 32 laps.

Q: (Frederic Ferret – L'Equipe) To all three of you: today we saw the Red Bull was good, the Lotus was good and there were two failures. Do you have an explanation as to why the failure often happens to the other car, not the leading driver?

KR: I have no idea what happened to Romain.

Q: He had a problem with the air system.

SV: The air system. And Mark?

Q: Gearbox, that's what he told me.

KR: It sometimes happens. I've had some issues. It can happen to anybody and then it's up to us, up to the team to try to make sure we don't have any issues but although they do everything to 100 percent you can have a failure, even the cheapest part of the car can fail or the most expensive part. It's just one of those things that happens, even though we do the best we can to make sure there are no failures.

SV: Yeah, I don't think there's a reason. We both had issues with the gearbox – if Mark had a gearbox issue – in Monza. When we came here, I think we understood it to some extent but not entirely. I had more issues on Friday with the gearbox than Mark had. Maybe he was in traffic the whole race. It's quite hot, temperatures were maybe a bit higher but on the other hand his gearbox suffered already a little bit more in Monza because I think a radiator had an issue. So maybe it's a consequence of that but I don't think there's a reason for that, between cars. We both get the same stuff from the same shelf.

Q: (Anthony Rowlinson – F1 Racing) Fernando, do you feel confident that Ferrari will be able to close the performance gap to Red Bull next season?

FA: Well, I think we start from zero next year, completely from zero. Big change in regulations so it's our best opportunity to close the gap. This year was a continuation in a way. I think we started in a good way, we were competitive in Australia, maybe not in qualifying but in the race we were taking care of the tyres very very well, together with Lotus. We won in China, we won in Spain and then we seemed to lose a little bit of performance, especially when the 2012 Pirelli tyres came back so that was probably our point in the championship; when they changed the tyres, we said bye bye. For next year I think we start from zero. Really we will put all our effort and hopes into 2014, because starting from zero is our best opportunity to close the gap with all the top teams.

Q: (Andrea Cremonesi – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Fernando, we heard during the race a radio message from [Andrea] Stella [Fernando's race engineer] when he said 'take care of the tyres, we have to put on the car the supersofts, take care of Paul di Resta, he's behind you.' It was a tricky joke for everybody else, to push Mercedes to stop again?

FA: I think it was maybe not clear on TV because, at least, what they told me, was take care of Paul di Resta behind because he's on supersoft, new supersoft and I was on medium, so there was a performance advantage, as Seb said before, of around one second in the first couple of laps, so I knew that maybe Paul was trying to attack me in those first laps with fresh supersoft. So that was the message: be careful with di Resta.

Q: (Trent Price – Richland F1) Sebastian, late in the race, Rocky [Guillaume Rocquelin, his race engineer] radioed in that he thought there was a brake vibration on the car. Was this something you could feel, was it affecting you under braking?

SV: Yeah, definitely, I could definitely feel it. It was building up towards the end of the race. Fortunately we were in the lead and we had a new set of supersofts which we saved yesterday, so I could afford to take it a bit easy. Surely, if we had been under a lot of pressure then... we've had those kind of issues before but it's not the most comfortable... you use the brakes quite a lot to stop around here. Then we could control it but had we raced harder until the end I think it would have been tough.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Kimi, do you think that you will be fully recovered for Korea and what do you target there?

KR: For sure, we will have to see. I think it should be OK and we try to do a better overall weekend there.

F1 Singapore Blog – Race report

On Sunday night in Singapore Sebastian Vettel demonstrated once again just why he is a triple world champion well on his way to a fourth consecutive drivers' title. Despite a brief challenge from Nico Rosberg off the line, the Red Bull racer controlled the race from lights to flag, opening up a commanding lead over the opposition over the course of the first few laps.

So great was Vettel's lead that during his first stop he was able to pit with 27.4s in hand over the chasing pack, emerging on fresh medium tyres with the nearest car still eight seconds behind him on track. But the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry, and Vettel found his lead destroyed by future teammate Daniel Ricciardo, who brought out the Safety Car on lap 25 when he ploughed his Toro Rosso into the barriers at Turn 17.

The five laps that Vettel spent following Bernd Maylander around the Marina Bay Circuit marked the only time all night that the defending world champion was not in complete control of the Singapore Grand Prix. And when racing resumed on lap 31, the young ingénue sped off into the distance, pulling out six-tenths on the second-placed Rosberg during sector one alone. At the start of lap 32, the gap at the front was already 3.2 seconds, and the race was as good as won.

While the majority of the Singapore Grand Prix was rather less compelling than watching paint dry, the closing laps made up for the preceding 90 minutes of boredom, as the degrading rubber led to a series of wheel-to-wheel battles from P3 down. Jenson Button had been running in third place, and might have been able to deliver McLaren their first podium of the season, but the Briton's tyres were falling off the cliff and there was little he could do to fend off the chasing pack.

First to pass was Kimi Raikkonen, on lap 53. By the time the chequered flag fell to mark the end of the 61-lap race, Button was in seventh, having been overtaken by Mark Webber, Rosberg, Lewis Hamilton, and Felipe Massa.

Button was not the only driver whose tyre strategy failed to pay off on the streets of Singapore. Teammate Sergio Perez also found himself losing grip and track position in the closing stages, while Rosberg and Hamilton found that the team's two-stop strategy did not reap the hoped-for dividends. Sauber also struggled to make a two-stop strategy work – despite running in or near the points for much of the final phase of the race, Nico Hulkenberg and Esteban Gutierrez started to lose position on lap 53, with the German dropping three places in eight laps while his teammate went from seventh on 48 to twelfth at the flag.

But the prize for worst race finish goes to the beleaguered Webber, who spent much of the evening battling with the same gearbox issues that had dogged the Australian in Monza. A classified finisher in P15, Webber was running in fourth place until the penultimate lap of the Singapore Grand Prix, when his gearbox gave up the ghost with a dramatic puff of smoke that engulfed the pit straight, leaving the Australian to watch from the sidelines as the field passed his stricken car one by one.

While Vettel's win looked effortless, the men with whom he shared a podium had fought hard for their trophies. Second-placed Fernando Alonso got an excellent start off the line, leap-frogging four rivals before they knew what had hit them. Losing positions only in the pits, the Asturian was a strong contender all evening, and a dead cert for a place on the podium. Equally impressive was Raikkonen, who overcame both a back injury and a P13 grid slot to finish the Singapore Grand Prix in third place after a characteristically dogged drive.

2013 Singapore Grand Prix results

1. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1h59m13.132s
2. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) + 32.627s
3. Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus) + 43.920s
4. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) + 51.155s
5. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) + 53.159s
6. Felipe Massa (Ferrari) + 1m03.877s
7. Jenson Button (McLaren) + 1m23.354s
8. Sergio Perez (McLaren) + 1m23.820s
9. Nico Hulkenberg (Sauber) + 1m24.261s
10. Adrian Sutil (Force India) + 1m24.668s
11. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) + 1m28.479s

12. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) + 1m37.894s
13. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) + 1m45.161s
14. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) + 1m53.512s
15. Mark Webber (Red Bull) DNF
16. Giedo van der Garde (Caterham) + 1 lap
17. Max Chilton (Marussia) + 1 lap
18. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) + 1 lap
19. Charles Pic (Caterham) + 1 lap

Paul di Resta (Force India) RET
Romain Grosjean (Lotus) RET
Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso) RET

F1 Singapore Blog - Saturday press conference

For the 41st time in his Formula One career, and the second time in Singapore, Sebastian Vettel took centre stage at a post-qualifying press conference.

Present were Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull), Nico Rosberg (Mercedes), and Romain Grosjean (Lotus).

Q: Sebastian, biting your nails at the end there. You took the decision not to go out and do a final run. Does it sit comfortably with you, being a gambler?

Sebastian VETTEL: Yeah. It's a weird feeling. You stand in the garage when there's roughly two minutes to go in the session and you know that it's too late. But then it's much worse when you see the others at the final attempt and you know there's nothing you can do. Because you stand in the garage. I was watching the sector times very closely with obviously Romain, Nico and Mark in particular. Mark started with a purple sector one, very close in sector two, then Nico had a purple sector two, then Romain had a purple sector two. Then fortunately my last sector was strong enough to – yeah – just stay ahead. It was very close in the end with Nico. That's a great feeling then, obviously, because it could go wrong but very happy obviously with the result. The car's been phenomenal all weekend. Yesterday I think the gap was a bit of a surprise. Today's been more what we expected – especially with Mercedes being very close behind.

Q: The gap is a tenth of a second Nico. You've had the upper hand over your team-mate here but not quite over the Red Bulls.

Nico ROSBERG: Yeah, unfortunately Sebastian especially has been really quick the whole weekend but it was very, very close in the end. A pity, because one tenth more, with the way they gambled in the last qualifying... One tenth more would have been possible somehow, y'know? That would have been great but anyway, second place is still a good result. A great result. And it gives me a good position to start the race tomorrow and I'm also very confident about our race pace. It's looking OK so I think a great result is possible.

Q: Romain, a confident decision from you in the first part of qualifying not to use the faster tyre. Were you feeling confident today?

Romain GROSJEAN: Well, I think the car's been OK today. If we look at how many laps we did in the whole weekend so far, P3 in the quali is not too bad. We knew we were strong this morning. I think we got a little bit caught by the night coming on and it was a little bit less quick than the fast time we expected in Q1 but nevertheless I think the team did a good decision about the strategy and the cut-off and everything, so then we had two attempts in Q3. It's good to be at the front in this grand prix.

Q: Sebastian. You've won from pole the last two grands prix. Is it more of a challenge to do it around this Marina Bay circuit tomorrow?

SV: Yeah, definitely. It's one of the toughest races we face all year. I would say the toughest – physically and mentally – because it's so long. One lap is so long, there's so many corners, there's hardly any room for mistakes, it's very bumpy and, as you can see, we're all sweating pretty much even though we only did a couple of laps in qualifying. So the heat obviously and the humidity plays a factor. It will be very tough. Surely pole is the best position to start from – very happy with that as it is tricky to pass on this track. But because it is such a long race I think there is plenty of opportunities for all of us. Usually we get a safety car at some stage in the race. Yeah, as I said, happy to start from pole, try to have a good start and then settle into a nice rhythm and see what we can do.

Q: So Sebastian, your 41st career pole, sixth of this season, three in a row now after Spa and Monza. You've had a great record around here, won the last two times at Singapore. What is it about this Singapore circuit that really gets to you?

SV: I don't know. We race at night. I think even though it hasn't been in the calendar for many decades but still it seems like a classic and it's a very nice place to come to. The circuit is a big challenge for all of us. It's so long, so many corners, very difficult to keep the focus for the entire lap. Tomorrow's race will be very long, it's usually the longest race we have with two hours duration. So, yeah, it's just... you hate it and love it at the same time. Obviously in qualifying if you get the lap right it feels fantastic. I think it's the challenge that I love – that we love – when we come here.

Q: A quick word on your main title rival – Fernando Alonso seventh today.

SV: Yeah, obviously, I don't know. We don't really look at what the others do. At least I don't. So, I think the race is long, as I touched on, especially around here. I think the Ferrari was struggling the last couple of events in qualifying but they have a very, very good race pace. I think the last couple of races Fernando always finished on the podium, so I'm sure they will come back. So, yeah, obviously it's no harm for us today but first of all we have to look after ourselves and look at what we can do in the race. And then we see where we are. But I'm confident Fernando will do everything he can tomorrow in the race to fight back.

Q: Nico, it was reminiscent today of Monaco back in May. Another street track and very competitive again for you.

NR: Yeah, I really like street tracks generally. Always been quick on them and again today I felt comfortable with the car. Really the whole weekend, the progress has been nice. Starting on Friday, I wasn't very happy with the car and everything, wasn't feeling very good. We just worked through it, and really optimised it and it was just perfect in qualifying then. It's just everybody together: me with my engineers, the mechanics, everybody working together well. I'm pleased with second. I think Sebastian was out of reach this weekend, all weekend, so second is OK. And with a good race

pace, should be good tomorrow.

Q: A quick word on how it went from a second [off P1] after FP2 yesterday to less than a tenth this evening.

NR: Well obviously they gambled a bit. I'm sure they were still quite a step quicker than that lap time if Sebastian would have done another set of tyres. But for sure we've closed the gap again as we always do on weekends. And that's good to see that we're able to do that.

Q: Romain, you touched on the fact that you had a lot of problems yesterday but it's another big improvement from the Lotus team from Friday through to today and from your own point of view overcoming those difficulties. How did you do that?

RG: Well to be honest, yesterday didn't look that bad on the few laps we did - I think we had ten timed laps, something like that in total in the whole day but we were something like P5 yesterday evening and the lap wasn't great. So I knew we had a good baseline to start today and this morning went pretty well. And Quali, yeah, we had a good strategy again. In Q1 it was tight because I guess the Prime tyres were less quick than what we expected but then we had a very good set of tyres for the Q2 and Q3 and we did manage to have good runs. We could compare between the two cars, what they were doing and what we were doing and try to get the best of both. It's good. I think we could have tried to have a go at Nico but yeah, it was just not quite good for the first few corners.

Q: Is it fair to say you're driving like a man who knows that his team-mate is moving on next year and you want to be the lead driver of the team next year?

RG: I don't really care. Relation with Kimi has been always... not very 'speaky', and I just do my best on my own. I like the team, I'm sure they're quite happy with the way we work so far and yeah, just focussed on what I have to do and then we'll see for the future.

Q: (Abhishek Takle - Mid-Day) Sebastian, I think you had a gap of around 0.6s after the initial runs in Q3. You chose to sit the last run out; were you surprised by the amount of time these guys gained? In the end the gap was less than a tenth.

SV: Well, it's difficult to expect. I knew that obviously we had a cushion which is why we decided not to run again but the thing you don't know is how much the track improves so I'm sure that there was a little bit of track ramping up plus the fact that if you run again you get a better feel for the tyres, for the track and you get a little bit more out of yourself, so we thought it was good enough and in the end it was good enough. But yeah, it was probably a bit closer. Both of them, Nico and Romain, had a very strong middle sector but fortunately my last sector was strong enough to keep them just behind.

Q: Just for clarity, on the radio you said you thought you could find another tenth when you were asked, and you didn't look 100 percent convinced when you got out of the car, so was it a team decision rather than your decision?

SV: No, it's a decision we, we... obviously Rocky (race engineer Guillaume Rocquelin) asked me whether I was happy not to run again and stay in the garage and I said 'yes, I'm happy.' He asked before that how much I thought I could improve if I went again. I told him that probably there was a tenth, maybe two. You take a little bit of track into account, a little bit of yourself, how much the track ramps up is difficult to know so I thought there was a tenth in me - it is the most famous tenth in the world, that all the drivers seem to have in their pocket but they couldn't get it out in qualifying so it's still there somewhere. It was very close and it's not the best feeling when you stand there and watch.

Q: (Livio Oricchio - O Estado de Sao Paulo) Nico, we have some similarities between this race and the Hungarian Grand Prix until now, that Lewis starts better than Sebastian, got the lead in the first corner and then finished the race, he won the race. Do you think you always have the pace in race conditions to keep in front of Sebastian or here the overtaking possibilities mean that he can't overtake you?

NR: Lewis was on pole in Hungary, I'm second here so it's a bit different. Not sure. I'll give it a go. For sure, he's quicker on race pace, we saw that on Friday so if I can get by, then it's possible that I can stay in front but it's all down to the start. I think the left hand side has a little bit less grip than the right hand side on this track at the start but we will see. It's possible.

Q: (Michael Schmidt - Auto, Motor und Sport) Nico, where did the big jump from the first outing to the second come from? Was it just the circuit being better, was it because maybe you have been a bit conservative in your first outing or did you change something on the wing setting or whatever for the last outing?

NR: Very difficult to explain. I don't know. I didn't expect such an improvement either but I think it was the same for everybody so maybe it's down to the track ramping up or cooling down a bit more, track temperature dropping or something of the sort. I'm not sure.

Q: Were you surprised by how much quicker the used supersofts were when you went out on them the second time at the beginning of Q2? Sebastian maybe take it first.

SV: I didn't go out on them.

NR: Was I surprised at the time I could do? Not really, no, because I knew the track was getting better and I saw what my teammate did in Q1, pushing, so no, I wasn't surprised.

Q: (Don Kennedy - Hawke's Bay Today) Sebastian, you've won the last two races here, you're on pole and you're probably anything from half a second to a second faster than everybody else. Do you think now we can expect you to be more confident about not only winning this race tomorrow but also the championship?

SV: I think it was quite close. Whether... I think the track ramped up, whether we could have gone with that we don't know because we didn't do the run but I'm sure we had a little bit of time in hand. But yeah, for tomorrow I think the car feels fine, the race pace looked very strong on Friday, yesterday, so yeah, if all goes well we should have a very good chance to get a strong result but to be honest with you, I try... I'm not just trying... I do keep it very simple. I've got to do my homework. Just because of the fact that the last couple of races were pretty good doesn't mean that there's a guarantee that this one will be good again and the next one and so on and so forth. I think it's the wrong strategy to lean back and see what the others can do. You might get surprised, so we keep going flat out, I keep pushing myself 100 percent. The target tomorrow is to win, not only for the championship but more so, to be honest with you, because it's such a nice race. That means a lot to me. As I touched on, the challenge around here is one of the biggest we face all year so that's why it means a lot to finish this race on the podium and even better if you can win it. You don't have to be a genius (to work out) if you win, you score more points than the others and it feeds on itself.

The final practice session of the Singapore Grand Prix weekend passed without incident, and was notable only for the slightly reduced gap between the all-conquering Red Bulls and the rest of the field.

Sebastian Vettel held on to the top slot on the timesheets, chased by Romain Grosjean and Nico Rosberg. Mark Webber followed in fourth, while Lewis Hamilton rounded out the top five. But where Friday saw Red Bull light years ahead of the competition, FP3 ended with the top six drivers covered by one second (and some very small change), while the gap between Vettel and Grosjean was just shy of two-tenths.

As qualifying started under the glittering lights that line the Marina Bay Circuit the temperatures were balmy for Singapore, with the track temperature at 30 degrees and the air at 29 degrees. Hamilton was an early pace setter, but Rosberg was faster, and halfway through Q1 it was the Mercedes pair who led the pack while Vettel and Webber remained safely ensconced in the Red Bull garage.

Once out on track the Red Bull pair were instantly towards the top end of the timesheets, and at no risk of early elimination from qualifying, while with two minutes remaining the danger zone was made up of the driver pairings from Caterham, Marussia, and Force India. Adrian Sutil and Paul di Resta saved themselves with a minute to spare, knocking Felipe Massa and Pastor Maldonado into the dropout zone.

As times fell to mark the end of the session, it was Maldonado and di Resta who found themselves in the dropout zone with the four usual suspects, while decent but unimpressive times from Vettel and Webber spoke of tyre conservation tactics from the Red Bull pit wall.

Kimi Raikkonen was the first man to set a time in Q2, despite concerns that a trapped nerve might prevent the Finn from running in the second session. But Rosberg and Hamilton both crossed the line nearly one second faster than their Lotus rival, breaking into the 1m43s.

With less than five minutes remaining only Vettel, Webber, and Grosjean were out on track, the only three drivers yet to set a time. Surprising no one, Vettel went straight to the top of the timesheets on his only Q2 lap, with a 1m42.905s lap that was eight-tenths faster than Webber's first effort. As the clock counted down to mark the end of Q2, the dropout zone was comprised of Nico Hulkenberg, Jean-Eric Vergne, Raikkonen, Perez, Sutil, and Bottas.

Breaking with the pattern established in the first two sessions, Red Bull sent both drivers out on track in short order, with a tyre bounty to use in the unlikely event that the RB9 is not the fastest machine by a country mile. But Vettel went straight to the top with a comfortable six-tenths margin over Rosberg in P2.

Button, Massa, Alonso, Gutierrez, and Ricciardo had yet to set times with two-and-a-half minutes remaining, although Button had started and abandoned a lap before taking to the circuit for a second time. As expected, Vettel had no competition for pole, and Saturday's qualifying session laid the groundwork for a processional race on Sunday.

Provisional grid

1. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1m42.841s
2. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1m42.932s
3. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1m43.058s
4. Mark Webber (Red Bull) 1m43.152s
5. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1m43.254s
6. Felipe Massa (Ferrari) 1m43.890s
7. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1m43.938s
8. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1m44.282s
9. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso) 1m44.439s
10. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) NO TIME SET

11. Nico Hulkenberg (Sauber) 1m44.555s
12. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1m44.588s
13. Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus) 1m44.658s
14. Sergio Perez (McLaren) 1m44.752s
15. Adrian Sutil (Force India) 1m45.185s
16. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) 1m45.388s

17. Paul di Resta (Force India) 1m46.121s
18. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) 1m46.619s
19. Charles Pic (Caterham) 1m48.111s
20. Giedo van der Garde (Caterham) 1m48.320s
21. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) 1m48.830s
22. Max Chilton (Marussia) 1m48.930s

F1 Singapore Blog - Friday press conference

On Friday night the Marina Bay Circuit played host to one of the most fascinating FIA press conferences in recent memory.

Present were Eric Boullier (Lotus), Bob Fernley (Force India), Tony Fernandes (Caterham), Franz Tost (Toro Rosso), and Claire Williams (Williams).

Q: Let's start with today's two practice sessions. Bob, if I could turn to you first. Progress made or was it a bit of a struggle for the team?

Bob FEARNLEY: It was a little bit of a struggle but I think we saw a little bit of progress in FP2, so optimistic.

Q: Same optimism for you Franz?

Franz TOST: Yes, if we find seven to eight tenths then I'm optimistic for tomorrow.

Q: Any chance?

FT: I hope so. The engineers have some time now. It's a wonderful night and I'm convinced that they can study all the data and they will find a solution for tomorrow's set-up.

Q: For yourself, Eric, one of your drivers spent more time on the track than the other. Romain Grosjean had problems.

Eric BOULLIER: Yeah, it's a concern in these early days but it should be fixed for tomorrow. Some issues yes on Romain Grosjean's steering, power steering and hydraulics but still fast, and obviously happy with the second session when we could see on the high fuel pace Kimi was matching the so fast Red Bull cars, so we'll see tomorrow.

Q: At Williams, Valtteri Bottas, driving here for the first time, was slightly faster than his team-mate Pastor Maldonado.

Claire WILLIAMS: He was but I think we're still where we are and I don't think that was a surprise. We had a few changes to the car this weekend that we have evaluated so we have a lot of data to go through and we'll see where we are tomorrow.

Q: And Tony and Caterham?

Tony FERNANDES: As Claire said: we are where we are. Young drivers who get used to the track every practice session and we improve every session, so we're expecting a bit more out of FP3 but we are where we are.

Q: Eric, if I could turn to you next. Not for the first time in Formula One history we've seen drivers and engineers leave Enstone recently to head off to Ferrari. How concerned are you about the impact the departures of Kimi Raikkonen, James Allison and Dirk de Beer will have on Lotus regarding your future competitiveness.

EB: Not so high as you could maybe surprisingly imagine. It's true that it's a new chapter for Enstone, we lose valuable people and obviously a very charismatic driver. But as you said it happened twice already in the Enstone and every time the team has been world champion right after. So actually I'm quite motivated saying let's start a new chapter and do as well or as good as happened before.

Q: Claire, you've strengthened your staff at Williams. Pat Symonds, just over a month ago, started as Chief Technical Officer.

Have you started to notice differences yet? What areas has Pat identified that you need to make improvements in. And also, will you be looking to bring others in in the future?

CW: I think Pat started just before Spa, so he hasn't been with the team for a huge amount of time, but already we're seeing the impact he's having. He's a guy that's worked in Formula One for a huge amount of time and he has a huge amount of experience. He's won numerous world championships and of course that's going to bring with it a level of experience we really need at Williams. So he's definitely looking... or spending a lot of time at Grove. He's not here with us this weekend, he's got critical meetings to attend to back at the factory, making sure we are where we want to be next season. But we all know that he's not the magic bullet but he's doing a great job for us so far and we will take his advice and see what we need to do once he's had time to evaluate the business as a whole.

Q: Franz, at the end of the season you and Toro Rosso say goodbye to Daniel Ricciardo, his replacement expected to be another Red Bull young development driver. As team principal, what are you looking for from whoever gets that seat. What qualities do you think a young driver to bring to be an asset to Toro Rosso.

FT: The best one is always when he finds the right-hand pedal and pushes it - that's quite good. Generally speaking he has to be skilled; he has to have talent. For example, currently the Red Bull drivers, all the drivers from the Red Bull driver pool, have won a championship when they were racing in a lower class. Vettel, for example, in BMW junior. Daniel Ricciardo as well as [Daniil] Kvyat and [Carlos] Sainz won in the Renault 2.0 litre championship. Jean-Eric Vergne won the English championship as far as I know, with the highest number of victories. That means this is a good basis where they showed their talent. This is the first point. The second point: they must be patient. That means if a driver is coming to Toro Rosso he has to live Formula One 365 days a year. There should be nothing around that disturbs him and he has to be 100% concentrated on this job. The next important point is discipline. Discipline does not only mean he arrives in time for the meetings, discipline means also that he, for example, in qualifying does not overdrive the car; that he respects the schedule for his physical training; that he respects all the important facts of nutrition and that he respects what the engineers tell him. The next important point is innovation. He should think first how he can beat, at first his team-mate and for second all the other competitors. That he must think in advance: that he must be well prepared. All these factors together decide together whether a driver becomes successful and wins races and championships or not, and we are looking for this.

Q: On a similar note to Franz, if I could turn to you Tony, is that the same at Caterham? Are they the qualities you're looking at or do you have to look more at the budget that a driver can bring as well given the situation that the Caterham team is in?

TF: I think this year was the first year that we took the budget into consideration. We were trying to save as much for 2014. This is the state of Formula One right now where unfortunately sometimes the budget plays a large part in your decision making. We've got two fairly inexperienced drivers driving for us in the hope that we can put more resource into the 2014 car.

Q: Bob, we were talking to Adrian Sutil here yesterday. It was his opinion the recent dip in Force India's form was related to the change in the construction of the tyres that we saw halfway through the season. Is that a view you share? And if so, what as a team can you do to combat the downturn in results before the end of the season?

BF: I think Adrian's absolutely right: it's not coincidental that the dip in form obviously ties in with the change in tyres. It's very difficult because we're past the time in the season where we've already committed through to the 2014 car. We ideally would need to put the 2013 car back into the system. I think what we've got to do - and it might not be very exciting - but I think we've got to just eke the best of the performance we can out of it, we've got a great team of engineers and I feel sure that they will overcome the problem but we've got to do it on the track and we've only got Fridays to do that. So it's challenging and it's going to be a little bit tough and it's disappointing after what was an incredible start to the season - but we are where we are and we can't change things.

Q: Question to you all next regarding costs in Formula One. We heard from Christian Horner in the FIA press conference in Monza, his thoughts that although teams have been working to reduce costs, 2014 looks like being a very, very expensive year with the regulation changes. In his words, "collectively," he said, "the mistake the teams made was not saying 'no' to the new

engines." I just wonder, do you share his view? Have costs escalated beyond what's ideally realistic for your teams to deal with the larger outfits on the grid? Start with you Tony.

TF: I've been consistent since day one I've been in Formula One that costs are too high and every... when I came into Formula One, people talked to me about costs coming down but I don't think there's been a single year it's come down. I think next year will be probably the highest year – so I think there's something fundamentally wrong. I don't think it's just the engine, by the way, I think the teams lost out an opportunity to get costs under control. I think self-interest overrode the sport and we are as much to blame for this problem as an engine.

Q: Franz, is that a fair assessment?

FT: Yes, as I said, next year's power unit package costs are double the price of this years and we are always talking of reducing the costs. Regarding now that power unit, on the one hand we must say Formula One is the peak of motorsport and we should come with new innovations. I think the new package from another point of view is quite economical and is quite interesting – but it costs us a huge amount of money. But the teams are stupid enough to decide to do tests during the season. This is totally a waste of money because we have eight test days and as soon as the car goes out on the track it costs money. But the teams want to do it. On the one hand they're complaining they don't have money, on the other hand, they throw it through the window. It's a little bit difficult to understand for me but we were voted down because we were against the tests. And who wants the tests? The rich teams. As usual.

Q: I'd be interested in your thoughts now Eric.

EB: It's true that Formula One is costing too much money and regarding the next year engine, I do agree with Franz, F1 needs technology, this is the pinnacle of motorsport. I think just rather than blaming engine or not, it's more about the process, about how this technology has been developed and sold to the team, which should have been controlled more. F1 needs technology, we need car manufacturers, we need obviously sponsors but we cannot afford to spend more and more every year. I was not there personally but last decade car manufacturers were in this place and the lowest budget in F1 was around \$250m and the highest about \$400m. Today it's not the case any more and the smallest budget is around \$60m and the highest is around \$250m. But still, it's... you multiply by four. If you want to be competitive you need to spend unfortunately some money, because you cannot afford if not, and you cannot be competitive then... This is a circle: you are not attractive, you do not bring in any new sponsors... so where is the balance? I think it's a complicated debate. Obviously all the teams should stick together first, which is obviously something very difficult to do, and also sit down with Bernie and the FIA and make sure the regulations are stable at least for the next few years. I think in the new strategy committee we have a chance to voice what we would like to do. That's going to be the first step, to make sure we go to a sustainable Formula One.

Q: Claire, to you next.

CW: I don't think I really have much more to add. Everyone's covered the arguments. Williams, you know, we're an independent team and we rely on sponsorships to go racing so the escalation in costs for next year across various different elements of what is involved in going racing, aren't great for us and we have to just push and push to try to get the budget in for next year. But we have high ambitions as to where we want to position the team and to get the team back up the grid – but to do that is going to take more money. So to have more costs piled on top of each other, it's going to be a challenge for us.

Q: Bob, where do Force India stand on the current debate?

BF: I think the teams have demonstrated that they are not capable of being able to agree a cost control, so I think the answer is to take it outside of the team's control. I think it's up to the FIA to decide a formula, bring that in and implement it.

Q: (Chris Lyons – AP) Eric, Kimi said yesterday that one of the reasons he left was that he wasn't being paid his salary. Can you clarify the details of that and does the fact that this has come out damage the brand of the team?

EB: I don't think it's damaging the brand of the team to be honest. The truth is that yes, we owe him money so that's true. He's going to be paid, that's true too and if you want to have a little bit more of the story, last year in the same period it was the same story: we were owing him some money but at the end of the year he was fully paid. It's just the way we manage our cash flow. Unfortunately we are not as rich as some other teams on the grid. You can also understand that a team capable of winning this year and fighting for some podiums may not be as sustainable as it should be. We have obviously favoured our people working in Enstone which is understandable I think, obviously the car development because this is the essence of Formula One if you want to keep competing. So there is nothing else behind this story.

Q: (Joe Saward – Grand Prix Special) Just to lighten it up a bit, in two or words or in the case of Franz, three, can you say who's going to be driving for you next year or who do you think will be driving for you next year? Tony?

TF: No idea.

CW: I have two: no comment.

EB: No.

FT: We will see. The season's not finished yet. There are some races to go and then Red Bull will sit together and then we will decide.

BF: It's Vijay's decision.

Q: If I could re-phrase the question, do you all have in your own mind an idea of who you would like to be driving for you, or is your mind still wide open as to what your final pairing would be?

TF: I would have one pretty clear and one open.

CW: Yes, in one word.

EB: Yes.

FT: Of course the Red Bull drivers – da Costa, Sainz and Kvyat – and then we will see where we end up.

BF: No, ours is a process, we can't make those decisions at this point. It's something we do after the Indian Grand Prix.

Q: (Mat Coch – pitpass.com) Eric, with Kimi leaving and the state of the team at the moment, are you after a driver to come in on a salary or are you looking for someone to bring funding?

EB: We keep the same strategy that we've had for many months. Geni helped us to bring the team to where it is today. We now want to have more finance, more sponsors because we need to step up and guarantee some stability over a few years. That's part of the strategy, this is what we are still working on and we need to deliver on that point. We see the timing was not the right one for Kimi but we still have to deliver this. That would then allow us to chose drivers on merit which is obviously the first choice.

Q: (Kate Walker – GP Week) Claire, you mentioned earlier about the difficulties of ensuring that you have enough budget, the way

that it's an annual process. We've been reading in the papers recently about troubles with the Venezuelan economy. I was wondering if that was going to have an impact on your operating budget next year.

CW: We have a long term relationship with our friends in Venezuela so no, I don't really have a concern about that at the moment.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – The Citizen) Lady and gentlemen, you're constantly going on about cost-cutting in Formula One, how costs must be reduced but as any housewife knows, there are two ways of keeping the household going: one is to reduce costs and the other one is to maximise income. Claire, you said earlier on that your source of income is sponsorship but I would have thought that the commercial rights holder also pays you something, and the commercial rights holder is obviously recording record profits. Is it not easier for the teams to club together to go and get more money out of the commercial rights holder than it is to constantly bang on about reducing costs and not reach agreement?

FT: I think the team didn't get together. The teams had a wonderful opportunity to try and create a fair, equitable split so that the sport is sustainable. I'm obviously in another sport where I think the difference between the top and the bottom is not as great as between the top and the bottom in Formula One. If you look at the Premier League, the winner of the Premier League share of prize versus the team at the bottom is not as spread out. I think teams had an opportunity but I go back to my very first point: that teams looked at things on an individual basis as opposed to working together in FOTA and trying to find a win-win situation for everyone and create a very healthy environment in a sustainable sport. We screwed it up, it's as simple as that.

BF: I tend to agree with Tony. I think we've had wonderful opportunities and we've collectively failed to be able to bring the deals together. There's a certain amount of greed comes in from the top teams as well and I think they have to take some of the responsibility for that but it is Formula One, it's not something that's new, there's never been any equality in Formula One so you have to go out there and make sure it happens for yourself.

FT: Each team has got the Concorde Agreement, at least from a financial side and if teams do not accept it, they don't need to sign it. It's as easy as that. And if they sign it, they have to accept it. There's nothing to complain of from this side. I think first of all the teams should try to come down with the costs. It's easy to say yes, we should get more money but give the engineers one million and they ask for two. Give them four million and they ask for eight million. It's something about the discipline within the teams and as I mentioned before, we decide by ourselves to spend the money for nothing as I explain with the testing. If the teams get more money, they go testing even more and in my opinion that's wrong.

CW: I think everyone's said it all really. In my experience, this is the way Formula One has always been so unless you have a seismic change in the future, then I imagine it will remain this way but as people have said, the teams may have had an opportunity but unfortunately they didn't take it.

EB: Well, I think it's been debated and it's true that I share the view of the other team principals that we may have missed an opportunity to just sit down with the commercial rights holder and re-negotiate something which could have been more in favour of the teams but we failed. I think on top of this it's not one more or less costs, I think it should be both of them to be honest, because, as Franz said, the more money you get, the more money we will spend if you don't have any safeguards around you. Your engineers will always try to find out the best way to be competitive and this is why we are paying them to be like this, but at the same time, the more open the regulations are, the more we will spend money and waste money. So it's true that we need both.

Q: (Joe Saward – Grand Prix Special) On the question of testing, can anyone of you think of a good argument this time next year when Bernie says 'look, you've gone to four tests, you haven't earned any money, why don't we have four more races in 2015?'

EB: Four is not enough. Ten more is better.

Q: Could you race more, is that possible?

FT: This is what I always request. I prefer to have more races where we gain money instead of spending money for nothing, therefore I would prefer to maybe have two races more or three or four races more – I don't care – instead of going testing for eight days where we go out to do some laps for nothing in the end, because reliability – as we can see – is no longer an issue. Ten, 15, 20 years ago we could say OK, we need to do some tests so that the cars become more reliable. That's no longer the case. What we are doing now is to create a new test team, because the theory that the race team will do the tests on Tuesday and Wednesday is absolutely wrong because they have to go home to prepare the cars for the next race. That means that on Sunday, the test team will fly in, then we do the test on Tuesday, Wednesday, then they go back. It's not only testing, it means bringing new parts, because the development will be increase and these are the costs.

CW: I think there are so many considerations. Like Franz said, the major one for bringing testing in is that you've got to create a new support team. A few years ago, Williams disbanded – whatever the word would be – our designated test team so now we're looking at additional costs to create a new test team because you can't have your race mechanics and engineers working that amount of time but then there are other considerations. Could you use those days for a young driver development programme, for example, that could bring in revenue for the teams? So it's definitely conversations that we're having internally at the moment to see which would be better whereas I don't know whether... you bring in four more races a year or... Eric wanting ten more races. You're going to have to bring in more personnel to support that as well, so I think again, it's all about costs isn't it?

EB: Just to comment on this, when I said ten more races, I know we face the same problem that today we have a team sized for twenty races, so if we go one or two more races, I think we would struggle if we could do it, but if you had ten more we would have to have a second team. This is why I said ten actually, because four races would be difficult but it's better to race than test.

BF: I think Eric's got a very good point there in terms of the amount of races, but the advantage you have of testing as opposed to having two or three races imposed on you is if you could make the choice of whether you wanted to go testing. You don't have to do that, you do have to do races.

Q: (Luke Smith – NBC Sports) Eric, since Ferrari's announcement, the two names that have been linked to the seat (at Lotus) have been Nico Hulkenberg and Felipe Massa. Where does this leave Romain Grosjean in this situation: is his future with the team secure or could you completely change your line-up for next season?

EB: His future is secure so far because he has a contract with us. Last year was a bit difficult for him; this year he's doing a great job. In the last four races, we have nothing to complain about. He was one hundred per cent up to speed, especially compared to his famous teammate. We just see now and monitor what he is doing and if everything is going as planned, he will have a great future with us.

Q: (Fredrik Af Petersens – Honorary) One question: I might have missed something but you are all talking about a missed opportunity regarding next year. Why did you miss it?

EB: We couldn't sit down together and clearly we missed the opportunity by not taking the chance to conclude the process.

Q: (Fredrik Af Petersens – Honorary) Aren't you grown-up enough to do that?

CW: We're all too competitive.

FT: We do not only compete on the race track, also behind the scenes, around the green table.

Q: (Fredrik Af Petersens – Honorary) Just a comment, and I agree with Franz when it comes to testing, but your father, Claire, once said, a few years ago when there was a lot of testing, that ‘the first race of the year, my car is about half a second slower than the quickest one. Then we go testing. At the end of the year, my car is quicker but still half a second slower than the quickest one.’ So why go testing and, as Franz says, spend a lot of money?

CW: That’s true. Yeah. I do think that there is an argument that over the course of a year, if you start the season... to use an example, where we were at the start of this year, if we had had the opportunity to do some test days after the first few races, after Bahrain or Barcelona, it may have helped us, we don’t know, so I think there’s an argument for both sides.

Q: To pick up on Freddie’s original question, Tony is there a feeling among the teams that are represented today that you haven’t got the voice that is heard, that missed opportunity that you’re talking about. I assume that your opinion was given at various meetings. Was your voice not heard? Was that the problem?

TF: No, I don’t think so. I think there were numerous meetings, loads and loads of meetings, loads and loads of proposals but at the end of the day, some teams decided to split and when that happens, it’s a divide and rule situation and the whole thing falls apart. I don’t think it was anything else but that. There was lots of unity at the beginning but one by one, people decided to do their own thing.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – The Citizen) I would like to continue this particular debate about cost-cutting and maximising income. The general consensus of opinion seems to be that the teams screwed up in not maximising the income they could get from the commercial rights holder. The general consensus of opinion also appears to be that the FIA should control cost cuts. Am I correct in assuming then, that you people are asking the FIA to control something because you people screwed up?

BF: I think that was my comment, actually Dieter. I don’t think anybody else made that. My view is that the teams can’t agree what day it is, never mind be able to agree cost-cutting measures...

Q: (Dieter Rencken – The Citizen) Tony used the words ‘screwed up...’

TF: Yeah, I do. I don’t honestly think that if someone mentioned grown-ups etc around here, if we all sat together and agreed something, we wouldn’t need anyone to police it. The reality is we can’t. In my short period in Formula One it’s very clear, so I think someone here suggested the FIA controls that but the reality is that if 12 people in a room can’t agree something, then that sounds fairly ridiculous, but going back to Claire’s point, the competitive element of it leads us to this position and historically that’s always been the case I suppose.

CW: I don’t necessarily actually have anything more to add to it.

FT: For me, the FIA should not be involved in financial topics, but the FIA can come up with a regulation which helps the teams to cut the costs but then it’s obviously up to the teams to spend the money.

EB: Nothing else to add, to be honest.

F1 Singapore Blog – Friday report

Friday mornings tend not to be the most riveting aspect of a race weekend, with limited running taking place during FP1. Moving Friday morning to the early evening – as is the case during the Singapore Grand Prix – only looked to make matters worse.

Teams the length of the grid held back on track time, with all and sundry waiting for one of their opponents to head out and complete the thankless task of laying down fresh rubber on a dirty track, and fans saw even less practice than usual.

Once the running got underway, however, those watching were treated to a four-way fight between the Mercedes and Red Bull driver pairings, with Lewis Hamilton, Nico Rosberg, Mark Webber, and Sebastian Vettel all jostling for position at the top of the timesheets. When all was said and done it was Hamilton who came out on top, giving rise to the hope that the Singapore Grand Prix would be more exciting than the snorefests we saw in Monza and Spa.

Romain Grosjean did an impressive job to finish the first session 0.001s behind teammate Kimi Raikkonen despite losing out on running thanks to issues with his steering. It was a difficult day all around for the Frenchman, who also suffered issues with his hydraulics and steering column in the afternoon session, significantly limiting his track time – over the two sessions combined, Grosjean managed a scant 30 laps of the Marina Bay Circuit.

But the promise of a competitive weekend faded away in FP2, when Vettel leapt straight to the top of the timesheets with a multi-second margin over his rivals. Over the course of the ninety minute session that lead shrank, but the triple world champion hung up his helmet on Friday evening safe in the knowledge that he was six-tenths faster than his teammate and a second clear of Rosberg in third place.

It was a session entirely dominated by the Red Bull pairing; while Vettel and Webber put on a fantastic show as each did their level best to beat the other, none of the other teams were able to get close. Webber managed to set the best time on Pirelli’s soft compound tyre, but when the pair switched to supersofts Vettel emerged the victor, thanks partly to the Australian getting rather too close to the wall, making contact as he tried to outpace his teammate.

All signs currently point to yet another walkover weekend for Vettel, with the bell already tolling to mark the end of the drivers’ championship.

FP1 times (unofficial)

1. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1m47.055s [20 laps]
2. Mark Webber (Red Bull) 1m47.420s [20 laps]
3. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1m47.885s [19 laps]
4. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1m48.239s [23 laps]
5. Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus) 1m48.354s [18 laps]

6. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1m48.355s [12 laps]
7. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1m48.362s [21 laps]
8. Sergio Perez (McLaren) 1m49.267s [20 laps]
9. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1m49.348s [23 laps]
10. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) 1m49.355s [21 laps]
11. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) 1m49.481s [20 laps]
12. Felipe Massa (Ferrari) 1m49.493s [16 laps]
13. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) 1m49.510s [21 laps]
14. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1m49.608s [20 laps]
15. Paul di Resta (Force India) 1m49.887s [18 laps]
16. Adrian Sutil (Force India) 1m50.092s [20 laps]
17. Nico Hulkenberg (Sauber) 1m50.222s [17 laps]
18. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso) 1m50.757s [16 laps]
19. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) 1m52.359s [16 laps]
20. Max Chilton (Marussia) 1m52.673s [15 laps]
21. Giedo van der Garde (Caterham) 1m52.920s [24 laps]
22. Charles Pic (Caterham) 1m53.647s [23 laps]

FP2 times (unofficial)

1. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1m44.249s [34 laps]
2. Mark Webber (Red Bull) 1m44.853s [30 laps]
3. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1m45.258s [34 laps]
4. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1m45.368s [33 laps]
5. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1m45.411s [18 laps]
6. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1m45.691s [32 laps]
7. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1m45.754s [30 laps]
8. Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus) 1m45.778s [32 laps]
9. Adrian Sutil (Force India) 1m46.002s [27 laps]
10. Sergio Perez (McLaren) 1m46.025s [31 laps]
11. Daniel Ricciardo (Toro Rosso) 1m46.406s [34 laps]
12. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1m46.429s [33 laps]
13. Paul di Resta (Force India) 1m46.606s [33 laps]
14. Nico Hulkenberg (Sauber) 1m46.808s [36 laps]
15. Felipe Massa (Ferrari) 1m46.870s [33 laps]
16. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) 1m47.287s [29 laps]
17. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) 1m47.434s [33 laps]
18. Pastor Maldonado (Williams) 1m47.761s [25 laps]
19. Giedo van der Garde (Caterham) 1m49.434s [34 laps]
20. Charles Pic (Caterham) 1m49.526s [34 laps]
21. Max Chilton (Marussia) 1m49.619s [33 laps]
22. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) 1m49.731s [30 laps]

F1 Singapore Blog - Thursday press conference

It was a nearly all-Kimi press conference that took place on Thursday afternoon in Singapore, the Finn's first media outing after it was confirmed that he would be moving to Ferrari for 2014.

Present were Valtteri Bottas (Williams) Nico Hulkenberg (Sauber), Sergio Perez (McLaren), Kimi Raikkonen (Lotus), Nico Rosberg (Mercedes), and Adrian Sutil (Force India).

Q: I'll start with Kimi if I may. Congratulations on the move for next season. First time we've seen you since the announcement. If we'd have said to you at the start of the season that you'd be a confirmed Ferrari driver by September, what would have said then: no chance, no way or is it something you always thought might be possible?

Kimi RAIKKONEN: I just have to say things change in Formula One a lot. I never had a bad feeling with them really. But I mean I still have a lot friends and good memories from there. I knew that my contract will end at the end of this year so obviously I had to make some kind of decision what to do for next year and now it's been done.

Q: Was there anything that Lotus could have done to keep you with the team or was the attraction of a return to Ferrari just too strong for you?

KR: Yeah, there was a lot of things and for sure they know what it is. It's hard to say which way it would have gone if that would have had happened but the deal's done now and I'm very happy with the new deal.

Q: What would you say is the biggest challenge for you then next season at Ferrari?

KR: I know the team and I know the people. Obviously there are some new people and some more have left since I was there but most are the same. I don't think this will be too difficult to go there and do well. The car's will be obviously different so I think that will be the most difficult thing, to get the cars right and get them running reliable and whoever makes the best car will probably make the best out of it.

Q: Thank you Kimi. Let's turn to Nico Hulkenberg, sitting behind you. There's at least one seat going at Lotus and if you look at some of the headlines on the Internet you're the man for the man for that team for next season. With due respect to your current

team, is signing for Lotus a priority for you?

Nico HULKENBERG: It's not a priority. The priority is to find a good deal and a good car, a competitive car, and a good package. Nothing is finalised. Nothing has been decided at this point. Trying to sort out all the options and then to come up with a good decision for the future.

Q: Your name was of course linked to Ferrari. Did you think you got very close to a move there?

NH: I don't know. I guess so. There was a chance there. There's no point now to think about that too much. That's history now. I have to look forward and move on.

Q: You come here fresh with your performance at Monza in your mind. How much of a relief was that result for you given some of the difficulties on track this year?

NH: It was a fantastic weekend for us, a great effort by the team. I'm really happy for everybody there, for the hard work and that finally we could reward them a little bit, and for sure that's given us a boost and some momentum for the final seven races. Monza, after a very challenging and disappointing year, has been very happy and good for us.

Q: Sergio, I'm sure you're really excited to be here in Singapore this weekend but I'm sure your thoughts aren't very far away from your fellow countryman affected by the tropical storm in Mexico?

Sergio PEREZ: Definitely. We're not having a great time right now. A lot of people have lost their houses; other people have died. Things are getting a bit more complicated. That's a bit sad for my country. I will dedicate my race weekend for all my country, all the people that is suffering, losing their houses, their families, so hopefully things can get better.

Q: From a personal perspective, this time last year we were discussing your future and linking you to a move to McLaren, which eventually came off. Twelve months on people are talking about your future again. Have you signed a contract with McLaren yet?

SP: Yeah, it's pretty much everything done, I think, but the right thing to do is to ask Martin about that but everything is done.

Q: Have there been stumbling blocks along the way or have you been in unanimous agreement with McLaren?

SP: Yeah, we've been having some discussions about the contract. The contract is done but we are just finalising the final dots. Obviously I cannot give much details about them but everything is pretty much done.

Q: Valtteri, driving the Marina Bay circuit for the first time - what challenges lie ahead for you do you think this weekend?

Valtteri BOTTAS: I think it's going to be a difficult race weekend, like Monaco was first time for me. And then this track, it's a night race obviously but the lighting is very good and bright so that shouldn't make a big difference but y'know, it's a difficult circuit, a lot of corners, so there's lots to learn on Friday.

Q: Realistically, what are your goals for this weekend?

VB: Still our goal is points. This track is a lot different from Monza. We were not really strong there but this is different and it means we can be stronger here. The team was very strong here last year actually, so really hope this track suits our car. We have some little updates and if they work I really think it is possible to fight for the points in the race.

Q: We're talking about drivers' futures. For yourself for next season is it safe to assume you'll be staying with Williams?

VB: I think we still have to see. It's always best to ask the team, they know the best what they are going to do but at the moment I'm very confident with Williams and comfortable and really would like to continue.

Q: We'll stay on that theme. Adrian, your chances of staying with Force India for next season?

Adrian SUTIL: Yeah, I would be happy to do another year. I'm just back into Formula One, more than half a year only. It would be OK but I haven't really lost too many thoughts about it yet. It's quiet at the moment.

Q: You and the team haven't sat down and started to look ahead just yet then?

AS: No, not yet.

Q: And this season, the form of the team, it was an upward curve and then the tyres changed. We had the construction from last year and the compounds from this year and the team's form seemed to take a bit of a dip. Is it all tyre related?

AS: Yes, I think so. Since the new tyres came in it was clearly a step down for us. We used to be able to do one less stop in the race which was a big advantage compared to others and also the general balance of the car was much better and we lost it a little bit now, last few races. Spa was still OK but Monza was a big disappointment. Coming here of course we try to improve our performance again. I don't think we get everything out of our package and we don't develop the car any more - that's clear - but it's not different to other teams. So, we have to get back again where we used to be and I think even with this car what we have, we can show more in Singapore - here I expect a better performance.

Q: Is that very similar to yourself Nico Rosberg, that after the disappointment for the team in Spa and in Monza, Singapore, totally different track, Mercedes should improve? Or are you fearful of another disappointing weekend?

Nico ROSBERG: Spa wasn't really a big disappointment. Of course it wasn't a win - and we're aiming quite high recently - but still it was a great points haul for the team with third and fourth. Monza, yes, didn't go to plan. I think we had a very, very quick car so a lot more would have been possible. Unfortunately my weekend didn't go perfectly. But that's why I'm really looking forward to this race here. It's back to high downforce package where Lewis won last with this package in Hungary, so I'm confident we can be very quick again this weekend.

Q: A track you quite enjoy as well, I'd have thought.

NR: Yeah, for sure. I've had great results here in the past and really enjoyed the track and that's why I'm looking forward to it.

Q: Have you enjoyed this season? There have been two tremendous highs but some frustrating moments as well.

NR: In general I've really enjoyed it, yes, because it's the first time in my career that I've really had a car that on numerous occasions I can win races with. That's a great feeling. To come to a race track knowing I can put it on pole, I can win the race, it's really nice.

Q: (Paolo Ianieri - La Gazzetta dello Sport) Kimi, you said last year that when you left Ferrari you felt liberated. So what made

you decide to go back and lose your – in brackets – freedom?

KR: I always had freedom there also. There are a lot of stories from my past, from different teams but it's all from you guys and I don't think that you guys work in the team so you don't really know what's happening and you write a lot of stuff which can sometimes be true and sometimes not. I had a good time, like I said, and I'm sure we will have a good time together again.

Q: (Jacob Polychronis – F1Plus.com) Kimi, some other drivers have been quite quick to already suggest that your partnership with Fernando Alonso may not work out, namely Jenson and Sebastian. Do you care to weigh in on the issue?

KR: I don't see the reason why it wouldn't work. We are all old enough to know what we are doing and for sure the team is working for the right things to make sure. If there is something, I'm sure we can talk it through. It's not like we are 20-year old guys any more. I might be wrong, but time will tell, but I'm pretty sure everything will be good. For sure there will be hard fights on the race circuits but sometimes things go wrong... like I said, I'm pretty sure it will all be OK.

Q: (Andrea Cremonesi – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Kimi, Mr Montezemolo said in an interview in our newspaper that he expected victories and poles from you, but also that you can help Alonso to develop the car. Are you ready to spend more time in Maranello, like Fernando, to stay there even more than in the past?

KR: It's a pretty similar answer to before. There are a lot of stories but I think we've done pretty well in this team when we started and I don't see any reason why we shouldn't be able to produce a very good car for next year and keep improving it. Obviously there are new rules so it will be more challenging for all the teams but I have no worries about those things.

Q: (Luc Domenjoz – Le Matin) Kimi, it seems that Lotus owes you a lot of money, so the question is simple: why, if the team doesn't fulfil its part of the contract, why do you respect yours and why don't you simply stay at home?

KR: I like to race and then obviously that's the only reason why I'm here: it doesn't matter which team it is and obviously the reasons why they ask from the team but the reasons why I left from the team is purely on the money side, that they haven't got my salary so it's an unfortunate thing but like I said, I want to try and help the team as much as I can and I like to race.

Q: (Fulvio Solms – Corriere dello Sport) Kimi, referring to your next teammate, what do you think will be possible to learn from him next year and can he learn from you?

KR: For sure, you always learn from different teammates: everyone does different things. Maybe they do something better than you but often there are a lot of things that only suit one guy and it doesn't work if you try to do the same thing for yourself, it's not going to work. I know the team, I know the people. Like I said, I have no worries to go there and have something that wouldn't work. I don't really worry about it, I've never worked with Alonso. I obviously know him from racing but I'm sure it will be fine.

Q: (Chetan Narula – Planet F1) Adrian, how important is it for Force India to beat McLaren, considering there is just a five point gap and quite a few races to go, also considering that extra points means extra money in the Constructors' standing, especially for a middle team going into 2014, which is a highly... the rule changes and everything for a middle team to go forward and to develop, so how important is it to beat McLaren?

AS: It would be a great success, of course. We are a few points behind now and it's a very high target to complete but we showed, with a good car, it's possible also to fight against McLaren and well, what can we do, we are professionals so we want to finally actually win races which is why we're all here. That's why we never give up so at the end of the season, who knows what's going to happen? We only know that it's a big challenge to beat McLaren but it's not impossible and that's why we're pushing on. It would mean fifth position for us at the end of the year, that's two better than last year and that means much better financial backing, of course, for the next year. So you can think about it by yourself, that definitely means a better chance for us next year to compete even better.

Q: On the flip side to that, Sergio, how important is it for you and everyone at McLaren to finish ahead of Force India this year? Is it a fight and a battle that you're taking a lot of notice of?

SP: Yes, of course. It's not a secret that we haven't had the year that we were hoping for so we definitely have to try and finish as high as possible in the next seven races that we have ahead of us and maximise the full potential. Last weekend in Monza, we should have got more points than we did so I think we definitely have to make sure that we bring home all the points that we can. If at the end we beat Force India, it's good for us.

Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action and National Speedsport News) Nico Rosberg, at the start of the season the momentum was on your side; then it switched to Lewis. For the latter part of the season, how do you get it back onto your side? Is it just a matter of letting things unfold?

NR: I've just had a few races now when it's just not gone perfectly, a string of races and that gives a little bit of a dip but I'm really confident I can turn it around and get some good races again from now on.

Q: (Abhishek Tackle – Mid-Day) Nico Hulkenberg, last year you were linked to a Ferrari drive; this year there was actually a contract on the table before the deal with Kimi was agreed. Is there any sort of resentment that you feel towards Ferrari, especially the way that you found out that you hadn't got the drive, I think it was an SMS or something?

NH: No, not at all to be honest. I think the relationship is as good and as positive as before. I think there has maybe been some understanding and that story has been blown up by the media. I read that too but no, I don't feel that.

Q: Were you not contacted by text message then?

NH: No.

Q: (Luke Smith – NBC Sports) Valtteri, at Singapore, traditionally, there is a high rate of attrition, lots of retirements, there's been a safety car in every race here: is this your best chance to score points this season do you think?

VB: I think so, this should be the place to get the points. Like you said, a lot of things can happen in the race and safety cars etc. Like I said before, if some of the little updates work and we can get a little more speed and be a bit closer to the top ten in pure pace, then it's always possible to get points and we need to keep pushing for that.

Q: (Andrea Cremonesi – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Kimi, in your choice of Ferrari, is there also a technical reason? I'm thinking about the turbo era: do you think that Ferrari building both engine and chassis could be a better chance of being a competitive car

than Red Bull or Lotus next year?

KR: Obviously I hope so. They built very good cars and engines in the past, they've won a lot of championships as a team and then you have to look on the other side at teams like Red Bull or Lotus with Renault who have done very well. It's very hard to say which way it's going to go with the new rules and who's going to have the best package. There are a lot of stories about certain engines that will be much stronger than others but there are so many different things that you have to look at and go through and make sure that it works that I have no idea which team will be strongest and which team will come out on top. We have to wait and see, really, for the first few tests.

Q: (Chetan Narula - PlanetF1) Nico Rosberg, it's a continuation of the last question for you: for 2014, teams are looking to get the two strongest drivers to get them more points, considering it's going to be an unpredictable season. Lewis and your partnership was considered to be a very strong one, especially when Red Bull went for Daniel Ricciardo instead of Kimi. But with Kimi pairing with Alonso now, what are your thoughts on that?

NR: I can just say that for us it's working well. We push each other and also through a weekend, pushing each other, stepping up our game, learning from each other so it's working really well and we get on well together. But that's just for us. For other people, I don't know, we need to wait and see.

Q: Is it vital to get on with your teammate? Do you have to or can you still compete well on the track if you don't get on with your teammate?

NR: Well, get on, no, you don't need to get on but you need to show a certain respect, I think, otherwise it can go a bit wrong.
