



Sunday press conference

For the first time since he became a Ferrari driver, there was no Fernando Alonso at the post-race press conference in Monza.

Present were Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes), Nico Rosberg (Mercedes), and Felipe Massa (Williams).

Q: Lewis, so we would like to know, do you like to complicate your life?

Lewis HAMILTON: What a great crowd we have here. This is amazing to see. The whole finish line straight is completely filled with fans. You guys make this race, so thank you so much for the support.

Q: Nico, I spoke with our friends from Monza, they said: "maybe for Nico we change Turn One." Can you tell us what happened in Turn One?

Nico ROSBERG: It was a pity. It didn't work out today but Lewis drove a great race and he deserves it. So it's OK.

Q: Lewis and Nico, I have to speak but I cannot speak very loud because it's a secret. Are you friends again?

LH: Of course, we are team-mates and we always will be so...

Q: That's the best picture we can see is when you are friends, because all your life you race together and we like the way you drive, we like the way you fight, so we are happy to hear that. Felipe, you have made you first podium [this season] but it's a place you know very well, Monza, so you have to say something in English as well.

FM: Yeah, sure. I'm quite happy for the first podium of the season. I was not very lucky in some of the races, but the luck is on our side I'm sure now, from now to the last race we're going to be there fighting, so I'm so happy to be on the podium here and there's a lot more to come. So thank you very much and you are the best. Beautiful, you are the best.

Q: Lewis, many congratulations, another victory here in Italy; the first time in your Formula One career, I believe, that you've won six races in a single season, so a positively good omen there for you I'm sure. In the second stint... obviously the start wasn't great and I'm sure you'll touch on that, but also at the beginning of the second stint your engineer suggested to you that you might like to drop back 2-2.5s behind Nico and maybe attack him at the end, but you didn't do that. You put the pressure on him and obviously ultimately he went straight on at Turn One and you took the lead. Give us your mindset at winning the race, the start, and that phase there.

LH: Well, first of all, a big congratulations to the team. They said that they would want a one-two and they got it today. It was a difficult race. For whatever reason... at the start there's a button that you press which engages the launch sequence and for the formation lap it didn't work. I thought "no problem, I'll just put it on for the race" and then when I got to the grid I put it on and again it didn't work. It's very, very strange, I've never really had that happen before. There was a different sequence of lights that were on, that were unusually... that weren't on ever before. Anyway, I tried to pull away as fast as possible. The RPM was all over the place and fortunately I managed to not lose too many places. We never practice a start like that where you don't have the launch sequence in; we always practice in a launch sequence to optimise it. So I had no idea really what I was supposed to do, so I just floored it and hoped for the best. Then after that I had a good battle with Felipe, obviously. That was very fair through the corner. Then the engineer said that I should stay back, but knowing from experiences and also particularly this year I knew that that wasn't the way forward, so I chose another route.

Q: Can you say a bit more about that?

LH: The car felt good and it was the closest I had been at that point and just really during the previous stint I knew when I was behind others, when I was behind Nico, when I got closer to him on the older tyres it was very hard to stay with him. So I knew that the only chance would be at the start and so I took it.

Q: Nico, you got a perfect getaway, you were leading in the first stint, but obviously the talking point regarding you is the two straight on moments into Turn One. One I think on lap nine and then obviously the decisive one, which led to Lewis taking the lead. Was it your mistake? What can you tell us about it?

NR: No, it wasn't my mistake, it was the other guys' fault... I'm just kidding! It was just Lewis was quick, coming from behind. I needed to up my pace and then as a result just went into the mistake. That was very bad and that lost me the lead in the end. Definitely very disappointing from that point of view. But then at the end of the day, also, first of all it's a great day for the team, because after the recent difficulties it's the first one-two for the team in a long time, I believe, if I'm not mistaken. And so that's back to where we need to be, so that's awesome. And then for me: of course I'm disappointed now right afterwards but in the end of it, still second place, still a lot of points, so it's not a complete disaster.

Q: I think it's the first one-two since Austria.

NR: Yeah, so that's great. And the team deserves that, to put all the recent things behind us now and move forward.

Q: Very well done. Felipe, congratulations on another podium here in Italy and an important one - your first one for Williams and more importantly it takes you ahead of Ferrari now. Williams are third in the Constructors' Championship.

FM: Yeah, definitely. It's a great day for us. It was a great race, a great start. Also the pace, I think, was very good. So, not enough to fight with Mercedes but I think we had a very good pace, a very good car. The team did a perfect job. I'm really, really happy to be on the podium today. We missed a little bit during the season to be on the podium but so it's special to be on the podium here in front of these amazing people. Also, a very positive result for us that we passed Ferrari here as well, which is very important for us, very good for us, so I think it's amazing to see how Williams were last year and we are fighting with big teams. Definitely it's really good for the whole team and we will keep fighting until the last race and I hope really we can get this third place in the Constructors' Championship. It would be fantastic for the whole team. I'm so happy to be on the podium here in this amazing place that I really love.

Q: (Frederic Ferret - L'Equipe) Question for Lewis and Nico. When you put Nico under pressure, were you expecting a mistake of Nico? Where you trying to get close and overtake him? Question to Nico, can you tell us more about the difficulty of braking at the first chicane?

LH: I was pushing to overtake him. That meant it opens up doors for everything. So, I mean... I don't really know what to say.

Q: Nico?

NR: Monza, yeah, it's one of the most difficult tracks for braking because of low downforce and the highest speed of the year. That isn't any excuse or anything, that's just the way it is. It is one of the challenges, y'know, of this weekend here. Unfortunately I got it wrong. Two times in the race.

Q: (Péter Farkas – Autó-Motor) Nico, it's maybe a bit surprising that you don't look particularly downbeat despite coming second to Lewis. It's almost as if you have expected that second place to him. Is it fair to say that you have not completely regained your balance from Spa? Or do you think it has nothing to do with it?

NR: Spa is behind me. I put it behind me before the weekend. No. In today's race, just came to the mistake because Lewis was fast from behind. That's it. There's nothing unusual or anything. And me not being downbeat, I am very, very disappointed inside. But there's no point now to go hanging mouth down and things like that. It's still a one-two for the team and that's a great day. And it's not a disaster, that is a fact. I need to quickly look at the reality: second place, it's OK. There's a lot worse than that. I lost seven points to Lewis, so, y'know, that's the frame of mind that I'm trying to take.

Q: (Ian Parkes – PA) Lewis, first of all, congratulations. When you had that incident at the start there, given the many incidents you've gone through in recent races, was there a thought in your mind of 'oh no, not again'? And to Nico, unfortunately for you there were some more boos on the podium. Was that disappointing again to hear? And how do you try to move on from that?

LH: I think when you're preparing for the race you generally do everything near enough the same but you have to be prepared for the unexpected. I'm quite grateful today that I didn't lose it, I didn't end up crashing in the first corner, I didn't end up touching anyone, I didn't end up locking or anything like that. So, managed to keep my composure even though this thing... what it is, is a button that engages a system which controls the RPM, helps you control the RPM, and when that doesn't engage, the RPM just goes all over the place, so you're not able to get normal starts, so a correct launch. I don't know what the problem was, I guess the guys will investigate it and we'll try to make sure it doesn't happen again. I'm just grateful that I was able to not lose too many places and the also recover from that.

Q: Nico?

NR: It's obviously not nice but what can I say? I hope that with time they forgive and forget. That would be great. I have apologised, I can't really do anything more than that. Yep, that's it.

Q: (Vladimir Rogovets – Sb Belarus Segondnya) Felipe, 2007 you was second driver in Ferrari with Kimi champion. Last year you was second driver in Ferrari with Fernando, double champion. Today you are on the podium Monza, Italia, without Ferrari, without Kimi, without Alonso. Is it your message to Ferrari, first question? And second question: what do you feel in the podium here without Ferrari?

FM: First of all I think is not a message to anyone, I think it's just... y'now... you saying that I was second driver, I was trying everything to be the first driver all the time in my career. So, whatever team I was, had difficult times but it is part of our lives. Sometimes you have times that are a little bit more difficult than you expected but you need to fight against it, you need to go forwards. I always fight. It's not a message. We are fighting with Ferrari as well, that's not a message. We need to do everything we can to be in front of them. I'm not driving to Ferrari any more. I have an incredibly heart for Ferrari, they are really inside my heart and they will always be because I had an incredible time there, a great time there. But now I am in another team and we need to fight with everybody, not just Ferrari but Red Bull, Mercedes, everybody. We need to try to be in front of everybody and, y'know, today we did a fantastic job so we were in the podium. I think it's a message that we're competitive. It's a message that we are there, that we are fighting. It's not something that I need to... I have nothing against anybody. I just want to be in front of these people, which they really like me. I had an incredibly time with them for many years. It's not that I'm not in red anymore that I don't have the same pleasure and happiness to be there in front of these incredible people.

Q: (Andrea Cremonese, La Gazzetta dello Sport) A question for Lewis and one for Nico. For Lewis, do you think recovering seven points is a bigger relief after what's happened in the last few races, and if you feel yourself have plenty of confidence for the Championship? For Nico, if after the second mistake, if you was a little bit affected in the instruction that you received from the team because you lost in two laps two seconds from him, from 4.6 to 2.6 seconds in two laps.

LH: Well, I've generally felt like I've always been in good shape. But I came here with a positive attitude. Hoping just for no issues. I guess the cool thing about today is that I had another serious one and I managed to pull through it. Again, all those experiences I've had kind of have prepared me for it today and I'm still looking for one of those weekends where we don't have any troubles. Clearly today I had the pace on everyone and on Nico and I felt that way all weekend. So, I'm going to make sure that's the case moving forwards.

Q: Nico?

NR: I don't remember what happened. I think it was... traffic? Lapping somebody or something like that. That was the biggest problem but I'm not quite sure. But either way, Lewis in that phase was quick, so it didn't really change that much but yes, maybe that shortened the process a little bit. But nothing in particular.

Q: (Sarah Holt – CNN) Lewis, we talked about Monza being about mental toughness as well as about what you can do on the track, and today we saw you fight your way through the field. You ignored the team's advice about holding back a bit and then you had to listen to all the Italian in the weighing room, the podium and no one was speaking English to you. Do you feel like you showed today that you're mentally tough enough to win the title? Is that important?

LH: Firstly, I didn't ignore the team's orders. I have a great relationship with my engineer and he's constantly in touch with me throughout the race and really guiding me. If I'm losing a bit of time here or there, he's telling me so that I know how to correct it. They want to win just as much as me so they're just trying to guide me to what they think but at the end of the day, I was the one out there and they had to really decide: OK, I can back off here and keep the tyres but the calculation might be better the other way. I knew that if I applied the pressure, an opportunity would eventually come. I didn't get the chance to say it really out there but the fans have been amazing here. Even I've gone through difficult times here – 2007 probably, when I was racing against Fernando and obviously we were racing with Kimi and the Ferraris but I've really felt a real growth of the support that I've had here over the years. It's such a beautiful nation. When you come here, the weather's always good, the track's incredible and there's nowhere you go and you see the whole straight, which is one of the longest straights in the whole season, completely full of fans, mostly with red caps and flags but they really create the atmosphere. In terms of me, I came here to do a job and I did it so I'm happy with that.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Nico, there are six races to go and you lead by 22 points. When do you think that it's time to start to consider only the championship instead of winning races?

NR: I don't know. For me the approach that works best at the moment is just trying to win the race that I'm at, that's the way I feel most comfortable at the moment. We will see. Maybe I will tell you when I change my thinking.

Q: (Ted Kravitz – Sky Sports) Nico, the team told us at the end of the race that you were managing brake temperatures. Was that the problem at the first corner as well? Were the brakes the problem throughout the race?

NR: No, the brakes were no problem at all, up towards the end when you first heard it on the radio, that's when it started to become... and it wasn't a massive problem, just something that you have to manage a little bit. That's always going to happen, because opening up the front brake ducts you lose quite a lot of aerodynamic performance. You always try to bring that to a certain limit and that may then put you slightly over in the race so it's not the first time and last time that something like that is going to happen and I think it was just pretty much optimised for here.

Q: (Peter Farkas – Auto-Motor) To all three of you: all three of you had reasonably long first stints on the mediums. How marginal were the tyres to do a one-stop? Did any of you have any problems? Lewis mentioned that it was hard to follow Nico on used tyres at the end of the first stint.

FM: Well, I think a one stop was the strategy for everybody before the race. I think the tyres worked pretty well, maybe a little bit more degradation on the medium which I was suffering a little bit more at the end of the stint on the medium but no problem at all with the hard tyres. I think it was

really pretty much OK to one-stop, at least for us.

Q: Lewis, we heard a message to Nico from his engineers saying that you'd reported that the tyres were beginning to go off before lap ten, I think it was. Did you have any issues? Did it clear itself?

LH: No, basically I was in traffic, I was behind a couple of cars. The grip didn't feel good at the time. To be honest, the tyres have been really good this weekend. It was generally really easy in terms of doing a one-stop. There was only one risk and that's really if you lock up, that's generally why you'll see drivers going (straight) on at the first corner, because they don't want to try and make the corner, lock up because then they have to convert to a two-stop which is much slower, so the thought is that if you get a lock, you let off the brake and go straight and that's what Nico would have done twice and that's what other people would potentially have done today. But I think it's such a cool track - I don't know if it was fun to watch the race - but to give more racing, more pit stops would have been good here, bit of a softer tyre which was a bit more of a challenge because the tyre was really easy to generally look after. I didn't have any problems really.... I was behind Nico, losing downforce through the high speed but then as soon as he pitted the car was quick again, so I think the tyre could have gone even further.

Q: Was it any way marginal for a one-stop for you, Nico?

NR: Not really, no. Of course there was quite a lot of degradation on the soft one but no, it was fine. And I agree, it would be better to have two stops for more exciting racing, but then again, for the fans and you watching on TV for sure the one-stop is much easier to understand because it's very straightforward and simple, whereas as soon as you get into two-stop, it becomes different tyre strategies and this and that and it becomes near impossible to understand often in front of the TV, but also has some advantages.

Q: (Ottavio Davide - Tuttosport) Felipe, do you think that on a completely different track such as Singapore it's possible to beat both Mercedes?

FM: Mercedes? Very difficult. In Singapore, especially, I think it will be very very difficult, but Singapore is a race at which many things happen so we need to believe that we can do a good job there as well so I would say maybe from now to the last race, Singapore is maybe the track that is going to be more negative than the others for us. But at Singapore, you never know, many things happen there so I hope we can do a good job there as well. If we can beat Mercedes it will be a surprise but we will try everything we can.

Q: (Leigh O'Gorman - Walker Watson) For all three: concerning how Monza is such a fast circuit, so much of it is full throttle, were there any issues with regards to fuel usage during the race?

LH: It's not an issue. This track was very easy to...

NR: No problem.

FM: No.

NR: Mercedes engine, I suppose.

Race report

Despite an error-riddled race for Mercedes of both the human and mechanical varieties, the Silver Arrows claimed a 1-2 finish at the Italian Grand Prix, with Lewis Hamilton taking the chequered flag with just over three seconds in hand over teammate Nico Rosberg.

As the lights went out in Monza it looked as though Hamilton would be ruing his poor luck once again, when the Briton's getaway was hampered by a launch control issue. Falling back to fourth place before the pack had left the pit straight, radio transmissions then revealed a significant and potentially serious data conflict between car and pit wall, with contradictory messages and never-before-seen lights flashing on the steering wheel.

On the other side of the grid, Rosberg made a clean getaway and was soon leading the field through the glorious Monza parkland, with Kevin Magnussen and Felipe Massa giving chase and keeping the gap to the race leader nice and tight. In fourth place with his launch control issues resolved and any data conflicts no longer bothering either driver or pit wall, Hamilton hung on and was able to keep Rosberg around four seconds ahead on the road.

An error from Magnussen on lap four promoted both Massa and Hamilton, and the chase was on. But on lap 9 it was Rosberg's human error that cut the gap to his rivals behind, with the German driver running straight on at Rettifilo and losing half a second to the time spent weaving through the polystyrene. He held the lead, but it would prove to be a sign of things to come.

By the time the first - and only, for the bulk of the pack - round of stops was complete, Rosberg led Hamilton by a margin of 1.8s, with Massa 10.6s behind in third place. Told by his team to hang back with a 2-2.5s gap to the championship leader until the closing stages of the race, Hamilton pulled out qualifying lap after qualifying lap, and on lap 28 pulled out an impressive 0.5s on his teammate in the second sector alone.

On lap 29, and under pressure Rosberg once again went straight on at Rettifilo, and this time the error cost him both the race lead and eventual win, as by the end of lap 30 Hamilton had opened up a 2.6s lead over his teammate that would prove to be unassailable.

Further down the pack it was Valtteri Bottas and Daniel Ricciardo who were the heroes of the day, with both men delivering spectacular performances as they carved their way up through the field.

Bottas - who lined up behind Hamilton on the grid - lost out on the start when the Briton failed to make a clean getaway, and the Finn's afternoon was later hampered by a bizarre choice of pit strategy from Williams, who undid all of Bottas' hard overtaking work in the first stint with a badly-timed stop which dropped him back in the middle of the pack he had worked so hard to pass. Unbowed, Bottas simply repeated the feat and finished a comfortable fourth.

The last dozen laps of the race belonged to Ricciardo. On lap 40, the Australian slipped past Jenson Button for P8, and one lap later stole seventh from Sergio Perez. That put him in the frame to chase down Kevin Magnussen for sixth, with the Danish driver several seconds up the road. But two laps after making short work of the Force India, Ricciardo nipped past the second McLaren and set his sights firmly on teammate Sebastian Vettel who was four seconds further up the road in fifth.

By lap 47 Ricciardo has caught up and slipped past his multi-titled teammate, with the passing pas de deux getting started at Rettifilo and carrying on for a couple of corners before the job was done and Vettel was left staring at the gearbox of the other RB10. With only a handful of laps remaining and the Mercedes-powered Bottas more than ten seconds ahead on track, Ricciardo's climb through the field came to an end.

It was a miserable Sunday afternoon for Ferrari, who are usually able to pull out at least a podium for the adoring tifosi at their home grand prix. This year it was not to be, however, with Fernando Alonso retiring seconds after Hamilton took the race lead, and Kimi Raikkonen inheriting ninth place thanks to a five-second time penalty for Magnussen. Alonso stopped at Rettifilo with what appeared to be gearbox failure but which was later attributed to water leaking from his energy store.

Italian Grand Prix race result

1. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1h19m10.236s
2. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) + 3.175s
3. Felipe Massa (Williams) + 25.026s
4. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) + 40.786s
5. Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull) + 50.309s
6. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) + 59.965s
7. Sergio Perez (Force India) + 1m02.518s
8. Jenson Button (McLaren) + 1m03.063s
9. Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari) + 1m03.535s
10. Kevin Magnussen (McLaren) + 1m06.171s*
11. Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso) + 1m11.184s
12. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) + 1m12.606s
13. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) + 1m13.093s
14. Pastor Maldonado (Lotus) + 1 lap
15. Adrian Sutil (Sauber) + 1 lap
16. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) + 1 lap
17. Kamui Kobayashi (Caterham) + 1 lap
18. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) + 1 lap
19. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) + 2 laps
20. Marcus Ericsson (Caterham) + 2 laps

Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) RET

Max Chilton (Marussia) RET

* Kevin Magnussen was issued with a five-second time penalty for causing a collision with Valtteri Bottas, and would have finished in ninth without the penalty.

Saturday press conference

There were no prizes for guessing which engine manufacturer was the only one represented in the post-qualifying press conference at power-hungry Monza.

Present were Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes), Nico Rosberg (Mercedes), and Valtteri Bottas (Williams).

Q: Lewis, it's the first pole since Barcelona since Barcelona back in May. It's been quite a journey since then to get to this point. How do you feel?

Lewis HAMILTON: I feel excited for tomorrow. I'm very proud of my guys. My guys on the side of the garage have also been through the difficult time with me and they've done a remarkable job in terms of every time bouncing back and fixing the car and dealing with the difficulties so we've done this as a team and it's great to have another one-two for the team and I'm really proud that I can be up there for them.

Q: Well done, Nico, you were up by a tenth-and-a-half at the end of the first sector on that final run, but then it got away from you. What happened?

Nico ROSBERG: A tenth-and-a-half relative to Lewis?

Q: Yes, Lewis' benchmark, which he did on his first lap [in Q3].

NR: Yeah, but we're always going to be quicker in some parts and slower in some other parts, so relative to my own [first] lap it was an OK lap, so from that point of view second place is still a good position for tomorrow. It's a long race you know, everything can happen and so just need to now work towards the race and try to get a good start and have a good race. Anyways, also, I mean, definitely the team again. It's so great. Even on a track like Monza, where it's such a different track to all the others and even coming here, still we're so dominant and that's great to see. Of course it's only qualifying and the race remains to be seen but it's really awesome. The team is doing a fantastic job.

Q: Coming to you Valtteri. Your third top three qualifying in the last four races. Particularly strong long runs yesterday in free practice. Does that suggest that you can challenge these gentlemen for the victory tomorrow?

Valtteri BOTTAS: I really hope so. From Friday to today they seem to have a bit more pace. In qualifying we expected that maybe we could be a little bit closer to them today but yeah, I really hope so. I think we have solid race pace and it just depends how much more pace they have left than on Friday.

Q: OK, thank you very much. Coming back to you Lewis. Obviously the margins are always pretty fine around here. How do you feel about the race tomorrow? You've got some points, clearly, you need to make up, any suggestion of team orders or are you free to race?

LH: Free to race. That was the decision last week, so it continues as usual. I hope that tomorrow... it would be really good to get another one-two for the team. I think they're working extremely hard. I hope that we also have some competition from these guys [Williams]: I think that would be really great for the fans. As for me, I feel, I feel... I'm looking forward to it.

Q: Lewis, I guess the key really is to put a complete race weekend together, that's what you've been looking for, for some time. Did you feel, coming into this weekend, and do you feel again now, that this would be that weekend that would give you that momentum back.

LH: Well to be honest, for probably at least seven races I've always gone into the weekend thinking that it could be a clean weekend. We saw the issue that we had yesterday and, again Nico had a problem today. It's definitely an area that we're focussing on to try and improve as a team but, y'know, I'm grateful to have got through qualifying today. It was kind of a very clean qualifying session for me, for once. And so, yeah, it's a great feeling to be up here.

Q: Nico, Lewis mentioned there the problem that you had this morning with the electronics on the gearbox which meant that you didn't really do any meaningful running. Where you able to bounce back today? Do you blame what happened here today on that loss of time this morning and the preparation of things like the braking points and that precision that's needed for a lap around here?

NR: To be honest, straight in the first run in qualifying I had a good feeling and the car was better than yesterday in many areas. Adapted the setup overnight and worked on it so actually I got straight into it. I was happy about that feeling because I was expecting it to be a bit more complicated but that was good, definitely. So, from that point of view, qualifying was OK.

Q: Valtteri, when you talk to engineers here, they all say it's incredibly difficult for a driver to get all four of those big brakings around this circuit absolutely perfect. How close did you get to that today and how do you feel about it?

VB: Pretty close! There are many braking zones that are quite bumpy here and with the low downforce and coming in at really high speed it's not easy – but today managed to hit them quite well, the correct braking points, and lap by lap the lap times were really consistent so I really felt today there was not much more in the car – so we definitely have some work to do.

Q: (Frederic Ferret – L'Equipe) Question to all three drivers. What are your thoughts on the new Parabolica? Is it the same way of driving and attacking it, or is it different? You can take some more risks?

LH: I think naturally you can take more risks. In the past it was a corner that you really had to build up to and you really did not want to go past the limit because you would be in the gravel and it's hard to get back from the gravel at that place. Now, of course, you can attack it more. I go in with the same mentality but you do know you have that cushion there if you have an oversteer moment or you went in too far, you can run wide and come back on. That's the same everywhere really, that they do that.

Q: For the race?

LH: For the race, yeah, for sure it makes it a little bit easier in the race but I haven't been anywhere near the green or out of the white lines so I don't really know what it's like out there – but it is a safer option in terms of stopping the cars if there is a problem there.

Q: Your thoughts Nico?

NR: I think they've done well. Of course it's a pity because it's more exciting, in a way, the way it used to be, y'know? But we all need to think about safety and it was one of the most dangerous corners in the year – so I think it's the right way to go, what they've done. And also, it works out really well because as soon as you do put the tyre over the white line, you lose grip because of the metal thing that's there, and so it works out pretty well actually.

Q: Valtteri?

VB: Yes, I pretty much agree with the guys. Yeah, it's not the same as last year. It takes a bit more time to build into it, to be absolutely on the limit. It's just a bit less risky really, that's it.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Valtteri, our rally hero Markku Alen is here and he's very famous for his slogan 'Maximum Attack'. Was this your version of 'Maximum Attack' today?

VB: Yeah. It's always maximum attack! You always aim for that. You always want to do your best – but trying too much, it doesn't help. There's a fine line with a maximum attack.

Q: (Péter Farkas – Autó-Motor) Lewis, you seemed to out-brake just a bit yourself on your first lap in Q2 which proved to be your best in Q2 – which means you have to start on that set of tyres. Is it a concern for you?

LH: Erm... I don't remember that to be honest. I didn't have any problems with the tyres when I finished the lap, so they're fine.

Q: (Ian Parkes – PA) Lewis, Nico, congratulations on the front row – but how much will the words of your bosses be ringing in your ears as you approach the first chicane tomorrow?

LH: They won't be ringing in my ears at all.

NR: It's not changed. Already before, when we started the season, the message has been clear – so there's no real change at the moment. So, from that point of change it's the same as always, in a way.

Q: (Vincent Marre – Sport Zeitung) Nico, you say you improved the car since yesterday: I would like to know, technically speaking, how you improved it mainly?

NR: Mainly overnight, just looking at yesterday... at the running yesterday and the difficulties that we've had. The team made some suggestions because there's also a whole group of people back in the factory looking at the computer and analysing. They made a good set-up suggestion which worked and then we just adapted it also here at the track, and I was quite pleased about that because it felt a lot better. Roll-bars, for example.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – Universo Online) Valtteri, considering it is difficult to fight with Mercedes, who do you consider can try to beat Williams tomorrow? Do you think Red Bull, McLaren and Ferrari can be up with your team?

VB: I don't think we should ever under-estimate them. Like we saw last week in Spa with the Red Bull, they were really quick and we didn't expect to be behind them so we should not under-estimate but we are a bit more confident here than Spa for example. Hopefully there's not much threat from behind us and hopefully we can mainly focus on things happening just in front of us or hopefully we can really challenge them, but let's see.

Q: (Ian Parkes – Press Association) Lewis, Nico, you've both had issues this weekend, Lewis yesterday with electrical, today Nico with a gearbox. You seem to keep having these little niggles, these technical issues. Are there any concerns going into tomorrow's race, that you can both have a clean race throughout?

NR: It is an area which we need to keep working on for sure, also medium term to make sure the car is working 100 percent all the time, but it is a challenge, it is difficult but we're getting there. I'm very confident for tomorrow.

LH: It's a little bit different for me because it's happened quite a few times on my side of the garage. But... no, I feel optimistic, I think the guys have rectified whatever problems we may have had this weekend. Yeah, it's not really a mindset you can go into a race with, thinking 'what if?' You go into it with 'this is what I have and I want to do the best with it.'

Q: (Barna Zsoldos – Nemzeti Sport) Niki Lauda was a bit upset after Spa because you tried a risky overtake on the second lap. Now, if you will have the chance on the second lap, will you go for it again or will you wait a little bit?

NR: It's a question that I'm not able to answer. The message is that we're keeping on racing, that is the message, that's the way it is. And then every situation is different. And Niki has apologised for that also which was great.

Q: (Andrea Cremonesi – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Nico, you haven't won in Formula One here in Monza if I'm not mistaken. At the same time, you are leading the championship with quite a good gap. Tomorrow, what is your aim: to become a new winner here or to conserve the second position, thinking about the championship?

NR: Well, first of all Monza is a special place, also for me because I really like Italy, all my friends are Italian, so it's great to race here and great also in front of the tifosi and they give me a lot of support which is great. I really enjoy that and I'm very thankful for that. And then at the moment I'm out to win, it doesn't matter where we are, I'm not thinking about the end of season yet or things like that. It's really every race, try and get the best out of it and try and win the race.

Saturday report

It was Lewis Hamilton who topped the timesheets for Mercedes in the final practice session for the 2014 Italian Grand Prix before doing the same in qualifying. But while Nico Rosberg was hot on the Briton's heels in the afternoon, the German's morning was compromised by electrical issues in his gearbox and there were concerns the championship leader may be forced to skip Monza qualifying.

But Rosberg was able to make it out of the garage in time to start qualifying with his peers, and it wasn't long into Q1 before he and Hamilton were trading places at the top of the timesheets.

As anticipated, the Williams were strong in the early phase of qualifying, with Valtteri Bottas and Felipe Massa the only drivers able to lap within half a second of the Mercedes pair. The surprise was Massa's pace, with the Brazilian at one stage half a second ahead of the Finn, despite Bottas'

record of being fastest through the bulk of the speed traps this season.

Following on from the precedent set in practice it was the McLarens, Fernando Alonso, and Sebastian Vettel who were best of the rest for the bulk of Q1 (and all on hard tyres to boot), while at the back of the pack it was the usual suspects from Caterham, Marussia, and Lotus who struggled. Watching the cars trackside, even a blind man could see the aerodynamic deficiencies of the Lotus, made even more evident by the shortfalls of the Renault power unit.

Things went from bad to worse for the Enstone racer in the final minutes of Q1, when a hot-lapping Pastor Maldonado was asked by the team to stop changing gear as the pit wall had detected (yet another) problem with the car.

With the usual suspects out of the way, it was those who had impressed in practice who by and large elected to stay in the garage for the first half of Q2. Rosberg got an early banker lap in and went top of the timesheets in the process, but when Hamilton emerged from the garage he unseated the German on his first timed lap, albeit by a margin of just over a tenth.

But Kevin Magnussen, who had been a strong performer all weekend, was in the dropout zone with his first timed lap, joined by Nico Hulkenberg and the driver pairings from Toro Rosso and Sauber. Hanging around the bottom of the top ten were Sebastian Vettel and Daniel Ricciardo, and both men were at risk of dropping out in the event of a strong late run from either of the two Mercedes-powered drivers in the dropout zone.

Particularly impressive was the gap between Mercedes and Williams and the rest of the field, with a half-second gap between P4 Massa and P5 Alonso. But it was after the chequered flag fell that the action kicked off on the timesheets, with Kimi Raikkonen suffering the indignity of being a Ferrari driver knocked out in Q2 at Monza, alongside both Toro Rosso drivers, both Saubers, and Hulkenberg.

Barring any reliability issues on either car, the top ten shoot-out in Monza was always going to be a straight fight for pole between Rosberg and Hamilton, and with five minutes left on the clock it was Hamilton who led his teammate by a semi-comfortable four-tenths, with Rosberg losing all of that time in the middle sector. The German appeared to struggle to get the perfect line around Lesmo, and it looked as though Hamilton might secure pole for the first time since the Spanish Grand Prix in early May. Hot on Rosberg's heels in provisional P3 was Bottas, with Massa just behind.

But with all runners out on track for a final shot at pole, the final 90 seconds were a minute and a half in which anything could happen. Nothing did, and it was a front row lock-out for Mercedes led by Hamilton, with Williams claiming the second row as their own and McLaren doing the same on row three.

Provisional grid

1. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1m24.109s
2. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1m24.383s
3. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) 1m24.858s
4. Felipe Massa (Williams) 1m24.865s
5. Kevin Magnussen (McLaren) 1m25.314s
6. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1m25.379s
7. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1m25.430s
8. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1m25.436s
9. Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull) 1m25.709s
10. Sergio Perez (Force India) 1m25.944s

11. Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari) 1m26.110s
12. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1m26.157s
13. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) 1m26.279
14. Adrian Sutil (Sauber) 1m26.588s
15. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) 1m26.692s
16. Pastor Maldonado (Lotus) 1m27.520s

17. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1m27.632s
18. Kamui Kobayashi (Caterham) 1m27.671s
19. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) 1m27.738s
20. Max Chilton (Marussia) 1m28.247s
21. Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso) 1m26.070s *
22. Marcus Ericsson (Caterham) 1m28.562s

* Daniil Kvyat qualified in P11 but will start the Italian Grand Prix from P21 for an automatic penalty incurred by using a sixth internal combustion engine.

Friday press conference

The Friday team principals press conference in Monza covered every topic on the secret strategy group meeting, from cost controls to the future of the sport.

Present were John Booth (Marussia), Federico Gastaldi (Lotus), Paul Hembery (Pirelli), Christian Horner (Red Bull), Marco Mattiacci (Ferrari), and Toto Wolff (Mercedes).

Q: Toto, could I begin with you? First of all, can you bring us up to speed with what happened to Lewis Hamilton this afternoon: we saw he lost at least an hour of running. What was the problem and what else have you lost?

Toto WOLFF: Yeah, obviously not very good. We lost a lot of running due to an electronic problem, which we need to identify yet. It shouldn't be a big issue but losing valuable time in free practice two is obviously not perfect.

Q: Looking back to the last grand prix, can you tell us what new rules have you imposed on the drivers since that collision in Spa and given that there will always be, I guess, close calls on track between drivers in a tight championship fight, are you convinced that they will be enforceable?

TW: First of all, you know, if that particular incident would have happened somewhere back in the field it would have... or it has been actually judged as a racing incident. Now you don't want to see these kinds of things between team-mates and I think this is valid for any other team and particularly not between team-mates who are racing each for a win, for a podium. We've made it very clear that we want to stick to our philosophy in letting the drivers race – it's about the Drivers' Championship, we acknowledge that, that this is the most important championship. Nevertheless, what we said from the beginning was that there shouldn't be any contact between their cars and I guess this is valid for us and it is valid for any

other team and this is why we re-emphasised that point.

Q: Christian, coming to you, it looked pretty close today in terms of times at the top of the running and two wins in the last couple of races. Does this give you belief that maybe you could pull off an unlikely ambush in the championship?

Christian HORNER: Well certainly Spa was a big surprise for us, we didn't expect to be competitive there and ended up winning the race. Monza is a different challenge. We can't go any lower on downforce without taking the wings off. Obviously everybody has come down on downforce level this weekend. Hopefully we can put in a good performance tomorrow, get as high up the grid as we can and have a grandstand seat to see what happens between the Mercedes boys at turn one.

Q: Obviously engine penalties are looming, with only five engines per driver allowed this season. Can you tell us what has been discussed in your planning meetings on this, what it's yielded and how you think it might affect these next few grands prix in the championship?

CH: Well it's inevitable for us that with the amount of failures we've had this year that we're going to have to take an additional engine at some point. We don't have to take it just yet but certainly over the next four races I would think we are going to be faced with that question. Where other teams are in their sort of duty cycles with their engines and gearboxes is unknown to us. So we can only focus on ourselves and deal with issues as they arise. Sebastian's situation is slightly worse than Daniel's because he's had the lion's share of issues during races on his power unity. So we'll see how the next couple of events go.

Q: Thank you very much for that. Coming to Federico Gastaldi, the Deputy Team Principal of Lotus. Obviously Gerard [Lopez] is unable to join us I take it?

Federico GASTALDI: He was trying to... actually he's here at the race track but for some reason he was stuck in traffic and he might be arriving any minute, so I apologise for that.

Q: OK, so let me ask you the first question I was going to ask him, which is that there's quite a contrast between the Lotus of 2014 and the Lotus of last season?

FG: This year obviously with the new regulations, I mean everything has been a big change for everyone, but for us certainly it's very, very tough. Actually at the beginning we thought it was only an engine problem but as the season kept going we found out we had different problems. We try to learn from every race and we try to improve for the next one but so far it's not been very positive for us, that's all.

Q: And what measures are you and Gerard and the rest of the management team putting in place for the future?

FG: We are trying to... everyone know we have lost very good, experienced people from the team, going to other teams and that affected us a lot and also we were trying to find a solution for the engine, so that's the key for us.

Q: Thanks very much. Coming to you, Marco. Obviously it's your first Italian Grand Prix as a team principal of Ferrari, so can you describe your emotions, your workload and obviously your feeling on the performance today?

Marco MATTIACCI: It's my first Monza, as you said. I'm impressed about the passion around Ferrari. To see all these children outside, people cheering at us, it gives us positive pressure and responsibility and motivation to keep working very hard. It is Friday, we have good indication that we keep working consistently, but it's still Friday, so I would until Saturday afternoon, Sunday afternoon.

Q: In your various appearances here over the course of the year so far you've given us your vision. You've been arguing recently that you think there needs to be a change to the rules to developing engines in-season. Why do you think that's the right thing to do for Formula One?

MM: We've been discussing this all together, so I think that Formula One is about innovation. I think that naturally who did a fantastic job, it's important that it's clear that he's ahead, but I think that to wait one year, to give possibility to catch up with the best, to develop and to innovate is too much. I think fans sometimes they don't understand why we need to wait so long to close the gap. But at the same time I think that we can find a balance to do some productive progress and probably loosen up the rules in order to see a little bit of work on the engine, to let our engineers be creative and to improve.

Q: Thank you very much for that. Obviously yesterday we heard from Max Chilton about the situation in Spa regarding him. In your mind is that now fully resolved and where has it left you?

John BOOTH: Well, I don't want to dwell on it for too long, I think we've done it to death over the last two weeks. Obviously down at our end of the grid sometimes these things happen. We normally like to deal with all this sort of stuff in house but with a four o'clock deadline on Thursday at Spa it wasn't possible. But we managed to resolve it overnight and things were back to normal and the important thing is that we look forward and move on.

Q: Turning to your driver, the other driver, Jules Bianchi, he obviously got himself into Q2 again at Spa. With your extensive experience over the years of young drivers, how would you describe his development and do you think you can hold onto him again for next year?

JB: The first part is pretty easy. Jules is obviously a very special driver. He's always been quick - from the first day he sat in the car at the second winter test at Barcelona. But now he's got much more maturity. He's learned how to manage tyres, how to manage his pace, manage to manage the whole race situation. I think he's maturing into as top-line driver. As regards holding on to him, maybe I'm not the person you should be asking?

Q: Maybe we'll ask Marco about that?

MM: Bianchi is a guy that is coming out of the Ferrari driving academy, that is a very important project for us, and it is clear that we want to venues for a talent to express himself. So that's what we are going to work on.

Q: Finally, Paul: a home grand prix for Pirelli, so tell us what you've learned today about the performance of the tyres, what we're likely to see in terms of strategy?

Paul HEMBERY: It's pretty straightforward from our point of view. It's a circuit that is low on abrasion. High speed is the biggest challenge, so structurally it's a challenge for the tyres. The difference between the tyres is about half a second, six tenths, so not a great difference to create any interesting strategies. You lose a lot in the pit lane here, so like last year looking at a one-stop race.

Q: The tyres this year, generally though, have made for races where there have been a number of strategy options. Do you feel enough has been made of the impact that this has had on the racing?

PH: I think it's been a reasonable balance. We are having less stops, coming up to about one per race less than in the past. But this year was always going to be about the new technology of the vehicles and quite rightly. The change in regs has given us some pretty exciting racing, which has been wonderful to watch.

Q: (Daniel Ortelli - Agence France Presse) A question for Toto. It's not a question about Hamilton and Rosberg, I hope you're happy. It's about the Russian Grand Prix. There's a lot of talk about the Russian Grand Prix this week. I want to know what's the position of your title sponsor Petronas about the Silver Arrows racing in Sochi a few weeks after the tragedy of the Malaysian flight?

TW: I would have preferred the first question. You know we are a sports team and we are a sports team and I think that sport should unite. We must rely on the governing body and the promoter to give us guidance and to give us information. It is always dangerous to read the news and build an opinion, because that opinion could be very wrong of what is really going on. And I think this is what we are going to do, rely on the opinion of the FIA and decide or then go forward, with their guidance.

Q: (Ian Parkes – Press Association) Toto I do have a question about Nico and Lewis. You were quoted in a radio interview that you would potentially risk changing your driver line-up should there be any further indiscretions from your drivers in the future. Could you just clarify that remark as to what circumstances would force you make what would appear to be a drastic change?

TW: This was exactly the context – what would happen if we could not get on top of the situation. Obviously at that stage we are very happy with the line-up of the two drivers and we've always said that. We trust them and we had a very good discussion with the two of them, a very clear discussion, and we've always said that this shouldn't happen and I think at that stage of the season maybe it was important to re-emphasise that. My statements were about what would happen if we wouldn't get on top of it and this is something obviously which is a very, very worst case vision and I don't think that we were ever going to get there.

Q: (Péter Farkas – Autó-Motor) Marco, it's a question to you. I'm afraid it's a dead-end but I have to ask it: there have been some vile rumours during the weekend that Luca di Montezemolo was leaving, you were leaving as well or maybe replacing him. Could you please comment on that. Is there any base to them? And will you elaborate on it later maybe?

MM: No, I'm not going to elaborate. I'm not going to comment on rumours. I have so much things to do. I spoke to Mr Montezemolo half an hour ago. Plenty of work on my table. To even comment on rumours is going to be extremely difficult for me also. No comment.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) To the five team principals. In Spa we heard that Max Verstappen will take the start next year at the age of 17. This morning we had a driver who doesn't quite qualify for a superlicence yet ran F1. Jacques Villeneuve in Spa said that he thought this was an indictment of the ease with which you can get a superlicence. Do you people believe that it's actually right for drivers with that little experience to get superlicences the way they are?

JB: First of all, the driver in F1 today, I know he doesn't quite qualify for a superlicence at the moment but he is a driver of the highest order who will make a very good grand prix driver in the future. As for the Max Verstappen situation, I think it's far too early to tell.

Q: Federico?

FG: I think they should have more kilometres under their arms. They should have definitely much more experience, like in the old days.

Q: Christian?

CH: I think it's a case of if you're quick enough, you're old enough. Very seldomly a special talent comes along and warrants a place in Formula One. We saw it with Kimi, we've seen it with other drivers that have progressed very, very quickly. Verstappen quite clearly is a considerable talent. I think what we've seen this year with the change of regulations is that a Formula One car is probably as easy to drive as it's ever been, which makes the transition from the lower formulas much easier. There aren't the G-forces, there aren't the loads on the drivers and the physical demands on the drivers. You've seen the graduation of Daniil Kvyat, jumping from GP3 to Formula One who's performed tremendously well. So I think that gave us all confidence at Red Bull. Verstappen is quite clearly a hugely talented youngster, Toro Rosso's purpose is to develop young talent and give that talent an opportunity and therefore it was logical to give him a try.

Q: Toto, "A Formula One car is as easy to drive as it has ever been," says Christian. Do you think that's a good thing?

TW: First of all, coming back to F1 this morning, the boy who was driving in F1 is an ex-F3 European Champion and he's 22 or 23, so it's a different situation. I think if somebody's good enough, he deserves to be in a Formula One car. Now, we've had the discussion this morning and we still believe Formula One is the pinnacle of motorsport and Formula One drivers should be people who inspire, drivers who inspire, and they should have the qualification. I think this could be an endless discussion: somebody who is very talented, does he deserve to have a seat in Formula One? The example we discussed this morning was Kimi Räikkönen. So we've seen that in the past. I think he probably deserves a go in Formula One because he has shown great talent in the categories below, in karting and in F3.

Q: Marco, coming from a business background, it's all about empowering talent do you think? What's your take on this situation?

MM: Usually I do judge on demographics and passport about people. Let's say if he's a talent... what I'm a little bit concerned could be the message that will be sent out to those thousands of kids starting to approach racing or karting. I think we need to be sure there is a path to arrive to Formula One. Naturally, to define a talent is quite complicated but I think we need to give opportunity to young people – but at the same time I think we need to, as we've been doing this morning, to think about what could be the perimeter of this and be very careful about the message because there is a lot of passionate people around the world of racing. There's a lot of young people and we need to be careful because we're talking about impressive cars with impression technology.

Q: (Leigh O'Gorman – Walker Watson) Toto, you made comments recently that you may be putting together a junior programme for your F1 team. Any updates on those comments? And could you elaborate on a route or a programme that you'd give to that driver?

TW: There is a great history in the Mercedes-Benz junior programme, many years with Frenzen, Wendlinger and Schumacher. We have a junior programme, we have obviously a good F3 engine and some of the boys we co-finance, we help them in racing the budgets to finance those engines. This is already happening since many years. The idea was in further expanding that programme, similar to the one 25 years ago. We've started to think about it. We had a look at some of the very good boys but we are not yet ready – and the simple reason is that there is a championship in our way. In the next two-and-a-half months we should be concentrating on getting that done – and probably over the winter we're going to structure a junior programme and I'm very much in favour of doing it. But if you're going to do it, you need to do it properly.

Q: (Michael Wittershagen – FAZ) Question to all of you. Apart from contracts and the FIA guidance and the Russian question, do you still feel comfortable in racing in Russia in four weeks' time and entertaining Mr Putin or do you think there is a responsibility for sports like Formula One not to do things like this?

PH: From our business point of view, Russia is an important country for us, we've got two factories there and globally we've been internationally training for over 140 years. So, we will continue to operate across the globe and in those years, you can imagine there has been all sorts of worldwide incidents and situations. So you have to take a slightly longer term view. I agree with the comment of Toto. At the end of the day, if there's going to be an event we're the people that are supplying the tyres and if the sport is going there, we'll be going.

Q: John?

JB: I think very much I refer back to what Toto said when he was first asked the question. We are sports people and we operate under our governing body's regulations and we have to follow their advice on where we're going to race.

Q: Federico?

FG: Same thing actually. We're part of the event so we have to be there. Politics or not politics, we don't control that.

Q: Anything to add Christian?

CH: Nothing to add really. If there's a race, we'll be there.

Q: Marco?

MM: Aligned.

Q: (Kate Walker – crash.net (<http://crash.net/>)) Nothing has been confirmed but it has been discussed that both NATO and the EU will try to implement sporting sanctions against, not just us, but the World Cup, other events. Sporting sanctions are not legally binding however. Would any of you choose to go against those sanctions if the race were to go ahead?

TW: Third time around. I think everything has been said. Your question relies on information out of the news. We haven't gotten yet a formal opinion or guidance from the FIA and I think we need to wait on what they say. This is the role that the FIA has. Obviously once there is an opinion, once there is a guidance, we will discuss it.

PH: Again, it's worthwhile saying, that until you have the information and it's not press speculation, you cannot say anything.

Q: (Ian Parkes – PA) There is a banner in the main grandstand opposite the pit straight that you may have seen today. It reads 'Ugly Circuits, Ugly Cars, No Engine Sound, F1 is Dead'. That banner may have only been put together by one person or a small group of people but how do you feel when you see something like that inside what is one of F1's most historical venues – and what can be done, again, to change that kind of negativity that is currently swirling around the sport? That's to anyone who would like to answer but perhaps Marco first, as Ferrari team principal.

MM: I don't think that one banner sums up the overall opinion about Formula One, that I still believe is a phenomenal sporting platform. So, I think there has been enough excitement in the last races. It is important to listen to criticism, we are debating in order to address some of the issues but, again, I don't see such negative, gloomy scenarios.

Q: Christian?

CH: Who's garage was it outside opposite? Opposite the McLaren garage or...? I've got nothing, I haven't seen that one, I'm afraid.

Q: Toto?

TW: Obviously everybody has an opinion and there are lots of forums where you can express your opinion. If I would have read all the opinions in the last two weeks I would have needed heavy drugs to survive that. So, another opinion...

JB: It seems a very strange place to talk about ugly circuits on one of the most iconic circuits that we go to.

PH: I think the racing's been really good. I'm, y'know, Toto's doing a one man job at the front there to keep us all alive but I mean I think it's been a fantastic season, the racing's been really interesting and if you sit back and look at it as a fan, it's been very, very good.

Q: Federico?

FG: It's actually between McLaren and ourselves. I think I recognise people from Formula E putting that banner there. Listen, as Toto said, one thing in there. This is a fantastic race, it's history. Come on.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) We've heard from Marco regarding the engine unfreezing, if I can term it that, but we haven't heard from Toto and also from Christian who's the works Renault representative here. What are your thoughts on it, particularly in terms of the possible costs increases of an unfreeze?

CH: Well obviously Toto will want to freeze the engine for the next 25 years but we need competition, we need to catch up. I think as Marco said Formula One's all about innovation and competition and I think that innovation and development is going on anyway but there are only certain junctures that you can introduce new technology and upgrades. I think with the chassis, you're allowed to develop every race, you're allowed to... if you start off poorly, you can develop your way out of it and I think that with the engine, all we need to consider without hopefully having a significant effect on costs is next year we'll be allowed a power unit, perhaps more freedom to allow manufacturers to develop in order for that competition to be there to compete at the front.

Q: Can you do this without increasing costs, Toto?

TW: Well, there is another point besides costs. I think we need stability. Obviously we have a competitive advantage, it's pretty clear at the moment but we would take the challenge on. I think it's about defining what we want to do. We are twelve races into a season and we've had that advantage. Is it the time at the moment now to change the rules to change something? Maybe. I think we did... the discussions we've had so far were pretty open. There are various concepts on the table and if we decide to go completely in the opposite direction and to open it up completely, it's like Christian said, we have four power units per drivers, this will increase the costs quite dramatically, not sure whether we could deliver all the same engines – all the same specification of engines to everybody, logistically it's not feasible – so the devil lies in the detail but the discussion we are having is very open.

Q: (Kate Walker – crash.net (<http://crash.net/>)) Again, question for everybody. I think we're all in agreement that we've had a fantastic show this season, great racing, no complaints there. The big problem that we seem to have is that circuits aren't getting as many fans through the gates because it's too expensive and the fans can't afford to pay to watch it on TV. So we're giving a fantastic show and sending it out to a largely empty theatre which in the end hurts your bottom lines as sponsors pay less. Given that you've got contracts in place, what can Formula One do to make sure that people are watching the fantastic spectacle that we're giving them, because they can't get it now, which is the problem?

PH: I fall in two camps there because we're also a sponsor. So, of course we look at all incidences, we look at what's going on but we also see what's going on in other sports because we're involved in other sports. People often give the example of football but football is a tribal sport and it's quite different to something like Formula One. The answers to the questions are complex, obviously. If they were easy, we would have done it. I'm quite sure that there's a lot of people involved in the sport with a great deal of experience and a great deal of ideas, so if it was just a one-off shot to solve things, then it would happen. But the people around me here are involved in discussions, they have no strategy group which is involved in looking at different ways the sport needs to approach the public. We, as a sponsor, look forward to hearing what they come up with.

CH: Well, Red Bull for the first time has hosted and promoted a Grand Prix this year which was a great success. It was a capacity crowd, more than 100,000 people and there was action from start to finish of the weekend, on and off the track. Obviously it is a difficult question. Our responsibility is to put on the best show that we can and then obviously the different promoters – it's up to them to promote that event and set their prices according to how they run their businesses, whether it be ticket price or television etc etc. I think our responsibility is to put the best show on that we can and then rely on the promoters to do their bit.

MM: We have been discussing about this several times and definitely they are open to do something different but again it's a such wise discussion that there are so many variables and so many players that it's quite a long discussion, and I think it has to be done with the right institution and venues because otherwise we keep throwing ideas that can create confusion. I think that there is an alignment that we need, an integration among all the players because, as you said, the product is great so that's a great base to start, it has to be fine tuned but I think that's beginning to work in order to make sure that we are aligned to promote the sport.

JB: I think people have more choice of entertainment than they ever had before. There's so much out there for people to do and watch with their spare time, so that's an issue. I don't think it's all doom and gloom. I think, as Christian said, the Austrian event was fantastic. Silverstone and Canada were both sell-outs but there have been a few that have been more disappointing but I think it's not quite as black as some people make out.

FG: Quite the same, actually. We all agree here that we need to keep improving the show. I think we're putting on a great show. There are other tools than television these days so there's much more choice for the general public to watch or to interact with different sports. Also every race is a different story so as Marco said, the situation is very wide.

TW: I think everything has been said.

Q: (Luis Fernando Ramos – Racing Magazine) Christian, one of the big stories of the season is how quickly Daniel Ricciardo has established himself as a top driver, winning three races – in Spa, a very unbelievable race. Does Red Bull plan to adjust his contract of length and earnings of top drivers like Vettel, Alonso and so on?

CH: Well, Daniel is a product of the Red Bull Junior programme. He's come up through that scheme, through Toro Rosso in the same way that Sebastian has and he's done an unbelievable job. Winning three of the last six races is beyond all of our expectations, probably even Daniel's, but he's under contract until about 2030 but most importantly, more importantly than the contract, he's enjoying being in the team as does Sebastian and I think that you invest in these guys, you give them the chance and I think Red Bull should be applauded for investing in youth and talent and coming up with talent like Sebastian or like Daniel Ricciardo that on pure merit, have come through the system and are now sitting in cars, doing what

they're doing.

Q: (Vincent Marre – Sport Zeitung) We have been mentioning new races that are coming but if there is one race that you would like to exclude from the championship, which one would it be?

JB: None.

PH: They're alright.

JB: Every country is very interesting, every circuit is a different challenge. The variety of circuits and challenges around the world – I can't think of one I would like to drop.

FG: They all deserve to be there. They work very hard to get it so they deserve it.

PH: It's a bit negative as a question, why not ask what race would we add in to the calendar?

Q: To which you would reply?

PH: Well, Dieter's there so South Africa, I think I would better say.

CH: As Paul says, it's a question of... it's a shame not to be going to venues: India was always a fun race, good track; Istanbul, again, from a circuit point of view. There are so many venues, it's great that Formula One has got that competition for the 20 or so events during a year.

Q: (Silvia Arias – Parabrisas) Federico, you said that the team lost very important people during this season. I'm asking how difficult is it to find the right people again? Is it about money, about new talents? What is the main problem to get the right people back?

FG: It's not about the money, it's about the opportunity like any other job or opportunity for the people out there. If someone comes and offers you three times the money which you're being paid, even if you are paying a very good salary, what will you do? It's very hard to... even if you go to the best universities to get the best graduated guys in engineering, the guy needs to get experience. You don't get experience in one day in Formula One so when they're gone, it's hard to replace them.

Q: (Peter Farkas – Auto-Motor) There was a team principals' meeting with Bernie today. Could you explain what was on the agenda, has anything been agreed and have there been any new developments?

TW: Pretty much what we've discussed during the press conference. We discussed engines, engine homologations. We discussed young drivers, what we can do to increase ??? around Formula One. Nothing very spectacular. It's just another meeting we had, another important meeting.

Q: (Kate Walker – crash.net (<http://crash.net/>)) This is a follow-up question for Paul, based on what you said about being both a sponsor and a supplier. Given that we have new ways of accessing all of our sport, all of our media, to what extent do you take into account illegal streaming and torrenting of F1 to see how many eyeballs are viewing your product?

PH: We don't. We still look at classical evaluation of television distribution.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) Toto, you've been remarkably open about the meeting, the agenda that you had this morning so I wonder if you would clarify if you discussed budget caps, and if any form of cost-control is back on the agenda and was discussed please?

CH: Toto will now be in breach of his obligations as a strategy group member if he discloses any further information. His pass probably won't work as he leaves this press conference!

TW: Yes, I think it's very important to discuss costs and how to manage costs. That is part of every agenda, because we feel that we are responsible.

Friday report

Thursday press conference
