



Sunday press conference

The line-up at the post-race press conference in Barcelona was an exact copy of the post-qualifying press conference that took place 24 hours earlier.

Present were Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes), Nico Rosberg (Mercedes), and Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull).

Q: What a great race, what a great finish – Lewis Hamilton, ladies and gentlemen, four race wins in a row: let's hear it from him.

Lewis HAMILTON: A big thank you to my team, they've just done an incredible job this year. I'm really happy with the support I've had here in Spain, it's the best I've ever had, so thank you to everyone in the grandstands, it means the world to me. My first win here in Spain, it means everything to me.

Q: We heard you grumbling, or not quite happy with your team about the graining and also about the time loss in the pits. Tell me, were you upset?

LH: No, not for the pits. I wasn't fast enough really today; Nico was quicker. I struggled a lot with the balance and really had to rely on my engineers a lot more to give me the gaps and to try to find where I could find time. And also with all my settings, I was moving them up and down, up and down really trying to find extra time. But Nico was just generally quicker this weekend but fortunately I was able to keep him behind.

Q: Well, I needn't tell everybody out there but you've now taken over the lead in the championship. Nico, what a fantastic fight, just like Bahrain, right up there at the end. How many more laps do you think you needed to pass him?

NR: I think one more to be honest, one more I could have given it a good go. I wasn't close enough to give it a go there but next lap I would have. But unfortunately that was it. So, a bit gutted but still, second place, still close to the championship and many more races to go anyway.

Q: I needn't remind you or anybody else, but you've been on this podium every race of this season so far. Going now to your home race, Monaco, where you won last year, surely you can make a massive effort for there?

NR: Definitely. I'll be going there to do it one better and try to come first there and repeat the win from last year. That's the aim and we'll see if it works out. And for those of you who don't know Eddie is my number one favourite neighbor in Monaco.

Q: I don't they needed to know that! They want to know all about you. Ladies and gentlemen we'll leave my neighbourly friend here and move to young Australian superstar, the man who has lit up the season so far from a rookie point of view, Daniel Ricciardo. I don't want to be doom and gloom here, but you were 50 seconds behind, what are you going to do to catch these guys up?

Daniel RICCIARDO: Thanks

Q: I just thought I'd bring you back down to reality a bit.

DR: No, you're right. They were a long way ahead. I think coming into the race today we knew a boring race would be a pretty good one for us. We knew we didn't really have the paced for Mercedes. We looked like a third-place car and in the end that's what it was, we had a pretty comfortable third- place and we just had to focus on getting the tyres to last two stops and that was it. Really nice to be on the podium and I'm sure I'll be able to keep it this time.

Q: Lewis, are you surprised with the dominance, because a lot of people called into question your idea of coming to Mercedes maybe 18 months ago. Had you got this in the back of your mind that this was all the potential that was being told to you?

LH: Yeah, sitting down with Ross at my mum's house at the kitchen table, yeah this is the idea that I was given. I really, truly believed it was going to happen, but I could never have imagined us to have a 50-second gap to Red Bull in a race. So it's just an exceptional job from the team and I feel truly blessed to firstly be a part of this team, to be contributing, getting the results. This is our fourth 1-2 together, it's just unreal.

Q: So, Lewis, where do we start? Four wins in a row, fourth Mercedes 1-2 in a row, which is fairly hard to achieve. First win for you in Spain and you're leading the Driver's World Championship for the first time since, I think, 2012. Which of those things means the most to you?

LH: Of course getting my first grand prix win here after trying for eight years. It's very difficult to really put into words the feeling when you come to a race and have a result like this. Never have I had a car like this and obviously we've never had a gap like this to anyone before. Nico did a fantastic job today, it was a struggle to keep him behind, but I'm grateful that I was able to. I just feel that it is such a huge blessing, for not only me but for all the guys in the team, because of all the hard work they've done for many years now, but finally they are starting to see the fruits of their labour. So, for me, yeah, just enjoying every moment, every step of the way. And it's really great today we have our board members, our bosses from Mercedes, so it was really good to... every time Dr Zetsche came last year, we generally had a bad race, so it was really important to get a good result for him to get rid of that negative bug, or bad luck that I guess he thought he was bringing, so I'm really grateful for the team being able to do that today.

Q: Nico, the start didn't give you the platform or opportunity that maybe you'd hoped for. From there, like Bahrain, you tried something different on the strategy. Like Bahrain, Lewis said you were quicker today – but unlike Bahrain you didn't really have a chance to attack, particularly at the end. Why was that? Why did it work out the way it did?

NR: The start unfortunately was poor. It's a bit of a weakness that we have at the moment, just inconsistent and now I've had a couple of bad starts in a row – actually three bad starts in the races. And that's costly, you know? Because, always losing out at the start, that's not good, need to work on that. Other than that, the race, yeah, I felt comfortable, race pace was good. Best thing to do was to switch strategies. That was planned before the race. Worked out well, worked out perfectly – but this is a really, really difficult track to get close to the guy in front. I still got close, y'know Turn 10, the last lap. Could have got gone for a kamikaze move but it wouldn't have worked. Lewis did a great job the whole weekend and just that little bit ahead. But there's a lot of positives for me to take out of it. I'm fully motivated to just try to get that little bit extra and to edge him out next time – and it's doable.

Q: Daniel, hopefully the first trophy you'll be able to keep. Obviously the story of your race, a difficult start, losing the ground to Bottas but then getting him with the undercut first round of stops, then you were Billy-No-Mates, on your own driving around on your own – tell us how it worked out for you.

DR: Yeah. Not exactly the start I wanted. I think initially the launch felt OK but we lost a bit of traction after that. Bottas got past me. The first stint I tried to hang in there, had, let's say, a pseudo-attempt into Turn One. I got underneath him but it wasn't deep enough to pull the move off and then, yeah, it was just about doing an undercut and just trying to still make a two-stop work. So from then on a pretty lonely race. Unfortunately we're not going to catch Mercedes. At least this weekend we weren't going to, so a lonely third was not a bad result in the end.

Q: Final question to both Lewis and Nico, just looking ahead to the next couple of races that are coming up, Monaco is a track that's been strong in the past for both of you and strong in the past for Mercedes, and then we go on to Montreal which has always been one of Lewis's favourites. How do you go there, Nico? And your thoughts, both of you, on those two upcoming races.

NR: Monaco: fantastic. It's my favourite race of the year. Great memories there from last year. Looking forward to it, with the car that we have also this year, it's going to be great. For sure the opposition is going to be closer. Especially I expect Red Bull to be a lot closer, so it's going to be tougher for us but still, we have a strong package, engine and car. So, should go fine around Monaco and going to try and make the most of it, repeat the win from last year.

Q: Your thoughts Lewis...

LH: I think I have a bit of work to do in the next couple of weeks but of course I love those two races. Struggled last year in Monaco and struggled with this race, so need to figure out where I'm losing the time and apply it to the next race.

Q: (Frederic Ferret – L'Equipe) Question for Nico and Lewis. What was the main difficulty during the race: managing the hard tyre or doing quick laps at the end to fight to get Lewis with the medium?

NR: No, the big challenge was tyre degradation. Very, very big tyre degradation. That was really difficult to manage that. But I found my way and was quite comfortable with it, and then graining on the hard tyre which is the opposite of what we expected. We expected to have graining on the soft tyre. So it was very strange. Graining on the hard tyre and no graining on the soft tyre, it was really weird and unexpected.

Q: (Adrian Rodriguez – Agencia EFE) Question for Lewis, congratulations for your first win here in Spain. Makes it 26, one more than Jim Clark and one more than Niki Lauda, one of the big guys on your team – are you planning any jokes on him tonight and how many victories can you make it this year?

LH: At the rate the team's going, we're looking strong for at least a few more races. It's by no means easy for me because I've still got a massive challenge with Nico. But, I mean, I could never have imagined winning these four races but it's still so close, long, long way to go and, just as I was saying earlier, I've got a bit more time to find in this car, so going to work on it.

Q: Michael Schmidt (Auto Motor und Sport) Lewis, in the race, did you experience similar problems to those you had yesterday and how did you try to dial them out? There was a lot of conversation between you and the engineers.

LH: I did have the same problems as I had yesterday, yes. It was very strange because Friday P2 was excellent. The car was really good, degradation... I mean I was very very fast and I stopped my run with 18 laps or something like that, but if I just brought my pace down a little bit I probably could have eked it out even longer. Those changes just transformed the car and today, just not able to attack the corners due to snap oversteer, and that's generally where Nico was catching me, through those entries of corners.

Q: (Leonid Novozhilov – Fl Life) To the Mercedes drivers: you have won every race this year. What secret did you find and where?

LH: I haven't found any secrets but I think Mercedes – there is no secret really, it's just been hard work and really constructive work. Often when you're working towards something, sometimes you stumble and fall and then you have to build it again and the team has just been building and building, building and not really having many times when they're falling. It's quite remarkable, the actual car itself, the downforce is very good, I'm sure very very close with the Red Bulls and then with the engine, it's the best engine Mercedes have made.

NR: It's been five years, it's been since 2010 this process started and so much has changed, it's been such a long long way, the personnel restructuring, everything. Big big changes and now we've come to a point where, thanks to all the work from the past, we're really just able... we're becoming the best team in Fl. That's the way it is. I would still say Red Bull is the benchmark at the moment but we're definitely shaking their chair at the moment and I think there's the possibility that soon we will be the absolute best team, in terms of team organisation, capabilities, we're getting there and hopefully it will be a long domination.

Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action and National Speedsport News) Daniel, Sebastian Vettel went from 15th to fourth, is that encouraging that the car – while not as good as a Mercedes – can slice through the opposition, or a bit worrying because it looks like he might be back up to speed and coming to challenge you?

DR: Obviously it's the first thing you said. Yeah, really good. I just sort of heard on the radio that he was making progress through the field and when he was in fourth – I think he made a move in the last few laps so really good. I definitely see it as a positive for the team, third and fourth, particularly after his starting position. Obviously Mercedes are the top dogs at the moment but we seem to be settling ourselves nicely in that next spot and I think we've just got to now try and somehow creep our way closer. All the talk about Seb, I'm sure that was going to pass very soon and he'll get to his World Champion form.

Q: (Tony Dodgins – Motorsport News) Nico, just before the first stops, on the radio we heard the team say 'primes planned for the next stint' and you said 'the options are fine.' Did that mean you wanted another set of options for the second stint or were you happy with the way it went?

NR: There was a misunderstanding from my side because we were going to go prime second stint – there were two variables. There was one where we go prime second stint if we have graining in the first stint or I go prime second stint to try and beat Lewis, if I feel that pace-wise I can be quicker and have a shot at it. I thought they were going prime because they thought I had graining but I didn't have graining so that's why I was confused but then I understood: it was to offset my strategy so that I would have a chance to fight Lewis at the end so it was fine – and just what I wanted.

Q: (Borna Zsoldos – Nemzeti Sports) Lewis, at the end of the 2012 season when you announced that you would switch to Mercedes, there were some really harsh criticisms against you, stating that you are destroying your career without the guidance of your Dad. Now that you're winning and leading the championship and have the very best car of the whole pack, is it important for you that you could really prove that you can make good decisions on your own?

LH: Yeah, for sure, it was obviously a great call and there was never a moment that I ever doubted it but of course never could have imagined that we would be having this kind of success. I'm not one to rub it in people's faces. I knew that I was in a good place, I knew that I was making the right decision for me and now it should be becoming more evident to people... I'm sure the people that wrote those things had an opinion at the beginning and I'm sure it's changed now.

Q: (Adrian Rodriguez – Agencia EFE) To Nico and Lewis: you guys seem to get along pretty well right now but the problem is that just one of you can win if it keeps going this way. Do you guys believe that your relationship is going to be the same by the end of the year?

LH: We've been racing together for a long time so I don't see why not.

Q: Does that help, Nico, that you've been racing together for a long time?

NR: Definitely yes, because we've been through this before. It's not a first time and even back then we had discussions, debate but always... life goes on, discuss it and life goes on so that helps, yeah.

Q: (Anthony Rowlinson – F1 Racing) Lewis, you've said quite a few times this year about how perfect this car is, how well suited it feels. Could you explain just a little bit about how you've guided the development of it so that it suits your style?

LH: It's a lengthy process. Obviously last year... when you request something to be changed, it takes some time because obviously you don't want to take away their focus from the most important things which is getting downforce. I think it's just taken some time. I think Michael required a little bit of a... he had a different driving style to me. He required different things, different seating position, different set-up and as I've come along, I've really tried to... and I guess Nico probably and Michael both kind of gelled and went in one direction with the balance and then as I've come along, mine is slightly different and I guess we've then created a hybrid: Nico's come halfway, I've come halfway so we now require the same things from the car, but last year it was maybe a little bit different and so over the time just really, for the engineers to get to know what I require from a car and I think really working on being comfortable with the engineers as well, new engineers, it takes a while to build those relationships and that's probably been a key strength to this year.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – Universo On Line) Nico, you are second in the championship now. Will you change your approach for the weekend, make strategies with more risks; even during the race, do you think you will change what you have been doing until now?

NR: There's not much to change. The race was really lost in qualifying and at the start. Those were the two opportunities I had. Qualifying was very very close, I even had a bit of a problem which we found in hindsight, where I was a little bit down on power on the straight, but the difference was not enough to get pole, but still it was actually even closer than it looked. And then just had a poor start, so those were the two shots that I had at it and it didn't work out. And then in the race, I nearly got another opportunity at the very end but again, just not enough. One more lap and I could have given it a go, I think, but I would have done everything the same again at the start of the weekend. Of course, I also missed F1 which doesn't help either. Many small things which add up and there are only very small gaps so next time.

Race report

Lewis Hamilton made it four from five in a close-fought finish to Sunday's Spanish Grand Prix at the Circuit de Catalunya.

Teammate Nico Rosberg crossed the line a scant six-tenths behind as the Mercedes pair – on competing strategies that saw them on opposite compounds in the final stint – fought each other in a race of their own, lapping the field up to sixth place.

Despite losing time to Rosberg in the pits, Hamilton was able to keep his teammate four seconds behind before pitting for the final time, a gap that made all the difference in the run to the chequered flag. On the medium compound Rosberg was hanging on to his teammate's tail for the final laps of the race, but deft work from Hamilton kept the German out of the DRS zone for much of the closing stages, making it harder to overtake.

The two were in a race of their own, with third-placed Daniel Ricciardo crossing the line more than half a lap behind the Silver Arrows, trailing the championship leaders by 49 seconds. Twenty-seven seconds later, Sebastian Vettel crossed the line in fourth, a fantastic result for a driver whose weekend saw a series of misfortunes that resulted in the quadruple champion lining up on the grid in P15 after receiving a five-place grid penalty for a gearbox change.

Vettel was the first to pit, and made the most of his fresh rubber to climb through the field while benefitting from promotion as the rest of the pack moved to change tyres. By the end of the first round of stops the Red Bull driver was sitting comfortably in the points, and for the rest of the afternoon he combined strategy and outright overtakes to finish behind his teammate.

One man who couldn't make the strategy work in Barcelona was Williams' Felipe Massa, with the Brazilian attempting an unsuccessful three-stop strategy from ninth on the grid. Massa spent much of the afternoon stuck in traffic, where he experienced unexpected levels of tyre degradation and finished a lowly fifteenth to teammate Valtteri Bottas' fifth.

Eight seconds behind Bottas crossing the line and the last driver to remain unlapped was Fernando Alonso, who delivered an acceptable if unimpressive performance for the passionate – if dwindling – Spanish crowd. Like the others before them, Alonso and Kimi Raikkonen were on differing strategies at the Circuit de Catalunya, with the three-stopping Finn overtaken by his two-stopping teammate on fresher rubber in the closing stages of Sunday's race.

Romain Grosjean delivered Lotus with their first points finish of the season, crossing the line in eighth, three places down from his grid position. The French racer's afternoon was hampered by power loss caused by a sensor failure, and Sunday showed just how far the E22 has come since the difficult pre-season tests.

Pastor Maldonado was unfortunately unable to reap the benefits of the car's improvement, as a qualifying crash saw the Venezuelan line up at the back of the grid. He then incurred a five second stop-go penalty for causing a collision with Caterham's Marcus Ericsson early in the race.

It was another difficult afternoon for McLaren, who finished the Spanish Grand Prix with both drivers out of the points, the third consecutive weekend that the Woking racers have gone home empty-handed. McLaren now stand in sixth place in the constructors' standings, behind Force India and Williams.

An attempt for Jenson Button to undercut the Force India drivers in the pits saw the Briton held to ensure a safe release, and the time lost may have been the difference between tenth and eleventh places.

Spanish Grand Prix race result

1. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1h41m05.155s
2. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) + 0.636s
3. Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull) + 49.014s
4. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) + 1m16.702s
5. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) + 1m19.293s
6. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) + 1m27.743s
7. Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari) + 1 lap
8. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) + 1 lap
9. Sergio Perez (Force India) + 1 lap
10. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) + 1 lap
11. Jenson Button (McLaren) + 1 lap
12. Kevin Magnussen (McLaren) + 1 lap
13. Felipe Massa (Williams) + 1 lap
14. Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso) + 1 lap

15. Pastor Maldonado (Lotus) + 1 lap
16. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) + 1 lap
17. Adrian Sutil (Sauber) + 1 lap
18. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) + 2 laps
19. Max Chilton (Marussia) + 2 laps
20. Marcus Ericsson (Caterham) + 2 laps

Kamui Kobayashi (Caterham) RET
Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) RET

Saturday press conference

There were three rather familiar faces at the post-qualifying press conference for the Spanish Grand Prix.

Present were Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes), Nico Rosberg (Mercedes), and Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull).

Q: Lewis, your fourth pole of the season and this time you had to save the best until last.

Lewis HAMILTON: Yeah, it's been a tough day and Nico has been driving really well, through P3 and also through qualifying and so I didn't know if I'd be able to get it, but right at the end I had to eke out absolutely everything and more from the car. But coming here this weekend, we didn't know where everyone was going to be, so to see the develop that has gone on and the hard work that has gone into getting our car ready for this week – it inspires me. So a really big thank you to the team. To have the kind of performance we have, I've never really known that before. Still, it's very difficult out there, the track conditions are pretty poor, but I, overwhelmed I'm so happy to have had that.

Q: Nico, obviously Lewis was looking strong yesterday but you were fastest in Q1 and Q2, so you obviously found something overnight? Given how it's all: ended up are you a little disappointed?

Nico ROSBERG: Yeah, definitely very disappointed. I don't particularly enjoy coming second to Lewis. I am of course disappointed but in the end it was a good lap from me, so Lewis just did a better job and that's just the way it is. Anyway, it's still all to play for tomorrow. Second place is only a little bit away from optimum because all it takes is a good start tomorrow and then I'm in the lead again. That's the good thing about it and that's why it's still all to play for.

Q: Daniel, another top three, a good day for you personally, obviously problems for you team-mate, Sebastian, in Q3 there, and a fairly big margin between Lewis and yourself there on the grid.

Daniel RICCIARDO: Yeah, I think we're again sort of best of the rest but that's not quite good enough, we're still a second off and the lap, I thought my lap was not too bad, so I was expecting a smaller gap than that. I think we've made some improvement but they – they being Mercedes – have as well. So we would have liked to have closed that but we have some work ahead of us. On a positive note we're a clear third today. I think we had a pretty to P4, so that's not too bad, but for sure we want to get closer to the front two.

Q: Well done. Coming back to you Lewis. You've never won here: why is that and how much would it mean to you to put that right tomorrow?

LH: There are lots of different circumstances, situations I've been in but generally, it's not being fast enough. Even going into today I lost a bit of pace today, so I'm really even happier knowing that I dropped a bit of pace but was able to get back at the front. In the past I guess it's just not been my time, so I'll do everything I can to bring some really good points for the team and let's hope that means something positive.

Q: So, Lewis, during Q1 we heard a radio message from you saying "I don't know how but we've made this car worse." What were you feeling at the time and how did that translate into what happened at the end when you managed to get pole?

LH: Well, yesterday I had such a great day and was really happy with the car and then, often when things are that good, you generally don't want to change much but we changed a couple of things overnight in the hope of making it a little better. Small things, like a half a millimetre here and there. The smallest of tweaks. But today the track grip, I think went down and today my car's been a real handful for me. Just lots of oversteer, very inconsistent corner to corner. So it was kind of back to square one, where I was in P1. And once you're in qualifying there's nothing you can do. We made some changes going into qualifying but I was generally struggling. So that's why in Q1 you saw I was half a second off Nico, just struggling to put a lap together. But at the end I just did it by the skin of my teeth.

Q: So, you found it yourself, you say?

LH: Well a little. I couldn't change anything so I really had to tweak a little bit the diff settings, otherwise just drive a little bit differently to just get the car around the lap. Obviously we were very quick but it doesn't matter how fast your car is, we take it to the limit. That's what all of us drivers do, we take our package to the limit. We're on the edge of our limit.

Q: Nico, you're still leading the Drivers' World Championship, tomorrow's an important day, some thoughts on that. But also, everyone's come here with updates, and as Daniel said, you perhaps expected the gap to you guys to be smaller. Do you feel that, if anything, Mercedes have slightly pulled ahead of the opposition?

NR: No, I wouldn't say that but it looks like we've managed to keep the gap consistent – and that's an achievement already. That's fantastic and I'm very happy about that – great job from the team and everybody because our ambition is to make the gap bigger, not try and be shaky and hope they don't close the gap too much. No, we want to grow the gap. Nearly managed to grow the gap, I think we kept it consistent and that's fantastic to see.

Q: And your own personal thoughts on the race...

NR: Personal thoughts are, of course, not ideal today but still all to play for tomorrow. It's going to be a long race so it's all possible. Tyre degradation is going to be a key point, need to get a handle on that.

Q: Daniel, what about your personal thoughts? You mentioned the margin behind them you are in qualifying – a second – your own goals for this weekend and also, what are the team's objectives now that you've seen where you stand at this stage relative to Mercedes?

DR: I think, y'know, for us it's just to keep closing that gap to them. On a positive, we're the best of the rest but we've still got to keep the others, keep the guys we have behind us behind us, but to close to them. A second is too much. Even with a different strategy in the race it's going to be very hard to make up a second per lap. We've got to just keep chipping away. Obviously they're doing a great job and, yeah, I'm sure I can still learn a bit. As I am, I think, each race. We'll put up a fight tomorrow and at least try to get on the podium. And if we can't do anything about them, then keep the rest behind us.

Q: (Adrian Rodriguez - Agencia EFE) Lewis, is the main guy to watch sitting on your right? What are your feelings about your other rivals for tomorrow?

LH: Well, we always keep our eyes open for everyone. Of course Nico's the closest but Daniel's been driving very well in the first part of the season so anything can happen tomorrow. We've just got to really try to work hard to stay out in front and as Nico said, it's a long race so really try and look

after the tyres, they're still going to be a huge player tomorrow depending on what strategy people do and tyre degradation.

Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action and National Speedsport News) Daniel, at the end of the session, the team sent you a message on the radio saying something about 'remember what Charlie said about the photo.' What was that about?

DR: He didn't want us running away, the top three guys, after qualifying, he didn't want us running away out of the scene, to do the group photo. I think last time I was hiding for a little bit too long, so just a reminder from the team, nothing technical, just outside dramas.

Q: (Pablo Grau – F1aldia) Daniel, your pace in long runs yesterday was very good: what do you expect for tomorrow, maybe an aggressive start?

DR: Yeah, I mean the plan is always to try and get a good start. Yeah, if we can do something about Lewis and Nico we will try our best and then yes, the pace yesterday was good, still not as good as a Mercedes but I think in relative terms we made the tyres last a long way. I think if there's any issues with making a two stop possible, if the race ends up being more of a three stop, then we might be in that window to do a two but we will see how we go. We have to assess everything after lap one and then push from there, but it's a tricky one here. You push but you're in conservative mode for the tyres as well. It's one of those tracks where tyre wear is a big one.

Q: (Michael Schmidt – Auto, Motor und Sport) Lewis, you said you had to cope in qualifying with some issues on the car. Is that a worry for tomorrow because you can't change very much or do you think that with more fuel, all these issues will be gone?

LH: I'm not worried for tomorrow but of course it's a concern for today with the balance being a little bit tricky. My long run yesterday was good but the track kind of went away from us a little bit, I think it went away from everyone a little bit today. Perhaps tomorrow will be different, you just don't know. This track can go up and down so we will just wait and see how tomorrow goes. You can adjust some things – your diff settings and your front wings – so hopefully I'll get that just right for the race.

Q: (Dan Knutson – Auto Action and National Speedsport News) A question for all three: normally you drive around Monaco with a millimetre or two to spare. This year the cars are a lot more tail happy. How are you going to deal with that?

NR: Yeah, it will be a little bit more of a challenge this year because we have less grip and traction than we had last year and harder tyres so it will be even more exciting but that's all good.

LH: Yeah, we'll just have to be a lot more cautious, I think, because today, massive oversteer moments. I don't really know what to expect when we get there.

Q: Daniel your thoughts, and is it a circuit that gives Red Bull some optimism?

DR: I think, yeah – Lewis just asked me, actually, if we will be quick there and I said I hope so. We'll see how we go. It's a track that I think all of us drivers enjoy driving around. We're always on the limit there. We get a few corners where we brush the barriers and I think this year it's going to be even more of a challenge. We may not have to get too carried away with getting close to the walls, because if the rear snaps, then as we saw with Bottas in Melbourne, a similar scenario, where he had that incident and yes, things like this are probably more likely to happen but that's what we get paid the big bucks for, yeah? So I'm sure we will be right.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – Universo On Line) Daniel, your team always puts a lot of responsibility for the lack of performance this year on Renault, and Renault have announced that they have a new version of engine here. Can you tell us if the engine is really better than the previous one?

DR: Looking at the speed traps this week, we seem to be closer than we were the last few races at least. Obviously the straight here is not as long as Shanghai but I think realistically we have closed the gap there, so I think they've done a good job Renault is helping us all the time. We know we've still got more ground to make up but to answer your question, I think yeah, we have made some progress.

Saturday report

Qualifying was less than five minutes old when Pastor Maldonado ploughed his Lotus into the wall at Turn 3, ripping off his front-right wheel and bringing out the red flags before he was able to set a time.

Once action resumed Nico Rosberg headed straight to the top of the timesheets, more than a second clear of his nearest rival. Lewis Hamilton's first effort saw the Briton 13 seconds slower than his teammate after a trip across the grass, but his second attempt was a P2-worthy 1m27.238s lap, four-tenths slower than Rosberg.

Over at Red Bull, Sebastian Vettel recovered well from Friday's lost running to post a 1m27.958s lap, good enough for P3 and nearly a full second clear of teammate Daniel Ricciardo.

At the back of the pack, Caterham's woeful weekend continued, with both drivers three-tenths slower than the Marussia of Max Chilton. And as the chequered flag fell, it was the driver pairings from both of those teams, plus Maldonado and Adrian Sutil who were in the dropout zone. An impressive last-second improvement from Chilton pushed the Briton into P18, while the Caterham pair ended the session only two-tenths down on Jules Bianchi.

It was an incredibly close session, with the group between Ricciardo in P4 and Sutil in P17 covered by half a second. That being said, the gap between Rosberg at the top of the timesheets and Ricciardo was 1.3 seconds.

There was a fairly slow start to Q2, with only six times on the board when the session was half run. With their first laps Rosberg and Hamilton again topped the timesheets, more than 1.2s clear of Kimi Raikkonen in third place with a 1m27.454s effort. Vettel's first lap saw the Red Bull racer one second behind the Mercedes pair, while Ricciardo managed to get within shouting distance, his 1m26.613s lap only four-tenths slower than Hamilton in P2.

With five minutes left on the clock both Kevin Magnussen and Jean-Eric Vergne had yet to leave the pits, with it later emerging that a technical problem had prevented the Dane from running. At the ninety-second mark, it was clear that neither man had any intention of setting timed laps in Q2, while all other contenders except Rosberg, Hamilton, Ricciardo, and Vettel were out trying to improve.

In the dropout zone as the clock counted down were Sergio Perez, Jenson Button, Esteban Gutierrez, and Daniil Kvyat, but when Button improved he knocked Nico Hulkenberg into P11. The end of the session was tense for Fernando Alonso, who narrowly avoided being eliminated when Perez failed to improve in his last-ditch effort, eventually abandoning the lap.

The final round of qualifying saw another set of red flags brought out before any times were on the board, with Sebastian Vettel losing drive and stopping at Turn 3. The incident marked the end of the Red Bull racer's afternoon, and in the process ruined six sets of tyres about to set timed laps. Over the radio, Vettel apologised to Hamilton for destroying his lap.

When Q3 restarted Rosberg was the first to set a time, but his 1m26.561s effort was soon bested by Hamilton, who managed a 1m26.288s. Ricciardo

was 0.4s behind Rosberg in P3, but the last two minutes of the session saw everyone bar Vettel out on track, all guns blazing.

With their final attempts the Mercedes drivers both managed to find an extra second, with Rosberg snatching pole from Hamilton before the Briton took it back. Ricciardo managed third, just over a second slower than Hamilton, while Valtteri Bottas was a creditable P4 and Romain Grosjean impressed by wrestling his E22 up to fifth place.

Provisional grid

1. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1m25.323s
2. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1m25.400s
3. Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull) 1m26.285s
4. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) 1m26.632s
5. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1m26.960s
6. Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari) 1m27.104s
7. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1m27.140s
8. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1m27.335s
9. Felipe Massa (Williams) 1m27.402s
10. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) NO TIME SET

11. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) 1m27.685s
12. Sergio Perez (Force India) 1m28.002s
13. Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso) 1m28.039s
14. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) 1m28.280s
15. Kevin Magnussen (McLaren) NO TIME SET
16. Adrian Sutil (Sauber) 1m28.563s

17. Max Chilton (Marussia) 1m29.586s
18. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) 1m30.177s
19. Marcus Ericsson (Caterham) 1m30.312s
20. Kamui Kobayashi (Caterham) 1m30.375s
21. Pastor Maldonado (Lotus) NO TIME SET
22. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) NO TIME SET*

* Jean-Eric Vergne qualified in P16, but will start from P22 thanks to a 10-place grid penalty resulting from a lost wheel in FP2.

Friday press conference

The senior team personnel press conference in Barcelona was all about the cost cap (or lack thereof) and the F1 Strategy Group.

Present were Cyril Abiteboul (Caterham), John Booth (Marussia), Bob Fernley (Force India), Monisha Kaltenborn (Sauber), and Franz Tost (Toro Rosso).

Q: A question to all of you to start with. What updates did you try on the car today? Obviously it's always a talking point at the first European round. How did they perform and will they stay on the car for the rest of the weekend?

Cyril ABITEBOUL: Yeah, well, like every year and like most of the teams we brought an aerodynamic package, a typical race five, Barcelona package: front and rear, front wing, rear wing, floor and so on and so forth. Will we keep them? It's sad to say that through the lap time it's not working great. Will we keep them – I hope, because we don't really have an alternative. So the plan is really to make them work at that point in time.

Q: Franz?

Franz TOST: A new rear wing, new rear wing endplates, a new diffuser and they will stay on the car during the race weekend.

Q: OK. Robert?

Robert FERNLEY: Mainly floor but it's complementing a little bit what we did in China to finish off the package and they'll be staying on the car.

Q: Monisha?

Monisha KALTENBORN: We have a new front wing, we have new sidepod deflectors, we have a new cooling system, all that aimed at reducing the weight of the car a little.

Q: Will they stay on the car?

MK: They will stay for the weekend, yes.

Q: And John?

John BOOTH: Yeah, we have a few small trims and gurneys but nothing major this weekend, but we're very pleased with what we've added and for sure they will be staying on.

Q: Another question for all of you: obviously there were meetings last week on cost control – all the teams met and also the F1 Strategy Group met, so I'd like to ask all of you what you think of the progress so far, thoughts on next steps and the likelihood of a workable plan for 2015 as we stand here. Cyril?

CA: It was a good meeting; it's always good to meet, in particular when there is an opportunity for all teams to be represented. It was certainly that opportunity. So, yeah, we put on the table our position. When I say 'our', it's the position of the teams that are not in the Strategy Group and they are afforded less opportunity to make their position. So yeah, pretty much pleased to have that opportunity. Obviously an awful lot of work remains but pleased with that.

Q: Franz?

FT: Yeah it was a good meeting, as Cyril already mentioned. The most important thing now is to find solutions how to reduce the costs. I think we are in a good way. I hope that at the end we will find possibilities to come down with the costs and to help the smaller teams to survive.

Q: Robert?

RF: Yeah, I think it was a very good meeting; very positive. I think we shouldn't lose sight though of the fact that in Geneva we agreed a certain protocol in terms of unanimous agreement to look at cost cap and we believe that still applies today and that the FIA should continue that process.

Q: Monisha?

MK: I pretty much agree with what Bob said. We could sense that there is an overall feeling to reduce costs significantly but now it's time that we really had concrete steps and of course there are different positions on the table but it's important that we find a solution now and implement it.

Q: And John?

JB: Yeah, we support any moves that lead towards the ultimate goal of getting the costs under control. Last week's meeting was really a carry-on from Geneva in January. I think all teams are working hard to find the best way forward.

Q: (Kate Walker – Crash.net) It's a question for all you. Since the 1st of May meeting we've heard that you guys have been asked to table your own propositions with regards to cost-cutting without a cap, such as scrapping FPI. Could you tell us what sort of proposals you have made and what ones you've discussed possibly in the meeting this morning?

MK: I'd like to clarify that we've not been asked to put up a proposal without a cost cap, we've simply been asked to put forward a proposal, which we will be doing shortly. What we want to do really is achieve something that everyone can agree to, and that's what the FIA President asked for. So we are very gladly going to pick up the ideas, which were brought up but the Strategy Group. We're working on that, yet we still have the position that particularly in view of this Geneva meeting, where we have a unanimous decision to a cost cap in principle, we can put these add-ons to it and that's the basis we're going to continue to work on.

Q: A couple of other perspectives on this: Franz?

FT: Regarding the cost cap, there are different views on this. The Strategy Group at the end, one month ago, refused the cost cap for various reasons and as the cost cap will not be any more in place, as the top teams from the beginning onwards said that it is difficult to police it and if something cannot be controlled it doesn't make sense to bring it in. I think we should find now a way with the Technical Regulations and the Sporting Regulations to cut the costs. If I look for example, next week we have a test here in Barcelona and in my eyes it's a totally useless spend of money, because what do we bring in? We bring a car, an extra car, we bring in extra people. We are running here for two days and each kilometre in Formula One costs you three or four hundred euros or even more and if you calculate all this at the end we have spent a lot of money. That means we have to sit together, we have to find ways, with real examples, how to come down with the costs. This is for me not to do tests during the season, to limit upgrades, all this kind of stuff, which at the end will help us to come down with the dramatic costs which we have at the current time.

RF: I don't have a great deal more to add what Monisha said. I think she said it very eloquently. I think the question we have is that the FIA are comfortable that a cost cap can be administered and we respect their opinion and we question, as we always have done, the legitimacy of the Strategy Group to overturn the Geneva decision.

Q: John, anything to add?

JB: No, not really. I would question the idea that we can control costs substantially by technical and sporting regulations. History shows the banning of testing and even of wind tunnel and we're spending more on Formula One than ever before. So I question whether it is possible to control costs with technical or sporting regulations.

Q: And a final view on this, Cyril?

CA: No, no further comment.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) One of the phrases that's kept on cropping up is Strategy Group. As the disenfranchised, do you believe that the Strategy Group actually has a constructive role to play at all in the future of Formula One and should it exist at all?

RF: Yes, I do. I think the Strategy Group does have a role to play. I think as it's name says it's for developing strategies and I genuinely believe that's very positive but I don't believe it substitutes, obviously, for unanimous decisions.

JB: I fully endorse what Bob says. I would just add that they have a real difficult task in the Strategy Group – developing strategies and ideas that are good for the sport as a whole, not just for the six people in the Strategy Group. So they have a really hard task achieving that.

CA: Yeah, I think the same thing. I think it is difficult to elaborate a strategy in particular in a sport which is as complex as Formula One, because each time you change something it has implications that you no necessarily foresee and therefore the feeling that you can elaborate a strategy without the opportunity to discuss thoroughly with all the teams first and secondly also with technical and sporting experts is maybe a bit short-sighted. The second thing I would say, though, is that it's good to have some opportunities to think long-term. Therefore, in a proper group and adding some sort of top-down approach rather than only a bottom-up approach I think is good and I find in that respect strategy is good, but I don't see why half of the grid, or most, should be kept away from the discussion – at least from the discussion. Then, in terms of voting, you know I can respect, from my perspective, the voice of Caterham does not count as much as the voice of Ferrari but it doesn't mean that we cannot be part of the discussion, at least for the sake of transparency. We have the same obligation as Ferrari, for instance towards regulation: we need to enter two cars, we need to comply with the regulations and we are just as exposed from a cost perspective and therefore I think it would be fair that we have at least the opportunity to know what is being talked about and also the opportunity to express opposition. Then again, the voting mechanism can be a different issue.

FT: I think the system is OK, which we have currently. We have the Strategy Group, which works out strategies, and then we have the Formula One Commission and we are all sitting in there voting. It's anyway coming to the World Motor Sport Council and for me the system is fine.

MK: With the regard to the jobs, I'd say the duty of the Strategy Group, Bob's put it all in there as we see it. What gives rise to a lot of concern is what's happened now with regards to the cost decision, because a Strategy Group can look at certain things and make proposals but if there is a unanimous decision, and like Franz says, we have the Commission, we have our forums I'd say where all teams actually have the same voice and they all agree on something, we do not accept that another group can come up there and just overrule that decision.

Q: (Ralf Bach – Sport Bild) A question for all of you: to make a long story short, is the cost cap now dead or not?

RF: I don't believe... from our point of view, I don't believe the cost cap is dead. I think as far as we're concerned it's still in the hands of the FIA to progress what was unanimously approved and we will do our very best to support other measures that can go in line, but I think you need the two.

JB: Marussia very much share that view.

CA: Nothing to add.

FT: For me the cost cap is dead because the top teams don't accept it. It's also complicated for them and as long as auditors are not allowed to look into the books it's useless to make a cost cap.

MK: I don't think it's dead because first of all, as it's been said already, there is a unanimous decision and I think it is very much possible to police it. Because it's something can be policed, it's figures – because they are pretty clear. It depends on the people that put down the figures if they are right or wrong. We do that all with our companies. I think there's no country where our teams are situated where we don't have book-keeping so I don't think it should be an issue. We, at Sauber, definitely could live with a system where you first of all come into with trust, and not the lack of trust, and say if the teams put in the figures and you have a certain actual policing system. It can work, we've been saying that for long and I think it is very much doable.

Q: Are there any timetables or deadlines on this?

MK: Well, we have the natural deadline by the rules that you have to agree to it by the 30th of June. So, I still hope we can agree to it. Of course you can achieve certain cost reductions through rules, maybe sporting or technical but I think you will not achieve that kind of drastic cost saving you want to. And at the end of the day it doesn't matter how you get there because you're looking at a figure. You have to ask yourself, do you want one figure at the end or do you want to have 20 different figures which just calculate again to one figure, so you always come to the same.

Q: (Mike Doodson – Honorary) I have a question about the viability of the Russian Grand Prix only a weekend after the Japanese. I put the question to Bob and John possibly first: there are serious concerns about the political situation in Sochi. The Superbike

Championship round there has already been cancelled. My question is: do you think that Formula One should do the same? And on a practical note, have you yet confirmed your travel arrangements to go to that race.

JB: First of all, travel arrangements have been confirmed. There's a charter going straight from Japan to Sochi. As to whether we go to Sochi or not, as with Bahrain over the last couple of years, we'll follow our Government guidelines on whether it's safe to travel or not, or whether we should go or not.

Q: British Government guidelines you mean?

JB: Yes

RF: Yeah, I agree with that. I think there were certain criticisms that came to the teams and the organisation going to Bahrain but we were clearly in line and in accordance with British Government guidelines. I think unless the British Government advise otherwise and then from that obviously the FIA and FOM, then we are obliged to go, we are contracted to go.

Q: Does anybody else have a view to put across on this?

FT: I personally just hope that we can go there because the Russian market is quite important for us. I hope that we will have this race. Until October there is a long time and I hope they can sort out all the troubles that they have currently.

Q: (Vladimir Rogovets – SB Belarus Segondnya) For all participants: I started my season yesterday. Today, I heard Formula One engines for the first time and I'm really disappointed. It's not Formula One, it sounds more like GP2 and GP3. What do you think can be done, in reality, to change this situation and restore it for the journalists and public?

MK: Actually I don't agree with this that this is not Formula One. This is actually a good era of Formula One. We've got into this very exciting new era with very complex, sophisticated hybrid engines which are exactly doing what they were expected to do, that is showcase the highest level of technology. We're always meant to be bringing it to a certain edge which we are doing and some people might like the sound or not but there's too much of importance in this matter that you just reduce it to the sound; it would be a bit sad if we just look at that. Otherwise, I think the show has, on a couple of occasions, been exciting and it's just the start of the season. I think it's still an excellent platform, one of the best in the world, it's one of the biggest. You look at the fans, you look at the global reach we have, how we are spread throughout the year so I think it is going in the right direction.

CA: I would agree with Monisha but it's a bit too much left brain or right brain for me and Formula One is very much a compliment of emotion and intellectual exercise, so I think from a technology perspective we are set up now. We have been saying for a while that Formula One needed to do something with its engine formula and that's ??? I think we should not forget also that it's a show business so it's a show and it has to satisfy the end customer who at the end of the day are not only the car makers but also the fans and if, in order to address that and continue to tick that box, we need to address something with the noise. There are ways to do it, and if indeed there is a test that is planned for next week, and I understand that it's almost doubling the sound that you can feel when you are near the track and therefore I think that's something that should be done, that can be done easily. Obviously there will be some cost implications and there we go again about cost cuts but we should do it. The last point is that obviously Formula One is also moving towards other media where sound is almost irrelevant. If I ask you what is the sound of Twitter, we see that we have to think a little bit differently to a certain degree. But the sound has to be right.

RF: I think you should always remember that the increase in sound is just loss of power and I think that when you're harnessing all the power and it means that the engines are quieter then you're actually doing a more efficient job and as I've said before, the show has been quite fantastic and I think that it would be very disappointing if we're just judging Formula One purely on the fact that it makes a lot of noise.

JB: I think Formula One should really be applauded for managing to bring this modern technology to Formula One. As Monisha said, we showcase the cutting edge technology and the reliability that's been achieved with these power plants in such a short time, I think is an incredible achievement.

FT: First of all, I think the most important part is that people write... the fans, Formula One fans with interesting races, with fights, with overtaking manoeuvres and Formula One is the peak of motor sports. That means the music that you hear now from Formula One, is what they will also hear in the future, because I think also the other categories will, sooner or later, come out with the same technology. A turbo engine doesn't have the same sound as a 12 cylinder which was twenty years ago. We're in another period of time and we have to adapt also what the automotive industry wants to see.

Q: (Renan do Couto – Warm-Up) To all of you: we've had new names coming into the direction of teams, like Marco Mattiacci, Eric Boullier leaving Lotus to go to McLaren and other ones. How does the arrival of new names on the pit wall affect the racing and the business in Formula One?

MK: I don't really see any direct effect now. Some of the names that have been mentioned have been in other teams before and they are from the automotive business, so it's always good if you have a certain new mix coming in there, maybe some new ideas come but I think Formula One teams are pretty independent. If you look at now the positions from new people coming in I think would have been a bit different if you look at team owners coming in, establishing their own team. That could still have maybe more effect how the team is run and what the team stands for. But I think it's now really of no relevance.

FT: It's a normal process. I don't see anything special in this. Formula One is a very fast business, people are coming in, people are going and this is how it is.

JB: Some of the people who are no longer on the pit wall were very big characters, always sorely missed, but I don't think it will change the show at all.

RF: I agree with John, there. From a personal point of view, I will dearly miss the people who are no longer here but Formula One will continue without even us and everyone else who matters. The sport is always bigger than any individual.

CA: Yeah, unfortunately I don't there are many different ways to operate Formula One. I think there is a model. Maybe it can be perceived by people outside the sport that it is a bit old-fashioned but actually even the people making the comment that it is old-fashioned which would change it once they are within the sport, they go back to the old model.

Q: (Ian Parkes – Press Association) Cyril and Franz: Jean-Michel Jalinier has revealed today that at least one of Renault's customers has not paid its bill this season for the power unit supply and if that bill is not paid, has threatened to withdraw the power units for future races. Can you reveal whether you have or haven't paid the bill and if not, what you make of Jean-Michel's threat?

FT: As far as I'm aware we have paid everything.

CA: It's a confidential issue but I'm happy since I'm on time to say that we are settled with invoices with Renault Sport F1.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) One of the fall-outs of this cost-cap versus improvements plans or whatever have been threats maybe that this will end up at the EU. Do you people – particularly Robert because you've been one of the most outspoken about this – do you believe that it will or should end up with the EU? Should there be EU intervention in these matters?

RF: I don't think that's for Force India, Dieter. Force India doesn't receive any subsidy payments, so it's not in any possible contravention of any rules. I think that people who receive subsidy payments should be asking the questions themselves. I think you know, generally, between the teams that are receiving additional payments or subsidy payments as opposed to the teams that are receiving the standard column one, column two payments, so the teams that are receiving those extra payments need to look into it themselves. It's not a case for us. Even there was contravention, we're not doing it because we're not receiving anything, but they need to look at it through their legal teams.

MK: I think this topic regarding the European Union is not something that has just come up today. I think it goes back to a couple of Concorde Agreements before, it always just keeps coming up. At least I can say that the teams that have written to the ??? are certainly not threatened, excluding Franz here, he was not part of that, they've not threatened anyone. It's just something which is very much there, as Bob has said. We don't see ourselves in any danger. It's more for the others to know what they're doing or not and to assess the legal effects of that.

FT: I think there's enough politics in Formula One, we don't need an additional party.

Q: (Kate Walker – crash.net) I wanted to touch again on the F1 Strategy Group haves and have-nots kind of situation. Late last year when we discovered that this Strategy Group was coming into play, several of you made comments about the need for trust in a relationship where five of you weren't going to be represented so for everyone except for Franz – because you are sort of represented – has the abandonment of the cost cap violated your trust in the Strategy Group moving forward?

CA: It depends what comes next. As we say, we still believe that there was an unanimous agreement that would explore the possibility of a cost-cap. We understand that some experts from the FIA believe that it's entirely possible, so on that basis we feel that we need to look at the issue properly and not stop in the middle of the bridge, so on that basis, we continue to trust the F1 Strategy Group. Obviously the first thing that we saw from the F1 Strategy Group was double points-scoring at the last race, so we would like to think that they can do better than that.

MK: I agree with that. I think that as the name, and it's been said already, as the name says, you do need always a smaller group and that's very common for any bigger corporation which sits down and looks at strategy. We can understand certain memberships given in there because certainly they are bigger teams and can come up with the right ideas but as I said before, we have concerns now since we've seen what has happened with the cost cap.

RF: I think that one has to question that when you have a group that it is clearly, from our point of view, bringing in recommendations that are favouring the people that are involved in that group then one has to question it and that is where we are at the moment.

JB: First of all, we don't accept that the cost cap is dead. We're still working very much towards achieving that. I think it's too early to say how successful the Strategy Group will or won't be.

FT: I trust the Strategy Group!

Q: (Daniel Johnson – Daily Telegraph) Question first to Monisha and then Franz and then John: back to the crisis in Ukraine, have you seen any effects? You have relationships with companies inside Russia. Have you seen any effect on any potential partners or sponsors from the crisis and how will that affect you going forward?

MK: We've definitely seen an effect because a lot of talks which are very advanced have virtually come to standstill because people are waiting and seeing what's going to happen and nobody really knows the entire impact it can have because the sanctions that have now been imposed are really biting some of them, so they're very careful which again means that we simply have to wait and there's nothing we can do about it, so we really hope that the situation can be clarified soon and all our deals can be sorted out.

FT: Yeah, of course the political situation affects our negotiations with companies in Russia because no one knows exactly which way it goes and I just hope that it will end up in a positive way and we will go to Sochi because that's very very important and then I'm convinced within a short term period of time that everything comes back to normality.

JB: At the moment, there's no immediate impact but if it continues to escalate no one knows what will happen in the future.

Q: (Ian Parkes – PA) There's obviously been a lot of questions directed today about cost-control, finances, etc., As five of the smaller teams on the grid, as we stand here today, what would you assess are the chances of the 11 teams that are currently in Formula One being on the grid for the first race of next season?

MK: I really wouldn't even want to give a percentage on that. Because clearly our target here is that all teams which are here today need to survive. Formula One needs this kind of diversity. This is what makes the show exciting and this is what allows sometimes a smaller team – as they call it – to even touch the front and get maybe a podium or two and that's exciting for the whole show. So, I firmly want to believe that we will all make it and we certainly see it as our job, wherever we can do something, to make that happen.

RF: I would hate to lose the diversity that we have. You should never underestimate the resolve of Formula One teams to survive. Historically it's been proven it's an amazing effort and I hope that with efforts than can be made, we can make it easier for people to survive by bringing in the cost controls and any other measures that are possible.

FT: Difficult to say now. I can't talk for the other teams. I just know that Toro Rosso will be on the starting grid. So far we are financed thanks to Red Bull, thanks to CEPSA, Nova Chemicals and Sapinda. For the next years we are on the financial side on good pillars.

JB: We've battled every year through our short F1 lives for the last five years. We've been written off several times and we're still here. I'm sure we'll still be here at the start of 2015.

CA: Pretty much the same thing as John. I think we do, and will continue to do, every single thing that we can in order to be sustainable – not just next year but the following years. The one comment I would make is that we should not take anything for granted. Formula One is the pinnacle of motorsport. We need to deserve our position on track and making reference to lap times. It's not like once you are in there you should sit down and relax. That's the sort of thing I will not accept as the CEO of this team. And therefore we need to do a better job on track because we need a lot of noise about the finance but at the end of the day it's also lap times that matter – although that's also connected to finance and the overall model – but we need to make sure to deserve our position on the grid.

Q: (Thomas Maher – FormulaSpy.com) Question for Franz. Franz, Daniil Kvyat has had a pretty good start to his career – I think it's three points finishes out of four – has he surprised you or exceeded the expectations of the team?

FT: No. He is in plan. This is what we expected. He is a very high-skilled driver. He is working very committed and disciplined and therefore I expect that he will continue also in the future to be within the first ten.

Q: (Sergio Lillo – Revista Scratch) Question to Franz. You have said this day that Daniil Kvyat will be a champion. I want to what kind of skills have he got to achieve this and what's the difference between him and Vergne?

FT: First of all, whether he will become a champion or not, we will see. I think that he has the abilities to do this but the complete environment must also be in place to become a champion. He is a very, very high-skilled driver, that means he is a huge talent. He is very committed to motorsports, he is passionate to motorsports, he is disciplined and he is a very hard worker – and these are all the factors which are decisive, whether a driver wins races, and at the end championships, or not. Also Jean-Eric Vergne is a high-skilled driver and he is doing a very good job. If both drivers are being provided from the team with a proper car, then both of them can be successful.

Friday report

Lewis Hamilton topped the timesheets in both Friday practice sessions in Barcelona, showing that the Silver Arrows are still at the head of the pack despite the best efforts of their rivals to close the gap in the three-week break since China.

On Friday morning teammate Nico Rosberg was a second slower than his teammate, but the German racer was hampered by an ERS cooling problem with his Mercedes power unit that limited him to a scant nine laps. Despite the comparative disadvantage, however, Rosberg finished FPI fifth on the timesheets, and ended FP2 in second place, four-tenths down on Hamilton.

Rosberg was not the only front runner to suffer a technical setback on Friday morning – 25 minutes into the session, Sebastian Vettel was sidelined with a short in a chassis loom that was so laborious to fix that the Red Bull racer was unable to take part in FP2.

Red Bull teammate Daniel Ricciardo was third on the timesheets in both morning and afternoon, his consistent pace an apt demonstration of the progress Red Bull have made since the F1 circus returned to Europe. The loss of data from Vettel's car will be a setback for the team, but the quadruple world champions are more than capable of overcoming minor hurdles.

Another team whose times indicated improvement over the past three weeks was Ferrari, with Fernando Alonso finishing fourth in both practice sessions, while teammate Kimi Raikkonen was sixth in FPI and fifth in FP2. The Scuderia drivers were a second off Hamilton's pace in the morning, but only half a second behind in the afternoon, under the watchful gaze of Luca di Montezemolo.

That being said, however, the Ferrari chairman held a press conference on Friday afternoon in which he took the opportunity to underline his previously stated disappointment in the Scuderia's current level of performance.

It was a difficult afternoon for Lotus, who had to pull Pastor Maldonado off the track when a potential gearbox issue emerged on the pit wall data, while Romain Grosjean was hampered by potential brake troubles also flagged up by the brains on the pit wall.

The morning session saw all manner of catastrophes large and small, with Giedo van der Garde – standing in for Sauber regular Esteban Gutierrez – having a near-miss with the barriers at Turn 1 thanks to braking problems in one of the fastest sections of track. The normally placid Dutchman was rather shaken by the incident, although was luckily uninjured.

Sergio Perez lost a wing mirror: it slumped into his cockpit and the Mexican racer returned to the pits holding the offending item in place. Following Vettel's 'retirement' from the session, the Red Bull driver had to wield his own fire extinguisher when the car was being returned to the pits.

The afternoon was slightly calmer, but saw Jean-Eric Vergne three-wheeling in his Toro Rosso, while Max Chilton lost the monkey seat from his Marussia.

FPI times (unofficial)

1. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1m27.023s [17 laps]
2. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1m27.891s [26 laps]
3. Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull) 1m27.973s [21 laps]
4. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1m28.128s [23 laps]
5. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1m28.168s [19 laps]
6. Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari) 1m28.337s [19 laps]
7. Kevin Magnussen (McLaren) 1m28.423s [27 laps]
8. Pastor Maldonado (Lotus) 1m28.744s [34 laps]
9. Sergio Perez (Force India) 1m28.779s [18 laps]
10. Felipe Massa (Williams) 1m28.791s [13 laps]
11. Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso) 1m28.792s [24 laps]
12. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) 1m28.828s [17 laps]
13. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1m28.859s [24 laps]
14. Felipe Nasr (Williams) 1m29.272s [15 laps]
15. Adrian Sutil (Sauber) 1m29.688s [16 laps]
16. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) 1m29.820s [22 laps]
17. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1m29.444s [21 laps]
18. Giedo van der Garde (Sauber) 1m30.440s [21 laps]
19. Max Chilton (Marussia) 1m30.748s [19 laps]
20. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) 1m30.942s [4 laps]
21. Kamui Kobayashi (Caterham) 1m30.997s [22 laps]
22. Marcus Ericsson (Caterham) 1m31.421s [22 laps]

FP2 times (unofficial)

1. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1m25.524s [33 laps]
2. Nico Rosberg (Mercedes) 1m25.973s [36 laps]
3. Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull) 1m26.509s [38 laps]
4. Fernando Alonso (Ferrari) 1m27.121s [33 laps]
5. Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari) 1m27.296s [33 laps]
6. Kevin Magnussen (McLaren) 1m27.788s [37 laps]
7. Jenson Button (McLaren) 1m27.811s [29 laps]
8. Felipe Massa (Williams) 1m27.824s [31 laps]
9. Pastor Maldonado (Lotus) 1m27.866s [42 laps]
10. Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso) 1m28.049s [35 laps]
11. Nico Hulkenberg (Force India) 1m28.074s [31 laps]
12. Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) 1m28.246s [30 laps]
13. Adrian Sutil (Sauber) 1m28.284s [33 laps]
14. Valtteri Bottas (Williams) 1m28.698s [33 laps]
15. Esteban Gutierrez (Sauber) 1m29.105s [24 laps]
16. Sergio Perez (Force India) 1m29.129s [34 laps]
17. Romain Grosjean (Lotus) 1m29.463s [26 laps]
18. Jules Bianchi (Marussia) 1m29.991s [26 laps]
19. Max Chilton (Marussia) 1m31.148s [28 laps]
20. Kamui Kobayashi (Caterham) 1m31.338s [38 laps]
21. Marcus Ericsson (Caterham) 1m31.586s [39 laps]
22. Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull) NO TIME SET

Thursday press conference

Formula One's return to Europe was marked by a Thursday press conference that saw two drivers the centre of attention while the other four fought to stay awake. Plus ca change...

Present were Fernando Alonso (Ferrari), Max Chilton (Marussia), Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso), Kevin Magnussen (McLaren), Pastor Maldonado (Lotus), and Sebastian Vettel (Red Bull).

Q: Daniil, can I start with you? Three points finishes, one 11th place, you must be quite pleased with the way things have started in the first four races?

Daniil KVYAT: Yeah, it's going quite OK now. A bit of a shame not finishing in the points in Bahrain as well, but anyway you have to learn from something. So far we've been a bit on the limit of the points zone, but I hope that we can make some good steps and become even a bit more competitive, so we can take points a bit more easily. It would be a really good step but we are working hard together and soon it will be reachable.

Q: So the story so far is that Jean-Eric Vergne your team-mate is three-one up on you in qualifying but you're ahead of him in races. He's had a few reliability issues in races but how do you see the balance between you, and your own progress?

DK: I'm not really looking too deeply into these scores and so on. We've been quite close. Don't forget that Jean-Eric is a very fast driver and he's in the peak of his shape probably now. Also very experienced. In the wet I have to admit he was very fast so far and in Bahrain it was a dry quali. Of course, he's also been having a bit of issues. But in China it was a very good balance. I was quite happy in the race. I was quicker than him at that point but in the end we have to see in the future races.

Q: Max, coming to you. The run continues: 23 consecutive finishes in your Formula One career, two 13th places so far this season, are you proud of what's been achieved so far?

Max CHILTON: Yeah, I am. Last year it wasn't a perfect season but lots to take away from it. I remember someone asking me in me in Monza, I think, saying: 'you're 10 races in, that's a good little record you've got going there'. And then I broke Tiago [Monteiro's] record, which was 16 from a rookie start, and we thought it would be nice to get to the end of the year, which we did. Credit to the team: that's pretty good for a small team reliability-wise. And we're four races in now and we've carried that on. It's not our main goal, but where we are it's absolutely crucial to finish the race as I've shown this year with the two 13ths. We did have good speed but we had to be there at the finish to make sure those results counted. So we will try to keep it going but our main focus is to try to get a bit more speed out of the car and myself.

Q: Apart from Malaysia, in the races where you and Caterham have both finished Marussia has tended to be in front of them. Can you say a little bit about how you see that battle and also about how close you feel you are now to the teams in front of you?

MC: We've always had a good battle with Caterham. They kind of hold back sometimes, I think, in practice and qualifying and surprise us in the race. But I think this year, to me, our car is definitely better. We're developing well. We've brought some good updates to here. I'm not sure if they have or not. It would be nice if we could push forward. Sauber hasn't been too far ahead of us and we've been battling with them in at least the first few stints of the race and so... yeah, I guess you've got to focus on the cars in front, there's no point in focusing on your mirrors, so we'll try to improve our results this weekend.

Q: Thanks for that. Coming to you Pastor. Obviously you're a former winner here in Barcelona. Lotus in Q3 in qualifying in China, running in the top 10 obviously. How would you describe progress within the team?

Pastor MALDONADO: It's clear that we have been progressing quite a lot in the last couple of races. Still maybe we were not at 100 per cent but we've been working really hard. Hopefully here with a bit more time, putting everything together we can be much more competitive and we can fight for good places. This is our main focus at the moment and I think we can. We have a good car, a good team. We have been not good enough with all the new engine system at the beginning but now it seems to be more clear in terms of technology, you know, controlling all the systems in the car and hopefully from this race to the end of the season it will be much better for us.

Q: We've heard about a lot of new parts on the car this weekend and also power unit upgrades from Renault. What are you expecting and what are you expecting from yourself this weekend?

PM: I'm expecting to have no problems, a competitive car, and do my best. In the past I've been quite good here, so I think as soon as we manage to solve all the problems we will be back to fight for good places.

Q: Sebastian, Red Bull have announced that you have a new chassis this weekend, so I wonder if you could share with us what's in it, why do you need it? Obviously, we've heard you saying that you don't feel that the car was talking to you; maybe you'd like to elaborate on that. So, what are you looking for from this car and how close do you think you're getting to finding it?

Sebastian VETTEL: I think we concluded after China, where we were quite a little bit behind to change the chassis, so actually it's not a new chassis, it's an old one that we used in testing in the winter, and we have some experience with it. It's more a sanity check rather than a real problem with the other chassis. So it's just to try everything we can and basically reset and start again. Obviously there is still a lot of work ahead of us, as I mentioned after the first couple of races, maybe I'm not as happy as I want to be but it's a long process, a lot of things have changed and I think we need to be patient.

Q: Kevin, two-all versus Jenson, you personally have been three times in Q3, so Saturdays are going OK, but it's been a rough couple of grands prix, the last two for you. Tell us about that?

Kevin MAGNUSSEN: Well, I think I've learned a lot. It's been good in many ways as well. Obviously we're not where we want to be and we need to keep working really hard to get there. But I think I have learned a lot and there have been many positive points to take away from the last two races. It's no secret that we are not where we want to be: it's not that we're happy or that I'm happy. We just need to work hard, keep working hard. The team is doing a great job. They are staying positive, although they are not happy with the position. They are staying strong and keeping the fighting spirit up. So, yeah, I'm pretty happy with how things are going in terms of the progress we're making.

Q: It's unusual for McLaren to have two races where you score no points with either car. How has the team reacted to that internally?

KM: Well, in Bahrain I think we would have scored points. China was not good for us. It was a bit of a shock how far off the pace we were but again I think we learned a lot. We know China is probably the worst circuit for us at the moment, but we'll just see how it goes here.

Q: Fernando, a two-time winner here, winner last year in a Ferrari. Tough start to the season clearly but third place last time out in China. How much encouragement has that given you and the team, and how big a step have you brought with you here this weekend in terms of updates?

Fernando ALONSO: The China result is a boost for all the team – extra motivation to keep working hard. As you said we are not in a position we are happy with. We start with some deficit to the top teams, especially Mercedes who won the first four races and is dominating now with good margins, so we try to decrease that gap and we try to get closer and closer. To do that we need to make bigger steps than what the other teams will do. For here, to be honest, we need to wait and see. I think the characteristics of the circuit will help us a little bit, with not too big straights – only one here on the finish line. About the new parts, we bring some new parts but nothing out of this world. I don't think we will be different compared to any other top team in terms of what we bring here, or even less. We need to see. As I said, track characteristics are the biggest help we have here.

Q: (Mathias Brunner – Speedweek.com) Sebastian, not to use the same chassis again, how much of a 'black cat' decision was that?

SV: Not really. I think it's not unusual to change chassis, generally. Obviously if you change, you change to a new one, but we decided, as I said before, to change back to an older chassis just to make sure nothing is wrong. Just to see, or basically change the things that you can, to have a reset and try again. We don't think that there was anything wrong with the old chassis but nevertheless we decided to change, so if so we should get an answer this weekend.

Q: (Jackob Melgaard – Metro express Denmark) For Kevin, how do compare the car after the break to the car you drove at the last grand prix and how do feel about this track in Barcelona?

KM: We don't know how the car feels, we haven't driven it yet since the last race, so we'll have to wait and see. I don't expect it to feel a lot different. We are bringing a few new parts but nothing that is going to change the world. This track is the first track on the calendar this year that I've been to

before, so that's nice. It's nice to be in Europe again, so feeling a bit more at home. So I'm looking forward to it.

Q: (Manuel Franco Peral - Diario AS) Fernando, podium is a real goal for you here in Spain?

FA: No, I don't think so. We cannot start the weekend thinking to be on the podium. Or thinking to win the race. That will be creating... y'know, false targets to everyone who will come here. We finished ninth and tenth in Bahrain, we did podium in China because we had some things putting together on that Sunday but it's not that we are in a position now to say we will fight for the podium here. We will do our best but we know it is going to be a tough weekend and it's not going to be easy. But, you never know, this is sport and anything can happen but today, sitting here, if I tell you that I will fight for the podium, probably I will lie to you and I don't want to do so for all the people coming.

Q: (Renan Do Couto - Warm Up) Question for Fernando. Fernando, after four races this season Kimi has only 11 points. At the same point last season Felipe Massa had 30 points. Does it show that Ferrari need much more than a driver-change to get back on the title fight?

FA: I don't know really. We are not in a position at the moment that we expect. We thought to be more competitive and we struggle, as everyone sees, at the start of the season. I think it is the same for all the teams that we are facing some problems, apart from Mercedes, they had an easy four races, four wins. But, you know, we will work hard. We will work hard to come back in a better position and the start of Felipe or the start of Kimi was not the best in terms of points but I think hopefully soon they will be close to the podium or to the victories and we, both Ferraris, can score many points for the team.

Q: (Ralf Bach - Sport-Bild) Question to Fernando. When I listen to your, let me say, remembrance from China, between the lines I could hear that maybe the driver was better than the car in this weekend - or on the Sunday?

FA: I think the car is always what it is. The car never changes. The driver, also, sometimes you have better luck, sometimes you have worse luck. In China, for example, I have a crash at the start and nothing happened to my car and I could finish the race. I think the Red Bulls, they were fighting a little bit, they lost a little bit of time and I could be there. My pitstops were very quick. In the first stop I overtook Sebastian in that lap, so there were many factors together that put us on the podium. But, y'know, we need to do very special weekends to be on the podium and China was one of those. Lucky. And some other factors. So arriving here, sitting on Thursday on the next press conference. To repeat that podium will be unbelievable. But it's not, at the moment, our main target.

Q: (Vladimir Rogovets - Sb Belarus) My question is for Sebastian and Fernando. You are the champions. How long can you work without first place in the podium?

SV: Well, I think - and Fernando will probably say the same - we're here to win. I'm not coming here to finish second or fifth - but you have to be realistic and the target is always to get the maximum out of yourself, out of the car, out of the package that you have. And you can get a lot of satisfaction if you achieve that. So, it means basically if a podium is in reach or P5 is the best you can do then you need to ensure to become fifth. If you then become seventh it is not satisfying. But surely, ultimately we are here to win. That's the target but obviously you know much better what's going on inside your team and how competitive you are. So yeah, there's a lot of things that need to come together. Right now, obviously, we have Mercedes in a very, very strong position. Difficult to beat but never impossible.

FA: Unfortunately I have a lot more experience! So, yeah, there is nothing really you can do apart from try to do the best job you can and try to find different goals. Obviously we are here all to win. My last win was last year, here. So it's one year without victories. I would like not to have that long period. On the other hand, we are 22 drivers on the grid and maybe 20 are in a worse position than me. So, I cannot also be... y'know, blaming my luck for that. I'm extremely lucky and a very privileged guy, so, you need to keep working and if your boss is happy with you, that's something very important.

Q: (Andrew Benson - BBC Sport) Sebastian, Christian said in Autosport today that you are extremely sensitive to rear stability on corner entry. But that was... last year you were using the rear instability to turn the car into the corners. Can you explain what it is about this year's car that you don't like and why you've not been able to adapt to it so far?

SV: Well, I think generally we all have our own style to how we like to drive the car, how to set up the car. I think in general I don't mind when the rear's moving so I don't mind suffering or having oversteer in the car. But if it is too much obviously if it starts to bother you when the car slides too much, then you find yourself correcting more than actually being able to push or get the maximum out of the car. And, yeah, it slows you down. I think that has been part of the problem so far. There's lots of reasons behind it so it would be nice to have just one problem and one fix for that but obviously it got a lot more complex this year. There's a lot more factors than just the car setup. So yeah, we're still learning a lot. We did already a lot of improvement but there's still obviously a lot to do. But I think generally you never change your... the way you like to drive a car or your style I think doesn't change.

Q: (Cristobal Rosaleny - Car and Driver) Question for Sebastian. You're changing now chassis. You have spent four races with problems behind Daniel Ricciardo. Do you feel this time you have lost is a bad thing for you for your own progress during the season and could affect the rest of the season for you?

SV: Surely if I had won the first four races it would be better for my season that what I did! Yeah, it is what it is. There's two ways. You can always look back and try to find something to complain about - or you can look forward. And I think in general we are trying to look forward to the next race. There's a lot more races this year to come and for sure we didn't score as many points as we hoped. But then again after winter testing I think we were in a very bad position. I think right from the first race it was probably better than what we initially expected. Lots of positives with Daniel's podium in Australia - which obviously got taken away - but then the podium in Malaysia showed that we are on the right track but knew, just reading the feeling inside the car that it's not yet where we want to be. And you also see that in the results. As I said, there is a lot of work but I think we are generally quite good in getting the maximum out of the car. At the moment there's a couple of things that we need to get on top of and then it should be a different story.

Q: (Daniel Johnson - Daily Telegraph): Seb, looking forward it's no secret that your car's good in the corners but not so good at the straight bits in between. How much are you and the team - particularly considering it's the start of the European season - relying on Renault to make a big step forward for you to mount some kind of a championship challenge?

SV: As you mentioned, it's not a big secret. If you look at the sector times or comparisons that we have available, we currently lose out too much on the straights - but there's always hope, obviously. Again, you have to look at it from the start. Where we started in winter testing was unfortunately way, way off compared to where we wanted to, in all means. Talking about the car, we set fire to the car nearly every run. Talking about the engine, obviously we were not on the same page that we expected to be, both in terms of reliability and performance. So, since that, I think we had a very, very strong comeback but obviously you miss that time of development. But I think there's always hope. Just look at Ferrari, for example, the last race, the step that they did was mostly in straight line. I think they got a better fuel and picked up around 7kph on the straights. So... we know that our disadvantage is more than 7kph to the Mercedes which are currently the benchmark down the straights but things can change quickly. We need to make sure we push 100 per cent on the car and also on the engine side. In the end we are a team: Renault and Red Bull Racing, so both parties know that we need to push very hard to make sure that we beat these guys and also the currently strongest team with Mercedes.

Q: (Graham Harris - Motorsport Monday) Sebastian, you're changing chassis at this race, why not a new chassis? And the second part: does the chassis have a name?

SV: Same as before. It's not that much of a black cat, I hope.

Q: (Carlos Miguel - La Gaceta) Fernando, this morning Toto Wolff said that you are a real race monster. He said that Ferrari is the biggest enemy in the championship; what do you think of these words?

FA: About the monster, it depends how you take it. At least he's a man. If it was a woman who said that I was a monster it would be even worse. We need to do it step by step. As I said, we need to be realistic with the position that we have. We will not give up, there's a big gap and a big gap in points and in performance with Mercedes but there's still a long way to go in the championship so we will try to do our best. As a team, and with the potential that Ferrari has, we must do anything we can to close that gap and to become competitive. That will not happen between one race to the next one, that will be a slow recovery and hopefully not too late when we become competitive in terms of points to fight for the championship but let's do it race by race. China, as I said, was a combination of things and very good luck to get that podium. Here in Barcelona, it's a good point to check how competitive we are, because it's a circuit with different characteristics again and a circuit that will give us an answer in some of the parameters and some of the areas that we need to find some answers. Monaco is the next one, then Canada – again a completely different circuit so we are in a moment of the championship that will tell us many many things in terms of how competitive we can be and how much of a threat we can be for Mercedes. If they count on us for the championship fight, it's good news because they respect us but we need to deliver if we want to really become a threat, so we are on that, that work.

Q: (Silvia Reneé Arias – Parabrisas) Fernando, I want to know if you find any change in the Ferrari team after Stefano Domenicali left?

FA: Not really. At the moment, everything is more or less the same. I have been in Maranello last week. Everything is calm and no big changes, nothing really that you're going to spot that is different at the moment. As I said in China, Marco (Mattiaci) arrived – as we said – with little experience in motor racing, a lot of experience on the managerial side but he's listening, he's learning as quickly as he can in everything. I don't think Marco wants to become an engineer because that's not his priority at the moment but he will need some time to settle down and to make some changes, some decisions if he thinks they are needed. As I said, in the two or three weeks that he's in the job, nothing has really changed at the moment. He needs more time.

Q: How much are you guiding him; how much are you contributing to that?

FA: We had some meetings, obviously, to try to help him in all the areas. He's quite interested to listen to everyone. He called all the engineers and all the engine side, electronics, the drivers, we are going to his office and try to explain all our points of view and all our requirements. As I said, he's taking note of everything and he will make the necessary changes, what he thinks is best for the team. Hopefully that's a good thing for Ferrari to move forward and to improve some things, some historical mistakes that we've made in the past and we will see if this fresh approach... and not influence about any technical things because, as I said, he's not an engineer. Hopefully that will help Ferrari.

Q: (Valenti Fradera – L'Esportiu) To all of you: the circuit Barcelona Catalunya used to be the venue of choice for pre-season testing but this year you haven't run here yet. Will that change how you approach the weekend, and will we get to see more laps than usual tomorrow during free practice?

PM: Even without any tests, it will be same approach as the other tracks, for sure. I was quite interested to run before this season, because it's a good track, a good combination of corners, good weather but it's what we have so it will be the same.

MC: Yeah, it will be pretty similar. Obviously when we've come here in the past we'd pretty much know the ideal set-up for the circuit. Obviously the cars have changed drastically since last year so there will be a lot more to find out now we haven't done any pre-season (testing) here. And we've now got the extra set(of tyres) in the first thirty minutes of free practice which we can use so there will definitely be more laps completed but if you compare it to China, for example, it won't be any different.

Q: Kevin and Dan are obviously rookies (in F1) but you've got personal experience of this circuit, even if it's not necessarily in Formula One.

KM: I don't think it's going to be a lot different – the approach to this weekend than the other weekends. Personally, I like this track, I think it's a good track, the mix of corners. As I've said before, it's a track that I've been to a lot of times, so it's nice to feel at home here but other than that, it's just a normal weekend.

DK: For me as a driver I don't think it's going to change a lot compared to other years we've been coming here. It's my first time here in Formula One as well so let's see how it will start going tomorrow.

SV: I don't think it makes a difference. We didn't run in Bahrain. I think that even if we had had the test here in the winter it would make a difference. But usually it's quite cold in winter time, so when you come here in May it's quite a big difference, so you need to use the time that you have available in free practice, but I don't think we can run as much as we'd like to because we've all got the safety... the engines. We will see, but for sure the running tomorrow will be important.

FA: Nothing to add, really.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – Universo On Line) To all of you: when you have one driver from a team that has a car that is winning everything – like Mercedes – and your team needs to win three times in a row (to catch them up), how does it work for teammates? For example, the guy who is behind, does it stimulate him to try to win or does it work in the opposite direction?

FA: Yeah, I said waiting for Rosberg. I don't know really. For this, when it happens, it was a question for Mark last year, when Sebastian won nine times. For Rosberg now. It's not so difficult to know what you're experiencing. Probably I will answer because I will have the experience, but now... of course, I think Rosberg would like to win, that's for sure.

SV: I would hate Lewis now, if I was Nico.

PM: I would hate Lewis as well. It's a difficult answer. For sure, you always want to beat your teammate, you always want to do your best and to be ahead of your most close contender. For sure, it's not ideal to always be at the back but in my opinion, they are both competitive, sometimes one is quicker than the other and sometimes it's vice versa. It's a difficult answer because it depends about any driver.

MC: It would be nice to be in that position, obviously. It's hard to beat someone who never gives up and Rosberg, I'm sure, will never give up. I'm sure he will get his fair share of wins back. Sometimes if you're constantly winning you sometimes let things slip so if you just make sure you just keep giving 100 percent, he will definitely get other race wins.

KM: I don't have anything to add.

DK: I don't want to talk for others but if I have to talk for myself there's never a huge friendship between teammates so I think you always want to be in front of everyone and there are some circumstances, sometimes if you're teammate is in front of you, it means that there is something that you can maybe do better but once again, there are different circumstances.
