



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

2011 BRAZILIAN GRAND PRIX

FRIDAY PRESS CONFERENCE TRANSCRIPT

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TEAM REPRESENTATIVES - Eric BOULLIER (Renault), Jean Francois CAUBET (Renault), Robert FERNLEY (Force India), Paul HEMBERY (Pirelli), Christian HORNER (Red Bull), Riad ASMAT (Lotus)

PRESS CONFERENCE

Q: Bob, the battle for sixth place in the championship. How important is it for you?

Robert FERNLEY: It is absolutely vital. I mean we lost it last year by one point, as you know, it was a disappointment at the last race and we simply don't want that to happen again, so we have really got two objectives this weekend. One is to secure sixth and the other one is to put Adrian (Sutil) in the top 10 for drivers.

Q: Fifteen points is quite a lot to gain or even lose, isn't it, so it's unlikely to change?

RF: Unlikely, but it could be weather driven and as we all know there is many a slip so we have to be absolutely sure that we deliver.

Q: Your team owner, Vijay Mallya, said that he would announce the drivers before the Brazilian Grand Prix. I think he said that, anyway, and we are still waiting, though, of course, the grand prix hasn't happened yet?

RF: Yeah, he might be waiting a little longer before he finalises it.

Q: Is it the drivers he is talking to or what's holding it up?

RF: A number of things really. I think it is only fair we deal, obviously, with the drivers. We have got three very talented drivers and we need to make sure that the one that is going to be disappointed has the best opportunity to position himself and that's our priority. Once we are clear with all those programmes, Vijay will announce it.

Q: Paul, it's interesting that Jenson Button said yesterday that he felt that at the beginning of the season your [Pirelli's] policy has been somewhat more extreme perhaps with the tyres dropping off quite dramatically whereas perhaps more conservative later on in the season. I think you have already said that you will be less conservative next year, but can you talk about your policy for next year.

Paul HEMBERY: Well, first of all we didn't change anything, so I think there are a lot of other factors involved why maybe there is not that big drop that we have got now. The only thing that we did change was the hard compound after the Turkish race. Next year we are

going towards softer compounds. We have too big a gap between some of our choices this year in terms of peak performance so we are trying to get that down below a second to try and encourage the strategy. Experience and hindsight are wonderful things and we can make maybe some more aggressive choices in some circuits.

Q: Apparently the choice of going softer has come in for a certain amount of criticism, or allegations of favouritism to certain teams that cannot warm up their tyres very well. What do you say about that?

PH: Well, when we go harder everyone says we are being conservative and the races are boring, so it is one of those no-win situations. I think the team you are talking about, when we were in Korea with super softs and softs, still had some issues so that's rubbish. We are doing it because we are trying to encourage more exciting racing and I think what we are doing is in the right direction to try to have the peak of performance much closer together between the tyres. The harder tyres to be more durable and the faster tyres to have a degradation so we will see a little bit more of that strategy we saw earlier in the season.

Q: A question partially for you and partially for Christian about Sebastian Vettel's tyre from Abu Dhabi. Is there anything more to report on that?

PH: Well, to be honest we finished looking at that over a week ago. I said at the time we had a bag of bits and we had a look at the bag of bits and ruled out a whole host of things. We didn't feel there was an integrity issue with the tyre and as we've seen in some races you get debris, a foreign body that you pick up, and that causes a hole in the tyre. It was unfortunate: first corner, first lap, world champion, so not the greatest thing with all the world watching but it's what happens so nothing really else to add.

Q: Christian, anything more from you?

Christian HORNER: No, I think Paul summed it up. There was no smoking gun if you like. We did a lot of research with the Pirelli engineers and worked closely to try to understand that bag of bits that came back. Some of it came back in Mark Webber's car but I don't think we will ever fully know exactly what the root cause was. There are lots of theories, but nothing that you could hand-on-heart say it was that.

Q: Riad, very interesting load of drivers that you used in the Young Driver test in Abu Dhabi. I'm thinking particularly, obviously, of Luiz Razia, who is of interest here in Brazil but also Alexander Rossi. That's a fairly important driver as well in terms of, perhaps, your future strategy for the USA.

Riad ASMAT: I think, bottom line, is that we have always had the capability. We started a team but at the same time we also had a driver development programme. We are filtering them through that system right now and hopefully we get to nurture their talent and hopefully put them in a car in the near future. As you can see we still have the capacity and capability, so we select by merit who can do what and when, so it's a commitment and we are sticking to it.

Q: Is it something particularly with Alexander that you are thinking if we have got an American race we need to have an American driver?

RA: Well, actually, in all honesty that didn't come to mind as we had him even before the American GP was announced and he just had talent. We saw that in him. We worked with him in the World Series and we've now tested him in GP2 and we will have to determine where he goes next year.

Q: And you have also had a name change. That's been approved as well. How important is that?

RA: Well, in a way it is quite sad that we have to move on but at the same time it gives us the pragmatism of determining our future, having control of it, and I think we have reached a

very amicable parting of the ways. I think it is good for both parties. For me, it is quite clear what I have to do for the future with the team and we are just focusing on that.

Q: Similar question for both Jean Francois and Eric. You have both had the name change as well and does this mean the parting of the ways with Renault no longer the name of a team. Final severance as it were?

Jean Francois CAUBET: I think the deal was clear. When we sold the team two years ago we agreed on the transition year, so the name was Lotus Renault and the chassis name Renault, but the team was controlled by Genii and no reason to push the name Renault under the ground. The strategy was to move from the team to engine provider and I think that is quite natural that we keep the name Renault for the TV rights to help the team to develop and to have a good balance sheet and I think it was a good strategy.

Eric BOULLIER: Nothing else to add. At least now the situation is clear and there is Lotus name for next year and Caterham and it is all clear now.

Q: Jean Francois, are you still looking for another team to supply engines to or has that died down a bit now?

JFC: Last year we had two teams. This year we have three teams, next year four teams. I think it will be the last step as the problem is not to have five or six teams, it is to provide a good engine and to have a good technical partnership with all the teams. To have good reliability I think four will be the best.

Q: Four is the best?

JFC: Yes.

Q: Just looking back at this season – fantastic success as well?

JFC: I think it was a good season. We have a fantastic relationship with Red Bull. It is good to start a new strategy and win. The reliability is not 100 per cent. I think we had an engine blow-up with Jarno (Trulli) in Silverstone so the goal next year will be to finish all the races.

Q: Christian, just looking back at the season as a whole what was the key to success. A lot of people would say it's the engineering side, it's the way the car has been designed et cetera, it just seems to use its tyres well. It has the downforce, but what from your point of view is the key to success.

CH: It's a combination of everything working in harmony. Everything, every department, all the bits that you don't see. You see the shop-window effectively at a grand prix weekend, but it's the behind-the-scenes as well. The production, the thousands of hours that go into forgotten departments like electronics, like the R&D department, the paint-shop for example. It is all those factors that have to come together. The drivers have to do their bit. Obviously Sebastian has driven at an unbelievable level this year but it's the harmonisation of all those aspects that have to come together to achieve the kind of results that we had. 2010 was a very, very tough year for the team. It was a championship that went all the way down to the wire, development went all the way up to that final race so to come out and win the first race of the year in 2011 after the challenge that went into 2010 was something that was tremendously rewarding. Then to build on that, the momentum on that through the year was really very, very special.

Q: It does, of course, mean that you are in everyone's sights for next year. It does put a lot of pressure on you for next year?

CH: Yes, it's funny when you start winning you are very popular. When you win repeatedly you become very unpopular. That's the nature of sport, the nature of this business. Of course, if you look at the last 40 races we have won 23 of them. We have had 25 podiums this year alone, 17 poles. It has been a remarkable year, or a remarkable period for the team, and with continuity, with stability, our target is to try and maintain the level of

performance and success that we have worked so hard to achieve over the last few years. But we are up against phenomenal opponents. Ferrari, the pedigree of that team, the heritage of that team. The engineering resource of McLaren. You have only got to see the size and scale of their facility. We don't underestimate our rivals but we are determined, very focused, to build on and maintain the kind of levels of performance we have achieved not only this year but in 2010 and in the latter half of 2009.

Q: It has been an amazing feat, but you are probably in the sights of everybody though?

CH: Inevitably, I think we have been the benchmark and with that comes a different pressure. It has been a different pressure to defend a championship and I think we have actually defended the championship obviously more convincingly than we won it the first time and it doesn't get easier. Of course there are teams that have not won for several years now that are very determined. Red Bull has only been around for seven years and we have won four championships in the past two years. There are other great teams with tremendous depth of resource that are very keen to get back on top. We can only focus on ourselves, we can't control what other teams are doing and hopefully we can turn up with a good car next year and carry the kind of form we have enjoyed this year. It is a shame it has to end really. I know we are in the end of November, but it would be nice if it went on a bit longer from our perspective.

Q: Eric, can you clarify the Robert Kubica situation at the moment, as that seems to be going to and fro?

EB: The situation is quite clear. We have a contract with Robert until the end of this year, terminating this year. This is why we are using our channel for the communication with him and we agree with his manager, Daniele Morelli, to issue a press release before this week, which was entirely approved by both parties before being released. The choice of the wording is my responsibility and I think the message was clear. We have waited for Robert. We would like Robert to be back. I think we are the first one who wish him well and he informed us that, unfortunately, he would not be able to be at the first test, which means he will not be able to start the season for me, so that's it. I think the issue came up that some translation maybe was wrongly done in the far east of Europe and the message was really that he would not be able to be back in 2012 which is not the message at all. The message was clear. He will not be at the start of the season, or the test if you want, but he may come back next year.

Q: So are you looking to sign two or three drivers?

EB: Nothing like this.

Q: Because you may change drivers during the season?

EB: I still have to sit down with Daniele Morelli to discuss or assess the situation for the future.

Q: When do you think you can announce drivers?

EB: It is a company decision now, it's a board decision, so the board will take the decision. As soon as they sit down they go for it.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Christoph Schulte - Focus Magazine) Eric, what do you think is the reason that we hear so many negative things about your team. Technically-wise you are in a free-fall. We had the (Nick) Heidfeld situation, then we had the choosing of (Bruno) Senna without any success. Then we had (Vitaly) Petrov complaining and we have the

chaotic situation with Robert. What do you think is the reason as no team is producing so many negative headlines like your team.

EB: I don't think we produce any negative. I think the message can be released or can be used negatively. It was a difficult choice for the team to have an accident after the first week of testing which leads into you missing your leading driver. That doesn't help. Then we had a succession of different situations like also the car not lacking but suffering some development because we had a too innovative forward exhaust system. At the end of the season the results are not good and every time the season is not good enough there is some negative.

Q: (Christoph Schulte – Focus Magazine) Are you really convinced that you are right person to be doing this job as Team Principal?

EB: I don't know. You need to ask the people who employ me.

Q: (Julien Febreau – L'Equipe) Two questions for Eric: what about Romain Grosjean's performances in Abu Dhabi and here; and how important was this morning's session in order to chose your drivers for next year?

EB: First question: Romain did very well this morning until he had this clutch problem, so I think the speed was there, the feedback was very good, the team enjoyed working with him. I cannot say more than this. Second question: it's part of the assessment we decided to go through so we will see. He did it positively and now it will be reported to the board and then we will see.

Q: (Kate Walker – Girl Racer) Paul, in the last few races, we've seen a couple of Fridays where you've been trying out new compounds for next year. Are you able to give us any feedback on what the drivers have been saying and which ones we are likely to see next year?

PH: It's a little bit confusing with the naming because, for example, the soft tyre you will have seen here is actually going to be the medium tyre next year so you will probably get a bit confused and a bit bored if you get into too much detail. But we've had some good feedback from the Abu Dhabi Friday session, which is the new soft for next season. The hard tyre we had a go with this morning, which showed a performance which was much closer to the medium compound which is what we were looking for. The hard tyre that we had this year was far, far too conservative. It was creating a lot of problems. So far, we have to say positive. Clearly the young drivers' test was an interesting test, because we saw a lot of drivers, didn't we? They were changing... we had to check who was in the car because we had a lot of drivers going through, but it did allow us to get some feedback which we've used to confirm the data that we had ourselves, and also the simulation data. Of course the teams, by and large, use simulators today to do their work so they'd already run the tyres virtually. We know they need to change the balance of the car. The rear tyre has increasing grip levels so it changes the balance; they will have to work with the aero because there's a different profile. But yeah, so far so good. It is a bit of a limitation for us, testing. We don't have a test car. The Toyota is now in a museum so we can't use that any more. Ideally, we would like to have a more current car or a more recent car to do our testing sessions with.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – The Citizen) Christian, for some time now, people have been suggesting that Red Bull has been marching out of step when it comes to the RRA document. In Abu Dhabi, you presented a document to all the team principals. This morning there was a meeting that's been dubbed a make-or-break meeting; how do you feel now after this meeting?

CH: Confused. No, we met this morning and it has been decided that the RRA has effectively been taken out of FOTA for the time being, to try and achieve a solution. I think it's important to try... I think an RRA is important for Formula One and I think all the teams are unanimous on that. I think the thing that isn't quite clear is how to achieve it in a way that fits everybody's business models, that some of the teams are different, and I think the

key thing for us is that the treatment and transparency of it is consistent and obvious and probably needs to go beyond the chassis and incorporate the engine as well. You can't cherry-pick, you need to look at the package as a whole. Hopefully, in discussions prior to the end of the year a solution can be found but I think that inevitably we come more under the spotlight because, as I said earlier, perhaps if we hadn't had as much success this year then it would be less pertinent but that's the way of the world, but from a Red Bull point of view we're keen to find a solution and we're hopeful that one can be found between now and the end of 2011.

Q: (Valerian Zukeran – O Estado de Sao Paulo) For all of you: we know that you have an economic crisis nowadays in Europe. I would like to know how much impact that will have in Formula One over the next two years, because most of the teams have European sponsors? May investment be more conservative over the next two years because of that?

CH: If I may start, I think Formula One is a World Championship and yes, Europe is having a tough time at the moment, but South America, your country here, is doing tremendously well. If you look at Asia as well, those markets are doing very strongly, and I think that Formula One, through its global appeal has attracted brands and partners into the sport from those areas and that's why it's so important for us to be racing as a World Championship. It's important for companies like Renault, for example, to make the commitment to Formula One, to have made the commitment as an engine supplier into the future, with the new regulations. That's why it's also very exciting to be racing in new markets as well. India, this year, was a tremendous success and obviously new races in future years only endorse the fact that it is a genuine World Championship.

J-FC: Just one example: for Renault, Brazil is the second market in the World. The first is France, the second is Brazil and probably the third will be Russia. So we want to invest in Formula One because for us it is the best return on investment. It's true that there is a crisis in Europe but there's no crisis in Brazil, there's no crisis in China, there's no crisis in Australia. In terms of budget, we cut a lot of budget but we didn't cut one euro from the Formula One budget.

RF: I actually endorse what Christian and Jean-Francois were saying. It is a global sport. Obviously from a Force India point of view, whilst we recognise that Europe is struggling a little bit at the moment, it will come back in time. Our main backing is from India, so being selfish about it, we're probably OK.

EB: It's true that as a global sport we are also looking after some sponsors in new countries, mainly BRIC countries, where you clearly have some expansion economically and not some crisis as in Europe.

PH: I'm only really going to reiterate what everyone else has said: we're a global business, but yes, we do have problems in certain geographical regions but they're offset by maybe great business performance elsewhere. Formula One is a great platform for a business like ourselves that has global expansion plans, very ambitious plans so from our point of view, it's business as normal.

Q: (Ian Parkes – Press Association) Christian, you mentioned earlier about the unpopular feeling that you were experiencing nowadays. Does it feel uncomfortable to be unpopular or does constant winning make it more bearable?

CH: Winning Grands Prix tends to make up for it, to be honest. It's one of those things, you can't be everybody's darling. For us, we tend to focus on what we're doing and not let other things distract us. There's a phenomenal team spirit within the team. Yeah, we've set the benchmark over the last couple of years, but with that comes an added pressure that you go from being the hunter to being the hunted and that's a different type of pressure to have to deal with. I think that's one of the things that has really pleased me this year: how the team has dealt with that different type of pressure. When you're chasing a championship like last year, and almost went into the last round expecting it to be a long shot to win the championship but coming out on top, it was a completely different pressure this year and so the manner in which we conducted our campaign this year was tremendously rewarding, but we fully respect the calibre of our opponents. Ferrari, McLaren and Mercedes are all

great teams, they've all got great heritage and great pedigrees and if anything that makes the winning even more satisfying when you're up against opponents of that calibre.

Q: (Dieter Rencken – The Citizen) Jean- Francois, in Silverstone this year, the engine manufacturers met to discuss an RRA on engines. How does Renault see that working, particularly if you're supplying four or five teams versus the three or four of others and the two in the case of Cosworth for next year and does Renault support it? How can you have an equitable RRA? With the teams it's different, they've all got two chassis but with the engine suppliers it will be a totally different matter.

J-FC: Yes, it will be totally different but we are working hard with Mercedes because we share the same philosophy and we want to avoid the same situation we had three or four years ago. I think in the cost of engines, you have fixed and variable costs. All the people are selling the engines on the variable costs, so if you control the fixed costs it will be easier. We agree with Mercedes to share the same philosophy with Ferrari. It is a little bit late because all the investment for the 2014 engine has started, but the problem will be after 2013, probably, to accept the RRA.

Q: (Kate Walker – Girl Racer) Robert, it was mentioned on the BBC coverage today that Vijay is actually planning on making the driver announcement at your team Christmas party. Could you confirm that?

BF: You probably know more than I do if it was put out on the BBC, but I'm sure that's the date he's always set. If you remember, he said December 15, that would be consistent with what he's always projected.

Q: (Valerian Zukeran – O Estado de Sao Paulo) Christian, us Brazilians are in a different situation this year because we used to see the trophy, the championship completed at our track. This year that's not the case. Is your team doing something for next year at this race?

CH: At the last few races we have been working hard... our motivation has been to try and win every Grand Prix that we attend. The track time that is available to Grand Prix teams... this is the last weekend that the cars will run prior to new cars arriving in February next year, so it's important to make the most of the track time that you have available, so inevitably there are little things that are tried. There were some things at the young driver tests that Jean-Eric Vergne tried last week which will be the same for all the teams, but the priority is to try and win the Grand Prix and I think you're set for a really exciting race this weekend. I think McLarens look very quick, the Ferraris are going to be quick and the weather looks like it could be quite British on Sunday, so I think you have all the ingredients for a great race and I think that Brazil has always produced exciting races. We've been lucky enough to win the last two races here and we would dearly love to make it a hat-trick of wins but it's going to be a big task. It's almost like an FA Cup Final, the drivers and teams will really be going for it to try and win this event.

Ends