



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

2011 BRAZILIAN GRAND PRIX

POST QUALIFYING PRESS CONFERENCES TRANSCRIPT

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DRIVERS 1 - Sebastian VETTEL (Red Bull)

2 - Mark WEBBER (Red Bull)

3 - Jenson BUTTON (McLaren)

TV UNILATERALS

Q: Sebastian, a record 15th pole of the season. Describe your feelings at this historic moment?

Sebastian VETTEL: Yes, it is difficult. I mean there has been quite some talk before the qualifying, before this weekend, about this particular record and the best thing was just not to think about it at all. Yesterday we did have sort of a rough start to the weekend where I wasn't happy 100 per cent with the balance yet but then I think we made the right choices overnight and again going into qualifying I was happier. Yeah, enjoying the moment, enjoying the laps I had. I was already happy with the first one in Q3 but I knew that there was a bit more to come and, yeah, put everything into the last lap. Very emotional when I crossed the line as I knew that whatever happens this is all I had and I gave it all so I was very pleased with that but then had to wait for quite a long time to see if my time was good enough or not. The names kept popping. My engineer told me Button P2, Mark P2 and then pole position so really special. Different than the other poles I would say. Obviously it took the master in that discipline, Nigel Mansell, a couple of races less but very special to me and now just happy to be here, happy to start at the front tomorrow, and hopefully enjoy the race so looking forward. The weather is going to be a big question mark. We knew that going into the weekend. To be honest it has improved so today was already supposed to be wet, but it was dry, so I think this place is a bit tricky anyway. Special races, special weather. We have seen that the last couple of years so looking forward to tomorrow.

Q: Mark, you were only a tenth away from Sebastian. The margin is very, very tight so can you finish the season with that elusive win?

Mark WEBBER: Yeah, it would be good mate. Today's qualify went very well. The whole weekend has been pretty strong and it would be nice to keep the heat on Sebastian. Both of us have got the maximum out of the car today. Unfortunately I could not look after Nigel today and get pole, but Seb did a good lap as usual and my lap was pretty good as well to be honest. We both got the best out of the car so looking forward to the race tomorrow.

Q: Jenson, it is very close and tomorrow might throw up the changeable conditions that you have often thrived in. What are your thoughts on that?

Jenson BUTTON: You know, I think we are all excited about tomorrow. The last race of the year and we want to end on a high. But at the moment I am just enjoying the moment. This is my best qualifying for the last six years and 10 places better, I think, than last year so it's a good start to the weekend. I always love racing here. It is such a good circuit for racing

and really fighting and out of the last corner down into Turn One is very good for overtaking and obviously we have the DRS out of Turn three, so hopefully we can get these two tomorrow. I think whatever happens it has been a great season for us, just not quite good enough. There are a few areas we need to work on and, as I said, hopefully tomorrow we can end this reasonably good season with a high.

Q: Sebastian, now we have had the final qualifying session of the season you can tell us what is the secret. How did you find those few final tenths-of-a-second on that run last run in Q3? All of these guys would love to know and we all want to know too.

SV: Yeah, I don't know. There is no secret. We had a nice dinner on Wednesday before the weekend here and a couple of the mechanics kept joking 'where is the bag, where do you keep these couple of tenths for Q3. Do you just take it out?'. It is not that easy to put everything into one lap. All the circuits are different and sometimes you are not so happy but other times you are very happy with what you can do or what you could do in qualifying. Generally this year I think I was able, most of the time, to put everything into that one lap, or final run in Q3. Sometimes you want a little bit more but all in all I was pretty happy with my days on Saturday and we had good Sundays as well so there is no secret. Once we go into qualifying we all seem to enjoy it. I personally love the moment when you go out for your final run. You feel it is different to any practice run, or Q1 and Q2. You are so excited, nervous, as you know that's the lap. The build-up to it is great and then the lap itself is like a rush so I really enjoy that.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Q: Sebastian, a lot of drivers don't worry about statistics, don't worry about records, but this one seems to be very special for you?

SV: Yeah, I don't really worry going into the race or into the qualifying or into the season. I think you can't set yourself a target like that. It is a bit hard to believe it now, but I think those sort of numbers in a way they are made for ever and it would be ridiculous going into a season thinking you might be anywhere close at the end of it. As I said, I think it just happens. Many times if you set yourself a target to say I want to achieve this or that or reach a certain number, go for statistics, I think it goes wrong. There was quite some talk already on Thursday. Not from my side, but from the outside and today as well. I think the only way to really get there was not to worry about it and just do our normal job which is trying to do the best we can. I said to myself going into qualifying that I want to make sure I get everything out of the car there is and if someone else beats me then he totally deserves it. I think that is the name of the game every time. Fortunately this year we had quite good Saturdays, also brilliant Sundays, but surely sitting here now and answering these kind of questions is very special.

Q: Have you ever thought how you are in the car? Are you tense" Are you gritting your teeth or are you relatively relaxed?

SV: Good thing you don't see our faces! I think sometimes you would be surprised. Not really, you don't really think about yourself. Qualifying is all about putting everything you have and the car has in one lap. Sometime sacrifice a bit here to get more at the next corner or the next sector. I think you have to be awake for sure. Even if sometimes things go a little bit wrong in one corner, I think you straight away have to move onto the next corner. I just love the build-up to qualifying. Q1 and Q2, you know that the most important thing is to get through. Of course, you would like to be fastest in the session but then Q3 is really when you feel the excitement and you are getting tense and nervous at the same time. When the lap happens you don't really think, you just got for it and try to get more and more. Fortunately it has worked out pretty often, but you are also very close to doing mistakes, which happens if you push yourself on the limit over the limit. It is natural, it happens to all of us.

Q: You said you needed to take another step from yesterday and the team seemed to have delivered. Was that fairly easy to work out where that speed was coming from?

SV: Not really. The start to the weekend, yesterday morning, was a bit rough. It wasn't bad, but just I wasn't happy with the car, myself, balance, and just everything did not come together and we made a reasonable step overnight. The guys on the car worked pretty long last night so really thanks for that and the engineers, especially my engineer Timmy (Maylon) he pushed very hard and I think he didn't get a lot of sleep and he is responsible for a big part of the car improving so much. I think it was more what I was used to having in previous races straight from this morning and then we fine-tuned a little bit and then in qualifying there is not much you can do. We just tried to get a little bit better every run, tried to go with the track and see what we could do.

Q: Mark, you have won from second on the grid here and here you are, second on the grid again.

MW: Yeah, it was a good qualifying session, all in all, very tight at the end of Q3 there between most of us. Seb just had that extra tenth to grab the pole, so disappointing (for me). I tried to help old Nigel (Mansell) out today but it didn't work out, so a good lap for Seb. In the end, I'm happy to be at the front for the start of the race tomorrow.

Q: What were the conditions like; you said they were pretty difficult yesterday?

MW: Yes, I think because of the track temperature, also pretty windy. When the track is around 50 degrees, it's challenging for the car balance, how the tyres behave, all that sort of stuff. It's the same for everybody and today wasn't too dissimilar. Obviously by qualifying the temperature had dropped, with a bit of cloud cover and in the end - we've always been towards the front this weekend - it was obviously just a question of who was going to get pole. Obviously with the run that Seb's had, obviously it takes a big arm-wrestle to get it off him. I was close, but not quite close enough.

Q: Well, you got your own trophy yesterday for fastest laps.

MW: Yes, it was nice of DHL, I must say. It was a lot better than a lot of the trophies we get on the podium; a lot of them on the podium are quite boring but there was a bit of imagination to that one, so it was quite a nice trophy and also a beautiful Rolex, so that was nice. So thanks to DHL for that and yeah, it was good.

Q: What are you looking for from tomorrow – obviously a win but second in the championship as well?

MW: I'm not overly bothered by that. It would be nice, of course, and if you had a choice, you would always take second over fourth, fifth, sixth or whatever. JB's had a great season, so has Fernando, given the car that he's got, so all in all, yes, leave me tomorrow with a win, obviously. If it's in the fence, it's in the fence, but a win would be nice.

Q: Jenson, you said yesterday that you were having problems with the option, the softer tyre. Did you get over that today?

JB: Yeah, quite a bit. I still feel that I was quicker on the prime, didn't quite have the balance in Q2 on the softer of the two tyres but made a few little adjustments for Q3 and I feel that we did the best with the car. I think the set-up was as good as we were going to get it for Q3. The lap was pretty ragged for me, but I got everything out of it, I think, so an enjoyable lap, I thought I was going to be further up the grid than I was, but it just shows you how good a job these two did and obviously their cars are working alright as well. So yeah, good day and much better than Saturday last year, and I think tomorrow's going to be a very interesting race. There's a good chance of rain, I've seen that these guys have a very slow end-of-straight speed so I'm guessing it's a bit of downforce and a bit of something else which is going to help them tomorrow, but we are where we are and we've just got to hope that our car works well in the wet. It's worked pretty well so far this year.

Q: I think the last time you wore that driving suit was pretty lucky, wasn't it?

JB: Yeah, this is my flower power suit, gives me a little extra push around the circuit, especially when it's wet, the flowers grow. I have good memories of Hungary [where he wore it and won] and she's back. Big thanks to the team today, actually, because as I've said, I've always struggled here on Saturdays, so it's nice to qualify well, and I want to say a big thank you to them for the whole season. It hasn't been perfect but we've still done a good job, I think, and it's a good base for next year. I'm just saying this just in case I'm not here tomorrow or something happens!

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Kate Walker – Girl Racer) Sebastian, I wanted to ask you – you are now not only the team to beat but the man to beat for 2012; how does it feel, knowing that you are now the hunted and not the hunter?

SV: Well, I think, to be fair, it has been a little bit the same situation going into this year. The guy who wins the championship the previous year has the number one on the car and that's what we are all after. We had an incredible three years now, but in particular the last two were very special for us as a team and for myself, obviously. To be honest, right now, I'm not bothered about next year, I'm looking forward to tomorrow. I think it should be quite an exciting race. Conditions might be a question mark, there's rain on the way. The question is when, how much and if the flowers grow or not. It should be an exciting day tomorrow and after that we worry about next year. I think, first of all, it has been a long season this year. We are all tired in a way and ready for the break and then, quite soon, we are ready again for next year so I'm looking forward to that, obviously. The guys in the team are pushing hard to work on next year's car, but years like this, or seasons like we had this year, you can't take that for granted at all. We work very hard to have a competitive car next year again – we hope – and then we will see.

Q: (Frederic Ferret – L'Equipe) As you said, the rain is coming; the question is to all three of you: would you like it to rain and would it help you to win or not to win?

JB: I really don't know. When it's wet it's obviously a lot more tricky. There's a chance you could have great performance and you have a good chance of winning, but still, even if you have great performance there's a good chance you could end up off the road, getting out of the car before the end of the race. It's tough, especially around here. There's a few very tricky corners if it rains. I think what they've done with the drainage system, putting the little grooves in the track has helped a lot but it's still a very tricky circuit, especially when it rains hard. It's the same for all of us. If it's dry tomorrow, I think we will still have a good race, but the wet will obviously mix it up a lot more.

SV: Yeah, I agree with what he says. There's always more chances if it's wet. On the other hand, the risk is higher so yeah, it's probably very exciting for people in the grandstands – maybe not so much for them if it really rains because they get wet – but the people behind the TV screens and generally watching the race, it can make it more exciting. For us, it can be exciting too but as I said, it's obviously quite a bit trickier, especially around this place so we will see. If it happens, it happens. It's not in our hands anyway. It's a good thing we cannot control the weather. We control too many things, I think. The weather's not in our hands.

MW: Yeah, the guys have touched on it. Obviously the car is more consistent, more controllable in a way when it's a dry track. As JB touched on, it's one of the trickier venues when it's wet but it's a challenge to a grand prix driver obviously to perform in all conditions within reason. Obviously Charlie looked after us a few years ago in qualifying after we had a few crashes of course, but generally... we will see how heavily it rains tomorrow, if it does at all. Let's see how the conditions are, but it should be OK. Visibility is the main thing. If we can see where we're going, then we can have a race.

Q: (Rodrigo Gini – Estado de Minas) Sebastian, of course, you won't tell us about the tyre strategy but what can you say about the option tyre degradation and in which kind of aspect do you think the race will be decided if the rain doesn't come? Jenson

said yesterday that he didn't think the back stretch will be enough to benefit the DRS; do you agree?

SV: Well, there's a lot of questions there. We had time yesterday – quite consistent conditions, it was pretty hot – but then we were able to check the performance and check the cars on either tyre, in particular on the soft one, and you have to say that if there's a certain figure in your head about laps that you can do, this circuit is shorter, a lap is shorter, so you do more laps, the race is longer, you have 71 laps tomorrow. Degradation is there, we saw that yesterday but it wasn't shocking, it didn't surprise us so I think that if it's a normal dry race, it's within the two or three stop region. I think it's not real secret. If the degradation is really high then it would tend to make it three or four stops. If it's really low, then two would be for sure. I think it's somewhere there. Surely it will be important to look after the tyres around here. That always has been in a way and it has been this season, so we will try to do that again tomorrow. For the DRS overtaking, I think generally around here it has been a miracle track. We have seen a lot of overtaking in the last couple of years, sometimes less, but other times we have seen a lot, and a lot more than anywhere else. This track has potential to give a little extra and, in a positive way, to be a bit crazy so we will see, and I don't think we necessarily rely on DRS to see overtaking. Sure, it enhances our chances into turn four but it's quite short and it's not a prime overtaking place on the track anyway, if you look at the last couple of years. If anything, it helps, but we will see what we can do.

Q: (Dan Knutson – National Speed Sport News) You each have a few years on the grid already but can you imagine yourselves doing 19, maybe 20 years in F1 like Rubens?

JB: I'll start because I think I'm the closest. Scarily, this is my 12th season already, yeah, 31. At the moment no, I definitely can't imagine being here for another eight years but four or five years into Formula One I didn't expect to be here now so time flies. As we all know, when we're travelling around, you don't sit still for a second so the years go by very quickly and as long as the hunger is still there, which it obviously is with Rubens, it's great that he still wants to race. I really hope he gets a drive next year, I hope he's racing next year because otherwise we've missed a really big party on Sunday night. And I think that's the same for a lot of drivers. You've got to make sure that you're ready to leave because if you leave too early and you try and come back, for a lot of us I don't think it will work. It's a difficult call, when you decide to retire, if it is your choice. It's not something you take lightly or chose lightly.

SV: First of all, I think it would be a real shame to lose Rubens for the future, because he belongs here, he has been here for a long time as you said, pretty crazy to imagine yourself to be around that long. In the end, I don't think it really matters how long you are in F1 but the really inspiring bit about Rubens, I really like him and the inspiring bit is that he loves what he does. I get the impression that he's happy when he wakes up in the morning and goes to the track, he doesn't think about his age. Sometimes you have people – I don't know, but from what I have seen, sometimes we've seen people of that age who are sad that times passes on but Rubens has no problem with his age. For him it's a number but it doesn't mean anything, he still feels young and fresh and he's still really funny and definitely a character. It would be a shame to lose him and I think for all of us, in a way, it's hard to imagine that we will be around for such a long time. Mentioning statistics, I heard a figure the other day – I don't know if it's true, I don't know how many races or grands prix that Rubens did now, I think 300 and something - but he has participated in more than half of the grands prix ever held [not true, 321 out of 857]. I don't know if that's right, I think so, so it's pretty impressive.

MW: Rubens has been an amazing man for our sport, for sure. He's been through incredibly difficult times, particularly 1994 and had some great moments as well. I think seeing him crying on the podium at Hockenheim after that amazing drive from the back of the grid is how we always love seeing Rubens and that's how he genuinely is anyway. Obviously this year he hasn't had a very competitive car but it would be great to have him around again next year. A few months ago I was in the gym and I bumped into Frank Bruno who was a boxer; he managed to fight Mike Tyson a few times and he's been through quite

a few things, and he has been very honest with me the last few times I've gone up there and he said that the biggest fight you will have in your career is when you just try to stop, and that's how it is for all of us. The positive thing is – that's how competitors are – there's obviously some arrogance involved that we want to keep competing. But the hunger, desire, all that is still with Rubens so to answer your question, unlikely for me that I'm still here. I don't know what I would need to be. Like JB... I think I started two years after JB so ten or eleven years now, so for me to do another nine, I think I would look not very sexy at 45, so I think I will probably leave it at that.

Q: (Michael Schmidt – Auto, Motor und Sport) Jenson, you mentioned that you went for top speed; obviously you knew the weather forecast for tomorrow. What was the idea behind it; are you taking a gamble that it's dry tomorrow?

JB: Well, we couldn't go any slower, basically. We tried as much as we could but we couldn't go any slower. It's not a gamble that we've taken.

Q: (Livio Oricchio – O Estado de Sao Paulo) While the weather forecast tomorrow is for rain, have you chosen the set-up of your car only for qualifying or also thinking about 71 laps for tomorrow?

SV: To be honest with you, I think a typical rain set-up doesn't exist any more. The big difference is that you put on different tyres. Car-wise, there isn't much you can do. Generally if it's wet, you put on more downforce if anything but car-wise, from the set-up point of view, it's more or less the same as in the dry.

JB: I think that the set-up we've taken this weekend is a set-up that helps us in the wet, and it's not been done on purpose, it's just the way it is for us around here. Yeah, as Seb said, there's not a big difference. You don't really have a massive change to the car for wet conditions but there are small things.

Ends