



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

## 2011 BRAZILIAN GRAND PRIX

### POST RACE PRESS CONFERENCE TRANSCRIPT

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#### DRIVERS

- 1 – Mark WEBBER (Red Bull Racing)
- 2 – Sebastian VETTEL (Red Bull Racing)
- 3 – Jenson BUTTON (McLaren)

#### TV UNILATERALS

**Q: Mark, a win to take you into the winter, how are you feeling right now?**

**Mark WEBBER:** Yeah, very good. Felt good all weekend to be honest. Seb did a great lap for pole yesterday but y'know today I had a little bit of the rub of the green. It would have been nice to have a race with Sebastian all the way through but I think he's had a little bit of a problem. It's a win that you'll take, for sure, because I've had enough bad luck and whatever you want to call it. That's the way that motorsport goes sometimes. So, very important win for me and the team again to finish on a high. I enjoyed the last few laps, to be honest. It's always nice when you finally... I could pit a bit later and cover people off and do all that sort of stuff, so that was good. I enjoyed doing the last few laps. That was a nice way to finish. I want to dedicate this win to a close friend of myself and my family, Bob Woods, who's a very ill man at the moment, so this win is for him.

**Q: Sebastian, you compared yourself to Ayrton Senna here in 1991, nursing a gearbox problem for a lot of the race. Describe the struggle you had today to get to the chequered flag.**

**Sebastian VETTEL:** The difference is he won! Yeah, it was a real shame because I had a very good start and then a good feeling. I was able to pull a gap straight away at the beginning of the race but very early got the call that we have to manage a gearbox problem. And yeah, I had to turn down the engine, short-shift and it was just getting worse throughout the race so I ended up using higher gears pretty much everywhere and that's why the comparison came into my head. Nevertheless, Mark drove a fantastic race, he deserved to win. I don't really like calling this bad luck. Surely, if something like this happens it's not in your hands. Still, I tried to do my best: tried to stay as close as I can; tried to keep the gap to Fernando for most of the race and then Jenson at the end. I think we had a pretty amazing season and I think it would be over the top being upset now. We take this second place and a one-two finish for the team, which is great and... yeah, it has been a phenomenal year and a very strong finish as well so now I think we are all ready for the winter and looking forward to the break to recharge our batteries and come back as strong as this year, hopefully, at the beginning of the season next year.

**Q: Jenson, a fighting drive to the podium today after losing a place to Fernando Alonso earlier on.**

**Jenson BUTTON:** Yeah, it was a difficult race for me on the softer of the two tyres. Fernando was very close out of turn five, so I covered the line into six. Normally it's an easy place to block but I looked at where he was and then when I looked forward again there was lots of debris on the inside. I think it was Michael's [Schumacher] tyre and a bit of front wing. As soon as I saw that I didn't want to drive through it. I couldn't pull to the left because Fernando was already there, so I had to back out of it and just pull in behind Alonso. That was a bit disappointing and a little bit unlucky – but I just didn't have the pace on the softer of the two tyres. We decided to put the harder tyre on for the last two stints and it worked pretty well for me, especially the last stint where I could hunt down Fernando. Ferrari, I think, struggle on the harder of the two tyres. I was able to make the pass but third was as high as we could get. I was qualifying every lap but I still couldn't catch Seb.

**Q: Mark, it got a little tight between you and Fernando after the first round of stops. He took three-and-a-half seconds out of you there. Were you ever concerned at that point?**

**MW:** Well I knew he gained something out of that first round of stops. Obviously I went a bit longer than I would have liked to because Seb had the priority obviously on the first stop, so I was out of juice on the tyres at that point so I knew I was going to lose if someone else was going a bit shorter. In the case it wasn't just to lose out a bit to Seb obviously I lost out a bit more to Fernando. I was a bit surprised at the margin, nearly three seconds or a bit over. He must have had a good stop and risked a little bit more here and there on in and out laps. I think I had a bit of traffic on my out lap as well, so, y'know, sometimes that's just the way it goes.

**Q: Sebastian, sum up your feeling on what's been a pretty historic and dominant season for you.**

**SV:** You have time?

**Keep it brief...**

**SV:** It's difficult to sum up. I think it was a great end of the season to finish with both cars on the podium, a one-two. Surely I would have loved to have finished the race in a normal way today but nevertheless I think we had a great, great season. Pretty incredible. Going into the season we thought we have a competitive car, maybe we can win some races but it has been phenomenal. The team has been faultless most of the time, so they've raised their level massively compared to the last two years. We seem to enjoy what we do. It's nice every weekend to come into the garage, see the boys with a smile on their faces, being happy with what they do. At the end of the day I don't think it really matters if you, I don't know, race Formula One cars, touring cars, sports or business, as long as you enjoy. I think one thing about us: you walk into the garage, I think even as a guest, and you get that feeling that we really love what we do. We are passionate and it doesn't matter if we have to work until late or work harder than others. We are ready to take that because we know how sweet it can taste at the end of the race, at the end of a grand prix or the end of the season. I'm really grateful to all the guys here on the track but more so even to the guys in the factory. All year long pushing to keep the car at the level that it is. McLaren were pushing massively and I think at the end we were pretty even. I don't think that one car really had the edge. Sometimes here, sometimes there, but all in all it was much tighter than probably it looked. Looking at the Championship score obviously it wasn't that tight but that shows how good we work on the operational side. More or less getting 100 per cent out of us as a package all the time. We can be really proud of that. I'm very proud to be part of that. This will be a year that we will look back to and always be very proud of.

**Q: Jenson, you're confirmed second place in the Championship, a strong end to a strong season. Where do you and McLaren go from here?**

**JB:** Into a long winter, ready for next year. I think at this moment in time we shouldn't think too much about next year this evening. We should celebrate what we've done this year. It hasn't been perfect, no, these guys have been quicker than us, more consistent than us, but all round it's been a reasonable season. We've grown as a team together and I think that we have a very good base going into 2012, so I'd just like to say a big thank you to everyone for 2011, thank you to all the guys

involved in the team but also the other guys who've surrounded me for the last 12 years of my career. Big thanks to them and bring on 2012.

**Q: Mark, finishing with you, obviously a dominant year for Red Bull but next year are you going to give the little fellow to your right [Vettel] a bit of a harder time, do you think?**

**MW:** I think I can have a stronger season than this year. Clearly I started off poorly for lots of different reasons. You've got to look at all different areas to get at the highest level, and when the bar's high it's obviously not just Seb. I don't come here thinking about just him, we've got some class operators in other teams: JB, Lewis, Fernando... these boys are on the case. So, that's what makes it rewarding. It's a nice little tonic for me to finish the year, that's why those last few laps for me to feel the car and give the RB7 a bit of a send off for me because it hasn't had an amazing amount of memories for me but today was a very special day for me and I'll have that over the winter. Although some other nice drives as well but Seb clearly had a great year and so did the team, Renault, reliability. We were bomb-proof in many areas and that made it hard for the opposition. So that is important. And I'm looking forward to learning how to surf in the winter and backing off a bit, recharging and then coming back in February and concentrating on the job again.

## **PRESS CONFERENCE**

**Q: Well done, Mark. Is there a little bit of relief there, to have won?**

**MW:** There is, yeah. Just the feeling is nice. Obviously in motor sport you take them as they come. It was actually brewing into a reasonable little battle with Seb and I. The pace wasn't too bad at the end of my stints. I'm not exactly sure when he started to have a few little issues, but obviously I can only control what I'm doing, so I kept pushing and then really it was down to then covering off whatever Fernando might be able to do, and that obviously turned out to be possible and then we spread the race out, then obviously made sure we loaded the tyres correctly to get to the flag. Yes, with ten laps to go, I started to think 'OK, it's nice to finish the year with a win, nice to finish with the car feeling good underneath you, nice to have my second victory here in Brazil – it's always been a nice little track for me, a little classic.' It's been a pretty good year but not like 2010 obviously, so all the guys on my car, Gav and Ciaron in particular, have worked their nuts off all year so it's been good, and I'm happy to get the win today.

**Q: And you were talking about those last ten laps; certainly the last three were all fastest laps of the race.**

**MW:** Yeah, it was getting a bit frustrating because I kept pinching the front a little bit into turn eight. On the last lap I got it a little bit better otherwise I was probably going to bail a bit earlier, but I kept pushing pretty hard. Yeah, that's what it's about, isn't it, pushing yourself and backing yourself and having a crack. I was only racing myself at that point so it was a nice little feeling, as I say, to have the car working well underneath me. As I said, this winter a close family friend of ours has been in very very ill health so I dedicate this win to him.

**Q: What was the team saying to you about Sebastian's problems?**

**MW:** It came pretty quickly. I thought he was either in tyre trouble way earlier than he should be or no KERS or something was going on, because one thing Seb doesn't do is forget how to drive from one lap to the other. When I started to take a pretty big chunk out of him per lap, I thought something might have been going down and then Ciaron informed me that he had a gearbox problem and I think I could smell it a little bit when I got close, and there was also a little bit of fluid. Normally, that's a nice feeling... OK, it was mixed obviously for me, because there was the chance to get the win but I know how hard the guys worked on Seb's gearbox last night because it wasn't completely smooth. They got it together but it turned out, obviously, in the end that something's let them down. I thought that with that far to go in the race he obviously would not finish but the car still got home and that's it.

**Q: When exactly did the problem occur, Sebastian. Was it lap 13 when you started to lose time to Mark? Was it before the stop or after?**

**SV:** Yeah, it was already at the end of the first stint. It was during the first stint, at some stage, that I got the message 'we have a gearbox issue'. It sounded pretty strong, pretty severe, so I turned down the engine and then immediately started to short shift and it just kept getting worse. I got through the first pit stop and obviously gained a little bit on Mark, because I came in a lap earlier but then at some stage I realised that it was still pretty early in the race, our main priority is to finish the race and Mark would be catching up and the most important thing would be to help the team to win the race. I tried to be very clear on the radio that I cannot keep first position with the pace that we were going or whatever they asked me to do, what was required to manage the gearbox and then I told them 'OK, but obviously advise Mark' or 'tell Mark that I would let him through', to give him the chance to keep pushing, don't lose any time getting past me because at that stage I didn't know whether I would see the chequered flag or not. So I'm really happy to be here, but obviously it was a little bit of a shame. I then just kept losing more and more time towards the end, so I had to be more and more conservative. At some stage I said that 'I feel like Senna in 1991 when he had to manage the gearbox problem around here'. Obviously it was totally different for him, he was Brazilian and he still managed to win the race. I was forced to push in areas where I was allowed to, in the corners, but as soon as I went on the straight, I obviously had to shift earlier. I don't know if you have walked the track or have run the track, but getting out of the last corner is pretty steep so there was no chance to really... I tried to stay with Mark as well as I could, in case the problem solved itself and we could go again, but in the end I was just trying to keep the gap. When I heard that Jenson was going on P2 I wasn't very happy because I've heard that a couple of times, when he was coming through at the end of the race, but this time we had enough pace in hand to keep him behind and enough of a gap, so that was fine, but all in all, as I said earlier, I'm very happy. It would be wrong to complain today, it's an amazing result for the team to finish first and second. Mark drove a very good race and had very strong pace, so I'm not sitting here and saying if... if... if this and that, then I would have won. The fact is that he won the race, he deserved to. As I said, we've had an incredible year, the team, myself, so I'm not really wanting to complain.

**Q: We did see the fairly rare sight of you off the circuit as well.**

**SV:** Yeah, I was a bit surprised when I got onto the primes and warm-up was a bit poor and then I think I just got caught out with the traffic ahead and lost too much at the front with a little bit of warm-up. It's quite tricky, the exit kerb of turn four, because it's off-camber and then it pulls you to the exit or off-track and then I said 'OK, there's no point' so I tried to open, give the car enough space and come back easy on the circuit before I tried to do something stupid, so that was that.

**Q: Jenson, was it planned that both of you would come in fairly early? You were about the first and second to pit.**

**JB:** No, I pitted earlier than expected. I really struggled on the tyre that I've been struggling with all weekend and strangely, I couldn't look after the tyre, I really struggled with degradation, especially at the rear end, which was a little bit of a shock. But for me, the problem in the first stint was Fernando, he pushed me very hard, and when someone's doing that, you have to drive a little bit harder, so I was pushing the tyres pretty hard. And then Fernando got the run on me out of turn five, got alongside me and I picked the wrong line, because that lap is when Michael had his puncture and there was rubber all down the inside (of the track) and I didn't know what it was, whether it was part of a car, so I couldn't risk just driving straight through it, and I couldn't pull to the left because Fernando was there, so I had to back off early and pull in behind. I would say he was gifted the position quite easily. And then I pitted early because I couldn't look after the tyres, so that was the issue, put a second set on, exactly the same thing happened and then we went to the prime tyre where the pace was much better, the car felt more consistent and the good thing was that we could get a good feeling on that tyre for the last stint, when I stuck on some new primes and I was able to hunt down Fernando. It was definitely the right call. I think we need to look at the reasons why I couldn't look after that tyre because it's quite unusual, but all in all, it ended well and I had a lot of fun fighting with Fernando today.

**Q: At one point you were on the prime and Lewis was on the option and you were still lapping quicker than he was.**

**JB:** Yes. I don't know, I don't know if it was just our car with that tyre, I don't know. For me, we made the right call in the end, but we just didn't have the pace to fight these two today, but I'm happy to be on the podium. It's nice to get my 12<sup>th</sup> podium this year. As I said before, it's been a good year, it's not been a perfect year but it's been a good year and we can really take a lot from this season, a lot of positives, sort out a few little issues that we had with reliability and I think we will be looking pretty good. I think for us the main thing is to have a strong winter – we're not able to drive the car – but have a strong winter at the factory and come out fighting at the first test not at the first race. But no, a big thank you to the guys. I think we've really grown as a team this year, I feel a big part of the family of Vodafone McLaren Mercedes. They might not look like it from the outside but they do have a lot of passion and they will do anything to win.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – O Estado de Sao Paulo) Mark and Sebastian: we also heard that Sebastian had gear problems and suddenly, very hard gear problems. Then we started following your lap times. We should expect you to lose time in sector two maybe, when you used the low gears which your mechanics suggested you use. But you didn't lose time there and you could maintain the pace with Mark and you also finished very close to him. We had the impression at some times, I'm sorry to say, that it might not be true.**

**SV:** I can tell you that I had a gearbox problem and I was forced to... I didn't like the message but I had no choice. Either you finish the race or you don't. As I said, I turned down the engine, I felt happy in the car and I felt more and more able to understand the tyres after the first stint and keep the pace reasonably well, so I tried to stay as close as I could with Mark and then push where I was allowed to which was in the corners, not so much as soon as I started feeling the throttle, because I was forced to use high gears and upshift earlier. At the beginning, I think I was able to keep reasonably close, especially in the second sector. Of course, I lost – not traction – but then acceleration but then the straights are relatively short in the second sector. But then if you compare the last sector, for instance, which has only one corner, and then it's killing uphill when you have to upshift early. At some stage I got the message 'we need to save the gearbox and slow down' but I told them that I'm aware and I wasn't pushing hard. Yeah, I think we had good pace in the car and we were quite quick on the soft tyres at the end. Obviously it was more about getting the car to the chequered flag, but you can believe me, if I had the choice, I would have gone for the racing option.

**MW:** Well, I didn't drive Seb's car. All I can do is what I can do. When I first got past Seb, obviously, I realised that the race was not over for him, but I thought, OK, I'm maybe managing the race with the other guys, because problems normally only get worse. So my rhythm wasn't only judging myself against Seb at that point. If I pushed, obviously, most of the time it was half a second per lap or four tenths, and then some laps it would be the same, mainly because I was not completely disciplined myself because I knew I could give the tyre a bit of a chance to breathe a bit more and make the stints a bit longer, and keep the gap at whatever it was. Some laps I could push, obviously, and give the tyres a bit more of a chance when I had less fuel and stuff like that. I've agreed with you many times this year, but not this time.

**JB:** Viewing this from the outside, I can say whatever I wanted, but as a driver you learn to adapt to a situation. If you're told to save fuel, if you're told to save brakes, you learn to adapt and you drive in a different manner. Many times this year we've saved fuel and you can pretty much match a lap time after five or six laps, because you adapt to it and you drive in a different way. That's what we're paid to do.

**Q: (Frederic Ferret – L'Equipe) Seb, at what time did you think you might take all risks to catch Mark or did you prefer to save second place?**

**SV:** It's never nice to finish second when you know you have a car or a package good enough to fight for victory. But yeah, very early in the race I got the message and then, as I said, the main priority was to make sure that at least if I went out, Mark could carry on and win the race. I didn't want to hold him up, so I gave way and after that, more and more, I was forced to slow down and in the end, I was going round and not using second gear, which around here, in the slow speed corners, is not a help. Sure, I lost time, but in the end I don't want to sit here complaining. As the

team told me and as I understood, the most important thing was to finish the race and it's great to be on the podium here. I think the people here at Interlagos are very passionate about racing, the drivers' parade is very nice. When we stand on the truck and go around the lap, there are so many people cheering for what we do. They get excited for what we do a little bit later on on the same day. It's great to be part of that and then going into the track, you never know what's going to happen, so if you see the chequered flag and then stand on the podium, get a trophy, it's not a bad day.

**Q: (Dan Knutson – National Speed Sport News) Mark, your season started off with momentum, quite bumpy; thing smoothed out, pace got better. How much will this win kick-start the momentum for next year and give you a flying start?**

**MW:** Well, Dan, even if the win didn't come today, I think there were some positive signs in the last three or four events. To be honest, the team knows there's been some races where it's been a reasonable pace for me, considering some of the things that have been going on, whether that's damage to the car or bits and bobs here and there. That's not an excuse, it's just what happened. Sometimes my pace on Sundays has definitely been better than it was at the start of the year so there were some indications to get more positive. Today was a good Grand Prix for me, the pace was good, all that sort of stuff. Obviously if Seb... we're not sure how it would have turned out but maybe I wouldn't have finished too far behind, maybe a little bit ahead. Who knows how it would have worked out if he made a mistake or whatever, or if I made a mistake? We can't judge what would have happened in the rest of today's Brazilian Grand Prix but it's not a bad thing to finish the year like this. One of the most important things is that I've started to feel the car a little bit better, in terms of direction and working better with the guys and what we need to do, which happened a while ago, not just at this race but starting to get a bit more of an understanding, which, together, has actually helped both of us again, because we've got the most out of the car and that's been a success for the team as well. Yeah, happy for the win mate, that's for sure.

**Q: (Kate Walker – Girl Racer): This is for all three of you. We saw quite a high number of gearbox problems in the course of the race. I was wondering, do you guys think that's mechanical fatigue at the end of the year or the particular challenges of Interlagos?**

**MW:** I think it's mechanic fatigue maybe? Caipirinhas? You never know. It's been a long year, maybe a bit of a coincidence. Turn two is pretty hard, inside, outside with the rear end of the car there. The gearboxes these days are pretty reliable. They've got to do a lot of events. I don't know in terms of the cycles of where people were with their boxes but I think because we've had a couple of high-profile ones today – obviously one with Lewis and Seb who got home – that's the way it's been but it's unusual to have retirements these days. Normally the cars are like a computer game: they just keep going round. The drivers drive them. We had a few stoppages today.

**SV:** I'm not sure. My gearbox was brand new, so it was the first race. Maybe we should have kept the old one, I don't know. I think yes, the circuit is pretty rough but on the other hand there are places where it's way worse. Street circuits where you use low gears all the time, you do very short ratios in the car so you have a lot of changing gear... Fatigue would be a bit odd after only one race, not even that.

**Q: (Rodrigo Gini – O Estado de Minas) Question for Mark and another for Jenson. Mark, you had it seems this time you had a quite normal start, you hadn't any problem and sometime you had a gap of up to three seconds to Sebastian. Do you think under normal conditions you'd have been able to fight him on the race? And to Jenson, do you think that without that stuff with the exhausts at the start of the year, the pre-season where the team needed to revamp the rear part of the car, you should be able to be here still fighting for the Championship – and do you think having the right things in the right place next year, you'll be able to make a better year and fight Red Bull?**

**MW:** As you say, the gap was in the three-second window. Be nice to be a bit less but that's what it was at that point. When you're within that margin it can be the drop of a wheel nut, it can be a small lapse of concentration from Seb and you're there. So, it's impossible to say how the rest of the race would have gone. Sebastian was very strong in qualifying and very strong at the start of the stints

and I felt I was a bit more comfortable at the end of the stints, which was probably one of the first times this year, to be honest. Difficult to say mate, but it would have been a very tough race to challenge Seb hard but we never know.

**JB:** I don't think we can take anything away from Seb and Red Bull this year. I think they've done a phenomenal job and it's wrong to say we could have fought them if we had a better winter. We don't know that. What we do know is that we didn't have a very good winter. The guys did a great job of turning it around for the first race. Our performance was pretty good but obviously you lose a lot of preparation work in terms of reliability but also in terms of set-up and moving forward in terms of aerodynamics and also the blown diffuser. It wasn't an easy start of the season but it's just the way it is. These guys had a better start to the season. For next year? We hope we have a winter, basically, of testing, whereas this winter we didn't. We didn't really do any set-up work because of the issues that we had. Hopefully we can start the year off well in testing and not do all of our set-up work at the first race. Actually do something over the winter tests. That's the aim for 2012. And I hope we can achieve that.

Ends.