



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

## Press Information

### 2014 Italian Grand Prix Friday Press Conference Transcript 05.09.2014

**TEAM REPRESENTATIVES – John BOOTH (Marussia), Paul HEMBERY (Pirelli), Federico GASTALDI (Lotus), Toto WOLFF (Mercedes), Marco MATTIACCI (Ferrari), Christian HORNER (Red Bull Racing)**

#### **PRESS CONFERENCE**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**JB:** The first part is pretty easy. Jules is obviously a very special driver. He's always been quick – from the first day he sat in the car at the second winter test at Barcelona.

But now he's got much more maturity. He's learned how to manage tyres, how to manage his pace, manage to manage the whole race situation. I think he's maturing into as top-line driver. As regards holding on to him, maybe I'm not the person you should be asking?

**Maybe we'll ask Marco about that?**

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

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

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

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

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

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Q: (Dieter Rencken – Racing Lines) To the five team principals. In Spa we heard that Max Verstappen will take the start next year at the age of 17. This morning we had a driver who doesn't quite qualify for a superlicence yet ran FP1. Jacques Villeneuve in Spa said that he thought this was an indictment of the ease with which you can get a superlicence. Do you people believe that it's actually right for drivers with that little experience to get superlicences the way they are?**

**JB:** First of all, the driver in FP1 today, I know he doesn't quite qualify for a superlicence at the moment but he is a driver of the highest order who will make a very good grand prix driver in the future. As for the Max Verstappen situation, I think it's far too early to tell.

**Federico?**

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

**Christian?**

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

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

**TW:** First of all, coming back to FP1 this morning, the boy who was driving in FP1 is an ex-F3 European Champion and he's 22 or 23, so it's a different situation. I think if somebody's good enough, he deserves to be in a Formula One car. Now, we've had the discussion this morning and we still believe Formula One is the pinnacle of motorsport and Formula One drivers should be people who inspire, drivers who inspire, and they should have the qualification. I think this could be an endless discussion: somebody who is very talented, does he deserve to have a seat in Formula One? The example we discussed this morning was Kimi Räikkönen. So we've seen that in the past. I think he probably deserves a go in Formula One because he has shown great talent in the categories below, in karting and in F3.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**John?**

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

**Federico?**

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

**Anything to add Christian?**

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

**Marco?**

**MM:** Aligned.

**Q: (Kate Walker – crash.net) Nothing has been confirmed but it has been discussed that both NATO and the EU will try to implement sporting sanctions against, not just us, but the World Cup, other events. Sporting sanctions are not**

**legally binding however. Would any of you choose to go against those sanctions if the race were to go ahead?**

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

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

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

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

**Christian?**

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

**Toto?**

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

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

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



**Federico?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**TW:** I think everything has been said.

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

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

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

**JB:** None.

**PH:** They're alright.

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

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

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

**Q: To which you would reply?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ends