



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

2010 GERMAN GRAND PRIX

SATURDAY POST-QUALIFYING PRESS CONFERENCE – July 24, 2010

DRIVERS:

1. Sebastian VETTEL (Red Bull), 1m13.791s
2. Fernando ALONSO (Ferrari), 1m13.793s
3. Felipe MASSA (Ferrari), 1m14.290s

TV UNILATERALS

Q: Sebastian, congratulations. Your third pole in a row. Your first in your home event and by such a small margin as well.

Sebastian VETTEL: Yeah, it would be interesting to calculate how much it is, two thousands of a second. It was very, very close. All session Fernando was really strong and in general the Ferraris are very competitive here. We knew it would be a difficult session but two thousands of a second is not really the margin you are looking for, so we had to push very hard. It was extremely exciting especially Q3. I knew that both times I had only one lap to get it right here. There are some places that lead you easily into a mistake, so it was close. You push a little too much and you lose the edge of the tyres and then you start to feel you are losing the time, so my last run wasn't 100 per cent perfect. I had a little bit here and there where I went a little bit above the limit and it cost a little bit of time but in the end it was enough by nearly nothing to stay ahead and get on pole. So extremely happy. First time on pole at home, but the main challenge will come tomorrow. I think we do have a very strong car here and it will be a tough fight against the red cars I guess.

Q: You were the first of the leading competitors to go out for the final run, so it was a nervy wait. Do you think that might have been a mistake as the track does get quicker?

SV: Yeah, the track does get a little quicker towards the end but it is not much. You could possibly argue it is not two thousands of a second or something like that. It is very small. We wanted to go out and wanted to make sure we got a clean run and especially a clean preparation with the out-lap without any traffic, so I could time myself and bring the tyres in the way I wanted to. It worked well, so in the end we put the car on pole. So we did everything right but it is not a nice feeling when you cross the line and you see the screen on the dash and you see the screen passing and you know that you are on top, currently P1 is being said on the radio, and then you just go down the straight line praying 'please, please, please let it be enough'. Then obviously I got the call from the team that we did it. But when I got the call that I did it by two thousands of a second I was even more relieved. It was very close but I didn't guess that close. It was an exciting session for the people and it is good to be here. A lot of people for yesterday and today, so hopefully there will be more cheering for all of us tomorrow.

Q: Fernando, I don't know whether to say congratulations on your best qualifying of the season or commiserations that you missed out by such a margin.

Fernando ALONSO: I think we have to be happy. We are on the first row of the grid for the first time this season, so that is definitely a step forward for us. We have been very competitive all weekend, very competitive with the car, very happy with the car in Q1, Q2 and Q3, so finally we made a perfect Saturday. Obviously we lost pole position for a very small margin but this is not important. The points are tomorrow, Sunday not Saturday, so stay focused for tomorrow and

repeat a good day tomorrow after a good day today and try to score as many points as possible and definitely going in the right direction. In the last two or three grands prix massive step forward for the Ferrari team. Now both here in the top three, so this is the way we have to continue and keep improving.

Q: Because you have been so competitive and because you were quickest in Q1 and Q2 did you expect when you had provisional pole before the final lap that you would go on and secure that top spot?

FA: No, not really. We expect always the Red Bulls in Q3 to give something more. Sometimes we saw this. Very close in free practice, close in Q1 and Q2 and then Q3 Red Bull half a second in front of everybody. I was expecting a very strong reaction in Q3 from Red Bull and a very tough competition and we are in a way surprised to be that close and finally fighting for a pole position after 10 races. It took a little bit long but now we are very close.

Q: Felipe, great to see you back in the top three for the first time since Bahrain. You must be delighted with your performance.

Felipe MASSA: Yeah, I think it was a good performance from us. It was a very tough qualifying. In Q3 anyway I couldn't put all the sectors together. I could have been a little bit better but anyway I think they were very strong but also happy to be back on the top three and even more focused for the race tomorrow. I hope we can do a good job and score as many points as possible for the team and for ourselves as well. The race is tomorrow and the position on the grid is quite good.

Q: Talking of the race. You qualified ahead of the second Red Bull in Mark Webber, so you will be trying to fend him off for as long as possible.

FM: Yeah, we fight to everybody. When you are in front of not just Mark, but many other cars like both McLarens as well and Mercedes, so it is a car that on some tracks can be very strong. We are there and we just need to try to be in front of everybody tomorrow, have a good race, a good fight and it will be interesting.

Q: Sebastian, looking ahead to tomorrow's race. It is not your team-mate alongside you. I don't know if that makes you smile or not but Fernando will give you a tough race I am sure.

SV: Surely, but unlike Silverstone here the clean side is really worth quite a bit. Fernando and myself in the last race were quite surprised by the bad grip that we had on the clean side, so here it should be good for us and we have a very strong car. It is very close to the Ferraris but usually we have a decent pace in the race. It is a long race, anything is possible. We start from the best position, so we could not have done any better today but now we are looking forward to tomorrow, that is the main target. It is nice to be here in the middle on Saturday but in the end there is no real reward except going to sleep with a good feeling but we need to confirm it tomorrow. That is the objective.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Q: Sebastian, how important is it for you this race to be on pole position at home, especially in front of the team owner Dietrich Mateschitz who is here this weekend.

SV: It is as important to be on pole as in every race. It is nice as there are a lot of people supporting us, supporting Red Bull, supporting myself. It is a bit of an extra on top, I don't mind. It was a good day today. A very close session, very close battle with the other cars and good to be on pole. It is the best you can achieve on a Saturday but the main challenge will come tomorrow.

Q: You said yesterday how good the car was in the final sector. What was it like in the other two sectors? Did you have to improve it today?

SV: To be honest yesterday I didn't say it was good in the last sector. I can't remember. It was good yesterday. I was struggling a little bit with the car under braking. I didn't feel 100 per cent comfortable and I didn't have the control yet that I usually have, so struggling to find the right brake

balance and putting the car in the right place at the entrance of the corner. It was much better this morning, so I felt much better, much more confident and all in all I had a very good, kind qualifying. We were able to improve, improve, improve. The last qualifying we know that both times we had one lap and it worked in the end with a very little margin but it was very easy to go a little bit above the limit of the tyres and then you find the tyres sliding rather than just being on the edge and it is very easy then to lose some lap times. The last lap was good but could have been a fraction better to have a bit more margin to Fernando. I don't think we can rely in the future on having these two thousands of a second in our hand but it was a good challenge, very tough session mentally, so I am happy that we made it and it is good to be on pole for tomorrow.

Q: How obvious is the tyre strategy tomorrow given these conditions which were not perhaps expected?

SV: Well, I don't know what the weather forecast is. I heard dry. I think the majority of the top 10 cars are on the option. People compare this race because of the tyres choice to Montreal, Canada, but I think the circuit is different and we have seen yesterday and today even in changeable conditions with a very green track which is usually not good for tyres that the option tyre holds up well and is actually not a big problem to make it last for something like 10 laps or more. So it should be fine and no matter when you change to the hard tyre you know that you can drive this one to Hungary without any problems. It should be clear. You never know what happens in terms of weather, safety cars, so we will have to see and adapt but if you go into the race looking for the best strategy I think we are on the right page.

Q: Fernando, you have been so quick all weekend; are you a bit disappointed to be second?

FA: No, not at all. I think we have been competitive, but we have been competitive for the last five races and in Q3 we were half a second behind Red Bull. Today we are not half a second, so we are very happy.

Q: You said yesterday there was the necessity to improve the balance; did you manage to do some of that today?

FA: Yes, I think today the car was very, very good. I've been very happy with the balance all day long and I think we maximised the potential, finally in one Saturday qualifying we did our hundred percent. We are very happy to have both the Ferraris in the top three. I hear the team is extremely happy with this result after the improvements that we've been adding in the last three or four grands prix. Everything is working as expected, or even better than expected, so we have definitely found the direction we need to continue working in.

Q: Is it the dirty side of the grid for you?

FA: I think the dirty side was better at Silverstone, so now I'm hoping it's better to be on the dirty side, but there are 62 or 68 laps or whatever tomorrow, so it's not only the start that matters, I think the race will be very long. As we've said now, nobody knows how the tyres will behave. Yesterday it's true that we didn't have any big problems with the super soft but yesterday we were running in 1m 16s, today we're in 1m 13s. I'm sure that with this pace, the tyres will struggle a little bit more.

Q: Felipe, you didn't look very happy just now in the unilateral; are you a bit disappointed?

FM: A bit disappointed because I had a bit of a margin to improve the lap, looking at the grip I had, but I always had a difficult moment which made me lose some tenths but anyway, I think it's good to start in the top three in a difficult qualifying. But I'm optimistic, definitely looking forward to tomorrow.

Q: This has been a good circuit for you: you've finished every single Grand Prix, you've qualified second, you've raced to second as well.

FM: Yeah, so it's a good position. Let's carry on trying to score good results on a good track. The race is tomorrow, it's long and our car looks pretty competitive to fight.

Q: Going back to competitive runs, I think you went off on your first run. Were you then perhaps a little bit too cautious?

FM: Yeah, as I said, I couldn't put a lap together and even risked losing some positions, but anyway here we are in a good position.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Marco Degli'Innocenti – La Gazzeta dello Sport) Sebastian, looking at the qualifying, you are on pole and there are two more young German drivers in the first ten and Michael Schumacher is eleventh. Do you think there has been a sort of symbolic changing of the guard here in Hockenheim?

SV: I sat here on Thursday with Michael. I think great champions know what they're doing. Obviously at the moment he's probably not having the easiest time with the car. You need to ask him why that is. It's good to have young drivers in general coming up. It's very close at the top, so it's good that as a German from Germany there are lots of drivers, we have quite a lot this season. So it's good for our country but I think it's how it goes sometimes. I don't think that today is a symbolic day which you will always remember and look back to. I think it's good to have so many Germans, it's good for our country, but there will be a time when you have four French drivers or five. At the moment you have zero, so it changes. Sometimes you call it good work in the lower categories, sometimes it's probably just luck. I don't think there's really a real reason. If I look back, when I started karting, Michael was already in Formula One and was a World Champion, so a lot of kids were inspired by his success and entered karting and for sure, if you have one thousand talents the chance that there's probably one is higher than if you only have ten or one hundred. There will be one and this one will make it. It always helps the more popular the sport is... I don't want to talk forever but if you look at tennis, we had Boris Becker but that's already a long time ago. Since then there have been good tennis players from Germany, don't get me wrong, but not a hero, so obviously it's difficult to push the sport if you don't have one person you can look up to and I still think that Michael is this person in Formula One and motor sport for Germany, so it's good that he came back.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Sebastian, was this the tightest ever pole position that you've won?

SV: Yes, I think so. I don't think you can be much tighter than two thousandths. There's only one thousandth, so I guess it was. I don't know but I'm quite sure yes. In the end it doesn't matter. If you win pole position or the race by one thousandth of a second or ten seconds or the World Championship by one point or a hundred points, there will always be the guy who is first and the guy who is second and in the end it doesn't matter. For sure now, I said on the team radio as well, probably all the bad stuff we had this season already, it was good now to be a bit lucky and have this two thousandths of a second on our side. I think we did a very good job. It was a tough session, it was close between us, so we find ourselves in a very good position and I think we deserved it, so it's good to be here again but there are no points on Saturday, so the challenge will come tomorrow.

Q: (Michael Schmidt – Auto, Motor und Sport) Fernando, the development steps in the last three races were probably the smallest ones but when you look at the step on the circuit, it was the biggest one. You've never been so close to the Red Bulls; how do you explain that?

FA: I think there are some different circuit characteristics here. At Silverstone, we knew that it was a tough race for us and when we saw that we were competitive at Silverstone we knew that we had a good chance in Hockenheim and Hungary, these types of circuits with a little bit less high speed corners. All the steps that we made in the last three races were very important. Some of them improved the car in high speed corners, some of them in the slower speed parts. Everything is helping now to make the car much better, much more competitive, so I'm happy to finally be closer to Red Bull after ten races. We had the chance to be on pole for the first time in this championship, first time we are on the front row after ten races, so this is the best news for us in today's qualifying.

Q: (Ian Parkes – The Press Association) Felipe, it's a year tomorrow since your qualifying accident in Hungary. I can imagine, when you look back at that past year, you must be absolutely delighted to be sat there right now.

FM: Yeah, definitely. It was a difficult time, almost a year ago, it was a very difficult time for me. Somebody was saying that I still need to be here, so I'm here, very happy and working, still doing my job and let's go back to Hungary and let's try to achieve a good result there, but first of all we

need to think about tomorrow, tomorrow is the race and then we have one week to think about Hungary and try to do a good result, a good job because it would be even more fantastic for what's happened.

Q: (Byron Young – The Daily Mirror) Seb, there was a lot of controversy at the last race regarding the difference between your car and Mark's car. Can we just be clear about the difference here today?

SV: It's all different. He's Australian, I'm German. He has car number six, I have car number five, so I think there's lots of stuff for you to write again. Yeah, it's always different, you know. No part is the same, no car is the same. I don't know which road car you have but even if it says 160 horsepower, I guess that if you buy exactly the same car again, it's probably not 160.0 again. There will always be a bit of a margin but we do have the same cars and the same possibilities as usual. I think he was very close in Q2, I don't know about Q3. Maybe he had a problem, I haven't had the chance... obviously you're so focused on your own car, so I don't know what happened to him but when I looked at the lap time after the first run I was a little bit surprised. As I said, not many differences but for sure, if you want to find something, you will find something.

Q: (Carlos Miquel – Diario AS) Fernando, what's your main worry for tomorrow? The race rhythm of Sebastian or losing some positions on the grid?

FA: I think there are no worries for tomorrow, only the rain.

Q: (Frederic Ferret – L'Equipe) Sebastian, Michael has always been very important to German fans. Do you think you can take his place in the heart of Germany one day? And does it matter to you?

SV: I don't think anyone can take Michael's place. Michael is Michael and he always will be. To the sport he's a legend, like other legends, like other great champions – Prost, Senna – you know, he's in the same league and there's no way you can replace someone. Felipe races for Brazil. Obviously the hero of the past was Ayrton Senna but Felipe has his own style and his own way. In Spain the hero is Fernando and no one will replace him. For sure Michael is the one that everyone is looking up to in Germany and that won't change for quite a long time. I think the records he has set are quite unique, so even though at the moment he gets a lot of shit, he probably knows what he's doing. I think if you look at his face, he seems relaxed, so he knows what's going on and I think that's also a quality a champion has to have.

Q: (Ottavio Daviddi - Tuttosport) To both Ferrari drivers, considering the situation of the championship is it better for you to achieve some points tomorrow or to take all the risks and try to win?

FA: I think we need to win the race, that's the best thing for the championship, and I think we really have the possibility here to win the race because we are competitive. We had the possibility in Bahrain, we took it. I think we had the possibility in Canada. We didn't manage to do it and tomorrow maybe we have another opportunity, so hopefully tomorrow we can do it. We will take the risk that we think is necessary. Obviously we want the points. We both have to finish on the podium if possible but at the same time – and I'm sure that Felipe agrees with me – we want to finish in the first two positions on the podium and we will try to do that, for sure.

Q: (Michael Schmidt – Auto, Motor und Sport) Sebastian, you made up your time in comparison to Ferrari in the last sector, Ferrari are faster in the second one. Which one is the more important in the race?

SV: It's quite different, because obviously in qualifying you are on low fuel whereas at the start of the race or for the majority of the race you are on quite high fuel. Yeah, it's true we are quicker... we are similar in sector one. There are not too many corners, we are quick in the last sector, so it's good, the corners that we have there, we can use them to maybe build a cushion. There are not too many corners in the second sector, it's obviously stopping the car and it seems that the Ferrari is very strong there, also in straight-line speed. We have seen in the last couple of races that they are quite quick on the straights which is usually not one of our strengths. It's good to be ahead of them, rather than behind, because overtaking would be a bit a more difficult and I think that generally here overtaking is difficult even though you have a nice place into turn six but you have to be close enough first, so it's good to be up front. The target is to defend the position in the beginning and then once you are in race trim it should be a bit easier.

