



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

2010 BELGIAN GRAND PRIX

SATURDAY POST-QUALIFYING PRESS CONFERENCE – August 28, 2010

DRIVERS:

1. Mark WEBBER (Red Bull), 1m45.778s
2. Lewis HAMILTON (McLaren), 1m45.863s
3. Robert KUBICA (Renault), 1m46.100s

TV UNILATERALS

Q: Mark, congratulations and Happy Birthday for yesterday. I take it the present you asked for most was a spot of rain just after you bagged provisional pole.

Mark WEBBER: Yeah, we knew that the first lap was going to be pretty important as around here it is just so unpredictable. The weather yesterday and today has been very unique even for Spa to be honest as it has been so on and off. You know particularly in qualifying that every lap is important. First lap for me I was very happy with it but you just never know in this company if it is enough. But I pushed to the limit and it was enough for me to have pole half-way through the session. It is a nice thing to have going into your second run but, like you said, the weather made it a little bit more difficult to improve on our second attempts. But some people, like Lewis obviously, I am not sure it might have only been Lewis, he did a good lap on his second lap. But I think we would still have been pretty quick to have a crack if it stayed dry and consistent for the second round of laps. I was still looking forward to that part of qualifying.

Q: Certainly Red Bull have not got the advantage here that they had in Hungary. And in Q2 you were fully a second behind, so what were you were hiding? What made the difference in Q3?

MW: I think Q2 depended where you were on the track. The track was drying very, very quickly. Lewis did a good lap in Q2. Also you know you just need to do enough to get through. But it is pretty intense times in that situation when the track is a bit mixed up. It is easy to get outside the bubble and if you miss a braking point and you don't get a clean lap in then you could be out. It was one of those days where it could easily go wrong and you could have a bit of egg on your face but I think apart from Fernando (Alonso) all the normal guys had normal days.

Q: Lewis, a tricky qualifying session. You are back on the front row but was this a pole position that got away from you today?

Lewis HAMILTON: No, I mean I didn't know it was your birthday, so Happy Birthday for yesterday. He did a fantastic job. It was such a tricky qualifying session where the weather conditions were changing drastically. I got out for my first lap. I was the first one out and it wasn't a particularly great lap. There was one corner, I think turn 14 which was drying up, but I was the first one to get there and I didn't really know how much I could push there, so I lost a little bit of time on the first run. The second run was a good lap except for turn one. We lost three and a half tenths or so there, so it was possible but we are on the front row. The positive thing is that we are up there and in for the fight, so it is good.

Q: And you have been quite good at fighting and picking your way through the field this season. An aggressive first lap could pay dividends.

LH: Yeah, aggressive but you have to be cautious at the same time. Tomorrow is a completely different day. We don't know if it is going to rain or be dry. The good thing is that the car feels

pretty good here, so we are in a good position to get some good points tomorrow. I will make sure I am fit and ready for tomorrow morning and prepare myself the best way.

Q: Robert, very good qualifying performance from you and the upgrades on the car are really working well this weekend.

Robert KUBICA: Yeah, it has been a good qualifying for us. We have been quite competitive in all conditions and also in qualifying when the track was drying up, mixed conditions. But we had a bit of a black moment in Q3 when the car just stopped running approaching the last corner, the last chicane on the in-lap, so we knew that we would not be able to do a second attempt in Q3 as there was no time and I was just praying for rain. There were some drops but not enough that Lewis managed to set a better lap time. But it is still good for us being back here after introducing the F-duct quite late but fortunately it worked pretty well. Actually, perfectly yesterday from the first lap. We are happy to be here.

Q: What can you now do in the race? Are there concerns after qualifying? Do you think you can live with the Red Bulls and McLaren over 44 laps?

RK: Well, everything can happen. We have seen different condition here. What is important is that we have been I think in all sessions in the top five from yesterday to qualifying. Also this morning we were very competitive. I think Red Bull is out of reach also the McLarens are very fast here but we will try our best.

Q: Mark, you go in to the race on pole position and the championship leader. You have been the championship leader at other stages as well but it is getting serious now, isn't it with just seven races to go. Does that intensify the pressure?

MW: Not really. I don't see it as just seven races to go. If we were sitting here in Brazil then it would be a little bit more intense. But we have got a lot of racing to do yet. It is a special place to get pole. It is a beautiful circuit. All the drivers love driving here, so I am going to enjoy the race tomorrow and do my best.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Q: Mark, leading the World Championship, pole position, it couldn't have gone better, could it?

MW: Well, it's always nice when you drive well. It felt like it was a great effort from the whole team and it's a great place to get pole position. We've seen a few occasions this year that pole positions haven't done too much, so we need to capitalise tomorrow on what could be a very challenging day, but we're certainly up for it. We've been pretty quick in all conditions. You can only take each day as it comes and today we did what we needed to do and tomorrow we will do our absolute best.

Q: Reading the weather here seems to be a black art but you seem to have done that pretty well today.

MW: Well, it's virtually impossible to be honest. The showers that pop up here and there, there's no real consistency to them. It's just a very special venue as we know, where it is here, tucked away in the forest. But it wasn't that difficult today, to be honest, in terms of picking the weather. Most of the time everyone knew what they needed to do, it was just up to the teams and the drivers to do what they needed to do at the time, which is also reflected in most people, where they should be, within reason. It wasn't too much of a mixed up session in terms of people out of position.

Q: Coming here I think the team had a few doubts about the straight bits, but not the twisty section in the middle. Have you been happily surprised as to how good the car has been on the straights?

MW: We've worked incredibly hard as we have done all year. We know there are some circuits that certainly suit us better than others and if we were to have seventeen races, we probably wouldn't pick this track and certainly not the next track. That's the way the World Championship is, you've got to have lots of different venues and test the technical people, test the drivers and Spa is a track which we always want on the calendar, so it's up to us to have a good car at all venues and capitalise on when we have a good car, which was in Budapest and a few other venues. We've

seen it ebb and flow a bit. These guys have been very, very strong on a few circuits and have a few weaknesses as well, so that's the pinnacle of Formula One at the moment, measured by small margins. You can't be doing purple sectors on every single track in every single condition every single time – fuel loads and different compounds – it's just too competitive for that.

Q: Lewis, that was really last minute. I looked at all the first sectors and I thought that no one would improve, but then all of a sudden it all seemed to come together in the second two sectors.

LH: Yeah, as Mark was saying, it was quite a tricky session throughout the whole of qualifying. Bit of a disappointing first lap – I wasn't really able to pull the time out of the tyres and then obviously I got the opportunity on the second lap. Turn one was a little bit damp, so I lost a bit of time there but the rest of the track was dry, so I was able to utilise the tyres and really pull out the time, but I think I was a tenth behind Mark. The potential was obviously there for us to be on the front in P1 but to be P2 on the front row is a good position for us. We didn't know how well we would do here so... I'm quite happy with the car, we made some changes going into qualifying which is very rare for us and fortunately they were the right ones.

Q: And you were saying that you seem to be making small steps forward all the time as a team.

LH: Yeah, we are. Obviously some other teams make bigger steps every now and then but we are generally learning a lot more about the car. The guys are working so hard back at the factory to understand how we can improve, as every team is, but they are doing their job and it's down to myself and Jenson and the guys here to also do our jobs. I think we've done well so far this weekend; let's see what we can do tomorrow.

Q: Are you pretty happy with the way you've read the conditions as well?

LH: Yeah, well, much better than Malaysia. It was quite good today, I think. As I said, it's very difficult for me out there to picture and understand and see all the dark patches and light patches and the sky; it's difficult to know if it's just a dark patch of tarmac or whether it's actually damp and whether it's going to affect you, so you don't know until you hit it. We're all on the knife edge out there.

Q: Robert, it's probably fair to say that you didn't expect to be sitting here today, did you?

RK: Well, after yesterday and this morning we were hoping to. It seems a bit easier to be more competitive with the F-duct, and fortunately it has been working very well since the beginning. We introduced it yesterday and we were competitive in all sessions in different conditions with different tyres, so we were somehow hoping to repeat our performance from free practice.

Q: Do you think you're a genuine contender for victory tomorrow?

RK: No, I think a victory is out of reach, but in racing, in motor sport, anything can happen, so for sure we will try our best as we have done all season and we will try to take the maximum from this weekend. We have been a bit unlucky and lucky; had a problem with the car, so I wasn't able to do my second attempt with new tyres. At that point we were hoping for rain, as we were P2 but yeah, there were a few drops but not enough but still, third is a good position.

Q: Any indication what was wrong with your car?

RK: I think some fuel pick-up problem, just running before the last corner in the high-speed section the car just shut down and I was luckily just able to reach the pit lane, but we knew it would not be possible to make a second run, because the timing was so tight, so at that point, we were saying it was bad luck, but fortunately the rain came a bit and it turned out to be not such bad luck.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Q: (Mike Doodson) Mr Hamashima from Bridgestone said yesterday there was some doubt about tyres. Am I right in thinking that you were able to keep off the intermediates and that you do have adequate supplies of tyres for whatever conditions turn up tomorrow?

MW: Yeah, I think we should be fine for tomorrow's grand prix. Maybe they will have to make a few more for next week but they should be able to do that.

RK: I think qualifying helped us today. If qualifying should be wet and tomorrow it's raining then we might be in trouble but it should be OK, but both intermediates and extremes are lasting very little, only a few laps and then they start graining quite a lot.

Q: (Frederic Ferret – L'Equipe) Mark, do you think that McLaren on this particular track is quicker than you in the rain?

MW: China was an interesting grand prix. Obviously that was a very consistent condition. If you look at the whole grand prix, it was generally pretty wet, so whether we see that here tomorrow I'm not sure but they were better than us in Shanghai, but many, many things have changed since then, in terms of cars and how their cars have been developed, and of course we understood a lot from that race in those conditions ourselves. I'll get back to you on that one tomorrow.

Q: (Heikki Kulta – Turun Sanomat) Lewis, how much would it mean to you to finally join the winners' list here in Spa?

LH: Well, so many of the greats have obviously won here. It's one of those legendary circuits. Growing up... this is actually the first grand prix I ever went to in 1996. Yeah, of course I would be very honoured to be on that list. Fortunately, I've done some other circuits but there are still plenty for me (on which) to gain that title.

Q: (Michael Schmidt – Auto, Motor und Sport) Mark, how difficult will it be tomorrow to defend your position up the hill, given the fact that the others have a better top speed?

MW: That's another one I'll get back to you on. Impossible to say, Michael. Let's see how the start goes. We don't know if it's going to be consistent both sides in terms of grip level, in terms of we've seen the right side of the track drying a bit faster than the left side, so if it's going to be like that then I should get away OK, but if it's even across both sides in terms of wet or dry then I'm probably expecting Lewis to be pretty close but it's nothing unusual. We've been there before and we will try and do our best. I don't think tomorrow's grand prix will be won and lost on the first lap, to be honest.