



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

## 2010 BELGIAN GRAND PRIX

**THURSDAY PRESS CONFERENCE – August 26, 2010**

**DRIVERS: Sébastien BUEMI (Toro Rosso), Pedro de la ROSA (Sauber), Lewis HAMILTON (McLaren), Michael SCHUMACHER (Mercedes), Sebastian VETTEL (Red Bull)**

**Q: Gentlemen, first of all, what did you do during the break? Pedro, with the family I guess?**

**Pedro de la ROSA:** Yes, it has been a very good break. I was always with the family. We went to Majorca, on holiday, where we normally go. Great time I must say, very good. I did a lot of cycling and realised how bad I am at that, but it was very good.

**Sébastien BUEMI:** I think everybody is the same. I spent some days in Switzerland with my family and then in Monaco and I was one week in Salzburg for some fitness tests, just to check out where we are in the middle of the season. It has been a good break and it was good to relax a bit.

**Lewis HAMILTON:** For me I went straight from Hungary to the States and spent time out there with some friends and with the girlfriend, so it was good training, good weather, lots of sun and good food.

**Michael SCHUMACHER:** I have been home with the family. I just took it easy.

**Q: Nothing more than that? Lots of riding?**

**MS:** No, other stuff but all from home.

**Q: Sebastian?**

**Sebastian VETTEL:** I think like the majority of the drivers, a bit of holiday in the beginning and then as soon as I was back I tried to get back into the rhythm. Lots of training. The weather wasn't always fantastic in the centre of Europe, but the usual stuff I guess. Then I tried to prepare to come back here.

**Q: Pedro, the improvements that Sauber have made, can you maintain those?**

**PdIR:** Well, we hope so. We have introduced quite a lot of changes since Valencia, already for Valencia and since and I think that we have raised our game. We are a lot more competitive, not only in high speed tracks like Silverstone but also in low speed tracks, corners, which were our weakest point like Hungary. That was good for us as we realised that all the changes had worked and we were targeting the right places and we were suddenly a lot more.... We have increased or widened our window of competitiveness which is very important.

**Q: And yet it was suggested that here you might be hurting a little bit on the straights?**

**PdIR:** Yeah, we still have to do a lot to improve. Don't get me wrong. We have improved our competitiveness but we are still lacking in other areas. One of them is top speed. There are two sectors here - sector one and three - where you will rely heavily on top speed. Pretty sure that sector two will be quite good for us though.

**Q: Sébastien, one of the things that I believe you did during the break was a certain amount of self-analysis; having a look at how the season had gone so far. Any changes for the rest of the season?**

**SB:** Obviously when you have two races in a row it is a bit difficult to analyse well what we did well and what we did wrong, so I spent one or two days in Faenza just trying to look at it carefully. We

know a little bit more where we have got to improve ourselves, especially in qualifying. This is the place where we seem to be lacking pace, especially with new tyres. We will try some new things on Friday and Saturday just to see if we can improve it a bit. If we can just start a little bit closer to the Q3 then it might help a lot in the race.

**Q: Is there much more development coming from the factory? There doesn't seem to have been a huge amount in comparison to some of the other teams.**

**SB:** Yeah, what I can say it is a big difference for us from last year to this year. Especially this year as we have got to do everything on our own, so it takes a bit of time to get things working well. We have got some good things coming for the future with the F-duct and the blown diffuser but it is still not really planned when but it will come. This is important. We just need to try our best with what we have got now and then when the new parts come we have got to get the maximum out of it. It takes a bit of time but I am pretty sure the team is giving everything to get better and this is important.

**Q: Lewis, a similarly interesting comment from Martin Whitmarsh. He feels there is a lot of performance in the car which is still to be unlocked. Is that your feeling as well?**

**LH:** I think for me every time I have gone to the track I have done the Friday and the Saturday and my comments are always 'this is the best the car has ever felt over these years at this track, but it is still not quick enough compared to others.' But we believe there is still some untapped downforce in the car which we have not been able to use at the moment or at least draw out, so we are working very hard. The team are working flat out as always to try and pull that out. I am trying to do everything I can to encourage and paying very close attention to what is going on and keeping a close eye on everything.

**Q: Yet the feeling is that this circuit suits the car perhaps for exactly that reason, that you haven't got a massive amount of downforce. It is not so important here.**

**LH:** I think it is still important here. There are a lot of high-speed corners here, so you still need quite efficient downforce I think especially with the long straights. But I think we should be a little bit better here than we were in Hungary. Hopefully. I am looking forward to getting into the car tomorrow. I hope the weather does clear up for us as it doesn't look so great out there at the moment.

**Q: Michael, you have the penalty coming up but your feelings about this circuit as this is an important circuit I think in the history of Michael Schumacher?**

**MS:** Yes, indeed. I have often called it my living room and there are lots of fantastic memories from the past and even good ones to look forward to. We have a mixed weather condition predicted for this weekend. We have the 10 places which makes it extra special and exciting to try and move forward. With mixed conditions that could help. We have worked on the car, so altogether we will try to make it as good as possible but I certainly look forward very much as this is one of my most loved tracks and special excitement.

**Q: What are your expectations from the rest of the season given that the team has said that they are beginning to concentrate more on 2011?**

**MS:** I guess that we sort of have to see where maybe we can use the strengths that the car has and where maybe it is a little bit more difficult. That is something to find out and maximise our opportunities. Naturally we want to still take as many points as possible to stay as high up in the Constructors' position as possible. These are the targets and naturally we keep on working within limits to achieve this but then yes, the focus is on next year's car.

**Q: It is a bit of a balance?**

**MS:** Yeah, exactly but in a way that is for everybody. Some decide this strategy slightly earlier than others.

**Q: Sebastian, tell us about the technical challenge for Red Bull here as it has been quite interesting driving 24 seconds at full throttle with your engine balanced against the fast**

**corners in the middle sector and then again very quick on the way back. What are your feelings about the technical balance there?**

**SV:** Yeah, as you said a big part of full throttle here, so lots of straight lines where you cannot do much from the driving point of view. Looking back last year we were very strong in sector two. With all the corners in sector one and three we lost out. This year I think we have a better car in all kinds of conditions and also for all types of corners whereas last year I think in low speed we were probably a little bit behind. We have definitely made a step forward, so we should be strong here as well and for straight lines, yeah. Obviously it is not Hungary. There are lots of straight lines, so we will see how we will get on. But I think we will find the right balance. We don't know the weather but generally we are positive and carefully optimistic I would say.

**Q: When it comes to the rest of the season we heard from Michael how Mercedes perhaps are concentrating more on 2011. Other teams perhaps doing the same thing. How do you see the rivalry at the front of the championship for the rest of the year?**

**SV:** If you are in a position to win the championship that is where your focus is on but I can assure you that we are also working for next year. The cars will change again quite a bit, so you have to focus early enough and start early enough to be there right from the beginning. But, as I said, it is obviously a different situation for us maybe in comparison to other teams. We are in a very good position for this year and obviously the target is for everyone to win races and ultimately the World Championship. We are in a very good position to do so, so that's where our main focus is.

**Q: And do you see the other two or three teams really continuing to push you?**

**SV:** Of course. I think Virgin is obviously focusing on next year, teams like that, but the teams that still have a fair chance – Ferrari and McLaren – I think that of course they have to and they will push until the end, same as us. So they are in a very similar position. We are all very tight on points. Again, the points system this year is different, so even though it might look a big gap of ten, twenty, thirty points, it's literally nothing. Fernando, for instance, had a couple of good races in the last two or three races and from nowhere, when people said he's no longer in this championship, he's back. It shows how quickly things can change. You have to keep pushing until the end.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Ian Parkes – The Press Association) Michael, we've just been speaking with Rubens Barrichello. He mentioned that you sent him a text message today, apologising for what had occurred during the Hungarian Grand Prix. Do you have any plans to speak to him personally this weekend regarding that?**

**MS:** I have no problem speaking to Rubens, absolutely, but there were two reasons I sent him a text and one of the main reasons was that it's his 300<sup>th</sup> grand prix. We have quite a history together, so I thought it was appropriate to congratulate him and clarify the point. He sort of felt that I wanted to push him against the wall and very clearly, this was not my ambition. I wanted to race very tightly but without any wall contact and to clarify this point, if he felt this was the case then I was sorry for that.

**Q: (Dorothea Jantschke – Bild) Michael, the last third of the season starts with this race, there are a few drivers who have a chance to win the title. Sebastian is third right now, but do you think he has a good chance to be the one in the end, and if so, why?**

**MS:** Why, I guess, is easy. His car seems to be very competitive and very strong. There have been some slightly unfortunate moments during the year, so now it's up to him to see how consistently his performances can improve and he can take the points, but certainly he's in a very good position to fight for the championship but as I said before, it's tight. You depend on your development and so many things and a bit of luck but at the end of the day it's down to you. He's had some bits of bad luck already, so let's hope for the rest of the season he can count on (good) luck.

**Q: (Juha Päätaalo – Financial Times Deutschland) Sebastian, if you look at the performance of your car, you actually should have a few more points. Is there anything in the rest of the season to which you personally and your team will take a different approach to avoid throwing away important points?**

**SV:** I think, yes, we should probably have more points. We have a saying – I don't know if it makes any sense in English – but where I come from we say 'if the dog wouldn't have gone for a shit, he would have got the cat' which is basically would, could, should. It's all fine, but at the end of the day what matters are the points you have on the scoreboard. I think we're very close. Obviously Mark is leading the championship, I'm only ten points behind. We're first in the Constructors. I think, yes, you could argue we should have scored more points but then again, also other teams and other drivers are in a similar position and they should have scored more than they did, so in the end we are who we are and this is where we are at, so basically the championship starts from more or less zero now and we have to focus on every single race, obviously. With 20 races to go, or 15 races, there's obviously more chance or probably more room for mistakes and with only seven to go you know that every single one is probably more important.

**Q: (Sven Haidinger – Sportwoche) A question for all of you: which corner on the Formula One calendar is your favourite corner and why – as we're in Spa?**

**PdIR:** I don't have any favourite, actually. They're all good. I must say that possibly the most difficult corner and challenging and also because of that, the nicest for me, is Pouhon, turn ten here in Spa. This is an absolutely fantastic feeling. It's just very fast, very quick. You just don't brake, you just let the car roll in. It should be like this, this year at least, and for me that is a very challenging corner, it's very, very difficult. Fantastic.

**SB:** I think what Pedro said is a good one, Pouhon is a good one, but there's also Eau Rouge, the Radillion is something special. You don't have this kind of feeling (anywhere else) when you go up the hill so quickly, so this is my favourite one if I had to choose one.

**LH:** I think it's very hard to... as Pedro said, I don't particularly have a favourite. I think it's very hard to pick and chose. I think if you looked at all the maps, I'm sure that you could pick out a few that you like perhaps more than others but Pouhon is definitely one that springs to mind, similarly to him.

**MS:** Obviously we always talk about Eau Rouge and indeed, starting here some years ago – a few – it was thrilling but in this generation of cars it's certainly a lot easier because the cars are so improved, but what is still – and it's a different track – a great excitement is Spa and it's not a single corner, but it's the first sector all together. That is the most loved place for me.

**SV:** I should say that I love all the bad corners that we have in Formula One because then obviously it gives you a positive or good feeling in all the nice corners. I think it's difficult to name only one corner. People often speak about circuits like here, Spa or other tracks with fast corners. In general, I think that corners where cars are on the edge, the drivers are on the edge, are probably the places that you enjoy most. We all love speed, so fast corners like we have a lot of these fast floating corners around here are the ones that I think all of us like and I like best as well.

**Q: (Frédéric Ferret – L'Equipe) To all of you: as Spa is a special track and something different always happens here, do you have a special memory from this track, good or bad?**

**PdIR:** Yeah, I'm not a specialist of Spa really because I've raced here only four times, so I don't really have extremely good or bad memories. It's been a very nice track to drive but I remember in 2001 when I qualified P10 and there was an accident and I was on a one-stop strategy then. Everyone was on a two and then the safety car came out and then there was a red flag which basically threw my race. It was strategically a bad move, to do a one-stop strategy with the red flag, but it could have been very, very good. It wasn't but I always like this track. Let's hope that this year we have something to remember about it, but I'm not a specialist here.

**SV:** It is just the second time that I've raced F1 here, so obviously I don't have so many memories but I won some races in small categories, so those were good ones, and last year, obviously, the first time you drive here in Formula One is always a bit special because you get some special feelings that you cannot even come close to with GP2 or whatever, so it has been a good one last year. Now we hope for some points which would make this year a pretty good race.

**LH:** For me I had some good races here in Formula Renault and especially Formula Three in 2005, I had a good race with Adrian Sutil who was my team-mate, passing through Eau Rouge which was quite good in the wet. But then in Formula One I would say 2008 was still quite a cool memory for me, regardless of the result. I think it was a great race and one that was definitely very interesting.

**MS:** Well, I like to remember '95, and probably I'm in a similar position here this weekend. Me being here in Spa, having this situation, having the memory of that year it's good, look forward.

**SV:** I broke my finger here in 2006. I had a crash in World Series and then for the first time I was in the medical centre here. They brought me in the ambulance to the hospital. It's not a nice experience, I don't want to do it again but it is an experience. I remember I was put into a wheelchair, even though there was nothing wrong with my legs and they gave me this funny dress like an old woman's dress...

**MS:** Pictures?

**SV:** No pictures. Yeah, it's an experience, something you obviously won't forget. The driver of the ambulance was probably more crazy than all of us together. And then, I think only two years back in 2008 there was quite a chaotic finish with a bit of drizzle at the end of the race. I think I went from P4 to P8 to P4 within one lap. It was quite special. It's a very long lap here and a lot of things can happen. You realise on occasions like this, it's always a nice track where something extra happens.

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – O Estado de Sao Paulo) Lewis, do you think the championship will restart here as we saw in the last few races – Hockenheim, Hungaroring – where Red Bull, Ferrari was on one level and then McLaren a good gap behind, considering the factories were closed?**

**LH:** I don't think anything's going to change, not immediately. Obviously we've had the shutdown, so I expect our car to be very much the same as it was in the last race. Obviously this is a good point in time where we have to try and do some more tests whilst we're here on Friday and Saturday, try to get even more information back to try and understand where the extra time is and where the extra downforce is. Only once we've done that can we really move forwards. I don't think it's restarting again, it's just continuing. These guys are going to be incredibly quick, especially the Red Bulls and we have to do everything we can to not allow them to pull too far ahead.

**Q: (Walter Koster – Saarbrücker Zeitung) Sebastian, what's your gift for your team-mate tomorrow? The old man has a birthday, 34 years old.**

**SV:** I didn't know that this was his birthday. I have brought nothing with me. I don't know. I need to find something. I think they have these free shampoos and this kind of stuff in the hotel, a last minute present. But don't tell him, of course.