



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE L'AUTOMOBILE

## 2011 BRAZILIAN GRAND PRIX

### THURSDAY PRESS CONFERENCE TRANSCRIPT

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**DRIVERS – Rubens BARRICHELLO (Williams), Jenson BUTTON (McLaren), Felipe MASSA (Ferrari), Daniel RICCIARDO (HRT), Michael SCHUMACHER (Mercedes), Bruno SENNA (Renault).**

#### **PRESS CONFERENCE**

**Bruno, I think, first of all, you've had a pretty busy time since Abu Dhabi because you came straight here?**

**Bruno SENNA:** Yeah, well, to be honest last week I took [off] to rest and to get acclimatised as well. It was a bit cold in Brazil, so I didn't get to enjoy the sun but this week has been very busy and I think it's going to be a very busy weekend overall. But it's a home race so you have to get used to it and get on with it.

**Are you excited about the fact it's a home race?**

**BS:** Very excited yeah, it's my second time racing in Brazil and it's the first time I've going to be here in a competitive car so I think it should be an interesting race weekend, lots of pressure but very exciting as well.

**You've had less than a half season, how tough has that been and how pleased have you been with the way you've tackled it?**

**BS:** It's been very tough of course, competing with the guys that have tested and have done the whole season. It's not easy: these guys are not joking around here, they are the best drivers in the world and mixing with them is very satisfying. Overall, it's been a good experience, it would have been much better if I'd done the whole thing, for sure, but I think I'm pleased with the results. There have been ups and downs but the performance normally speaks for itself and hopefully we will still finish this race on a high note.

**And the future?**

**BS:** Well, that's still up for...ah... [it remains] to be seen, but I'm working very hard for the seat and hopefully we'll know the future as soon as possible.

**Rubens, just going back to the last race, that was a great drive from the back of the grid, were you pleased with that?**

**Rubens BARRICHELLO:** I was! I was very pleased and, you know, even more that we had so many conversations with the team because there was some idea that Cosworth wanted to take the engine back to the factory and try to work around the engine, not to break the seal. I said: 'look, if it happens then you're going to have to open it anyway, the engine. I'm not going to use that engine in Brazil because I'm going to pay a penalty.' And the only other engine I had was a Friday engine that already had some mileage, so they said: 'OK, let's take the gamble' and when they broke the seal with the FIA there, they saw that it was such a minor thing. The engine became a ninth engine instead of the eighth, so I paid a penalty – but I was on the back anyway so, I have kind of a fresh engine for here. It was good to race hard in that respect. I didn't finish in the points but I still have a lot of pleasure from the drive.

**And what does this race mean to you. This one here?**

**RB:** Well, you ask me that every year!

**It probably gets more important every year...**

**RB:** It is! It's getting better. They know already that I've lived 20 years of my life just on the other side of the road and I know pretty much everyone around here. It's a lot of emotion coming to Interlagos and to drive here, so even though I don't have a competitive car you have to put hopes... you have to dream. My dream here this weekend is to put the car in the points and have the best finishing position that I can manage.

**And are you worried about the future? What are your feelings about the future?**

**RB:** I think it would be sad to be worried about the future. I had 19 lovely seasons, you can see that as much as I wish Bruno all the success in the future, he's having his second year, one-and-a-half years pretty much, working hard to stay there. I've been there for 19 seasons, I've been doing this for such a long time, I've been wanted for such a long time here, so I feel good. I feel that I still have a lot of youth on me, and it's not something that I'm asking 'please, give me the drive'. If somebody wants me to drive on a competitive basis it's because they believe I can do a very good job – that's why I'm here.

**And after Abu Dhabi, presumably you've proved that you still can?**

**RB:** Absolutely. It was really good – but I don't think the results right now would make any change in what people think I can do and what I cannot do. It's based on different parameters. I hope that it's enough to secure me a good drive for next year.

**Daniel, a new circuit for you. Have you had a look around? How far have you managed to get so far?**

**Daniel RICCIARDO:** I was here last year playing a reserve role, so had a walk last year and I've done a few laps on the simulator so, yeah, I guess I'm coming to the new circuits already a little bit prepared. Y'know, this is another one the drivers seem to enjoy. It's a short lap here, we go round and round in circles for quite a few laps in Sunday and it's going to be good. I'm looking forward to it. I think like everyone else here, you know, I'm trying to end the season on a high and go home over Christmas and have something to be pleased about.

**What are your thoughts on your half-season?**

**DR:** I think it's been not bad. Obviously, it took a while to get the big wheel going but I think I then gained some momentum and have had some pretty good races since then and some good qualifying. Coming in half way through the season, as Bruno said, it's not the easiest thing to do. There's always going to be things that you're not 100 per cent happy about or things you know you could have done better. But there's been a good race along the line and a good qualifying at least so I know definitely the potential is there. Just got to try to put it together more often. I think that comes with experience as well and more time in the car. I'm pretty happy, especially if I'm to finish this weekend on a good note, then I'll be satisfied with the last 10 or 11 races. I don't know, it's gone bloody quick!

**What do you know about your future?**

**DR:** Not much! Like a few of us we're not really sure what's happening next year but I think I'll live for the moment and try to do the best I can this weekend and see what comes from there. Hopefully I'll keep Dr Marko and the guys at Red Bull happy and see what opens up for next year – but, yeah, it's not really something I'm prioritising at the moment. My mind's set on the weekend.

**Jenson, I'm sure a lot of memories of this circuit. It's where you scored your first point, for example, and where you sealed the World Championship.**

**Jenson BUTTON:** Yes. Lots of very positive memories, so it's great to be back. For me, the memory that really stands out is obviously 2009. Winning your first point means something but winning the Championship means a lot more, so clinching the title here with a race to go was the perfect way to win the World Championship. It wasn't an easy weekend for me obviously, with terrible [time in] qualifying but a great race and a fighting race, which I really enjoyed. So, some very special memories and hopefully this race will be special as well. I've only been on the podium here once. I'd like to stand on the podium again.

**And that came all the way from 14<sup>th</sup> on the grid as well...**

**JB:** Yeah, I think my best qualifying [here] for the last six years has been 14<sup>th</sup> on the grid so I'm hoping to go a little bit better than that this time.

**Also, there's second in the Championship up for grabs, how important is that?**

**JB:** Not so important I suppose. I think it's nice to know over a season you can finish in front of obviously some very good drivers but also some teams. To finish in front of a Red Bull would be great, considering that Sebastian's won the championship in a Red Bull. And Fernando has obviously been very strong in the Ferrari so, if I get the chance to beat them at the end of the season in terms of points, yeah, of course I'll be happy but as we all say, we'd rather come away from here with a victory, that means more to us than finishing second in the Championship – but it's still nice, I suppose, if you can come away with second.

**You've almost had a better Championship season than when you won the World Championship. Particularly the second half.**

**JB:** I don't think that's ever the case really if you haven't won the World Championship. The second half of the season in '09 was pretty tough but it's a very different situation now. The Championship's won: we can have a lot of fun this weekend and, looking back on 2011, yeah, I'm pretty happy with what I've achieved. We haven't been quite good enough to win the Championship but I think we've had a pretty strong year and hopefully we can build on what we've achieved this year, next year and really take the fight to Red Bull.

**Felipe, obviously you're looking already at next year but this is a very important race for you as well.**

**Felipe MASSA:** Yes, for sure. I think when we have the last race in Brazil you cannot just forget and look at next year. This is a very important race for us. I think for all of us Brazilians this is also like a championship, this race. I think when you race at home it's like a different championship. So we try to do the best we can here. I'm happy to already have achieved two victories here in Sao Paolo, in Brazil and looking forward to having another strong weekend and just thinking about this race 100 per cent. And then on Sunday after the race just move everything to next year, which I definitely hope will be much better than this year.

**What do you think you can give to your tifosi this weekend?**

**FM:** Well, for sure we have the same car from the Championship. No new parts on the car but I think when you race at home it's better. I think you feel extra power and everything from the people and I think it's a help. I hope definitely I can have a good weekend here fighting for the podium. If it is the first place, that would be fantastic but I'm definitely looking to have my best result from the Championship in this race.

**And as well as those two wins, three consecutive pole positions as well, so it's been a good circuit for you.**

**FM:** It's the place where I started my career, over the other side of the wall, which we always say here, which is in the go-kart track in the other side. And then when I was 16 I moved to this side and started my career here at this track. It's a very special track for all of us and it also a great feeling to race here in Formula One in a place that I always came to as a kid to watch Ayrton and Nelson – not Emerson! – but it's a place that's so special for me.

**Michael, again a driver with a lot of memories here: 2006 is one of our great memories, which is yours?**

**Michael SCHUMACHER:** Obviously, having been around for so long there are many special memories but yes, 2006 was a particular one. Last race before the retirement and a pretty special race that initially, after the puncture I got, I thought 'might as well go into the pits and start the party early', but then I thought 'give it try and see where you go'. It turned out to be a memorable race and a very exciting one.

**You've also had a lot of podiums. Not just the four wins but six podiums as well.**

**MS:** Yes, it worked out over the years. It's a very interesting and very challenging circuit and we seemed to have the right car and combination to do well here in the past.

**I'm intrigued that you're still making progress or seem to be making progress with the Mercedes. Even though you're not necessarily putting new bits onto it you are seeming to understand it and getting more pace from it. It seems extraordinary.**

**MS:** I'm not sure it's actually true. Each car has a certain character and certain tracks may fit better or not so good to it. Maybe lately we've had some tracks that fit the car well. Certainly since mid-season from our side we are able to maximise the potential of the car, a lot more consistent which I'm obviously glad about.

**And is that going to be the case here? Do you feel this is going to be a circuit that suits it?**

**MS:** Ah well, I'll tell you later.

## **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Q: (Andrew Benson – BBC Sport) Jenson, when you joined McLaren, you talked about the challenge of taking on Lewis in the same team, and since then you've talked about him being one of the fastest drivers there's ever been, so what does it mean to you to finish ahead of him over a season?**

**JB:** You would think I would have a good answer for this by now; I've been asked it enough times. When you're working closely with a teammate, when you're off the track you're sharing everything, trying to make the car go quicker and trying to improve your performance compared to other teams, which is the way it should be. But when you're on the circuit, you obviously both want to get the best out of the car, which means beating your teammate is necessary. I think if we're fighting for the World Championship and one of us came out on top it would be a very special feeling but we're not in that position right now but for me, I'm happy with what I've achieved this year in terms of getting the best out of the car and getting some reasonably good performance. For me, Japan really stands out as being a great race, but also some other races that we haven't been able to win, so I take more comfort from just the results I've got out of...on a race weekend, and also how I've felt that I've done over a race weekend. It's not so much about whether you beat your teammate over a whole season, because so many things can happen: reliability issues, incidents that maybe aren't your fault. I think if you clinch the title, as you said, it makes a big big difference, but when you're fighting for second it's not quite the same.

**Q: (Livio Oricchio – O Estado de Sao Paulo) In the last race we saw that some drivers could overtake the competitor in front, and the following straight you could get the position back. Here there is more or less a similar situation: we have a great pit straight and then you brake hard and then you have another straight where you can use the DRS. Do you believe you will be in the same situation as you were in the last race?**

**FM:** I think you can. If you have overtaken the car on the main straight, which is the better place for overtaking, without using DRS, it is possible you can be overtaking again at the next one, because in the next one you're going to have the DRS. I think it can be the same situation. For sure, maybe it could be the same as what happened in the last race.

**MS:** I think that if you are able to pass on the main straight, you would actually definitely be the quicker car, because you do it without DRS and then the chicane itself should be enough to clear yourself so that the guy behind shouldn't have sufficient power, even with DRS, to then re-pass you, so you probably only pass at equal speed on the back straight, because of the DRS, but it shouldn't be similar to what we saw in Abu Dhabi.

**JB:** I agree. I'm in the middle.

**MS:** I don't think it was contradictory of what Felipe was saying. It's just an add-on.

**BS:** I agree with Jenson!

**JB:** Good to hear!

**Q: (James Allen – Financial Times) For Michael and Rubens; you both obviously raced here in the days when Ayrton raced here and it was a very, very special atmosphere, with the drums going – incredible days. I wonder, when you arrive here on a Thursday and you get out of your hire car and you look around at the atmosphere here, do you ever think of him?**

**RB:** I think for me, obviously, it's a different thing to what Michael's going to answer because by being a Brazilian, I lived by Ayrton for most of the time. People still talk about him a lot, it's a time now of his commemoration of the three times World Champion, so it's very special, very, very

special. I'm so proud that I was here a couple of times when I raced with him on the same track, and I was here with the same buzz from the people. Even though we haven't been so successful as he was, we still have a lot of good feeling with the crowd to hear our names and to hear this feeling, to feel that makes me always feel that Senna is involved, because people always remembered that, whenever they were cheering, it's because of him, because of Nelson, because of Emerson, but I think even more from Ayrton.

**MS:** He's certainly someone you will always have in your memory. For me, it goes way back to when I saw him in his go-kart days, becoming a fan of what he was doing, particularly in these go-kart days because I think he has been so exceptional and so special. And then being able to race him over here and having had those years together, it's a privilege and I'm very honoured to have done so. It's great to see that none of us – and even outside – forget what Ayrton has done, as if it was yesterday. It's so fresh, he's just around and that's great.

**Q: (Tales Azzoni – Associated Press) This is for Michael but the other drivers can comment too: what are your impressions of the rule changes to improve racing this year? Do you think it's had a positive impact, as the season comes to an end?**

**MS:** It's about DRS, I guess. To me, I think it is very obvious that we have improved big time. We have had incredible races this year. I take one particular example and I think it's pretty fresh still, and that's Korea. If you think about the fight that Mark Webber and Lewis had together over there; without DRS, it would have been nowhere close, we wouldn't have seen anything. It would have just been a normal kind of old traditional kind of race and in that respect, it may not always work out perfectly, there's a little room to improve the situation but in general it has contributed a lot to some great racing.

**JB:** Personally, I think it's brought a lot to the racing. You obviously have races where you think it's too easy to overtake, there are always going to be negatives to something like that, but I think the positives outweigh the negatives and I think we've had some great racing this season on circuits where we've never had overtaking before, especially with two competitive cars, you can have a bit more of a fight now. Even if it doesn't make the pass for you, it can bring you a lot closer so that you can have a go elsewhere on the circuit. I think DRS on its own is good but personally I feel that having KERS has really helped us this year. I think we can really use it to our advantage, to overtake and obviously to try and block a position, so that, for me, has been as big as DRS.

**RB:** I enjoy it very much. I think it's been an incredible year and the fact that in life, sometimes you can see people are never happy with that, because I heard for 20 years that there wasn't enough overtaking in Formula One and all of a sudden I'm hearing people saying there's too much! It's just 18 races and they come up with numbers saying that there's been a hundred overtaking manoeuvres so it looks a bit too easy, but I think it has been quite good. It's still difficult to follow the car in front because the cars are going fast because of its aerodynamic balance, and whenever you have something that destroys that, you basically don't follow the car, so the DRS has helped. It is true that sometimes it may make it too easy, sometimes it wasn't enough, so I think the FIA had all the good numbers to make the show even better for next year. So I'm very much in favour of that. Obviously the new people that come into Formula One will still have to get their hands on the buttons and everything, which we were complaining about at the beginning of the year. Now it has become a much easier thing because we've got used to it, but the new guys will have to adapt to that and I hope there's not too many new guys, so that the old one are kept on. We are used to it, so it's fine.

**Q: (Dan Knutson – National Speedsport News) Rubens, looking back to your first ever F1 race, what one thing stands out to you about that weekend in South Africa?**

**RB:** To be very honest with you, I was over the moon. I'm not an anxious guy but I remember that I was sleeping a little bit less, because I woke up very early to go to the track, I was ready to go at any time, but for me, whenever Ayrton came walking to my garage to offer me help, if I needed anything – for me, that's been my weekend at Kyalami.

**FM:** And he had a lot of hair at that time!

**RB:** Someone who talks about hair, you should have a look whenever it's raining and he's running in the rain, because now it's combed and it's OK, but you should have a look when he's running. It looks worse!

**FM:** I think it's better if we stop, huh?

**RB:** We're going to be fighting even over that now!

**Q: (Alessia Cruciani – La Gazzetta dello Sport) Felipe, do you have any news about your new front wings, the problems?**

**FM:** Well, we're going to have all these front wings from the last three races here again and I hope it's not going to shake. I'm looking forward to run these front wings without any problems.

**Q: (Bob McKenzie – Daily Express) Bruno, the success of the Senna film all around the world seems to have re-awakened – for a lot of people – memories of the great man. Has that also increased pressure on you and what's it like being here? Can you walk around the streets, do people expect you to deliver what he delivered?**

**BS:** No. The movie has only awakened the spirit of Ayrton to people. People come to comment about the movie all the time. Everybody's completely touched by the movie, but that hasn't changed anything from my perspective at all. The most that people will go to when they talk about me in the movie is when they see me driving the boat with Ayrton and stuff like that but not really about my racing. People in general, especially in Brazil, are very supportive of my very short Formula One campaign so the pressure is on, it's been on since I started and it's not going to change for sure. Yes, I can walk about the streets. People recognise me but they don't attack me. I'm not any type of superstar or Hollywood film star so it's alright. I bet Rubens and Felipe have much more of an issue with that. They also look much better, of course.

**RB:** They tell me Bruno looks very good in the film, but he's grown and he's got a different face. It looked very pretty in the film, that's what people tell me.

**BS:** We'll see when I get to your age...

**RB:** As long as you will have some hair that's fine.

**Q: (Rodrigo Gini – Estado de Minas) Question especially for Felipe and Bruno: you've both had problems with stewards' decision in the last races; Felipe in India and Bruno also. How do you feel about it, how do you expect them to behave here, are you satisfied with the stewards' decision, because racing is much closer this year and it tends to create some situations that sometimes you may not agree with.**

**FM:** I'm sure they will behave much better than in India, I'm sure.

**BS:** I blame it on Jenson anyway! No, when there is a situation where people are judging then there is variability unfortunately so sometimes you can get away with it, depending on the way it looks, sometimes you can't. I think we all want the same thing happening to everybody and in the same situation. This will probably never be the case but whenever we have our meetings with Charlie and the FIA, we try to put our perspectives in front of them and I think it just gets better and better every time we come up with something, so let's hope that everybody gets the same treatment every time.

**Q: (Kate Walker – Girl Racer) Now that we have a whole season under our belts of racing on the Pirelli rubber, I was wondering if you could tell us what effect you think that's had on overtaking as opposed to KERS and DRS?**

**JB:** Yes, I think it has helped. I think that at the start of the season, especially, when we were trying to work out what the tyres were like and how many laps they would run and what the degradation was like, I think there was a lot of overtaking. Some of it came from looking after the tyres but also a lot of it came from people pitting, coming back out onto the circuit and being two or three seconds quicker than other cars. It seems a little bit different now, the degradation of the tyre doesn't seem to be as high, it doesn't seem to drop off a cliff like it did earlier this year. Maybe that's just our car, I don't know, but that's the way it seems. It seems that they are more conservative with the choice of tyres towards the end of the season, meaning that the degradation is lower and I think that that will be the case here also. I personally liked it at the start of the year when we had a lot of degradation, I thought that was more fun but personally I feel that Pirelli's done a great job this year. To come into Formula One... you know you can't hide coming into Formula One. I think that they've done a great job, they've definitely been a part of the action this year. There's been a lot of great overtaking and some of it does come down to tyres. So yeah, I think KERS, DRS and the Pirelli tyres have all worked very well together. We've just got to hope that it doesn't change too much next year.

**RB:** If you want to have the degradation I still have it! You can have mine.

I think it's fun, the way it is. Obviously when you give a tyre to a driver you're talking about more or less grip, you're always trying to go for more grip and the faster you go, the more pleasure you have, so at the beginning of the year, I think everyone had to adapt a little bit, not that the Pirelli

was worse than the Bridgestone, it was just different and you had to treat the tyres differently. That was the special feeling about it and when we talked about grip, in testing it seemed that it was not enough with the temperature that we had there, but then when we went racing, there was a lot of overtaking and I think Pirelli had done a really good job to actually help that. So together with the DRS and the KERS, I think the show has improved and let's hope that's the way Formula One's going to be for the long term.

Ends