

Sunday 29 June 1997 - Extracts of post-race winners' press conferences

1. Michael Schumacher (Ferrari), 72 laps in 1hr 38m 50.492s;
 2. Heinz-Harald Frentzen (Williams-Renault) 23.5 seconds behind;
 3. Eddie Irvine (Ferrari), 51.3 seconds behind
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Q. Congratulations, Michael, on your third victory of the season and on consolidating your lead in the championship to 14 points.

MS: It is an enjoyable victory -- and a very surprising one. Obviously my predictions about the weekend were totally wrong. But I am happy to take it as it is: to get pole position and then the victory is the best you can do. The way we did it was perfect, too, because we made no mistakes in either the setup or the strategy.

Q. Did you stick with your pitstop strategy all the way through?

MS: We were on a two-stopper and we stuck to that. In my situation I had to watch Heinz-Harald, to see whether he would be going for a tyre change or not, and that meant I had to stay out as long as possible. That was fairly difficult -- and I had a moment when I got into the gravel at the first corner. I thought, 'oops, am I ever going to get out of this?' But it worked, and I was able to control the race after that.

Q. Heinz-Harald, you must be pleased today to have beaten your team mate ...

HHF: Yes, I am happy with the result today. I really wanted to finish well because so far this year I have only two results in the points. I was astonished with Michael's speed at the beginning. I thought he must have been going for a three-stop strategy because although we knew from testing that the tyres wouldn't be a problem, you have to be careful in the early laps -- and he was pushing like hell. That made me think he was on a three-stop strategy -- and I let him go.

MS: Thank you!

HHF: Even though I was still pushing very hard, I thought he would be making three stops.

Q. Were you tempted to come in and change to wet or intermediate tyres?

HHF: There was a very critical point when the sky looked clear over the track but it still wanted to rain. I didn't know where the rain was coming from and it obviously wasn't going to stop, so I started wondering what Michael -- or the guy behind me -- would do at the stage. There was no change at all: Michael seemed to be taking the same strategy, based on the rain stopping soon, because he stayed on his slick tyres. I decided to stay with them as well - - and obviously the situation was alright for us when it did stop raining after a while. But I think we should have gone for the intermediate tyres a couple of laps earlier, because at the least that would have helped us to finish closer to Michael.

Q. Williams has not been strong recently while Ferrari has. What is your feeling about the team at mid-season?

HHF: It is a disappointment at the moment because everybody was expecting Williams to have an easy-going year, especially because Ferrari had so much to complain about at the beginning of the season. Everybody was expecting it to be quite easy for us. Even Michael has been saying that he was not sure that he would be getting into the points, it encouraged us to think that it would be easy for us. But now it has turned around and it looks as though Ferrari is much more competitive than it was at the beginning of the season. At the moment Michael is the one to catch.

Q. What can Williams do about it?

HHF: We had a new specification of engine here, but it wasn't a big improvement. It was a

step in the right direction. I hope that Renault is going to push a little bit more in that case.

Q. Eddie, you must be delighted to be back for a fourth podium appearance this year. And how about that excellent start?

EI: I have had two bad races and it's a great feeling to be back here. My start didn't feel too good: maybe other people made really bad starts. I got far too much wheelspin, but when Villeneuve braked far too early for the first corner I just sailed round the outside of him. After that I was able to pull away from him.

Q. On the last lap Jacques almost took you off at the last corner. Did you know he was there?

EI: I knew he was coming up fast, but my intermediate rear tyres had blistered really badly on the last lap and I was just trying to hang on. In the second last hairpin I just couldn't turn in because I knew the rear wouldn't [grip], so I had to go straight on to the grass, into the gravel and back out again. Every time I tried to turn the steering wheel the rear wanted to go straight on. It was pretty close -- but it made for an exciting finish.

Q. Michael, what are your feelings about the British Grand Prix in two weeks' time?

MS: If we have the same kind of change between testing and the race [that we have had here], then obviously we are looking good! The Silverstone test was awful -- so let's see what this week brings when we go back there. It will be our last chance to set up the car.

[Whatever happens in the race] I guess I now have enough points in the world championship to be still leading after the British GP. That is a good prospect for the rest of the season.