

[Transcript] Sky Sports F1 Podcast / When will anyone catch up with Red Bull? | Nico Rosberg: Max Verstappen is extraordinary!

Hello, everyone. Welcome to this week's episode of the Sky Sports F1 podcast with me, Matt Baker. Joining me for this one is the 2016 Formula One World Champion, Nico Rosberg and broadcaster, Liam McDevitt. Hello to you both, Nico. I'll start with you. How are you? How's your weekend in Hungary?

Hi, everybody. Yeah, so it's great to be on your podcast show here, and I had a lovely weekend in Hungary. I think it's a great track. It's a great city, so it's nice to be there. It's nice to be part of the Sky Sports F1 team, and it's always good to catch up with all old teammates and friends and things like that. So I said hi to everybody at the Mercedes team, my mechanics and journalists, and that's always lovely.

It's hard to move you through the paddock, Nico. You're a very popular man when you go to Formula One races.

Yeah, even though I mean, it's now seven years now since I stopped. It's incredible. It's a long time ago already. It's unbelievable. It feels like yesterday. No, but it's still nice that, of course, people still appreciate me being there. It does help that I was a World Champion, I guess.

I think so. Liam, first time on the podcast, so I'm going to give you the honour of giving us your one word race review for the Hungarian Grand Prix.

Yeah, thanks for having me on and pleasure to meet you, Nico, but the word I've gone with, I think, is defining, and it's because Red Bull answered every question they needed to answer, didn't sit in pole position in qualifying. Even I got bought into the dream of a slightly more competitive race, but Max and Red Bull came up trumps again, so I've gone with defining for the race this weekend.

Nico, I don't know if you were briefed before to have a one word race review, so I might be putting you on the spot here, but if you were to define that race in one word, what would it be?

What would I say, astonishing or legendary? Let's go with legendary, because the Red Bull team broke a legendary historic record of 11 successive race wins by McLaren. They've now got 12, so that's an incredible milestone, and for Stappen himself is driving in such a legendary way. I mean, he is driving like one of the best five or six of all time, you know, in line with the Senna, Schumacher, Hamilton, and two other names. So, Fan Joe, and then you start to struggle already, so it's really legendary.

Couldn't agree more. I've gone for cruising, and that's because I felt like Max was just cruising all of Sunday, a bit like you said, Nico. He never looked in doubt.

Matt, that's not a cool one word, Matt. We give you a second chance. I mean, that really sucks. Legendary, astonishing, perfect. Should we call it perfect? It wasn't a perfect weekend, but it was a perfect race for Max for Stappen. I think, yeah, and what I was going to say, the reason why I was kind of going to go down cruising, but I'll change it to perfect, is finishing 33 seconds ahead of Lando Norris in second, and you know, no one seemed to lay a glove on him, basically. As soon as he overtook in that first corner, he was straight into the lead, and it never looked in any doubt. So, yeah, all right. Matt, you think the race weekend was perfect, or you think it was perfect for Max? I think it was perfect for Max. Yeah, I don't know if that's the word you really want to go with, but yeah, Max wasn't perfect. It really was. Right, here's what's coming up then on the podcast today. We're going to ask the question,

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can anyone catch Max for Stappen and Red Bull, and when will that happen? We're going to talk about the Red Bull records that you alluded to earlier. McLaren's turnaround, Mercedes getting a bit closer, maybe on Saturday, maybe not on Sunday, and Ricardo's weekend as well. But let's go through some of the records that Red Bull have broken this weekend. So, we've already talked about that 12th consecutive win. Red Bull have now won 21 out of the last 22 Grand Prix.

Verstappen

becomes the fifth driver in history to win seven consecutive races, and they are Alberto Ascari, Michael Schumacher, Sebastian Vettel, and a certain person called Nico Rosberg. So, Nico, I want to start by asking you about your seven wins in a row, and tell us how hard it is, and therefore, how much respect do you have for what Max Verstappen is doing at the moment? Yeah, I mean, what an honour to be in that sentence as part of that, seven in a row. Yeah, that was quite cool. I would have had eight if Lewis Woodner shunted me off in Barcelona, for those of you who remember that race in 2016. I'm laughing, by the way, for those of you who can't see me now, because that was a joke, anyways. No, and yeah, I mean, it's incredible, really, to such a performance from Max. And I said it in the after-race interview with him, that I'm one of the people that can best judge his performance at the moment, at the level that he's driving at, and yes, it doesn't exactly make for the most exciting races at the very front, but I mean, it's so deserving, because it's incredible, the level that he's at, that's so close to perfection all the time. And I mean, you've got to compare to the teammate. Look where Sergio Perez is. I mean, his best qualifying result in the last six Grand Prix was ninth on the grid, can you believe, with the same car. And Sergio is a really good driver, yeah, we know that. I mean, he's not a, he knows how to drive a racing car. So, Max is just extraordinary.

Nico, I always, as a fan, I watch those races and watch Max every week. And I think, how do you stay concentrated to the, obviously, you're going around corners at ridiculous speeds and everything's on a knife edge, but do you ever just sit when you're leading races as often as that? And are there ever moments where you really, really need to stay concentrated and remember where you are in the fact you are in a Formula One car leading a race?

Yeah, of course. I mean, it's more a general thing that he generally needs to be careful that he doesn't get complacent because when things start to, I mean, he's in such an incredible flow where no one can touch him. And that's usually when there's a risk of getting complacent and you lose a bit of motivation. So you just need to be a bit careful of that. But I don't see that happening because the state of mind is phenomenal that he has and just he's so focused and so in this zone all the time. It's like art. It's amazing.

Nico, if we look at some of the great partnerships in Formula One, I'm thinking Schumacher and Ferrari,

for example, is Verstappen and Red Bull. That is going to become legendary, isn't it? I mean, it already has. But where do you see that sitting in the history of Formula One?

Thank you, Matt, for appreciating my one word to describe the race weekend. That's very cool.

I like how you picked that up. So yeah, it is, no, it's a historic pairing. I mean, it's going to be one of those epic ones. We have Senna with McLaren. We have Hamilton with Mercedes and we have Verstappen with Red Bull and Schumacher with Ferrari. And then that's kind of it, no. I mean, you'd have some after that, but it's less clear because it's a bit more mixed.

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So that's kind of it, you would say, I suppose. And no, I mean, it's going to be one of those, I guess, top four that I just mentioned. Liam, if Red Bull, because I think when we ask this question at the start of the season, can Red Bull win every race, we thought, haha, that's a great question to ask Christian Horner after the race. I mean, that won't happen. That can't happen. Now it is looking very possible that Red Bull could win every single race at this Formula One season. If you look at sport more widely, and I'm thinking there's plenty of other examples of domination in sport, where do you think Red Bull winning every race would sit amongst the great sport achievements? Oh, I think it would be up there. For me, I had the privilege of sitting down with Thierry Henri recently, and he spoke about that invincible season that Arsenal had. And the writing on the wall for that season was there the season before. And I feel like it's the same with Red Bull. You're going into race weekends now, and it's almost who can finish second. Because you know, Max, as long as he keeps the car on the track is probably going to win. And I think it would be up there with the with the great sports and achievements like the Invincibles. And it would certainly for me anyway, be on a par with that to go through a whole season with Red Bull winning every race would just be incredible. It would be legendary, Nico, I think. Here we go again. Yes, we're doubling up on this. But it's even more impressive, considering that there's only one driver who can win races at the moment. I mean, that makes it even more crazy, the whole thing. Nico, when you were racing, were you bothered by records? Will Max be thinking of the next record to come? And will the whole team be thinking of those records? It really depends from driver to driver. But I think, I think probably in the end of the day, all of us are keen on records, because it's like part of our legacy. So to this day, I'm proud of this seven race wins that I had in a row. And being being in one sentence there with Max just now, you know, I'm proud of that. I'm proud of being a one time world champion and everything. Look at Michael Schumacher. Remember when he beat equalized Ayrton Senna's race wins in Monza? I think he got 41 or 42 race wins. And it was equaling Ayrton Senna and he broke out in tears. So it does mean something to everybody. And I'm sure it means something even to Max. And he's there. I mean, he's on it to break many of them. I feel like it's a way of quantifying what you're achieving, isn't it? If you look at people you've aspired to be like, or people you compete against, if your records are better than theirs, it's a way of quantifying what you've just achieved. And I think he'll definitely be looking at those those records and Red Bull will be what will be wanting to do it. I think if they can keep a car on track the whole season, I can't see anyone beating Max at all. I've got a tweet here from Dan. This is sort of directed to you, Niko. What's the difference between Mercedes dominating era compared to Red Bull's domination now? And do you think it's now much more predictable that Red Bull would win compared maybe with when Mercedes were dominating? I don't really know what the difference was, because we were just as dominant as Red Bull is now. I mean, we're getting all the pole positions, all the race wins. It was just when we were messing up and having some crashes between the two of us or reliability concerns. Because it was the beginning of the hybrid era, so at the time there was more reliability concerns in the cars and in the power trains. I think probably that's the only difference really, just more reliability struggle at the time. If not, it's very similar.

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Another question, and this is on the Sergio Perez question really, because what started as a very difficult weekend for Sergio, he started P9, or sorry, he had the crash in FP1, first of all, which was obviously not the start he wanted to the weekend, but he went from P9 in the race to finish on the podium in third. Cameron, on Twitter, would like to know what lessons could Checo learn from your approach in 2016 when it comes to beating an unbeatable inverted commas teammate? What would you, if you were Sergio Perez's coach or manager, be saying to

him now about dealing with Max Verstappen? Well, I mean, first of all, I would recommend to Sergio to really switch off all the media and everything, not look at social media, because he's going to be seeing so many memes going against him, comments going against him, journalists giving questions that are going against him, so you really need to separate yourself from that. So what I switched off my entire social media email, News World, and completely for the last six years when I was fighting for the championship. The only problem is that he still has to go to the racetrack, and on a Thursday, he has to sit in front of 50 journalists, and they're going to ask him, hey, Sergio, you're looking like you're having the biggest struggle in your career. Do you think you're ever going to get out of this again? You know, this is the journalist asking, and that, it always hits you. It always hits you because you have to listen, you can't ignore, you have to answer the questions. And the next question is going to be, hey, Sergio, do you feel a threat from Daniel Ricciardo? Do you feel that you might lose your seat? You know, that's the next question from the journalist, you know? And it just goes on and on like that. And it's so hard, because it just keeps on hitting you in your head. And that's like one of the hardest parts of the weekend for Sergio at the moment to deal with. And so really, it's about switching off, focusing also in a state of mind. He was very focused on, hey, I want to beat Max, I want to beat Max, I want to be champion.

You know, he's always saying, I want to be champion in the winter. And it's time to, I mean, he's doing it anyways, but just forget about that and just race weekend by race weekend, come to the race and session by session, do a fantastic job, prepare for it as best you can, risk manage out there, and just do a fantastic job and rebuild like that. That's, that's what it's about. That's what he needs to try and do. Yeah, I think if you look at how he was, how he opened the season was clearly had that winter where he was talking about being champion and the first

few races didn't have that level of distraction that perhaps we see now and maybe that's where the complacency and inconsistency is perhaps creeping in. It's very difficult to explain how his season has nosedived in the way that it has, because he had some really strong showings earlier in the year. It's impossible, it's impossible really to say, but we've seen that so often with sports, especially also Formula One drivers that they just get this, hit this patch of like really poor form. And I mean, Sergio, I mean, imagine five races in a row, not in Q3 with a Red Bull car, like, and then ninth on the grid now in Hungary, like, wow, that's a, that's a, that's quite a struggle, you know, so, but the day like yesterday is really going to help him a lot. And he confirmed that in the post race interviews with me. He was like, yeah, this is really the perfect race to rebuild my confidence. Liam, do you, do you think actually what Sergio is doing at the moment is kind of, it's not really bothering Red Bull, because actually Red Bull could be leading the Constructors Championship just with Max's points by himself. So, you know, we know how difficult

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that Red Bull seat is to find a good, a good match for that, for that second driver to Max Verstappen. So would you say perhaps actually the only person this is harming really is Sergio Perez. It's not harming Red Bull. Yeah, completely. I think if you look at previous seasons where they've needed someone to maybe help Max from a charge in Lewis Hamilton or a bit more competition at the minute

Max is so far ahead, they don't need a second driver to maybe play team. So if you are under, under fire for your seat, then Red Bull are in a position where they can afford, like you said, to just have Max out leading out front. They don't need someone else who's applying pressure or potentially slowing up another driver who's on a charge. So yeah, for Perez, I think it's going to be really interesting how he comes back after the break, if he maybe needs that break, just to have a bit of downtime and come back in a second half of the season and put some performances that might just keep him in his seat. Because what's the next spot, right this weekend? Yes, follow this weekend,

then we've got the break. The problem is Spa is like going to be the ultimate Max for stopping track again, I'm sure. I mean, he's, it's really a driver's track where you can make such a difference if you're like dialed in and you're in the zone. And I feel that he's going to be killing it this weekend, like, and you, it's so difficult for a driver when you start to come to the realization that, hey, this guy does things that I will never be able to do in my life. And you just keep looking at it all weekend and you see these things in the data. And of course, I had these moments with Lewis. Fortunately, they didn't last too long. But, but there was always these moments where I look at the data and like, there's no way I would be able to do this. Like this is like inhuman, it's not even human anymore. And that's what Sergio will be looking at with Max for stopping. And that's, it's tough. It's really tough to accept that, you know, that, that he's just able to do something that I'm not, you know, it's really not easy. What about what about that summer break, Nico, when you were racing, was that a period, I guess it depended on how the season was going right? But if was, was that a period where you just needed that, that time, that, that time to switch off to reset and to go again for the second half of the season? Yeah, it's very valuable to have that summer break and just really recharge with your family and friends, you know, go with family and friends, spend a lot of time, tell them not to mention the word formula one that's important, which is often difficult because it carries over into the, into the family. I mean, you know, I would come home and my, my, my father or father-in-law would tell me, Hey, I should pick up boxing. Yeah. And the reason was because Lewis was walking all over me the day before in the race, you know, so, so my father-in-law or my father then tells me, I should pick up boxing when I come home. I'm like, do you know how painful that is to hear? Like, oh my God, you know, it's like, it's like they're telling me to grow a pair of balls, you know, like, oh my goodness. That's horrible. So it goes all the way into your family. So that's why it's like F1 top ban on the family and just recharge. Fascinating insights. You'll have a holiday, Nico. Yeah, I like that story. That's a good one. All right, let's, let's move on to, to talk about McLaren because obviously McLaren, the last couple of races, Silverstone and now Hungary have performed exceptionally well. I think we were both waiting for Hungary to, to see

if, if, if it was just a Silverstone thing, the lower temperatures that the specific type of track. But Nico, if McLaren can do it at Silverstone and at Hungary, is this car the real deal?

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The McLaren car is the real deal. That's confirmed now. Of course, there's a very extreme track change now to, to a spa. But, but we've seen how rapid the McLaren is on the straights. So, or should be fine there as well. And it's, I mean, it's, it's such an impressive technical development that they've done during a season that's so unusual for a team to make such a massive jump. I mean, from like 13th to second, like it's incredible what they've, and then they're challenging for the race win now. I mean, it's coming. It's coming that race win, you know, and Lando is like a champion in the making. Yeah, he's a world class. He's incredible as a, as a young driver. So unbelievable what they've done. I hope they understand it 100% themselves. Sometimes

I'm not too sure if they really understand everything because these aerodynamics, you know, are just so complex with the underground, with the ground effect. It's very, very difficult to, to fully understand in the wind tunnel. It's much more easy to see flow on top of a car than underneath because underneath then it also changes so much with angle and with, with ride height, you know, there's very, very rapid effects going on there. So, yeah, but if they do understand it 100%, it's phenomenal. And they don't even have their, their new wind tunnel up and running, you know, they're still using their old, old wind tunnel, which we know as it's massive limitations. So, wow, incredible. Liam, how good is, is it now for Formula One to have another person at the front? And particularly Lando Norris, who is, I mean, I was standing under the podium yesterday. I think he got the biggest cheer out of, certainly from Verstappen and Perez. It was all for Lando. I think, like, Hamilton, when he came out for the, for the drivers parade, got a massive cheer equal to Lando's, but he probably is one of the most popular drivers on the grid at the moment. Yeah, Lando Mania is real, honestly. A lot of my friends who are new Formula One fans, it's all about Lando Norris and to see him and McLaren back near the front of F1 is good for, for everyone who watches and all involved. It's just, I don't know if they can close that gap on Red Bull like Nico said, I'd love them to. And I think the jump that they have made this season is already incredible. But to have another team competing for that podium, those podium spots is, at least it makes for, for some overtaking behind Max. No, I can confirm that. I would, again, post post race interviews. I mean, the cheer from the crowd when Lando was coming up to talk was just massive. So

he's so much support he has. It's really amazing to see. And I hope it's not, it can be a bit overwhelming sometimes also for young drivers to have so much attention and so much support because

F1 is taking on dimensions now that didn't used to have like five, seven years ago. I mean, there's the people like under your hotel that you can't even get out anymore, even at your home, wherever they're living. So it's really, it's really going quite extreme. I was speaking to Toto at the race weekend and he said, no, I'm not coming to Ibiza because it's just paparazzi nuts. I need to go somewhere where nobody can find me for the summer holidays because everything's going out of control.

So, yeah, so I hope Lando manages to cope with all that attention.

Also Oscar Piastri, he's putting in really solid performances. And I guess the excitement of Lando double podium is easy to focus on. But Piastri's driving like someone who's much more experienced than he is in his seat in McLaren. Yeah, you're right. It's like this crucial phase and opportunity

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for Rookie. Piastri now suddenly has that good car. And it's now he has these couple of races where it's his moment where he needs to put a marker down as a Rookie that I'm here to stay. And he's doing exactly that perfectly, like so perfect. He's shadowing Lando just right behind him always, like one, two tenths, couple of tenths behind him, always there. If Lando's second, Oscar's third, even in Hungary now, he was one place in front after the start. So he's doing a perfect job. We did see some weaknesses then from him in Hungary. And we saw the same ones in Silverstone actually that he's still struggling a little bit with tire management and race space throughout the whole race. But let's not underestimate it. I mean, it's so, so difficult to get that right. So experience helps a lot there. And Oscar, it really looks like that he's the real deal and he's here to stay, which is, which is awesome. Yeah, this is a man who didn't race last year. Now I was back in Formula One after not being in the car for a whole year.

Nico, what about Lando's contract until 2025? I think at the start of the season when, when McLaren were often not getting out of Q1, there were a lot of people saying, wow, I mean, that contract, how watertight is it? Because if you're Lando Norris, you're wanting to get out of that potentially pretty sharpish if the McLaren isn't as good as that. Now, it's maybe starting to look a little bit like actually till 2025, that might be the right kind of timescale for that car to get to the front of the grid. Yeah, I mean, in general, I'm not sure that was the right decision of him to lock himself into McLaren for, for so long.

But, but, but of course now in hindsight, you can always say it was the right decision because now the car has come alive, the team is coming alive. So now it's all good, obviously, because he's been challenged for race podiums every weekend and go for the race win very soon. So now you can say everything is done correctly. And now he won't mind that contract being long because McLaren is an awesome team. And with the way it's going, he's in a super fantastic position there. So why not? Liam, you started to work a little bit with McLaren over the coming months. I mean, what's the mood like in the McLaren team at the moment? What's the atmosphere like? I mean, if you get a couple of good results like this, I imagine it turns, turns the team around. We had a little party after qualifying at Silverstone, which was, which was incredible. It just seems like every the hard work is finally starting to pay off. And I don't know how you couldn't celebrate the results you're guessing, but it really feels when you're near Lando and Oscar up close, they seem to be a team, they seem to get on well. And I think that that can help and is important. So I mean, how could you not be happy at McLaren right now with the results and the upgrades that they've put in have clearly had a massive impact. So hopefully it can continue throughout the, throughout the rest of the season.

I've got a question here from AlwaysF1 on Twitter. Niko, do you think McLaren can finish second in the Constructors' Championship if they keep getting podiums or other teams eventually catch them? Second is maybe, I mean, that's probably a little bit far. I mean, that, that would mean Mercedes are on 223 and then McLaren are on 87. So we'd have to take a lot of points away from Mercedes or something. Yeah, no, that's not going to work out, but they're going to catch up rapidly. But, but when McLaren finish second and third Mercedes is going to finish fourth and fifth, so it's going to be difficult to make up that huge difference. But I don't know who's, I mean, who's, what's the next ones there? I mean, there's Aston and Ferrari, I don't know if they can catch one of those maybe, but even they are going to be pretty far up the road on they, maybe Aston, Aston, because at the moment they only have one driver who's really

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getting bigger points, even though even in last race they both didn't get many points, perhaps they can catch Aston. Nico, would you rather be sat in a McLaren or a Mercedes for the rest of the season? Well, Mercedes, come on, because it's my home, it's my team, it's my, it's my ex family, so I'll go for Mercedes. There we go. Yeah, that was a very good question. Let's move on to talk about Mercedes speaking of, because it was a weekend of mixed fortunes, wasn't it, for your old team, Nico? Let's start with the positives, that poll for Hamilton on Saturday, you could see how much it meant to him. What do you think that did for Lewis in terms of his energy and moving forward, feeling like the team are going in the right direction? Yeah, I mean, I've witnessed that greatness many, many times in my career, sitting in the same car as him. And on Saturday, that was one of those very, very special moments where nobody in the world could even come close to a lap like that that Lewis did with that car. I mean, it was similarly to Max being inhuman in general, then Lewis was inhuman, inhuman on the Saturday there on his, on one of his favorite tracks. You know, it's just the way he goes on this track is, is unreal. And that's why I was so sure, because he's done it before so many times that he just makes the impossible possible by, by then winning with a car that's actually not supposed to be winning, especially on a track like Hungary. So I was actually really thinking he's going to win it on Sunday. And we saw a really rare, rare, like string of mistakes from him, messing up the start, messing up turn one, messing up turn two, and just giving up another position to Lando, just drove around the outside of him, you know, so, or was it inside or I think outside, I'm not sure, can't remember. Anyway, so that was very unusual. But, but back to the question, what was the question? It was a case of how, how that result has will impact Lewis going forward, you know, into the into the second half of the season. Oh, no, no, no, no, it's huge. I mean, for motivation, it's huge for the whole team, because you start to believe again, hey, we can be on pole, we can win races very soon, just gives you this belief back, and that that will be a such a motivational booster. So, so I think it's a great thing. And who knows, maybe it can also make that difference in the contract negotiations, you know, that he's having with Toto, because it's different, you know, when you start to believe again, that the Toto and the team can actually give you a car where you have a chance to win races, and perhaps go for another championship, it will be a big difference to difference. And you're in your state of mind, then to actually putting pen to paper and signing a contract, where who knows, maybe there's a couple of million less than you're hoping for or somebody else. I don't know, obviously anything, but maybe that's something. Liam, what did you make of make of Lewis's pole? How excited were you at the prospects of Lewis being on pole, and potentially going on to win the race? I mean, Lewis, how much is the whole reason I ever got into Formula One many, many years ago, when he was in a McLaren. So, I was bought into like Nico, I thought Sunday was going to be a Lewis special, and he was going to go and at least compete for longer. So, I mean, it's great to see them, great to see you can see the emotion, which we kind of haven't seen too often in recent times from Lewis. So that was nice to see. And you see, Nico will know better than me, but it seems like he's a really hard worker. And that pole might just be a little bit of fire that he needs to hopefully go and go and put some quicker laps down throughout the rest of the season. But for me, it was amazing to see Lewis Mercedes on the start of the grid on a Sunday, but just to shame me, he was back in fourth after the first few corners. It didn't last very long, did it? Did it that hope? Nico,

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do you think we were almost robbed of that battle, that wheel to wheel battle between Max and Lewis going into turn one? Obviously, we had it into turn one, but it was over pretty quickly, wasn't it? And I think it was such a shame it didn't at least give us a few more laps of that battle. Yeah, I mean, it was really such a letdown. I was so excited and then I saw that happening. I was like, oh no, come on, that's not cool. So that was unfortunate for us F1 fans. But there was a wheel to wheel battle going into turn one because Max purposefully ran Lewis out wide. I mean, he just didn't even try to get the apex. So there was a bit of a battle there, but Lewis couldn't do anything on the outside. Once he tried to decide to go around the outside of Forsappen, so probably Lewis should have just backed out of it or something and try and tuck in behind. I think there's a big part of all F1 fans who just want to relive those former seasons of Max versus Lewis and Lewis versus Max every week. And of course, any hint of that, you can easily

get loaded into being excited, but yeah, just wasn't there Sunday. Of course, because Lewis is historically one of the best ever in wheel to wheel racing, and then arrived this new charger who did like incredible things in wheel to wheel racing, which even took Lewis by surprise in a way. We never witnessed this kind of level before, you know. So to see Lewis then fighting back is just so cool, you know, and we all want to see more of that. Don't realize how lucky we were in 2021 to see that kind of weekend in weekend out. Nico, do you sympathize with Lewis and his lack of confidence in the car? It seems like that's kind of the in quotes after race weekends. That seems to be the problem. What is it like as a driver when you don't have confidence in the machinery underneath you? Well, I don't know if we should if we should put too much weight on those

comments. I'm not sure. But of course, sometimes it can go that way that things that the car just isn't completely to your liking. And it's not a quick change. It's never a quick change then. It's probably a waiting till the next year kind of thing, usually. But it's rare and usually you can work your way around it. And I think sometimes Lewis, yeah, like this Friday in Hungary where he said, we're struggling so much, the car is so far off. And then he goes in the pole position, maybe we shouldn't put too much weighting into that. And let's remember that that he's doing such a great job against George, who's also potentially a future world champion with what we've seen from him. But isn't it amazing how how it's just swings and roundabouts like last year, George was having the better run, better luck and beat Lewis over a season. And this year, everything is going against George every moment on every race weekend, it's always going against George. So it's just the complete opposite. And then this year, Lewis is going to have George under control in the championship, you know, but but what a great recovery drive from George from 18 coming back to six was again, like it was such a such a fantastic drive. Really, really well done.

Lim, I guess when when we first entered 2022, and we were we were kind of every weekend that Mercedes weren't up right at the very top was a shock. And are we now in a situation with Mercedes where it's kind of like, oh, well, you know, they are just kind of operating in the midfield at the moment, being honest, it's hard for them to get out of the midfield. It's no longer a shock, say, when when they end up P4, P5, P6. Yeah, completely. I wanted after the end of the season success they had, I thought the gap would be much closer. And I did think originally at the start of the season that the early results were just a blip. But I think you showed the car revealed its true

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pace on on Sunday. Obviously, it came back when it had a lighter fuel load in the end. But I just think it's where Mercedes are. McLaren have obviously made the jumps they had. And if you ask kind of like Mercedes can get on the podium consistently, that seems like success at the minute. And obviously, that's not what so many F1 fans are used to over the last six, seven, eight years. I wonder what I wonder what that is that the Mercedes car can fairly well like cope with one lap pace, or low fuel pace. And then when it's heavy, just be so far off. I wonder, I wonder what that is. Some head scratching at Mercedes HQ. Yeah, a tweet here from Stephanie during the Hungarian Grand Prix. This is you, Niko. Sorry, you said Lewis isn't done with F1 yet. How long do you think he can and wants to go on? Well, because Martin Brundle said we're seeing the handing over the of the baton from from Lewis to Lando. And I was like, whoa, whoa, hang on a second. I don't think we're there yet. And it's impossible to to say how long. I mean, if he's enjoying himself and he still feels motivated and believes that he can still have a car to win races. And he's earning, I mean, who knows, 40, 50 million a year plus whatever. Then, yeah, if there's possible, they will still do many years. Why not? I mean, look at Fernando. Fernando is 42. And it's still world world class. I mean, the way he's driving is still incredible. So so yeah, who knows? Yeah. I mean, Liam, how long would you like to see Lewis go on for? I'd obviously love to see him in a position to compete for an eighth. That would be for me something that I'd love to see is the reason I love F1. And to see him again, be close to being crowned a world champion would be would be amazing. But at the minute, just that dream of an eighth is for me fading and fading away. And hopefully Mercedes can pull it together and at least get in my car that can compete with with Red Bull and and McLaren if they keep improving the way they do. Yeah, because even for next year, even for next year now, it's starting to be difficult because in the in the post race interview with Christian Horner, he said that the Red Bull team is now putting 100% focus already on next year. They're not developing this year's car anymore. So Mercedes at the very least has to do that as well to have a fighting chance against Red Bull next year. But it's just it becomes such a long game, you know, an F1 that's very difficult to catch up. There's no guarantees are there that next year that Mercedes will be able to give Lewis a car to go for eight. No, no, no, no. Right. The final kind of big, big topic I want to get into is just Ricardo's weekend. Obviously, his his first weekend back in Formula One this season, replacing Nick DeVries at Alfa Tawery. Nico, start with you give us some marks out of 10 for how you think Daniel's weekend was. It's really difficult to judge. I think in general, you would say nine. Maybe you would even give him a 10. I don't know. The thing is, I'm not able to judge his his race in itself because he got he got shunted from behind. And then as a result, he crashed out the two Alpenes, which was not his fault. And after that, I really don't know what he was doing pace wise. But Liam, do you know any idea? No, I'm not going to focus at the front, but it's great to see him back. We love a Ricardo in an F1 car. He did finish 13th and well out of Sonoda and everything. So maybe his pace was was good. But anyways, already his qualifying pace was was was really way, I mean, really strong, because beating Sonoda first time back is is really strong in a car that you've never driven before with very little running the day before. You know, that's wow, that's the ultimate challenge. So super. And it's so nice for all of us that he's back. We love watching Daniel Ricardo, you know, he's such a such a warrior on the racetrack. And Christian Orner was saying that a happy Daniel Ricardo is a fast Daniel Ricardo. And I'm seeing him very happy at the moment. The pressure and

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expectation is not really getting to him, which is so he seems to be in a good place. And maybe then we can see a different Daniel Ricardo and see the old Daniel Ricardo again, you know, was incredibly fast and talented. When I saw he was going to be back in back in F1, and then the Red Bull Rima mill started, I kind of wondered what he'd have to do for the remainder of the season to put forward a good enough argument to get a seat at Red Bull. I don't know what success for Danny Ricardo looks like this season. Well, it's going to be really dominating Sonoda. It's going to be getting some getting some points, some strong races. And then then and then it depends on Perez also, if Perez continues this difficult form, then there could be a chance, but it's going to be a big ask. But anyway, I think Daniel made a bit of a mistake to mention that interest in going back to Red Bull racing, because it just adds the whole focus now on him is like, is he going to manage to do this? And it's all about that. And it shouldn't be, it should be about him just racing for Alpha Tawery and trying to do a good job. That's it. So it was, it was, it's a mistake for him to, to put so much focus on, I'm only here because I want to get back to Red Bull racing. That's a big lesson that I learned in my career, you know, that's a total unnecessary extra pressure. It gives us some extra jeopardy to talk about there, doesn't it? Yeah, because you're, you're going to rate him based on that. Was Sunday good enough to get him back to Red Bull racing? That's all what it's about now. And, and that's all good. That's all healthy. Getting in that car halfway through the season, having not even tested in that car, was this weekend, do you think, a lot about just kind of getting comfortable, understanding that Alpha Tawery and getting the setup right in order for maybe then Belgium might be a slightly even better thought for him because I guess we'll spend what, all week in the factory this week, working on the setup, working on the car to make sure it's as good as it can be for him. Yeah. I mean, he's a race winner in, in Belgium as well. So it's a track he goes well at and because he beat me there, I remember that. And, and Hungary, I think was really about also getting the small things right, like even just your brake pedal feel, because some drivers will like really hard brake pedal, some drivers will like soft brake pedal. And even that can make a huge difference than on your performance. So a lot of, I think a lot of fine tuning and just for driver comfort will have happened in Hungary for him. And, and that's why there's much more to come from him once he settles in into the car and feels comfortable and has a comfortable seat and position and steering wheel and everything. So it was a good start. Liam, I'm intrigued to get your thoughts. And this is actually a question from Stephanie on Twitter. How much time should F1 rookies get to prove themselves and yourself, you're a, you're a professional footballer. And imagine if you, I don't know what, I don't know what 10 races is in football terms. I'm going to let you say six months. Imagine you get six months, half a season to prove your worth. It's brutal, isn't it? Well, it's brutal in the sense that there's is so unforgiving F1. It's hard to draw a comparison with football because I guess the rooflessness of it, if you, if you don't take your chance and you're, you need to be in that top elite, elite group of people in the world who get to sit in a F1 car. I'd like to think you'd need a season to get, get used to everything and the new surroundings. Cause you see the jump, the jump up is, is so vast and so massive. I'd like to think you'd get a season, but when you're dealing with the very top percentage of elite sport, you can understand how decisions are made as, as ruthlessly or as quickly as they are. What, what do you think, Nico? You think he's been hard done by, or, or you think you need a season to, to kind of really

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understand what you need to be a top F1 driver.

Vision order said, we're only interested in Nick. If he looks to be like the world class we're looking for to potentially come to Red Bull Racing. And, and they came to the conclusion that yes, Nick can be a great Formula One racer, whatever, but he'll just never be what we're looking for to potentially have him in Red Bull Racing. And then it's just not of interest for us. And we have this opportunity with Ricciardo at the same time. I mean, certainly that was decisive in the decision to release Nick. If it wasn't for Ricciardo there, Nick surely would have finished the season. But there was that opportunity to put Daniel back in the car and evaluate him if perhaps they could find the old Daniel once again, and not the Daniel they saw at McLaren, which would be very exciting for Red Bull as a whole, because of course, Daniel is huge personality and, and was a huge driver, you know, so I think it was a combination. And it was very harsh on Nick because to get kicked out of your dream for Nick, for Nick, and for all of us, you know, the dream is drive a Formula One, be a Formula One driver. And then you get it for a couple of races and you get kicked out brutally. It's so harsh mentally. And you saw it on the social media that you just went black out on social media and just came with a short statement and said, hey, sorry, I need time for myself. You know, it's, it's painful. So, so yeah, that's the way it is. Sometimes I guess, yeah. Human level, there's just huge sympathy with going through that process so publicly. It's not nice. It's like, it's like, yeah, it's like if you met tomorrow, Sky calls you up and says, hey, Matt, you're just not good enough. Yeah, brutal, horrible. Yeah, you're getting, you're getting kicked out. And it takes you by surprise as well, kind of, you know. That's the same, it's the same feeling. And then add 100 million people watching that. Yeah, so 100 million people watching Sky telling you publicly, hey, Matt, you're just not good enough, please leave, leave the team. Go home. Go home. Horrible. This, this could be quoted, this could be quoted out of context, can't it?

Yeah, no, not nice at all. And yeah, I'd say huge, huge amounts of sympathy in that scenario.

And just want to, just want to quickly look ahead, Nico, to Belgium this, this weekend.

What are your expectations? Is it hard to look past another, another Red Bull domination there?

Yeah, probably, but at the same time, there can be surprises in Belgium. We've always seen that there can be real surprises. And probably the team that has a chance to surprise will be McLaren.

Maybe someone like Ferrari in qualifying or something, because I don't see, Mercedes,

I don't see it all because they have no straight line speed or very little for now. And, and then

Aston, I think, somehow are a little bit on the back foot. But I would put it to McLaren to do,

to do a big surprise. That'd be great. Yeah, I hope, I hope after the Paris is charged this weekend

that we can see him and him and Max at least have battled out some laps. I think he'll have

got great confidence from Hungary. And if he can take that into into next week, hopefully we can

see Red Bull McLaren shoot out, which would be, which would be nice. Last race, of course, before,

before the summer break. Right. Final two things. I've got a question here for Nico from Andrew.

Where did you get that shirt that you wore on yesterday's show? Nico, I liked it. I liked it

a lot. You know, I sat there at home, I thought it's a good shirt. So what you don't know is

I had the full outfit in the morning because I have the matching silk shorts. Wow. And I was

asking the Sky Boss Billy, can I, can I pull it off? You allow me to. And he was like, if you feel

comfortable, go ahead. But I, I chickened out, I chickened out and I put a long, long pant on to

go with it. So actually, it's my, it's my Ibiza Ushuaia party party shirt. From a vintage, from

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a vintage shop next to our ice cream parlor in Ibiza, which our ice cream is called Vivi's Creamery. Vivi's Creamery in the Old Town and we're like number one ice cream now in Ibiza and it's from the vintage shop next door. So, but yeah, I like to start pushing a bit of boundaries on the fashion front. Look great. Maybe we'll see the shorts, shorts next weekend of a different shirt. I guarantee you with the shorts and the combination is epic, but I didn't, I chickened out. When you got on the bus in the morning, there were some weeps weren't there and, and, and some more crystals, I think amongst us. Yeah. Exactly. Exactly. Exactly. Like it was like, you look great. And then the final thing, which, uh, Lim, you, you bought this to my attention today because I, Nico, I've gone on. I have to know. I'm one for sport curses. It was the Drake curse for a little bit. Have you seen the Nico Rosberg F1 curse that's been going around on Twitter? Yeah, that's not cool. Yeah, that's not cool at all. Because I just, I post like on race weekends, I just post a picture from the pit lane with some, with a, with a car or something. And, and that car has then gone pretty poorly. So, uh, I need to be careful with that in future. Yeah, you've got the next few weeks are really big because if you, if you post another picture next weekend and the team or the driver perform bad, it's going to just keep getting bigger and bigger. Yeah. That's why I need to put, uh, put the pause button. I'm not doing that anymore. Yeah. You can do a carousel of every driver and then you, you can't, you can't get blamed. Yeah. Either way. Yeah. So the back of the backstory here is that on Saturday I posted Max's car and of course he lost the qualifying and then on Sunday I was like, go Mercedes and I posted Lewis's car. Um, and that went completely, that went completely wrong. So that's the back story behind this. Yeah. No pressure. No pressure. Nico powers. Nico curse. Uh, yeah. It was a lot of talk of that on, uh, on social media over the weekend. Uh, right. Okay. Liam, thank you for your time. Nico, thank you very much for your time as well. Uh, much appreciated. And we will be back on the podcast next Tuesday to look back at the Belgian Grand Prix, the final race before the summer break. So we hope you can join us next Tuesday. Bye for now.