



## Lewis Hamilton *Forever Faster* Q&A

**Q: How does the Championship battle you're having this year with Nico compare to the battles in 2007 and 2008?**

A: The battle does feel a lot more intense this year. When I was racing against Raikkonen and Massa, they were in a different team and their cars had different strengths and weaknesses to my car and, in my team, it was just me that was really competing with them. Now I'm racing against a guy who has the same car – we have access to exactly the same data and feedback, so it is really hard to try and be ahead. It's a little bit like playing poker - you have a set of cards and the other guy is not supposed to know what you got, but Nico and I can see each other's cards so then it's more difficult to beat each other.

**Q: Does the fact that you're in the same team as the guy competing against you for the Championship make it more or less challenging?**

A: Definitely more challenging, because you have to find ways to create small margins. So what you do is bring your skills, things that you've learned, things you can put into the mix, and you always have to move forward. You can't just be good and that will be enough, you have to keep pushing the boundaries, because every time you take a step forward the other guy makes an equal step so you have to keep doing it.

**Q: If you won the Championship this year, how would that compare to 2008?**

A: 2008 was great because it was the beginning of my Formula One career, but a lot of the things that went on in the sport at the time weren't so enjoyable. Now, with so much more experience, I'm able to really enjoy the sport. I'm happier and can focus solely on racing without any of the distractions I had back then.

**Q: Do you feel more comfortable in the sport now?**

A: Yes, I feel like I'm on my feet now, you know - firmly grounded in the sport.

**Q: Hockenheim was testament to this being one of the most exciting F1 seasons in the modern era, perhaps because of regulations, rules and developments in the car. What is the view from a driver's perspective, is it a more enjoyable sport to be in because of those regulations?**

A: Personally, I'm not a huge admirer of the direction that everything's going, in the sense that the cars get slower every year so physically it's easier for me in the car. Maybe in the hot conditions it's still a challenge, but generally it will take me two race distances to feel the same as I did in my first season. As the cars are slower, they have less down-force, they're fast on the straights of course but slower through some corners and that makes a difference. I just feel like Formula One is the pinnacle within the sport, it should be so draining that when you finish the race you should barely be able to get out of the car. The cars should be the fastest they can be within the boundaries of safety. However, our sport also has to

stay relevant and some of the technologies that have been brought in, such as the energy recovery systems which we can see being used on road cars, are definitely a positive step.

**Q: There's been a focus on trying to make F1 more entertaining for the spectator, to enable close car racing and overtaking. Do you agree?**

A: Yes, it is definitely more entertaining for the fans to watch in that sense. The problem is you can't follow in F1 because the downforce of the car behind is interrupted. What I really think we should do is have much stickier tyres, maybe a little bit less downforce and then, perhaps, we might be able to follow closer. But then again that's what they had in the late '80s, they had big tyres and less down-force but still couldn't follow so I don't really know what the solution is. DRS enables people to get close and overtake which is great, but sometimes DRS is all it takes to overtake at the beginning of the straight and then you're gone which is not so realistic. It should be harder and more of a challenge.

**Q: Last year with a lot of tyre degradation it was more about getting the car around the track and managing your stints, than it was about racing. Tyre degradation has improved this year, has the sport improved as a consequence?**

A: It's definitely better and the fans have reacted positively which is good. In my first year in the sport, you could push to the maximum in every stint which was really cool but overtaking was even worse, which was boring for the fans. We've done some good things to make it more fun, for example at Hockenheim I had to come through the field and then keep moving forward. That was cool.

**Q: The first 16 laps at Hockenheim were sensational from a spectator point of view.**

A: Ultimately that is the most important thing. At the end of the day, every time I get in the car I think this is the greatest thing I have experienced.

**Q: Do the new regulations reward and amplify technical driving skills?**

A: Yes, I think they do highlight the driver who has the better skills. Also now we have to juggle so many different requirements in the car. We have the steering wheel that has so many different functions and then you're driving as well, then you're saving fuel, then looking after the tyres and you're trying to race and get past people. So we're more active in the car than years ago and I think the better driver will make it through the field quicker when they have to. To outsmart and outwit the car in front, you have to know where their weak points are, know when you are going to get them and, when you do, you have to be 100% committed. So, perhaps this year you'll get to see some of the better drivers benefit. There will always be drivers who are better at one-lap qualifying, some at practice, at testing and some in the race.

**Q: Is there a driver throughout your career, not necessarily just in Formula One but a driver that you've most admired for their attitude or their approach or their talent?**

A: I've always admired Ayrton Senna from a distance before I was in the sport. But one of the best drivers I drove against was Robert Kubica, he was truly phenomenal.

**Q: Is there a circuit not currently on the F1 schedule that you would like to be on the calendar?**

A: Just for driving my favourite track of all time is Macau, a street circuit near Hong Kong. It is absolutely amazing. It's like Monaco intensified by two or three times and it's awesome. I wish I could go back there incognito and race in Formula 3! It's just really awesome barrier to barrier driving and it never ends, the track is just so long. I think it is two minutes thirteen to get around there. Of the current races, I really enjoy Hockenheim, it's actually a really great circuit for overtaking, really great. Not a lot of circuits are like that.

**Q: *Abu Dhabi, the last race of the season has double points, which makes it even more likely that the Driver's Championship will go to the final race. Having been in this situation twice before, do you think that will help you? Mentally perhaps?***

A: I know I've been there before because I'm going for my second Championship, but it feels like I'm going for my first. It really does. It doesn't feel like I've had one already and I've experienced it. Every race is different and every season is a new experience. Every Sunday you feel different, every start you feel different. When you win a Championship, for me it was a relief, because you worry all year, you think about it non-stop. The only fear is failure, you know? So when you do win, you just kind of think: "Oh thank God for that and go relax now". It's not all :"Yeah, yeah I won, I won! It's the greatest thing!"

**Q: *You're now in the summer shutdown, how important are these three weeks just to get some rest and recuperate and recharge yourself?***

A: When you're in the season, it's very difficult to switch off. When you go into a season, you feel like you're fit and healthy but it really takes a toll on your body from all the travelling and races. So that break really does help you to replenish your energy levels, get some good sleep and just stay in one place for the whole period of time and not travel. Which is quite restful, to be in one time zone and then just getting positive energy from spending time with family and friends. You can't ever measure how valuable that is. And it's great for the team too – they have worked so hard this season and done a fantastic job. Now they get the chance to relax and spend some time with their families.