

FIA FORMULA ONE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP™



From left: Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton, Haas' Kevin Magnussen and Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel are all smiles at a drivers' press conference ahead of the Austrian Grand Prix this weekend. PHOTO: EUROPEAN PRESSPHOTO AGENCY

DUO'S 'BROMANCE' BACK IN MOTION

Hamilton, Vettel make up before Austrian GP and stress they have respect for each other

SPIELBERG (Austria) • Triple world champion Lewis Hamilton said he still had "the utmost respect" for Formula One title rival Sebastian Vettel after accepting a public apology from the Ferrari driver yesterday.

Speaking at a crowded Austrian Grand Prix news conference, the two men addressed a "road rage" controversy that has dominated the headlines since the June 25 race in Azerbaijan.

"I will continue to race him hard through the rest of the season," added Hamilton, who said at the time that Vettel had "disgraced himself" by driving into him in Baku.

He said Vettel called him on the Monday after the race and then texted an apology, which he accepted.

The championship leader had driven into the back of Hamilton's Mercedes while both were following the safety car in first and second places, waiting for it to return to the pits.

Vettel then pulled alongside, gesticulating angrily, before banging wheels.

The German, a four-time world champion, later accused Hamilton of "brake-testing" him by slowing suddenly.

The car's telemetry subsequently showed that was not the case and Hamilton said the accusation was one he particularly wanted corrected.

Vettel was handed a 10-second stop-and-go penalty, and finished fourth.

He was then summoned to a hearing in Paris on Monday where the governing body declared the matter closed.

Initially reluctant to dwell on the matter, saying he did not want to "pump this up more than it is already", the Ferrari driver yesterday repeated the written apology.

"It was the wrong move to drive alongside him and hit his tyres," the German said.

"I don't think there was any bad intention (by Hamilton). I don't think he actually brake-tested me. I was upset and overreacted. I am not proud of the moment."

Vettel added that he had been caught out by the differing speed in the cars as they exited Turn 15 preparing for a restart after a safety car period.

"At the time I was surprised," he said. "It felt like Lewis hit the brakes and I couldn't stop hitting the car. But I don't think he actually brake-tested me. At the time I read it like that."

It is the second incident in seven months in which Vettel has lost his temper in the car – at last year's Mexican Grand Prix he swore at race director Charlie Whiting because he was angry Red Bull's Max Verstappen was not being penalised.

But Vettel denied he had an issue with anger.

"I don't think so," he said.

"I can see why you might believe it's not."

Hamilton, 14 points behind Vettel after eight races, missed out on victory in Baku after a headrest worked loose and he had to pit. He finished fifth.

Before Baku, the two world champions had made much of their mutual respect and the budding "bromance" seemed to be back on.

"It's nice to hear that we are able to move forward," Vettel said.

"I think the respect we have for each other on and off track helps us in this regard." REUTERS

FIERY BATTLE

I will continue to race him hard through the rest of the season.



LEWIS HAMILTON, turning his attention to racing after accepting Sebastian Vettel's apology.

MUTUAL RESPECT

It's nice to hear that we are able to move forward. I think the respect we have for each other on and off track helps us in this regard.



SEBASTIAN VETTEL, on putting the incident between him and Hamilton behind.

Pique in S'pore for quick business trip

Barcelona star Gerard Pique flew into Singapore yesterday on a short layover for a business trip.

The 30-year-old centre-back then met representatives from Sports Singapore and the Singapore Tourism Board to explore possible opportunities to host a sporting event here.

He is believed to have flown in from Qatar where he was involved in Barca's promotional pre-season tour alongside team-mates Sergio Busquets and Jordi Alba.

The trio also played a testimonial match on July 4 in Sidon, Lebanon for Lebanese footballer Roda Antar, who recently retired.

Pique played a pivotal role in the heart of the Barcelona defence this season in a campaign which saw them lift the Spanish Super Cup and King's Cup.

The Catalan side, however, failed to retain their LaLiga title, finishing runners-up to Real Madrid.

While Pique's trip to Singapore was not publicised, national swimmer Danny Yeo was among the lucky few to get a photo with the Spanish star at the Singapore Sports Hub. Pique departs Singapore today.



National swimmer Danny Yeo managed to get a coveted picture with Barcelona star Gerard Pique at the Singapore Sports Hub. PHOTO: INSTAGRAM/SWAGGYWHALE

Nicholas De Silva

Thai attack too strong as S'pore floorballers win silver

Ian Kiew

Their defence had been rock solid throughout the inaugural Asia-Oceania Floorball Cup (AOF), conceding a solitary goal in four matches en route to yesterday's final.

But Singapore's men's team collapsed against Thailand as the top seeds let in eight goals to lose 4-8 in Bangkok.

Captain Gary Wong, 24, said: "We are disappointed, but we have no regrets as we tried our best. I thought we did quite well. Going into the tournament we wanted to take it game by game and didn't have high expectations."

The world No. 17 went unbeaten in the group stage, scoring 43 goals.

In the semi-finals, Singapore trounced South Korea 11-0. But it was a different story in the final.

World No. 22 Thailand were dominant throughout the competition. They scored 46 and conceded four in the group stage before beating Indonesia 15-2 in the last four.

Wong said: "Credit to Thailand's attack, they were superior and fast. We lost our focus on defence and they attacked and scored."

"We played well and exceeded expectations. Our coaches helped guide us through the tournament."

Singapore head coach Matt Joutsikoski added: "We have a lot of respect for Thailand, we played a very motivated team with excellent players who found holes in our defence."

"Our goalkeepers did an excel-

lent job, but we win and lose as a team.

"We were equal competitors and have learnt plenty from this game."

In their previous match against Thailand in December, Singapore lost 2-8.

Yesterday's team was much younger and inexperienced, noted Joutsikoski. The average age of the five starters was 24, and he believes the team has potential.

"We have a great young team and a fantastic journey ahead," he added.

The Singapore Floorball Association announced it will host the first women's edition of the AOF Cup, which will be held at Our Tampines Hub next June.

ikiew@sph.com.sg

Australia pay dispute casts cloud over Ashes series

SYDNEY • Australia's cricketers yesterday boycotted this month's Australia A tour to South Africa, escalating a bitter pay dispute which threatens to derail senior tours to Bangladesh and India as well as this year's home Ashes series.

The Australia Cricketers' Association (ACA) said the players were unavailable to tour South Africa for the Australia A team without an agreed pay deal or new memorandum of understanding.

Their contracts with Cricket Australia (CA) expired last Friday following months of increasingly acrimonious wrangling.

"It is with great frustration that with no progress towards resolving the current dispute, Australia A players confirm they will not tour South Africa," the ACA said in a statement.

"This decision is made in support of more than 200 male and female players who are now unemployed."

CA, cricket's governing body in the country, said it was disappointed with the players' decision.

"CA regrets that players have made this decision despite progress made in talks between CA and the ACA in meetings over the past week, including regular communication between CEOs," it said in a statement.

"While a new MOU has not yet been agreed, CA is of the view that these talks should have enabled the tour to proceed as planned."

CA said it has advised Cricket South Africa of the players' decision and will donate the cost of the tour, which is estimated at A\$250,000 (S\$262,650), to a scheme to provide better and more inclusive cricket facilities around the country.

The players had been training this week with captain Usman Khawaja and hoping for an end to

the impasse.

"By making this call, the Australia A players have sacrificed their own ambitions for the collective – an incredibly selfless act that shows their strength and overall commitment to the group," the ACA said.

There are fears now that the pay row could scupper next month's Test tour to Bangladesh, the one-day international series in India in September and even the Ashes. The first of five Tests against England is set to take place in late November in Brisbane.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, REUTERS

SINGAPORE HORSE RACING

<p>FRIDAY, 7 JULY 2017</p> <p>First race starts at 6.50pm</p> <p>🏇 Aushorse Golden Horseshoe 🏇</p>	<p>SUNDAY, 9 JULY 2017</p> <p>First race starts at 12.35pm</p> <p>🏇 Emirates Singapore Derby 🏇</p>
---	---

Live telecast and totalisator services are available for the above race meetings at the Singapore Racecourse and Off-Course premises.

For the latest updates, visit www.turfclub.com.sg or call the Singapore Turf Club at 6879 1000.

PLAY RESPONSIBLY

Do not bet illegally. Always play with care.

SINGAPORE TURF CLUB

For admission to the Club on race days, you must be at least 18 years of age.