

Hamilton again says his sport must speak out on racism



Lewis Hamilton reacts after a race (file photo)

AFP | Spielberg, Austria

Lewis Hamilton has said “now is not the time to be silent” and explained why he criticised Formula One as he set out to rally the sport against racism.

In a video released by Mercedes’ parent company Daimler on the eve of this weekend’s belated season-opening Austrian Grand Prix, the six-time world champion made clear that his comments were not directed at any rival Formula One drivers.

“People perceived it as if I was targeting drivers,” said Hamilton of his criticism of those who remained silent and did not speak out against racism.

“But I really wasn’t. It was targeted at the whole industry. And it’s been something I’ve been aware of for a long, long time --and I’ve not really seen anyone doing anything about it.

“People being silent is something that I’ve experienced for such a long time -- and now is not the time to be silent.

“This is a time to help spread the message, the time to pull together. We need as many voices as we can to push for change.”

Hamilton and his Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas will wear black overalls and race in a black liveried car this season following Mercedes move to back the efforts for greater diversity in motorsport.

Hakimi joins Inter from Real

AFP | Madrid

Inter Milan have signed full-back Achraf Hakimi from Real Madrid, the two clubs announced on Thursday.

Inter will pay Madrid 40 million euros (\$44.9 million) for Hakimi, with a further five million euros due in variables, according to reports in Italy.

The 21-year-old has signed a five-year contract with Antonio Conte’s side.

Hakimi joined Madrid’s

youth set-up in 2006 but struggled to establish himself in the first team and has spent the last two seasons on loan at Borussia Dortmund.

He impressed in Germany but Zinedine Zidane was not convinced Hakimi could dislodge current Madrid right-back Dani Carvajal.

Hakimi, who can also play as a winger, scored nine goals in 45 appearances in all competitions for Dortmund this season.

‘Surprised’ Vettel insists there was no new deal

● Vettel confirms there were no talks on a new Ferrari deal

AFP | Spielberg, Austria

Sebastian Vettel said Thursday that Ferrari had not offered him a contract to stay with them beyond this season, adding that their split, announced in May, was clearly not by mutual consent.

In a controlled official pre-race video news conference ahead of this weekend’s season-opening Austrian Grand Prix, the four-time world champion German driver added that he was keen to join a rival team if he could find “the right package”.

Vettel said he was surprised when Ferrari team boss Mattia Binotto called him to say his services were no longer required after 2020.

“It was obviously a surprise to me when I got the call from Mattia and when he told me that there was no further intention for the team to continue,” he said.

“We never got into any discussions. There was never an offer on the table and, therefore, there was no sticking point.”

In a statement, Ferrari had said the parting of the ways was mutual.

Vettel, who has been linked with possible moves to Mercedes, Renault and the new Aston Martin-Racing Point project, added that he is now hoping to find a new team.

“Obviously, I want to make sure I make the right decision for myself and my future,” he



Sebastian Vettel and Charles Leclerc of Ferrari talk at the Ferrari team photo in Abu Dhabi

said.

“I think I have a very competitive nature. I have achieved a lot in the sport. I’m motivated and willing to achieve more.

“To do so, I need the right package and the right people around me so that’s what I’m looking out for at the moment.

“If the right opportunity should arise then it is quite clear. But, if that’s not the case, then I’ll probably have to look out for something else.”

Vettel won all of his four titles with Red Bull as an outstanding young tyro in his early career before joining Ferrari in 2015.

In recent years, he has been regarded as a leader and spokesman for the drivers.

He made clear he is serious also about leaving the sport if he cannot find a new seat.



It was obviously a surprise to me when I got the call from Mattia and when he told me that there was no further intention for the team to continue. We never got into any discussions. There was never an offer on the table and, therefore, there was no sticking point

SEBASTIAN VETTEL

“I am of the conviction that if you are prepared to say ‘let’s shut the door’ then you should be prepared to shut that door and not shut it and expect it to

open again.”

Vettel found himself under pressure from teammate Charles Leclerc in 2019.

The Monaco driver won two races to Vettel’s one last season and finished a place above him in the championship.

“I think, first of all, you have to obviously say that from the day that I joined, we’ve tried everything together to fight for the championship which I think is what we have done on several occasions. We did not win the championship,” added Vettel.

“In that regard, looking back also, I have failed, we have failed.”

“In the end, it’s quite simple. We were not quick enough, our package was not good enough, and, as a team, we were not as strong as Mercedes.”

Muhammad Mokaev: on the path to becoming a champion

TDT | Manama

It is the oldest tale ever told; when one does whatever they can and sacrifices everything to stay around their true passion, eventually the talent is noticed, and finally success comes.

This is the same story of Muhammad Mokaev.

“I started from nothing”, Mokaev said. “I used to work, hop on a train or bus to a different city just to have some sort of training. I used to clean the mats in exchange of a gym membership, because I couldn’t afford it. For almost four years, that was my life: long trips, reaching home at 11-12 PM, and getting little to no sleep at all”.

Inspired by his country’s most prominent MMA fighter Michael Bisping, Mokaev who started with wrestling and Brazilian jiu-jitsu, decided to make a transition to Mixed Martial Arts. His results inside and outside the gym, the same gyms he used to clean to be able to attend free classes, got him recognition and changed the course of his story.

“I started getting recognized



Muhammad Mokaev

by companies and they started supporting me”, he said. “Suddenly I was able to pay for my rent, food, and cover my training camps expenses. Life is defi-

nately not as hard as it used to be but the hunger is exactly the same. I’m a full-time professional fighter, I train twice or three times a day, I sleep well, I eat



Before signing with BRAVE Combat Federation, Mokaev was already making waves in the amateur scene, not only in his home country, but worldwide. Between 2015 and 2020, ‘The Punisher’ built a record of 23 wins and no losses

healthy, and I’m able to travel around the world, meet new people, and gather experience”.

Before signing with BRAVE Combat Federation, Mokaev was already making waves in the amateur scene, not only in his home country, but worldwide. Between 2015 and 2020, “The Punisher” built a record of 23

wins and no losses.

The perfect amateur run was crowned with two moments that he described as the highlights of his career so far: becoming a two-time IMMAF World Champion. “The European championships and especially the World Championships in Bahrain are, by far, the most important moments I had so far. But definitely not the last ones”, he guaranteed.

Now a member of the Flyweight division of the promotion founded by His Highness Sheikh Khaled, BRAVE Combat Federation, “The Punisher” has the chance to fulfil his destiny and write yet another brilliant chapter of his saga.

“I do what I do for my family, I don’t want for them to go through the same kind of struggles that I had in my time. Also, I want to set up a charity foundation under my family name, so my legacy will still be around when I’m gone. But before all that I have to earn my spot among the best and to do so, I will become the Flyweight world champion at BRAVE CF”.

Djokovic, wife Jelena test negative for COVID-19

Reuters | London

Novak Djokovic and his wife Jelena have tested negative for COVID-19, nine days after returning a positive test, the world number one tennis player’s media team said on Thursday.

Djokovic, along with Grigor Dimitrov, Borna Coric and Viktor Troicki, tested positive after playing in the Adria Tour, an exhibition tournament organised by the 17-times Grand Slam champion. Real Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois and Manchester City striker Sergio Aguero are among other soccer players to have taken part in Formula One’s virtual series.

“Djokovic and his wife tested negative for COVID-19, as the most recent test they took showed. They felt no symptoms of the virus and took the test after consultations with doctors,” the statement said.