

# Hamilton happy with team's performance

Reuters | London

Mercedes are over-delivering in the Formula One title battle and going from strength to strength, according to championship leader Lewis Hamilton.

The Briton won convincingly in Singapore on Sunday, his seventh victory of the season, to go 40 points clear of Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel with six races remaining and a fifth title beckoning.

Vettel had gone into the weekend as clear favourite but Hamilton seized pole position with a monumental qualifying lap that stunned even his team mates. He then controlled the floodlit race.

"The car's true pace is 100 and we are putting out 102," the Mercedes website quoted the Briton, who headed to Thailand after the race for some promotional work before a few days off, as saying.

"Our understanding of the car, how to utilise the tools that we have - we're far more comfortable at our job right now," he added.

The jet-setting champion answered those who feared his lifestyle - with fashion shows and trips to America - would affect his bid for a fifth title by showing that it was all positive.

"People have asked me if I need to change my approach.



Lewis Hamilton celebrates after his victory in Singapore

I think we've got a great approach as a team. We have outperformed often a car that's slightly better. We just need to keep doing that," said Hamilton.

The 33-year-old said there was no chance of anyone at Mercedes getting 'cocky or overly confident' after stretching the gap to Ferrari in both championships.

"I don't look at it and think that we lucked in. We honestly don't waste any time wondering what they are doing or how they are feeling or if they are feeling pressure, if they are happy or

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LEWIS HAMILTON

unhappy," he said.

"There is nothing we can do about them. All we can do is be the best we can be that weekend and hopefully that is good enough. If it's not then we will keep working."

Hamilton said he still felt a need to win every race and had assured team boss Toto Wolff that he would do all he could to achieve that.

"I just said to Toto: 'Don't for a second ever believe or let creep into your mind that I don't want to win this championship more than anything. That's my priority,'" he declared.

## 'Ignorance makes you very bold' - Ramos slams Griezmann attitude

AFP | Madrid

Sergio Ramos has launched a scathing attack on Antoine Griezmann's attitude after the French forward said he has his eye on the Ballon d'Or this year and is on a par with Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo.

In an interview with AS on Monday, Griezmann admitted he was disappointed not to be nominated for the Best FIFA Men's Player award and regarding the Ballon d'Or prize, he said: "I have it in my head and there are three months to give everything".

Asked if he considered himself in the same class as Ronaldo and Messi, the Atletico Madrid player said: "Yes I think so and I know other players are going to come for sure.

"Being at that table is a vision I have but I also know that I can do better."

Griezmann also teased Ramos after Atletico beat Real Madrid 4-2 to win the

UEFA Super Cup in August. The striker posted a picture on social media of Ramos placing a crown upon his head.

When asked about Griezmann's comments yesterday, Ramos said: "Ignorance makes you very bold.

"When I hear this kid talk, I remember players like (Francesco) Totti, Raul, (Gianluigi) Buffon, (Iker) Casillas, (Paolo) Maldini, Xavi or (Andres) Iniesta who have won everything but not a Ballon d'Or.

"Everyone is free to express their opinion but I think he should take the advice of (Diego) Simeone, (Diego) Godin or Koke who represent the values that serve them (Atletico Madrid) well.

"But I have always said that he is a great player and I wish him the best."

Atletico play Monaco in France yesterday in Champions League while Madrid begin the defence of their title at home to Roma on Wednesday.



Sergio Ramos and Antoine Griezmann

## Maradona makes Mexico debut with win

AFP | Culiacan, Mexico

Diego Maradona won big in his Mexican coaching debut Monday, as the Argentine legend's new club, Dorados, routed fellow second-division side Cafetaleros 4-1.

Maradona has raised eyebrows with his decision to coach the struggling team from Culiacan, Sinaloa, in the heart of Mexican drug cartel country.

But he was all smiles as Ecuadorian forward Vinicio Angulo - wearing Maradona's old number 10 - scored a hat trick to give the new coach the win.

"We played a great match," he told a packed press conference afterward.

"Some people said Marado-



**Maradona, 57, lived the finest hours of his playing career in Mexico, leading Argentina to the 1986 World Cup title**

na's useless. There were a lot of stupid people going on television to fill up the time. I hope they'll come to the pitch now and look at my record and see what we're actually doing, see that I know how to do this," he added.

Still, it was hardly a monumental win: Dorados were 13th in their league heading into the match, and Cafetaleros 15th.

With their newly earned three points, Maradona's team doubled their previous total and leapt to 10th place.

Maradona vowed it was just the beginning.

"This was nothing, this was just one match," he said, sporting a gold-and-white Dorados cap.

"We're still going to be playing in a lot of finals. Let's not think we've achieved anything with this match. This is just the start of a beautiful dream."

Maradona, 57, lived the finest hours of his playing career in Mexico, leading Argentina to the 1986 World Cup title.

His coaching career has been less stellar, and he has publicly struggled with drug addiction, alcoholism and obesity along the way.

He got a hero's welcome when he arrived in Culiacan last week.

But he failed to fill Dorados's 20,000-seat stadium for his debut.

Attendance did more than double from the club's recent matches, however: there were 10,133 fans in attendance, up from just over 4,000 on average at the previous two home appearances.



Schalke players during their match against Monchengladbach

## Struggling Schalke accused of 'selling future'

AFP | Berlin

Schalke, who return to the Champions League yesterday after a four-year hiatus, have been accused of "selling their future" for allowing three rising stars to leave.

The Royal Blues, who finished second in the German league last season, host Porto in Gelsenkirchen in their Group D opener, but are struggling after losing their first three Bundesliga games.

Despite finishing second to Bayern Munich last season, Schalke are already struggling this term leaving head coach Domenico Tedesco under pressure after 15 months in charge.

Ex-Germany midfielder Steffen Freund has criticised Tedesco's boss, Schalke's sports director Christian Heidel, after Leon Goretzka joined Bayern and Max Meyer, both 23, left for

Crystal Palace on free transfers last season.

On top of that, centre-back Thilo Kehrer, 21, was sold to Paris Saint-Germain last month for a reported fee of 37 million euros (\$42.3 million).

"The departures play a big role. Perhaps one notices now that Max Meyer, Leon Goretzka and Thilo Kehrer were the future of Schalke and they sold it," said Freund, a Euro '96 winner with Germany, told broadcaster RTL.

Schalke are second from bottom in the German league table after losing to mid-table sides Wolfsburg, Hertha Berlin and Borussia Moenchengladbach, where they were beaten 2-1 on Saturday.

They reached the Champions League's semi-finals in 2011, bowing out after defeat to Manchester United, but will be lucky to get out of Group D this

season, which includes Lokomotiv Moscow and Galatasaray.

Tedesco says the Champions League offers a fresh start as Schalke make their return since losing to Real Madrid in the last 16 of 2014/15.

"Obviously recent results are playing on our minds, but the Champions League is a fresh start for us and we have earned the right to play these games," said Tedesco.

However, Freund, who retired in 2004 after spells with Tottenham Hotspur and Borussia Dortmund, says the problems are in both attack and defence.

"Schalke have problems scoring goals, they need twenty goal shots to score. You have to compare it with last season - because then they only needed eight shots," said Freund, who spent two seasons at Schalke in the early 90s.



Diego Maradona, head coach of Dorados de Sinaloa soccer team, celebrates a goal