

May I ask that the chairman reads the following letter to the members of the World Motor Sport Council.

To the members of the World Motor Sport Council:

Gentlemen,

Although I am not able to attend the extraordinary meeting of September 21st in person I would like, by means of this short letter, to make some points about the case in question. As I am no longer in touch with the Renault Team it is unknown to me whether they may make similar comments although I intend to send a copy of this letter to their representatives.

Firstly it appears to me that in all the statements and external reporting that I have read that a key point is missing and that is the fact that the idea for this incident was entirely conceived by Nelson Piquet Jr. It was he who first approached me with the idea. At the time I naively believed that it was something he wanted to do for the good of the team. I was not aware of the position of his contract negotiations although with the benefit of hindsight I now consider that he believed that his actions would have a favourable effect on these negotiations.

Secondly much has been made of the fact that I employed an unusual strategy for the other car and hence people must have been suspicious or knowledgeable before the event. I would counter this by saying that it was not an unusual strategy but instead a novel strategy. It must be remembered that our other car was fuelled for 14 laps (23% of race distance). The only other competitor to start on the softest tyre refuelled at 15 laps albeit having started six places higher on the grid. Throughout my career I have been credited with being the first to employ many of what are now the classic strategies (and indeed have developed much of the methodology used to determine them). We had first seen the effect of extreme degradation of very soft tyres in Canada in 2007 and I am sure everyone will remember the sight of Sato in a Super Aguri driving round the outside of the World Champion in a McLaren as a result of differing tyre performance. I was determined not to repeat this mistake and equally I felt that on a circuit that looked difficult to pass on (and of which we had no prior knowledge as it was a new venue) I saw little point in running a long strategy. The strategy I employed is no longer unusual and indeed we saw an extreme example of it this year in Australia (where the tyre problems were similar) when Hamilton started from the back row of the grid on the softest tyre and stopped after only 11 laps of a 58 lap race (19% of race distance).

Finally, and most importantly, I would like to discuss the safety aspect of this incident. On that evening in Singapore Nelson Piquet Jr was entirely in control of his own destiny. Only he was in the car and only he could determine the outcome of events. I obviously did not discuss with him the details of how to manage the incident and I am not pretending that I imagined it would be similar to the incident perpetrated by Michael Schumacher during qualifying in Monaco in 2006 but equally I certainly did not expect him to act in a reckless fashion.

In mitigation I would like to acknowledge my role in this incident. I was the one who, when the idea was first suggested to me by Nelson Piquet Jr., should have dismissed it immediately. It is to my eternal regret and shame that I did not do so. I can only say that I did it out of a misguided devotion to my team and not for any personal gain whatsoever. I consider the role I have played in bringing the team to where it is today to be my life's work. I started the nucleus of the team 28 years ago with only 19 other people. Today it has grown to an organisation that directly employs over 500 people and supports innumerable local and international businesses. The last thing that I ever wanted to do was to jeopardise that team and the many people to whom I had an overwhelming responsibility. In a single action I have destroyed the high reputation I have built up during a 33 year career in motor sport. I am a competitive person who worked in a high pressure environment. This can, at times, cloud one's judgement. I have always tried to be an honest person, a fact I hope you will give me credit for by witness of my statements to the stewards in Belgium. On that night in Singapore last year I made a mistake the consequences of which I could never have imagined at the time. For that mistake I can only offer all of you, and all those touched by the action I was involved in, my profound apology.

Pat Symonds