

NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Marco Andretti

Andretti Autosport

Will Power

Team Penske

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome to our Zoom post practice press conference for practice number three here at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. We are joined by Marco Andretti today. We will soon be joined by Will Power, as well.

Marco actually has been in the top three every day of practice. Today he ran the fastest lap on Fast Friday since 1996.

Marco, tell us about your day.

MARCO ANDRETTI: Yeah, it was a good day. We were actually really focused on getting laps alone. Somebody actually pulled out in front of us, so I figured I'd run with the tow, make Mario happy.

Other than that I think we had a pretty solid four-lap run. That's what I care about for tomorrow. I'm a little bummed because we just drew 28th out of 33. The temps are not going to be ideal for my run. Hopefully we're fast enough to get in the top nine. That's the only goal for tomorrow. Then go for the pole on Sunday.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up to questions for Marco.

Q. Being 28th tomorrow, how much of that is a disadvantage for you? Also with what you learned today, the fact you have five other teammates to back you up, how beneficial is that for you tomorrow?

MARCO ANDRETTI: Not at all because we got what we got. We're not going to be making changes. It's really going to come down to -- I'll have to answer your question will it affect me tomorrow because we don't know. I don't know how hard it will be for the earlier guys, how hard it will be for me.

We have the speed for the top nine, but we have to hope we're not sliding too much.

Q. Overall how was the day for you generally?

MARCO ANDRETTI: It was good. It was all right. We ended with a lot of people disrupting our run, so we didn't really get to end as strong as I'd like.

In the middle of the day, the heat of the day, we put together a really solid four laps. That is the heat of the day, right? That's the positive to take into tomorrow, that if it is going to be hot, we already did that today.

THE MODERATOR: We welcome in Will Power, driver of the Verizon 5G Edge Team Penske No. 12 car.

Will, the fastest four-lap average of the day. How did your practice go?

WILL POWER: Actually it started off a little rough. I have to say by the end we were in a pretty good window, let's say. It's obviously going to be very tough to make it in the top nine because there's so many fast cars. I think we're just on the cusp there.

I think maybe our strength is the consistency over four laps. Hopefully that really matters throughout tomorrow. The opening speed for some of these other guys aren't too big. But, yeah, still working through it though. Still trying to think about how we can make it really count tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: We'll continue with questions.

Q. Marco, you've been top three the last three days. While it's nice, it could also be a little bit deceiving. How do you feel as far as race pace with your car right now?

MARCO ANDRETTI: I mean, race pace is only as fast as the car ahead of you. It seems when you're more than two cars back, it's really hard to pass.

I feel comfortable in race trim. I put myself in pretty tough positions and I still felt good about it. We'll revisit that Sunday afternoon. Right now we're in qualifying mentality.



THE MODERATOR: Marco has drawn 28th for the qualifying draw. Will has drawn number 10 tomorrow.

We'll continue with questions.

Q. Will, can you sort through the session in a tiny bit more detail? Obviously we saw the kind of TV interview in the middle of day where you said you weren't fast. Things picked up towards the end of the day. What were you able to do in the second half of that session that fixed things for you? Was it an alteration in conditions or work you did on the car?

WILL POWER: Yeah, we changed the car not significantly. Ultimately like the speed just came from an eight-second tow or something. That just helps. But our consistency through the run was certainly better.

I don't think we have that ultimate speed of some of the Honda cars. We have a consistent car. Yeah, it wasn't massive changes, nothing that would change the speed of the car. If anything we did things that would slow it down as far as adding some more downforce.

It's just going to be real interesting tomorrow when everyone is in the same condition with no cars on track, no tow, to see where we truly do stack up. My feeling is that we'll be lucky to get in the top nine. That's how I feel. I think there's just a lot of fast cars out there right now.

I think the only thing on our side is maybe we can hold a lap time longer. That's the saving grace.

Q. What do you think about the draw? Is it going to be more significant this year because of the heat?

WILL POWER: Definitely. Yeah, definitely. Like if you draw towards the back, man, you really are at a disadvantage because, seriously, after the first run, I don't think it's going to get any quicker. If you're out of the top nine then, you really don't have a good shot of getting in.

The first run really counts. If you drew in the first top 10, you're in pretty good shape I feel like. Especially for us who are just trying to crack into the top nine, an early draw, getting 10th, I was really happy about that. You go in the first 45 minutes, a little bit of rubber on the track, obviously a teammate will go before I go. I have a little bit of an indication.

So, yeah, it's a good spot. Good spot for us to give us the best chance to get in.

Q. Marco, the fact that the whole team, including the satellite team with Jack Harvey, not only were the fast

speeds and the no-tow speeds and four-lap average up there, how much total confidence does that give the total program at Andretti Autosport?

MARCO ANDRETTI: Our roll-off cars were good. Honda brought it this year. We were kind of holding our breaths, hoping Chevy didn't have that extra turn up. Maybe they are for tomorrow, we'll see.

Yeah, I mean, basically we would have to screw it up right now to hopefully not be in the top nine, even with a bad draw. That's the goal.

Q. If you're able to win the pole, your no-tow speed is pretty good, fourth fastest. How big of a career accomplishment would that be for you to have an Indy 500 pole?

MARCO ANDRETTI: It would be awesome. It would be awesome. That's what we're gunning for. I have to be able to play first. I got to get in the top nine with a bad draw. That's my next objective. From there, I know you're looking at ultimate speed, but it's going to come down to lap three and four I think even for the pole. That's what we've been working on.

Q. With the higher speeds this year, then the extra weight of the Aeroscreen, did either of you notice any significant setup changes or tire wear throughout the four laps when you did a four-lap run?

MARCO ANDRETTI: I mean, it's definitely more than a pass. I think lap three and four is going to be more important than the pass. Definitely more dropoff, definitely more weight on the tires. Yeah, it's going to make it more interesting, for sure.

WILL POWER: Yeah, I agree. It's kind of good that it's like that. It's certainly tough to put four laps together without having a lift, without the balance going one way or the other. It's like Marco said, it's definitely going to come down to those last two laps, who has the least amount of dropoff.

Q. Will, to get the speed today, trimming the car out at all, did that help things? Was it a little more slippery once you got things going with trimming the car out?

WILL POWER: Yeah, the condition at the end was so hot that you actually had to add a lot. Like, you know, the first run we did was what we thought was a small trim. Man, you didn't have a chance of running that like when we went back out and it was hot.

Yeah, we kind of scrambled to understand how much we



really needed. Yeah, it became very evident it was tough to put four full laps together. Yeah, kind of changes the game a little bit from years past, for sure. Before used to be about getting good gusts of wind and all that. It's legitimately about having a good car for four laps and obviously hanging onto it, too.

Q. Looking at the race itself, you had some chance to get some practice under your belt, obviously the Aeroscreen being implemented, there's been a lot of talk about what the race might actually look like, do you think it will be a very competitive race? Do you think there will be good chances to get a good tow in the race?

WILL POWER: I think it will be very similar to the past years where the top two or three will battle it out at the end back and forth, then the tires will deg a bit. I think the leader would have a chance of maybe holding someone off like halfway through a stint.

Just depends. If there's a late restart, it will be a pretty aggressive race like it was last year. Every year, once you're about three or four cars back, you have to rely on a car to drop off, balance go off or something, to pass them, otherwise it just happens during strategy, pit stop sequences, restarts.

Yeah, the problem is these cars move so much air that once you got four cars punching a big hole, that air is going so fast, you simply just don't have the grip. Not much they can do about that, just nature of the beast.

THE MODERATOR: Good luck tomorrow. Thank you, everyone.

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