

# NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA



## Pato O'Ward

Arrow McLaren SP

## Will Power

Team Penske

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everybody. Welcome to our NTT INDYCAR Series post race news conference with the podium finishers. We're joined by the runner-up from today's race, Pato O'Ward of Arrow McLaren SP.

Pato, one spot better than yesterday, but still searching for that first win. How was today's race compared to yesterday?

PATO O'WARD: I think today's race was a bit tougher than yesterday. The track temperature was quite a bit higher, so that makes it quite a bit more difficult when running in traffic, especially when the trains get so long.

We saw it all race, when the leaders would get to the back of the pack, no one could pass. You can get sort of a distance, then that's it. You can't really strike unless you have way newer tires or the other one makes a big mistake.

Other than, that I'm so proud of this Arrow McLaren SP team. Team Chevy gave us a great package. We were 1-2-3 today with Team Chevy. We rolled out of the gates very strong. Man, I mean, our objective was a couple podiums this weekend, and we achieved that. It would have been great to get a win, but I think it's great points.

Josef obviously is in front of us. It's not ideal, but we closed the gap to Dixon, who had increased it very large yesterday. So yeah, I'm very happy with the results, but we've been so close to that win. I know our time will come. Yeah, we just have to keep pushing.

THE MODERATOR: Is it getting frustrating being so close to winning the race in the last four or five races but not actually getting to close the deal yet?

PATO O'WARD: Not really, man. I'm honestly having a great year. I'm third in points. I'm scoring podiums. I'm technically a rookie. To be able to be challenging for that in my first year, I think I should be very happy with that.

Obviously we want to win. We're in this to win. But we're in this to be on podiums, as well. We just keep getting better and better. We're working together, stronger each race weekend. Yeah, we just have to keep doing what we're doing, executing how we have been, our win will come.

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

**Q. How close were you to getting to Josef in terms of trying to pass him? What can you take from this weekend going forward for the rest of the season?**

PATO O'WARD: I could probably get within like a car length or two. But more than that it was really tough to follow because the train of cars in front of Josef was massive. If maybe there were no more cars in front, maybe it would have been a bit easier to close up on him and try to get a run. It would have been extremely difficult. My only chance was on the pit exit. I had so much understeer.

I have so much respect for Josef. He is one of the fairest if not the fairest and cleanest drivers in the paddock. So competitive but yet he's not dirty. I know that I can really race him hard without putting both of our races in jeopardy. Honestly, tried on the pit exit when I was on his outside but couldn't quite get it done.

Yeah, I think this gives us some momentum. Mid-Ohio is the next one, a doubleheader, road course. The road course we didn't end up very strong. We were two laps short of winning it. I think if we're able to repeat that but end one step higher, that would be fantastic.

**Q. We saw quite a few onboard videos from the two races of you coming off the pits. You mentioned you had a bit of a moment with Josef. Your hands are all over the place. Give us an idea of how much time can be made up coming into the pits and out of the pits?**

PATO O'WARD: Yeah, it's so important, in and out laps.



As you saw Josef barely got me. If I could have picked up maybe one second, I would have been in front. That's things I will continue learning. I truly think that I've pushed to my maximum in and out laps. I continue to learn.

It's important not to make mistakes and to work up to it, starting in practice sessions, always really challenging to try to be the best you can in the race.

He was just a little better than us there. Yeah, those type of things are so important in these NTT INDYCAR Series races because everything is so competitive, so tight. Any half a second or any time you can make up, it means you can overcut or undercut three or four cars.

It's a big learning curve when you come from the junior formulas. I'm starting to get a hang of it and trying to improve every single time so I can get stronger in those areas.

Yeah, just being competitive as well as hitting my marks, not making any mistakes, I think it's so important for championships.

**Q. We're getting to the point where if this was a normal season people would be talking about what's going on for next year. How important are the performances you've had over the past few weeks sort of reflecting on your season, how are things looking for next year? Do these performances make it easier when those conversations happen?**

PATO O'WARD: I sure hope so, these are at least helping my prospects just a little bit. This team is like a family to me. They've welcomed me like I'm their kid, their baby (smiling). It's been a thrill to be able to work on these relationships, grow, just meet new people.

There's a lot of people here, very smart and intelligent engineers, mechanics. Honestly, I have had so much fun. It's so competitive, but I've had so much fun doing it. At the end of the day that's what matters. You have to be enjoying it. Today honestly I've been really enjoying just driving out there, trying to win races, trying to be on the podium. I think that's what this is all about.

THE MODERATOR: We welcome in the driver of the No. 12 Verizon Team Penske Chevrolet, third-place finisher, Will Power.

Will, is it a race that you look at yourself and think, How did that get away from me?

WILL POWER: Yeah, it certainly was tough at the end. Everybody kind of stuck in traffic. I wish we had pulled off

with Pato and Josef. It's a tough call. Very strong day for us. I feel like we had the best car. Obviously it didn't really matter how good your car was, no one was going to pass anyone.

But yeah, I mean, to get on the podium again with the Verizon 12 Chevy, it's good for us. We obviously had a pretty rough trot lately. Yeah, very happy.

THE MODERATOR: We'll continue with questions for Will and Pato.

**Q. Pato, if you go all the way back to Texas, did you ever think nine races in you'd be third in the driver standings and just sniffing at a win?**

PATO O'WARD: I think the realistic answer is no because I knew was going to be a learning path. Even though I had some races under my belt, it's a new team, new engineers, new car, different car.

In Texas for me it was just about finishing. I had never been there. That track is fast. It's not really the best if you end up putting it in the wall. You don't learn anything. I was just trying to finish that race. I knew once the road courses came, that's a bit more of what I'm used to.

I think Road America is where we really hit it off. Hats off to this team. They've really made the correct changes. Every time I need something, I tell them, they make a change, it usually works. That's so important with these super compressed schedules with such little practice. It makes a humongous difference to your race result in the end if a yellow doesn't fall in someone else's favor, et cetera.

Qualifying has been so important. From there we probably just proved to ourselves that we can actually do it and we can win races, be on the podium, really be challengers. I think from there we've always come into the weekend with the goal of we want to be on the podium, we want to win, we want to go for poles.

Again, so far the year has been going so well, there's still quite a bit of races left, but I think we'll approach them in the same way, trying to score as much points as we can and we'll see where we end up at the end of the year.

**Q. You mentioned qualifying. Anything you've done differently with the driving or is it the team or both coming together to get the proper package?**

PATO O'WARD: In the first road course, which was Road America -- no, Indy road course, we had little issues. That kind of eliminated our chance to really challenge. Road

America qualifying one, we had a little kind of setback, so we kind of salvaged a really good ending spot for eighth in race one. In qualifying two, everything was on it. Everything was feeling good. We put it on the pole.

In Iowa we had strong races there. Over there, qualifying is not that important. The most important thing there is having a very strong race car and being able to follow in traffic. Again, obviously here traffic was kind of (indiscernible).

I think we've done a very good job. Hats off to the team. Very proud of what we've been able to accomplish. We should just keep trying to execute like we have.

**Q. Why would you say it was harder to pass today? Was it because of the oil that went down before the race started? Was it just the heat?**

PATO O'WARD: For me it was the heat. The track was quite a bit hotter than yesterday. I feel like that made it harder. Kind of like yesterday being Carb Day at Indy, then the race being today, where it's just hotter, just tougher to follow.

I don't know what Will thinks.

WILL POWER: Yeah, I mean, it's simply the weight of the car now. It's obviously a much heavier car. You lose a lot more grip, mainly the front, when you try to get close to someone. You basically need two lanes. That would make the racing really good.

**Q. You would like to have seen them do the higher dragging thing again?**

WILL POWER: No, does nothing. It's got to be hot rubber that's pressed into the surface. They run a powdery thing into it. Does nothing. Our cars produce, like, in this configuration 4,000 pounds of downforce. With hot rubber being pressed into it, if they had a machine that did something like that, yes, it would work.

**Q. Will, you seem to be a little unhappy the way your car came back out in traffic. How much of that really kind of determined your fate? You ended up getting out in traffic instead of clean air.**

WILL POWER: I think the best option for us was to pit with the 5 and the 1. That would have kind of covered those guys. It's just tough decision. Tough decision for the strategists, to be honest. Unfortunate to have led all those laps and not come away with the win.

Still a good day. I mean, points mean nothing now for us.

Still great to get on the podium.

**Q. How important was it for Team Penske and for Chevrolet to have a day like this where two guys got on the podium? Chevy has been taking their lumps at Indy. You come back a week later and get you and Josef on the podium.**

WILL POWER: Yeah, it's very good for Chevy to have the top four finishers. It was unfortunate at Indy. We all had troubles in qualifying. Obviously the boost level probably took us by surprise a bit.

Yeah, I feel like it's very equal on every other track.

**Q. How dicey was it racing off pit lane with Josef, which really determined the race?**

PATO O'WARD: Yeah, honestly I pushed, I tried to get him around him outside on the apron. I knew I was on the wrong side to really do that.

Honestly, hats off to him. I have so much respect for that guy. He gave me a lot of room. He was pushing, as well. I think it was good for the fans. Obviously I would have loved to come out in front.

Yeah, it's really cool racing these guys that I've looked up to ever since I was a kid. Yeah, it's good to be battling it out with them.

**Q. Will, what is it like racing against a youngster like Pato? How do you see his progression so far this season?**

WILL POWER: It's very strong, very strong. Always knew he was really fast. We saw that in Indy Lights, the few races he did in INDYCAR last year. So, yeah, he's right where we all expected him. He's definitely going to be a force to be reckoned with in the future.

**Q. Will, how different is it to not have Roger Penske on the pit box with you as he was in the last few years?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, I mean, you get used to your strategist pretty quick. Obviously when you have someone for a while, you get used to the lingo, what exactly they mean when they're giving you messages.

The transition was pretty good because Ron Ruzewski was with me during that time with Roger and would run the practice sessions. The transition was very easy.

THE MODERATOR: We'll thank Will and Pato for their

time.

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