

# NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

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## Josef Newgarden

Team Penske  
Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good evening, everyone. Welcome to the NTT INDYCAR Series post-qualifying session.

We've already been joined by our front row starter Josef Newgarden, who drives the Hitachi Team Penske Chevy, who gained a point in the championship hunt today with his front row start.

Josef, go ahead and let's us know how the day went.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, it was good. Great qualifying session for us. Pretty happy overall. Obviously we would like to be starting first, but kind of first of our group, if you will, which gives us a point, like you said.

It's about as good as you could hope for on a day like today. Got a little bit lucky with the yellow flag. We were quickest on merit with the same tires as everybody else, but didn't get to see what was going to happen on reds. I felt positive we were going to be just as good on the red compound, because I was so happy with the car right out of the box. It would have been fascinating to see.

Yeah, I think a front row start is going to be good for tomorrow. I feel good about the Hitachi car, like I said. Don't know much about it in race trim, but from what I felt here, we had some of the things we wanted to test for the race. You have to on these weekends use every session you can to keep working on things.

I feel confident it's going to be quick. I think Team Chevy has done a pretty good job. Our straight speeds are fantastic. I feel confident with them backing us power-wise that we're going to have a good shot tomorrow.

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

**Q. Talk to me a little bit about the conditions on track. With the sun coming down, drivers were struggling a little bit with visibility. How was it for you?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It was typical glare. Whenever we have a session during this time or we have a race that races from dusk till evening, it generally is difficult for the vision. In a couple spots today, it was tough in turn 12, turn 13 getting on to the front straight.

You could work through it. It wasn't the end of the world. It was just a little tough to get your reference point going into the corner.

We've dealt with it before. We have tinted visors for that reason. It wasn't anything I'd say abnormal than what we've seen in the past.

**Q. The race tomorrow, how much confidence do you have, getting the extra point, gives you a bit of an advantage over Scott, albeit a small advantage?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Much more confidence after that session. I was curious to see how we would get on in qualifying. We were much better than we were in practice. In practice it was a challenge just to get going. We had issues that we didn't really forecast, things that we didn't have here in July, but things that we just did not foresee.

I mean, it was complete opposite of what we were expecting to get. We were all over kind of setup-wise trying to figure it out. We didn't even figure it out by the end of the session. Then we threw on something a little bit different for qualifying, it was right where it needed to be balance-wise and comfort. I was really encouraged by that. Speed was there. That's going to translate really good to race conditions tomorrow.

**Q. What is the strategy for an 85-lap race tomorrow and 75 laps on Saturday?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Different stops for sure. It makes the spread different. I need to look at the sheet, to be honest with you. I haven't fully studied. It's going to be different.

We're probably looking at a three stop versus a two stop when you look at the two different races. But it all depends on yellows. You could turn tomorrow into a two stop if you wanted to. It just depends on when the yellows come out, if they come out.



I think tire degradation is going to be very low. It was very low here in July. I think with temperatures being where they're at now, it's even better. That pushes you to think about going longer, if you didn't want to go longer in the past. It kind of forces you into that.

I think with tire warmup, it's actually not too bad. Sort of the undercut I don't think -- I don't think the undercut will be as powerful as maybe it was. It's not terrible either. You would suspect the tires to take a lot longer to warm up where it would penalize the undercut. I think the warmup has been pretty good.

You probably still have some options to play with, either overcutting or undercutting. We'll have to see. It could be a straightforward race or very mixed up. At this point we don't know right now.

**Q. With the temperatures being in the 90s the last time you were here, much cooler or has it gone too far in the other direction?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: In which respect? If it's gone too far?

**Q. Now it's too cold in the car.**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: No, no. If anything, it's lovely in the car right now. It's just about perfect. It's cool out. It feels like a nice fall day. You've got a bit of heat radiating into your back, into your seat from the engine and the fuel cell. It actually feels beautiful. If the temperature was like this every race, it would be perfect. You wouldn't have any complaints.

**Q. You're saying this is something you could get used to?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Oh, yeah. If someone wants to forecast this in, I'm all for it.

**Q. Hopefully it's nice tomorrow.**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I think it will be. On the cooler days it used to get cold in the cars for sure. Now I almost think a colder day is nicer. You have the screen insulating you a little bit better. Yeah, it should be a good day.

**Q. You realize you needed a bit of a break to get back into the points race. You got it today. How much can this kind of shake things up? How much are you going to expect that guy starting 12th to drive his way on up and try to challenge you before it's all over?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Well, this is the luckiest we've

been all year with yellow flags. I would have much rather had this happen in a race, where it went our way. The race is where you make all the points. Qualifying is good, it's one thing.

The positive was we were quickest on merit. Everyone, same tires, we had a fast car. Looked a bit quicker than Dixon. I was really pleased for that. It bodes well for race pace.

With him, you can never count him out. I would say the same thing for us. If we were starting back, he was up front, don't count us out. We are going to do everything we can to get up front again. Dixon and his crew will do that, probably be there in the mix at some point.

If they have something unfortunate or they can't crawl forward, that is good for us, but I don't think you can count on that. They are going to run a good race like always, and they're probably going to be in the mix.

**Q. I asked you about being the only Team Penske driver that hasn't won at Indianapolis. You got to feel this could be your best shot.**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, never know. I've felt positive here in the past and it doesn't happen. You just never know. It could be a good day tomorrow, maybe not.

**Q. Is it really important to have these extra points for this pole?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Every point matters. I mean, every point matters. I'll take it. It's good to get a point. The race win is obviously the most points. Every bonus point on top much it, it helps you out a little bit more.

In the grand scheme of where we're at with three races to go, the race is what matters. Not going to get caught up on a bonus point. At the end of the day it could make all the difference.

**Q. How much improvement did you make in the car between July and now? Does it make a difference, matter, with the big weather change?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It does. The weather change does affect trim levels, tire warmup. I would say the wind affected things more than we predicted today. It's really the wind direction, where the wind's coming from on the track, at least with our car directionally.

We found that we had quite a bit of tailwind today, which we didn't have in July. I thought that was a bigger change to the car balance-wise than the temperature. The

temperature you pick up horsepower, you pick up downforce, you lose a little bit of the tire degradation. Everything gets a little bit easier in some ways.

The wind, it wasn't super windy, but the direction of the wind was more of a factor today, in my opinion, than the temperature itself.

**Q. The lap times are two seconds a lap slower than they were a couple years ago. What would you attribute that to? The windscreen being heavier? Is the track getting slower?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I would say probably at its peak, what was your best lap here overall? What's the record? A mid or low eight?

**Q. 107 something.**

ReplaceName: Is it?

**Q. I believe so.**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Okay, so maybe it's 1.5 seconds slower, 1.6. I know some of it's the weight of the car. We're 60 pounds heavier. That's going to account for it. At most tracks we're 8/10ths of a second slower just because of the weight. Some of it's just the downforce era. When we did our peak times here, we had fully engineered kits making the cars as efficient as possible.

On a track like this it really matters because when you have long straightaways at a place like this, if you have a very efficient aero package, you can trim a lot. You can be really quick on the straights.

Whereas now we run close to max downforce at tracks like this with this aero kit. We're slightly trimmed whereas in the past we were super trimmed out. So it is a combination of not having as much downforce, as much efficiency and probably the weight of the car.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for joining us. Good luck tomorrow in the race.

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