

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Josef Newgarden

Team Penske

Will Power

Team Penske

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the NTT INDYCAR SERIES video news conference with teammates Will Power and Josef Newgarden from Team Penske.

Gentlemen, both of you had success last year on the road course here at Indy in the Harvest Grand Prix with Josef winning race one and Will winning race two.

Will, you have four wins and five poles here at the road course in Indianapolis. How excited are you to get back to the road course where you've had so much success?

WILL POWER: Yeah, always a track that I thoroughly enjoy. The field is so tight this year you have no idea where you'll stack up. We were pretty good at Barber. That was a road course, smooth road course. Hopefully some of that transfers over.

But I think our baseline setup there is pretty good. The temperature matters a lot there. You can have a very different car depending on the wind, the temperature, if it's rain or whatever.

But, yeah, never take it for granted we're going to turn up strong, always ready to react on the fly. Yeah, certainly looking forward to starting out there.

THE MODERATOR: Josef, you had a P2 finish in St. Pete on a street course. How excited are you to get back to a road course where you started P2 last year for the Harvest Grand Prix and ended up on the podium in the winner's circle?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Just like Will, it's always been a good track for us and Team Penske without a doubt. We're going to try to follow up where we were at last year.

Temperature-wise I think Will brings up a good point. We seemed almost a little stronger on the 2 car specifically in October. I'm hoping that carries over. I think the weather is going to be cool looking at it, not necessarily super hot. If the wind is not to our liking, like Will said, we have to be ready to react pretty quickly.

Excited about it. Excited to have Snap-on running on our car this weekend, which will be quite cool. A unique livery. Celebrate their makers and fixers. Very excited about that.

THE MODERATOR: The weather is going to be cool, in the 60s, but sunny at least through Saturday. Happy about that.

WILL POWER: I love Snap-on, so yeah. I have Snap-on everything. Maybe I should have had the Snap-on car. But Verizon 5G is still someone I'm very loyal to. Yeah, I just wanted to put that out there and let everyone digest that the way they would like. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: I'll have you guys work that out with the captain.

WILL POWER: Yeah (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with questions.

Q. Will, you got to admit, it's a crappy day outside here in North Carolina, isn't it?

WILL POWER: It is. If you want to come over and watch How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days or something like, that I'm all for it. Just chilling in my basement. Up to you.

Q. Maybe I'll stop over and bring some barbecue with me.

WILL POWER: Sounds good, Bruce (smiling).

Q. The Friday race last October was one of the best road races we've seen at the IMS road course. What do you see the reason for that being? The length of the race was different in the Friday race. It was a more action-packed race than what we've seen in some of the previous races at IMS on the road course, which if you get out front at the right time, you can cruise to



victory.

WILL POWER: I would say it certainly was the difference between the Friday race and the Saturday race, the fact that of the distance. It opened the windows, the strategy window, up significantly so you could try different strategies, pit on different laps, just created good racing.

Actually I haven't looked at the distance. I know we sent the series a lot of information on race distance, how to open the windows up, make it so it's not a fuel race. Hopefully I did that.

Q. Josef?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I agree with Will. It's just the fuel windows. A much better race on Saturday because they were open windows. I think that's the goal going back, is to try to keep those windows as open as possible. It just creates opportunity to run a completely different strategy than people around you, make it work. I think that's the key, is providing options to people.

Once they have them, it makes the race instantly more entertaining because there's just a lot more going on.

Q. Speaking of entertaining, Mr. Entertainment himself, Juan Pablo Montoya, is going to be driving an INDYCAR the first time since 2017. How happy are you to mix it up with him? Arrow McLaren SP is a pretty good team this year. Put Montoya in the mix, it's interesting.

WILL POWER: Is he running the road course as well?

Q. Yes.

WILL POWER: Is Helio running the road course?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I believe he is.

Q. He's not. He's just doing the 500.

WILL POWER: Okay.

Q. He'll be doing the Music City Grand Prix.

WILL POWER: He picked a right one there. That's a special town, not because of its history in country music, but because Josef Newgarden lives there. As I've said before, he is what I'd class as a god-like figure based on his social media. So, yeah, I'm excited to go there. I'm sure Helio is, as well.

Q. How about Montoya?

WILL POWER: Oh, yeah, Montoya. Yeah, no, it's cool that he's back in the series. Juan, he works it out pretty quickly. I think he'll help that team with all the experience he's had. I think he'll really help them on the oval actually. That's where he's very strong.

Yeah, it will be fun to have him back in the series. Always a great character, someone that you don't want to mess with on the track or off the track.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I mean, I would agree with Will again. I think Montoya's strength will be more on the oval. I think he'll be a very strong teammate for both Rosenqvist and Pato. I think he'll help the team a lot with what they're doing and just be tough to beat. He'll be difficult to beat.

Road course-wise, think it will probably be harder for him, I really do. He's Montoya, so he could surprise all of us at any moment. I think he'll have a tougher time just getting back up to speed.

The field is so tight, like Will said, you can't even make the smallest slipup nowadays. You can be way in the back, like 20th.

WILL POWER: Yeah.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I think it will be hard for him to get back up to grips with the road course car.

WILL POWER: I'll see you in an hour or so, Bruce. The barbecue, remember that (laughter).

Q. Will or Josef, because you're going to spend so much time at Indianapolis over the next few weeks, Josef, it looks like you're moving house to Indianapolis anyway, but driving this direction this weekend, the other direction from Monday onwards, does it actually play into your mindset when you're on the main straightaway at Indy or do you blank it out because you're doing what you got to do?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I mean, doesn't even register. Totally different track, different downforce level. So, yeah, I have to say in all the times I've done it, it hasn't even registered. It's such different disciplines, you could say.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I'm like Will. It's so completely different that you're almost hitting it in stages. The first stage of a big month, kind of really focused on that. Then as soon as you get done with it, you can start thinking about the oval event and the 500.

Having said that, we have people working on the 500 the whole off-season. Even before we show up for the GP, we've been working on the 500. We get locked in on the GP event, get the most of that. You get a good cadence leading into practice the next week, then you roll into the big show.

Q. Will, is there anything specific that you can pinpoint as to why you're so good at the road course in Indy?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I think it's Bruce's barbecue. Something about when Will and Bruce get together there's a 24, 48 hour window. Bruce is available, Will gets that barbecue, that guy sings on the track. He just sings. I don't know what it is. It's something in the brisket (laughter).

WILL POWER: I would agree with that because the years I've won it, yes, Bruce has come over and we've eaten barbecue and we've watched chick flick. There is something to that. Maybe it's the attitude of going into the weekend, an attitude of bliss and happiness.

On a more truthful note, honestly I enjoy the track. I've done well at pretty much every track we go to in the series now. Yeah, in particular just a fun road course, consistent grip all the way around.

Yeah, it's hard to pinpoint whether it really suits my style because we go to other tracks where it is a completely different style and I'm still quick.

Yeah, don't know. I think the team's very good there, period. So you're starting off with a good car, then obviously you got to do the rest. Yeah, I actually really enjoy it. A really fun track.

You can certainly push the limits because, you know, there's not many walls or anything to hit there. You get to the limit pretty quickly. I couldn't pinpoint a reason apart from all the work I've done over the years on the craft.

Q. Josef, obviously you did really well last season. What do you think you can kind of improve, if anything, for this year to get to victory circle?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Well, I'm disappointed I'm driving up to Indy, I was trying to be over in North Carolina today with Will. I would have liked to have gotten on this barbecue meeting, chick flick. I've got to look at different ways to be good.

I thought we were very strong. Hopefully I haven't frozen here.

THE MODERATOR: You jinxed yourself, Josef. You were doing great, then you froze. Now you're back, but you're muted.

WILL POWER: He shouldn't have talked about Bruce like that (smiling). He's muted again. Take your ear phones out, Ashley won't care.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I much prefer to listen to Will, to be honest with you. I don't know that it's a tremendous loss that you're not being able to hear me (laughter).

I think we hit on something pretty good last year with our car specifically. I felt good about our car in the summertime, too, when Will and me were up front in that race before the yellow happened.

I'm excited. We just got to try and make sure we qualify well. I think that's pretty important at the GP. Definitely make your day a little bit better. So if we can do that, I think we'll have good cars, like Will said.

Q. Josef, there's been quite a lot of talk about INDYCAR drivers in Formula 1 over the past few weeks, spurred by Colton winning at St. Pete. Obviously you went over to GP3 and had a short period of time there. What was it that brought you back to the States? Was it how attractive the Road to Indy program is? The style of the tracks? The limited time you had to get used to racing on the calendar?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It's kind of a shame. I think it's just a shame to see the animosity amongst the two series. I consider both of them world class championships, both Formula 1 and INDYCAR. I think there's just a lot of parallels you see (indiscernible).

WILL POWER: We can't hear you, mate. Your headphones.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I figured this would be a shame if I broke up on this, because it's a great question. I don't know that I can really answer it super well in these conditions. Got toilet paper behind me (laughter).

Jack, if you remember this, you ask me this question again at some point. I would love to see some young drivers get over there. Both Pato and Colton I think would do extremely well in Formula 1 personally, in my opinion. It's a great question.

I hate to see the animosity between some of the fans amongst the series because they're both great championships, really great. I think they have so many

parallels together.

I'm just a huge fan of seeing the crossover, more often than not, whether that's drivers, mechanics or engineers. I'd love to see some more. Hopefully we get some young guys from our side competing over there.

Q. There's a lot of points on the table this month. You have a doubleheader in Belle Isle after. How do you balance the championship, thinking about the championship, also the 500 as a driver? The championship at the end of the year can be decided over these next few races.

WILL POWER: I've never been a big fan of the double points at the 500. I believe you should never be thinking of the championship when you're racing to try to win that race. If you're in the hunt to win it, not that you're thinking of that, but if you're fifth and you're down the last stint, the last 10 laps, there's no chance to win, you won't fight as hard. You might consider just taking the points.

Yeah, I just think it shouldn't be double points, it should be normal points. It should be 100% about the race, shouldn't be about the championship, in my opinion.

Yeah, obviously like you said, massive stint in a short period of points coming up here. It will play a huge part in who's going to be a contender at the end of the year.

Q. Josef, do you think championship yet? Is that even in your mind? Are you still just trying to get the season going?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I think it's still pretty early. Even at Indianapolis. I completely agree with Will. I've not been a big fan of the double points scenario, both at Indy and the championship finale, quite frankly.

Yeah, you're not thinking of points at Indy until it's over. Those come in moments. You think about qualifying, you're always trying to be fast, always trying to be in the top nine shootout because you know there's points there, but more so because you want to start up front in the race.

You're first thinking about doing well in the race, starting up front. Then after qualifying is done, then you think about the points implications. If you had a good qualifying, it helps you in points. If you didn't have a good qualifying, you worry about what it did to you in points.

The race is the same way. When you're in the race, you're thinking about doing as well as possible in this event. You get one shot at it every year. It's such a big deal. You're just trying to win the race.

After the fact you kind of have to settle with whatever that was. If it was a winning day, it helps you tremendously in the points. If it wasn't, then you're feeling horrible about leaving there, being in a hole probably in the championship.

Yeah, I don't like it. I think Will brings up a good point. If you're fifth or sixth, do something strategy-wise to win the event, you may not do that nowadays just because you don't want to sacrifice the negative of losing a bunch of points if you get it wrong. I don't like that element.

For the most part you're not thinking about championship when you're in the event.

WILL POWER: Is the final race double points this year?

THE MODERATOR: No, just the 500.

WILL POWER: I thought they got rid of that.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I don't know if they carried that. I know we did that last year.

THE MODERATOR: Not the finale. That was two years ago. Just the 500. I just verified that with Arni, the knower of all things.

WILL POWER: Unless you're behind, of course, then it's terrible (laughter). Change the rule.

Q. When it comes to being successful, how much is it about pure speed and how much is it getting comfortable in the car?

WILL POWER: I would say successful in this series is often about luck because if you get caught on the wrong side of yellows, it can totally ruin your day because they have this terrible rule where the pits close on the yellow.

Obviously speed matters massively. You might question that if you look at last year's championship where Dixon won probably three races because of yellows and qualified horribly.

For the most part, yep, if you can qualify at the front it helps. Lottery yellows, I love to stick the knife in and let people know how bad they are.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It's a tough equation. It's just tough. I feel like you have good years and bad years when it comes to luck. You just don't know. I don't know how you really control that. You just got to work as hard as possible at all moments and try to put yourself in position to

be ready to capitalize. There's some things that are just out of your control.

WILL POWER: I think a pretty safe strategy is pit when Dixon pits because nine times out of ten you're going to catch a lucky yellow, like last year on the Indy road course. If you just, like, watch Dixon, qualified 17th, me and Josef out leading by a mile, Dixon pits, INDYCAR is going to throw a quick pit, Josef would have won the championship for sure. I probably would have been in the hunt, yeah.

You can tell Josef hasn't been destroyed multiple times by yellows, and he's still kind of on the fence. Well, yellows have helped me out a few times. A few more times of Dixon getting the lucky one, him not, he'll be right onboard, Yep, the yellow thing really, really stinks.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I've not been beat to a pulp quite as much as Will has when it comes to yellow flags. I don't have as many wounds. It's not fresh for me. But I understand it.

WILL POWER: Honestly, it's a really bad system because if you qualify well, you're more subject, because I have qualified well my whole INDYCAR career, you're definitely more subject to getting screwed by a yellow. If you don't qualify well, you are going to pit early and take a risk, go fishing for that lucky yellow.

That's where I think it's a horrible system, a horrible system that has nothing to do with merit. Totally to do with luck. It almost goes the other way: it hurts the guy that does a good job. Horrible system. Must change.

Think I got my point across (laughter)? It's the truth, though.

Look, I can promise you nothing will change. We actually went to the INDYCAR meeting. Helio was in there. Walked out, said, Nothing has changed in 20 years. He's right.

Q. Speaking of frustrations of yellows, another side of frustration can be keep coming close to winning and not winning. Is the frustration building in having not got there yet or is it too early in the season to have that buildup?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It's becoming almost unbearable at this point. So close, yet so far. No, I'm kidding.

It's been okay. We definitely have been in the mix, which is most important. Step one is just getting in the mix, giving yourself an opportunity to win a race. We definitely have been there two out of the four events we've had so

far.

I feel really positive. I think we're doing a lot of things right. Probably not the start of the year that we would have dreamed of, but it's been good enough to where we can build on it. That's kind of where we're at. We're trying to build on what we've done so far, continue to improve.

I think we just need to keep doing what we're doing because we're plenty close enough in the fight. You keep to doing that, eventually it will cave open. We will make sure the door caves open.

WILL POWER: Caves open? That's the way.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Knock it down.

WILL POWER: Knock it down.

Q. Josef, it's been a little bit of a rocky season so far for you with some incidents that have happened, yet you've managed to be No. 4 in the championship right now. You bounce back, you're always able to bounce back. You bounced back last season. What's the secret? How are you able to do that?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Look, I'm telling you, I don't want to give my secrets away, but it's barbecue. I live in Tennessee. We got good barbecue, too. I know Bruce has some magic stuff there that Will has been taking advantage of every now and then. It's the diet. It's really the diet that keeps you resilient. I don't know. It makes me more rubbery, just makes me bounce back.

I don't know what to attribute it to. We have a very resilient team I think in general with all of us. Certainly within our group specifically, when things happen that are negative, certainly the first race was very negative, then you just got to move forward. Whether it's me or a member on the team, it's one of the engineers that's not feeling good, we just always are moving forward. I think we have that mindset that we're always moving forward. That kind of keeps us in a good place performance-wise.

WILL POWER: I think we all need the barbecue just based on today's social issues.

THE MODERATOR: We'll close out today with Asher.

Q. For both of you. You were both winners last October for the Harvest Grand Prix. Josef was the first winner on day one, Will was number two, number one in day two. There's only one race for the GMR Grand Prix, so only one of you can win. What is one of you going to try to do to try to get it to the front or make a

repeat win?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: What do you think, Mr. Power?

WILL POWER: Hopefully we roll off the track pretty good. It's a couple of short sessions, straight in qualifying. I think we're pretty well-prepped. It will come down to qualifying well, or if you don't, catching a lucky yellow. Obviously making no mistakes in the race. Might as well make a couple risky moves.

Like Josef said, keep knocking on that door and eventually the yellow flag monster will answer. Or just a win, or the I've-worked-hard thing will come to fruition.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I would agree. Thanks for the question, Mr. Asher. I hope you're excited for the weekend. I know that we are.

I would love to have a duel with Mr. Power on the track. That would be fun as long as it doesn't end badly for both of us. I think it will take qualifying well, decisive decision making because we don't have a lot of time. It's going to go really fast.

You're going to roll off the first practice, pretty much how your car is is what it's going to be. If it's not good, you have to make quick decisions to make it better before you qualify. A fast-paced weekend that you have to basically get the most out of very quickly. Whoever is best at that will do really well.

WILL POWER: Actually I think that we deserve to resume our battle that we were having at the first race last year, and Dixon should be back starting 17th. Let's replay that and see how it really would have finished.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I would have liked to have won. It's a shame we didn't get to see.

WILL POWER: It would have been quite an interesting good little battle.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I would love an opportunity to snooker Mr. Power. I like that we can snooker these guys. Very hard to do, though.

WILL POWER: You've snookered me more times than I've ever snookered you. I owe you a snookering big-time.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Can we just say 'snookering' all weekend? That's the new word we have to fit into our interviews.

Q. Do you think there will be another push-up battle

between Will and Josef?

WILL POWER: I reckon I might be able to beat him right now. I've done a lot of weights recently. I'm pretty sure I can get him in push-ups right now, pretty sure.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: We should have another battle.

WILL POWER: Let me know when. I'm probably going to get you. Probably going to get you this time.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I don't think so. It's a good suggestion.

Q. How many push-ups do you think they should do? 500 or what?

WILL POWER: In a workout you can definitely do 300, no question.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: How many in a row can you get right now, Will?

WILL POWER: No, I haven't been doing many in a row. They'll all been, like, intervals with 10. I've been doing chest, weights, single arm chest push, whatever you call it, single arm dumbbell press.

THE MODERATOR: Then you add in the barbecue.

WILL POWER: I've got bigger muscles than I've ever had right now. Trying to stay in my weight bracket.

I'd like to add that Josef sent me a very, very disheartening text message last night. He hasn't apologized for it. That's something that's kind of upsetting me, I would say (smiling). I should tell you what he said. He said my wife does everything for me. That's what he said. And she does (smiling).

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I did not know what you were going to say. I actually was confused about what text message you were talking about.

I was complimenting Liz. Liz is very organized and professional. Some people don't seem to know that, but they're going to know that Liz is very professional.

WILL POWER: There's no question. Liz is certainly on top of her game. She has two children to deal with. I contribute a lot. You'd be surprised, Josef. You would be surprised. I bathe my little boy every night, put him to bed. I don't ever cook dinner, never cook dinner. The missus, she's too on it, man. Just something I don't do. But I would.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: You're a lucky man, Power.

WILL POWER: I don't know. I reckon old Ashley does probably quite a bit for you.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: She's amazing. I would not function without my wife.

WILL POWER: You hear that, Ashley?

ASHLEY NEWGARDEN: He has to say that because I'm driving.

THE MODERATOR: We're going to end it there. I would suggest similar to our Andretti Autosport friends that you guys start a podcast together, like Hinch and Rossi. I think it would be entertaining and there would be a lot of subscribers.

Thank you everyone for joining.

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