

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Josef Newgarden

Colton Herta

Press Conference



Q. Second front row start from Road America, did you think you had it at the end or a little bit out there?

COLTON HERTA: You have to think that there's 3/1000ths in it somewhere. It's a little disappointing when you lose by that much. I think it's like the third straight weekend I finished second during qualifying. In the Detroit race, too. Road America. And now here.

So I'm getting tired of it. I gotta get around it. It's always fun to battle with Josef, and especially for the race. He's one of the guys that's extremely clean in the series and always races hard. I'm looking forward to that now.

Q. Josef Newgarden, P1, once again. Third straight this season. Last time that happened was 2015, some guy named Will Power did that in Texas, Toronto. Third consecutive pole. Your thoughts on getting it done at the end?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It was tighter than I would like it to be. These guys all close the gap quite a lot. I felt we had a really good car straight out of the box this weekend. So we opened really well. And I think for us it was a matter of maintaining that, trying to not lose any speed and keep up with the track progression.

And then everyone around us, like certainly Colton, just raised their game a lot and just about knocked us off. It was going to be hard. You could see how fast these guys were. He was super quick all through qualifying. So it was going to take a really good lap. And thankfully we put it together.

That's INDYCAR. It's Mid-Ohio. Always tight here. So difficult. I think I've qualified second like three times, something that. It always comes down to being super tight in the end. Very happy to -- I think the biggest thing that's encouraging me for is we've had speed all weekend, the car's felt good. It's about maintaining that. And if we can

keep our composure for the race conditions, we'll have an opportunity to challenge again and seal one of these off. That's what it starts with. You get one on the board and it will help. We're still trying to make that happen for 2021.

Q. Colton, can you compute .0031 of a second?

COLTON HERTA: I don't know what that would be like. Probably very little, maybe like just the length of the P1 sticker.

Q. That's pretty good. Both you guys, looks like in qualifying, looks like you're almost water-skiing out here, the way you're working the wheel and stuff, the tires almost looked like barely touching it. What's it like driving a car to the limit like that?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I thought it was pretty hooked up. I was more hooked up in the Fast 6 and I thought maybe it might be. Tires dropping off were an issue. I think Colton and me were matched as far as how much we use the tires two laps apiece. That made a big difference. I think if you have three laps on the reds, makes it even harder. My car felt really solid all weekend. I can speak to that. Doesn't feel like you're water-skiing at all. Feels like you're riding a roller coaster on rails. They say it about this place. It's like a roller coaster, with the undulations and just how hooked up it can be with the elevation change.

It's a really fun ride when the car's working well. If it's not super comfy, it can be challenging, but for us in the 2 car, it's been really nice with that.

Q. How much did traffic affect you all in the first couple rounds of qualifying there?

COLTON HERTA: I don't really having any traffic. In practice it's pretty tough. It's hard (indiscernible) around here. So I'm sure a lot of people are frustrated with different people. But it's like constantly people backing up, backing up, but in qualifying I was okay with it. I didn't have any problems at all and everybody was pretty considerate.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I was similar. Exact same comment. 26 cars. We were talking about it, it's on the limit here. Probably over the limit here for practice running,



but in qualifying it seemed fine. Once you cut it down to 12.

Q. All the Andretti Autosport cars so good starting position for all of you. How important is it that you all know kind of the trials and tribulations the entire team has had?

COLTON HERTA: Like I said, it hasn't been a question of anybody's pace. They're quick drivers, it's just getting it all together on one weekend. And they're off to it. All the qualifying, the cars in the Fast 12, which is really good. And it seems like it's going to be a pretty simple three-stopper and strategy. It's going to be flat out the whole time and racing, which is nice. And it will be interesting. A lot of guys that maybe aren't extremely quick. That traffic might be involved, it will be interesting from that aspect, like we had the last few weekends.

Q. This is the Honda Indy 200. How much extra pressure, incentive pressure to win for the home team?

COLTON HERTA: I think it's kind of -- Honda has a huge plant out here in the north, north of Ohio, build a lot of cars. Important race for them. And I think as the sponsor, and it's real important race for them, like I said, and this and Long Beach, the Honda races. And I think they're kind of expecting a Honda to win that race, and those races. And then they love to steal races in Detroit. So it is important. Obviously everybody on the team wants to win. Not just Honda. We'll be gunning for that.

Q. Josef, how much fun is for you to steal a race from the other manufacturer?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: For me, there's a lot of respect for our competitor and Honda. They're a tough competitor for us, which is great. You want to have a good battle. And someone that pushes you -- and I feel they pushed us as hard as you can be pushed. So a lot of respect for Honda and what they do every weekend. I think for us at Chevrolet, obviously for me I'm very proud to be backed by Chevrolet. Every single one of my INDYCAR wins comes with a Chevrolet powering me in the back of my vehicle. I'm pretty comfy where I am at and hopefully we can put Chevy on top tomorrow.

Q. Colton, you mentioned an even a two-stopper peace offering, you saw maybe the tires were going off quickly, tomorrow may be warm, is it going to turn into a tire management race?

COLTON HERTA: It could be. I think it depends how much rubber goes on. Every stint, the more rubber that

goes down the easier it gets on the tires. So I think it could be. It will paint a better picture in warm-up. But I think tire ware, pretty confident with it. I don't think it's going to be anything like Detroit. I think we know every year the tires are (indiscernible) in the five laps. So it's definitely different places. Like I said, the more rubber goes down, the easier it can be to manage the tires.

Q. Talking about strategy, how much do you think strategy will be a factor tomorrow?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Depends on the yellows. Outside of yellows, if it's a green race it looks pretty straightforward.

Q. Which has happened a lot here?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It has. But as soon as you try and predict the race, it does the opposite sometimes. So it could be all green or we could have five yellows. You just don't know. I think yellows are always what flip the script on these things. If it's green all day, it looks pretty straightforward.

Q. Josef, you guys, you've done everything but win this year, a race. Is there pressure there? How would you describe -- I think y'all won five of the last six, seven races last year. Quite a roll. But what is it like within the team about getting one on the board you talked about a minute ago?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Pretty normal, to be honest with you. Doesn't feel any different. I don't feel any different. I don't think the team really feels any different. Kind of been doing the same thing, feeling really good. And joking, a lot of joking in the engineering meeting as normal. So, yeah, it's pretty much status quo on our side of the world. Definitely been unfortunate. It's probably the word I'd use. Just unfortunate we've not been able to have things go our way. Some of that's probably a little self-inflicted. Obviously we try and clean that up in a year when we have a couple of mistakes. But some of it has just purely been unfortunate. So outside of that, pretty jokey. Pretty committed, and ready to go tomorrow. So same deal as always.

Q. You talked about the yellows, don't expect yellows presenting issues this season. How do you go into the races, how do you prepare for that? I know you can't predict when they come, but they've altered many finishes.

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, you can't really do much about it. If you're running up front, you kind of usually wait for some guys to pit before you and pit when you can. And with guys pitting before you, (indiscernible). So kind of hope,

pray, I don't think you put yourself in a good position if you pit five laps before you normally would. Shoot yourself in the foot for later. It's a tough one up front. I think luckily now in race control they've been open to the idea of kind of keeping it green for a lot. If the car is not in a dangerous area. Obviously if it's in a dangerous area, then they'll put out the caution, expand that.

They have been doing something to kind of help that. It's very tough. Winning a race, you're in a race winning position and get taken off with a yellow, it's difficult.

Q. You have race control, drivers?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: No, I think it's -- obviously race control doesn't want to dictate races either. Puts them in a tough spot. I think they hate having to throw a yellow and it flips the world upside down for the top 5 who have worked hard to get there and deserve to stay there. So they don't want to influence the race.

But to Colton's point, you can only do so much in the rule sets that we have because it's a closed pit situation. If there's a car in harm's way, they've got to throw the yellow immediately. If they can't, I think they try and do everything possible to give the team an opportunity to pit, which is about the best you can do with this set of rules. If we want to make it even better, you know, where we mitigate the risk of your race being ruined by a yellow, then we've got to change the rules. We've got to figure out how to do that safely. That's another conversation. But as far as how we approach the day, to Colton's point, you can only do so much. There's some areas where you can lower your risk of getting caught by the yellow, but then there's some areas where you just can't do anything about it. You've got to focus on your strategy that you have kind of gone with. If you get bit by it, it sucks to get bit by it. That's the nature of this style of racing at the moment.

Q. So you have been bit by late yellows two consecutive races. Tell me, what do you say and feel when it happens, and what happens tomorrow if it's a third time?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I would say the last two races weren't necessarily -- I wouldn't put those down to yellows. You look at last year, last year was very unfortunate for yellows. I think we gotten taken out of four events, four wins because of yellows. I wouldn't say that was the case these last two races. Things just didn't pan out. Detroit didn't pan out because of our strategy the way the yellow fell. And Road America, we just couldn't predict what was going to happen there. It's just an unfortunate failure. But if you looked at last year, yellows played a big role in our races specifically. And those are the tough ones.

When they purely take you out of the top 10, when you're up there on merit, it's a hard pill to swallow. But like I said, it's the rule sets we live in right now. It's the style of racing we're used to. We know the drill. If we want to make that better, we have to change the rules one day.

Q. Lastly, are there guys out there that you guys are sick of it, are there guys out there, that are just, like, targets, get your act together, stop throwing yellows?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It's up and down, up and down the grid. So, yeah, I don't think you can point the finger at one person. No one's trying to do anything on purpose.

Q. Colton, do you think the talk about possible changes with the team have lit a fire under everyone, from drivers to guys in the shop? Has it been distracting at all?

COLTON HERTA: No, I'm locked in for the next two years beyond this year. So for me -- it's every weekend. Really need to start winning a lot of races to get back in the championship and that's my goal. When we're not winning races, we need to finish on the podium. So we've been good at doing that the last few races; but, yeah, I think it's really trying to turn it on and win races. So I'm focused on that.

Q. We haven't had a repeat winner here at Mid-Ohio since 2014. Colton, you're going for a repeat. Dixon was the last one to do it. What makes Mid-Ohio so difficult to be able to repeat and how much does this track change from year to year?

COLTON HERTA: I think before the difficult aspect of it was it was 90 laps. And that's a two-stop and a three-stop. And a lot of guys that probably could have won in that era got burned. And it's a long shot and stuff. Before it was very difficult to choose the right strategy and predict who is going to be the winner. Now it's a flat-out race. We'll see guys pushing to the limits. And I think that's kind of what's -- I don't want to say it's easier, but it's a little bit more predictable in that sense.

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