

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Friday, August 13, 2021

Will Power

Christian Lundgaard

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: A man that knows his way around the road course here, Will Power. Second-place start tomorrow. Tell us about the Firestone Fast 12 for you.

WILL POWER: Yeah, it was good. The car was really good. I just missed out by 6/1000ths, but so did about four other people. That's about the tightest session I've ever seen, I think.

Pretty good conditions. Car was good. I'm glad to just be back in the groove again. Had such a kind of bad qualifying run lately. Yeah, certainly right there in the running for pole, so really happy to be up front.

THE MODERATOR: It never ceases to amaze how tight this field is. Kind of a cliché, but you come to a place like this, a couple thousandths here or there, you can be up front or towards the back.

WILL POWER: Yeah. As you know, if you're just a little bit outside the window, you're going to be way back there. Yeah, 2/10ths moves you about eight spots in that last session. You had to be right on the game, on the ball.

But, yep, we've been there all weekend, all day, that's it. That's all we've had all day, so... See how the race goes. Long race. Can certainly do something from there. Yeah, see how it plays out.

THE MODERATOR: Christian Lundgaard joins us. Welcome to the NTT INDYCAR SERIES.

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Apparently you like this place pretty quickly. Tell us about your day here.

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Apparently, yes. Let's just say I didn't expect to be here now when I left home. I know my family is asleep right now. I guess they will have a heart

attack when they wake up in the morning.

Yeah, I'm just super happy to be here. I'm enjoying every second of it. It's so different to Europe. Just seeing fans is amazing. We've had one or two races this year in Formula 2 where we've had fans. It's only half capacity. So to come here and see so many people near us is just awesome.

THE MODERATOR: Why do you look so comfortable so quickly in a car here?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Difficult to say. I'm just enjoying myself and seeing all the opportunities I have, trying to grab them obviously. But it's always about going out there and give it your all. For me, it's just amazing to be here and to prove myself.

I think it's looking good so far. But I didn't expect to be here now.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take some questions.

Q. Will, they said you were challenging Pato's lap. Can you walk us through that. Were you expecting that to go in your favor?

WILL POWER: On the first lap, yeah, I was up actually. He started warming his tires and slowing up. Then I had to back up. Aborted the lap.

I didn't get close enough to him. I could have driven right up to the back of him and he would have got a penalty. I had to get a gap for the next lap because I only had fuel for the next lap. Go for it.

That's all that was. Let's say it wasn't a blatant block, but he starting waving and backing up. You know you only have one more lap to do it. If you finish on his gearbox, you're not going to be quick because you lose all your air.

It is what it is. It's fine. Top four or five cars were on the same 10th. Anyone's go, I had a good second lap.

Q. Christian, you said you didn't expect to be here. You talk with a lot of confidence about the car being similar to your F2 car. Was it even more similar than



you expected?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I mean, after doing the test, I knew how the car was. But going into the test I did at Barber, I didn't know what to expect. But then figuring out that the car was fairly similar, obviously it's slightly different.

I mean, a race car is a race car. So for me it's just about finding the limit off that car. It seems like I've found that pretty quickly.

Q. You talked earlier this week that your big concern for the race is it's twice as long, flat out. Do you have any more confidence about that after today?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I wouldn't say I ever was really concerned. For F2 we do three races a weekend, two sprint races of 45 minutes, then a feature race of an hour. I mean, F2 and INDYCAR is pretty similar in terms of steering weight. Physically I'm fine.

But to put it up to a challenge in a two-hour race, I mean, after doing practice, I definitely wasn't concerned for tomorrow's race.

Q. Will, on the lap that you got second place on, is there one corner you just go back in your mind and think you could have done something a little bit different that could have got you pole?

WILL POWER: Yeah, there's always a little bit there. I mean, I have to say made no mistakes in there, it was a neat lap. Always a little bit of something there. Yeah, no, obviously everyone was kind of at the limit of their cars. We were all on the same 10th. I don't think anyone was going to go like 2/10ths quicker. Maybe a couple hundredths in it. Pato did a phenomenal lap to be on pole.

Q. Christian, is it liberating just knowing you're able to go flat out without worrying about points or anything like that?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Absolutely. I'm enjoying myself so far. I think the lap time and the position shows that, as well. I'm not looking for anything. I'm looking to gain experience and learn as much as I can. Obviously hopefully do a good job.

Q. Christian, have you met any of the other drivers yet?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Not before this morning, no. I got to the track around 11. I think that was the first time I met some of the drivers. So, yeah, it's all new to me

(smiling).

Q. What do you make of it so far being in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES paddock?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Honestly, when I'm down at the paddock, I'm just confused because it's so different. Obviously F1 and F2, we got garages and so on. But here the people just walking around the cars, it's amazing to see. I'm just enjoying. I think every second I spend here I like it more and more.

Q. Will, could you speak to the desire you have for a victory tomorrow. What's burning inside you right now?

WILL POWER: Yeah, it's been a terrible year. A lot of desire for pole position and a victory. I didn't get pole today. Long race tomorrow. Hopefully we have a good race car. I mean, we're going to make some changes and see if we can get it hooked up.

You never know in these races, as we saw last week. Ericsson was nowhere, and he was over the back of someone, then he won the race. So who knows. If you just stay out of trouble in these races, you always have a chance to win.

Q. Christian, what is something about these cars that you found you really like compared to the ones you've been driving?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: It's actually a good question. How to describe them? I'm not too sure. Obviously the F2 car and the INDYCAR is both built by Dallara. I think some of it is very similar. Just the way the car drives is not really that different. I think also that's why I got comfortable so quickly.

Yeah, how to describe it, I'm not too sure. I know that was kind of what you wanted to know. It's difficult.

Q. Is there part of this car that jumps out at you that you like?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Yeah, I love to drive whatever car it is. The faster the better. Obviously I think this is faster than F2. It's not that bad, no (smiling).

Q. Christian, you were on simulators quite a lot. How much did that help you adapting to the track today?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Actually, I haven't driven a sim that has this specific layout. I only did the iRacing one which has the F1 circuit that they drove on. Obviously turn

one for the Indy 500, the oval track, is the last corner we went on on the banking. The track that I basically prepared myself for was a different track.

But showing up this morning, the first run in FP, practice, was getting to know the track really. I knew what to expect from the car at that point but not the track. It was just making sure that I stayed on track and got the (indiscernible) covered.

Q. Is it right you missed the track walk?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: No, it was 45 minutes and I would have had to run. No. Didn't want to do that.

Q. Christian, talk about the differences between the Firestone rubber and what you normally run on with Pirelli.

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I think the drivers probably won't agree with me because they want the tires to come in faster. These tires come in a lot quicker than what I'm used to. We basically do two warmup laps. We go out and do one, then we push for two laps, and that's it. Here, it's going straight out of the box. You basically want to push as hard as you can going straight out of the box. That's quite different to what I'm used to.

I think I'll be struggling with getting straight out of the box and being sure I'm at the right braking point because I haven't got used to that because it's nothing that I've done before. That will probably be something to learn.

Q. In terms of warmup tomorrow, is that an added benefit for you?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Sorry?

Q. The benefit of warmup tomorrow morning, will that give you something to build on for the race?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: That is also new to me, to do a warmup before a race. I've never done that. But sure, definitely. I think the more laps I get in the car, the better. Yeah, it's something that we'll look at to be sure we have covered for the race.

Q. Will, do you see this result today as a bit of a relief?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I do. I was very determined coming into this weekend just considering how the last few races have been for me. Yep, right on the pace, back where I need to be. Very focused. Hopefully we can have a good day tomorrow.

Q. Will, are the track conditions noticeably different than when you were at IMS in May? Does NASCAR running on the track with a different type of rubber make a difference to INDYCAR?

WILL POWER: Yeah, it is definitely a different track condition. The car was a lot different for us at the previous race. I don't know whether because the temperature was cooler.

Yes, the NASCAR rubber does not go well with the Firestone stuff. It doesn't take long to get it up, though. Doesn't take long to get the rubber out of the way.

Q. Will, the whole team has been in a little bit of a funk the last couple of races. How important is it for you as pretty much the veteran of the team to pull them out of this?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I mean, we're all looking for a bloody win. So is about every other person in the series. Yeah, very fierce competition. To win in this series, man, you got to play everything just right otherwise you're not going to win.

Q. Christian, beyond this weekend, is it open-ended here at Rahal or pretty much just this race? Are there some future options for you here?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I think whatever the future brings, there is a lot of different options. I'm not going to say this isn't one of them. It definitely is. But there is also others.

I think to come here to do this race I think is a good thing for us for the future, to be able to decide. I would say looking at the results and from the performance today, it probably looks bright for the future. But I'm not going to say it's going to be this. There's so many options.

I mean, I'm here to explore. I'll probably also explore some other things later on. But I've still got half a season to go in F2. That's still where the focus is, to finish that season, be sure we improve the championship position we're in at the moment.

Q. I got to ask this. What do you think of those NASCAR stockcars? Are they kind of like monsters on wheels?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I actually didn't see them drive. I'm sure I will at some point. But everything over here is so different, I'm pretty sure seeing them in real life will, as well.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations Christian and Will.

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