

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Alex Palou

Conor Daly

Will Power

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: So far in 2022 let's just begin with the Firestone Fast Six for you. What did you have? Are you happy with second?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, it was a great day for us. Really fast all day, all practices. We tried to improve the car for qualifying. We did. We found some stuff, which I was really happy about, and we got through Fast Six. That's the main target to start up front.

And then when you are with use reds and you have only one lap it's tough to make it happen, right? Yeah, it was a good day for us.

THE MODERATOR: Driver of the Ed Carpenter Racing Chevrolet, Conor Daly, joins us after his best qualifying effort of the season starting fourth. I know you are just trying to catch your breath, Conor. How happy are you with starting fourth tomorrow, top-row finish?

CONOR DALY: It's much nicer fighting with these guys than not. You know what I mean? As Will Power says all the time, some of the most talented drivers in the world. I truly right now.

When you have a good qualifying, especially at -- this is an incredible track. I truly believe that. It's so close. It's insane how the gaps are so small. It's nice to be able to just put three solid runs together.

Would have been nice to maybe be on the front row, but I just had one moment on the lap, and that's all it takes. It's still a great day for us.

Q. You were driving a pretty loose car. Was that basically the key to your speed?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, that was what I said to the engineers

as well, but they didn't believe me. (Laughing). Yeah, it's a track where the corners, how they are laid out, all the cars tend to obviously steer a little bit on entry if you look at it.

We were basically trying to make the car be more comfortable and easier to push with it. At the end I was super happy during qualifying with my car both on blacks and reds. It's a track that you always have to fight so much.

Q. As the fastest driver most of today, were you surprised or shocked that Will was able to get it at the very end the way he did?

ALEX PALOU: I mean, it's Will Power. No. It's like how many poles?

CONOR DALY: A lot.

Q. 64 careers.

ALEX PALOU: He probably has more poles than I have races in single-seater.

CONOR DALY: The math is correct on that.

ALEX PALOU: No, it's not a surprise. I wanted to get pole, but to be honest, I knew we were really good. We had really good speed, but we always lack a little bit on use reds maybe because I don't have enough experience also on getting 100% from them, which Will had. I wanted to get the pole, but I was not super shocked. It's Power, so ...

Q. Alex, surrounded by a lot of bow ties up front. Do you feel there's a big difference between Honda and Chevy right now? You're the only one in the top seven.

CONOR DALY: You're the only one, bro.

ALEX PALOU: That's good, right? I was not lacking power today. Otherwise, I wouldn't be up there. Yeah, I don't know. It works that way here, but it was working the other way some other races. So, yeah, I'm happy being up there and being able to fight.

Q. For both of you, as close as this field is and time

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sports

charts and in practice, do you feel a lot of strategy is going to come into play if it stays dry?

CONOR DALY: I think it always does, right? And everyone is so close here and so competitive, so we hope to be the smartest people out there, right?

When you are this close to the front, all you need is just one lap, but whether it's an in-lap or out-lap to kind of change your race. I hope it stays dry now that we're starting up front. But if it's wet, we do have less spray starting up front, so that's nice.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I agree. I think nowadays, strategy is a big, big thing here in INDYCAR, everywhere. When it's so close, you need to do something different to try and overtake or make some spots, so I think Firestone came out with really good tires where it's a big difference between both compounds, and it makes it easier for drivers and teams to make different stuff because we go to some tracks where it's not so different, and it's tough to pass somebody. I think it's going to be a great race if it's dry. If it's wet, it's wet. Maybe. I don't know.

CONOR DALY: Who knows?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah.

Q. Conor, I think you qualified sixth for this race last year, eighth for the August race. What is it about the IMS Road Course that you seem to grasp so well for qualifying?

CONOR DALY: It's a great question. The Ed Carpenter Team has a great handle on this circuit for sure. We have done a lot of work on the simulator here as well, but I've obviously -- there's no question I've struggled with this generation of car.

There's certain places where every driver has there better tracks and their worse tracks. Apparently here I remember how to drive. I don't know. It's one of those things that this car here just it feels fast. You can drive it fast, and it does what I want.

So I feel like it's been a difficult window to find at other circuits, but for whatever reason here, it suits my style more than a few other places for sure.

ALEX PALOU: Might be the jacuzzi.

CONOR DALY: It is the jacuzzi, yes. That too.

ALEX PALOU: I'm sure that mentally helps.

CONOR DALY: Oh, man, yeah. I feel good. (Laughing).

Q. Last year your race almost ended before it really got started with the collision at turn one. Any special good luck charm or thing you're going to try to do to keep everything away from you this year?

CONOR DALY: Who knows, man? Me and luck at this place and getting -- I don't know. It's interesting. We're just going to go charge down to that first corner and avoid all the other people with four tires on their car, and hopefully the people avoid me too. I don't know. We'll see.

You can't hope for anything. You've just got to do your best to pass the guys in front of you, and I'm going to just hope that he gets a nice jump, and we can follow each other down in turn one nicely.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah.

Q. Alex, you watch qualifying, and everybody is sliding all over the place in different spots, but then you wind up so close. That doesn't seem like it makes any sense. You would think if everybody is slipping and sliding, you would have a big gap. How does that happen?

ALEX PALOU: I don't know. I agree with you. When you drive it, the lap is so imperfect, let's say. You're battling so much. The car is moving. It's tough to hit your spots and your points that you have your references.

You do the lap, and everybody is in less than one-tenth, and you go to other race tracks where it's easier to drive, let's say, and there's bigger gaps. So I have no idea to be honest.

CONOR DALY: I think everyone is, honestly -- it's such a high level I think here that even though everyone is driving on the edge, I think everyone has realized that here you have to be on that limit to be fast.

In no way today have I ever been happy or comfortable, but that's how you have to go fast here. You know what I mean? It's interesting.

THE MODERATOR: Joined by the pole setter for tomorrow's GMR Grand Prix. 64 career poles and counting. Sixth on the IMS Road Course where he has won a total of four races from pole position here at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Road Course. By the way, it's the fifth different pole winner in 2022 for the NTT INDYCAR SERIES driver of the No. 12. Verizon Team Penske Chevrolet. Congratulations, Will. 64 and counting. How does this one feel?

WILL POWER: Pretty good. It's been a while since I've been on a pole on a road course. Super stoked to get that one. As usual, it was crazy close with everyone.

If you look at practice, it was six-tenths. I think it was 23 cars, so couldn't leave anything on the table. Any time you get a pole on this series these days, you've done a really good job. I think the team and everyone has put it together because any time you are leaving anything on the table, one-tenth moves you a lot of spots.

Q. Literally saving the best for last. Did you know on that final lap that maybe I've got what it takes to win pole here?

WILL POWER: No, I didn't. I did my absolute best and put it all together and didn't know where it would stack up. I just knew it was not that far off my quickest time on new tires. I thought it was a pretty good time to have done on used tires. So, yeah, it was a good lap.

Q. Will, a couple of times on the podcast I've asked you about a pole record, and you said that you honestly didn't know whether you had three poles left in you to catch them. Do you really believe that, especially after a day like today where you were able to come back? I mean, that was vintage Will Power out there today.

WILL POWER: Yeah, it was. I mean, no, I don't disbelieve it. It has become incredibly hard to get poles. It's just a different guy each week who gets it all together, so it is hard.

It's hard to get more than two a year. Two or three you would be doing a good job. Yep, we'll keep chipping away. Don't really think about it all that much. I just try to do the best I can, and I know it's there. I know there's that record there, but honestly, I feel pretty blessed to have got so close. I never expected to get that close, but, yeah. To be amongst Mario Andretti and A.J. Foyt in pole records is something I never expected.

Q. Will, I think I've asked you this 100 times, but I'm going to ask it 101. What is it you summoned when it comes to running the fastest lap on a weekend? What comes over you? Can you explain to people why it's so important to be the fastest guy on the track even though everybody else is trying to do the same thing? What do you think is special that comes over you?

WILL POWER: I'm going to say to put a really good lap together in this series there is just so much that goes into it before you even get in the car or just throughout practice

and everything before you even get to qualifying, and then it's up to you to really dig deep and put it together.

But, yeah, I mean, I originally early in my days I used to say anyone can learn to do this, but after 20 years of high-level driving or more, I don't believe that anymore. I think you have to have some sort of fire in the belly, which you see so many drivers have that in this series now. You see it in Formula 1 and in every series. Just some guys have that whatever it is in them and some don't.

The people that don't may be exceptional in another area, but, yeah, it's everything about looking at data and the video and putting all that in your mind, but then when it comes down to the nitty gritty, you've got to put it together, and it takes a lot of everything to do that.

Q. When did you know or notice that you had that in your career? When did you notice that you could be special in that regard especially?

WILL POWER: It's never a point. You are digging and clawing whole career trying to stay in the right. I would say when I was in Champ Car or World Series by Renault, I was very good at putting laps together. It wasn't really any particular time that I thought --

I'm not really any faster than I was when I was 17 years ago, honestly. I'm not. I'm the same pace. You have just added so much more to your tool box of putting things together and weekends together and knowledge of the car and setting it up. The ultimate speed in you, you see it in kids as early as go-carts. You just can pick them.

Q. I wanted to ask, on that final run we saw you a bit more than one-tenth up, and then there was a little kind of twitch, and it dropped to half one-tenth up. Did you think that it all disappeared at that point?

WILL POWER: Where was the twitch? In 7?

Q. Yeah.

WILL POWER: I actually backed 7 up more to be better through 8, 9, 10, which I hadn't been in the previous rounds. I slowed the minimum of 7 down. I probably got more of an exit, which might have been a twitch, but it was a pretty neat lap. It was pretty neat.

I can't really fault anything on that lap. If anything, I felt like I under-drove 4 where I had struggled as well. Yeah, not really -- I can't go back to that lap and fault it anywhere.

Q. Then I wanted to ask, obviously, we saw on second lap on the reds, like in fall-off by anything up to

three-tenths or whatever.

WILL POWER: Yeah.

Q. If it stays dry tomorrow and it stays hot tomorrow, is tire life going to be a major factor, or is it going to be more down to fuel?

WILL POWER: Tire life. Definitely going to be a typical race here where if you can hold to the tires a bit better, you're going to race well.

Q. Top four all four of your races this year. Now a pole. Do you feel like you're driving as good now as you ever have?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I'm right there. Right there. It's so competitive these days. You can't leave anything to chance. You can't just rock up.

Like I said, before you ever even get to the race track let alone qualifying for the race, there's just so much that has gone into it with simulated time, video, data, and analysis. It's endless.

Yeah, I'm there with a lot more experience. I'm still as quick as I was. I just have so much more available if my toolbox.

Q. 64. You're now three shy of Mario. Do you savor these now as you get them since they're harder to come by?

WILL POWER: I do, yes. Yes, I really, really enjoy them. I know that you don't even know if you'll get another one, so you've got to be -- any win or anything I get in this series now I feel very blessed and happy to have got it because it's tough. Obviously, I'm not 20 anymore either. Yep, got to keep digging.

Q. You've got a few rough starts to the year the past couple of years, but this year you are consistently good. Is there anything that's different that you can pinpoint this year?

WILL POWER: Not really. I mean, man, when I look back at the previous two years, it's just so many weird things that happened. Whether it's a spark plug gone bad or at the 500 we had a brake issue or the car doesn't start at Detroit. These sort of things really hampered me the last couple of years and even before that in 2021 was the same. '20 was the same.

I just felt like if we could just put a season together of kind of not being the best, just mistake-free. Don't have to be

the quickest on pit lane. Don't necessarily have to be the quickest on track. I feel like we could be riding the championship home.

Q. Not necessarily anything you or the team is doing differently. Just kind of working out that way?

WILL POWER: No. I'm for sure more of a mature driver. There's no question. That's just slowly happened over 17 years of INDYCAR, so I make less mistakes and know when to go, when not to go more than I used to. There will be a little bit of that playing into it as well.

Q. For tomorrow would you welcome the rain if it comes?

WILL POWER: It will be what it will be. I don't mind driving in the wet. I think that the tires have been a bit iffy lately. Sometimes you get a really good set. Sometimes you don't.

A dry race for us would be good. To start at the front, that's what you want. A very straight forward race. Unfortunately for fans, you want a boring race. No yellows or anything. Just straight forward.

Q. Will, last year Team Penske had their issues at the 500. They spent a lot of time trying to figure out what went wrong and things like that. Put a lot more focus on it to fix it. Is it difficult to remember, hey, we still have this race to go on? We can't focus on the big oval just yet. We still have 90 laps to run on Saturday before we look at going down this main straightaway southbound.

WILL POWER: Yeah, exactly. You don't even give the oval a thought right now. Saturday night, that's when you start the whole switch-over, but yeah, it's not even a thought. We know we've done our homework for the oval. If we're not quick this time, I don't know what it would take.

Q. Is there anything you can particularly pinpoint to your success here at the road course in Indy?

WILL POWER: No. It's a track I really enjoy. There's nothing particular. I've struggled here before as well. Obviously, I've had a lot of good days, but definitely clicks with me. It's quite a technical track. Very European style, which I enjoy. Yeah, nothing more.

Q. Obviously, INDYCAR have introduced these new LED light panels for the flags and stuff. What's your thought on that?

WILL POWER: My thought? Yeah, actually, I experienced



them once already. Very bright and good, yeah. Definitely a good system to adopt and hopefully that brings some more control of the yellow situations where eventually maybe they can leave the pits open or do some blue flag stuff.

Q. As you continue to rewrite the record books, I just wonder what it means inside a team such as Team Penske and what it means to Roger and Tim to have a driver of your caliber helping contribute to the history of Team Penske?

WILL POWER: Honestly, I feel so lucky to have had a career and a team like that. You are given a car week in and week out that's capable of pole positions and race wins, so you can't -- man, I have so much appreciation for that at this late stage in my career having been in the series for so long.

I think struggling at Indy last year gives you an understanding of what some people go through all the time, and just fortunate to have a team that can have a struggle like that and go away and come back and I feel like rectified immediately just because they're so resourceful. Just have quality people. Yep, very fortunate. Very fortunate.

Q. It's hotter today than usual in Indy. How much of a bearing has that had on setup and keeping the tires alive?

WILL POWER: Yeah, it definitely changed the setup from this morning when it was cooler. Definitely was a lot more difficult than the two sessions. The second practice and qualifying. It changed the car quite a bit, so you had to chase that.

Q. And how important will the out lap be tomorrow, of course, not to take too much of the tire life too early?

WILL POWER: It's going to be a tight race if it's as hot as this tomorrow and doesn't rain. Yeah, that always plays a bit of a part around here. I think the tires always drop off, and I think tire selection plays a big part as well. Yeah, it's kind of tough starting up front because tire selection. You are kind of in a tough position. Especially the pole sitter.

Q. You said several things that make you sound like you're old. You keep talking about being experienced. Also, frankly, I expected more jovial Will Power in here today.

WILL POWER: I was on the radio.

Q. Was this pole a relief or fun?

WILL POWER: It was fun. No, I was very emotional on the radio or very ecstatic. Yeah, you have to remember you have a race tomorrow. You don't want to use up any of that. You don't want to use too much of your mojo up just celebrating a pole position, but any time I get one these days, I'm so happy. So, so happy.

Q. Is that part of it that you have had all these poles, and you want to focus on races?

WILL POWER: I actually have focused more on races, especially this year, going into this year. Maybe the last two years. Just really perfecting how to approach a race and tire deck and all the little things that add up.

Q. It sounds like it's more of a mental thing of not getting too excited on Saturday or Friday.

WILL POWER: I was always a bit that way. You just know how the races go. I am extremely happy. I am. It's so difficult to get a pole these days in this series, so I am over the moon.

Even if the race doesn't go well, I'll come away from this weekend knowing that I added to that pole list and ticked another box for the season, you could say.

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