

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Will Power

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Congratulations to Will Power. Win number three at the Chevrolet Detroit Grand Prix presented by Lear. Now ties with Scott Dixon and Helio Castroneves for most wins on the island, wrapping up the island era as we head to the streets of Detroit next year.

First win of the season. 41st career win. Fifth all time. Now one behind Michael Andretti for fourth all time. Sixth different winner this year. You also take over the points lead, you're three up on Marcus Ericsson.

Congratulations, A. How did you do all that on reds at the end? How difficult was that? How satisfying at the end of the day?

WILL POWER: Yeah, obviously very satisfying. Redemption from last year. Yeah, the last stint, it was good because it had such a gap. On the out lap, it was really nice. You can do a bit of damage on the cold tires. I was really cognizant of not slipping the tire too much. Then just got in a rhythm and drove it really straight, really straight. Can be very quick that way. Just a certain way you can drive when tires are like that.

The fact that the track had rubbered so much looked after them. They never, like, dropped and I was like, Oh, my God. I just looked after them in case there was a battle at the end. If I had to go hard at the end, I think I could have.

THE MODERATOR: Getting Chevrolet's 100th win in their backyard. How proud are you to get number 100 for these guys?

WILL POWER: Yeah, great. I think I've got 26 of those 100. That's what they said. Yeah, very cool to have a partner like Chevy. I've been with them since 2012. Yeah, we've certainly had a lot of fun together. Won a championship, won an Indy 500, and a ride in the game this year again.

I cannot thank them enough. They work really hard. Certainly improved over last year. Better drivability, better engine all around.

Yeah, really proud to get the hundredth.

THE MODERATOR: Another championship for them when it's all said and done.

WILL POWER: That would be amazing. That's the goal.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Facetiously, do y'all's mirrors have 'objects closer than they appear' on them? How close did Alexander Rossi look there on the last lap especially?

WILL POWER: Yeah, that was the first glimpse I got, I think. I had it on my dash where I can see the time behind and in front. I was getting updated every lap.

We held the gap, the same gap for a while. When I got stuck behind Harvey, I just kind of managed that gap. Yeah, the lap car in INDYCAR is a real deal and it's a problem (laughter).

Jimmie Johnson, when you follow him, he's amazing. Like, he's as fast as you ever see him go when you're coming, trying to get past him. I'm not joking. He actually drives really well then.

Q. Were you in that zone again today? What is that like?

WILL POWER: It's hard to get to that place. I used to be there a lot often when I was younger. But, yeah, it's just one of those zones where everything's clicking so well, you're 100% in the middle, it's that flow state. You can't make a mistake. You don't make a mistake. Just so much space there to play with it, you could say, like manipulate it, play with it.

Hard to explain. But I would get in that state for qualifying often, pump out some pretty ridiculous laps. That was today. That was the race for me. In a really good spot.

Q. Were you surprised there were no cautions today?

WILL POWER: Yes, I was surprised. But then, you know, we have races like that. Such a good field, like there's no



bad drivers. There's no drivers that shouldn't be there. I mean, they're all good. It doesn't surprise me it was a mistake-free race.

As you've seen, what is it, seven races, six different winners? That's just the norm for INDYCAR now. The Fast Six is a different group every time, differ polesitter. There's no series like this in the world.

If you were to compare this to Formula 1, there's really two guys that are going to battle it out in Formula 1 right now. You're comparing to the best, biggest series in the world.

In INDYCAR try guess who will win the next race or who will be on pole, win the championship. Just try guess. You couldn't. It's impossible. I mean, there's so many good guys.

We need to get it out there. This product is so good. The racing is so good. It's so unpredictable. A different winner every week. The racing is great.

Q. Could you go into detail what you did with the reds. Some drivers started complaining about them going away after two, three laps. You kept them on for 20.

WILL POWER: Yeah, no, we were aware of that. I think the fact the track rubbered up is why we left it till the last stint. We had a good gap, so you could come out, you didn't have to battle someone on your out lap, and you could look after them, slowly get them up to temp without slipping them too much, then drive the car real straight.

Yeah, I was very aware of all that. Then aware of the time behind. I kept keeping the same gap for quite a while. We're pretty good here if nothing happens. Coming up on a group of cars was a bit of a worry. You get the turbulent air, this car moves around more.

I never feel like I'm going to win until the very last maybe two laps or something because, as you know, last year, I think I'm going to win this. No, you're not. There's been a few of them over the last few years of my career.

Until you cross the checkered, till you get that, you're not home.

Q. You mentioned a mental shift, maybe how you're approaching races differently. Have you done something differently or maybe the different place you feel you're in this year compared to the last couple?

WILL POWER: Yes, I am definitely, as far as in the race goes, I certainly perfected that sort of mental place you need to be in, decision making and such. But that was

there last year. It's just that I had a lot of unfortunate things happen last year that really put me out of contention in some big races, in some races where I was top three for sure. It wasn't obvious.

It looks like a big change, but it's not a big change. I've had years of this. I'm so experienced at it, so I know it so well. I understand the game so well. I'm just executing as you should at my experience level. You're getting everything right, like all the details.

Obviously qualifying, hmm, a bit disappointed with that. I never qualify well here. I was 19th last year, so... I race well. Yeah, yeah.

Q. You mentioned you feel like you're racing the best you ever have in your career. Is that due to that mental approach? How do you feel you're different than you were in '14 when you won a championship?

WILL POWER: When I used to qualify on pole very often and start the very front very often, you're not racing in the pack very often. Now rarely am I right at the front for qualifying. Sometimes. No one is consistently at the front anymore. It's just too tough. So you're racing around other cars, you get very good at that, too. You get very good at restarts, good at judging where you should be. That's something I missed out early on in my career because I was so fast, I was in the front, I was always leading.

So, yeah, obviously fast. INDYCAR rules, as they are, rewards often qualifying badly. That's no joke, it does. You can really go off the guys in front of you. That's not always the case, but it's the beauty of INDYCAR, you can come from 16th and win, you can come from 19th at Barber and finish fourth. Did I get on the podium there?

THE MODERATOR: Fourth.

WILL POWER: Actually, you're having a lot of fun doing that, yeah.

Q. Do you feel like you're having the most fun you've ever had in your career?

WILL POWER: I'm not disappointed with bad results anymore. It is what it is. That's one thing that has changed with me. I really don't care. I don't have to put anything more up on the board. I could stop right now. I don't have to. So I haven't got that pressure. I just don't care anymore. I'm just enjoying it.

I massively care about my craft. I want to do it absolutely properly. But I don't care for a bad result because it is a part of the game. That's one thing that has changed me

because I've learnt that's not fair. Yes, it is. I'm extremely lucky to be doing what I'm doing, just extremely lucky, just fortunate that I'm in this position to race cars and get paid for it. It's insane. Compared to what you could be doing... It can always be worse, no matter. It just can. Just lucky.

Q. How physical was the event this afternoon?

WILL POWER: Wasn't physical for me. I was just fine. Yeah, I didn't find it physical at all.

Q. In terms of the continuity you have going into the rest of the season, how much confidence does that give you going into Road America and beyond?

WILL POWER: It's different every weekend. But we have been really strong at pretty much everywhere except Indy this year.

Yeah, yep, I think the team, the engine is really good. I think the team is good. It has been. Everything is just flying nicely for us now.

Yeah, we want to be competitive for the rest of the year. We want to be in the championship hunt. That's the goal.

THE MODERATOR: This attitude you have about not finishing well, not caring, does any of that play into being a dad?

WILL POWER: Honestly, I just think it's just getting older. You know you're not going to be around. Once you've been on this earth for 40 years, Well, that went pretty quick. So the next 20 of being able to do stuff is going to go real fast. So who cares. Enjoy it. Enjoy it. That's it. It gets faster and faster. It's ridiculous, the years. I couldn't remember my last win last year. Somebody asked me when was the win last year. I couldn't remember.

THE MODERATOR: Being a dad is part of that, though.

WILL POWER: Absolutely. Best thing ever. I want four of them. Wife doesn't. I love it, man. She does the hard yards. I don't really do the hard yards. I just get to enjoy the kid.

Q. After the start of the season you had, how important was it to get back up with the championship standings after what happened at Indy?

WILL POWER: I was really happy in Indy to finish 15th, just starting how I did. Falling back to 30th. I just said in my head, Just keep digging. Every point matters. That's kind of what I've been doing. Every point matters.

I finished 15th. That's not bad. A couple legit championship contenders had bad days. We're still in it. We were only 24 behind after that. Had a good day there, be looking real good.

You're going to have that all year, these ups and downs. The straighter you can keep that line, the better it is.

Q. Coming up to Road America, you've had wins, podiums. How happy are you that's the next venue INDYCAR is heading to?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I'm looking forward to it. I'm looking forward to a bunch of these races coming up. Doesn't mean you're going to have a good day. Yeah, know the track, all the tracks. Yeah, going to do all the work necessary to be competitive.

Q. Going through the field like you did, you were only one of nine drivers to start on the black tires. How much fun was it being able to go around everyone on the reds?

WILL POWER: That was fun. I have to thank my engineer. He did a great job. He put a setup on that was all him. It was all his setup. In warmup I said, Yeah, I think this thing is real good.

I was very focused on getting all the guys on plaques, which was two. I got Kirkwood and I got Dixon. After that just picked them off. Got to Newgarden. Oh, we're actually in the lead here. Then, Let's go. Took off.

Q. Were you ever worried about having a repeat of what happened with Josef after a late yellow?

WILL POWER: That was a possibility. That was the risk we took. We started 16th. If that was happening, I was going to be happy to hang on to a top five or something, get good points.

Didn't get the yellow. Looked after the reds. It paid off. It was a risk worth taking.

Q. How did it feel to finally be able to go in the fountain this time?

WILL POWER: Getting in the fountain was really rewarding. I can't believe it actually happened because I knew it was the last race, what are the chances. I lost the chance last year. I thought the chance of it happening again is pretty slim, especially after qualifying.

You can never give up. Never give up.

Q. Did you hear us rooting for you?

WILL POWER: Yeah.

Q. We were shouting, Take a swim.

WILL POWER: Well, I took a swim.

Q. After all the shenanigans of last year, did you go into this year at the start of the season having this race a little more important than others on the calendar?

WILL POWER: It was a race on my mind, no question. I wanted to get that one, yep. Not that you were able to do any more work for this race because it was so close after the 500, you're exhausted. You get to do the simulator.

Yeah, it's funny how things work out. That's why you don't sweat it on the bad days because they do come back. You just relax and let it come to you. It feels like it's the way life rolls. Never is perfect. It just isn't. It's not built for humans to have perfection.

Q. How soon after the race last year were you starting to think about this race this year?

WILL POWER: I think in the off-season I'll, like, flag a race in my head, I want to win that race. Often it happens. It's crazy, but it does. I know it's just planting that seed in your subconscious. Just unfolds as it should, yeah.

I can't remember if I was thinking of this one in the off-season. Maybe.

Q. Earlier you talked about turbulence passing cars. Am I crazy to ask you being held up by Jack Harvey, did that help?

WILL POWER: Yeah, that was hurting the car. I was aware of that. He ain't going to give me any help. But I knew I could get Ferrucci to help me out. He was pretty good at the beginning of the race. Ferrucci backed off, which opened it up for Harvey a little bit to pull the gap.

I was thinking if I could get Santino to let Jack go, let us both go, he's going to take off and give us more of an air gap, and that happened.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILL POWER: The blue flag means zero in this series. It's ridiculous they even put it out. We've been pushing, all the drivers, have been pushing. Should mean something. At least with 25% of the race to go it should mean something.

Q. You mentioned you feel like you were in a similar mental place last year and this year. Is there a specific time in the recent past where you feel you changed your approach to racing?

WILL POWER: If you go back and look at let's say the last two years, you will find that there are some pretty ridiculous things that have happened that were out of my control. Like I can't really -- I don't know why they happened. Is it an attitude? Is it a vibe you give off? Some of the mistakes we made like in pits or things have gone wrong? I don't know.

You get more relaxed as you get older. Yeah, there's not a massive shift mentally. I mean, yes, certainly this year -- let's just leave it. I'll tell you after I retire (laughter). I don't give much away.

Q. You signed a new two-year deal starting this year. You mentioned not knowing how much longer you're going to be doing this. Any sort of freedom when you enter a contract knowing this might be potentially the last couple years?

WILL POWER: I'd say there's freedom in not caring -- not having to add to anything you've done. That's the feeling I have. I could stop now and be satisfied with what I've done.

Yeah, anything else you add on to that is a bonus. There's freedom. You don't have the pressure of I'm only two years into my career and I have to try to make a living out of it. You know what I mean?

It doesn't matter. I could stop now and it would be okay. But I'm still performing at a really high level, probably better than I ever have. So just enjoying that. Trying to extract the most out of it is the enjoying part of it.

Q. On the strategy you did today, at the beginning the blacks seemed to work better. I would like to know what were the rationals for you leaving the reds till the end? Was it decided before the race or on the fly?

WILL POWER: It was talked about before the race but it was decided on the fly because the further we went, the more rubber went down and the more chance that the reds would last. That was the thinking behind that. That was the reason.

The later you did it, the better chance you were going to have to holding onto them.

Q. It was a green flag race but we have McLoughlin

speeding, coming back to the race. Any fears after yellow flag coming?

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WILL POWER: There was definitely fear of a yellow at the end because that would have been really tough. Yeah, it didn't happen, so... I was pretty surprised to have a full green race here.

Q. How good does it feel winning Detroit this year knowing what happened to you last year? Of all those tracks we have ahead on the championship, which is the track you feel most excited to race? Which do you feel it's going to help you for fighting the championship this year?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I was really excited to obviously win this race after last year. Had my eye on it for quite a while.

And the tracks coming up? They're all good. I mean, it's so hard to know where you'll be strong or where you'll be weak because the series is so tough now. Everyone is so good. It's very mixed up week after week. You just got to try to be consistent.

I don't see any tracks -- well, I would say Indy road course I'm usually pretty good. Can be hit-or-miss sometimes. Yeah, all the tracks, looking forward to them all coming up. I have won at most of them, but some I won a long time ago.

THE MODERATOR: The People Ready Force For Good Challenge, \$10,000 split today amongst you and the team, your favorite charity, which I believe is Speedway Children's Charities, is that correct?

WILL POWER: Yes. Speedway? It should be Charlotte.

THE MODERATOR: Tell us a little bit about that, the charity.

WILL POWER: Why I picked that charity?

THE MODERATOR: Exactly.

WILL POWER: I really have a lot of empathy for kids after I had my own kid. I want to help them in any way I possibly can. That's why I chose that charity.

THE MODERATOR: The name again?

WILL POWER: Actually, yeah, the Speedway Children's Charity. I believe so. I told them to get a charity that was for kids, and they told me there was a Speedway charity.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

