

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Friday, June 10, 2022

### Simona de Silvestro

#### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Obviously joined by the driver of the No. 16 Paretta Autosport Chevrolet, Simona de Silvestro.

Welcome back, first of all. What was it like to be back?

SIMONA de SILVESTRO: I don't know, it was definitely much faster and braked much better than anything I've driven the last, yeah, five years. No, it was really good.

I'm really happy to be back in an INDYCAR, especially around here. It's quite special. I think Road America is one of the coolest tracks we get to and one of the fastest ones. Definitely feels really fast, yeah, at the moment.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Simona.

#### Q. (No microphone.)

SIMONA de SILVESTRO: Yeah, well, I felt like I went out in the session and literally the car was driving me. Just getting used to everything (smiling).

I feel for sure, I don't want to be last, but I think we weren't too far off in the sense. I think there's a few things that I really need to clean up driving-wise, just getting used to it.

It was really the first day back I think after seven years in an INDYCAR. It feels pretty familiar, but definitely I think to really be where I want to be, I think I'm going to hopefully sleep over it and be better tomorrow, a bit more acclimated, I would say, yeah.

#### Q. (No microphone.)

SIMONA de SILVESTRO: Yeah, I think definitely the really high-speed stuff. I haven't driven a car with a lot of downforce since a long time. That's something to get used to again.

The car takes it, but you just have to kind of trust it. I feel like that's also where, looking at the data, is where I need to work more on. So, yeah, I think those are the things. The slow stuff seems pretty good, but it's really just having

the confidence in the car and just kind of sending it at the moment, yeah.

#### Q. (No microphone.)

SIMONA de SILVESTRO: Yeah, I think so. I think going out today, to be honest, it was like everything was new. Even like pit limiter, how to do that. Just going and driving. When you turn, the car really turns. In the beginning it kind of surprises you because it's so agile. Also the braking is really powerful. It took me a few laps just to get that sorted.

I feel like now that's kind of, okay, I figured that out, I'm feeling the car well. What could be better, what could be doing better. In the high-speed stuff, it's a lot of commitment.

For sure, just sleeping over it, usually the next day is always better.

#### Q. How do you describe how difficult it is to get in one of these cars against these guys that do it all the time?

SIMONA de SILVESTRO: Yeah, well, I think the big thing is also when you driving these cars, you get used to it. Things slow down. It's a bit like at Indy: the first few laps it just feels always really quick, then your brain just kind of calms down and everything feels more normal.

At the moment, you know, this session for me everything was coming at me pretty quickly, trying to deal with it. Hopefully by tomorrow that will slow down.

I think the level right now is really, really strong. Yeah, they're in the middle of their season. They're already know what they need in the car. They can work on the car already. I'm, like, still trying to find the confidence and pushing the car actually to where it needs to be pushed to be right up there.

#### Q. At Indy you had hours of practice every day, days of practice, leading into qualifying. Here you have 75 minutes today, 45 tomorrow, qualifying session. How difficult is that for a newcomer?

SIMONA de SILVESTRO: Yeah, it's definitely hard



because you need to -- the new tire, as well, you need to use it to get that lap time out.

I don't know, you just try to do your best. Hopefully by tomorrow I kind of have it a bit more figured out. Maybe everything fits well together in qualifying. I just need to do one lap. That's the thing I'm telling me, I just need to do one really good lap, and hopefully it will be enough, yeah.

**Q. How great was it to be back in the car today? How big is your smile inside the cockpit?**

SIMONA de SILVESTRO: Yeah, a lot. For me, I don't know, in an INDYCAR it's been my happy place. If I look at my career, it's where I had the most success throughout my career. When I did last finishes this morning and sitting in there, it felt right at home. I'm really excited.

I think the competition is amazing in INDYCAR. The drivers are really good. The teams as well. Yeah, it just makes you want to be really good and perform really well at this stage, for sure.

**Q. How much have you been leaning on Rinus and Conor Daly this weekend so far?**

SIMONA de SILVESTRO: Yeah, well, we've had one session. Now I know how it feels. Now they're going to get annoyed by me quite a lot tonight, I think (laughter).

**Q. How beneficial is it for you to have Ed Carpenter in your ear this weekend?**

SIMONA de SILVESTRO: Yeah, actually I didn't know that was happening. Yesterday he told me he was going to be on my box. It's really cool.

He's a racer. He knows the position I'm kind of in in that sense. I feel like he's super supportive. I think as a team, they're really pretty successful this year.

Just having him kind of also pushing me to get there, I think it makes you appreciate that and makes you even want to push even more to have good results at the end all together, keep working together to achieve some really good things.

**Q. You lost a little bit of time in practice because of a technical issue. Do you think that will hamper you a little bit going into P2 tomorrow?**

SIMONA de SILVESTRO: Well, yeah, we lost a little bit of time. The session was quite long in a sense. The break actually wasn't too bad for me because I can look at the data and start getting on top of things that I need to do

better.

Yeah, was a little mishap. I don't know why there's always fire around me (smiling). A nice welcome back to INDYCAR I guess for me. I don't know.

**Q. How race-ready do you feel? The last time you raced was at Nurburgring.**

SIMONA de SILVESTRO: It's been a while. I think my last race was in October last year. In that sense, for sure, I think the race is going to be quite long.

At the end of the day I'm a racing driver and I need to be prepared for this. I've been training quite hard. Hopefully everything that I've done is going to be enough.

But for sure, going back into a race that is two hours long, pushing these cars, you really drive these cars right at the limit which you don't do in a GT. It's going to be interesting.

I'm looking forward to it. First of all, I'm having a lot of fun driving it, so I think it will be all right.

**Q. Where do you see the partnership going with Paretta into 2023? Have talks already started on what you want to do for a program next year?**

SIMONA de SILVESTRO: I think for Beth, that's the goal, to be full-time next year. We started this journey together last year during the 500. This year we have these few races together.

For me, for sure. I think INDYCAR is somewhere where I want to be. In 2015 I tried to come back to INDYCAR, but I didn't really have the sponsorship to do it. Then my journey took another route because I just couldn't find the funding for it.

From that point of view, yeah, I think if Beth really gets to be full-time, even more races, I really hope we do it together. Yeah, we started this together, so I think we both want to have success together as well.

I think with the partnership with Ed, as well, I think we have really something to grow together and to become something pretty strong.

**Q. By comparison to last year to do the 500, now doing a road course event, what different challenges are you facing this time around compared to what Indy brings?**

SIMONA de SILVESTRO: Yeah, because you have so

much practice, you really can kind of take a little bit of time getting up to speed.

I think the big thing, as well, physically on the oval it's not as bad as on a road course. On a road course, you really have a lot of input in the car. There's a lot of Gs and stuff like that. It's a bit more tiring. Today I was quite tired after the session.

Those are aspects that are a bit different, as well. Not having a test day before. Right now it's the first time I'm working with my engineer, John. We need to learn how to work together. He needs to kind of feel what I kind of want in the car. I need to be able to communicate. We're really kind of on a fast process. I'm trying to push the car to the limit.

There's just a lot going on, like today and tomorrow during practice, getting there where we should be. From that point of view, yeah, that's a bit the difficulty because we don't have this time to kind of, yeah, take your time a little bit. You just don't have it right now this weekend.

**Q. Did it feel similar to 2015 doing similar things to the car, or a big change in terms of the things you're doing?**

SIMONA de SILVESTRO: No, I feel like once I kind of got up to speed, I started to feel what I want in the car, and that was positive. I think there's a lot of things in my past, when I drove Atlantics, drove INDYCAR, there's things that I like. I think any driver...

It was actually more rewarding for me that I started feeling this, maybe I need the car a little different. That was pretty positive.

For sure the car is different with the aeroscreen and all that. To be honest, as well, right now to be where I want to be, I just need to find still a bit more confidence in the car. Hopefully that will be tomorrow, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: That will wrap it up.

SIMONA de SILVESTRO: Thank you.

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