

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, July 3, 2022

Alex Palou

Will Power

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone, both in person and joining us virtually. Welcome to the media center at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, wrapping up the 2022 the Honda Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio presented by the all new 2023 Civic Type R. Today's champion, Scott McLaughlin, will join us here in a matter of moments but we're currently joined by second and third place, Alex Palou in the NTT Data Chip Ganassi Racing Honda, started seventh, comes home second, his fourth podium of the season, 13th podium of his career; and Will Power in the Verizon Team Penske Chevrolet, plus 18 today. Started 21st -- maybe even further back than that after the off early on. Will Power, spinning third. He'll take it. Fourth podium of the season, 89th for his career, which makes him eighth place all time all alone, getting passed, Bobby Rahal and Al Jr. in that category. But fourth podium of the season, 89th for his career, now just 20 points behind Marcus Ericsson for the overall points lead.

Alex, we'll start with you. As interesting from inside the cockpit as what it appeared outside for you today?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I mean, I missed a lot of the action with obviously him, I didn't know what was going on, and then I saw some people also like getting in trouble with their teammates. Yeah, it was a good race for me.

I was super happy. We had a fast car. Honda gave us everything we needed today with mileage. That's why we were able to pit early and try and get that under card that worked. It was a bit of a shame that we got that yellow because we were leading by two seconds when we passed pit exit.

Anyway, it's the same rules for everybody. But it's good. It's good to be back here. Good to fight until the end.

It's super tough to pass here, at least if you are on the same tire strategy. I think we were a bit faster but couldn't really pass Scott. He did an amazing race, too.

THE MODERATOR: Will Power coming home third, 18 on-track passes for you. Just tell us about your day, maybe the spin early on and how you came back from that.

WILL POWER: Yeah, the spin, I went up the inside. Everyone was very choked up and just got someone's back wheel, trying not to take them out. Spun, kept it running, kept going, and had passed a few cars then and then pitted again, went to the back, and then yeah, just started passing cars. Good pit stop sequence. The yellows hurt us actually for the sequences, but it helped us for restarts. We had some good restarts, definitely gained positions because of restarts.

Yeah, solid -- another great day, good strategy, and yeah, keeping ourselves right in the points game.

Q. Do you play that what-if game, what if you had a better starting position? Obviously your car was outstanding all weekend.

WILL POWER: Yeah, I definitely feel like we had the fastest car because in the second practice I had left three tenths on the table. I was up three tenths and the throttle broke, and then obviously in qualifying we had our issue. We had the fastest car and it really hurts to give up a chance at a pole or potentially a win, but to get back to third, you're not looking back on those days saying that's why we lost a championship, definitely.

Q. Will, what would the old Will Power have done in a situation like that? Would you have been able to have kept your cool and raced your way back or would you have thought about it and obsessed about it for a while?

WILL POWER: I don't think -- it's not that different. I'm not doing anything crazy different. I'm just not having strange things happen like spark plugs and brakes not working and just weird things happen to me. I think we had just a great year all around because we haven't had any mechanicals or anything like this, and yes, my -- I did make a slight change in the off-season after watching him (nodding toward Palou), and it's kind of -- yeah, I'll tell you after I'm finished what it was that actually I've caught on to that's helped me a lot, after I'm done, and you'll understand -- I probably could tell you because you do it anyway. But



yeah, it -- yeah, it's good.

Q. A lot of times in championships, it comes in years where something like today happens and you're able to battle back and score good points.

WILL POWER: Yeah, I think the lesson is that even if you don't pass any cars today, you're still making positions. If you don't make any mistakes, just to start with, and then you have a fast car on top of that and you make smart moves, you're going to make positions.

You can't get too desperate -- like the first lap, that little -- that was just being in the wrong spot sort of where I spun. But yeah, these races are so unpredictable, as you've seen all year. If you just hang in there, you're going to end up in a good spot.

Q. Alex, on the last restart it looks like you hung with Scott for a little bit but then he started to pull away. At that point did you just figure that second is pretty good?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I think we had a fast car, but here it's also tough to -- as I said with the same tires to try and get a run if he doesn't do a mistake. He was perfect today.

I was just trying to push him to maybe just get a run. We had two or three runs into 4, but that was on the outside and I was not really like side by side, so I thought it was not the best move I could make. Yeah, a shame that we couldn't -- as I said, that yellow hurt us a little bit, but so far it was a good race for us.

Q. Alex, that restart when you did get up on Scott and then the yellow came out, was that the moment that kind of came and went?

ALEX PALOU: It was the closest we had, yes. Could I have made it, I don't know. Yeah, I was braking. I was on the outside. We were side by side at that point, and I just saw the yellow going, and I just released just to avoid going out because it was not necessary.

Yeah, that was close. But it's okay; he was ahead.

Q. Will, when something happens to you like the first lap in speed and you put your head down, in some ways is that fun from then on because you're just going charging, just put me in your head a little bit there from the standpoint of did you have a little bit of fun today, I guess?

WILL POWER: Yeah, you certainly find it fun after the race, but you're so focused during the race, you just -- I

mean, that's the enjoyment of a skill is executing it the best you possibly can. Yes, I enjoy it a lot. I enjoy qualifying, putting it all together a whole race weekend. But yeah, when you have a day like that, makes you want to keep going for a long time.

Q. Are you watching McLaughlin mature before your eyes here in the series? What are you seeing that impresses you?

WILL POWER: Yeah, he's just a fast driver. He's doing all the work he needs to do. No surprise to me that he's winning this year and running up front. Obviously it's only his second year in this series, but he's gained a lot of experience at a very high level. He dominated down in Australia, and that isn't an easy series, either.

I think what was good for him was he had the maturity of a professional driver. He didn't have to learn like a rookie and make all these silly mistakes and a lot of trial and error. But doing a great job, great job. I mean, to come from sedans to open wheels and be competitive is impressive.

Q. Alex, second place to Scott again; is there any additional frustration knowing it's the same guy that beat you in St. Pete or no?

ALEX PALOU: No. No. It's okay, yeah.

I think we did the best we had today, so it's not like we left something on the table like we did at the Indy road course, for example. That was frustrating. Today was just fun. I was trying to push and try and overtake him, and I don't know, I feel like every time we've been on the podium we've been pushing the guy in front until the last lap, which happened at St. Pete, Barber and here.

It was fun. A shame that we couldn't get him, but yeah, we'll keep pushing and try and get that win.

Q. On the points standings, you're both within -- Alex, you're 35 back; Will, I think you're 20 back. Is there anyplace the rest of the season where you feel like, that's my spot to make up a bunch of points or is it something you've got to worry about or I've got to take it easy and just get through that weekend? Any opportunities you're looking forward to?

ALEX PALOU: I think here in INDYCAR it's all the races. You have to be up there all the races and you have to get the best you have all the races. We saw it last year. We are seeing it this year. Yeah, had some races where we had almost no points, and that's why we're down there. But we're getting there.

It's going to be tough in my situation with like Toronto. I've never been there. Iowa, we did a test there. We were not super good, but we have enough time to prepare for that. But yeah, I think every race you need to try and do the best you can and try and be top 5 to win the championship at the end.

WILL POWER: Yeah, I do actually -- having been around so long, I understand the tracks that I'm good at and what I'm -- Toronto is always one that I struggle in qualifying for whatever reason. Usually good in the race.

After that they're all -- you've got to be good at all of them, and some that you think you'll be really good at you may have a bad day, so you've got to make the most of everything. But there are some tracks your car is better, you're stronger at, some click with you very well. That's a path that you've got to keep working on, so be strong everywhere.

Q. Alex, having not driven at Toronto you may fall in love with the place.

ALEX PALOU: I'm sure.

Q. Will, as a guy who knows what it's like to win when your family is not here and then when they are here and how that feels, his parents were able to finally able to see him win a race, what that must mean to him.

WILL POWER: Oh, man, winning a race with your family there is amazing. I've never won an INDYCAR race with my parents here, only my brother, Damo. When I won the championship, yeah, but not a race. They just never come. They don't really care. (Laughter.) I've tried to make them come, they just don't like it. They just go on with their lives, like you realize you've got -- I'm not superstitious, I'd love them to come, but they just don't care for what I do really. They watch the races at home but it's a long trip to come and hang out here.

Q. What must that feel like for Scott?

WILL POWER: It's great. If I was him I'd be hanging out and staying here tonight with your parents, enjoying it with all the people camping and all that. He's going to fly back, but yeah, having your parents, family there to win a race, yeah, great feeling. I've had it twice, with my brother when I won the Indy 500 and when I won Detroit recently. Yeah, it's good that they can see what you actually do.

My parents still think I'm an accountant. (Laughter.)

Q. What do your parents care for, Will?

WILL POWER: Well, my dad races. He does like it. My mom was a nun for seven years. She was in a convent, and she left because she had such anxiety because of the community work you had to do with kids and such. She's a very gentle, arty person. My dad is nuts. Like he's a race car driver and he's just crazy. I don't know how they ever ended up together, but they produced this, which is kind of weird.

Q. I don't know if your brother is too far off that, either.

WILL POWER: Yeah, they produced a bunch of funny, weird kids.

Q. We saw everything that happened with Andretti Autosport today; how do you think they'll get past everything?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I think it was not a big issue with Marcus. It just took me 10 minutes to see the video and then five minutes to talk to him, so it was all good afterwards.

I haven't seen what happened today on track, but people told me it was exciting, so yeah, cannot wait to see that.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much. Congratulations, Alex Palou and Will Power, second and third, wrapping up the podium here at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course.

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