

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Will Power

Romain Grosjean

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are joined now by the driver of the DHL Honda for Andretti Autosport, Romain Grosjean. Back on an oval. You tested here earlier. How much did that help maybe what you had to go through today in very hot conditions?

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: Yeah, afternoon, everyone.

It was good testing here. Definitely challenging oval. It is closer to Gateway, Texas or Indy. That kind of was similar, but it's very bumpy. The tarmac is quite tricky. So it was good to come testing just to get acquainted with the racetrack.

We had some good work when we were here. Today the conditions were a bit different. I feel with all what we tested in the session, we could have a good car tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Obviously joined by three-time pole winner here, Will Power, driving the Verizon Team Penske Chevrolet, quickest today. Were you happy with what happened today, Will?

WILL POWER: Yeah, definitely. Happy with the test. Tried a few things. I think we're in the window. Obviously a lot of good cars and drivers, so you're never going to predict who is going to be where. I'm hoping to finally have a good qualifying, at least start at the front.

But, yeah, I feel good about the car.

THE MODERATOR: Let's go ahead and take questions.

Q. A little less than a year from your first oval, how are you feeling on ovals? Do you feel like you've got it?

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: No, I think it's definitely not easy for a European driver to come and do the ovals. If you look at it, we have four races on ovals, that's it. It's not that many. Everybody's quite specific in what you need to know, where the car is going to go on an 80-lap stint. It's

difficult.

I'm still trying to rely a lot on my teammates, my feedback as well, trying to feel confident and comfortable in the car mainly. It's still quite tricky. Saying that, I like short ovals. They're really fun.

Q. Romain, do you really feel the sense of speed on the oval rather than some of the road and street circuits?

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: I think when everything goes well, like we had the first quallie in Indy, everything is smooth, it doesn't feel that fast. When things start to slide a little bit too much, it does feel really fast (smiling).

The sense of speed comes when it's not really where you want it to be.

THE MODERATOR: Both your general thoughts, when you think of an oval, certainly Indianapolis Motor Speedway, smoother racetrack. This is not that. How cool is it to come to a track like this?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I think it's a great track because it has multiple lanes, a lot of tire degradation, bumps. Tricky. It's my favorite oval. I really, really enjoy it here.

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: I'm very similar. I like short ovals because there's two lanes and that makes it really fun. There's nothing worse than sitting in one lane and following the guy in front of you 60, 70-plus laps.

Q. Will, saw you run the second lane a little bit. Is that something you're going to have to be able to do tomorrow to hang on to the tires for a tire stint?

WILL POWER: I just think you're going to be wherever a car in front of you is not.

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: There you go.

WILL POWER: It's not even a tire deg thing. It's where can I get clean air. There's probably three sort of lanes in a way that you can find places. Hopefully it creates a good race.



Q. Romain, how much did the test a few weeks ago help you get your setup for this weekend?

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: It helped a fair bit, as I say. Here already when you arrive at Iowa and you leave the pit, it's a challenge to get on the racetrack, it's so bumpy. Just getting comfortable with that, with the pit entry, with the bumps in turn one and three, four, knowing where they are. Again, we went out, I am like, Bloody hell, it's slippery and bumpy. So you forget. Then you go into the session, it gets better.

I'm glad that we came testing here, it was important.

Q. Will, you've qualified really well in Iowa in the past. Your entire career your best finish here is second. Are you set up pretty well to get a win this weekend?

WILL POWER: Yeah, if you start at the front, it certainly helps. It's difficult to make a lot of ground, so you want to definitely start in that top 10.

It's a difficult race to win when Josef Newgarden is in the game. He's had a very strong career at this track (smiling). Yeah, I think he'll always be in the mix. But I've got the same car. Hopefully I can make it work.

Q. Will, the consensus it seemed like coming out of the test was that Penske was in a different league. Did you still feel that way today?

WILL POWER: Man, I had cars at the test I thought were pretty strong as well. McLaren looked good. When teams have our setup... We know McLaren has got it, because an engineer went there. Andretti has it because Pagnaud brought it over.

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: He doesn't remember at all.

WILL POWER: Yeah, right. He used to take screen shots of our setup sheets. He has it. And email it to himself.

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: Missing information, brother.

WILL POWER: Maybe that I run that. We've certainly changed since '19. Tires changed, so it is a different car. I get the sort of philosophy.

Q. You weren't looking at this race as a huge opportunity to gain major points in the championship?

WILL POWER: You just can't tell in this series. You can't. You don't know when a yellow will fall. You can't say, Okay, I'm going to have this race that I'm going to get points. It may just not be the case. You've got to take

every race, put everything into, because you never know.

Q. Obviously a lot of talk today about the Hy-Vee activation, signage. Your impressions? Have you seen anything like this before?

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: Yeah, I mean, I'm the wrong guy to ask about activation coming to Formula 1. That's something they do really well obviously.

INDYCAR has been doing incredible this whole weekend, building the track the way they did. And they really play the game. You see in the supermarkets, the cakes, the cars, Jack Harvey. If people around here don't know Jack Harvey by now, they haven't been in the store.

It's been really cool. It brings something on top of the race weekend. I think the concept is going to be amazing, as well. It's so cool that he can come to a weekend, for the fans of racing, they get to see the race. A little bit less familiar, but they have the concepts they would care about. I think that would be something great to have to add to many events.

Q. (No microphone.)

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: Gwen Stefani.

WILL POWER: That's the one I want to go to. It's before the race.

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: It's after Sunday.

THE MODERATOR: Before Sunday's race.

WILL POWER: That's tough. But I'll go and check it out.

THE MODERATOR: You have engineering meetings (laughter).

Q. I've heard some comparisons to Formula 1 in terms of Heineken Club. Does it somewhat compare to what you've seen in the past?

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: I don't like comparing. I don't think we should compare. If you look at Miami, some of the tickets were 20 thousand plus dollars per day. Obviously it's different. I don't want to compare.

For INDYCAR, what we have this weekend is a really good step. It's a great race. We are not looking at the same type of ticket price, which I'm happy with.

It's different. Philosophy, whatever, different. But I think this weekend marks what we should be aiming for in terms

of INDYCAR racing.

Q. Romain, it will be a different qualifying format than you've ever had probably before in your career. What do you think of it? What do you think of your strategy? If you go too fast on lap one, the tires may go off.

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: At least you start well (indiscernible).

Q. What do you think of the format?

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: You know what, it's not so much the lap, the one lap for each race. It's just that you wake up in the morning, you get breakfast, the next thing you know you're out for one warmup lap, then quallie lap. You don't have warmup. I think that's really something different. I like it. But going into turn one, first thing in the morning, as fast as you can get...

WILL POWER: That's a tough one. I was thinking about the same thing. I'm like, Man, how do you get out of bed then try to go as fast as you can around Iowa for two laps?

Q. Will, you've been coming here since 2008. Does it look like a different track to you?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I mean, it's amazing what Hy-Vee has done. Like Romain was saying, it's what we've got to aim for. It's the sponsor. Hearing the CEO speak from Hy-Vee, I mean, he has the right idea. He understands it. Doesn't need to be a race, it's got to be an event. That's exactly what they're doing.

It's amazing. Our racing is a pure racing sort of series. Formula 1, it's hard to compare, it really is. You come here, we're all in the same garage. Kind of almost tradition. I like INDYCAR, it's so pure. Everyone has the same car, same opportunity for racing.

Q. We didn't do the doubleheader in Detroit. We're doing it here in Iowa. What will be the challenges?

WILL POWER: Two bumpy tracks, similar. Yeah, I mean, same amount of points. It's similar, except it's an oval.

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: 50 laps more in the second race.

WILL POWER: You can't really predict who is going to win. You can put your money on someone that has a good probability, but really you don't know.

Q. Do you think the heat is going to affect you more here?

WILL POWER: Yeah. Man, it's tough. It's hot. Since the grip level has gone down, it's not as physical. The wheel is a little lighter. You're not like just holding on for two hours dying.

Q. Will, you took pole here in 2010. Can you compare the method it took to get fastest lap today compared with that pole lap? Are the differences down to completely different car formula or how the bumps has evolved or your driving style?

WILL POWER: It's completely different. Back in '10, we actually tried to run the white line. You could run the short line for speed. I think it was wide open. Must have been close to wide open. I think in '08, wide open for sure. Yeah, you're just doing a short line. Now you're more to the wall, down the apex, and you're lifting. Yeah, quite different.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for coming in, Will.

WILL POWER: Thank you.

Q. Romain, how much importance can you place on qualifying tomorrow given that it's two laps for both races?

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: I think qualifying is always important, but some races more than others. I think in INDYCAR you can win from anywhere. I feel like here if you have a better car than others on tire life, you could be looking good at one point after 40 or 50 laps.

Yes, it's important to be qualifying up front. Will has more experience, he's talking about top 10. I'll take his word. I feel it's more how your car is going to (indiscernible) your tires and how fast you can go the last 30 laps of the stint.

Q. In terms of the track itself, how has your experience been compared to your last experience at the 500?

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: It was a very short track, very bumpy. Before you know it you're back on the start/finish line. It's very hard to relax in the car. Even adjusting, the straight line is so short that it's hard.

Obviously it's quite different from Texas and Indy. A little bit more like Gateway. But I like it. I think it's good. It has different lines. I think it's good you need to set up your car to get around the bumps. The short oval with two lanes of racing is really good.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much for coming,



Romain.

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