

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Saturday, July 23, 2022

### Will Power

#### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up qualifying, we were expecting to bring in both pole winners this morning, Will, you made it easy on us. We're just going to bring in one guy.

I don't know where to start here. Poles four and five here at Iowa, but perhaps, with all due respect, more importantly you're one away from the legend Mario Andretti.

WILL POWER: This qualifying session, all season, I was like, This is where I can really make some damage, I can really, really put myself in a position to get there.

That was a big step for me.

THE MODERATOR: Tell us about the laps.

WILL POWER: Yeah, it was messy. I was bottoming a lot, skipping up the track. I was surprised I was the quickest. I was wheeling it as much as you could. I was leaving nothing on the table.

Yeah, there were 17s in the car, for sure. I just put everything into it, overdrove it a little bit. But, yeah, pretty good.

THE MODERATOR: How important will starting position be later in the race today and tomorrow as well?

WILL POWER: I felt like you had to start in the top 10 to have a good race. It seemed a little difficult to pass. Although cars can fall off a lot. You can make some positions up, you can make some positions up with strategy.

But leading is obviously easier. You can queue off other people when they pit. If you have a bit of a lead, you pit early, you're not going down two laps, you're only going down one. Good spot to be in.

THE MODERATOR: Team Penske has won a pole here at Iowa every year since 2015 except for race number one in 2020, the last time we were here. Last time there was a

pole sweep, doubleheader sweep, was your pal Simon Pagenaud back in 2016.

We'll begin with questions.

**Q. We know about the pole record, one away from Mario. You are 41 career victories. Do you feel you have a legitimate shot at 50 wins in your career?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, never say never. 50 is a lot these days. That's a lot more years. At best you can win three a year unless you're having a fantastic year. Yeah, I don't think I could get to 50. 45 is realistic.

But, yeah, no, just going to keep chipping away here. That's all we can do. You can't think about when you might stop or any of that stuff. You just got to keep chipping away, racking up results.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

WILL POWER: Yeah, if I got to 45. Even where I'm at, like, I'm happy. I just could never have imagined getting more than 40 wins in a career.

When you get your first win, you think, Wow. 40 wins in, you'll take that (smiling).

**Q. When you were in here yesterday I asked you if Penske maybe viewed this as an opportunity. You said the races were too hard to predict. Has your attitude changed on that a little bit? You just said starting in the top 10 is a good thing. Ericsson I think is outside the top 10.**

WILL POWER: Yeah, you can't predict it. But, yeah, starting at the front is very good. Single-lap pace doesn't really mean much for the race. I actually feel like our long pace is really good.

So, yeah, if you have a smooth race, I would really hope we're right at the front.

**Q. You and Josef both qualifying really well. Do you approach these races knowing you're right behind Ericsson in the points?**



WILL POWER: You can't think of that. You just have to put your mind on the exact time you're in. You just got to go and do what's best at the time.

Yeah, I'm hoping that this is a good weekend for us to catch Marcus because he's very tough. He's not the best qualifier, but he's probably the best racer in the series, in my opinion. Just over the years watching him race, he's one of the toughest guys. Like he's very, very good at starting back there and making his way all the way to the front.

Yeah, try to get some points on him.

THE MODERATOR: Marcus starting 12th and 15th. The last 20 races, Marcus has an average finish of 7.4, which is the best in the series.

WILL POWER: He's no joke. He's tough to beat.

**Q. Two poles today, you're one within Mario, do you think maybe that record attainable by the end of this year?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, I could get a pole before the end of the year. Yeah, these two poles are key. I was thinking about 'em all season. Put a lot of focus on this race for that reason. If I got those two, it's very realistic I could get that record.

**Q. Do you get a feeling ever, I don't know, premonition like, Hey, I'm going to have a good week?**

WILL POWER: You sometimes focus on one race at the beginning of the season, in the off-season, or from the previous season that you're like, This is the race, this is the one I want to win, the one I want to do well at.

You do that sometimes, and it often does play out that way, so yeah.

**Q. Feeling that way this week?**

WILL POWER: I put a lot of focus on this week. I love this track. Never won here. Trying to win here for a long time.

Yeah, yep, this is one of the tracks.

**Q. Do you have your ice bath ready?**

WILL POWER: Liz did fill up the bath. I told her I'm probably not going to have a bath. Yeah, maybe after the race if you want to do a press conference in there.

THE MODERATOR: Now, we're not Zooming that again,

no (laughter).

**Q. Can't he just bring it in here?**

THE MODERATOR: Yes.

WILL POWER: Roger won't mind. Last time I did it, Roger minded (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: I know he did. We all heard about that.

WILL POWER: He never told me, but I heard it through other people: Don't do that.

THE MODERATOR: We have witnesses in the room that received those calls. Arni still has PTSD from that call.

WILL POWER: Pretty much sitting naked in an ice bath while having an interview. If I had Verizon tattooed on my chest, maybe (smiling).

**Q. And Chevrolet.**

WILL POWER: Sorry, and Chevrolet.

**Q. How big was today in terms of your recent qualifying run? The last time you qualified in the top 10 was your pole before the 500 at the Indy road course.**

WILL POWER: That's crazy, yeah. It's been a bad run. I guess in a long career you'll have that at some point, things won't roll for you, whatever reason. Definitely a good way to break that drought. Yeah, super stoked.

**Q. Looked like you were using a high line. Is that something you experimented with?**

WILL POWER: No, that was the bottom of the car, skipping up track. I saw how fast the lap times were, meaning that people weren't having a (indiscernible) lift. I had to really drive it. That's why I said there was probably a 17 in there if you were able to get down enough.

**Q. Josef going before you, did you learn much from that?**

WILL POWER: Not really. We have different cars. Not really. Really didn't change anything.

**Q. You said starting up front was beneficial for your race. Simon won here from last a couple years ago. Are you worried about some cars in the mid to the back of the pack?**



WILL POWER: I guess the thing you're compromising on is ride height. Then again, you got to run it a bit high anyway for the bottoming on full tank. I guess it's not a massive compromise. You worry how Pagenaud won it with the yellow that put him on a good sequence, they were able to win that way.

Yeah, that's the variables. That's why I say you can never just bank on this being straightforward easy on a weekend to get good results. You just got to be ready for anything.

**Q. How much do you think traffic will play a part in tomorrow's race and Sunday's race?**

WILL POWER: You will be in traffic 15 laps in. You'll spend the whole race in traffic. It just will be the thing. Short-track racing, so it's how you can make the car work well through traffic. That is the key to winning this race simply.

**Q. Tire deg for the race, with the blacks and the reds...**

WILL POWER: Yeah, actually on the ovals, for this oval, we're running just blacks. There's no reds for this event.

**Q. Sorry.**

WILL POWER: Tire deg is significant. Big dropoff. The fact that it's extremely hot, the hottest we've been, it will be bigger deg.

It's going to play a huge part in the race. There's going to be guys that have nothing to lose that will pit early and make a massive time gain and track position gain. Kind of got to weather that storm as best you can based on where your championship contenders are.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

WILL POWER: Absolutely, yeah. I wanted to get at least get one of them, but I went for both of them.

THE MODERATOR: Did you know you had pole after the first one?

WILL POWER: No. I just saw zero. I was like, Hmm, maybe. Second one, I was surprised to see a zero because I went up the track so far. I didn't think anyone did two zero. I thought I may have gotten one of them.

Doesn't matter, 10 seconds later I was told, You got pole.

**Q. What do you like about the track and what gave you confidence this is the place where you could get the**

**poles?**

WILL POWER: I like about? It's such good racing. Degradation, the multiple lanes, it's just a very fun track. The car slides around a lot. Our cars are really good here. We're always in contention.

THE MODERATOR: With that we'll let you go. Congratulations.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports