

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Saturday, July 23, 2022

Jimmie Johnson

Press Conference



JIMMIE JOHNSON: Hello, everybody. Jimmie Johnson is in the media center. I got it, Kate (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: We've been joined by the driver of the No. 48 Carvana Honda, Jimmie Johnson.

You were battling with Rinus for quite a bit, had the pass on the outside that wowed this room. Tell us about your day.

JIMMIE JOHNSON: I had so much fun out there today. Watched so many great races at this track. To be here in person, drive on it in an INDYCAR is such a rush.

The first two-thirds of the race I really felt like we had a car competitive enough to win. Then there at the end it kind of slipped away from us. I think the longer run at the end also kind of exposed a weakness in our car, and I faded a bit more.

We'll sleep on it tonight, work with our teammates and engineers, make some good changes for tomorrow and come back stronger.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. How much of a benefit is it that you had a good run here today and now you come back and get a chance to do it all over again tomorrow? Do you expect to be even better tomorrow?

JIMMIE JOHNSON: Yeah, I think so. I mean, these cars really reward confidence. A Cup car, I think they reward patience and finesse. There's a different skill set that goes with it. You're going so damn fast in these things, the more downforce it creates, the confidence really rewards you.

Certainly hoping so. I hope tomorrow I have an even sharper performance.

Q. You were actually confident to take it up there on the high line three-wide. What made you do that?

JIMMIE JOHNSON: Yeah, the Cup car wasn't the first one up top. I do have some experience and have run higher with success in my Cup career.

I had a really good look at the line, could see where it was clean, where the marbles started. I tried it a few laps, just had my right sides up in that cleaner part of the track. 3 or 4/10ths a lap faster immediately. I kept working that.

Word traveled fast and that line was kind of run off after a period of time. For a while it was working really well.

Q. Jimmie, you've obviously come to a lot of new tracks in your INDYCAR career. With its similarity to Richmond, it being an oval, how was the preparation process different? How do you think it helped you today?

JIMMIE JOHNSON: I think there are more similarities to driving an INDYCAR here than anywhere else I've been so far. The inputs in the car are much more aggressive. There's a just a lot more sign on the wheel, a lot more work with your feet, like what you would do in a Cup car on a short track as well.

I felt like instinctively I could just drive the car and didn't have to think about things so much. Texas and Indy, speed is higher, you're more precise with your inputs. Here it was down and dirty, short track driving. Fits my style really well.

Q. Jimmie, the spin earlier in the race, how much did you learn from the spin? How much did that learning experience help you later on in the race?

JIMMIE JOHNSON: Yeah, I've had a lot of success in my Cup career, if you think of tracks like Atlanta or Richmond in the Cup cars, probably Kevin Harvick was one of the first ones to expose if you drive on the painted line, it will help turn the car and create some grip. I just tried it and it didn't work.

I was running lower and lower in three and four. It was working well. I thought, Let me just put the left sides on the painted lines. I was backward instantly. It was just a mistake on my behalf.

Q. There's a lot of repetition in street courses and road courses. Wondered if today you felt more freedom with the ability to move up and down the track?

JIMMIE JOHNSON: Yeah, it just instinctively I was able to be myself in the car and stop thinking so much about everything that I do. Thank God there weren't any braking zones for me to get beat in on this oval. It was really just about carrying momentum, carrying lines, understanding where a line would be overused, run off and lose grip, find a new line.

I was just able to be myself. It was really a lot of fun.

Q. Jimmie, it's a quick turnaround, you're pretty dehydrated to a degree. Doubleheader at Pocono your last season in Cup. What are you doing for recovery? What will it take?

JIMMIE JOHNSON: Yeah, honestly I felt pretty good getting out of the car. Just make sure I get all my fluids replaced, stay aggressive with that in the morning.

There are a lot of laps, but you complete a lap so fast in one of these cars, the duration being in the heat with a high heart rate is low in comparison to what I've had in the past.

I don't think tomorrow is going to be too difficult to run the second race. I feel like the experience I had last year at Detroit was good prep for this. Knowing this race was coming up, I spent a little extra time getting ready. But I don't see it being a problem.

Q. What was lap traffic like? Did you manage it pretty well or have any difficulty?

JIMMIE JOHNSON: I feel like honestly I didn't know who lap traffic was at times with the varying strategies. I'm used to lap cars being out of the way on a restart. To my surprise, one of the restarts were two lap cars in front of me. I didn't know until we took the green and got back going once I passed them, I heard over the radio it was a lap car and I didn't improve my position.

I didn't find it to be too difficult. Everybody was respectful, but we also had a really good car.

THE MODERATOR: Jimmie, congratulations. Great day in the 48. We'll see back here tomorrow for race number two.

JIMMIE JOHNSON: Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

