

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Saturday, July 23, 2022

Josef Newgarden

Pato O'Ward

Will Power

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Joined by second- and third-place finishing drivers. Pato O'Ward comes home second place, and Will Power comes home third.

Pato, open us up with your thoughts on the day.

PATO O'WARD: Yeah, really solid points day for us today. I thought we had a little bit more for Josef in the end. He was really strong. All Penske cars were extremely strong.

It was all about what can we do different to them to be able to just have a shot at getting by them. I had to use my tires a bit much. I think Will was on the same train battling with me and Palou, Marcus. So I think we used up our tires a little bit more than what Josef did. He had a little bit more to give in the end.

Yeah, I was happy with my car. Didn't really start off very good. We were just extremely, extremely loose. As we saw in the 7 car, unfortunate. Yeah, glad Felix is okay. We need to see what we can do better for tomorrow to not have that because it took a lot of pit stops to get it into a window where we could actually attack rather than just being a little bit of a passenger.

Yeah, really happy with our day.

THE MODERATOR: Will, your thoughts on the podium and the battle you had with your teammate throughout the day today?

WILL POWER: It was a good battle. Last restart is what hurt me the most, trying to keep guys behind. Had a couple of big yaw moments on the rear tire early. Pounded on that rear too much to stay ahead. Then went loose, really loose. I had some big saves.

I was happy to end up third actually. I was thinking we might fall back a bit further. Some good lessons in there

for tomorrow. But it is difficult when you get attacked. You can't do much. You want to be the leader because you're in clean air, so much easier to conserve your tires up there.

Yeah, kind of a second-gear restart, that was a mistake. That's what Josef got me. I should have been smarter on that.

PATO O'WARD: I did that too, mate. Retweet.

WILL POWER: It's real life, it's not Twitter (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: Traffic was crazy all day today. 772 total on-track passes this afternoon, 372 were for position.

We'll open it up for questions.

Q. Will, after starting from the pole, are you disappointed with third?

WILL POWER: No. You never look back on a day when finishing third is a bad thing. There's a few things I could have done a little better, been a bit more aggressive with the tools in the car to make sure the rear wouldn't go off.

I felt like we had a strong car. I was a bit conservative at the start, not attacking as much as Josef was. Then when we had the restart and I was starting to attack Josef, that's when I started to be a bit more aggressive and felt a bit stronger.

Yeah, good day. Third's good points every time.

Q. Speaking of points, the championship race keeps changing. There's five drivers separated by 59 points. How do you think this is going to play out?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I mean, Newgarden has four wins, probably five tomorrow, unless I can do something.

PATO O'WARD: Don't be so negative.

WILL POWER: Go ahead, try to beat him, man.

PATO O'WARD: I tried today (laughter).

WILL POWER: Yeah, well, I'm going to try to beat him



tomorrow. So is Pato.

But, yeah, it's still close. It's just if you keep finishing in that top four, you're going to be right there. At some point it's going to be clear who are the real contenders. Maybe this goes all the way to the wire, five guys.

PATO O'WARD: What he said, yeah (smiling).

Q. Pato, were you battling something with restarts with the gearing?

PATO O'WARD: Yeah, Josef had different gearing to us. I'm pretty sure he was aware of that. So the team told me to do a certain thing, which I did. It was pretty horrendous and we got passed by two guys, I think.

In the next one I did the opposite, and it worked. Yeah, it's hard to say, right? You don't know who's going to be leading you. You don't know if you're going to be the one leading. Obviously you're going to do the best for whatever is your pattern, gearbox pattern.

But, yeah, we only let it catch us out once. I think Will did, as well.

Q. Is that something you have to address for tomorrow?

PATO O'WARD: No. I mean, maybe yes or no. It just really depends on how bad it was. I just think knowing now what to do, it's really not too big of an issue, I guess.

Q. Will, yesterday you said Marcus was the best driver in the series.

WILL POWER: Yeah.

Q. Today he starts 12th, gets all the way up to second. Do you see today why he's going to be tough as the points leader?

WILL POWER: There was an example of him racing really hard. It hurt the overall finish for him because I was trying to save my tires knowing how long that stint was going to be. Those guys are attacking so hard that they are just going to fall back with someone sitting there conserving the second half of the stint.

Yeah, he's tough on restarts. He's a very, very good racer.

Q. Tomorrow's race is 50 laps longer, but the temperature will be about 15 degrees cooler.

WILL POWER: 15 degrees, I'll take that, even for 50 laps

(smiling).

PATO O'WARD: Yeah, it will definitely be nicer on the deg, on the car. I think it will be a little bit friendlier.

Q. Even though he never made it all the way up to where you guys were, Jimmie had a pretty good race for most of the day. It shows he's pretty good on ovals.

PATO O'WARD: Yeah, I think he's doing a phenomenal job in the ovals. In Texas, where I had my issues, I got to follow him for a bit. I thought it was really, really cool to see him explore in areas where no one else was exploring. He was making the car work in areas where no one else was. I think that's why he was so strong.

I think that NASCAR experience paid off in how those guys are just continuing to explore and see where the grip is. For us, I guess sometimes if you go off of what you know, it can be a big price to pay.

But, yeah, it was really cool to see that he was kind of thinking outside the box versus everybody else. Yeah, I think he's just going to keep getting better and better.

Q. I would like to know, you got a message for your Latino fans that live in Iowa? What can they expect for tomorrow's race?

PATO O'WARD: Yeah, I got to see quite a bit of you guys today. Hopefully I get to see more of you tomorrow. Come check it out. I think it's really worth mentioning what Hy-Vee and what Penske have done for this weekend. It's really, really cool to see. I've never seen Iowa this way.

I think their approach to everything has been phenomenal. I think it's the approach that everybody else in every single event in the INDYCAR schedule should be like. So I think we can learn a lot about this weekend and how well they've done it.

THE MODERATOR: Will, we'll let you go.

WILL POWER: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: We'll continue with questions for Pato.

Q. Pato and Josef, strong day for Chevy. Did you guys on track think you had an advantage with that engine than the Honda guys? Seemed like you did.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Oh, yeah. No, I don't know. I always feel very good with a Chevy behind me, don't you?



PATO O'WARD: Yes, yes, yes.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I mean, look, they've delivered this year on all accounts. Chevy power, durability, performance, it's always there for us.

Q. What burgers were you talking about?

PATO O'WARD: We were just talking about...

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Shake Shack would be good.

THE MODERATOR: Wahlberg's. There's one in Newton, right here.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I'm now very excited.

PATO O'WARD: Double-double. Let's go.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Love Mark Wahlberg's.

Q. (No microphone.)

PATO O'WARD: It was wonderful. The worst part is the first two minutes. After that, whew, you're chilling.

Q. (No microphone.)

PATO O'WARD: You wanted to see more, didn't you? Sneaky (laughter).

Q. (No microphone.)

PATO O'WARD: Naughty girl.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, Pato. We'll see you back here tomorrow.

PATO O'WARD: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Josef Newgarden, with four wins at this great oval.

Congratulations. We'll continue with questions for Josef.

Q. At the start it looked like you and Will came together. Did you discuss that or do you have an understanding of what happened here?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Came together?

Q. (No microphone.)

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I didn't feel that. Probably wasn't

big. I think we probably just got close. I got a really good jump beside him. But, no, I don't think it was too big. Then he got away. I was just kind of letting him do his thing for the first 20 laps, then we tried to pick it up after that. Yeah, I don't think it was a big deal.

Q. What is the context of the four wins within the team? Is it easier to motivate your guys because they've got the knowledge you're able to go out and win four races or is it more difficult because you've won four races and you're not leading the championship?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It's been a frustrating year in some regards. But it's been tempered with great results. I mean, to your point, we've had four wins. I feel like we've showed up at most of these weekends capable of winning the race.

Fortunately four of them have worked out pretty nicely. But, yeah, it's either working out like that or it's just going sideways to some degree. I don't know that I want to put that on any one specific thing. It's been kind of bad timing in a lot of respects this year. Mid-Ohio was bad timing, qualifying and the race. Toronto we had bad qualifying with P2 going out, hampered qualifying. Bad positions on the pit stop. Even the pit cycle before that was bad timing on when we pit.

I don't really think it's anyone's fault. I don't think we have a problem in any part of the team. For whatever reason, we have odd timing on most of these weekends. The other weekends where there is no odd timing, we win the race. I think if we could find the middle ground there, we'd be handily in the points lead. We can't seem to find that balance right now.

You have to be careful trying to find it. We can't change much. It's just the way it is. 2018 was similar to this year, we won three races, finished fifth in the championship. We had four poles, super good. We were either winning the race or something weird was happening.

Q. You won the second race here in 2020. The first race you were seething that you didn't win that race. A caution or something...

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I mean, should have. Got screwed by the caution basically. We were out front. Yeah, so I was seething. I was pretty upset. It's one of those timing things we're talking about. You can't control that stuff. Yellows sometimes completely bite you and you can't point your finger or yell at anybody. Wrong place, wrong time. That was one of those races.

Q. Everybody says you're the unquestioned favorite.



When you come here, is there more pressure on you to make sure you back it up the way you did today? Now does it shift for tomorrow where maybe you demoralized the field and the pressure is off?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I think it gets harder every year I come here. '16 we won the race, I felt like we demoralized the field. It was like taking candy from a baby. It was stupid.

Every year since it's just gotten harder. Feels like everyone is figuring it out. You can't have a mega advantage on somebody forever. They slowly start to figure it out.

You can see it with Will. Will has figured out how to finesse this place. Obviously there's a certain style, a certain technique everywhere we go that you find success with.

Scott is the same way. I think McLaughlin was picking up on what I was doing around here. Not just those guys, I look at Pato. Pato was not easy to beat today. We put the hammer down with 20 or 30 to go. Before that he was coming like a freight train at 30 laps to go. I was like, Who is this McLaren coming up on me. I was asking for feedback on that because he kind of snuck up on me.

I don't feel like it's an easy beat-down anymore. If we mis-step, we'll get beat. That will happen tomorrow if we are not on our game. I don't feel like we have an advantage anymore.

Q. Yesterday Will Power said he thinks Marcus is the best racer in the series right now. Knowing that you're battling him for the championship, what is your assessment of how strong he appeared today? Did he show something as the points leader?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I think he's done a great job obviously. How could you not say so, right? He's doing a tremendous job.

He's kind of just been level. There's not a lot of flash to him. I would say even less so than Palou. Palou to me is like the best non-flash driver. That guy is super well-rounded, does everything well. There's nothing much to him. You're not seeing a lot of spark.

Ericsson is like a step below that. I would put him like maybe below Palou. They're just having a good run. They're doing a great job. Obviously they have a great team. You can't do it alone in this series, they're a great team at Chip Ganassi Racing. It's a great combination for them.

He's not going to be easy to beat. If he keeps doing what he's doing, that can win championships. It's great to win four races. Our boring days we need to be finishing second or third. We just can't seem to do that right now. When we figure that out, I think we'll be in the mix, we'll be just fine.

Q. I asked the others about the championship race, how they see it playing out. Will said you'll probably win tomorrow and take the points lead. Pato said he's going to try to beat you. There's five of you separated by 59 points. How do you think this is going to play out?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I think it's been very entertaining from a fan standpoint. No one is getting away from anybody. We're all together. So that's exciting.

Typically this is what's been happening the last couple years in INDYCAR, it's always gone down to the finale. You always have a couple horses in the race at least.

I don't know how it's going to play out, I really don't. Someone could go on a streak. It could keep going up and down. That's kind of what's happening right now. It's so competitive that you have people sort of winning, then having a bad weekend, then you have guys like Ericsson who is in the middle and level. So no one's getting away.

It's impossible to predict. I have no idea. Someone could just go on a super streak, and maybe not. But tomorrow is not a given, I can tell you that. I think we have a good car and we did a good job today, but that does not guarantee tomorrow's race. It will be just as difficult as today. Cooler, absolutely. Hallelujah.

Q. (Question about pit crew.)

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Kyle Lapierre (phonetic), my left front, about died two days ago. He was mowing his lawn, got attacked by a hornets net. Was in the hospital 24 hours ago. Got released. I don't know how he got here and pitted my car, but he did. That dude almost died 48 hours ago. He was ready to rock. Doesn't care about 100-degree heat. You ask me about my pit crew: Kyle La peer, what a champion.

Q. (No microphone.)

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: He looked great. He pitted that car just fine. Write that. We should be singing Kyle Lapierre's praises. They're all excellent. Typically when I go into the pits, I know I'm either going to maintain or gain. That is an asset that you cannot -- you can't second-guess

that. It's certainly something that you - what's the right word - you just can't undervalue that. It is so critical to win these races in the pits. My team performs every time, as well as Will's.

Like I was talking about with Ericsson, you don't win these championships alone, you don't perform the way he's performed alone. You're normally backed up by a great team. I've always had great confidence that we have the best team out there. It makes a big difference to win these places, absolutely.

Q. (No microphone.)

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I don't know. We've got to come up with something for Kyle.

Q. (No microphone.)

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: He is the Hornet now from now on. That's his nickname. I was blown away by the story. I showed up. Kyle is in the hospital, he almost died. What? He's still coming, though, don't worry. I was like, Why? Stay home. Love that guy.

Q. (No microphone.)

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yes, yes. It wasn't like one. He got swarmed.

Q. (No microphone.)

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, right? A.J. has almost died twice by killer bees.

THE MODERATOR: Among other things.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah.

That was the last time they did that.

Q. (No microphone.)

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I think that was like their cousins.

THE MODERATOR: Cousins in Texas.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Seeking revenge. We'll finish you, A.J.

Q. How was traffic today? Seemed to be quite an issue.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: How was the track?

THE MODERATOR: Traffic.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: No, the traffic was I would say normal. It's always tough around here in Iowa. You've got to be really good in and out of traffic. Today was the same thing. I saw more dropoff today, though, than perhaps 2020. Being a day race makes that very different.

But it's the name of the game. Keeping after the tires and your adjustments to keep after the tires, being able to get through traffic, those are the two ingredients you need to win here at Iowa. It will be the same tomorrow. Even with cooler conditions, it will be the same deal.

Q. What about the momentum going into tomorrow? How excited are you for the race tomorrow?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, very excited. I mean, I love this place. I mean, not just because we're good here. Obviously that makes it better, but it's a really fun track to race at. You have two lanes to run on, sometimes three. That's abnormal for us in a lot of ovals we go to. It's the most exciting race we get to partake in in INDYCAR from an oval standpoint. Excited to have two of them.

Q. You sounded a little nervous over the radio when Pato was closing up to you. Did you think you had the tires to hold on?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I was nervous with Pato there. I noticed him coming up. I thought I had a good gap on everybody about 30, 35 to go. Then I just noticed this McLaren coming on very strong in my mirrors. He snuck up on me at that point. That's why I radioed in. Is this guy on our strategy? Is he on the same tires? Looked like he was on fresher tires when I was seeing him in the mirrors.

I was concerned at that point. I just tried to pick up my pace, make sure I could get through traffic a little bit quicker. Then we were fortunately able to sort of run away from him.

I don't know if we can continue to do that tomorrow. He looked pretty good to me. So we've just got to really look at it tonight, see what we can improve on, see what the weather conditions do for us, make this thing a little bit better.

Q. (Question about points.)

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I approach every race the same. If there's an opportunity to win, we're going for the win. We're trying to maximize our capabilities every weekend. When you're doing that, you're not aiming to make a mistake or put the car in a compromising position.



It's the same every day. If we have an opportunity with a winning car to win the race, we're going to go for that. If it's not there, we aren't forcing that. We need to maximize what the potential is.

Q. How did you manage to hold your nerve chased by everyone? What were the keys to defend your position?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It was very tough. I was quite surprised at how aggressive Will and Marcus were on the restarts. I just thought that was the wrong approach, quite honestly. Today was going to be a long game. You needed to be long on the tires, needed to be able to look after them. They were so aggressive on the restarts just to get track position. I think it ended up hurting them in the long run.

I just tried to stay in front. I tried to position myself where they would struggle to get by. Fortunately it was good enough today to manage them and hold them back.

Q. What do you think you can improve for tomorrow's race?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I think we could still make our balance better. I was up and down today. I made probably a bad adjustment in the middle of the race that we fortunately got back into the car, at least half of it. We can be better balance-wise across the stint.

It really is a balance of how you manage the tires. If you're too aggressive on the restarts, you're running too much front grip, you wear the rears out, and vice versa, if you're not aggressive enough to keep the fronts working, then you just start plowing understeer. Either way you can really lose the car if you lose the front or rear aggressively with tire degradation.

Yeah, I think we can tune it up a little bit better. We just need to make the right calls for a cooler track temp, see what's going to be right for those conditions versus today.

Q. You said on TV you were real motivated by not winning the pole. Is that really accurate?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Unfortunately I get so annoyed these days when we miss it. I hate it. I hate losing. It's not that I want to be a sore loser, but I'm so competitive that it is frustrating to me when we don't execute perfectly.

It's impossible to execute perfectly all the time. That's the way my mind works, is that we should be able to do that. So I was very motivated to get the race win just because I

knew we had a pole-capable car and we didn't get that done. I wanted to at least finish off the race, which is the more important bit. But it's also fun to win poles.

THE MODERATOR: There is another \$10,000 for the People Ready.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: They're going to love that. Serious fun. Wags & Walks, they're going to love that, absolutely.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, Josef Newgarden.

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