

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Friday, August 19, 2022

Will Power

Marcus Ericsson

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. Wrapping up pole qualifying. Now the a reigning Indy 500 champion who almost picked up career pole number one, Marcus Ericsson (indiscernible).

MARCUS ERICSSON: -- of course, you want to get that first pole. Will did a very impressive run in the end. We'll just have to try to get the win tomorrow instead.

THE MODERATOR: Knowing it was Will Power, did you think you still had a shot?

MARCUS ERICSSON: I thought my run was really good, so I thought I had a shot. If there's one guy you don't want to go after you when you're standing on provisional pole, it's definitely Will Power.

Either way, I'm really happy we're on the front row, the car felt so good. The team did a really good effort today to give me such a qualifying car.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. As this season title race is winding down, in oval qualifying, being in a legitimate title race, does that feel any different than it might have (indiscernible).

MARCUS ERICSSON: (Indiscernible) -- that's sort of the mindset I've had all the time. Now going down to the last three, I think I'll do everything I possibly can to try and win this championship.

I knew today in qualifying it was really important because of the way this track races. It's not always easy to overtake. I was very focused going in.

Yeah, I try and do like I've done all year and not change things up. But it is, like you say, in oval qualifying, it's something special. You have those two laps, high speeds, no margin for error. It is quite special to do it. It's a lot of adrenaline that runs through your body.

It's pretty unique, but I really enjoy it. I think it's really fun.

Q. Are we still with three races left too early to feel like you have to run your race off of what people are doing, covering certain drivers? Do you feel you're still able to run your own race?

MARCUS ERICSSON: I think if it was one or two cars fighting for it with three to go, you could start racing that guy. But now we are five or even seven cars fighting for the championship. It's not really possible to cover six other cars.

We need to focus on ourselves tomorrow. We need to try and win the race because we're going to be in a position to fight for that, so that's going to be the goal.

But we know it's tough competition out there. We need to race our race. I think that's important.

Q. If you look all the way back to the inside of row four, that is the points race. Everybody up there are the guys you're battling. To know the proverbial cream has risen to the top in qualifying really makes it look like it's going to be tough to win this thing. How do you look at that?

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, I think it shows how competitive this series is. Like you said, all the top guys are up there tomorrow. It's going to be tough. It's going to be tough to battle it out, try and beat the guy next to me here. It's going to be very tough.

But we're going to give it our best shot. I think we have three cars up there so we know we have a good package as well. Just try to do our best, race our race, see what we got.

THE MODERATOR: The guy next to you just happened to pick up career pole 67, Will Power. This is his fourth pole here, fourth of the season. A little history perspective: last time we saw an INDYCAR SERIES driver, Will, pick up 67, when Mario did, you go all the way back to August 1st, 1993. It's a mark that has stood for some time.

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WILL POWER: Yeah, something I've had my eye on for a while. I think when I got to 60, I was like, This could be possible. Yep, it's definitely a big box to tick.

But, yeah, now focusing forward on the race. That's really the big thing on my mind, is having a good day. Yeah, everyone's at the front, so it's just going to be...

It's pretty typical of INDYCAR, right? It's just going to go down to the last race. The way I see it, even on points right now, it's that close, it can just flip. It's going to be about who can finish ahead of who. Simple as that.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Will, there's been times you and I have talked, back when you were at 60, 61 poles, you said, I don't know if I'll be able to get there. Did you honestly feel that way? Now that you've reached your goal, is it just a huge sense of relief?

WILL POWER: When I got the double pole at Iowa, that's when it became really realistic. The year before I had one pole. I think the year before that I had three. It was getting increasingly harder to get pole position. I was kind of thinking, This is going to be pretty hard to beat.

But the double pole at Iowa was real key. Yep, great team, great engine, great crew. That's what I've had. I've been lucky.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILL POWER: No, I'm not feeling any relief because I'm so focused on the race and the championship. I can think about that later and feel good about it. Right now it's just so important to have a good car in the race and race well, yeah, have a solid day.

Q. Marcus, how excited are you to come to St. Louis to compete in a race that means so much here in the city?

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, I mean, we've been here a few years now. It's always been a great race, great atmosphere here with the fans.

I always enjoyed coming here from my first year in 2019. I think it's a track that sort of suited my style straightaway. For the ovals, coming from European racing, where you don't do any ovals, I think this is really the first track I got my head around. Been pretty strong here the last few years.

Going into this weekend, I knew that the ovals this year has been something that I've been really strong on, so I was really looking forward to this one. Qualifying on the front row shows we have a strong package for these type of tracks.

Q. And Will?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I think this is a really good event for us. It's promoted really well. Always get a big crowd. They do a really good job of presenting it.

It races well also. Can be a bit mixed up with fuel races and so on. Yeah, it's one of my favorite tracks, favorite ovals. I really enjoy it. I enjoy it a lot.

THE MODERATOR: Marcus, congratulations. Have a great race tomorrow.

More questions for Will Power.

Q. You've won the pole at Portland, coming up next. Can 68 happen there?

WILL POWER: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, next two races after this, next two qualifying sessions, have to be very good qualifying sessions. Yeah, that totally is going to be the goal.

But, yeah, not even thinking about that right now. Just thinking about tonight.

Q. How do you expect the second lane to run?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I'm really hoping that the second lane brings that in. I'm hoping that second lane practice brings the lane in.

I think it will be a bit better than Texas because it hasn't got the coating. Maybe it's not enough cars. But, yeah, we'll see. Man, the race would be so good if we could do that, people actually run there in the first 20 laps. It will just be a completely different race to what it was.

Hoping it works.

Q. How much of it is confidence driven, when drivers see guys going up, versus rubbering up the track up there?

WILL POWER: Exactly that. They see people running reasonably fast on the outside lane, if that happens to be the case in the practice, it will give people confidence to go there and know it's rubbered in. When they come into practice, yeah, hopefully it works.

Q. How much of this race becomes a fuel conservation race as opposed to others?

WILL POWER: Yeah, the second lane, it's actually got more grip up there because it's not polished. It just needs rubber. I think if we can get it in a bit, when the 30 minutes is up, everyone else comes out, people actually go up there.

Yeah, the fuel race, if there is some yellows at the beginning, people will try to make it on a three-stop. That's when it becomes a bit of a fuel stop. It really depends on when the yellows for that, otherwise it's a four-stopper.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILL POWER: Not something I take note of or even look at those things.

Q. If you go all the way to the inside of four, that is the points race. The top six guys are all up there battling. What does that really say about this points race that you've got everybody right up there at the top of the grid?

WILL POWER: Yeah, it just shows no one's letting up, no one will until the end.

Yep, pretty tight battle to the end. It will be very interesting to see how it unfolds. All you can do is just do your best. Do your best. Can't control some things, so see what happens.

Q. Now that you've tied Mario, which you wanted to do, what do you want to do next?

WILL POWER: I need to tie Michael in wins. That's one win away.

Q. Need to tie Helio in 500s.

WILL POWER: I can almost guarantee that is not going to happen before I'm done. That's a pretty good run if you could do that.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, Will. Thank you. Enjoy the rest of the night.

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