

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Wednesday, February 1, 2023

## Josef Newgarden

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Joined by Josef Newgarden. Remarkable year in 2022. Back at it. I remember last year you talked about you have five wins, but you could win 10 in a year, that's how good we are. That's the goal setting that you do. Here you are in the off-season. Thought about it a lot probably since then. Momentum heading into 2023? What's the goal right now?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Honestly, I don't feel that different leaving Laguna, where I was kind of at mentally there, my statements, what I was projecting. I feel very similar to that place. Not a lot's transpired between now and then. Just in the same spot, ready to get back going, improve where we can, be better in areas where we need to be, put a good season together.

I don't think we're going to change much. I don't know that we need to change anything as far as our approach or process. I think everything that we're doing is what we need to be doing.

INDYCAR just has that intangible side to it where you just can't predict everything. You do need a little bit of I don't want say lock but you need the tides to favor you at times. It's preparation, hard work, maximizing each day, then timing needs to be on your side. Sort of the tides need to flow for you.

I think most of everything went well for us last year. There were just too many events, just a couple too many races that didn't go our way that we needed to.

THE MODERATOR: I know a lot of you have questions for Josef. I'll open it up for questions.

**Q. They used to say in a championship race that the leader, biggest contender is going to have a bad race. Almost seems like with as competitive as the series is, you can't even afford that any more. Has it gotten to that point?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I think you can have a bad race. You just can't have three or four of 'em. Three or four is a

lot. It depends on the year.

I think the complexion of each year is different. It's always been hard for me to assess things by comparing year to year. They're all different. There's some years you probably could afford three or four bad races. Last year was not a year that you could afford that.

It depends on who's having a great year. Sometimes people just have a good run and nothing seems to go wrong for them. That's just the nature of the beast.

**Q. You said you wanted to level up last year and you did. You finished second in points I think three straight years. Does that eat you a little bit?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I mean, it gnaws at me for sure. It's annoying, there's no doubt. How could you not be frustrated by it, right? I think it's normal, very frustrating.

I try and take the frustration and just put it into motivation. How are we going to build a bigger gap where that's not even possible? I don't even want to be messing with it at the end of the year. In an ideal world, if we get to the end of a season where we don't have to mess with the gap, if we can just get that out of the way, that would be ideal. That's where my mindset is at, how do we get to that place where it's not even on the table, it's just done.

I think I'm not arrogant enough to believe that that's easy. It seems near impossible these days to do that. I think that's valid. It's very difficult to do that. I understand that. But I still want to find a way where we can get to a place where we don't have to mess with it.

**Q. You've got to end the INDYCAR streak of 15 years in a row coming down to the final race.**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yes. It's not easy. It's possible. I do not think that will be easy whatsoever, but we need to figure out how to do that.

**Q. What have you discovered when you dissected 2022? You said luck is a big part of it?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It really is. I've done this enough I think to have a fair assessment of it. It's my opinion there's



that intangible you can't control. When I analyze other drivers and the seasons they've had, even my own, sometime timing just seems to work out really well for certain teams and individuals. That's a thing you can't control, unfortunately, right?

With that kind of comes peace of mind. I focus on controlling how can we build the best cars possible to give ourselves the best speed, how can we make the best decisions we can strategy-wise, position-wise. You really just have to hope that the timing blesses you throughout the year as well.

I am so positive, when we get a year where we get good timing paired with great speed and decisions, it will be a great year. It will be really great. Much better than what we had last year.

**Q. Off track I saw recently you got involved with a content creation company.**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Podium Life. It wasn't my idea. It was a friend of ours, sort of my community and friend group, colleague group, that had this idea for Podium Life. I thought it was brilliant. I loved the branding of it, the idea.

It's really a centralized content portal for racing and motorsports lifestyle. It doesn't really exist. There's a couple different sites and magazines that are like this. It's supposed just to be a curated space of all things that are relevant within motorsports lifestyle and racing lifestyle.

It's really neat. There's going to be a lot of good content on there about what's relevant within car culture, what's relevant in motorsports. For me it becomes one of these places that you go and visit every morning, you're seeing what's relevant for the day, what's relevant for the week, what's relevant for the year.

I think the sports world, certainly motorsports, is wanting that type of stuff right now. It's everything, INDYCAR, Formula 1, NASCAR, sports car, anything that's relevant in the moment. I think it's going to be a great place that just builds, a cool community to be a part of.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I mean, that's part of what it is. Obviously it's not just a print magazine. It's really an online magazine, but it's also -- I think that's the old school way of looking at it from an arts sense. What did a magazine used to be? That would be where you would go to and find what's relevant for the month, whatever genre you were interested in. That's still the essence of what it is.

I think it has this very old school vibe to it, but it's obviously pulled forward, state-of-the-art, a website that's curating this relevant information and stuff.

But I love the old school look and feel of it, that it's like a magazine, but just in new school form.

**Q. A lot of drivers talked about continuity, how positive that is. You have another new engineer this year. Is that a scary thing or are there positives?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: There's positives. I always have great confidence in whoever's around me at Team Penske. We just are able to attract some of the best of the best talent-wise. Anyone that's in the doors there I feel confident to work with.

You could put anyone with me and I'll be happy to find a way to make the most of it. But I don't want to say it just like that. It's not me making the most of it. I'm going to be working with great individuals.

But there are a lot of new individuals on the 2 car again. It's going to be a new crew chief, new mechanics. There's a lot of new faces again this season. But there's some continuity there. I think we'll be able to get everybody gelling pretty quickly.

My new engineer was with me last year, which is really great, Luke Mason, who was kind of the performance engineer. He is fantastic. I think he will step into the role and absolutely shine. I have no doubt about it.

**Q. I went back and looked since the DW12 used since 2012, drivers that have won the title have either won three or four races. It seems almost unimaginable you could win five last year and Will only one. Without taking into account some years there were double points, do you think the way the points system works in INDYCAR should be the way it continues or would you like to see a change?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I have no gripes with the points system. I think everyone is working within the same rules, right? I mean, yeah, I don't know that I have a lot of feelings towards it. I think it's fine the way it is.

I guess now that I'm really diving into it mentally, the only thing that I've not loved is the double points at Indy. I was never a fan of double points anywhere. I like that it got pared back just to Indianapolis. In an ideal world, I would go back to just the standard points system at Indy, too.

But having said that, I don't have a big issue with it. I think the points are what they are. You need to make the most

of it, understand how they reward you. I've got no problem with it.

We won five races, but we had some races that weren't good. We can't have things like Iowa race two, can't have the engine penalty at Portland. There's one or two others that I won't mention that could have been, should have been different.

There's no secret to how do you change that result? We all know where it was. It's just a matter of getting it all right in one year.

**Q. With this test coming up tomorrow and Friday, testing in the off-season is so limited, a track that INDYCAR has never been to before, what do you feel you can take away from going to Thermal these next couple days?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: You probably shouldn't come out of here either too excited or too demoralized depending on how it goes because it is not incredibly relevant when it comes to at-track performance. We're never going to run here again. Well, I shouldn't say that. We're not going to run here this year for a points-scoring race. From that standpoint, it's not relevant.

What it is relevant for and what I'm excited about is just being on track. We definitely need it on the 2 car. We have a lot of new people. We're going to maximize this time by just treating it like a race weekend in that we're doing all the things we would do on a normal weekend to be fast and work well and efficient together.

When we come out of the weekend we'll have something to look at, what did we do well or not well. We have a good, relevant conversation piece to take into St. Pete. From that standpoint it's excellent.

If we finish 15th on the charts, yeah, maybe we shouldn't read too much into that. It obviously matters, why were we 15th. I'm not going to be blowing up on the fact that we were 15th at Thermal when we're not coming back here for a race this year.

**Q. Do you know how much you might be featured on 100 Days to Indy?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I've definitely talked with the production crew. I think they've got a stellar team in place. They seem really engaged, which is critical. They need to be really consumed by it, engaged by INDYCAR, trying to make the most of it. That all looks in place.

I don't know how much I'm going to be featured yet, to be

honest with you. I think I might be a part of it in a small way. I don't know to what magnitude. I think I might have a small part, yeah.

**Q. (Question off mic re Simon Pagenaud.)**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Has he? I don't know what he has done. What's he done?

**Q. He said he's gotten under your skin.**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: He has? What did he do?

**Q. (No microphone.)**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: He hit Farano, yeah.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Well, you know, when you're passing P2 in a GTP, that's a way to surefire get someone's buttons pushed. He is definitely nailing it in that regard (smiling).

No, seriously, he's probably just giving you a fun sound byte. I don't know. I obviously got a lot of respect for Simon. We were teammates for a long time.

I bet it's just a bit of fun he was having, which was good. I'm happy. He looks like he's in a good place right now, which is great. Everybody deserves that.

There's my Bus Bro jumping with joy.

With regards to your question on the show, I think it's critical that they capture more of the emotion of the sport. You just got to be invested. You got to be invested in the people. You got to be interested. You either got to hate 'em or you got to love 'em. I think that's a great way to put it.

People you just don't care about, that are too vanilla, what does that do for you? Fans got to love you or they got to hate you. That's what makes it fun and engaging. I hope that we can get more of that in this series.

There's really great personalities, there are. I don't know that I just want to say that to try to help sell our sport. It's the truth. I think a lot of people in the know, inside the paddock, they see it. They know there's fun personalities here.

I hope the Hundred Days will pull some of that out and expose it to a broader audience. When that happens you'll get true interest in the sport.



**Q. Do you feel you can personally show that raw emotion driving for Team Penske? Roger cares about how you carry yourself. Is that hard to be in real life?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I don't think it is. Look, I might not be the most engaging character. I've accepted that. We can leave that. I might be more vanilla in the show. That's not the good person to be. Maybe that's me. I'll accept that.

I'm just going to be true to who I am. I would encourage everybody in the series to be true to who they are. If someone is hated or someone is loved, that's okay. You're part of an entertainment product. People are going to make what they want of it.

My best advice is just to be true to who you are, and that will shine through. From my standpoint, I think they will capture whatever they can within Team Penske. I can't tell you if that's going to be interesting or not. Might not be very interesting from my side.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: That was something I was going to bring up. I think the Bus Bros deal has really brought out more of our personality. Even before this Hundred Days Out deal, this has been sort of the first thing to bring personality to I think Team Penske in a lot of regards.

I got to say I think the Penske names are great, too, no doubt. I think a lot of it is just down to McLaughlin. First off, he is hilarious, a great character. He's a great teammate, great driver. He has somehow had a confidence to just kind of be him. It's really shown through. It's great to see it. People have been more exposed to him now because of Bus Bros. They just love Scott, they see a great personality from him. It's cool to see.

I think a lot of it's been down to him bringing that forward.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I don't know if they do. I love Scott. I want to see more of Scott, so... I don't know. I'm not the judge of that. I have no idea.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Did he? Is Simon upset? Is he upset?

**Q. (No microphone.)**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: To another place? Well, I mean, look, he's not been there at the level he needs to be. I'm not naïve to think that he can't get back there. He's plenty capable of it. There's no doubt. We've seen it in the past.

If he's finding a way to elevate, then more power to him. I think it's great.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: We love-haters. We'll put you on the show. We're going to barge into his bus. We've already seen his bus. He's got a lot of crystals. Very interesting.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Crystals, meditation.

**Q. Bearing in mind your team won nine races last year, probably could have won at least three more, what do you still need to find? Are you just relying on Chevy finding another giant step?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I hope not. I mean, I think the parity in the sport it's because of the long-standingness of the car. You're seeing most teams have reached a certain max to what they can really look for, look into.

I am always pushing the team on how are we going to separate ourselves? It's difficult because we've almost examined everything to the Nth degree. What can we do? We are Team Penske, we've got to find a separator within the rules. Within the rules there's a way we can continue to work to separate ourselves.

We're doing that. We're trying to continue to dive deeper into areas we've already been through multiple times. We're going to go through them again, keep hammering them. We keep finding little things.

I do believe there is more. I think we need to continue to have that attitude because when you don't have that attitude is when you stay flat and you go in reverse. We just can't afford that. We got to keep going forward.

Indianapolis is obviously the most glaring example of where we can continue to push forward. There's other areas where we've excelled better, but Indianapolis is still a weak point for us.

**Q. Would it be fair to say that will be where the team's focus has been in the off-season?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: No doubt. It's number one. It's



the number one objective. There's just no excuse for it.  
We have to be better at Indianapolis, full stop.

It's not from a lack of trying. I can tell you it wasn't from a lack of trying last off-season. We thought we were going to be exactly where we wanted to be. I think we made tremendous progress, but we weren't fully there. We're doubling down again. No excuses. We've got to make it better.

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

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Cool. Thanks.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

