

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Will Power

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up this two-hour practice session as we look ahead to Carb Day coming up on Friday and obviously Sunday the 107th running of the Indianapolis 500 presented by Gainbridge.

Joined now by the driver quickest in that practice session today in Will Power, driver of the No. 12 Verizon 5G Team Penske Chevrolet. He'll start 12th on Sunday, making his 16th start in the Indy 500.

What did you learn in that practice session?

WILL POWER: Yeah, a lot, actually. We've been having vibration problems. I think we got somewhat on top of that, ran at the front, ran in the middle, ran in the back. I think the car is pretty good. Yeah, I think we're in a good spot, really good spot.

THE MODERATOR: Qualifying is one thing; it's all about dialing the race car, that's where the big bucks will pay off on Sunday. You like where it's headed right now?

WILL POWER: I do, and I think Chevy has a bit of an advantage on the power, as well. I feel like we have good horsepower, and I think we're in good shape. A lot of people who are extremely good, a lot of teams.

It's almost going to be a day of no mistakes in the pits and just keeping out of trouble on track to give yourself a shot at the end.

The package I have, you can run on the gearbox.

Q. Seemed like early on in practice today you would get behind somebody but you didn't want to pass them. What are you learning there? And when you look at the people starting around you, do you try to work with them in today's practice and Friday's, or when you get out there you don't know who you're going to be around?

WILL POWER: No, you try to be about 12 cars back,

knowing where you're starting, hoping that you maintain or maybe go forward a bit.

Yeah, you just sit behind a car leading to kind of see where you can run and where the air is, so you spend a few laps behind someone. Yeah, just finding where the wake is good and bad.

Q. Will, were you on track when we had that accident out there or around it or have any view of it?

WILL POWER: No, I had no view. It happened right behind me as per the spotter. Just went yellow. I haven't seen it.

Q. I think Katherine when we spoke to her at the medical center said there were a lot of cars checking up. Were you experiencing that ahead of the crash?

WILL POWER: Yeah. That's always the case. You've got to be really on top of -- because the brake pedal is super long. When a big pack checks up, it can surprise you, so I always -- if I see a bunch of cars up front, I always leave a gap and are aware that you can come in and have nowhere to go.

That's just these days because people -- it's not like the race where you can never lift. There's people lifting out of line, trying to get back in, people on different tire life and such. Yeah, it can all pack up for you really quickly if you're not ready.

Q. Is that something where especially in a month if we haven't had any crashes during this week of practice that you are cognizant of when we get into that practice when there's only four hours of on-track time before we get to the race? Everyone is doing race running; as you mentioned people are doing different things. Is that something you have to be particularly worried about in this Monday practice?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I just think always at this place, you've got to be on your toes always. You can never relax. It's so fast. It's so easy to get a push-off, so easy to sort of clip a wall. Someone has a mistake in front of you, it's just a fast place. It's really -- everything happens extremely

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quick.

It's actually a really good package. That's why no one has really crashed, which means it'll be a very fierce race. I think it'll be very tight. Maybe there's more accidents in the race.

Yeah, INDYCAR, they want to switch and back, no one leading; that's what it is. It's going to be a good battle.

Q. When I talked to you after the open test to get your assessment on how the aerodynamic changes and the more drag allowed you to get closer and pull out and pass, what did you experience today that would lead you to believe it'll be more so easier to pass or maybe not as easy to pass?

WILL POWER: Oh, it's going to be easy to pass, not in the pack but at the front, because you've added downforce. You actually haven't added much drag. The cars are about the same speed because they're very efficient, aero bits or strakes and some floor stuff, so it's not big draggy wicker on the wing or anything. It's the closest I've ever been able to run to a car at this place without an issue.

I think, yeah, the front three will race pretty hard, and then as usual, you can't -- I don't think there's a series around -- you can never have -- it would be ridiculous to have enough downforce for everyone to pass, but the one thing there is there's tire deg, so I think that will create good racing in the pack.

Q. If you're somebody who's starting way back, they'll be able to fight their way up?

WILL POWER: I think if they have a better car that looks after the tire, yeah. The left sides are softer. They get vibrations more easily and the tire degrades, so if it's a hot day like this, there will be cars coming and going, I think.

Q. Will, you mentioned that there could be tire degradation and vibration. I've heard a few drivers say that they have a vibration. Do you have an idea where that comes from?

WILL POWER: I think it's just because the left sides are softer. They just degrade easier. I haven't had a set without a vibration yet. I've had a couple that have been massive and you have to pit and I've had a couple -- last one I just did a full stint, but it's still there. It's left side, left front, left rear. Depends which slides more.

Q. Does it get gradually worse and then you might really have to pit earlier?

WILL POWER: If you get an early one, yes, like almost to the point where you can't drive it. Like if it's a left rear, you get that early, have a big moment early, yeah, you're going to be pitting on about lap 18 I feel like. Yeah, you might be able to hold on for a couple more, but it's on the edge.

But yeah, I think it makes for better racing. It needed some deg. Yeah, good hot day, I think it'll be a good race. Colder day would be pretty tight. Yeah.

THE MODERATOR: I think we're looking at cloudy and 80 degrees on Sunday.

Thanks for coming up, Will.

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