

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Will Power

Alex Palou

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon. Wrapping up today's Hy-Vee One Step 250 here at Iowa Speedway, and for that matter the Hy-Vee INDYCAR Race Weekend. Again, Josef Newgarden will join us momentarily as will third place finishing driver Alex Palou, but joined now by Will Power, driver of the No. 12 Verizon 5G Team Penske Chevrolet.

Managing his best finish of the season with a second. It's his fourth podium of the season, 98th of his career. Will, kind of a long weekend, but you made some points and a couple of good finishes there for you.

WILL POWER: Yeah, good weekend. Two poles, second. I feel like I had the car to really challenge at the end there.

We're lucky to get the yellow. Probably should have pitted a couple of laps earlier. It probably would have put us in contention. Struggled the first two massively. Like, massively. Massively loose.

Yeah, once we fixed that, we were really strong again. That was really good. Yeah, good day, good day.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Will Power?

Q. You've been on rolls before in your career, but you know, tracks that are just Will Power tracks. Will Power is going to win this race, and everybody else is fighting for second. It seems lately Josef has this place figured out. Is it almost exasperating that no matter what you do, he just seems to be that much ahead of everybody?

WILL POWER: Yeah, it is. I obviously look at it very closely. I felt like we actually finally had it once we made those adjustments to run with him.

We came into pits with him, but I had to wait for X and to pit. It was just bad timing on our part to not pit a couple of laps early.

Obviously risks with that, but not much. Here you have a two-lap window to make a yellow.

Just ovals in general, he has won every single oval that he has finished in a long time now, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Joined also obviously by Alex Palou, driver of the No. 10 the American Legion Honda with the seventh podium of the season, 22nd of his career. Not unlike Toronto after starting mid-pack anyway, finishing up top.

Big points weekend for you here as you now head to our next race on the Streets of Toronto with an 80-point advantage over Josef Newgarden. Just your general thoughts about the day and finishing on the podium here at Iowa.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, we knew it was going to be a tough weekend. We thought it was going to be maybe a little bit less tough after we tested here, but honestly yesterday we had a lot of pace. Not like Penske pace, but like second series pace, and that was great.

We just didn't really have that final lap that you need to finish fourth, fifth, and we finished eighth.

Yeah, today was the opposite. Today we had no pace. I was struggling to overtake. I was struggling to keep the tires under the deck, and the team just put me in the position that we are now. So, yeah, it was all up to the team today.

THE MODERATOR: Want to talk about that final restart and making up a couple of spots there?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, that was cool. I knew that we were the last car on the lead lap, so I could risk it a little bit more. If I had an issue with something, I was not going to lose a position.

So went on the outside. Had a good restart. Went on the outside of McLaughlin, and I think Rosenqvist was battling with Power and just to the narrow, and I got to the inside of him into three. So, yeah, it was a pretty good restart.



THE MODERATOR: Couple of points made up in all of that. Questions for second and third place finishing drivers?

Q. Alex, you came in here saying you would be happy with two eighth place finishes. You ended up with an eighth and a third, so it's a lot better weekend than you probably thought. So how does this set you up now for the final five races of the season?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I'm looking forward. As I said, it was a place and a weekend that I was not looking forward to even before starting the season because it's a place I struggle personally to place.

As a team we know we need to find a little bit more, which we did. Yeah, I was still struggling a lot.

Super happy with the podium today and with the P8 yesterday. I'm looking forward to the next couple of races, which we know that we have a good car, and I have a lot of confidence that I can extract kind of the same from what we have.

Q. Will, do you see him taking a page out of your playbook from last year in making the most of any day?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I think it's a points lead that's not completely comfortable. Pretty comfortable to take a bit more risk. Yeah, he has won a championship before. He knows that. He is going to do what he does, which is pretty good.

Q. Can I go back to Will? A question. You just said earlier a minute ago if I understood it correctly that the car was very loose, and it could be fixed. Was there already an indication today in the morning in warmup that the car was loose?

WILL POWER: There was an indication, and we didn't do enough. Yeah, yeah, it's nuts how the adjustment just of the front wing how it transformed the car from just horrible to extremely good.

Q. Was curious how it was communicated to you over the radio on those final ten laps and whether you were surprised that the leaders on the lead lap didn't get a chance to go through pit lane to take tires or anything over that final ten laps of the race?

WILL POWER: You weren't allowed to take -- yeah, you weren't allowed.

Q. I didn't know if you guys would have been expecting the pits --

WILL POWER: To open? There weren't enough laps left so I guess they were thinking. I think they said that in the driver meeting that with ten to go, they're just going to -- kind of it is what it is, which is quite interesting because it's like -- it would have been a big battle if it was new tires. A bit less with the old tires. Kind of close, but it still would have been a fun restart.

ALEX PALOU: It would have been a really fun restart for me. Yeah, honestly I said it on the radio, if we were going to take tires or not. But it's true that the lap is so short that -- ten laps is nothing. Yeah, I think they did the right call.

Q. Say this happened five laps early, so 15 to go, maybe more time to allow the pits to open and still get a restart, do either of you feel like you had a car to take to Josef on fresh tires with the adjustments you guys have made over the course of the race to challenge him for a win, or would it have still probably been the same or similar results?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I really did. I was right within that last stint going into the pit stop, and I had to wait for Ericsson to pit, so it was going to be interesting.

My car was very, very strong middle to end of stint. And at the beginning, yeah, I had a great restart. Went from I think sixth to third and then just hung back and saved tires and went again and went to second.

Yeah, that's the first time I actually thought, yeah, I could probably challenge this guy. A little bit last year, yeah, and today. Not yesterday.

ALEX PALOU: No, I did not. I was just wanting them to stay out and made pit, and maybe with the new tires against 50-lap tires I could have had a chance, but not with the same conditions, no.

Q. Will, you mentioned the Ericsson pit stop. They held you while he went in. How heads-up was that and then to realize, hey, Ericsson is coming in, there are some people that have penalties for unsafe releases. Let's keep him here and --

WILL POWER: I was watching my mirror because I saw them set up, and I knew that he would be coming, so I sat there watching. There was confusion on the radio that I was, like, not going to have one of these.

It sucks because you just watched three, four -- almost three or four seconds tick by. A chunk of time. Like, he

came out, and I could hardly see him. I came in the pits right on him, on Josef.

Yeah, that's the gamble. I just thought we were in a position to take a big risk and pit way early because we're not really in the championship. Just go for a win. But I'm not on the stand, so I don't know the situation. I don't think anyone had pitted at that point, but that would have given us clear in and out and the undercut.

Q. Alex, if we had another race tomorrow, another 250 laps, of what you have learned from Saturday and today, do you think you would have as strong a finish because you don't credit yourself for getting a podium. You credit the team, and I don't know if that's because of the pit stops and the life of your tires, if that made the difference, based on team strategy?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, they did the difference today. There are states where I make the difference, but today was all up to the team.

No, I'm glad that I'm going home tonight and there's not another race tomorrow because, yeah, I improved, but the steps I made, they are not up to closing the gap to Power and Josef. Yeah, I'm glad it's over.

Q. Alex, I know you are probably bored about the questions about the championship both coming into this weekend and also now, but I guess do you feel like this weekend -- if you were going to draw it up on a piece of paper, has it gone about as well as you could have in terms of managing that gap and how much you've given away? It could have been quite a bit worse. Even today. I think it was down to 67 at one point today, and obviously now we're 80.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, absolutely. I expected Josef to win because, as Will said, the last races that he finished on an oval, not including Indy 500 this year, yeah, but the past, he has won.

So we were counting on that, and it was up to us to try and minimize the damage. So, yeah, 100% didn't expect to be on the podium today. Yeah, I'm happy to be here.

THE MODERATOR: Will, we'll cut you loose. Alex, stand by. Go ahead with questions for Alex Palou.

Q. At one point the first half of the race I think you had gotten down around 12th. Was that more of a function of just tires had gone away, or was it that you needed to maybe make an adjustment or two on the setup?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I think we were okay. We were not

great, but we were not terrible in the first stint. Lost a couple of spots in the pit stop. It was not the best pit stop, and then we also had to wait for BK to come in, so ended up losing some places.

Then on that second run I was just loose, super loose. Never felt that loose. That caution that came after 20, 25 laps saved me a ton because I was just losing places and places.

That second stint, yeah, I was super loose. As loose as we've been, and we had to make a change. We adjusted the pressures, adjusted the wing, and then we started in our group again and made it back.

Q. I wanted do follow up on Jack's question about championship. 80-point lead with five races to go. You have one more short oval that Josef is probably a decent favorite for. You certainly seem like you had the advantage in run street course performance between the two. Do you still feel like this is a somewhat comfortable lead at 80 points with five races to go?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah. I hope that before getting to Gateway, it's not as bad as Iowa in the past, but it's not been great. I think I feel a bit more comfortable there, and also we have a bit more performance from the car.

But this guy, I count him on winning there, so I need to do the work in Nashville and Indy Road Course before getting there. If we cannot because it's part of the sport in INDYCAR, and then we'll have to figure out.

I'm glad we have those points in the bag, but I'm not comfortable, honestly. I will be comfortable if we won the championship already. We know in INDYCAR with the big swing you can make in only one weekend just by winning and having a bad race, yeah, you can never give up.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations on a podium.

See you in Nashville. Appreciate you.

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