

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Sunday, July 23, 2023

### Josef Newgarden

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Joined by Josef Newgarden as well, back with another victory here. Driving the No. 2 Hitachi Team Penske Chevrolet. Obviously sixth win here at Iowa. Fifth straight oval win, which ranks you up there with A.J. Foyt, 1964, the great Al Unser in '68 and 1970. 29th career INDYCAR SERIES win now, which ties you with Rick Mears on the 13th all-time. Ain't so bad.

First time the INDYCAR SERIES has had a double-header sweep since Scott Dixon did it in Toronto in 2013. You made it look easy leading 211 of the 250 laps, but I know it wasn't. Your thoughts about another win here at Iowa?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: By no means easy. I think today was different. As we spoke about yesterday, I felt like today was going to have a different twist, and it did.

I think that's why you saw the order slightly jumbled in the top ten. Just balance-wise with a hotter track you were getting different reactions from the car, and we needed to keep up with it.

I think the good thing is and the fortunate thing for us is that we have a really good baseline race car here. You know, it's impossible to win around this place without a great car, and we always have it at this track. At least in recent memory we've always had it.

Yeah, it was great day. I feel really happy today. Yesterday felt incomplete. That's the only way I can put it. When you have a double-header and you feel like you have a great car underneath you, finishing day one it just doesn't feel finished. Today I feel like we're done now. We can leave.

I'm much happier today, and really proud of the team. Excited for them. They deserve it. They put in a lot of work, and they deserve the results this weekend.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Josef Newgarden.

**Q. You just said it was a different twist today. Does it mean the car was different than yesterday?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, the balance was different today. The tires were wearing out I think more aggressively, or let's just say they were wearing quicker with the track temp elevated slightly more.

Balance was different. It was more difficult today to manage the front rear axle of the car relative to yesterday. Yesterday if you had one axle going off during the race, it stayed consistently sort of there. You can manipulate it on both ends of the car, but today it was both ends, and you could get yourself in a bad spot on either end of the race car today really quickly. It could flip stint to stint.

I think that's what made it trickier, and that's probably why you saw some people moving more today because it was easier to get it wrong, and you just had to be really on top of your tools to make sure that you didn't let it get away from you.

**Q. You talked about it a little bit in post-race on TV just about the satisfaction and relief almost of being able to get through this weekend and not being able to totally celebrate or appreciate yesterday's win until today's race was over with. What is that like after you got done talking to us going through your routine, going to bed last night? What emotions, what was that feeling like, that tension of not being able to be totally settled or happy with a great performance that you just had done?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I would say I just felt heightened. Similar to when you haven't run a race on a normal weekend, you know, you are just heightened the night before.

I'm just focused. I'm focused on what's going to be different. I watched probably four hours of video last night just figuring out what can be a little bit better, including the whole broadcast.

I just felt kind of on the chip just ready to go, like it's just not done. It's half of what the available points are, and so I felt really charged and ready to rock again.

But I wouldn't say that's different to a normal weekend.



That's how you feel leading up to a Sunday. So you get through Saturday, and you think, oh, what a great achievement, and it was, but it's just not done yet. You can reverse everything the next day.

Now I feel good about it. We're not reversing anything. We did the job, and now we can leave.

**Q. Like winning pole on a Saturday, but not feeling like the weekend is totally done?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I think that's a good way to put it. Winning the pole is a big deal. It helps. Very satisfying, but it's kind of just half the battle.

I would say even the pole is less than that. It's probably 25% of the battle. The wins are so much more. Yesterday truly only felt like 50% of the battle.

**Q. Going into the final championship stretch of five races with four races on road and street courses. I know you've been a little bit up and down with one podium this year I think at Road America, a handful of top tens, but maybe not quite the strength or the consistency as Alex. What do you feel like you guys are going to have to get out of those last couple of races, and do you guys feel like you have that performance and the distance in the car to try and steal this one from him?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I think that's the unknown. We have been a little bit too up and down across the board. We've talked about this before.

It's just, yeah, I don't think we have the consistency that we want as a team. When you look at every track type, we're probably bouncing up and down a little bit too much.

There's no doubt that the ovals, particularly the race package has been very strong for us. It's hard to complain about our race cars on ovals these days. They're very, very good.

It's a complex schedule on the way out. We've got to do street course, road course, oval, back to two road courses, and yeah, it is a question mark. We definitely have to elevate our game on where we've been the first half of the year. There's no doubt.

I think that Alex and his crew, they're in a really good spot. They've had what appears to be a pretty consistent program. We've got to elevate to their level and just execute.

You just never know what's going to happen. I think if we

can be excellent on the back half of the schedule, then anything is possible.

THE MODERATOR: I have an apology to Graham Rahal, who swept the Detroit double-header in 2017. I was thinking I blamed someone who wasn't here. Anyway, kudos to Nathan on that one.

**Q. You were saying about the four hours of video. What was that made up of? I guess you watched the race broadcast, and was it...**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Just whatever we have. Whatever we record I'm watching or listening to, yeah.

**Q. You mentioned in recent memory the car has been good here. You had obviously won races before the Aero screens came in. Do you think there's any characteristics that the Aero screens introduced into the car, and that's why you've been so good in this period after this?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I wouldn't say so. I think this is -- I think Iowa has stayed so consistent over the last, let's say, four, five years. It's the same challenge every time we're here.

It moves around a little bit, right, year to year depending on temp, track condition, tires. Tire was slightly different this year. There were small differences, but I think the broad equation or the overall problem that you're trying to solve here has not changed.

I would say other tracks have changed dramatically with the Aero screen. This has not been one of them. The only thing is it's wearing out more and more. Degradation is just higher every year, but the thing you have to figure out is just the same every year. You know, how do you get the thing consistent?

It doesn't take much. Everybody is struggling with it. And if you just get fractionally more consistent than the competition, then it can make a massive difference here relative to another track.

**Q. I know last year this day was not a good one or anyone around you would want to really think about it or remember it. But emotionally or just personally, does this win today feel -- have you thought about that day last year and what this win might mean to kind of correct that a little bit and just what that feels like?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I'm happy it didn't happen again. You know, it was -- to just answer the question, no, I have not thought about it much. I didn't think about it last year or

think that, hey, I want to come here and right the wrong. It wasn't that sort of situation.

When I think back to it, what pops out in my head is more the work that had to go into make sure they let me stay in the race car the next weekend. That's what stands out to me.

Obviously the win-loss was disappointing too for many reasons, but I just remember that the week after that, it was a heck of a journey trying to make sure that we were in the car.

But, no, I wasn't thinking about it. As far as this weekend, the only thing that stands out is that -- we talked about it yesterday, but just any person that I talked to, they just assume. They just assume, oh, you're going to have a great weekend.

I just stay very vigilant with that because there is going to be a year. It's bound to happen. We're going to show up here, and we're not going to be very good.

That's okay. I'm expecting that to happen. I want to be able to get on top of it when it does hit us, but yeah, that's the challenge that I think of when I come here.

**Q. I guess now you can leave the leather helmet at home that you wore at Indy last year. You whacked 18 more points off the lead. You're down to 80. If somebody had said to you entering the weekend you can get points lead down to 80, or a deficit, I should say, how would you have felt about that? And five races to go, is it doable?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I mean, I would take it. I don't know about you, but that's a positive result I think leaving the weekend.

I would have liked it to reach 50 or 60. That sound better, but that's not where we're at, and I think we did a pretty good job given what was in our control this weekend.

I mean, it's hard not to give kudos to Alex. I think he just did a great job. Clearly we seem to have the upper hand this weekend, and he had a great day today. You know, he maximized what he could, and I think that speaks to what he brings to his program. He maximizes his results. He minimized a loss today. You know, it could have be more, and he just made sure it wasn't.

He is a tremendous competitor. Did a great job. I wish we gained more, but I'm not going to be dissatisfied with where we brought it to.

**Q. Josef, when I asked Alex and Will when they were in here earlier, they told me that in the pre-race meeting that you guys were told with ten to go if there's a caution, pits would not open with the attempt to try to get a green flag finish at the end. Was that your same understanding, and did you know that, or did that come to mind when that yellow flag came out with ten to go?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah. Yeah, that's how I understood it too. It seems to be the most fair way to -- it's such a short track.

To procedurally do all the things that they want to do, just to give second, third, and so on place a chance at the end on a restart, I don't like that, but I think if you're looking at it from a fairness standpoint, if you're going to let everyone have pit stops, then you have to -- okay, we do that, but then we also have to move all the lap cars.

I don't think they have enough time on this length of the track. That's the situation that happened in 2018, and we ran out -- we thought we were going to go green, and we pitted, and we didn't. We just ran out of time.

I think the only way they can really approach this stuff is get the lap cars out of the way, we will go to the restart, and not allow anybody to pit. It's probably the fairest thing can you do.

I didn't love it. I would have preferred to keep the lap cars in between. But looking at it from a competitor, I think it's the fairest way they can approach it.

**Q. We've had a couple more laps. Say everyone gets a chance to pit and puts on fresh tires, obviously you dominated the race up to that point. Do you feel like you still would have had the car underneath you with the adjustments that you had made and the adjustments some other cars up close to you had made to fend folks off at the end if that had been the circumstance?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: So difficult to say. I have no idea. I would like to think, yeah, we would have been just fine, but this race can change quickly.

The balance can get away from you really fast. I think we managed our balance perfectly at the time we needed to. We needed to do it for 250 laps. If it was longer, it was 300, maybe we would lose out to somebody else, but it's impossible to say.

**Q. Following up on the caution with ten to go -- you're smiling.**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Caution with ten to go and I'm smiling?

**Q. You're smiling at me like I'm about to ask something --**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I don't know what you are about to ask. I'm very curious what you're about to ask. You're giving me that cheeky smile, like...

**Q. Is the red flag not an option the way it is at the Indy 500 if there is a late caution like that?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Definitely. I will say that procedurally this is what they said they were going to do. They also have the abandonment of procedures, so they could just do whatever they want; right?

I guess saying that, the red flag is the option. Yeah, maybe. Maybe. That's definitely doable.

I don't know in this type of -- it's hard to say. I'll say this. Whatever they were going to do, I'm fine with it. We'll race, and we'll figure it out, and we'll still try and win.

What they did today, we lived with it. I thought it was fair enough, but if they want to do it differently in the future, I'm all game for whatever anybody wants to do. Whatever is going to make everybody happy, that's what we should be doing. Everybody, every person.

**Q. The style of racing, did some of the offenders heed your advice today?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: No, but I think I probably made too much of a stink about it. I was worried about the reverse happening and it just getting worse. It didn't get worse. It was the same situation as yesterday.

I knew that was probably going to be the case. Like I said yesterday, I was trying to be prepared today on what I could do within my control to manage it.

When you are out there and this stuff is happening, I can't affect anybody else. The only thing I can do is just be more prepared, and I have felt more prepared today. I was ready for it, and whatever was coming my way, I was just going to handle it as it was.

**Q. And your corn field comment after the race about buying a corn field, I mean, I know that they do grow corn in Tennessee, but not quite like in Iowa. But just the fact that this part of the country has done so well for you, and also, you came up driving go-karts at New**

**Castle in Indiana in the Midwest. The whole midwestern thing really works for you.**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Bruce, I'm here to invest; okay? I'm ready. I'm going to buy some corn fields. I'm going to start producing for the country and doing my part. It seems like the right thing to do at this point with all the years I've spent here. I agree with you.

I really like Iowa. It's actually a great little place. It's not super busy out here, but it feels like a big event this weekend is what I'll say. I think Hy-Vee has done a tremendous job at making this a destination.

I like to say it's the Field of Dreams of racing. It really is. It's a cool place to come and visit and spend a weekend, and Hy-Vee has made it an event. So it's only gotten better from the first time I've been here.

Yeah, I'm going to partner with -- I'm not even going to say it. I'm going to get myself in trouble. But, yeah, maybe.

**Q. To kind of differentiate this race from yesterday's race, would you rather see it be 300 laps to where it's a little bit different procedurally, or are you fine with it staying two 250s?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I don't think that's going to change the show. I almost think -- gosh, I mean, whatever you say it's going to be unpopular. I almost think you could put a little downforce on the cars again. I'll just say it. I'll say it.

I don't want anyone to change it. I'm pretty happy with it the way it is, but if you really want to help the show, I think you put some more downforce back on the cars. It gets strung out pretty fast here, which is fun. I love it. As a race car driver, it's a good formula. I would just put more horsepower, make them dig even more. That would be my request.

But if you are trying to appease people, you could probably put a little bit more downforce back on, close it up, and you would still get that degradation on the sort of back one-third of a stint, but just keep the group compressed a little bit longer into a stint is what I think we could do to maybe improve the show, if that's what we're looking to do.

**Q. Or have one of them be a nice race?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I'm never against a night race. I would run every race as a night race if it was my decision.

**Q. Before the race weekend, it was my impression a lot of talk about tire degradation. So how was the**

**whole weekend summarized with the tire situation?  
Was it worse? Was it bad?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It was slightly worse, yeah, for degradation. And by worse I don't mean in a bad way. There just was more. I think naturally there was more.

Every year you come here and the track is a little bit older, you're always going to experience slightly more. It wasn't night and day different to last year. I would say it's slightly more, but not night and day. Pretty similar race.

**Q. (Off microphone).**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Oh, yeah, no, no, no. I mean, the tire is strong and structurally great. There's nothing wrong with that.

When it wears out, you just run a little bit slower, but it was very similar it last year. I would say you just have a tiny year-over-year increase.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations. Josef Newgarden driving the No. 2 Hitachi Team Penske Chevrolet, now a six-time winner here at Iowa.

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