

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Saturday, August 26, 2023

**Josef Newgarden**

**Conor Daly**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up practice for tomorrow's race, Conor Daly will join us momentarily, and Josef Newgarden has joined us, winner of the last three races here. Quickest in the first practice session.

Nice start to the weekend. Maybe somewhat expected given the success you've had here at the track.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, it was a good start, I guess. I wasn't super, super comfy, but I can't complain. I was just happy we get a session in, right? I think earlier today it looked like we weren't going to run at all, looking at the weather. Thankfully we got a little break. We were able to get some preparation, at least a feeling of what the car is doing. Even the High-Line stuff was certainly useful.

Going to try to put that to use tonight and make sure we come up with a good game plan tomorrow. Like I said, I don't think we're exactly where we need to be. I think we have information to make it better on the PPG car. I think Team Chevy is going to be exactly where we want to be tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Josef, do you know how many laps you got a chance to run on the alternate tire?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Not many. I think I did five to eight, maybe 10. That's when the yellow came out. I was on the back end of the session. I missed some of mine.

Will get a lot longer run in on him. I got a lot of feedback from him. I think we have data to look at. Less on my car, but more on the others.

**Q. Do you have a sense yet of what we might be looking at as an optimal stint or you still have to figure that out?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: They didn't seem wildly different.

That's my intuition. Hard to say until we do it for real. We're all going to find out together in the race.

But I think off the limited amount of data we have, I don't know that there's going to be a big difference between them. With that, it's not going to give a lot of preference I think is the answer.

**Q. You don't anticipate this to be a super crazy strategy shift in how you or your team approaches this race?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Not based off that, no. Maybe it will be different tomorrow, but I don't think so, no.

**Q. Obviously your track record speaks for itself. How important is it for you being within striking distance of Alex with three races to go to really capitalize on the track where you've historically had success?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I feel like if we were in a fencing match, he's like on the other side of the room. I'm very far from striking distance.

But we are in the fight. It is possible. You never know in INDYCAR. Things change very quickly in this championship.

I think for us, just got to do the best job we can. That's always our focus when we go into a weekend. We're trying to maximize every individual weekend by itself.

The chips are going to fall where they fall. I think we've got a great opportunity here to put a good race together, then we'll come out of here, assess, see what we can do on the last two events.

**Q. The success here and on ovals, with a win here, you would join A.J. Foyt as the only two drivers to win six straight on ovals. What is the significance of being in such rarefied air?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I don't know. I'm not sure if anyone really cares. I don't really think on it much. I enjoy statistics within motorsports, there's no doubt. I'm aware of what we've done as a team, what we've done in the 2 car.



I'm not sure how much weight other people put into it.

That's why I don't really focus on it. For me, a win is a win. They're difficult to come by in INDYCAR. Doesn't matter where you are. If you're here at World Wide Technology Raceway, the Indy 500, Long Beach, St. Pete, it doesn't matter, they're all difficult to win races.

I think you cherish each and every one of them regardless of where they come.

**Q. Your thoughts on the effort INDYCAR did to get as complete a weekend as possible, including a practice, High-Line session and a qualifying?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I mean, I think INDYCAR has done a great job of just giving us the maximum amount of time. It was really great, I really assumed that we weren't going to do anything today. We were going to show up tomorrow, get a little session in, a little practice, go straight into the race.

The fact they let us run as long as we did tonight, we're still going to qualify before the race tomorrow, it's going to be a complete weekend through a through. For the adversity they went through, they did about the best they could.

**Q. Does the alternate tire add the variable tomorrow that could make this more wide open?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It is definitely a variable. It's hard to say exactly how much they're going to add into the mix of the race. Just based off tonight, I don't know that it's going to be a huge difference maker.

I think you got to stay open to it and make sure you're ready for it to be a bigger factor than maybe you would realize.

I think fuel mileage is always a big deal here. If you get into the event if there's people on mixed strategies, there's going to create a lot of racing opportunity. If people utilize the second lane like last year, that creates a lot of racing opportunity, too. We'll have to see if that takes place.

**Q. You're going to qualify at 10 in the morning. I don't know what the temperature will be. I think it's going to be a lot hotter during the race at 2:30. What kind of changes do you think you're going to see?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: We did a couple Q sims tonight. How relevant will they be is certainly a great debate. It is going to be different in the morning. Track temperature will be different.

We're going to try to make our best guess on how tonight's performance reflects into tomorrow and what we need to take from it.

I think we've got a little idea of what the car's doing. It was a crammed session. There's just a lot you had to achieve. Typically, if this weekend would have flowed more normally, we would have focused just kind of on the pure qualifying part of the car in practice one, then we could have focused on the race car in practice two.

In this one we had to really get everything. It made it limited on what we could find out in qualifying trim. But we have an idea. I hope we get it right tomorrow. It's just very difficult to judge it correctly, especially when you're going up very different time slots like you talked about.

THE MODERATOR: Josef, we'll cut you loose. Team Penske, three of the top four in practice today.

Joined now by the driver eighth quickest in the session, Conor Daly, Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing.

Conor, your thoughts on a good start for you and the team on the weekend?

CONOR DALY: Yeah, thank you. I love this track. It's a great track. Man, I wish we were racing here at night, but that's... It is what it is. Just thankful that we got it dry. Appreciate INDYCAR and the track just getting it dry. For me, it would have been my worst nightmare going into qualifying.

My first run out there was not fast. But putting together a few pieces of information and trying to adjust my style, we figured it out.

I honestly am kind of a little bit surprised we were that fast, but it felt really good. So I can't complain.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Conor.

**Q. I don't know if it was surprise or excitement, happiness of the session you put up, what could you tell us about what you came away from that session feeling like?**

CONOR DALY: The thing I was coming away with most is we were on a 25.0. I had a huge moment out of four. It's there. We're not off by a lot.

It's literally a thrash. Like the whole session, you're like, What do we do now? Try this. How does that feel? I have no idea. I think we should do it again. Instead of making changes, Let me go out and again and let me just drive. I

think that benefited me quite a lot.

There's not many drivers who could, like, really actually attest to this, but the differences between programs, just how these cars can feel, there's such a wide range of setups you could run on these cars that it's mind-blowing you can still end up with a field as close as we can be.

For me, it's something that I had to get used to, to something I'm still getting used to, something again I really wish I had a second practice session.

I definitely can't have all my dreams come true in one day. We're going to work tomorrow and see what happens. But I definitely don't feel like we're starting in a bad place at all.

**Q. It might feel new, but do you feel comfortable in this car with this setup?**

CONOR DALY: Yeah, I mean, I'm comfortable, yeah. Everyone is so good that you have to be, like, uncomfortable the whole time, right? But, like, if you do that without even knowing what's underneath you yet, that's not responsible, right? Like, I think I'll get there by lap 140 of the race, you know what I mean? That's something you kind of pick up as we go.

It's something that here, in my experience, no matter what team I've driven for, if we're all right in practice, we've always been okay in the race, too. That is actually an encouraging factor.

I know what I like here. I think no matter what setup we've come with, no matter what team we've come here with, we've gone well. I definitely understand this place for whatever it is.

There's a lot of elements to this car I really do like. Wow, this is actually really cool. But still, again, the one lap you try to put that together, All right, I went too far. Now it's like, Let me try to tune that in for qualifying. So we'll see what happens.

**Q. How much running did you get to do on the alternate tire? What were your takeaways?**

CONOR DALY: Not enough. These ovals are so fast. These cars perform so well on these short ovals, to change a tire, completely different tire, that's quite a change, you know what I mean?

I would say thankfully it wasn't too big of a surprise. For me, I was like, Okay, not terrifying. It's not all of a sudden you went out and had a ton of front grip and the thing was super loose.

I saw a few other drivers, you might miss an apex here or there to try to figure out the entry security compared to how much grip it's got at the center. For me, there was definitely a noticeable balance change and a noticeable wear. I guess that's the goal.

I prefer the primary tires, I tell you that. But that's what's supposed to make it exciting.

**Q. I thought these were spec cars and everything was the same.**

CONOR DALY: Oh, yeah.

**Q. Why are they so different with relatively the same parts?**

CONOR DALY: They're not the same parts. You could put so much into the damper program. There's no cap on what you can do with the setup, right? There's so many different geometries and spring packages, ride height packages. The dampers are still... You can build those however you want to build them. As long as it will fit on the car, do whatever you want to them. That's what makes it different. That controls so much of the grip of the car.

I could even tell you each car that I've driven this year has a different ride quality, like the way the car literally rides on the road. You know what I mean? Like, I know that sounds kind of crazy, but it's interesting.

This is a professional motor racing series, right? All these teams come here to try to be the best they can be. If you're not trying to be a little bit different, trying to be the best, you're not at the top level of motor racing. This is what they do.

I feel very lucky to get to work with these groups of people, as well.

**Q. INDYCAR went to great lengths today to get as complete a weekend as possible with a full practice, qualification session, and a race. Sometimes they would bag the qualifying and have a practice. That was important to you. How important was them going to that effort going to be for your effort?**

CONOR DALY: I will be sending everyone Christmas cards because there's qualifying tomorrow. That's super helpful for me. We want to take advantage of it, right? We want to do as many laps as possible. I think this team has given me a great car to drive, so I want to be able to use it. That's the goal. Use every session and be the best every time we're out there.

**Q. Your mom chased me down at the end of the session, Tell everybody they need to hire my son.**

CONOR DALY: She would say that if I threw the thing into the wall and set it on fire, though.

**Q. Talk about this experience. You show up on no notice, help Meyer Shank. You show up here quick as a bunny first time in the car. Tell me about this experience. What are you hearing from others?**

CONOR DALY: I just hope that there are still people that you try to reinforce the belief in me, I guess. I'm still the same driver. I know what I can do in the situation. What this Rahal Letterman Lanigan team has given me, we go out there the car is fast, I'll drive it fast. You know what I mean?

For me, that's all you can ask for as a driver, is a chance to go out there and perform. We got to do it tomorrow obviously. Today is just a practice session. Lately a lot of people have been judging a lot of things off of practice session, so I guess that's good.

I will keep trying my best to just do my job every day out on track. That's all I can do. I'm going to need a lot to be somewhere next year. Might as well keep fighting 'cause I'm not done yet.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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