

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Will Power

Felix Rosenqvist

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up qualifying, we are joined by Will Power (indiscernible).

WILL POWER: That's been the story of the last two years. One of the data engineers said if we added up all the time you missed getting in the Fast Six, it would be 2/10ths. At St. Pete I missed the Fast Six by 21 thousandths. What was this one?

THE MODERATOR: 39 10 thousandths.

WILL POWER: One day I'm not going to be that far. We had a bunch of poles by 21 thousandths of a second. It ebbs and flows. That's my experience over time.

THE MODERATOR: Is there a section of the track...

WILL POWER: There was not much left on the table. Like really, I know, every sector... The only thing I could say is a bit into 10 and the hairpin. You're in the going to see a chunk anywhere. It's going to be hundredths. That just shows how good of a lap Felix did, how tight it is in this series.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.

Q. How long did it take for you to nail turn eight after what you went through this morning?

WILL POWER: Pretty much my best on my last lap. Slowly got better and better and better and better. The last lap was the best.

Q. Was the car completely back to normal after the repairs?

WILL POWER: Yeah. All I was doing was damaging the toe link. I was so sideways, it bent the toe link. Done it three times. Just lights up out of there. It's been (indiscernible). It's much nicer. Used to have a big hump there. Now it's really nice and smooth. A really cool

corner.

Yeah, not what the boys wanted to do. I felt bad, but yeah.

You must have done a mega lap. That was awesome.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah.

WILL POWER: I was like, I did a good lap. I was like, That was good.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: It's so tight.

WILL POWER: Yeah.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: They make us work hard out there.

WILL POWER: You're killing it. I think the car must suit your style.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: For sure.

THE MODERATOR: You can talk amongst yourselves.

WILL POWER: What did you have for dinner last night?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: What did I have? Chicken.

WILL POWER: I had a steak. How is marriage?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I'm not married yet. Engagement.

WILL POWER: I'm not the best man, but I'm a good man (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: Felix Rosenqvist joins us, starting on pole tomorrow. The first-ever pole for Meyer Shank Racing. I know the team is excited about that, Felix.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, honestly it's a bit unexpected. I didn't think I had it. I mean, I know everyone is so on it here, especially considering Q2, I had to nail it.

I had a big moment out of five. I don't think I lost a lot of time but I was still worried. We finished quite early as well.



We were sitting in the car forever waiting.

So excited to get it. Just a couple of thousandths in front of Will. Means a lot to beat this guy for pole. He's got a couple under his belt.

It's tight out there. You got to be your best self every lap out there.

THE MODERATOR: In the last 16 years, there have only been two front row starts that have been tighter than this. That was at GMR Grand Prix last year and the Honda Indy 200 in Mid-Ohio in 2021.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: It's getting tighter, man, all the time.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Obviously turn eight, the change to it, has made it a little bit different. How do you anticipate that affecting things tomorrow?

WILL POWER: Yeah, it's made it nicer. It just made it so you can get on the throttle earlier, so you have more power when you're getting out near the wall.

Yeah, I keep testing it. You should lift a little. You'll crash otherwise.

Q. Felix, this magical start of yours, joining Meyer Shank, continues. What is the biggest change? Scenery, attitude at the team? Worked out to be a perfect situation for you.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, I mean, it's been good so far, for sure. I think everything has gelled pretty quickly. That always helps.

I found myself previously, when you have to adapt, it takes a while before you gel with a car. Yeah, that time has literally been zero this year.

I feel like I have the team behind me, for sure. Obviously a bit more of me pulling the shots, calling the shots this year, which has worked well. It's almost, like, surprising how I feel like we're making the right changes to the car. We follow the track evolution well. We're really on it on the stand.

I think it's impressive what these guys are doing at Meyer Shank Racing. They just gave me a package to be up there straightaway. Hugely impressive.

Q. Has career been a little bit like a puzzle, you finally found the spot where the piece fits perfectly?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: If you ask me today, yes. But you never know tomorrow. I think it's important to keep your feet on the ground, keep working. There's so much more we want to do and improve. Lots of things that you can always improve.

Yeah, we just kind of want to focus on ourselves, keep doing what we're doing. Excited to get to the ovals soon to see how that feels.

Obviously, second race of the year, so we're early days.

Q. Felix, first pole ever for Meyer Shank Racing in INDYCAR. What kind of pride does that give you that you were the guy who did it?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: No, I think it's awesome. As I said, the team has just been behind me. I feel like they believe that I can do it. That makes me believe that I can do it in a way.

Everyone's just on the same page. No, I'm really proud of them. I think they've been close a couple times in the past. Obviously we still have that win to get, both for me and the team. They won the 500 in '21. My last win was in 2020. We still have that to get that done again.

Q. They asked you on TV how do you convert it into a win tomorrow. You said, That's the big question. How do you convert it since your last win was 2020? How do you finish this out?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I mean, that's what keeps me up at night, trying to convert. I mean, my pole-to-win ratio is 6-1 right now. That's a big question for sure.

I think we're in a good spot, honestly. We feel like the car behaves really well. We believe it's going to be good on tires.

Yeah, I mean, the warm-up is going to dictate a lot. We're going to have to be aware where the balance of the car goes. Definitely a lot of people now trying to make that happen. Long Beach, historically, it helps to be on pole, for sure. That's nice.

Q. Does it mean anything more to beat INDYCAR's all time career winner for the pole?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, for sure. I mean, he's the guy I grew up watching YouTube videos of. Was it in Australia, Surfers Paradise? Me and Mattias, my media guy, we spent hours watching this guy. It's pretty cool to be up here and beat him a couple of thousandths.



Q. (No microphone.)

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Oh, yeah, for sure. He's the man.

I watched a lot of onboard. I was fascinated seeing what different guys can do. Will is definitely one of the guys that can string a lap together, so...

WILL POWER: That's right (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: Since the start of INDYCAR's knockout qualifying, the Firestone Fast Six format, that is the tightest front row on a street course as you go back to 2008 when that program started.

Q. Felix, for a track like Long Beach, how important is it to get the technicality aspect?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Sorry, can you repeat that?

Q. How important is it to (indiscernible) to get the circuit, especially with turn eight being so different and more unique?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I feel like it's just an ever-changing game out there. When you see guys like Will, Scott, I feel like those guys just had to adapt every year because the level just gets higher and higher. If you do, like, a 9 out of 10 lap, you don't even make it.

It's just a lot of pressure and a lot of focus to do that lap every time. Yeah, I think you have to be hard on yourself and just be better every time. That's what I'm trying to do.

Q. We have seen continual opposite lock seemingly corner by corner practice and qualifying. You describe why we are getting so much of that. Is it tire, track, both?

WILL POWER: I actually think it's the right rear we have now. You can actually get away with being a little sideways and not lose time. It's a more nimble car. You can hustle it more simply.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I think also the tires are pretty hard right now for the weight of the car we have because we're in a bit of a window here where we're waiting for the hybrid and stuff.

When you get up to temp... When the cars are cold, it's a bit icy and it's easy to lose the rear. I feel like they get there eventually. My steering wheel was upside down out of turn five. I don't really think I lost that much. I looked at my delta, it's still there.

I guess that's good for you guys to watch (smiling).

Q. Will, you come in here clearly having more fun. How much is that a translation into your speed or are you having more fun because you're faster?

WILL POWER: I'm having more fun because I'm going faster, honestly. I've been quick all year, even in testing. Everywhere I have been quick. St. Pete qualifying I didn't put it together. Went the wrong way on the setup. I have been quick.

Super stoked to be in the top six. I've worked pretty hard in the off-season. I've continually worked hard my whole career. I'm still working extremely hard on all my driving details, constantly improving and evolving. It's never ending for me.

Enjoying it. Enjoying it. I love the competition. It's tough extracting the most out of yourself. Yeah, you get to compete with different eras of guys. The young group will be around for another 20 year. Competing with the middle group, which is sort of Newgarden, Rossi. You have Dixon and myself.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILL POWER: I'm friends with all of them. I like 'em all. You do get pissed off with them at times. You just know that's how it goes. It's just tough competition.

There isn't a guy I dislike in the paddock. I feel privileged to race at this level with these guys. I feel like recently there's a lot of respect on track. There's a lot of respect for racing.

Yeah, man, it's a great situation to be in. You get paid to drive. Great community in INDYCAR. Very nice over here.

Q. Seemed like in a sense you must feel fortunate to get into the Fast Six because there's so much stacking up in the early sessions. Were there close calls for you? Did you feel like you were fortunate to get in because of the stacking up and traffic?

WILL POWER: There wasn't any in qualifying. You get a penalty if you do that.

Yeah, in practice it's always like that here. You just can't get frustrated. It's just going to be that way. I was in the pits most of the time (smiling). I didn't have to deal with it. Kind of helped, I think.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, I feel these days a lot of the

times you don't get a clear lap in practice. You have to go off the feel a lot. A lot of time on the stand you panic if you're P20. The car feels good. Sometimes that feeling just translates into Fast Six. Instead of changing everything on the car, which I think is pretty common.

It's all about that communication between engineer and driver.

Q. You talked about the new changes to turn eight. Do you see that as a better opportunity to get a run and move going into nine?

WILL POWER: Yeah, it's hard to say. Will people make mistakes because it has a bit of a weird, like, grip transition? Maybe, yeah. It's a very open entry. It can do like O'Ward does and just jam it in there, man, jam it in there. You're going to have to deal with someone after.

Yeah, it's become a riskier corner to make a pass, to be honest. Used to have a curb there, so you had to slow it up and turn later. It's a brave corner, I would say. That wasn't your question, but I'm just putting that in there.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I don't think it's going to be a massive change.

Q. Will, when you first came in you said you'll be surprised if Penske doesn't win the pole for the Indy 500. Have you already seen the Hundred Days to Indy script? I thought Kyle Larson was going to win the pole.

WILL POWER: Okay. Yeah, no, you don't know. I feel like we have a great shot.

Q. Why?

WILL POWER: Because we've worked so hard. I don't think we've left anything on the table. I've said that for the last five years. I haven't said we'd be on pole. I've said we have a good shot. This year I really feel like we've put everything together.

We'll see. I feel like one of our cars have a great shot at pole, if not all on the front row. I hope so. I hope so.

Q. That's not because you saw the Hundred Days to Indy script?

WILL POWER: I haven't. Is that the first of the second season?

Q. They write it out. They got Josef the win last year. Maybe they can help you this year.

WILL POWER: No, I did read the script. It says that I'll be on pole, so there we go.

Q. I won't tell Kyle Larson then.

WILL POWER: They had him in there as pole. I got in there and politicked and got it changed. He's NASCAR, sorry. I'm changing the script.

Q. You talked about the difference in the weight of the car at the moment, waiting for the hybrid. Are we going to see some of that translate into the differences of the car for the 500 this year in terms of weight distribution?

WILL POWER: The car we could say will be a long time at the 500 because they're a bit lighter.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILL POWER: I think my pole will be like 236.5 will be my quickest lap. Averaging in the 35s. Yeah, that's quick.

Q. With the other running going on at the circuit and the drifting, what is like coming out of the hairpin in terms of grip level?

WILL POWER: The hairpin is pretty good.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I didn't hear.

WILL POWER: He's asking about grip level out of the hairpin.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Once the drifting rubber is gone, it's pretty decent. Not if you get out there on the high line.

WILL POWER: I tried it for fun just to drift. I actually want to do a bit of drifting.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: On the in-lap you can make a bit of a show for the fans.

WILL POWER: We should do that the first lap of the race.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: They should put a cone so you have to go out there.

WILL POWER: That's the new thing.

Q. Will, what improvements do you feel you have made as a team and yourself in qualifying this year?

WILL POWER: Yeah, it's a couple of things. I think the

engine's better. I think Chevy did some really good work in the off-season. As a team, we've worked hard on street course setups and road course. Overall actually we were kind of disappointed with the season, even though the team won the 500.

Yeah, we're just stronger overall. I've personally worked hard. I'm sure the other two boys, they're working hard as well. I think it's all clicking well.

Q. Felix, what do you think you have brought to the team that has helped this turnaround for the team? How much are you relishing being the team leader?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I think it goes both ways. I think they've taught me a lot, obviously. I brought some stuff to them. Obviously I've been with two big teams before. There's some good bits you can bring.

Honestly I feel like we just kind of done our own thing more than anything. We have a tight relationship with Andretti Autosport, our technical partner. That's honestly been huge as well, to be able to bounce off ideas between the five drivers that we are with Kyle, Marcus, Colton and Tom and me.

Yeah, I think it's not a big thing. It's all little details here and there. Just a good direction and a good ability to be able to react to different track conditions and setup changes, which in the end is probably the most that we're doing back in the truck, is trying to get the car as quick as we can.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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