

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, April 28, 2024

Will Power

Linus Lundqvist

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Will Power, the second podium of the season, second runner-up finish as well. 30th career runner-up finish, which ties him for seventh all time with the greats A.J. Foyt, Al Unser Jr. and Bobby Unser. It's also his 100th career podium, which ties him with Michael Andretti for fourth all time.

Linus, get used to this position hopefully, Chip Ganassi Racing. Led four laps. First podium in just his sixth NTT INDYCAR SERIES start.

Will, tell us about the afternoon. How pleased are you with the podium here at Barber?

WILL POWER: Yeah, very pleased with the podium. Actually made a little mistake there in the race, went off. It's very rare for me. I was very disappointed in myself.

We had such a gap that I came back on. I couldn't believe it. I only lost one. I thought I can get back past Lundgaard. Lundgaard was quick, but I knew I had a bit more fuel than him. Just get close to him, go a lap longer.

But it was a tough race, man. Like, the car is so hot now, you don't get any air. No air comes in these vents, no air comes in the helmets. They got to do something there.

Yeah, it was full wide open for us the whole race. Serious pace there.

THE MODERATOR: Linus, obviously on a different strategy. You were coming up through the field towards the end. What was that like to be picking off drivers in a series like this?

LINUS LUNDQVIST: Man, it was amazing. I think for the first time ever I was not on the save fuel strategy. I was not the one being passed, which was nice.

Obviously we had a bit of everything in that race for us. We started obviously quite far back, in 19th. In the

beginning it was just about basically saving fuel as much as we can, see what we can do later in the race. The team kept telling me to hit your number, you'll reap the reward at the end. That definitely happened.

I think after that second to last yellow, as well, I think it was Ferrucci ahead, then me. When he pitted, we had four or five laps that we went hard and tried to stretch the field a little bit. That kind of made our race.

We came out with sticker reds, no fuel saving. Came out with a bunch of guys that had 25 laps on their tires, a bunch of fuel saving to do.

That was a fun stint for me. When the guys came on the radio said I was third, I couldn't believe it. At the same time I was passing people like Palou. They're usually high up, we can't be doing too bad.

Super happy and super proud of this for the whole 8 crew. It's amazing.

THE MODERATOR: Talk us through the restart.

LINUS LUNDQVIST: Which one of them?

THE MODERATOR: The very last one.

LINUS LUNDQVIST: The last one was okay. Actually for half a second, I thought I could give Will a run for his money there into five. Not really. I think these guys were obviously the pace of the field today. I was able to hold off fairly easily from Palou. I think he still had some fuel saving or old tires.

When the yellow came out, I wasn't too happy. I was happy with the gap that we had.

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

Q. Will, the engine change, what was the reason for it?

WILL POWER: Yeah, we had an issue in warm-up. They tried a few different things back at the truck. Yeah, the decision was made to change it.



Have to take that back and see what the issue was. It was tight getting it done, so yeah, all credit to the whole team to get that put in and get out there with no issues, nothing. Ran fine.

Q. Do you feel, based on statistics, you're in your championship form from a couple years ago?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I do. Yep, I know I'm going to be quick everywhere. Just like '22, I feel like we got very good cars, good engines. I'm in very good form. So yeah, we're there knocking on the door each week.

Just got to win a couple. That's the thing. I just want to win a couple bloody races, you know?

Q. Linus, you're sitting here next to a guy with 100 podiums. This is your first. The final restart, did it sink in of who you were following or was it too short?

LINUS LUNDQVIST: No, I think this kind of goes for everybody. Once that helmet puts on, it's just a car in front of or behind you. You don't really think too much about who it is.

The moment that I did have was when I passed a little bit of cars in that last one. They were telling me who was the next car in front. Oh, that's Alex. Damn, okay. Then we kind of had like 10 laps in no man's land looking after the tires. You're going to have a couple moments to yourself thinking, Are we really running third here? Are we going to end up on the podium?

On the restart, you're trying to pass the car ahead or not lose the position.

Q. Linus, I believe you started 19th, which may be the biggest mover of the race. How did you make up that many positions?

LINUS LUNDQVIST: Big thing was strategy, honestly. I was a fairly small part in this I felt like. I just basically listened to the team. I think I did a pretty good job on the fuel saving in the beginning which meant we could always overcut. We saved a little bit of tires when we did have clean air.

Like I said, it was after that second to last restart, we were able to push hard, stretch the field a little bit. When we came out, we were in a very good position. That kind of made our race.

I got a number to hit, and they kind of said to push as hard as you can. That's what I did.

Q. Will, a pretty redemptive day for you and Scott. How important is that?

WILL POWER: You say 'redemptive'?

Q. Yes, redemption.

WILL POWER: Yeah, I would say after this week I think Roger would be pretty happy. I feel like if we'll be like this every weekend, I think we'll have a shot if we get it right. Obviously an unbelievably fierce field of very fast drivers.

It's very difficult to win multiple races in a season. If you keep knocking on the door and getting podiums week in, week out, you'll certainly be in the hunt for the championship.

Q. With the fuel strategy, you both wound up back in the field, back in the pack, had to make some moves. How combative was it?

WILL POWER: It was aggressive. It was combative, actually.

The thing is, when you've been running at the front in very clean air and hard, you get back there with all that dirty air, how much the car moves around, yeah, you kind of are not ready for it when it first restarts. You got to get used to the car being very much on top of the road again.

You're also thinking in your head, like, Scott and I kind of racing potentially for the win, but we're in the pack. The risk versus reward, you're kind of trying to decide.

I think I wasn't aggressive enough. I should have worked harder to keep Scott behind. I didn't block him. With everything that's happened this week, I just didn't want to bloody have two Penske cars off in turn one. I just kind of let it go.

Yeah, I was happy for the team to get that, though. I was. I've been around long enough where you actually are happy for the team. You're not so selfish. When you're young like him, you just got to go. Understandably, because you want to have a long time in this series.

But I am excited to see him on the podium because I know how that feels for the first time. It's been a long time since my first, but I think that's cool. That's a big deal in this field.

LINUS LUNDQVIST: Thanks, man.

Q. Linus, what did you see around you?

LINUS LUNDQVIST: The difference was, like Will said, he was kind of up front running in clean air. I started back there. I was surprised when I got some clean laps. Damn, the car kind of comes alive.

WILL POWER: Like a stockcar.

LINUS LUNDQVIST: Yeah, it was unbelievable. As soon as we got some clean air, it was like, Holy shit, we can go fast.

Like I said, the three quarters of the race was basically save fuel, try to stay safe. People were kind of being very aggressive out there. It was just like keep it on track, try to save as much fuel as you can. Hopefully that will set us up later in the race. That's exactly what I did.

Obviously we had a couple of moments where they said it was time to go hard. We had enough tires and fuel to do that. I kind of set us up for that last stint.

THE MODERATOR: With the different fuel strategies being played out in this race, there were 289 on-track passes, which is a series record here at Barber Motorsports Park. 281 of those passes were for position. Also a record.

Q. Will, how much of a relief is it for you going into the month of May having had your good start to the season?

WILL POWER: Yeah, it kind of feels like business as normal. But the one thing that I'm missing is a win. That's really starting to add weight to me. I want to get a bloody win.

I was a little disappointed not to win when I have the chance like that. On the other hand you look at the championship points, and it's a smart day, another smart day.

Yeah, we're in a good spot going into the month of May. It would be nice to sweep it. That would be big (smiling).

Q. Linus, obviously with it being your first podium, going into the month of May, how much confidence does it give you going into the Grand Prix and the Indy 500?

LINUS LUNDQVIST: Sweeping sounds pretty nice (laughter).

But no, the month of May is obviously going to be big, doing it for the first time. You hear so much about it. Being able to participate is like a dream come true.

We're obviously here to do a job. Ganassi has had a record of having very good cars at the 500. I'm excited to feel that out.

I also realize it's going to be a learning curve. Like Will said, the field is so competitive nowadays, you'll take anything you can possibly get.

Obviously this is a nice boost of confidence. We'll have a week off, but we're back at it again for the GP and obviously the big one. Yeah, just back to work.

Q. I'd be remiss if I didn't ask about the lady, the bridge, that fell.

WILL POWER: Was that a yellow?

Q. No.

WILL POWER: Yellow comes out and there's a lady lying on the side. You're kidding me, there's a yellow for that lady (laughter)? That would have been funny if it came in someone's cockpit. There's a lady attacking me (laughter).

Q. Whenever you were coming up to that part of the track, did you have awareness it was simply a mannequin?

WILL POWER: I saw it. I knew exactly what it was. It was a lady hanging there. They're going to have to seriously get some good cables. Did someone run over it?

THE MODERATOR: Nipped her hand, I believe.

WILL POWER: Should go in a glass case, preserve the body. Mummify it.

Q. Linus, did you think it would take this long for the podium? What is it like to be up here with a guy that has 100 career podiums?

LINUS LUNDQVIST: Did you say 'take this long'? I thought it was pretty quick, man.

WILL POWER: What took you so long (laughter)?

LINUS LUNDQVIST: Yeah, no, I think everybody on this grid wants the same thing, which is to win races and win championships and win 500s. Obviously that's what I want to do.

Going in as a rookie in this tough field, it's going to be so tough. Everybody is so fast. I kind of got a little bit of, honestly, reality check at St. Pete realizing, wow, the level

is even higher than I thought it would be.

I thought it would take longer. Obviously to be able to get it this early, it's nice. Also I feel like I still have so much to learn obviously. To be able to do this, like, on a regular weekend and continuously fight for podiums, that's going to be the goal.

Like I said, I got plenty of things to learn. This is a nice boost in confidence and kind of proof that once everything's right, we can do it here.

Q. Linus, how do you evaluate the start to life at Ganassi? What may be the biggest challenges? What clicked in the race today?

LINUS LUNDQVIST: What really clicked was honestly strategy. That was a big part of it. I think me listening to the team, as well. The first three quarters of the race wasn't that much fun because basically at times we're going to have to give up this position and just hit your number, hopefully we'll pay it off at the end of the race. That's kind of what made it. I think as well we had decent pace, especially when we got clean air.

Life at Ganassi has been great. The whole team is so talented, from the floor, the shop, to the top guys with Mike and Chip running the whole team.

Obviously as a rookie, you come in, you're sitting in debriefs across from Alex and Scott. What better place would you want to be at? I think, honestly, even the fuel saving that I did now was a big learning thing that I got from Scott, who did it last week at Long Beach.

Kind of just proves that if you keep your eyes and ears open, you can definitely benefit from it.

Q. Will, the racing was aggressive. Do you think that's how the racing should be in INDYCAR?

WILL POWER: Yeah, absolutely. Everyone fights hard for every position in this series because it's just so tough. I don't expect anything else. Like, yeah, I mean, that's the beauty of INDYCAR racing. I think it's what fans like it. Anyone can win any week. Obviously can get so mixed up with yellows, which is exciting for the fans as well, as much as if you're leading you don't like that.

It's great fun. Like no joke. I don't think there's a series in the world you get more satisfaction out of than this series.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations.

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