

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Friday, May 10, 2024

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

## Christian Lundgaard

## Josef Newgarden

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up qualifying ahead of tomorrow's Grand Prix on the Indianapolis Motor Speedway road course, joined now by Josef Newgarden who drives this weekend the No. 2 Snap-On Team Penske Chevrolet. Josef will start on the outside of row No. 2, start fourth overall, and Christian Lundgaard, driver of the No. 45 HyVee Honda for Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing, third straight front-row start on the IMS road course for Christian.

Christian, just your thoughts, another front-row start at IMS. You've taken to this place pretty well.

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Yeah, I must say I'm a little disappointed. There was only one more guy to beat. We've done it before. We've been on the pole here. We've also started second. That will now be the second time in a row that I'll do that.

But I think as a team, we need to be proud of always knocking on the door when we're here. We're always competitive, and yet we're still trying to find different things and make different things work, which was an approach we took for this weekend because we knew we had a place to fall back to.

It's kind of one of those weekends where we know we can experiment a little bit more and try to improve the overall road course package. But we ended up coming back. That was the better car.

**Q. Josef, it seems like throughout the day, steady improvement. How proud are you to get in the Firestone Fast Six here today?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, it was great. I really thought -- no discredit to Christian, I thought Will was going to have the pole today.

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: So did I.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: He was looking really good. I think he's been sort of the benchmark this weekend. Watching him, he's been just on it. Looked really good in practice 2.

I think for us, we've struggled from the first outing. Actually one of my best runs -- best laps was my third lap out, and then we just went backwards from there, and then we clawed our way back into qualifying. I felt like we had a really good car. Team did a great job.

So pretty happy to be in the Fast Six. Happy to start in that second row. I think we have something to fight with, which is great for the whole team. We've got a couple cars up there.

**Q. Josef, how great was it just to get back in the race car and be able to go out there and lay down those laps, and also, how well is it going working with Myron?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It's great. We've got an amazing team, as everybody knows. We've got a lot of depth. For us, we pride ourselves in it's never one person. It's great to plug in some of these other guys that I've known for a long time, ever since joining the team, and it's also been great to work with Raul. He's on the Porsche side right now, but just a great engineer. I've worked with him a lot in the past. Really enjoy him. Myron did a great job calling today.

It was a little different, just a new voice in my head that I haven't had in a little while, but they did a great job, and it's awesome to be here at the speedway. Just so excited to be at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. I love this place. Puts a smile on my face every time I drive through the gates. It's going to be a good month for us hopefully.

**Q. Myron may not have a lot of success in this race, but he's had a tremendous amount of success calling races in the Indianapolis 500 with some winning teams. That's got to give you a big boost of confidence starting next Tuesday?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Oh, definitely. I asked him -- I

**ASAP** . . . when all is said, we're done.®  
sports

didn't realize Myron has been here 38 years. He didn't even look like he'd been here 38 years. I was like, you've got to be top of the list as far as current tenure, and he's not somehow. He's up there. He's top 5. But yeah, he knows what he's doing, and he's great to have on the box this weekend. So excited about it.

**Q. Obviously you've had a lot of recent success here with the finish last year at the 500, another good day today. What is it about this track that you really like, both emotionally and the car?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I mean, what's there not to like? We were rolling down pit lane today and I was telling my crew chief Chad, I was like, there's just no place like the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. No place compares. The history of this facility and the feeling that it gives you, it's very emotional. It's just a great place to be.

Certainly this weekend is different than a couple weeks from now. The road course is one challenge. I would say it's not been our best challenge. We've actually gotten a race win in the 2 car on the road course but only one, and certainly on the oval it's a totally different ballgame when you show up for the 500. It's great to be here. This is a good warm-up, everybody enjoys this show, and we're really thrilled for what's going to come in two weeks.

**Q. You talked about the difference in the voice in your head. What advantages and disadvantages might that bring with a new voice?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It's not crazy different for us. It was funny having different cadence today than I've had in the last seven years, but I felt like business as usual. We got pretty much our whole team here, and we've got a pretty deep group. Everyone is really close together.

I know everybody -- I've told this to people before, but I wouldn't mind plugging into any one of these cars that we have at Team Penske. They're great teams. Everybody is solid. It didn't feel that different. It was just a different voice.

**Q. Josef, following up on that, what processes have you gone through or will you continue to go through just to try to make sure that you and John are on the same page going into a race? I know this is a bit of a condensed race weekend than what we might typically have?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Thankfully he's really up to speed, just as we touched on. He's been here 38 years. He knows the program. I've known John a long time. We talked about some of the likes, dislikes of each individual,

what I'm used to hearing, what I like to hear and don't like to hear, but he didn't really have to change his MO from the beginning. It was like, just be John. We don't have to be identical to what I've had in the past, but here's our operating procedure. We already had a plan laid out for the most part. We've been working on it for a couple weeks now.

It was really just business as usual in a lot of ways, and we're not doing a lot outside of the norm of what we would be doing on a race weekend.

**Q. I know folks were called in the shop on Monday and told about the changes that were going to take place with the team over the next couple weeks. Were you surprised that Tim and Luke weren't going to be with you in May, or how did you take that news?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I was surprised, but it's not -- this isn't my team. It's Roger's team. Everybody has heard from Roger at this point, what we've done, and all I can say is I'm excited to be here. I'm so happy to be at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. You have no idea. I'm not saying that disingenuously. It just feels good to be here, and we've got the team. It's a little different than what it looked like last year but not that different. We're here as a team, and we're ready to go.

**Q. Lundgaard, this is a track where while you guys might have struggled at other places, this circuit in particular you've had very strong results, not only in qualifying but in the race the last few years. With how much of a streak you've been going on coming into this circuit, how optimistic does that make you guys to try to score that win tomorrow?**

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Well, in our minds there's only one objective, and that's to win the race tomorrow. When we found out that the August race wasn't happening, we knew that one of our stronger races were taken off the calendar. I mean, last year we swept both poles across the team, and the car is faster, but we need to be better on race day. We've had two poles last year but only one podium, which wasn't a win. It's pretty clear for us what we need to do tomorrow.

**Q. Christian, any major changes that y'all made going into this race or compared to last year? I know the cars are a little bit different with them being lighter, but I don't think you really had to do that much because you got all three cars in the top 12?**

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: No, at least on the 45 car, we took a little bit of a different approach going into the weekend, which we've done on most tracks this year,



honestly. Which again comes to the car changes, the weight specifically. Obviously trying to compensate for that, and it's been a direction that we've been working in the past couple of years, but I think we took a little bit too big of a swing at it, and we basically came back to relatively where we were last year with the modifications.

But the car is in a good window. We're obviously still always trying to improve.

THE MODERATOR: Josef, Christian, thank you for coming out.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.

