

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

## Will Power

## Christian Lundgaard

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Joined now by the driver of the No. 12 Verizon business Team Penske Chevrolet in Will Power with his third runner-up finish of 2024. His 101st career podium, which is fourth all time, breaking the tie that he had set at Barber Motorsports Park a couple weeks ago with Michael Andretti, 31st career runner-up finish, which ties him for sixth all time with Al Unser.

I know you're already thinking back to the race a little bit. Just your thoughts on a podium finish to begin your month of May here.

WILL POWER: Yeah, I don't know what else we could have done there. I think that was a very solid day from us. We tried the undercut. It was just a little cooler today where the undercut wasn't quite as strong. But yeah, we gave it all we got.

Once again, my boys on pit lane were gaining me positions. Actually at Barber, two races in a row, we jumped Lundgaard in a pit stop. But I'm lucky to have them. They're solid.

It was just a solid day. Just didn't quite have enough on that restart. I had to lift coming into the last corner, just had too much push. Had to lift, otherwise would have been an interesting battle into Turn 1. I didn't know whether to go for the inside or the outside but he made it very clear he was going to blow up the inside, so I kind of went the outside. Just wasn't far enough along to make it work.

**Q. All told, you head into the 500 now, and I know it's difficult to talk about points. Here we are in May. Now 12 points out of the championship. You're very much in the hunt with a bunch of second-place finishes. This is a decent start for you here this season.**

WILL POWER: Not a bad start. Yeah, good start. Only thing we're lacking is a win. That would have made it a better start to the season.

But we're there every week. We're there every week. It's there to be taken if we do everything perfectly.

I just wish I was a bit more like Dixon where some of them just fall into place for you. Yeah, yellow drops here and you start on blacks. You qualified so you got your reds and da-da-da.

Doesn't seem to flow like that for me. I don't know why. Every win I get it's just the hardest fought win. I'll take an easy one at some point. I'll take that, the next one. The next race. If it was an easy, give me -- and I got absolutely lucky I would be very proud of that. If I got just a total luck -- like the dude should not have won, he wasn't the quickest, but he did. I'd be like, yes, I'm taking that. I'm taking it.

**Q. In lieu of everything that's happened the past couple of weeks, have you become the steady hand at Team Penske because you've been on the podium the last two races, the only driver of the three that's done that?**

WILL POWER: No, I mean, honestly, it has run very well this weekend, even with everything that's happened. Everyone has got their head down. They're working hard. Yep, disappointed all that sort of played out. But focusing forward, not even thinking about sort of the penalties.

It is just one of those things. It was a mistake, and it happened. When you're a top team like Penske, people certainly like to really blow everything up and make a big deal of it, although it was just a mistake. It was actually a mistake. I know, I was testing when the software was put in. It was just one of those things.

Man, I've just kept my head down, tried to block out all the noise. Looking forward. That's my job. My job is to turn up every week and give my absolute best and be professional and race to the best of my ability, and that's what I'm doing. I'm working hard and trying to get a win but just being smart.

THE MODERATOR: Joined now by Christian Lundgaard, who led 35 of the 85 laps this afternoon, driver of the No.



45 HyVee Honda for Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing, with his first podium of the season, second podium on the IMS road course, third career podium. Congratulations on another podium here at the IMS road course layout. Just your thoughts on the third place here today.

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Happy to be disappointed I would say. Yeah, I think that's becoming an expression in the RLL engineering truck. Sometimes we're just happy to be disappointed.

No, I'm proud of the team. We qualified well at Barber, and I think considering how we handled Long Beach in terms of strategy trying to get too much out of what I think we could have hurt us on the pure result. Going into Barber, it was a pure strategy of just get through the race and make sure that we get a good result, and coming here, there was a minimum, which was a podium. We got it, but I wanted it to be a win.

**Q. Will, your engineer obviously handled double duty with the strategy. Faustino obviously did really well with that. Do you anticipate it will stay that way the next two weeks? Will he remain in that dual role?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, I anticipate he will be at the 500. I expect that to be the case, I think. I can't see why not. He did a very good job. Didn't really have any issues. He's done it for so long -- ultimately he has a lot to do with the strategy anyway. He just doesn't call it.

Yeah, I would expect him to be in that same position.

**Q. There was a moment during the race, I can't remember which pit stop it was, but I think you were behind Marcus Ericsson and it was either Christian or Palou was coming up. Did Ericsson hold you up a little bit there?**

WILL POWER: Yes, he definitely -- I mean, he's on the lead lap, right, I'm guessing. So there's nothing that he did wrong. It just happened to be in that spot. Would be nice if he had let me go. It's just not -- he's racing, too. If he's a lap down, yes, that sort of thing is very frustrating, but if you're pitting into where he is on track, well, that's on us. We took the risk maybe hoping we would jump ahead of that car. Yeah, that certainly stopped my chance of getting Christian. If he's on the lead lap, yeah, it's not on him to let me go.

**Q. You said again after this race, Indy 500, Chevy is good, you're looking forward to it. What gives you all this confidence? I know you did the test, but you've been saying that I feel like since the start of the season.**

WILL POWER: Yeah, I just know the work that we've done. I know that we've improved from last year. Put it that way. Just cracked in the top 12 last year, and we've definitely improved on that quite a bit I feel. I kind of think that we should -- and everyone else had something taken away with those push rods.

I feel like we should be right there. You don't know. Everyone is working hard, as well. Other teams can improve. I just know that we've improved.

**Q. Obviously not having two people on your team this weekend but still coming away with the same result that you got at Barber with a second, what kind of statement does this say about your team?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, I mean, the team just has good people. You can lose a couple and then the slack is taken up pretty easily. I think every stand ran pretty flawlessly even though we're lacking people.

That's just the way that that team is. It's got a lot of depth, a lot of good people. It's easy to move people around and put them in different positions, and they perform at a really high standard. Not surprising.

**Q. Christian, obviously we anticipate the pace of RLL here on the road course, but we're changing to the oval. That was a big topic for you guys last year. What do you anticipate whenever we get unloading on Tuesday?**

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: We are definitely going to be better than we have been the past two years. I think the statement that we're going to want to make is the last two years was the last two years. We are moving forward and we've forgotten about that, and we have made improvements. The question is how much better is it going to be.

**Q. Will, at Barber and also yesterday you had mentioned that you've been knocking on the proverbial door. At what point does frustration take over, or is it just hey, good points day, we're only 12 back heading to the 500?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, anytime you're finishing on the podium, it's a good day. It really is. It's a tough series. But yes, it is frustrating seeing that it's right there for you even on a restart. We're pretty determined. You can only do what you can do. It's just only so much risk you can take without having a bad day if it doesn't come off.

Yep, definitely on my mind often to try and win a race, but



also fighting for a championship is nice. We'll see. If you keep knocking on the door like that, I just know eventually you're going to get a win.

**Q. How important is it for you going into the Indy 500 having Takuma Sato as your teammate this year?**

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: He's won the race a couple of times, so he knows what he's doing. I think it's good that he was the last race winner the team had. He won in 2020 with the team, and I think it's good to unite that package. I think that was the last really good running show that RLL put up for the 500.

Having him back I think is good in terms of showing what the car really can do, but we have been out of the window the last couple of years, and a lot of improvements have been made for this year. I think he's going to be able to show what the car can do.

**Q. Christian, with TV you were talking about luck and how that really does play a factor in racing, and Will was just talking about it, as well. Can you kind of just explain how big of a factor luck is in INDYCAR?**

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Well, I think you create your own luck, as well. I think today on our performance we really did the best job that I think we could on the first two stints. I think we were a little bold trying to put on another sticker set of primes for the third stint, but the alternative was a very used alternate tire that we had to put a long way, as well, in the race, and I preferred the primary tires there.

I think the luck aspect is -- the question was how did you get around Alex in Turn 1, and I said, I guess luck. In the end it's a little bit of hit-or-miss in Turn 1 at the start.

**Q. You talked a little bit about the oval coming up with the 500. As far as your mentality goes, what's the biggest difference between a road course or an oval?**

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Everything. I guess we're going about 80 to 100 miles an hour faster, so that's an aspect of it.

But I think as a team, I'm going in this year, especially to the ovals, with the mindset of let's take what we can get because the past couple of years we've just struggled so much just getting pure pace out of the car. Now knowing that the car is faster, I'm also tempted to push it an extra bit, but we need the results. We need finishes.

**Q. Will, obviously you've won a 500 before. You kind of were talking about how you keep getting second,**

**keep getting these podium finishes. What does it take to win a 500 or any race? What does it take?**

WILL POWER: It's got to be a perfect day, man. I remember the day I won the 500 was a perfect day on strategy, pit stops, everything, no mistakes. There weren't really any mistakes today. It was just circumstance. Qualifying, little mistake puts you on the back foot.

Yeah, just some days if you keep working hard, it just falls together for you at some point.

**Q. Will, in football they have a term "next man up." Do you feel at Team Penske your bench is so deep that your second- and third-string crew members are probably better than a lot of teams' first teamers?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, a lot of depth there. A lot of depth and guys that have been there a long time. It's a well-oiled machine. You can miss a couple of cogs and it still works.

**Q. Is that why this latest bump in the road has been nothing more than a bump in the road?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, it's not a big deal. Not a big deal. It's disappointing, but just one of those things.

**Q. Christian, whenever you were talking about the move to the primaries, I think that's kind of whenever Alex got the overcut if I remember correctly. I'm kind of curious, was that more the balance on your car and what you ended up struggling with, was that more of the balance because of the primaries or was that also the combination of not having clean air?**

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Honestly I think we were quite competitive on our laps. I think the red tires were the preferred tires today, but going into the race, I think everybody was in the unknown. I think everybody had a question mark, is it going to be 50/50 or 70/30 in terms of one compound being preferred. Like I said before, I knew my options, my other alternate tires was pretty used, so the alternative was using those and hoping they would last.

I chose the sticker primaries because we were one of the most competitive cars in qualifying on blacks, on the primary tires. I didn't see a reason why not to use them.

But I think Alex was just fast today. He was fast here last year in May, in August. He's fast wherever we go, really. Yeah.

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