

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Sunday, May 19, 2024

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

**Scott McLaughlin**

**Will Power**

**Josef Newgarden**

**Graham Rahal**

**Nolan Siegel**

Press Conference



one-tenth of a mile an hour. Then it was all on waiting it out with Nolan to see what happens.

Unfortunately lost, it. The first lap I had a 29.2. We felt fairly safe, but it's never good to see anybody lose it like that. Nolan is a young kid. He has a bright future, as I said on TV, and I expect to see him back here and doing great things.

I've been there. Last year, it still stings. It's not much better being 33rd. I can tell you that. At least we're in the field, and we're going to go racing.

THE MODERATOR: Of course, Josef, congratulations. Starting on the front row for the second time in your Indy 500 career. Just your thoughts on a Team Penske sweep here to kick off this next couple of weeks.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It was a great day for the team. This is a huge result. We've been working for this for the last three, four years. We've certainly not had an easy time in qualifying and trying to regain the speed that we had lost probably since 2019.

It's just been a nonstop effort ever since that point. We hadn't turned the page, and I think today is really the first time we've turned the page. We've got the speed back, and it's a testament to the entire group.

It takes a whole year to find this. You don't find it in a week. You don't find it in two weeks. You have to take the whole year to show up with this type of speed.

Really proud of the team. I'm sure they're over the moon and excited for the race weekend. It gives us a good shot at going for this race win together. We're going to be able to work together hopefully and have a clean day.

But yeah, really, really proud. The Shell car was fast, and we're in position. Yeah, great day.

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

**Q. Graham, obviously you said that 33rd didn't feel a whole lot better than how you were feeling last year, but is there any sense of relief that came with today?**

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. As we wrap up qualifying ahead of next Sunday's 108th running of the Indianapolis 500, Nolan Siegel will be on his way up. Obviously the poll winner for this year's race, Scott McLaughlin, once he wraps up celebration down on the Yard of Bricks. Will Power will be up momentarily as well.

Joined now by Josef Newgarden, who will start third on the outside of row one for the Indy 500 driving, of course, the No. 2 Shell Powering Progress, Team Penske Chevrolet, 233.808 miles an hour, his four-lap average. Second front row start for Josef in the Indianapolis 500 as he qualifies for his 13th 500 mile race here in Indy.

And Graham Rahal, who will start 33rd, driver of the No. 15 United Reynolds Honda for Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing. 229.974, his four-lap average, as he will participate in his 17th 500.

Graham, let's start with you. Thanks for being here early, by the way. Just your emotional roller coaster that you went through, unfortunately, for the second straight year here.

GRAHAM RAHAL: Yeah, this time around was a little calmer. Probably just because I've been there before and done it. Similar sort of stuff. You know, you're sitting there in the hour. You do your first draw, and you can't run again the way the rules are written. You can't pull out of your box, so you're kind of at the mercy of everybody else.

We knew Marcus was going to have to run again clearly, and then we felt that he was going to have the speed for sure to get in. Barely bumped up. I think less than half



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GRAHAM RAHAL: Yeah, honestly it's literally not to do it again. We went to bed last night scratching our heads. A lot of questions that need to be answer and still do. We changed some componentry last night that we expected to go better, and we went slower today again, which is the fourth day in a row of speed loss.

Setup really hasn't changed, so it's not you can draw a direct comparison. We can see it in the data, but unfortunately, we've got to identify what the component is. There's not enough time even before tomorrow.

Maybe Tuesday, Wednesday we can really dig in and see what we find, but look, like I said, we're in the show. That's all we can really ask for. I thought early in the week last week our race cars were solid. I ran with these guys quite a bit, felt we were right there.

I just wanted a chance at it. That's all you can ask for at this stage, and we've got that. I know how much it stings on the flip side.

**Q. So you do feel like the issues are solvable before the 500?**

GRAHAM RAHAL: Yes, I think there's some -- there's a clear fall-off in drag coefficient on our car that we can see in the data, and I'm not going to go into how we measure that, but we have some pretty smart guys that have come over and are new this year. The one gentleman in particular, he's been at Mercedes F1, Ferrari F1 team, and he is really bright. He's looked into it, and we can see the clear fall-off and drag -- or increase in drag.

Overnight what all do you do? We put on our road course gear box, which nobody else I can guarantee is running. We just threw on some random uprights, and we tried to make it work are, but we lost speed again. First run of the day 29.4. Just not great. Yeah, that's the way it goes.

THE MODERATOR: Obviously joined by two more drivers. Will Power, who, of course, qualifies for the middle of row number one, driver of the No. 12 Verizon Business, Team Penske Chevrolet, who it's the third straight front row start of the NTT INDYCAR SERIES here in 2024. Fifth front row start in the Indianapolis 500.

Nolan, also thanks for coming up after your day today, driving the No. 18 Dale Coyne Racing. Nolan, we'll begin with you. Your thoughts on not making the show this year?

NOLAN SIEGEL: Yeah, super disappointed, obviously. I feel like today we did the best we could do. As a team we I think had the best car that we've had since we started this

whole event. Those were the best four laps I think I've done. It felt pretty maximized, and ultimately it wasn't fast.

Took a swing at it to try and find a half mile an hour to get to where Graham was at, and we were already on the limit of the trim. So I was going to go home because I went flat and did everything I could do. I wasn't going to go home because I lifted, so here I am.

THE MODERATOR: Will, we were talking about another Team Penske front row. Just your thoughts on that?

WILL POWER: I was pretty certain one of their cars would get pulled back at Long Beach. In the offseason, to be honest, I just knew how much work we had done.

Pretty cool to get a front row lockout. I definitely like second place this year. It's just every single weekend it's either second in the race or second in qualifying, so I'll continue that for the rest of the year. Maybe I'll get a championship, and that will be a first, so it's good stuff.

THE MODERATOR: That's the plan. We'll pencil you in for a second in Detroit next week or two weeks?

WILL POWER: Yes, and qualifying too.

THE MODERATOR: For questions for all five.

**Q. In the garage area, Nolan, crew guys and everybody are coming up to you saying, Great job, hell of an effort, everything like that. Does that positivity and that knowledge of everyone appreciating what you did and the applause of everybody out here in the grandstand, does that take away a little bit of the sting knowing that you gained a lot of respect from everybody else here?**

NOLAN SIEGEL: Honestly, no, not really, but I certainly appreciate everything that the team has done. We were in this together. They wanted it too. It's not like I was the only one in this. They wanted it as well, and they worked really, really, really hard for a long time to make this happen.

Big thank you to them. We were all in it together. They're not thanking me for doing a good job. Everyone did a good job. I know that ultimately the result doesn't reflect that, but they worked really hard, so super appreciative of the effort that they put in. You know, we were in it together for months. It's like a family.

**Q. Graham, you had those issues earlier on. Can you list what was everything that went on because I think I missed one of the two things. It was a right rear wheel**

## thing or what else?

GRAHAM RAHAL: Yeah, that was a different mistake. We were lucky in practice. I entered turn three, and I felt the car shake, and I thought, well, maybe a gust of wind, although it was a pretty calm down. Going down the back I always check the flag, so I knew there wasn't a lot.

Then I got to the apex of three, and the car started to move around considerably, and I just bailed out. We were lucky that we were able to kind of keep it together.

Yeah, I mean, obviously everybody has already figured it out, but a wheel nut was left loose, and that could have ended our day right there for sure or ended our hopes. So we were lucky to get through that, but aside from that, we've got a lot of work to do in the next couple of days to identify sort of what's gone wrong and the degradation of speed and performance of the car through the week because, I mean, legitimately Thursday, at least in the Honda camp, we looked pretty solid from what we could see.

Friday came out. Had a really downward sort of trend, and Saturday the same. I mean, even today went out first round. Like I said, it was a 29.4 or something, which is the slowest we had gone by 2 miles an hour over Friday morning same setup, same everything.

Doesn't really make a lot of sense, but we got lucky to get in, and we'll go from there.

**Q. Graham, thinking back to last year, you didn't get a chance in the final run. You had to sit there kind of defenseless, and it felt very much --**

GRAHAM RAHAL: It was the same.

**Q. I was just curious if any of that felt a little bit different in comparison?**

GRAHAM RAHAL: Well, look, it never feels calm. It never feels good. At least this time I got out of the car, and I could at least be on my feet to see the verdict of what was going to happen versus sitting there watching a tablet.

The way the rules are written for the LCQ, it's not favorable it on those on the bump. You can't move. If you pull out of line, you pull your time, you're not allowed to make the adjustments on the car that you would like to proactively. You've got to wait to see and then pull.

So you can change tires and put in fuel. That's about it. It's not a great feeling, and we knew Marcus was going to run. As I said a bit ago, we expected him to have the pace

because he has the whole time, at least of the four of us, to be there. So, again, then that leaves Nolan one opportunity to go, and that being said, you just can't run. He left with two minutes left. That's it. There's no time to go in to react.

Like I said out there, I've got a tremendous amount of respect for Nolan. I'll put him on the spot here, but as I said on TV, he may be a new name to a lot of people, but he's a name that you are going to become familiar with. He's won at every level. He's won at everything he's done. He'll be here. He's going to be winning here. There's no doubt about that.

He's young. When did I meet you the first time? Probably ten years ago. He was much shorter than he is now, but he's a great kid.

These guys will attest to it to. To have an accident midweek and to get the confidence to come back and just jump right back into the high boost and everything else, it's not easy at all. To go out there and to do what he did today and what Dale Coyne did, they found a lot of speed over the last two days. I don't think there's a lot of teams out there that can say they magically found I think over a mile an hour on his car, a couple of miles an hour on Katz. That's not easy thing to accomplish. Tip of the cap to them.

**Q. Nolan, obviously this is gut-wrenching on a lot of levels, but you're still also fighting for an INDY NXT Championship in the process of all of this going on. Over this two-week stretch running around, practice, what have you, what do you hope that you have shown over the course of this month?**

NOLAN SIEGEL: I wish we could have shown that we deserve to be in the 500, but no, we've had a difficult -- really the whole event has been difficult, but we've had a difficult couple of days, and we pulled through it as a team. We did everything we possibly could. I feel like we maximized the runs today. Yeah, I mean, that's all you can do.

I guess I hope that everyone saw that we as a team did everything that we could possibly do.

THE MODERATOR: Graham and Nolan, thanks for coming up under these circumstances. Thank you. Nolan, see you a couple of weeks in Detroit and Graham, 33rd Indianapolis 500 a week from Sunday. Thanks.

Joined by Scott McLaughlin, driver of the No. 3 Penske Chevrolet, four-lap average 234.220, which is the fastest pole speed ever at the Indianapolis 500. Second NTT P1

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Award of the season, 7th of his career. As has been talked about, front row sweep for Team Penske for the first time since 1988. Team Penske's 19th pole at the Indy 500 and 301st all told. Congratulations. Are you going to celebrate this for a while, I'm assuming?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, absolutely, but we have next week, but very proud of the crew. I think it's our first front row sweep since 1988. I think to do it now with these two boys but also Roger's house, and I think we're all really happy for Roger. It's been a tough few years, obviously, at least with the car speed.

Josef winning last year was fantastic, but a lot of the objective was to bring faster cars, and I think we certainly have, obviously. So proud of the effort.

Yeah, that was just a gnarly run. It was so cool, man. Really proud of everyone.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for any of the three drivers.

**Q. Pretty cool since 1988 was the last Team Penske was on the front row together. You've all said the team has worked hard in the offseason on your pace here. Can you maybe walk us through a few of what those things are, and did your new partnership with AJ Foyt Racing help at all?**

WILL POWER: It was a few things. The push rod was one. That was a gain for us. I was the only of the Top 12 last year that didn't have that, and that might be half mile an hour. Chevy worked hard in the offseason. That was gain. All the other little details we did, including working with Foyt was a little bit of it.

**Q. Either of you guys, anything to add?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It's not one thing. Look, like I said earlier, we've been working on this for the last four years, and every year we show up we felt like we've put in as much effort as we can, this must be a turn-around for us, and it hadn't been.

SO when you go that many off-seasons combing every detail, they're bound to add up, and I think we probably were still missing a couple of things this last year. When you compile a couple new things with three years prior of just stacking little details together, it's hundreds of items. It's a lot. It's not there was one magic bullet.

It's a testament to the team. This is pretty cool that they were able to put -- look, this is what Indianapolis is all about is showcasing the talent of the team as a whole. It's

every individual. I mean, we definitely -- we're driving it, and it sometimes is hair-raising, but it is about the team and what they build for race cars.

It's a badge of pride for everybody in this garage that we have at Team Penske. They're going to be really proud of this one to have one, two, three.

**Q. Will, it was Friday at Long Beach. They brought you in after practice, and you were so excited about Chevy power that you guaranteed a Penske driver would win the pole for the Indianapolis 500. You even went one step further and said we might even sweep the front row.**

WILL POWER: Yeah.

**Q. Now, what was it all the way back in April that gave you that confidence that today was going to happen?**

WILL POWER: Well, everything we just talked about, the hundreds of little details that add up to speed around this place with this current formula.

Yeah, for everything, the engine was a big upgrade from last year. We certainly struggled last year against Honda, and just all those little things that add up. It's crazy. It just blows my mind how many things you have to do to be fast here.

To put it in perspective, if you put a standard Dallara that looks exactly the same as our cars and all the cars on the grid, it would be about 10-mile-an-hour slower than what we run. That's how ridiculous it is. There's so much work you have to do to get to this speed.

**Q. Your INDYCAR's all-time leading pole winner, but this is the one race you haven't won a pole in.**

WILL POWER: Yeah.

**Q. Something that eats away at you a little bit.**

WILL POWER: Yeah, I just keep getting seconds this year, but I'm not sure I'll ever get this positive. For some weird reasons I just think it's one of those things, you know, where racing Gods go, Yeah, you can have the pole record, but you're certainly not going to get this one.

That's just the irony of life, you know. Like I said yesterday, it's not the end of the world if I don't. It's just a box to tick. It's a good one. Obviously the race winner is much bigger.

The two days of qualifying is very stressful. You put a lot

on the line, and it's really hard to have the quickest car and the quickest team on that year. To put all that together, that's a lot of things that have to align, and that's very difficult because you see every team. There's one car that just seems to be a little bit quicker for whatever reason, but I have to say that our cars have been the closest they've ever been, so it shows the quality control that we have.

Yeah, second again, Bruce. I'll tell you (laughing), that's it.

**Q. For Josef and Will, I was just wondering, baseball analogy, watching all three of you qualify, it was like watching the Yankees in the 1960s. You know Slugger's Row? Would you rather be last at-bat or where you went? You understand what I'm saying? How much faster can you drive if you -- does it really make a difference if you know what you got to beat, I guess?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Oh, man, I think if you were going to choose, you would go last for sure. To Will's point, Indy is such a curious little place, particularly with the pole.

It is funny that he is the all-time pole winner and that he has not had a pole at Indianapolis. I think it speaks a little bit to this facility. That's why for me the emphasis really comes to the team because to put three cars at that level of speed is incredibly difficult. I don't think there's another team in this paddock that can have their cars stacked as tight as we've had them. I can't tell you how difficult it is.

There's always a little quicker car. One day your car is the quickest, and the next day it's not. To have them as close as we've had them is very difficult to do. It's impressive. It's very, very impressive. The team should be proud.

**Q. Will, is it likely standing here somebody shooting at you? What does it feel like to watch somebody else out there with that last shot?**

WILL POWER: It sucks, man. When you see the first lap -- as soon as I saw the first lap, I knew it was over. To me if I was going last and I saw my run, I would have definitely taken a couple of steps of rear wing out because mine was extremely consistent. My car never slid. I finished that, and I was, like, Man, that was easy. If I'm Scott, I'm --

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: We took three out.

WILL POWER: That's what I told Dale. I said, He went minus-three. You could go minus-three or four there. The condition was quite good. That's basically what we needed in speed. Minus-three degrees is around half a mile an hour.

Yeah, that was the benefit. He was quicker in the 12, and he was able to take that step.

THE MODERATOR: Scott, when you saw 234.5, what were your thoughts on that first lap?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Holy cow. Just don't spray it. Just wanted to make sure I brought it home. Look, we work really hard to get a really good balance in the Fast 12, and I felt like my best run of the weekend was actually the Fast 12. I knew going last was going to be advantage, and we used it.

To execute the way we have as a team, that's what's really cool. You see the time, and then it's all about just executing. After that your weight jacker and figuring out, okay, what was the car doing and what do you think the car is going to do the next lap. So you are playing with bars and weight jacker and trying to hold on to it.

Yeah, we all have been really working that this week and understanding it, and I was glad I was able to put it to the test when it mattered the most.

**Q. Will, just to piggyback off that last answer, had your rear wing been at negative three, would you have gotten pole?**

WILL POWER: Impossible to answer. My run was comfortable enough to certainly trim. It was very consistent. Hardly any drop-off. Hardly sliding even on the last lap. I don't know if the condition just got nicer from Ferrucci because we watched Ferrucci's run. It looked sketchy. I think he was at zero or minus-one. Man, it's just the circumstance it is.

**Q. If 100 is fully trimmed out and zero is like nothing, no trim at all, how close to the edge were you?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, I could have gone to 40 if you are using that spectrum. Minus-four, because he went minus-three, so you would have gone one more step. Minus-three would have been good. It would have been bloody close, to be honest.

**Q. You guys said that you all have been at this four or five years working out the details of things. Just kind of curious, with that Foyt technical partnership that's still relatively new within the team over the past year, how much did maybe that help provide a missing link, if any, to this?**

WILL POWER: It did provide just a little bit of information, yeah. It certainly wasn't a big chunk of what we have done here.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: It felt like it was a confirmation of a couple of things.

WILL POWER: Yeah. We weren't missing a big chunk. Just a couple of little things, as it is around here.

**Q. Then the second part is, I think -- I have to double-check this, but I believe that session started -- that last session started and the track temp was close to 130, and it dropped down to about 122 when Scott went out for his final run. How much does 8 degrees of track temp make a difference around here?**

WILL POWER: A lot. It really did. Compared to my run in the 12 to then, I just was solid, solid, consistent, hardly slid.

I think Josef even a run before was a little bit worse. He was sliding a bit more. That happens quickly. Maybe they should have the Fast Six in the heat of the day when the condition is stable if you want to be completely fair, but you know, it is what it is.

**Q. Scott, you gave it a bit of (indiscernible) today, didn't you?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Oh, yeah. Yeah, absolutely. We just held the (indiscernible) down.

**Q. This makes you the second New Zealander to ever qualify on pole for the Indy 500.**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I knew obviously Scotty had. I thought someone else had already. That's cool. Proud Kiwi, and absolutely pumped to be able to fly the flag. I've always dreamt about being in the front row, doing the front row photo shoot tomorrow morning. That's just a bonus to be on the pole with the New Zealand flag behind me.

**Q. I was watching you come into the pit lane and know that it had all happened. What's going through your mind as you are coasting that car in?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: You just want to get out of the car as fast as you can. You go back into the procedures and making sure it's all right, but at the same time you are looking around, and it's the first time you sort of enjoy and soak in the crowd. I felt like we had a hell of a crowd here today, around the banks and even at four and down the front straight. It was incredible can.

Just soaked it in as much as I can. You just never know when this moment will every happen again, especially at this place. As the boys said, it's a pretty weird joint. But then when you get out of the car, you celebrate, and we'll

enjoy this, but it's hard work next week to make sure we win the big one.

**Q. Then I'm sure I'll pass this on to two people in Cambridge tonight. Emotion from them being as well. That must run very high in the family. They've seen you take pole position at Bathurst, but this goes another layer again, doesn't it?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: It's a completely different kettle of fish. Bathurst is one lap. This is basically four and four good ones. I said to myself, you know, it felt like a shoot-out at Bathurst, but I've said I've done this many times before. It's just a matter of nailing it again. I felt like those two runs that I had today were some of the best laps I had ever driven.

**Q. Just quickly, Will, because I know it's been touched on, but you have said to me on numerous occasions, also on Zoom from Long Beach onwards, that this would potentially happen today, a front row shoot-out. Is this just sheer belief in what Team Penske are doing this year that gives you that confidence to be able to say something like that?**

WILL POWER: It was just knowledge of what we were doing, what we have done over the last four years and just a couple of things that went our way as well, such as a better engine this year and that push rod thing. That's just a couple of things that went our way that the Top 12 had last year and we didn't.

Yeah, I was going to be shocked if we weren't on pole. I was going to be shocked. We would have been really scratching our heads with as much as we've done. We would have been scratching our heads if we weren't on pole this time or fighting for it. We would have just been, you know, What are we missing?

THE MODERATOR: Scott, could you hear the fans cheering?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: When I turned the engine off and coasted down pit lane, for sure, yeah. Yeah, it was an amazing feeling.

**Q. Speaking of going down pit lane, I was just actually curious seeing your emotion in the car before you came down pit lane and all the craziness. What was that last cool-down lap knowing that's probably the last time by yourself before your celebration? What was that moment? What was going on in your head knowing that you just won the pole for the Indy 500?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: It's cool. Another thing I said to

myself before I went out, I'm the last one to qualify. How cool is that? I just went out and enjoyed it. And then, yeah, that last into four and what not, I was just enjoying and gave a wave to the fans for staying out so long. It was a hot day today, so appreciate everyone coming out.

It's just incredible. It's going to take a while to sink in. Super cool place to be on pole, but like I said, the big focus is next week.

**Q. When you made this move to come over here in 2020, I remember you talking about how challenging -- how competitive you were in that conversation with Tim, and here we are a few years later, and you are an Indy 500 pole winner. If somebody told you in 2020 that you would be to this point, I know you want to win a championship in the 500 race, but what would you have told somebody when they told you that?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I felt like I could do it. I felt like I believe in my talent and believe in my team around me. I'm very lucky to be able to drive for the captain to give me this opportunities. A big part of me coming to INDYCAR was to be a part of this race and to be part of the biggest race in the world.

I'm glad I came to INDYCAR. I'm loving every minute of it, and then to compete it with Team Penske and good cars each time has been a lot. It's been a roller coaster, as everyone knows, my Indy 500 experience. Ultimately, there's the only way to keep working and keep trying to get up the front, and bit by bit we'll get there, and this is just the start.

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