

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Thursday, May 23, 2024

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

**Scott McLaughlin**

**Josef Newgarden**

**Will Power**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'll continue with the front row. Starting third, he is the defending champion of the 500, two-time NTT INDYCAR SERIES champion, driver of the No. 2 Shell Powering Progress Team Penske Chevrolet, Josef Newgarden. Starting second, the 2018 winner of the Indianapolis 500, two-time NTT INDYCAR SERIES champion driver of the No. 12 Verizon Business Team Penske Chevrolet, Will Power. To your right on pole for Sunday's race, fastest pole speed in 500 history, driver of the No. 3 Pennzoil Team Penske Chevrolet, Scott McLaughlin.

Josef, how is your week going?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It's good. It's really good so far. We're one day closer to the big show, so I'm doing great.

THE MODERATOR: How is the car?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Car is fantastic. This has been a really pleasurable month so far. I mean, for the whole team. I was just having a conversation with Hinchcliffe. You can see every individual on this team has been really proud of the effort, as they should be. What they achieved on the weekend is not easy to do, to make the cars as quick as they are. This didn't appear overnight. Everybody that has been here the last four years knows we've not had speed in the cars. We've been chipping away. Last year was a big step. Got pretty close, but we were still off. I think this year we really turned the page.

Proud for the team. Everybody is happy and excited. For me, it's the opportunity to be here, to be in the race. It's a big deal to run the Indy 500. Excited to see what we can do on Sunday.

THE MODERATOR: Will, how crucial is tomorrow's practice?

WILL POWER: Oh, yeah, I mean, I think you just be doing engine checks, new engine. Not much for us. Not much. It's a funny place. Pretty finicky. The balance could go out. You have a perfect car Monday, a little bit out of balance. I can't see big changes.

I've been here where you're just throwing everything out it at this point. On Carb Day we're like, Man, I don't feel comfortable. That hasn't been the case this month. I'm hoping for a pretty straightforward day tomorrow. Just hate waiting for the race. This is the worst time, these few days. You just want to get into it.

THE MODERATOR: Scott, what is it like? How do you stay on top of things? You feel like you're good to go, but you never know, right?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, I mean, I think Carb Day, it's more you're trying to sort out your car, your engine, like Will said. I feel like we're definitely in a spot where we feel like we really have a good, comfortable race car underneath me. Just finalizing some downforce levels and a few things.

Overall, in and out laps are going to be pretty critical in the race. We'll finalize some of that, braking markers, whatnot. Ultimately it's been a really cool week. As Josef touched on, I think everyone is just really proud and excited to get ahead to the race.

Yeah, it's an awesome deal right now.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the front row for the Indy 500.

**Q. Last year, Josef, you said your car was similar to what you had at the open test. How different is your car now compared to what it was at the open test or first day of practice? How much have you changed?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: For me it's just a little downforce change. Basically fundamentally exactly the same as how I started really.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Same, same.

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WILL POWER: Yeah, I changed a little bit. Yeah, not much. It's pretty similar, just little details. That's just how this place is.

**Q. Everybody says you can win here from anywhere. When Colton was in here, he talked about how it's more difficult if you're farther back. Where you guys are, how much more do you feel you can control the race if things break your way knowing it is track position oriented?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I don't know. I'm not an expert around here, but I don't think you can ever get ahead of yourself. Regardless of where you are... If you're starting up front, you think you have the fastest car in the fold, you're starting in the back row.

I believe it's true nowadays. If you look at the current formula, you can win from anywhere. Anything can happen in this race. Can go great for the first 150 laps, then it turns. Vice versa. You can also have a terrible day until lap 150 and all of a sudden it turns. It is true that when you start up front, I think the opportunity to control the race is a little bit better, it's higher.

Having said that, as well, you just don't want to hang your hat on that. I think that's getting ahead of yourself. I think you have to be prepared for any circumstance, any opportunity. It's great to have fast cars, be in position, but you have to be ready for that to change at any moment.

**Q. Scott, starting first, you're controlling the pace to some extent.**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, I mean, the drafts and everything these days, it's a whole lot different to how it used to be in some ways, from watching races back.

I think you control what you can control. I just race my race and hopefully the cards fall my way. Pretty focused on just executing right now.

**Q. Will, you were talking about the wait to get to the race, does that get worse when you look at the forecast?**

WILL POWER: Yeah. That's actually something I've never experienced in all my times here since 2008. There hasn't been a rain delay. It's about time we got that. I mean, on the law of averages it's going to happen at some point. Looking like that's going to be Sunday. I hope not. I hope we just get it in.

**Q. Josef, the move you made coming out of four and**

**stuff last year, was that spur of the moment? What does it mean to you to have a rule named after you?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I don't know that it's named after me. I know it was published as that. In reality, it's happened quite a bit over the last couple years. I think this style of racing really crept in, if you want to date it, probably back to Montoya in 2015 is where it started creeping in.

It is in response to the style of racing that we have. The way we compete and the way the cars draft is very, very difficult to find an advantage. You can be at points just exposed when you're sitting in the lead and you have cars behind you.

To answer your question, I think last year was a combination of historical approach, but also reaction. I mean, I knew immediately when I went into turn three and I saw where Marcus was positioned, he was very tightly tucked behind me, I thought, Man, the opportunity for him to get back behind me before the line was pretty high.

I knew the rules at that point with the line. They weren't policing it. You had to use it. The response to change that I think is unanimously liked by everybody. We've all wanted it to change. It's good they're going to be doing that now.

I don't know that it will change the racing style too much, but it will certainly change that little portion.

**Q. Will, you said something about the little details to get to the point with the car. Can you touch on dampers?**

WILL POWER: On what?

**Q. The dampers. Can you go a little further on that to understand what happened over there that you are not used to do.**

WILL POWER: It would have been a very small improvement there. We already had pretty good dampers. It's just a combination of a lot of little things basically. Yeah, there's no one magic bullet here. It's a lot of details.

**Q. Scott, I heard you tell about the process to get into the pole position that you saw the videos of your teammates. Do you have a balance to know what is the thing that you want to accomplish with the car or is more have the confidence to know what way not to go?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Look, ultimately you got to trust yourself in some ways like what you want from the car, the



feedback you're feeling from the car.

Majority, 95% of the time, my feeling is different to what Josef feels or Will feels, to a certain degree. A little bit there you just have to separate yourself from and figure out what works best for you. I felt like we really nailed that down here in the last month.

Yeah, felt really comfortable. I did look at their videos, especially Will's for the qualifying over a Saturday night. Figured there were a couple lines I was taking slightly differently. I tried them in practice. It worked. Thankfully it sort of paid off for the Fast 12 and that.

When we're all so very close, very good drivers, we're all pushing each other really hard, you got to try to find that little bit. That was probably my process looking through that stuff, figuring it out, seeing what I wanted from the race car.

**Q. Josef, between the angle of entry entering turn one from the outside and also the fact that nobody runs up there, how tricky is it to be up there at the very start of the race?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Talking on the outside of turn one?

**Q. The outside of row one.**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I mean, I don't know. I'm not sure. I don't think I've ever started third here. I'm going to find out with you if it's tricky or not. I hope it's not tricky.

WILL POWER: It's not.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I love Will. He's my favorite (laughter).

We're going to find out together, Bruce. Let's hope we get through this start and we have a race on our hands.

WILL POWER: It would be amazing if you can make turn one.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I'm not worried about putting this into the atmosphere, but it would be hilarious.

WILL POWER: Into the wall.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Bruce is like, It was difficult to start on the high side. Well, I asked him, he said he didn't know.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Probably the best time to do it. Cleanest time at the start.

WILL POWER: It is.

**Q. Scott, how much of an advantage is to start on the inside of row one?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: We'll start out together, Bruce. I never started on the pole, mate.

WILL POWER: The middle is good, Bruce. You get the double draft. I'll probably be leading out of turn one. We'll see. Rossi will be P1 by turn one (smiling).

**Q. Santino was in here before you. He talked about the things on his car that he's using came from Team Penske. You say you're not using any stuff that came from Foyt. Is that correct? He says it's not correct.**

WILL POWER: We didn't say any. We said it was a small part.

**Q. Not their setups?**

WILL POWER: I'm running my setup from last year, same dampers, same setup.

**Q. The rest of you?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, exactly like Will.

**Q. Simon is coming on Sunday. He's going to do a tribute lap for Gil de Ferran. What do you think that will be like and what did Gil mean to Team Penske even though his time was over before you were Team Penske drivers?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I just heard this morning that he was doing that. I think it's really beautiful that that's happening. Gil, people have spoke to great length about Gil. He was a tremendous ambassador for motorsports. He was just a fantastic guy. Got along with everybody. He was an easy person to talk to for anybody I think in this paddock, someone to lean on.

For Simon, as everybody knows, they were very close. I think it's special that he's going to be doing a tribute in his car. I'm happy it's happening. Really cool to hear that this morning. I'm sure everybody in the paddock is going to be loving to see that.

WILL POWER: Yeah, I always enjoyed talking to Gil. Very technically savvy. Good guy. Very good guy. He was great to talk about the mental side of racing. Got to swap a helmet with him. He was always at the Penske dinners. You'd see him around at certain races.

Yeah, top-level driver. Probably stopped too soon.

**Q. Scott, you've worked with Ben since you came onboard to the 3 car. What has he helped you possibly, helped you get ready?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I mean, various ways. I think the way that I used to work with Jonathan when I first got here, then I got Ben in 2022. Both those guys are different characters in how they work. Ultimately it's just the fundamentals. I think Ben allowed me to sort of, regardless of my experience on ovals and whatnot, trusting my feeling, as I said before, trusting what I say, what I give feedback to the car. There's no sort of wrong feedback. If it's something you can't feel, say that. If it's something you're not feeling comfortable with, make sure I say it.

It's easy to be an open book with Ben. Very easy person to talk to. It helps we're very close friends. I've enjoyed working with Benny. Absolutely, he's got a lot of experience around this place. I think he builds a really nice oval car. For a guy, he's been box number one before at this race in 2019 with Simon, so he's got a lot of experience up there, too. Nice to have him in my corner.

**Q. Josef, a year ago today you were doing the same thing, media room. What has this past year been like? How have you changed since winning last year?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Feels really similar to me in a lot of ways. I feel a lot of respect for this facility and this race, this track. It's a tough day to get right. Everything has to in a lot of ways go your way. I don't care how good you are, it's got to be perfect.

We were fortunate enough as a team, as a group, where it just fell into place for us. We had a great car. One of the best cars I've ever driven around here. Made my job pretty easy. Circumstance-wise, the way it all flowed, it was our day.

I feel the same in that regard. I think I've got another great race car. Really excited to be here.

I had sort of let go of the fact that I was ever going to win this race. It's such a tough race to win, I think you had to be comfortable with that. I think that rings true for a second. I'm happy to be here, happy to have a shot.

There's nothing like the Indianapolis 500. I know that. That's how I feel. I feel the same way. Pleased to be here.

**Q. I'm sure the boss is thrilled that you're 1-2-3 going into this race. When do you turn off the friendship**

**camaraderie thing? When the flag drops?**

WILL POWER: No, it's interesting because the race starts, in a way, slowly. Not speed-wise, but as far as aggression. It really ramps up in the last 50.

I think the further back you are, the more aggressive you have to be to put yourself in a position at the end. It's a pretty cruise-y start in a way. Slowly work on your car, get in the first stint. Yeah, I mean, every man for themselves basically when it comes down to it. Coming down to the win, it is what it is.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: As long as we don't take each other out, the boss is happy. That's the main thing.

WILL POWER: It's a bad problem -- sorry, good problem to have. I know they don't like that. It really is nerve-racking for the higher ups like Roger and Tim to watch all three cars battle for a win. Tim has said it to me before. What can you do? You just hate to see an incident, but that he understands it's such a big event that it really is every man for themselves.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

WILL POWER: At the end, you mean (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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