

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Will Power

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: The now two-time winner at Road America, Will Power, driver of the No. 12 Verizon Business Team Penske Chevrolet.

A 34-race drought for you. The drought is over. You can move on now, right?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I wasn't sure when it was going to happen. I've been digging all year. Sometimes it just works out.

Long Beach I was leading by seven seconds. If a yellow doesn't fall there, I think we were going to have a pretty good day. A reasonable chance at Barber.

Yeah, very good strategy. Very fast cars. A lot of fun. Like, once all the yellows stopped, it was a very fast-paced race.

THE MODERATOR: You get a win and take over the points championship as well.

WILL POWER: We're working hard. We want to win the championship. I think we have the cars and the team to do it. Keep pushing.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Will Power.

Q. Not only are you back in Victory Lane but so is Ron Ruzewski. For him to have that strategy of the overcut, how brilliant was that?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I sat back. I kind of couldn't get Scott without using a lot of push to pass. I sat back. I knew I had a lap of fuel on him. I was making the reds last. My in-lap was super quick. They didn't really go off for me at all. I was kind of babying them. I sat behind there. That was a big in-lap. Gave me enough of a gap on Josef to be able to get up to speed on the cold tires.

Q. First time Liz has been to Victory Lane since her health issue. How special was that?

WILL POWER: It was very special. She was in tears. So was her mother. Had Beau there. Yeah, been a rough trot. It was last year we didn't get a win. She wasn't at a lot of the races.

Yeah, good stuff. Good stuff. Very positive.

Q. You mentioned your in-lap being extremely quick. You turned the fastest leader lap of the race. Can you describe the feeling of doing those two laps back to back so quick, and that's what ultimately made the difference for you pulling into Victory Lane?

WILL POWER: Yeah, the car was really good. I kind of came across something I hadn't been running that Josef runs a certain way, how he runs the car. I started driving like that, just using setup, and it really helped. Yeah, was just easier for me.

Yeah, so the car was phenomenal. I haven't had a car like that for a long time in a race. It was very fast.

Q. You mentioned earlier this year keep knocking on the door. The relief now that you're through...

WILL POWER: Yeah, we'll keep working for more. Like I said at the beginning of this year, I want multiple wins this year. I think that's what it will take to win the championship. We have the car for it. We have the engine for it.

You know how this championship goes: very tough group, no bad driver in this field. You have to put it together very well if you want to win.

Q. You're tied with Michael Andretti. How much does that statistic mean to you?

WILL POWER: That was the next one I wanted to get. That was the one I'd been wanting for a while. To surpass Michael, big fan of Michael's as a kid. Watched him win a lot of races. The Andretti family, such a big deal, such legends of this sport. Anytime your name is around those guys, it's a big deal. Cool to be equal with Michael.

Q. You'd been competitive last year, your first winless

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season in a while. Going into the off-season, was there any change in approach, mindset? How did you attack this year?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I just came in way more prepared like I normally am. I was just back to how I prepared for a year, which is constantly improving on my craft.

I have to say I'm a better driver again this year than I was in '22 when I won the championship. Last year was sort of a stall-out here. Not much I could do. Spending a lot of time at home, looking after Liz, making sure everything was going well for her.

Back to Liz helping me, like she is a big part of my preparation. She does a lot for me. We're back as a team again.

Q. Liz's issues affected you mentally. I assume the not getting back to Victory Lane was a drain on you. How down were you? Were you thinking about maybe this is it? How were you thinking about life?

WILL POWER: You start thinking. When that was going on, you start thinking should I be racing at all. If something happens to Liz and something happens to me, is she going to get better, what's going to happen. The doctor said this can come back at any time. Should I be racing. That was the thing that was planted in my mind last year.

You certainly don't perform at your highest level because you don't want your son to have no parents. That is sort of the thing you're thinking. Yeah, tough wrestling with that. Ultimately, yeah, if she wasn't getting better, I would stop. I would have to stop for my son. Simple as that.

Q. To go 1-2-3, front row at Indy, the team camaraderie has continued to build. Talk about the importance of that.

WILL POWER: Yeah, man, a great day. Obviously Indy was a great result for Josef to win it, but then also lock out the front row. I predicted that. I know how hard the guys are working back at the shop.

The whole push to pass thing was just an unfortunate incident. There was nothing malicious in it. There was no intent. No one intended to do that. Just habitually I think people press that at times. I think the whole field would have pressed that button at some point subconsciously in a restart. It just looked bad for us.

Yeah, to come back like that at Indy, then 1-2-3 today. Really, I feel like we're performing at our highest level right now. That includes Chevy. Chevy's done a great job with

the engine. I think we struggled a little bit last year compared to Honda. They went away, did their homework. So did we. Together we have a very strong combination.

Yeah, like Roger said, I feel bad for Roger, that whole thing that happened. Just one of those things. If you're a team like Penske, people like to pound you if something like that happens. Ha, ha, we knew that's how you guys are fast.

I know how much work goes into it. I know they don't even venture into the gray. It frustrates me at time because I know other teams do. But they will not do that just because of that brand. Roger won't allow that brand to be tarnished with cheating allegations.

We don't do that. There's a lot of talk around the paddock. I know we don't do that. I know other teams do because people push the rules. If I was a small team, I'd be doing it. That's how you get a slight advantage.

Q. You've been with Penske since '09. Where is the team at now compared to other periods?

WILL POWER: Like, if you take in sports car, NASCAR, INDYCAR, they're really firing. They're at their highest level now. The competition has changed, as well. You have no choice but to be at your highest level now or you simply won't win.

Just the car preparation, quality control. It's so detail orientated now to win in this series in particular, but the same in NASCAR, sports car. It's a very tough business. If you're not winning, you won't last long.

Q. Have Josef and Scott pushed you?

WILL POWER: I've never stopped improving. I've certainly learned off those guys. I've learned off all my teammates. The moment you think you're the best, you're going to get beaten. You're not learning anything. I'm constantly evolving as a driver.

I think the biggest step I ever took was '22, mentality, the mental approach. A big step. Something that I found and still use now.

But it's a fast pace, man. When I think about that race, it was fast paced. Man, this is seriously like no joke. Qualifying every lap basically. Yeah, good, tough group. Tough group.

Q. You talked about having to think about whether you should continue doing this last year. How close were you at thinking about hanging up your helmet?

WILL POWER: Yeah, in the off-season when my wife is sitting in hospital, we're just wondering what's going to happen here. She almost died. You start thinking, Yeah, I'm going to have to stop now, take care of my son.

Then after that also, like, it's a long process. Once they put the metal plates and all that, you have that infection in the blood, it can stick to the metal, come back. It's like what's going to happen.

Continual blood tests. You just got to be on top of it. If it comes, you have to be very quick to have the antibiotics reduce it, I guess. It seems like... The doc said it can come back anytime. You got to be quick to catch it.

Q. This was a tough weekend for you a year ago here. Was this one of the lowest points in the season a year ago?

WILL POWER: Yeah, it was a very stressful weekend because I left thinking that Liz was sick again. I left. She was looking in a glass. Actually getting in the car, had booked a private plane, because that's the only way she could travel. Get in the car, she looks down and says, Look at all the worms in that cup.

I'm like, Oh, shit.

Mother-in-law, I said, You have to stay here. We already booked this plane. Taking off now. I'll go, call you on the plane.

All weekend she's going back and forth to the doctors. Turns out she mixed some medications. Hallucinations. That's how it all started, hallucinations.

Stressful, yeah, this predicament. Should I race or not? Then you crash bad. That's why I was so I guess angry or just stressed. Anything set me off. Grappling with that.

Yeah, that's life. People have it way worse. I'm not complaining. People have it way worse. I'm lucky, very lucky.

Q. Does this season feel a little like the championship season in '22?

WILL POWER: Yeah, back to that flow again. Except we have to win more this year. It's a tough field. That's one thing I was a little cautious in '22 at times where I felt like I needed to push the envelope a little more. It's that fine line. I think Palou is the one that nails that perfectly of aggression versus risks and so on.

Yeah, I feel like as a package we are very strong, very

strong. You see Colton has incredible speed at times, but things seem to happen, which you go through when you're young. You know that guy's going to be pretty strong in the future.

I feel like as a package we're pretty good. Pretty good.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations.

WILL POWER: Thank you.

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