

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Sunday, July 14, 2024

### Will Power

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We welcome in Will Power, who led 50 of the 250 laps after starting 22nd. Simon Pagenaud-type numbers for you. Second win of the season. 43rd career win. First on an oval since Pocono in 2019. Back to second place in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES points standings.

Your thoughts on the day here.

WILL POWER: Yeah, I had a very good car. My plan from the beginning was to sit back and save a lot of fuel, just get the best possible number using the speed, lifting. In that gap, prayed for a yellow because I knew there would be out-laps. That would be when people would be prone to mistakes. That's exactly what happened.

Even if it didn't, we were just going to jump people by staying out. They come in. You're just faster. Jump a few people to a sequence, as well. Either way we were going to go forward. But that was the big one, getting that yellow.

I felt like we had a better car than Alex. Set back, saved fuel again. Went long. Jumped him over in that sequence. Good in out-laps. Amazing stops as usual by my guys. They're the best in pit lane. Don't have to take my word for it. Just look at the times every time. I'm lucky with that.

THE MODERATOR: You knew pit stops were going to be crucial all weekend long.

WILL POWER: Yeah, qualifying, pit stops. I made a mistake in qualifying in the second lap of my run.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. As you said, it was important to get the caution when you did. Even more important I feel it was the overcut on Palou. You have to give credit to the pit crew for that.**

WILL POWER: Yep, I definitely give credit to the pit crew all year. In the last three years, actually. In the '22 championship, last year. They're something I don't have to

worry about. I know if I hit my marks, it's going to be an extremely fast stop.

Yeah, the car was great. My engineer did a great job with the car. Doing the overcut, I was pumping out some fast laps while Palou was leading me. Then I knew that we'd probably have a lap on him. We jumped him that way, too.

Fast in-lap, fast out-lap, fast pit stop. Good strategy, good car. That's how you got to win in this series, and every now and then catch a Scott Dixon yellow (smiling). I need another 15 of them to catch up over the years. Any time I get one... hey, I'm owed about 15 of them from my early days (smiling).

**Q. (No microphone.)**

WILL POWER: If I hadn't had the yellows. Colton Herta said to me, Dude, if you didn't get caught out by yellows early in your career, you would be another 15 wins or something, 10 or 15 wins.

I'll take them every time and not feel bad. I'll be like, Yep, I deserve that (smiling).

**Q. Do you feel it's a resurgence, being involved in the championship battle now with only 35 points between you and Palou.**

WILL POWER: Yeah, I had a tough year last year personally. My head wasn't in the game. I was even considering if I should be racing at all because my wife was sick. It was just a throw-away year.

I'm back to the form of '22, and I'm fighting for the championship. Yeah, got a great group on the car. I feel like we have a great chance here. Going to keep digging.

**Q. Ryan Blaney won here a month ago. Scott McLaughlin won last night. Can you talk about what it's like to be part of the success that Team Penske has had here this year?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, we've had a very good time here for the last few years actually even though the track has changed significantly for the worse for INDYCAR. Yeah,

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it's cool to have Blaney win, then Scott win, then me win.

It's pretty funny that it played out like that. Yeah, it's a team that works hard. It's amazing the results that keep coming, but it's not when you see how they work. It's not like they waste money in any area. They run very lean but extremely efficiently.

I feel fortunate and lucky to be a part of that because if you look at it, there's only two teams that win championships in this series, and Penske is one of them.

To be in one of these teams, but for me to be with Penske, yeah, I'm very fortunate.

**Q. At the beginning of your career obviously this track was a little bit of a struggle for you. Can you walk through your process of now you're a winner here, and does it mean anything extra to you to finally get a win here?**

WILL POWER: It's funny because I was trying to win this for so long. Even last year I finished second. I think I finished second a few times before the repave, trying really hard to win. I didn't really think I'd win today.

You know how life goes, it just happens like that. Yeah, been trying to win this one for a long time. Stoked to tick that box. I've won a lot of races at a lot of tracks. When you tick a box at a track you haven't won on, it feels pretty good.

**Q. Second groove came in for a little while after the restart. What would it take to make that all day? Softer tires? Another notch of downforce?**

WILL POWER: I just wonder if we're just too heavy, the car is simply too heavy now. Then when we add the downforce, it overloads the tire. That's sort of the predicament.

I feel like if we were 200 pounds lighter, you could run more downforce, run a softer tire. There's a lot of things that would go toward being able to.

I think that should be and probably is a big focus of the new car coming in a couple years, is to knock a lot of weight. It's hard to, but I think they really need to focus on that.

Formula 1 is trying to do the same thing, trying to knock a lot of weight out of their car. If you saw the racing at the beginning of this year, which is the lightest we've been for a bit, a lighter gearbox casing and bell housing, it was pretty fierce, good, hard racing. It was a lot more moves

and closer racing.

I just wonder if that's what it is. Yeah, even with this package, yeah, maybe just a softer tire might just work with this downforce level. Just a softer tire. If it degrades, people go out. You can roll to the outside.

I don't know what the answer is, but we certainly got to do something for next year. Yeah, we went from the best oval race we would have all season to potentially the least amount of passing, yeah.

**Q. How gratifying or fun is it to win a race? You just kind of did your thing, it fell your way.**

WILL POWER: Yeah. Once I saw the yellow come out, I thought that this is very good for us. At last saving a ton of fuel worked for me. I've had a few races this year where I'm definitely going longer than anyone and then a yellow falls before anyone pits. You're like, Oh.

This time it worked out perfectly, which I had that feeling. If there's going to be a yellow, it's going to be through those sequences. So if you can go really long, someone is going to make a mistake on the apron, the out-lap, the in-lap, they're going to have to go yellow.

Yeah, that was the plan. Starting where I was, knowing how hard it was to pass, my plan is I'm going to sit back and save as much fuel as I can.

**Q. You mentioned the change in the racing style from last year. This race kind of reminded me of some of the recent races at Gateway. You really don't try to overtake lap traffic. Can you describe what it's like to manage the traffic?**

WILL POWER: That was a tough balance. Like, I was basically backing the corner up and just getting on the throttle really early. Every time I would come out of the corner, it was a big run. He would close up there, which you couldn't really do anything. It's usually when someone gets a big run on you.

Trying to keep backing up. Five to go, a bunch of cars battling and started really to back up. This is going to be interesting, but I did my best. I was keeping an eye on him and just trying to keep that gap to get big exits.

Yeah, it is a pity. Clearly faster than the group in front of us. You just can't do anything. You can take a bit of a risk. Two cars got by Palou and myself, lappers. You can do it. But if we ran hard, you couldn't. We were sitting back, saving fuel. You simply need a second lane.

If there's a coating we can use or something, but a second lane would like this race amazing, as it has been in years past.

I don't know if you can speed up the degradation process of a track. I heard they're going to resurface the whole thing in a couple years. Does that make it better for us? Maybe. Maybe you can start high. I don't know.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, Will.

WILL POWER: Thank you.

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