

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Josef Newgarden

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up tonight's Bommarito Automotive Group 500 with the five-time winner here at World Wide Technology Raceway, Josef Newgarden.

How did you do it?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: We had fast cars. I got to believe that was pretty obvious. It was obvious to me that our cars were fast.

The race had a lot of different variations to it. We started the race sort of bidding our time. We were trying to hit a fuel number. For whatever reason, that wasn't working for us. I don't know why. I mean, I thought we were really doing a good job. We weren't very good in that strategy for whatever reason. We'll look into that.

When the race picked up pace, I think it really favored the 2 car. We were able to use the second lane, which was the biggest thing. Once I realized it was usable, I started going, and then I think I taught my teammates too quickly that you could use it. They started using it. Then it got really tough to compete with them because they're just as quick.

It was just a hard fight to the end. It was really tough trying to get it right with traffic, time the pit stop sequences. Then at the end, if you ask how we got it done, we had a fast car. We were really good in traffic which is a difference maker. You can't ignore the final pit stop was a big deal for us. It is hard to say if it works out that we don't get that done. It certainly was a key ingredient to us winning the race.

Our guys in the pit lane, it's a big credit to them. They've been really good this year. They've had some good cars outside of Indy this year that haven't translated. It was good to get tonight to translate.

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

Q. Take us through the second-to-last restart. A lot of complaints it was slow or late. What is your opinion?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It was definitely late. I was trying to go as late as I could, which is not -- sometimes people go really early, sometimes they go in the middle, sometimes they go kind of late, and sometimes they go really late.

It's not that different of a restart I've done before. I've done a lot of restarts from the front. It's not that different from other restarts that have gone late.

I don't know that I'd change much. If anyone especially on our team wants to look at the data, you're going to see a very consistent speed.

What it looked like to me, when he stopped on the red, I saw the replay, what looked like happened is it went green momentarily before I went, just momentarily. I'm talking like half a second or a second.

If it's just that slight difference in timing, if race control goes green and I haven't gone yet for just a second, I think people were trying to jump, which we've had a problem with, to be honest. We've had a problem with jump-starts the last two years. It's a constant topic in the driver meeting.

If there's just a slight miscue there, I think people are very on edge on these restarts trying to get the run. It looked like it miss-timed in the back, at least with one individual, and that's what caused a problem.

From my side it's the last thing you want to happen at the end. I don't want to create a wreck. I was not trying to do that. That was not my intention. I don't know that I'd do much different because it's how I would do a restart.

I did the same speed. The next time through I just went a little sooner. It looked like the green going slightly early was the big miscue. That's my take seeing it from the car, just going off live. Yeah, that's how I saw it.

Q. Help me with the procedure. You were late in the zone, but you were still in the restart zone.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: That's not the rule I don't believe.



The procedure for race control is they're watching your throttle. When you commit to going, that's when they throw the green or they initiate the green.

There is a zone. They put a zone out every race. I was trying to go at the end of the zone, as late as you possibly could. It looked like there was just a miss-time there, so...

It's also possible, it looks like only one car really kind of ran into one other pretty aggressively, at least from what I saw. Maybe I'm wrong. It's also possible that was just totally fine. If that one car didn't have that problem, then we would have been all right. I don't know.

I didn't see the whole thing. That's what I saw with the clips.

Q. When you jumped him in the pit stop, tell us about your team.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I mean, it's critical. It's just a critical ingredient. These guys, they're so good. We've had some miscues, too. I think we were all pretty sad about Toronto. Toronto, I felt like we were in a position to challenge for the win. Came into that final pit stop, we just had a bobble and it kind of derailed our race for the last stint.

You come one race later and it may make a difference. It's a difference maker in tonight. The odds are probably we don't win the race if they don't get me out in front. I don't know exactly what's going to happen. It's impossible to say. We still would have had a shot. It's a big difference maker.

When they're that good, it helps you win races. I've won a lot of races because of my pit crew. I guess I'm just lucky in that regard that I got such a good team behind me.

THE MODERATOR: The green, you accelerating almost simultaneous, which is really standard restart procedure. The leader, you in this case, should not accelerate within the designated zone to allow the race to resume. That's exactly what's procedure is.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah. Maybe it was just perfectly timed. They have might have gone green. That's why I emphasized jump-starts have been a really hot topic for this series the last two years, internally at least. We're discussing it every driver meeting. We're trying to curb it so it doesn't happen.

I think that's part of what you saw tonight. I've been around doing this for a long time. I mean, last thing I'm trying to do is cause a wreck. I don't think I'd change my

procedure that much. I wasn't unhappy with what I did.

THE MODERATOR: The pace was constant, by the way. Never deviated from 80 miles an hour.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: If you look at the data, that's what it's going to show, is a constant speed. I wouldn't change it.

Q. Will was rather upset afterwards, even gestured towards you. I know in a team situation, you're all trying to do what's best for the team. How difficult is that when you have a situation where one of your teammates is upset with you?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Well, I know Will pretty well. I get that he's upset. He got wrecked out of the race. He's a championship contender. When you get run into, especially after the night he had, he had a great night, a fast car, he drove super well. He led two-thirds of this thing. Imagine how he feels. I get it. I get that he's upset.

I think he's going to try to place blame wherever he directly sees it right off the bat. He gets hot quick. I think when you calm down and look at it, it's probably not going to be exactly what he thought it was in the moment.

But the point is, he's going to be upset 'cause this is not good for his night in the championship. Believe me, the last thing I want to happen is for Will to get hit. I can tell you that right now.

If I go and sit with my boss tonight, he's going to look at me and say, Did you do a good job tonight? I want him to think I did a good job every single night that I see him.

I wouldn't change much from my procedure. It's not that different than what I've done in the past. I hate that Will got caught out in a situation tonight, someone running into him. It's not fun.

Q. Entering the race, pretty much 90% of the opinion was because of the extra weight of the hybrid, it's going to be a single-file race, it's not going to be exciting, follow the leader. It ended up being a record breaker for passes, lead changes. Drivers were using the outside. How surprised were you and how encouraged are you that the series can make this thing very good this season?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Well, we just did. We just did. I think you said it. This was a great race. To get two lanes working, it changes the game. It just completely changes the game.

I was shocked. I mean, in the middle when I started using it, this is a bit of a risk, but I have to if I want to win. If we're going to win this race, I have to get up here.

Our situation, doesn't really matter. If I wreck the car, so be it. We've had so many bumps this year, it's like it doesn't really matter for us as far as getting it wrong or right driving the car. I was willing to risk it.

When I got up there, it was just very friendly. Like I said, I think we taught some people in the middle of the race that was usable, then more people started using it. That makes it better. It feeds on itself.

I think the second half of the race was really entertaining because of that. Yeah, the package was good tonight. If we're going to come back next year, same car, it's what we need to run.

We can get other places right. Iowa was obviously tough. Think about the variables we had going into that. It's not just the car was different, the track was totally different. It was kind of a hodgepodge situation, right? I think that's fair to say when you look at it.

It's just a lot of variables for everybody to work through. I think we can get it right next year and have a better race there. I think we can have a good race in Milwaukee. I'm certainly encouraged it's possible. Same thing with Nashville. I'm not worried we can't figure it out.

Q. What combination of skill and good fortune when you went sideways coming out of turn two, you didn't get it into the wall?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Just good fortune. I got sideways 'cause I think I pushed just a little high in the gray. Man, I'm going to wreck this car. I was like, What an idiot.

I got sideways. Then it's like happening. I'm trying to correct it. It didn't really hit anything. Then I got the clutch in, engine is still going, no one hits me, we got going again.

I think it was just pure luck that we stayed off the wall. I got away with one is what I would say. I made a mistake and I got away with one. Really cool.

Q. Did you flash back to last year at all?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Similar situation. Like last year, it was kind of do or die. I knew we were going to lose the race to Scott. They were able to run a different strategy that we couldn't. The only way for me to catch him was going through the field. You couldn't run the second lane last year, and I tried to force it. I wrecked the car because

of it.

Tonight I was playing catch-up more than anything. Sitting fourth or fifth place, we were trying to play the fuel game. Wasn't working for us. In the attacking position, I have to go pretty aggressive if I want to get us a win. I pushed a little hard in that moment, made a mistake.

I was so thankful that we didn't wreck because I knew we could gather back. We had such a good car. We can gather this up and still win this race. That's kind of how it worked out.

Q. 1985 was my first Indy race. It was Danny Sullivan. I saw that spin and win. Never in my life I thought will I ever see this again. I was happy you were safe and didn't hurt your car or anything, you were able to win the race. After you did that, did you have to get the tires redone? Did you go in the pits immediately and change your tires?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, great reference. Certainly not as beautiful as Danny's. Man, he pirouetted. That was a really pretty victory, right? Mine was probably a little more clumsy looking. But the same. I never thought I'd have one of those, too. Very cool.

The fortunate part, why I got lucky with it, when I went sideways, went yellow immediately, right? I think I lost one position to Will at that time. I went back to third. We were all about pit. We needed to pit potentially. I was able to pit, get fresh tires. No harm, no foul basically.

Got really, really lucky with it. Was able to basically mess up, push too hard, then say, That's where the line is. I can just go back and know where it's at.

Q. How do you collect yourself mentally after a moment like that spin and reset to go again?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: For me it wasn't too bad. It wasn't hard because nothing was broken. I'm getting brand-new tires. I have the same great race car. Now, if anything, I'm more savvy 'cause I know where the limit is and I know what I can't do.

I wasn't worried to just get back on it. My we could win this race. I think we had the fastest car in the field, maybe a little bit quicker than our teammates, and they were quite good.

I felt confident to get going right again.

Q. Social media has that you guys are enemies with Scott. Scott said that's absolutely not the case. Can

you talk to us about what your relationship is with Scott.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I mean, I think it's natural. Everybody wants to find... I think a lot of people have wanted to pick us apart for multiple reasons this year. The good thing is that's all external. It's not an internal thing.

If you sit down in our environment, it's a really great environment, which is nice. It always has been. Same thing with Will. We just have a good working environment.

We work very closely, probably closer than any other team would be my guess. If you were in our engineering room, we all sit next to each other in a roundtable the entire weekend and we work together to figure out our race cars every single weekend. It's a great environment.

Yeah, I got nothing but good things to say about our group.

Q. I might be wrong, but did you change your helmet under the red flag period? Was that because of the visor situation?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yes, I did. It's funny, we talked about this before the race. I'm surprised if Scott didn't because Scott and I were talking about this. We both prepped two helmets. We're basically running this thing in the sun. I ran a full tint visor, as much blocking as you could basically. Then it got really dark because we had cautions and the red flag. We said if that happens, we should have a clear visor on a helmet ready to go and swap helmets. Yeah, that's what I ended up doing.

Q. Fundamentally that's an okay thing to do?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It is. What they classify that as now, because we've had a lot of red flags now, it's a safety issue. It's the same reason they allow us to have fans immediately or liquid immediately. They allow us to take tear-offs off the car. Anything that's related to safety, they immediately allow under those conditions.

Q. Did you just make that decision based on how dark it was getting with the amount of distance there was to still go?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, pretty much. We probably could have stayed. You can still run the race with a dark visor because of the lights, but you just have a little better clarity with what's going on with a clear in those conditions.

I thought we have the time, we might as well do it. We talked about we would do it. We were basically going according to plan.

Q. After this one, five wins here at St. Louis, back-to-back wins at the Indy 500, being claimed the King of Corn Country in Iowa, do you think you're the King of Gateway now?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: If I'm a King, King gets knocked off their perch pretty often in this world. I would never title myself that. This is the truth.

The secret to our success on the ovals has been our cars. You really can't will everything on an oval. I mean, you certainly make a difference as a driver. You have to drive the car, get the most out of it. When you have the best cars in the field, it makes your job a lot easier, a lot easier.

I think that's been the case for us. We've had incredible oval cars consistently over the last five, six years. We've just had great, great oval cars. Our road and street course package has been bumpier, just been up and down as far as consistency.

It just starts with having the best cars in the field. I think that's the difference maker. We've made the most of that throughout the time line recently.

Q. After what led to Will Power's wreck, any timetable on when you'll talk to him?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I'll go talk to him immediately once I get done with you guys. I don't know where he's at. He might be out of here. As soon as I see him, I'll talk to him.

THE MODERATOR: That wraps up the news conference for now. We'll see you in Portland.

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