

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Josef Newgarden

Scott Dixon

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up practice, we are joined by Josef Newgarden and Scott Dixon.

Josef, P1 in the practice session. What does that mean for the rest of the weekend?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It's always tough these days. It's a full grid, right? What do we have, 27 cars? A lot of people on track.

I'm sure there's individuals that didn't get a super clear lap, and there's probably more to be seen from everybody. You just account for that. I think we've accounted for that at other ovals. You'll see the same thing here.

It's encouraging. Think our car was really good. I was happy. Took some tuning. The tire was very different on the low line tire that we ran, then we went to the current tire and it took a lot of work to get it where it needed to be.

When we got through the first 30 minutes, I was super happy with the car. The team did a great job feeling comfy and comfortable. Yeah, I think Team Chevy did a good job, too, at least from what I've seen preliminarily.

Two opportunities for us to have a nice result to end the year.

THE MODERATOR: Scott, a little prior experience here, certainly the open test a month and a half ago. What's changed since then? Anything?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, it always feels different, especially when there's more cars. At our test, I think there were only seven cars. Dirty air was definitely more of a thing. The time management always through those sessions. We kind of missed a little bit of time, didn't get our second Q sim in. Balance felt pretty good. Car had good balance to it.

We tried lots of different things. 90% of them didn't do

anything. That's the way it rolls sometimes. Luckily for us, the cars ran off in a pretty good window.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Does it feel different, similar? Any of the old feel come become or does it feel like a completely new track?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: From previous years?

Q. Yes.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It feels similar. It's different compared to 2015 when we left. We had a huge aero kit, big downforce. You were pretty much just flat. Very different from 2015.

Q. (No microphone.)

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Exactly. We're way heavier. From that standpoint, it's completely different.

But I think it's still Milwaukee. Like, sort of the general traits of this track are very much there underneath the surface. It's just a different car. A lot less downforce. It's heavier, requires a different setup, different finesse. You got to look after things differently than you did 10 years ago.

It's the same Milwaukee. There's a preferred line. There's kind of an alternate line that's not great but usable. Yeah, it's a very interesting track. I think if we get some dropoff, there's going to be good racing, which I think everybody wants to see.

Q. Scott?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, I think Josef covered it all. Different car.

Q. (No microphone.)

SCOTT DIXON: Sure, just say I agreed (smiling).

Q. What should we expect in race one tomorrow?

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SCOTT DIXON: I don't know. It's hard to tell from these sessions. I think even from St. Louis, you didn't really get a great idea. Then as soon as the start, when people used that second lane, it was strong for the whole night.

Yeah, I don't know. I'd say in the low line run, it never really got any better, the low run. At least it didn't for me.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I mean, he's right. You don't know with these sessions. Sometimes you sort of get an inkling on what you think is going to happen, then things just kind of shift as you get through the race.

I think Gateway was a very surprising result. I was super surprised the way it raced. So I don't know. I mean, until we get through the first one, it's really tough to predict.

I know you want an answer, you think we have more of an idea. We get through the first round, we'll know exactly how is going to race, you know what you're getting for race two.

Right now, it's going to be interesting to see who is strong. I think you'll have big separation is one thing that I will say. I think you'll have cars that are really not good, like really not good, and you'll have some cars that are really good, so...

That's one thing I'd predict.

Q. (No microphone.)

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Who is eight and a half seconds? I was going to say... They're getting parked pretty quick if they're eight and a half seconds off.

Q. You just said it's hard to predict, but do you think it will be everybody stuck to the bottom the whole time or can you see it widening out?

SCOTT DIXON: I think everybody will be stuck to the top, man (smiling).

I don't know. Like Josef said, in that practice you definitely saw cars that were struggling. Again, it's a practice session. You don't know what sequence they're on, what tires they're on, so doesn't give you a great idea. Like Jenna pointed out, eight and a half seconds or miles an hour. Same thing, I guess (smiling).

There is a clear difference and that will create separation. It definitely will be tough. I don't think there's any moment you're doing a lap here and it feels easy. You're constantly correcting, trying to manage how much grip you've got,

how much you think you've got. It will be tough.

Q. Tire deg, marbles, could you talk about that a little bit. We saw Christian get up into the marbles. Pushed him up into the wall in turn two.

SCOTT DIXON: That's a weird one. Almost like he went straight ahead. I don't see how that happened, yeah.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Was it Christian?

Q. Rasmussen.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Oh, I'm thinking Lundgaard.

Q. What is the lap time dropoff?

SCOTT DIXON: The tires peak here I think for the first three or four laps. I don't know. It depends a lot on your sequence of where you are, air. You lose way more by following than I think the tire grip.

Q. With that said, it possibly opens up to a pit early, newer tires, better than older tires, but is that only for five or ten laps kind of thing?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, then you might be stuck.

Q. Josef, Will was telling us earlier today you told him at Portland that you'd be willing to swap positions with him for points if it came down to the end?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Look, what I told him, I said it's too early now. If it comes down to the finale, I've had great support from him in the past. Thinking about my first championship, 2017, he shadowed me the whole race. When it comes down to the very end and we're still in position...

You got to be really careful, though. This is not me being cagey, it's just the truth. If you start trying to orchestrate too much, you put yourself into a mess. I'm not going to do that. I don't think as a team we're going to try to do that.

Logically, you come down to the finale, we're in Nashville, we have a car that can seal the championship, I'm not in it, I'm going to have his back all the way, 100%. But we're not in Nashville yet. There's a long way to go. If we try and get too clever about the way we run our team, I think you put yourself in a bad situation.

We need to go out and do the job we always do. We're going to race each other hard, but we need to take care of each other, right? I don't want to be crashing my teammates.



When it comes down to the very end, hopefully we're in a position to seal the championship, we all want to see that happen, especially me. I'll make sure that we get the job done then.

Q. As strong as Penske has been on the short ovals, is there more emphasis for all three of you to help Will knowing you can put gap on Palou? If he wins, that helps him a little bit more?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, kind of the same answer. It applies to that question, too. Me running in a normal condition is helping Will. If he's off a little bit, I'm good today, he's going to know exactly why I was good today. There's nothing hidden there.

We'll go back and have a conversation like we always do. If there's something that he's benefitting from this, then he will. We got to run our normal program, try to win these races. Obviously our team wants to be in a position to win the championship.

It's not easy, though. Yeah, Palou could have an issue on one race, it closes right up, or he could just have two great races, like he normally does.

I don't think anything's a slam-dunk or simple. Just got to run our races and try to do a great job. Hopefully we're in position by the time we get to Nashville to close the deal.

Q. Scott, yesterday Kyle Kirkwood was telling us about how he apologized in a text for what happened in Portland lap one. He also said he felt like you wouldn't have done that to him, but that's just kind of how everybody races now. Like 90% of the field, except for you and Palou, everybody races that aggressively since Long Beach last year. Can we get your thoughts? Do you feel things have changed?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, we spoke today. Yeah, I don't know. It was definitely an F-U move. I explained that to him. That's kind of amateur when you're doing stuff like that. It's also how the series allows you to race. So I don't know what the answer is on that, to be honest.

In my way of racing, the outside, the white line, there's a wall there. But you just can't run somebody completely off. We saw the chain effect of what happened there. Then with Pietro, Pietro really had nowhere to go, but it was because of the 27 and the issue we had.

I don't know. I said I wouldn't race him like that. That was kind of the end of it, so...

Q. He said he went to race control afterward and said he wanted to have a conversation about this in the off-season to change it for '25. Are you onboard with that?

SCOTT DIXON: No, I didn't speak to race control. I figured it would be on deaf ears.

Q. Josef, how do you like the Josef Newgarden restart zone?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Didn't change. They're just painting it. There's no difference. If you read the fine print, there's no rule change.

I love it when it was brought up. That's a great point. Just to make it non-subjective. We get a gray-out zone, it's a little subjective of where it starts and where it finishes, right? It's a pretty big zone. You put a line, there's no subjectiveness. That's great.

I don't think the restart procedure needs to change. They've made some good changes this year, which were provoked by last year, the jumpiness that we've had this. We've had this for 24 months, this jumpiness on restarts.

This probably should have been done in the beginning. I just think it's a clarification more than anything, which is good for everybody.

Q. Neither of you were in the bullpen. One of the things that was discussed is NASCAR got a race in Mexico City ahead of INDYCAR. Pato is extremely disappointed in that. That spawned a conversation about where some places that INDYCAR could race. This guy would probably say Down Under. Where would you want to go race if you had a wide-open map?

SCOTT DIXON: Mexico (smiling).

I think that's a massive miss. I don't know how that happens.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I mean, you don't want to ask me. My dream tracks would be in, like, Japan. I'd be going to Japan. I love the country. I was sad I missed that era when they were running there. That would be on my list.

Going to Spa, old school tracks like that. Brands Hatch GP. The list would go on and on. There's a lot of legendary tracks.

I think there's some great stuff in the pipeline. I honestly

do. We have a lot of momentum. I'm excited about FOX coming onboard next year. NBC has done a great job for us, but we're going to be turning the page and having a new chapter next year. I think we should all be excited about that. There's more stuff to piggyback on with that deal.

I'm excited about 2025. We need to finish this year off right, but I think we got great momentum that can happen next year.

Q. (No microphone.)

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I've always wanted to race there. That's where I watched some of my very first INDYCAR races, Nashville Superspeedway.

Q. (No microphone.)

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Nashville Superspeedway? Yeah, I do. I'll respect their name. Not scared to do it.

Q. Scott, what are the conversations like for you with Mike, with Chip, about how you approach these next three races? I think that you are still mathematically alive. How would you approach if you find yourself around each other towards the end of the race, and swapping positions might be helpful for him?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, I think Josef explained it. It was pretty long, but I think he summed it up. So I would agree with what he said (smiling).

I think when it makes sense, it makes sense, otherwise you got to focus on your own thing. You always give your own teammates more room. You race them differently than you maybe do some other competitors in some situations. Does it emphasize when it's for a championship? Yeah, a little bit.

You just always hope that a team car isn't going to play a part in how that goes. If it's with the inner team stuff, then so be it.

Q. Gateway was such a great race in comparison to Iowa. Years ago at Phoenix, Scott, you were leading, caught up to Hinchcliffe, never passed him until he came in to pit. With Firestone's tires I understand the left side are softer and may degrade. Is that the same situation at Gateway?

SCOTT DIXON: They're two very different circuits. I don't know. I think there was a little bit of a hope with running the low line, which may help for tomorrow. Again, I think having good cars and bad cars, you're going to see that

disparity as well.

The problem is, Iowa, all the cars were pretty close to be honest. There was no real way to kind of get around, even through the last place one.

Yeah, I don't know. I'd just be speculating. I don't know what tomorrow is going to bring.

I hope there's side-by-side racing. I hope it's like St. Louis.

THE MODERATOR: Scott, you have a big number tomorrow, 400 starts. Any thoughts on that?

SCOTT DIXON: It's a big number (smiling). Maybe 400 more.

THE MODERATOR: To the next 400, I get it.

Guys, thank you.

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