

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Josef Newgarden

Scott McLaughlin

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Scott McLaughlin and Josef Newgarden. Scott, your thoughts about another P1 position here in 2024?

SCOTT MCLAUGHLIN: It was hot. That was like proper driving stuff. I think -- and Josef will concur -- that was like -- the UV of the track was high. It was quite loose, and a weird sort of grip level. It's always nice to get -- it's not just a flat-out oval track. It's nice to sort of just wheel one there. And managed to get pole there.

But obviously the Dallara-Chevy has been great since we dropped it out of the truck. It's just massaging it and making sure I was on it from a driving perspective. And, yeah, worked out pretty good.

THE MODERATOR: Josef, you could tell all the on-boards during qualifying, everybody is really working the wheel, getting through the corners today.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I agree. It was -- there are hard laps around Milwaukee. They make you work for it. We probably overshot a little bit, but we weren't going to undershoot today. I can promise you that. We've been on the wrong side of it too often this year.

We were going to go the other way, if anything probably put it in the fence. But the car was great. It's been really good since we rolled off, similar to Scott.

So the race is going to be a different animal, but this is great to get the front row with Team Penske here, the first to start out for both races. Excited to get into race conditions this afternoon.

Q. Since this is supposed to be sort of an evening night race, I imagine the temperature's going to come down a little bit. But I think we start around 5-something. So maybe we're done by 7:00. Is that going to affect the way the car handles and the grip level?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yes, for sure, it will be different than what you experienced here. I think it will cool and you'll have some changing condition within the car. Yeah, it always matters. Today might be different than what we experience tomorrow in the middle of the day.

SCOTT MCLAUGHLIN: Yeah, I mean, the difference between yesterday and today, just with UV on the track and the feeling we had out there was certainly different. So it's a unique surface, but hopefully it races well. I think it's going. It felt like it would race good yesterday, but we'll see what the tire deg is.

Q. You said you would have just, you said you would have overshot if anything. This is for both of you guys, with the race just a couple of hours away, if anything happens in this qualifying, you're kind of screwed for the race. Like, how do you still get your mind set to send it in there without that in the back of your head?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: The truth of the matter, even if I bend this thing, just knowing Team Penske there would be a brand-new car ready to rock for the race. It gives you a lot of confidence to just drive it flat out and do what you need to do.

I don't think any of us really on our team are conserving when we're qualifying, especially on a day like today. You just know the team will be -- we don't want to put the team in that position, but we're also not held back from needing to drive the car to a level we need to in qualifying.

I think there's a comfort factor there with our group. They're just so good at what they do. Don't want to put them in the position, but if they put their backs against the wall, they would recover and be ready for us.

SCOTT MCLAUGHLIN: Yeah, I agree with all that. You can't that have in the back of your mind you're going to crash either. You're employed to drive the car as fast as you can. So you're meant to risk and that's part of the game. If you muck up, the best thing like Josef said, you've got a crew that can fix it.



But at the same time I don't think, RP, sure it's going to hurt the bill. But ultimately they want us to push as hard as we can. Push each other, push the team, be out in the front and that's kind of expected.

Q. Scott, I know Simon Pagenaud gave you a lot of notes. Has he been able to help you with the short ovals as well?

SCOTT MCLAUGHLIN: I haven't heard from Simon at all this week. He's busy. But he was tremendous help, made Indy this year -- and I think the ovals in general. But we chat occasionally, but actually not this weekend.

Q. Scott, we're talking here about the evolution and the changes in the track. Qualifying at the time you did, the time of the races. By the time we get to race 2 tomorrow, is that track going to be even different again with the amount of rubber that it would have got from both INDY NXT and you guys?

SCOTT MCLAUGHLIN: I can't speak from experience, but certainly this is the first doubleheader we've had here, even from back in the day. So I imagine it would be a lot more gripped up and the line bigger. But we'll have to find out, eh? We'll see.

Q. Just looking at how quick the lap time is here -- this is kind of aimed at both of -- you'll get into the lapped traffic fairly quickly. And there was some significantly slower cars yesterday, which I think you mentioned in the press conference yesterday, Josef. Does it get to the point where INDYCAR will wave those slower cars off? Or how do you handle it when you get to the slower cars?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: There's a rule in place. We have a 105 percent rule. If they're excessively slow, they'll get black flagged. You can only be so slow relative to the entire field. So not worried about that.

But the raceability is what's important. If you've got a place to go and the tire provides you an opportunity to run around, then having cars that are way off the pace, it's actually easier to come up on those cars. Cars that are similar on pace is where it's going to get tougher.

But I think lapped traffic, it's always been a key ingredient here to Milwaukee. And it will be no different this weekend. You've got to be good through lapped traffic. That's how it's going to be.

Q. A lot of drivers out on pit lane said that they haven't had a car drive this free before going into the turns. What was it like for you?

SCOTT MCLAUGHLIN: Free. Very free.

Q. Was it a weird feeling?

SCOTT MCLAUGHLIN: Yes, it was kind of a numb feeling, I guess you could say, because you sort of have a little bit of push, a little bit free -- mostly free.

But it kind of feels more like the test, I don't know if you agree with it. But that's kind of what it felt like. Honestly, I think the sun is a big problem, but for the traffic itself. But that's just the same thing for everyone.

Q. Your first experience here. What do you think of the place?

SCOTT MCLAUGHLIN: It's sick. It's awesome. Love it.

Q. What do you love about it?

SCOTT MCLAUGHLIN: It's just fast. You've got to drive. You've just got to drive it. It's not just flat and a couple of lifts. It's like you're wheeling it, which is fun.

Q. You have a 250-lap race today and tomorrow. And with the hybrid, some drivers have said you have more fuel, you have to use more fuel. So can you go 60, 70 laps? What are your expectations in terms of how many pit stops? Are the tires something you would want to come in and change instead of using the full fuel capacity?

SCOTT MCLAUGHLIN: If we told you, we'd have to kill you. (Laughter).

I don't know. It's probably -- I shouldn't say that. That's pretty bad. (Laughter).

No, I don't know. It's going to be interesting. I think a lot will depend on tire deg and who is leading and whatever.

It will be interesting. Maybe. I don't know. Hopefully. I'm going to have to, I think. Someone did, I think, yesterday 68 laps on tires. Pretty slow. Yes.

Sorry, I would never kill you. (Laughter).

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