

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Saturday, August 31, 2024

Pato O'Ward

Will Power

Conor Daly

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are joined now by Will Power and Conor Daly.

Will, that lead between you and Palou shrinks a little bit.

WILL POWER: Yep, shrinks a little more. Another 10 points would have been great. Almost had him there, but just too good.

I should say pleasant surprise but well-deserved, Conor driving all the way. Shows it doesn't matter where you qualify. Even my spotter said during that run, Conor already has passed half the field around the outside, so the outside works.

For Ricardo and that team, couldn't be happier. Super excited to see that.

CONOR DALY: Thanks.

WILL POWER: Closing the gap. Palou is a serious contender, man. Nothing can rattle that guy. Very tough to go head-to-head with him.

THE MODERATOR: Conor, welcome back to the podium in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES.

CONOR DALY: Thank you. Yeah, it's really cool, especially when you get to share it with -- the last podium I was on had Juan Pablo Montoya and Sebastien Bourdais. I changed my era of INDYCAR drivers.

Yeah, kind of crazy. I mean, I honestly didn't know how good we were. The first lap I decided to just go where there was open space. Turns out that worked. Then, yeah, we just kept going. It was kind of slowly working our way forward.

Our pit box might be the worse thing in the world. I am just

thankful that, like, we didn't hit anyone. The guys got the work done, we got out of the pits okay.

It's going to be a struggle tomorrow for us, too. Obviously we want to win and we want to compete at the front, and this team gave me the opportunity to do that.

We thought we could do it at Gateway. That opportunity quickly came to a grinding halt. But yes, I'm thankful to be here and be back up where I dreamed of being my whole life really.

THE MODERATOR: The official passing stat, 51 on-track passes for you. Obviously most of the night. Incredible job.

CONOR DALY: Thank you.

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

Q. Will, I don't know if it was intentional or not, you boxed Palou in a couple times on the pit stop. He was actually monetarily fined for running over equipment. Was that gamesmanship or by design?

WILL POWER: Not at all. I tried my best to be square. The best thing I can do is hit my marks, that will give me the quickest stop. It's very difficult with such short boxes to get around and square. I actually locked up one time and went long.

Going around Palou, none of that. I'm not into that. Just straight up shitty to do that sort of thing. Yeah, it's tight boxes simply. Yeah, hard to get in and out with someone in front of you.

Lucky Santino left before I did on that yellow where we all stopped. So yeah, just tough.

Q. On Santino, did he help you there or did you earn that?

WILL POWER: No, he was going for a podium, which is fair enough. Those guys are still digging to get in the top 10. I did a move.



CONOR DALY: I watched it all.

WILL POWER: I didn't want to force him out.

CONOR DALY: Thank you, by the way.

WILL POWER: Is that how you got it?

CONOR DALY: Yes.

WILL POWER: Santino, I'm good friends with him. He helped me out at Portland. I didn't expect him just to move over. He deserved to be there and he's going to fight for it.

Q. Conor, do you have a shot at this ride, at keeping this ride for next year?

CONOR DALY: I mean, I'd love to think so. In the end, the finances are very difficult to make happen in this world. But I feel like I have a lot that I still want to do in this world. The last couple years have been obviously really difficult for me, in the situation that I was in.

This group around me has been just so supportive. Even after the first two races, like I said on TV, I'm sure everyone was, Well, we thought it was going to be great.

I know I can run at the front with these guys. The car gave me the opportunity to do that. I can only do what the car will allow me to do. They gave me that chance. We made the right moves when we needed to.

But yeah, what the future holds, I have no idea. Thankfully I got next week planned and the weekend after that. After that, we're kind of just back to the drawing board.

Q. (No microphone.)

CONOR DALY: Feels like family. I won Ricardo's first (indiscernible) championship for him and got him his first INDYCAR podium. Feel like that's got to count for something.

THE MODERATOR: Pato O'Ward joins us, sombrero and all.

Pato, congratulations. Your thoughts on obviously a big night and another race tomorrow, too.

PATO O'WARD: Yeah, wonderful race for us. The car really came to life in the second stint, then it was a little gnarly after that. A lot of changing editions. The track was getting quite a bit cooler. Tomorrow it's going to be quite a bit hotter than what it was today, at least how it ended. Balances are going to change. Quick cars are going to

evolve. We'll see where we're at.

But yeah, super stoked. A great bounceback after a really tough weekend for me and the whole team. So really happy that I was able to give them this.

Chevy top three, that's awesome.

WILL POWER: We should be in Mexico City, not NASCAR (smiling).

PATO O'WARD: What?

WILL POWER: I say we should be in Mexico City (smiling).

PATO O'WARD: Pato who (smiling)?

THE MODERATOR: Chevrolet top four tonight.

Q. Pato, what a difference a week makes. Tell me about this team, you guys rallied from nowhere last weekend to winning this week.

PATO O'WARD: Yeah, I mean, it's all about what are we missing, right? We're not going to get it right all the time. But specifically this year has been really, really tough just to feel like I have something to fight with. I feel like I've had it in numerous races along the year, but there's been some where it's just been really, really tough in a lot of different angles, I would say.

It was nice to bounce back like this after a solid qualifying effort, then really putting it together in the race. Great pit stops, great strategy. It all definitely came together for us.

Q. Will, what did you learn about your car tonight you can apply tomorrow to get more points?

WILL POWER: Man, it changed so much over a run and then from run to run. Very difficult to know what to do. I can't tell you how much I moved my tools around all night, front wing. Very difficult to know what you need here. I think the tire deg is so big that you start with one balance, you finish with the complete other side of that.

I think everyone will be better tomorrow. They'll know strategy, how the tires go off, they know how to pass, what lanes work. It will be a harder race, for sure.

But it was good. It was cool racing with Pato at the end there trying to catch him. Like, he was just laying big darkies out every time out of the corner. I'm like, He's loose. I was a bit loose, but I had a bit of both.

Yeah, you feel satisfied. We need a win. Very satisfied when you put everything into a race and it works out.

Q. Conor, speak to the fact that you've done impressive things on ovals in INDYCAR, and members of the Carlin team are now part of your current team.

CONOR DALY: A lot of those guys I got 'em a pole, now I got 'em a podium. I feel good about that. They're a great group of people.

Shout-out to Trevor Carlin, too. He put together a really cool group of people. Obviously, a lot of them have really enjoyed it. They've stayed. Ricardo and Brad have taken over.

It truly is I think a very underrated group. They're so smart. There's a lot of talented folks there. They deserve this, for sure, because it's been a very unlucky year for them. Obviously I felt it the last two weeks.

This is the first race we've been together where we haven't been spun at least once. That's positive. I think tomorrow can only be better, I hope.

Q. First time back at the Milwaukee Mile since 2015. How did you view the quality of the race?

WILL POWER: Yeah, it was pretty good. There was a lot of passing, back and forth. I thought the crowd was really good, too. Sounded awesome once you got out of the car, the cheer of the crowd.

I think it was a very successful return. A lot of fun in the race. Yeah, I don't know what it looked like from the outside, but it felt... He passed 50 times. I don't think anyone is going to get close to that.

CONOR DALY: I just wish they would have swept for the last restart 'cause when they did, it really opened it up. If they didn't, I mean, you were going up top with a prayer and you close your eyes. That was really tough.

WILL POWER: Actually couldn't see.

CONOR DALY: I never saw a single car in front of me.

WILL POWER: A car would disappear, come out and there he is.

CONOR DALY: No idea where I was (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: 667 on-track passes in this race tonight, 326 were for position which is the most on record here at the Milwaukee Mile.

Q. Pato, from your standpoint, the quality of the race, how the track felt, the fan support?

PATO O'WARD: It was fantastic. You could just hear the cheers of everybody. Super happy on the podium. Everybody was just super into it, brought a lot of energy today. That was fantastic to see.

My first time here in Milwaukee, so I don't know what to compare to. But this was fantastic. Really been amazing. It was a pretty good race. We could get through traffic and stuff like that, so that usually means it's eventful pretty much everywhere but leaders.

It was definitely a success and excited for tomorrow.

Q. Do you think there's a good foundation to build this race back to being a regular on the schedule?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I do. I think we got to really build these events up. It's important to have a full crowd. Looks great on TV. Looking forward to our TV package next year, all on network at the same time, at a good time.

Yeah, some great things happening to the series. Probably some good events coming in the next year or two. It won't be next year obviously, the schedule is out, but after that.

Got to keep digging. Got to keep catching those F1 and NASCAR people, see if we can get there, man. NASCAR, they had it written on the wall apparently that they're going to one day be there. We need that painted somewhere (smiling).

Where would you paint that? We can be near, I don't know, F1. You could aim high. Put it on the wall there for everyone to see.

CONOR DALY: Love your strategy, Will.

WILL POWER: Get in the psyche and subconscious. Manifest it and one day, boom, there's INDYCAR right up there with the big guns. You boys will benefit way more than me.

PATO O'WARD: Don't sell yourself short.

WILL POWER: If I was here for another decade...

PATO O'WARD: You'd be fine. You're performing fine. I don't see why not.

WILL POWER: It's just a matter of keeping your job that



long. Young blokes coming up trying to take my seat apparently (smiling).

Q. Conor, you mentioned earlier about getting Ricardo his first podium in INDYCAR, his first championship in Star Mazda. What does that mean to bring all that full circle?

CONOR DALY: It's pretty cool, man. I think it's really impressive what he's done with that group. It's still a fairly fresh team in the last five, six years, you know what I mean? When Carlin first came over, now under the JHR banner, I love what they've done, I love the group of people they've brought together. It's really hard to go racing in this series. It's hard to show up and be competitive. Obviously they've proven that they can do it.

It means a lot. I think Ricardo is a racer at his heart. He just loves racing. He wants to do whatever it takes. He's on my stand. It sounds like he wants to try to engineer the car sometimes. My man, there's people that are paid to do that. Let's just chill for a second.

But he just loves it. He wants to figure out how to make these cars go faster. The team is dedicated to understanding where they need to improve, which I think is so important.

To go faster, it is hard. You have to do a lot of work to get there. I think they're trying to do that.

Q. The last 25 laps you saw Pato and Will battling. How much was it having to keep back and realize you're in third, podium, not risk too much?

CONOR DALY: I mean, most of the time I had no idea where I was on track position-wise. I figured that once I saw these two in front of me, I was in a decent spot. I definitely didn't lift off. I was trying my hardest. Definitely got a bit free at the end and was just trying to hang on.

We were not slow by any means, which felt nice.

Q. When did you know you were in third?

CONOR DALY: As soon as lap traffic went away. Actually after I passed Santino, they were like, You're third.

That's cool. That was neat.

Q. Pato, is that headgear available at the McLaren merchandise tent?

PATO O'WARD: Pato shop, bro, Pato shop (laughter).

Q. Tell me about the sun. I can't 'blank' see was said every third lap by somebody. Was it that bad?

WILL POWER: Yeah, you couldn't see the line. Also, I know this guy is going high, then needs to go low, reappear here. Really, you couldn't see the car. It would disappear. It was very, very difficult at the end.

CONOR DALY: Gateway was tough, but this was worse. Complete blindness.

PATO O'WARD: Completely gone. Then, oh, it's there.

Q. Conor, looked like Santino came up post race. You had a post-race embrace.

CONOR DALY: I don't think the guy is a bad driver. I've always said that. We've just had some disagreements, for sure.

PATO O'WARD: His beef is with Grosjean.

CONOR DALY: Yeah, my teammate.

I can respect a good racer. Like, he obviously raced me clean. This year it's been really cool. Yeah, I've had some problems with him, of course. I respect good racing and a good racer. Like, he's done a great job this year, for sure.

His group of people behind him, Michael Cannon already texted me. It's very funny what he says. I like Michael Cannon a lot. He calls me Randy. Randy Cool. I don't know why. He just said Randy in all caps and 45 exclamation points. That's Mike.

Q. (No microphone.)

CONOR DALY: 2016, a long time ago. This is when I was trying to be elite, but I fell off the wagon and now I'm back. Randy's back.

Q. (No microphone.)

CONOR DALY: The dog never left, Pato.

WILL POWER: Top group, they all got dog in them, man.

Q. (No microphone.)

CONOR DALY: Will is a dog. Like, look at him.

WILL POWER: I didn't even know what that means.

CONOR DALY: Anyway, next question.

Q. (No microphone.)

CONOR DALY: That's not what that means.

WILL POWER: You engaged?

CONOR DALY: No, not yet.

WILL POWER: Big ring? Going to buy a big one?

CONOR DALY: I finally made money today, but not enough.

WILL POWER: Put it in the pot, man. At least \$50,000, the ring.

CONOR DALY: I got to get 40 more of these then.

WILL POWER: American girls love the big rings.

CONOR DALY: Is that true?

WILL POWER: Yes.

PATO O'WARD: If she wants that big of a ring, she doesn't deserve you.

CONOR DALY: This is going well, going great.

Q. Conor, did you know you were going to have to go after it today knowing you had the new engine and nothing to lose?

CONOR DALY: I honestly didn't know if we were going to be good or not. I still have no idea how that all happened.

Yeah, felt fine. Felt good. Car was nice to drive. We just kind of kept working on it. Small adjustments every pit stop. Then we didn't go crazy. We kind of put everything in the right spot.

Q. Pato, was this an emotional day for you, the stuff that happened this morning? Did you go through an emotional roller coaster or were you pretty even keel?

PATO O'WARD: No, I was chilling in the morning, I was chilling in the afternoon. I was just here for business.

WILL POWER: Business baby. The outside move. Scheckter also liked the ladies. Similar.

CONOR DALY: Pato, you going to be on Speed Street again this week?

PATO O'WARD: I enjoyed that.

WILL POWER: I was hoping I speak to Conor at least two more times this year. It's a big deal.

CONOR DALY: Great program.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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