NTT INDYCAR SERIES
News Conference

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Doug Boles

Press Conference

DOUG BOLES: We'll get started on the second half of this press conference. I've taken off my full promoter hat and I will put on my full president of the INDYCAR Series hat.

Obviously the last 72 hours now have been a challenging 72 hours in a lot of ways for the Indianapolis 500 and the NTT INDYCAR Series. For me certainly the last 72 hours have been an opportunity for me to fully dive into my previous life as a team owner and thinking about race cars and rules and things that aren't necessarily related to my most recent day job at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

I did want to address a couple of things that I think have come up as it relates to really the Monday announcement and the Sunday issue with Team Penske and the 2 car and the 12 car.

I think for me, the best place to start is -- the purpose of tech probably is the best place for me to start.

I've spent an awful lot of time the last two days in particular really digging into how our tech team operates, how the processes are, what are they focused on. I told you on Sunday night when I talked to some of you and then again on Monday that I was just really focused on facts. So for me, the last 48 hours with respect to the tech side of things has been related to facts.

One of the things or the most important thing that our tech team does is focus on ensuring that when cars roll out on to qualifying or roll out to race in any of the races, not just the Indianapolis 500 but any of the NTT INDYCAR Series races, that the levelness of the playing field is as level as possible.

When cars go through tech, the place where our tech team focuses is they focus on the elements of the race car that impact the performance the most and make sure that all of those elements are inside the tolerances that the INDYCAR Series pays attention to.

On Sunday when the 12 cars that were in the Fast 12 were presented in the tech line, we had a 30-minute window to get 12 cars through tech. As those cars go through two stages of tech, there's a tech stage that happens before they get in the tech garage here; it's in the tech tent on the ground and before they get to the tech garage where the tech platform is.

What happens in that moment, the tech team goes through the cars to make sure safety things like belts and headrests and those important driver safety elements are in the car and properly installed in the car and meet the proper ratings that we need for each of those.

We also look at a lot of the aero components that don't need to be measured from a level state. So in other words, they could be measured on a ground that is not absolutely level. The purpose of the tech pad is you're putting the car on something that's absolutely level, and there are certain things that we have to measure from that standpoint.

So a lot of the times if you stand outside that tech tent, you see the tech team with all of the templates that they use on things like the front wings, the rear wings, body panels, body parts. Those things that absolutely impact the performance of the race car on the racetrack.

Once the car goes through that and has passed through those, it goes up on the tech pad. When it goes on the tech pad, the team looks at other things that are related to making the car faster or making the car perform better when it's on track. So for example, the underneath of the underwing, making sure that the ride heights are exactly correct or within those tolerances, and in order to do that you need a tech pad because you need to ensure that the ground is level the way you measure it, otherwise those measurements could vary enough that it's challenging. That's the purpose of our tech team.

I can tell you after the last 48 hours that I feel 100 percent confident that the tech team has not failed in ensuring that all of those elements that cause a car to be faster or slower because of following the rules have been followed, not only this past week during qualifying, but I believe from what I've learned from talking to folks, that that's what's happened in the past.

So the elephant in the room and the question in the room is why did the tech team find on Sunday the attenuator on the back of the 12 and the 2 car that was not in the state as supplied by Dallara. So that's the big question I've been trying to ask. First of all, I want to know what does the tech team do and why was that piece not found.

I've spent a lot of time talking to engineers, I've talked to our internal engineers, I've talked to team engineers, I've talked to Dallara engineers to really understand the purpose of that.

The purpose of the attenuator on the car is for safety. There's no other reason for that attenuator other than for safety. So that attenuator has been modified three times over the last few years in order to make the cars safer in a rearward impact.

Over that time when the first attenuator came, Dallara has tested that through crash testing to figure out how they could make sure that that attenuator crushes at the right rate. So in January of 2024, when the current attenuator rule came out, that attenuator was homologated, and basically that means when it comes from Dallara you cannot change it. You cannot change it at all.

The reason we do that is a safety reason, because if people modify that part, it could make it more stiff or less stiff, harder to crash or less harder to crash, and therefore could change the real purpose of that piece of the car.

The purpose of that piece of the car is to create an energy absorption when that part of the car hits the wall backwards. It's absorbing as much energy as it can in the right time frame as it can so that we reduce the amount of energy that ends up in the drivetrain that ultimately ends up driving through to the driver. It's there to protect the safety of our driver. That's why it comes out as a homologated piece that cannot be changed because we don't know if a team changes it, if that, in fact, changes its ability to do its job.

So that's what the piece of that was.

On parts that are specifically designed for safety, our team and tech does not, on a regular basis, look at those, and this is one of those parts that was not looked at until it was seen on Sunday.

Is that a miss? Absolutely it's a miss. Is it a part that we should probably -- is it a part that everybody should be exposed to at every event, if they've changed it they're outside of the rules? 100 percent.

What I do know, and I've heard it from -- in fact, I started hearing it on Monday from team owners and others, that it had no real performance impact, and the reason it hasn't been looked at over the last several years as much as we scrutinize the things that we do know have a performance impact is because it doesn't have such.

I've seen drivers and team owners say publicly it doesn't have a driver impact. I'm not making an excuse for the fact that a rule was violated. In fact, you should see in the decision we made on Monday that we took it seriously. It is a safety element.

We've had two other safety violations at two races previously this year that we have taken seriously, as well. We said in both of those instances that safety is paramount for us, and we fined two other teams $25,000 in two events for safety violations as well.

We took this one step further. It's the Indianapolis 500. It is the most important race in the world, and we wanted to ensure that the integrity of this event is not compromised through an issue in qualifying.

So coming out of qualifying, do I feel like tech did their job? 100 percent. Do I feel like we have a lot of opportunity to be better in tech? 100 percent. So one of the things that we will definitely be doing going forward -- I've been three months in this job. This is an opportunity for me to get thrown into the deep end, figure out a way to make sure things like this don't happen in the future.

I've already started working with our tech team. We've got 11 races after the Indianapolis 500 that we must ensure that our tech is able to get through all of these pieces. Whether that means we have to extend the amount of time that they have to tech cars, whether that means we need to add more resources in terms of personnel or whether it means we need to add more resources in terms of the equipment that we use to go through the tech, we will do that between now and the end of this year, and that's something that we started working on two days ago.

Moreover, for the last six months, I've been involved in a conversation on the periphery and certainly more so in the last three months as our organization has continued to grapple with the optics issue and how can we remove conversations like the ones we've been having for the last 72 hours out of the conversation so that they know it is absolutely clear that there are not any optics challenges.

We have been working very, very hard to create an entity, an officiating entity, and by officiating, I mean race control and tech inspection, and an entity that is completely removed from anything that has to do with Penske Entertainment or Roger Penske or the Indianapolis Motor

Speedway and the INDYCAR Series. We want to ensure that we have an officiating entity that has no ability for folks to say, it's got influence from Roger Penske.

Am I saying that the last 72 hours had influence from Roger Penske? I'm telling you it absolutely did not. If it did, I probably would have left those cars exactly where they were in 12th place, but I believe that because of the timing of that violation and the fact that that violation would have left them essentially where they could have qualified anyway that the penalty needed to be much more severe, and I can tell you that was not a fun phone call to the owner of that team.

So those are the places where we are in terms of tech, and first of all, I'm not making excuses. We made a mistake. We missed something that is crucial to the way that we go through tech, and that is a tech element that's related to safety, and frankly, nothing is more important than safety on those cars, even more so important than what's happening on the racetrack because we do not want to have our drivers injured.

So at this point in time, we're going to focus on how do we make ourselves better over the next 11 races and how do we make ourselves completely better and removed from anything that could challenge the optics of the officiating of the NTT INDYCAR Series and the Indianapolis 500.

Like I said, it's been a lot of conversation over the last 72 hours, a lot of great input from drivers, team owners, engineers, our own engineers, Dallara's engineers, and I think together as a community we have some of the smartest people in this community, and we will continue to move forward, and I look forward to what the rest of the season looks like and certainly to what we can develop for 2026 and beyond.

Q. Doug, talking about tech, I know there's been a pretty firm line held that this was seen for the first time on Sunday. There's been a rumor that Chip Ganassi Racing had alerted tech to this impropriety. I wanted to find out whether that rumor had any validity, so I went and asked the leader of the team, and he said yes, we did. That informing, asking tech if what they saw with the modified attenuator was legal, did not happen last weekend. It happened at Barber Motorsports Park, which took place May 2 through 4. The illegally modified attenuators were noted at the April open test here, April 23 and 24. So I have on the record from Chip Ganassi Racing, they informed tech this does not look legal, well before we got here. I'm not asking you to so much opine on that, but I have no question that efforts to raise this well before Sunday had been made. Pivoting off of that, knowing everything you mentioned about looking forward to try and improve things, as Roger did today, unfortunately, by making some institutional changes there, big believer that you have to find out what went wrong and clean up that mess so it doesn't happen in the future. Will you or have you already started some form of investigation into what did we miss, how did we miss it, if we were informed weeks ago, why was this not raised?

DOUG BOLES: Well, I'll address the question. So far, I have asked people point blank has anybody told you about an attenuator issue with the Penske cars, anybody from another team, and I've been told by everyone so far, no one has been told. So that is exactly what I've been told.

So you telling me you have someone on the record that said it, that's the first time I've heard it. Now, I have not gone to Ganassi Racing or somebody and asked them -- right now I've been focused on how did we get here, what's the purpose, how do we ensure this doesn't happen again. But at the same time, asking those questions.

This is not an investigation as far as I'm concerned, but I'm not going to stop asking questions, nor will Mark or this organization. We are going to continue to understand how the process failed and how we can make it better, and the most important thing we have to do is make sure that, A, our drivers stay safe, but B, that the levelness of the playing field can't be called into question, and when a team or a driver is on track and they get beaten by somebody or they beat somebody, that neither one of those teams can say they did it because they got an advantage because tech missed something.

Q. You mentioned the possible addition of resources to tech, be it personnel or otherwise. You have many fine people there, many of them, though, are volunteer/part time --

DOUG BOLES: There's nobody volunteer. We do not have volunteers. We are a for-profit company. You can't have volunteers.

Q. Okay. My phrasing is incorrect. Folks who are not full-time, folks who do not come to work every day dedicated to technical inspection and compliance of the vehicles. Is that something you would expect Penske Entertainment to invest in so INDYCAR as an elite series can have indeed full-time people focused on something, not folks who come in for the weekend and go back to whatever else they might do?

DOUG BOLES: It's a great question, and I think I addressed it, if there are more resources, especially

personnel, we will definitely use those.

I do want to be careful, though, because I think we could probably use some more full-time people, but some of the part-time personnel that we have are as bright as they are in the business and understand what they do. They just happen to have other full-time jobs, and being able to use some of those people in a full-time capacity when they're working for us, meaning Thursday through Sunday, I don't think -- that's not the problem.

The problem is making sure we have enough of those people and the smartest people. Do we need or could we use more full-time people that are full-time? Possibly. But I want to make sure that just because they are part-time for us does not mean they're not the best people in the business.

That happens with race teams. Race teams will bring guys in that work on a weekend that they believe add to their team maybe more than a full-time person.

I'm just trying to clarify that piece. I think we have really great people. Could we use more resources? That's one of the things we're looking at, and right now I'd probably tell you that we could.

Q. Another bullet point to this: Technical inspection equipment, levels of technology, some other series you and I are fond of use 3D scanners, all sorts of things that would catch any irregularities, wouldn't just rely on the human eye. Is that an area you would expect to make investments, as well?

DOUG BOLES: Yeah, so you ask a question of an area that I've really started to dig into. Obviously we've had scanners out here with the IMSA race we have here. We've had scanners out here with NASCAR. The challenge in our series right now is in order for scanners to work, there has to be a reference point in the car, and generally those reference points are built in the car as the car is designed and built. So this is definitely something that we're already looking into as we think about the next generation of car.

The challenge we have with it right now is our cars have been built over a wide spectrum of time, and even though they're spec cars or they're supposed to be the same tub, the way that those tubs are built, when they're built, when the molds have changed, because molds change over time, it makes it really hard for scanning technology to be implemented in the INDYCAR Series as we stand today.

My understanding is really to make it effective today, you would have to scan each individual car instead of just one mold and then have reference points in order for it to work for us.

I will also tell you that if you think about IMSA, at IMSA they scan the pieces of the car that impact the performance, so the areas that really have to do with aero. In our instance, we would do the same thing, and that likely would exclude the attenuator. So this attenuator, even today, with scanning, would have been something that probably would have fallen out of scanning. If it was in the scanning, my understanding from engineers, what was done to this attenuator would have fallen inside of the tolerance zones, and so it wouldn't have been caught with scanning because it was subtle enough that it would have fallen inside the tolerance zones.

The other thing my understanding with scanning is scanning right now really is in the sport actually has larger tolerance zones than smaller tolerance zones, so the gap in which the teams can work is actually a little bit bigger than the gap in which we look at it manually. So there's a lot of things in scanning, while it seems like let's just go scan it and just solve all the problems, there's more to it than just having scanning to solve it.

At the same time, definitely in the next car we need to find ways to have that electronic help. I do think that'll help us. It's also a sport about technology, so I think it would be helpful there.

Q. 2024, winning car --

DOUG BOLES: It won the Indianapolis 500.

Q. Any plans on making any changes to anything, investigating anything? Any plans to do anything there?

DOUG BOLES: No, sir, it won the Indianapolis 500.

Q. To follow up on that, I'm 99 percent sure I know the answer, but any results from previous races I assume will not be changed?

DOUG BOLES: No, sir.

Q. Why did they find this on Sunday? Were they looking specifically for it, or is it just something they noticed out of happenstance?

DOUG BOLES: My understanding from the conversations I've had is as the 12 car was coming across the tech pad, it was noted that the attenuator looked smooth. At that point in time when it looked smooth, Rocket actually felt the attenuator to see if, in fact, it was smoothed over. If you

look at those attenuators, you can definitely tell what's a stock attenuator and one that has had alterations to it. At that point in time when he saw it as it was going -- he doesn't know why he looked at it. Look, there are 600 parts, part numbers, on a Dallara car that include about 1,000 parts not including the bolts and the washers and the nuts. Our team is focused on making sure that they're paying attention to the parts that actually impact what happens on the racetrack. So there's a lot of parts that you might see out of the corner of your eye or something may cause you to look at that.

As Rocket saw that, he recalled that we have a rule that allows you to make modifications to certain items, and he believed that we were not allowed to make a modification to the attenuator. At that point in time -- what he said, he said, I 95 percent believed that. I wasn't 100 percent sure. We have 30 minutes to get 12 cars through tech. All he was worried about there was just continuing to move things. He told the team he needed to look into it but head on down to the grid.

He went from there and walked back to the 2 car, which was in the tech tent, not on the tech pad but in the tech tent, walked around the back of the car, looked at both sides, felt both sides and realized that yes, in fact, that was. He looked at the other cars in between there and yes, in fact, that that was one that had been modified. He looked at the other cars in between and could clearly tell by looking at that at that point that these were outside of that.

Why did it happen on Sunday? I don't know. I'm just glad that it was found on Sunday. This is an opportunity for us to understand how we can get better in tech, and at the end of the day, it was a violation of a rule.

We will continue to understand how it happened, but as a team, they had a part on the car that was outside of our rules.

Q. Doug, I know you've said that past races have happened and results have been sent out will not be altered. I think as we sit now, we would say you are in the middle of a race weekend. We have results that have been sent out in terms of qualifying. But this race is not done. Has there been any consideration taken to investigating further Saturday, and what was or not on the cars and making any alterations to what was deemed legal and set from that standpoint on qualifying for the 500?

DOUG BOLES: I think the penalty that we imposed is a pretty steep penalty for what happened. It was a safety violation. I think, again, if you ask most in the paddock, I don't want to speak for everybody because I'm sure somebody may disagree, but even publicly people have said this had a 0.0 mile per hour impact on that car. Just as an example, had the car come through on Saturday and we had seen it on Saturday, what would have happened is the team would have been -- would have missed their guaranteed starting spot or qualifying spot that they would have had on Saturday morning and they would have been given the opportunity, like other teams do when they don't pass tech, to go back and put a proper part on that car and go qualify.

There's not anyone that will tell you that that car really was not going to make the race. I feel very comfortable that the 30 fastest cars are the cars that actually had an opportunity to be locked in as we left Saturday. So at this point in time, we've done the investigation with that, and we're moving on.

Q. I think there would be some team owners that would argue that the 30 fastest legal cars might not have made the Indy 500, though.

DOUG BOLES: Look, I hear you. At St. Petersburg we had a team who failed post-race inspection for a similar safety-related reason related to the intrusion plates on that race car, and we treated them the same way -- we probably treated them better than we treated Team Penske. We could have been having the same conversation with them, that wasn't a legal car, should you throw it out of the race. It was there for the purpose of safety, and we made the decision that we would leave the car alone, leave it in its spot, and we issued a fine.

I told our team early on that for safety violations this year we want to make it clear, we've done two prior to this one that were safety related that were $25,000 each and we took away owner points. We did not change the results of the race. And there were people in the paddock that would have argued without that plate in there allowed for more caster adjustment, and we looked at it and we realized that maybe there was, maybe there wasn't, but pretty much everybody said there's a 0.0 mile per hour impact in that, as well.

We're treating this the same way as we treat others. This is not about -- the 2024 results and the qualifying results in my mind are fine.

Q. I imagine we would have already gotten here if this was the case, but I want to ask the question anyway. I know you've said that there are plans to add additional resources, whether it be people or technology to the tech inspection process. Will there be any changes or have there been any personnel changes to that process ahead of Sunday's Indy 500?

DOUG BOLES: There have not and there will not be. We don't have the time. I feel like our team does a very, very good job at ensuring that the pieces of the car that impact the outcome of qualifying or the outcome of the race do their job.

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