

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Thursday, May 22, 2025

Josef Newgarden

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Going back to row 11, two-time reigning Indy 500 champion, 31-time race winner in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES, starting 32nd on Sunday, Josef Newgarden.

How you doing?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I'm not sleeping tonight (smiling). Long days, late nights, especially with the travel. Kind of ready to get locked back in the bus here and not go anywhere for the next 72 hours, however long it's going to be.

Yeah, it's cold in here, for, so I'm keeping my jacket on. All good, ready to go.

THE MODERATOR: Your thoughts on getting back in the car tomorrow.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I can't wait. I think the weather looks really perfect actually for the weekend in a lot of ways. Friday, Saturday, Sunday, pretty excited for that. Yeah, can't wait.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. These guys that are no longer on the team, they weren't just guys you worked with, they were friends, people that you were close to. How difficult is it to see them leave, especially under these circumstances?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Well, I think we got a lot of people sitting here today, it looks like. I don't want to disappoint or offend anybody. I'm here to talk about the race. I'm here with my team. I'm ready to go racing. I love this race. My goodness, I've been enjoying being here this whole time. I look forward to it every year, as we all do. Ready to go to work with our group.

Proud of everything that we have done up to this point. Ready to go racing. So that's what I got to say.

Q. Speaking of the race, Kyle Larson thinks you have

the fastest car on the track. What can we expect to see, what kind of charge? As Rick Mears says, you can win this race from any seat in the house.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I think he's right, you can win this race from any seat in the house. There's no bad seat in this house. I like saying that, too. I love listening to where people sit and hearing their stories. There's just no bad seat at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. I think that goes for the starting grid, too.

I like the challenge coming from 32nd. I don't know what the day looks like, it's so hard to predict. We do have a great car. It just seems to be getting better every year. I'm trying to protect that right now. It's one of these things where every day changes a little bit at the Speedway. You have to stay on top of it. Sunday is really going to be the day that counts. We have to make sure we're in the right place for that day. If we can do that, we should be in a good spot.

Q. Do you come into this race angry? Frustrated? Anxious? What's your emotion?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Right now I'm trying to remain - what's the way to put this - trying to remain happy. This is the Indy 500. I just said it at the very beginning, too. I look forward to this time of year every season.

I can't wait. We're going to have a sold-out crowd here for the Indianapolis 500, as it should be. To see all the people that show up and make this what it is, I look forward to that.

That's how I feel right now. I'm ready to go racing. I know I have a good car. I'm ready to work with my team and hopefully put on a good show. There's no guarantees, but I'm ready to rock.

Q. Has it been easy to try to be happy?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Well, it's a little cold to be happy today. A little gloomy. I think the weather is going to help tomorrow, Saturday and Sunday.

Q. As you're fighting from back there in 32nd, how do you approach that fight? Probably not a place you've

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been too much in your career. As you've been starting to think about this race, how do you approach trying to work your way up to the front? Do you have some benchmarks?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, it's a good question. I don't have a plan at the moment. I don't want to set anything in stone as far as markers or milestones throughout the race. I think we just got to go.

I know this. If we can get the car where it needs to be on Sunday, which is where it's been pretty much every day that we've been here so far, Indy is this mysterious place. Like every day, every condition is a little different.

I know if we have the car we've had this entire month, we're going to be completely in the fight. I don't know what that is going to look like. It's so hard to predict. I'm pretty open-minded on how this day is going to go.

We have the tools and the people to battle to the front, which is what we plan to do.

Q. Doug has said that they believe what was wrong on your car, Will's car, found in tech inspection, wasn't any sort of performance gain. You dropped back to 32nd and 33rd. Do you think the penalty that was dealt to you was an otherwise fair penalty? How did you react to it when you heard?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I just see a bigger mountain. That's all I see.

Q. You said you're here to talk about the race. The race gets a lot harder for you when you have distractions and your team seems in turmoil. How are you going to stay focused and block out those distractions without letting that seep into your preparation?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Well, it's the same challenge as always. I think you have to focus on what you can control. That's the difficult part about this job. It's the difficult part about the Indianapolis 500 is how do you stay focused on what is in your control.

That can look very differently every year. There can be different stressors that push you. If you can just get yourself to a place where you are focused at the task at hand, you know what's in front of you, you know what you're in control of, you're truly just focused on, that then I think you said yourself up mentally to have the best day possible.

That's what we're doing. We've got to just, like I said, get

the car right for Sunday. Even tomorrow in a lot of ways does not matter. It's a last check. But Sunday is what matters. If we just focus on what we need to do for that place, I think we'll be in a good place.

Q. You can still win?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

Q. How much will you and Will talk about moving up from the back? You can plan, say you're going to work together, but the elements take over, the emotions take over. Is there an ability to work together, especially with the hybrid, start saving some fuel?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I think it's hard to work together. We can certainly not hinder each other. That's probably the best way to put it. We're on the same team. We got the same goal. We want to get all our cars up front. We want a car to win for our team, for our group.

We don't need to be hindering each other. I don't know that we're going to be able to work in parallel. It's very tough to do here at the Speedway. In a lot of ways starting in the back, it's every person for themselves.

We're just aware of each other. We both know what the game plan is in a lot of ways. I just think trying to not hinder each other is more the challenge.

Q. Obviously you have Luke Mason as a strategist. What has made him the right person for the role?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yes, Lucas. His name is not even Lucas. I just like calling him that.

Luke is going to be just fine. He's one of the most naturally gifted race engineers I've ever met. I'm always excited when he's on the stand. It will be no different on Sunday.

Q. You've been traveling these last 24 hours. Will told us that Roger called him in and talked to him to deliver the news of yesterday. Did you talk to Roger on the phone, or how did you learn about what we learned yesterday morning?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I learned it on the phone just because I wasn't present here.

Q. Do you have any input on how folks were elevated? Did they ask you what you wanted to do on your car or just say this is what we're going to do with the replacements?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Well, Roger Penske is the boss.

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It's his team. That's a question for him.

Q. I'll give you a break and give you a fun one. Is there anybody -- with Kyle Larson being here doing the second double, is there anybody from either the INDYCAR side or NASCAR side also attempt the double?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: So many. So many. Gosh, we could have a huge laundry list of people that should do it.

I think Blaney really wants to do it. Obviously McLaughlin. I want to do it. I think you could ask the majority of the field would want to do the double. It's so much fun.

It's just very difficult to get that lined up. Doing what Kyle is doing right now, it's harder than it looks. What I mean by that is just putting the program together. You would have a lot of people doing it if it was simple, I can promise you that.

I think Kyle Busch has spoken publicly about trying to get something off the ground. That's Kyle Busch. Should seem like it's pretty likely for him to put a program together. It was quite difficult.

Yeah, there's a lot of people that want to do it. I would love to see Blaney do it at some point. I don't know how he would do in INDYCAR, but it would be fun to see.

Q. With how this race has ended the last few years, thrilling last-moments passes, going into this race, is there a certain time frame, a certain lap that you guys feel like would be the opportune time to pass for the lead?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It's different every year. I didn't predict anything the first two races. I didn't know how they were going to flow. First one in '23 was quite chaotic with the reds. It was very hard to track what was happening until the very last moment.

Last year same deal. You're just sort of going off instinct. It was a really big battle last year with multiple cars. I don't know what this year's going to look like. I think you have to stay very open-ended, at least as far as your plan or perspective. They're all different.

Maybe that's not going to be the case this year what we saw the last two seasons. Maybe it doesn't turn into that. Maybe it does. Even if it does, it might look differently than it did last year. I can't tell you. I can't tell you what it's going to be. You have to be open to it.

Q. There's some very good drivers starting in the

back, the rows in front of you. Does that give you confidence you guys will all race each other very well, or do you see that as they want to get to the front just as bad as they do?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I think everybody is going to be of the same mentality. Everyone wants to get to the front as quickly as possible. I'm not sure how it affects me with the cars. I kind of look at the field, you're against everybody here. I think everybody's really capable. It's not like, Hey, the first half of the cars I have to get through with the team, are they weak? I think everybody is going to be pretty strong throughout the field. You'll have some weaker cars, but I don't think they go in batches necessarily.

Yeah, I'm not really looking at who's lined up in the back to start.

Q. Since Tom Brady played such a big role in your commercial on FOX, are we going to get a chance to compare each other's jawlines?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I don't know that that's necessary. If there's a man for the job, it would be you, Bruce. We should put you on that assignment, yeah. We could get your camera out with your flash. I think you'd do a great job. Let's put you up to that task (smiling).

Q. On a human-to-human level, Will said it's pretty heavy on Mr. Penske to make those fines with people he has a long relationship with. In what ways do you hope to be there for him in this time?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I'm not going to comment further on the actions that have happened with the team this week, like I said earlier.

Q. The NASH sign out there with you in the green hat, that is your real hand?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Does the photo look weird?

Q. Only the hand.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Which one, the right one? Whichever one is exposed?

Q. Yes.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: That sounds weird, my exposed hand. Maybe it's the ring, I don't know.

Q. Should put two rings on.



JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I don't know. Now that you said that, I need to go look at that photo. It's probably warped in some way. Maybe that was a strategy. We wanted people to be freaked out by my abnormally large hand and then visit the pop-up. Everybody should come out and check out my abnormally shaped hand at our pop-up and buy some NASH merch.

Q. Do you think there's going to be a lot of passing because the hybrid or not because of the hybrid?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I think you're going to see a very similar show to last year. I really do. I don't think we're going to deviate much from the amount of passing or the style of passing, which is a good thing.

We had a really good show last year, right? Still gets tricky with multiple cars in a pack. If you're sitting three or four deep, you're working harder to try and look for a mistake or an opening.

But the ability for the front group to pass, certainly the first two, to get through the field a bit, I think it should be a similar show. It's a little different way we're getting there. You have to use the hybrid now within either attack or defense. So that strategy is different than last year because we didn't have that.

I think the ability to pass, et cetera, it should not deviate much from last year's show, which is a good thing.

Q. I remember two years ago you said that you have a specific plan in order to go to the front. I remember also that you said you already know, your team already know, the way to win this race. Do you already have in process this plan for this year in this specific situation?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yes, definitely. I don't think the plan changes in a lot of ways. As far as how do you win the Indianapolis 500? I think there is no one formula. I know of a formula that you can prescribe to win the race. I don't think it changes starting from 32nd. We know what we need to do throughout the race to give ourselves an opportunity to go for the win. I think that's really not the secret, but it's just the formula, if you will. You have to give yourself a chance at the right time. Seems simple, but this race, it's an endurance in a lot of ways, it's 500 miles.

A lot you have to calculate through: the way you manage yellows, where you put yourself in the strategies, when you're making moves, when you're not. There's a cadence to it. We've done it before, and we'll try and do the exact same thing this weekend.

Q. You spent years trying to celebrate with the fans. You never did it. Three in a row has never been done. Anything up your sleeve if you win on Sunday?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I don't know yet. I don't know yet. It's kind of an in-the-moment thing. We'll see.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for coming out.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Thank you.

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