

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Josef Newgarden

Jonathan Diuguid

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We're joined by the champion of the race, Josef Newgarden. First win of the season. 32nd career win, which ties him with Al Unser Jr. for ninth all time. Also joined by Penske Racing president Jonathan Diuguid.

Josef, better late than ever to get a win here in 2025. Your thoughts, to do it here in Nashville?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Very special. Never a bad time to show up and have a good day. I think the team really performed like you expect from Team Penske. I think we've had the same core that Team Penske's always had throughout this whole year in a lot of ways. You saw it again today, just the men and women across the board.

Really didn't matter which car. There was a point midway through the race, I came on the radio, Look at Will, looked amazing, incredible. He could have won the race today. I think Scott could have won the race.

That's the cool thing about Team Penske. You walk into that building, it really doesn't matter which car you're looking at, I would be privileged to step in any one of them. I think they give you a shot to win the race.

It's cool to be part of this team. We've got great leadership and depth across the board. I think that's what carried us through this weekend to bring in this result.

THE MODERATOR: Jonathan, a nice finish for 2025, two at the podium, the win at Portland. A lot of good things happening towards the end.

JONATHAN DIUGUID: Yeah, obviously to win the last race of the season is a good stepping off point for next year, the best way you can end the championship or season.

It's been a difficult year for us, but we've had strong performances the last few races. Like Josef mentioned, all

three cars led laps today throughout different phases.

New downforce configuration this weekend. We didn't know how it was going to pan out. When it came time to go, Scott and Josef was at the front, Will was up there earlier on. A really solid day for the entire group.

THE MODERATOR: Open it up for questions.

Q. Josef, if you were sitting here a year ago, this would have been a normal thing. Felt like there's a lot of relief after what has been the craziest year where nothing went right. Talk about this, a classic Newgarden feel to this victory.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I don't have a great answer for you. It doesn't feel that different. Nothing went diabolically wrong. I tried to throw it in the bin there in the final pit stop. On the edge, but not over it (smiling).

Like a meteor didn't come out of the sky today, which was nice. Other than that, it felt like a normal day in a lot of respects. It was not an easy race. I did not have the car where I wanted it at the start right away. I'm like, Okay, we're nowhere where we need to be, let's be patient.

We just did our thing like we always do: assessed everybody, hung there, went when we needed to go. We got the car in a really good spot in the end. I was like, Now we have a race-winning car. Let's close the deal.

That whole sequence felt very normal to me. Just proud of the team. More than anything, when I show up and I'm ready to see the team rewarded for the effort. I really mean that. You have no idea what goes on. Some of you guys do know what goes on.

It is grueling to get to these races and to get through the weekend, put a car on the track that's capable of winning, hitting all your marks every second of the race. It's just so difficult to do.

To get that reward for the team... We had it in Portland, which was great for everybody. We had it today. That's probably the highlight for me, just to see everybody rewarded for the effort and what they put in the end.

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Q. (Question about many drivers with problems in the race.)

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I become so oblivious to it at this point, I'm not even looking for it anymore. If it happened, I would expect it, so...

Yeah, I was just driving today.

Q. John, two wins from the last three races. You said y'all aren't really trying to do anything differently. The ingredients are there. Just needed to have clean runs. Speak to that. Seems proof that the formula is there.

JONATHAN DIUGUID: Yeah, no, Josef mentioned it before, we got a good, strong core. Didn't mean that we didn't have difficult conversations about where we needed to be.

Different issues with other cars, people making mistakes, it shows how tight the field is. We didn't lift off the gas for these last few races, we pushed down further. I think that goes to show how we showed up today and how we raced on all three cars.

Q. Josef, we used to talk about how significant it was for you to win at Indy. You won there. Talked about winning here. It's not the same, close, but where does it rank?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Oh, definitely up there. This was a hard race to win today. There was no gimmes. Got such depth across the board, everybody is so close as far as the competitive landscape, it's just hard to find an advantage on anyone nowadays. This was a hard race to win.

It's satisfying when you win a race in this environment. Then to win it at my hometown was really gratifying. I mean, I used to come here when was 12, 13 years old and I would watch stockcar races, INDYCAR races. I'd watch anything that came here. I sat in those stands, wherever I was able to go at the end of the race. Had no idea that I would have a racing career at that point in my life.

It's cool to come full circle and to be so close to home. I love being here in Nashville, too, for the season finale. I like it for INDYCAR. It's a great destination for us. Good for Nashville and certainly good for the series. I think we should continue that tradition.

I love this track. Whether it's here, somewhere else in the future, as long as we're in the Nashville vicinity, I'm going to be a happy guy.

Q. Talk about how much this means to you in terms of your confidence level going into 2026.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Honestly no difference. I think it's probably more a team question. This season, tough year on the team. I think the schedule was tough this year. Everybody just kept working, kept their head down, kept doing their jobs. If anything, that's what's gratifying I think for us as a unit. It definitely can send us into the off-season and we can go to work.

At the end of the day we need to go to work. We need to have a better 2026, and we're ready to do that.

Q. Obviously your team has been informed about the tire troubles of Pato O'Ward. What was going through your mind when you had this information? Did you feel it could happen to you as well?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I immediately got feedback from the team that we were doing a pretty good job at managing our temperatures. We seemed to be in line with our metrics. That gave me a lot of comfort.

I think we heightened our awareness to it after that. The guys were feeding me a lot of information after that to make sure I stayed in line. I wasn't too worried because of what they were telling me.

Q. Penske started off the season, especially at the Indy 500, as a team who almost nothing went your way. How does this result revitalize the team going into 2026?

JONATHAN DIUGUID: I think Josef mentioned it. The INDYCAR season ends beginning of September. There's long winter off months. Being able to finish with a win, it's the last race that everyone went to. It's hugely rewarding and a good springboard for 2026.

Q. Josef, when you saw Scott have his trouble after such a tumultuous season, what did that feel like in the cockpit where suddenly you're in the lead, got a break that went your way?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I'll be straight up with you, I was about to pass him. I didn't care. I was like whatever. That's a real answer for you.

Q. Obviously the end of the season has been much better than the beginning of the season for Team Penske. Was there a moment internally that was a pivot point in positivity?

JONATHAN DIUGUID: No, not really. Obviously our short



oval package is quite strong. We were strong in Iowa, Milwaukee, strong here this weekend. The calendar helped us a little bit.

As Josef mentioned, we have to improve on some other types of circuits. Today it was about execution. That's the biggest thing, showing the group and the team we could still do it. Just brings a level of excitement back.

Q. After such a difficult season, is it a relief to take victory at home, knowing you would have entered a winter with a winless year? What does that mean to you, winning at home?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Please don't be mad at me. It really didn't cross my mind. I wasn't worried about any of that. For me, genuinely you got to focus on just doing the best job that you can, everything within your control. I think the same on the team side. If you do that, you leave, you do the best job you could, you can be satisfied to some degree leaving the track. That was my only focus.

I had a little bit of a mistake there at that last pit stop. If that had hurt us ultimately for the result, I would have been bummed by that because that was in my control. But that was the focus is what I'm trying to tell you. I just was trying to hit my marks as best that I could today. That's all that was going through my mind.

Q. Up-and-down season. Did you take an extra moment to take this all in? The competition level in INDYCAR, these are hard to come by.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Definitely. I mean, not yet, to answer your question. I'm ready to go home.

Q. Josef, busy off-season coming up with a baby on the way. How much are you looking forward to not racing, just getting back and being a dad and husband again for a little while?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I mean, candidly I'm looking forward to it. I'd like to go away and start to miss it again. Sometimes that's what you want, is to miss something. That's my plan.

Q. You mentioned throughout the season keeping the faith a little bit, looking at each race and trying to take it individually. How do you think that helped you throughout the season?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I mean, I think whenever there's difficulty, I'm going to let Jonathan speak to this, it was a trying year for the team. I think for us just to stay focused. It's one thing individually, but I think it's even

harder from a whole team standpoint to do that.

JONATHAN DIUGUID: What Josef was mentioning, when you're not winning, you can question everything. You can question Josef's performance to the pit crew to the car setup to reliability, everything that affected our year. We really have to sit down and focus on our processes, try to trust in what you believe is right.

I think what we've seen over the past couple races is that the processes work. We have a little bit more work to do to get back to the top of where we're used to being. In general it's easy to get sidetracked, get down on yourself, questioning everything.

That's where the team excelled, we just sat and talked about the facts, how we need to improve together.

Q. Did you try to go whole doughnut there on the celebration?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I did, yeah. I was going to do that. I got the angle wrong. I'll just leave is there. I wanted to go in the crowd. I thought that was cool if they opened the gate. I almost lied about it. I was just going to half slide. But I messed it up, unfortunately. I was going to burn that thing to the ground, too. That's the saddest thing for me. Chevrolet probably wouldn't have been happy about that. It's probably good what happened, to be quite honest with you. I was going to go until it stopped.

Q. You said something like this was for the pigs. Can you explain that at all?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I said no one's going to understand that.

Chad Gordon, my crew chief on the 2 car, he gave an incredible pre-race speech in Milwaukee. I think you'll have to ask him about this. I don't know that I'm going to relay this speech.

It involved pig farming. He had a stuffed pig today. It was for the pigs. Yeah, I don't know how to elaborate much more on this. He gave a great team speech and we all felt it. We rallied behind that at the end of today. That's about the only way I can surmise it for you.

Q. Was this about bacon or poop?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: No, no, no. It was with team moral.

JONATHAN DIUGUID: More wholesome than that.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Very wholesome.

Q. Does this win at all change how you will look back on this season?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Boy, that's a good question.

I don't know. No. I mean, probably not, if I really think about it. Mostly because I've seen the win potential in this team all year, I mean, so many different times. Whether it's Indianapolis or it's a place like Long Beach or St. Petersburg. Actually, I think the glaring weak point for us right now is road courses. But there's been a lot of strength across the calendar.

This win, it's not even like it's validation. I saw the potential of it all year for the group. I don't really feel differently about it being realized. I'm just happy for everybody. Happy that they're able to enjoy it.

JONATHAN DIUGUID: Does keep your season winning streak alive.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I got to be honest, I didn't care about that anymore. I really didn't. I know we have that. But what does it matter? I used to be a big stats guy. I don't care about stats anymore.

That doesn't anymore, I guess is my point.

Q. Did you feel something wrong with the tires or do you feel like the tires are weaker? It was said maybe we have to talk with the company because the tires are wrong with all the competition.

JONATHAN DIUGUID: I think there were some tire issues today. Majority of the field got it right. The tires performed well all day, both the alternates and the primaries.

Not to say that they did anything wrong. Like Josef mentioned, we kind of did our homework and knew what we needed to do.

We've suffered with tire issues on short ovals from years ago, tried to understand what we needed to do. That's what paid off today, not having a tire failure. But the degradation of our tires was quite low relative to everybody else.

Q. Josef, as you head into this off-season, you told us yesterday you would love a week or two, then be able to get back at it, you've used these off-seasons to evaluate your approach. Do you have any plans on using this off-season to look at or change anything up about how you go about trying to attack 2026?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Not at the moment.

Q. About 22 laps to go, you take the lead from Scott McLaughlin. The caution flies. What was your thought there?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: At that point we were in prime position to seal the victory. That was the only thing in my mind, was let's close the deal here.

When you get an opportunity to close the deal in an INDYCAR race, you want to do that. Harder than it looks, to be quite honest with you. It's like climbing a mountain to get to that point. You put yourself in position to say, Okay, we've run this day, we are here, let's close the deal and get the result.

I knew for us, they're giving me this scorecard, this is how many laps, this is what you need to do. I'm looking at my tools, looking at everything, planning how do I need to drive this last 12 or 13 laps when it goes green.

That's what's going through my mind. We've done all this work, gotten to this point, let's close the deal and realize the victory.

THE MODERATOR: Anytime you can tie the great Al Unser Jr. in the stat sheet, that's a pretty good year. Congratulations.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Thank you.

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