

# NTT INDY NXT SERIES

## News Conference

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### Will Power

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: After earning a week away, the drivers of the NTT INDYCAR SERIES get back at it this week, round four of the 18-race championship, and a return to one of the more picturesque road courses you'll find in Barber Motorsports Park.

Our guest knows a things or two about what it takes to be successful there. Two-time champion at Barber, including five podium finishes. He heads into the weekend at a fourth-place finish at the Streets of Arlington. He's in transit, so we're going video off for now.

We welcome in Will Power. Thanks for doing this.

WILL POWER: No problem. I was actually third place at Arlington.

THE MODERATOR: Sorry. Marcus, your teammate. It was a great weekend for your team.

WILL POWER: It was a great weekend. We were very happy about that.

THE MODERATOR: Slow start to the season, but a tremendous weekend for the race team. How much are you looking forward to getting back on track?

WILL POWER: Yeah, it did look slow, but you got to remember we were leading at Phoenix. We had the incident. I think St. Pete would have been a top five, for sure.

The speed is certainly there, the capability to contend for the championship is there. It's a very good team, so...

Yes, you look back, yeah, it really hurt me in the points. It's unfortunate. But I know we're going to have chances of wins this year. I know we're going to be fighting at the front.

Pretty encouraged and very happy about working with this team, learning every weekend. We're learning each other. That's only going to get better, as well.

Yeah, showed at Arlington. Finally we put a weekend together. Stayed quit and ended up in the top four or five all weekend, finished third. That was a very good, solid weekend.

THE MODERATOR: I mentioned the success you've had at Barber. Unique place, big elevation changes, physically demanding. What has always been the key for your success at a place like that?

WILL POWER: It's certainly a flowy track, very different to what we just came from, very different to, like, St. Pete.

It's going to be an interesting weekend for me. It's the first time I've driven this thing on a road course, like a fast-flowing road course. I'm very interested to see where we stack up, if there's any work to be done. Every year you come back, it's more competitive. We kind of know that.

Yeah, it is a track I really enjoy. It's a track I've had a ton of success at. Always expect to be the pointy end there.

THE MODERATOR: Let's open it up for questions.

**Q. Will, there have been three different drivers leading the points after the first three races. Do you feel like there's any increase in parity this year?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, I would say most people, like every team, but Ganassi I suppose, we're all looking very closely at Palou. He's just a standout. If you look at the other Ganassi drivers, they're not on that level at all. I think he's the one setting the standard. That's kind of what everyone's trying to get to.

He is consistently there no matter what track.

THE MODERATOR: We've lost Will.

WILL POWER: Hello, sorry.

THE MODERATOR: We got you back.



WILL POWER: Two seconds from home. Bad cell service.

**Q. You were needling Alex after Arlington about getting an in-car camera. Not that they're hiding anything, but do you feel like they do have something still that you are still trying to figure out what they're doing?**

WILL POWER: No. I just wanted to see Alex Palou driving on a street or road course. There hasn't been an on-board on his car on a street or road course since then. Oval, Indy 500, he had one, but you can't really tell anything.

I just want to see the man in action, the man that's setting the pace, the guy that's the quickest guy. I want to look at his driving. I admire it. It was more about that. I want to see what he does.

I don't think he's hiding. Yeah, I was only joking, yeah. I think INDYCAR should want to see it, too. I don't know who decides it, FOX or INDYCAR (laughter).

**Q. After the hectic start to the season as far as having those three races in three weeks, what did not having a race last weekend do for you and the Andretti team?**

WILL POWER: Gave us a little time to catch our breath, man. For me in particular, learning a new team and all that, it's been such a, like, busy time. I've never been so busy in my life. To actually have a weekend off and digest a little bit of what needs to be worked on, what we need to be better and son on is definitely nice.

We have a few more of them coming up. A lot of obviously at this point in the season prep going into the Indianapolis cars. Trying to get that done.

We've been on the pace, I'll tell you. Definitely been on the pace. Andretti is a bloody good team. The cars are good. We're fast. We're at the front. That's all you can ask for.

**Q. You mentioned earlier this being your first road course with this new car and new team. What will you be looking to get out of Friday and Saturday?**

WILL POWER: Friday is going to be pretty important because it's the first time I've driven this car in sort of road course form. So it will be very much evaluating what is the setup like, how is it, what do we need to do to be on the pace. Yeah, it will obviously be not much running to get everything sorted.

Very quick there last year with Colton. I was right at the front. Very similar pace to me with my previous team.

Yeah, it will be very interesting to me. I really want to know what it feels like on a road course, yeah.

**Q. You said pre-season that you felt like Andretti could be a serious contender within three years. After Arlington you revised that you felt that could be the case this year. Why do you feel that so soon after only three races with the team?**

WILL POWER: Because one of those races was a short oval and we were contending for a win there. That was a weakness last year.

Man, I feel like I could have contended for a win at every race this season. So the pace is there. The ingredients are there to contend for a championship. It's been strong.

Obviously this is the next discipline coming up. It will be even more telling, where do we stand on road courses. That was a place the team felt they needed to work on last year.

Yeah, that's why I said that. I'm like we're there. The team is leading the championship. It's right there. Kyle is leading the championship. Two rough races at the beginning. If I just finish Phoenix, I'm right there.

That's the reason I said that, because I believe that.

**Q. You spoke pre-season about you've not had much time to assess what the change had really been like going from Penske to Andretti. You've had a few race weekends to evaluate. What are some of the differences in processes, the car, maybe big changes to get used to this year?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, they definitely do things a different way. There's no question. But their preparation, they're very, very a well-put-together team. I tell them, you've got everything you need to win a championship.

Just had my elbow drained. I'm sure no one is going to ask about it, health issues. That's my life. Over-sharing. Everybody knows everything going on in my life. It's kind of funny.

Anyway, what was the question (laughter)?

**Q. About some of the biggest changes you've had now that you've had a few weekends with Andretti. What are the biggest things part of this whirlwind you've had to get used to?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, well, the way they do their debriefs is very military like. They certainly have good processes

put in place. Not quite as lax in that respect as Penske. They definitely have more people there. It's interesting.

Yeah, I can see why we're running at the front, to be honest. Like the team is very good. I am very impressed. We're improving as well as we go here. Doing a lot of work.

Obviously they've also had feedback from someone from another team that's been at another team for a long time, sort of giving feedback on how the car feels from what I'm used to make it a bit easier for me to drive. I think it's something that is good for the team directionally in some aspects.

It's still an INDYCAR. I think Andretti has always been one of the top teams. There's only been two teams winning championships. I think this year I really believe I'm in a position to win a championship. Next year absolutely, absolutely. But this year we're there already. Making gains immediately.

**Q. Will, thinking about the fact you're the only guy while Palou has been at Ganassi to win a championship against him. When you get a guy like Palou, you run into a situation where all eyes are still on him, what does he force you to change or do in terms of your preparation, study habits? It's not as simple as replicating your 2022 season because you're at a new team. What does it force you to change?**

WILL POWER: You can't have a weakness ultimately 'cause he will get you. If you have a weakness, if you're not good in quallie, he's going to get you. In particular, if you're not good in the race. There's race pace, strategy, pit stops. You can't have a weakness simply. That's the only way you're going to beat that machine, that 10 Ganassi machine, man.

The driver, the crew, the strategy, the whole thing. I cannot pick a weakness of theirs. They're even really good on ovals. To beat them, you definitely are going to have to be putting it together every weekend. You cannot make a mistake.

It's funny, he just keeps racking it up. Stumble a little bit here, he's got you. He's finishing ahead of you again. There's another chunk of points. Yeah, very difficult. Good stuff, though.

**Q. Does it make you feel like you're reliving going up against Dario from 15, 17 years ago?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, quite different. Quite different time with some of the depth of teams and drivers now. If you

mis-step, you're not finishing third or something like back then. Now if you mis-step, you're finishing 17th. It's a different time.

But yeah, I would say there was Dario and myself back then, two guys that were dominating. Now you just got one guy doing that. No one else has stepped up quite to be there. Kyle is right there. Kirkwood is right there. I think our team's right there. I really think we're there.

Like look at us first two races, we're there. The road course will be very telling. Can we be a bit better on road courses.

**Q. Is there part of you that even though you know you can fight for a championship this year, you're slightly reserved, not even hesitant, but it is still kind of a wait and see because you have to see how you perform at a place like Barber?**

WILL POWER: Obviously as it unfolds here, different tracks, even in the same sort of track, they're all so different. Yeah, I think this weekend will be quite telling. Did we close the gap like we needed to on road courses. It will be interesting.

Barber is a bit unique, as well. It's a tough season. Like I said, you can't have a weakness. You cannot have one.

**Q. I know the sample size is only three races, but do you think we're looking at a year where, if we continue this trend of a lot of different winners rather than one guy or two guys, it's going to really come down to consistency maybe more than race victories that will win the championship this year?**

WILL POWER: It can definitely be that. But you got to remember, in all these places Palou is right there. He's in the top two every time. Obviously Phoenix, would have expected him to be up there at Phoenix, as well. That is a good question.

I don't think so. I don't think you can just be a top five-er all year. Again, I think you're going to have to win races.

**Q. Is that a double whammy, Palou is the guy that wins most of the races, he's also the most consistent?**

WILL POWER: Yes, he's set a very high standard. He's definitely set a standard that I haven't seen for a long time.

**Q. It really seems like this is a year where a lot of good things have happened for the series. It used to be INDYCAR had to fend out criticism, but now everybody is singing its praises.**

WILL POWER: Yeah, I'm very impressed and happy with everything that's been going on, man. The ratings, the size of the crowds. Three races in a row with those ratings, that's a big deal. You can thank FOX and Penske Entertainment.

The race at Arlington, amazing. Every stand was full. It's a pity about the wind. I don't think they could have the big screens up. The track layout, the track presentation.

That's the sort of events we need. We're just slowly getting those events all the time. Slowly getting rid of events we shouldn't be at, and creating new events that are bigger and better.

I can just say it from when I first started INDYCAR to now, it's only progressively got better and better every year. You can't say that for every sport. Ratings, depth of teams and drivers, everything, every aspect of it has just continually got better.

Man, I feel like we've taken a good step this year again with these new events and the ratings. It's good stuff. It's really good to be a part of.

**Q. When you get people involved such as NFL owners, Jerry Jones, also the Rangers, does that give the sportsfans the idea that this is good, maybe I should watch?**

WILL POWER: Being connected to huge sports teams like the Cowboys, the Rangers. Like Jerry Jones said, if we're going to do it, we're going to do it properly. Creating that event, they're held to have a very high standard and set a new standard of what our events should be.

So yes, it's all good stuff. It really is.

**Q. Looking slightly further ahead in the season, traditionally Long Beach has been a very good circuit for Andretti. Does that give you confidence going into that round as well, knowing there is a benchmark at that track?**

WILL POWER: It does, just knowing they have very good cars there. Arlington is a very similar track. I would expect to be very quick there, yes. That is definitely something that I have thought exactly what you said.

I know this car's very quick there. I actually know the car better, so I know I can be on top of it more, as well. Yeah, so I think anything but almost fighting for a podium would be very disappointing.

Obviously there's a lot of circumstance in that, but yeah.

**Q. Looking also ahead with an open test coming up at the Speedway, the first time we've seen the cars on the true speedway configuration as opposed to the shorter oval, all the years with the other team, do you think Andretti is in a good place in terms of how they're preparing themselves towards the 500 as well?**

WILL POWER: I think they will be better than last year in the car prep side of things. There's two things at Indy. Building a fast car is probably the first big deal. Can you build a car that's fast? It makes everything else easy. Then there's the setup. How does the car actually feel on basic setup stuff, mechanical, aero setup, like is it balanced.

If you just have a slow car, you can have an amazingly good-balanced car, but it can be slow, you can qualify nowhere. But then you can race really well. That's what I've seen from Andretti.

Just looking from the outside they've struggled in qualifying but been very good in the race. It says to me their mechanical side of things, aside from the way you build the car, is really good. Like, the car handles well on the track.

The question is, can we now build a car that's going to contend in qualifying? That's all about the way you build it, all the little details, bodywork, all the stuff.

We shall see.

**Q. This year INDYCAR started with a triple-header. How difficult was that as a driver going three races back to back?**

WILL POWER: I actually enjoy that stuff, keep rolling. But in my situation, it would have been nice to have a little bit of time in between those races just because I'm getting used to a new team. Gives you a bit more time to prepare and so on.

But I do like the back to back to back. You got to be on your game. You got to be ready and fit all the time. I can't say I didn't like it. I actually enjoyed it. It is hectic. It would be cool if we raced every weekend for a whole season. That would be very nice, but that is not the case.

**Q. Looking forward to the race in Barber this weekend, you're no stranger to success at the track, so what have you learned about getting the perfect lap at Barber?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, it's true. Spent a lot of time at that

track over the years, but so has everyone. The little details do matter. You definitely get down to very fine details and different lines you can take, how you approach the track.

I feel like I know it well now. I know how to extract time. Because it's a new team, car, I don't quite know how that car will feel there. It probably makes it a little easier because I know so many details about the track and how to be fast there.

I was very quick there last year. It will be more about me giving good feedback to the team to get ourselves in a good window of car setup.

**Q. Barber is kind of a special place, right, as a track, entire environment there. We lost George Barber this year. Can you talk a little bit about George, the relationship you had with him, what the track means to you.**

WILL POWER: Well, I'd always see George at the races, especially in the early days. He's always say, If there's anything I can do, anything to improve, please let me know. Such a lovely guy.

His passion for putting on an amazing event, or just the presentation of that track. You got to walk through that museum. It's amazing the way it's presented and set up.

The track, you drive in, it's one of the nicest presented tracks that we go to, the way the grass is done, the barriers, everything about it. The cool sculptures they have around the track.

I think we're lucky to have George Barber put on that event for us from the beginning. It's been a part of the INDYCAR SERIES now for, man, it's got to be 15, 16 years.

Yeah, I was sad to hear the passing of George. He was obviously a big fan of INDYCAR. Like I said, we were lucky to have him, what he's done for our sport in Alabama.

**Q. In terms of this weekend, the development you've had with the team, what are the two or three things you've picked up from the team since joining that you really feel are going to help you get to the front end?**

WILL POWER: I mean, the thing that I've picked up, which literally walking around the team within a day the first time I went to the shop when everybody is working there, they've got everything they need to win. It's there. It's a matter of putting a good weekend together. Obviously pit stop strategy.

They are a top, top team. Like there's nothing that says to

me that they're not a team that can win a championship. In some respects they have more resource than where I came from. They're very smart people.

It's no surprise to me now that I've been there that we are at the front. Like, I'm finding myself being able to be in the top five each weekend.

Honestly last year that wasn't the case for me. At times we struggled a lot. Obviously it's a very small snippet, only three races. They're three quite different tracks. This will be another track for us to see where do we actually stack up.

Very happy about being there. I really am.

THE MODERATOR: Great questions about Mr. Barber. There will be some stickers available this coming weekend that teams will be able to remember George and honor him throughout the course of the weekend. There will be many remembrances. Certainly on race day the track is getting ready for it, as well. Very deserving.

Thank you, Will, for your time.

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