

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Josef Newgarden

Jonathan Diuguid

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Josef Newgarden, now six-time winner here. Second win of 2026. 34th career win, which ties him all time for ninth place with Al Unser Jr. You also moved up to sixth in points. With the 53 laps you led tonight, that brings your total to 4,580 laps led, which means you pass the great Dario Franchitti for ninth place.

Your thoughts on another crazy race here.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It was crazy. I'm just glad we went the distance honestly. That was the big thing. With the rain, it almost turns it into a casino in some regards.

I think the fast cars finished up front going the distance. Marcus was super good. I don't know that we were much better than him. I think we were very equal. It turned into a track position game at the end because we were so comparable.

I think we had some strengths on him. I think the team executed a really great race, which is ultimately what delivered the result at the end of the day. They just did a great job. Everyone stayed composed. It was a methodical win.

THE MODERATOR: Jonathan Diuguid, president Team Penske.

From the pit stand, your thoughts on a huge night.

JONATHAN DIUGUID: A chaotic night. They asked us what we wanted to happen. I said I want it to stay green. Once we put Josef in front, I knew he wasn't going to look back. That's probably the best part of my day, when the rain didn't show back up, we got to get the whole race in.

THE MODERATOR: Eighth on back put on a fresh set of tires at the end. How worried were you looking through that? Was it problematic?

JONATHAN DIUGUID: We talked about it before the race, anything after 20 laps on tires we were going to pit and take tires. I think there were 24 on that set.

We saw some other cars earlier on in the race be able to stay out on used tires and stay up front. I knew once we had the lead and the clear air, it was going to be okay.

THE MODERATOR: Open it up for questions.

Q. How hard is it to try to guess what's going on out there with the rain.

JONATHAN DIUGUID: The biggest thing today was the rain wasn't showing up on the radar. Not on the first one. The second one, there was a blip that came up. It's difficult to predict. Good thing it was a hot, steamy and windy night in St. Louis. The track got dried up quickly.

Q. Josef, what does it mean to you to get back into Victory Lane?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Everything felt pretty good tonight. The car was fast, felt normal. It was great. I'm just happy for the team. They deserve it. It's been a hard stretch I think for everybody in the paddock. All of us are working incredibly hard to get to this point.

A win at any point, especially after this stretch, is super rewarding. That's what I'm most happy about.

Q. What did you see in the moment when Christian passed you and you came close to touching?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: So I got a little confused. I thought Christian was a lap car. I didn't realize that was Rossi that was a lap car. It's my fault. I was going to let him go. He doesn't matter, I'll just follow on him. I don't really want to be behind him. I still didn't know he was on the lead lap.

That is why when he came up to the podium, I am like, What are you doing here? How did you get here? You were a lap down. I think he got a little offended by that. I'm so glad that I repassed him. He's kind of in the way,



so...

Yeah, that's really the truth. I thought he was the lap car and Rossi was the one that I was going to fight if he was in the mix with Marcus.

Ultimately I think we were able to get back by him because we had a great car. I think Marcus equally had a super good car. I think because we went the distance, you saw the quick cars finish up front tonight.

If you're being truthful about it, I think me and Marcus were pretty close on performance. It was just going to come down to execution. The team executed when we needed to. That's what ultimately pulled off the victory.

Q. You thought that was Christian all the way to the checkered flag?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I didn't know till I got to the podium. I was confused why he was there. I got it wrong in my mind.

Q. You won Phoenix. Been so strong on the short ovals. Do you come into here I don't want to say expecting to win, but if you don't win are you more disappointed?

JONATHAN DIUGUID: We expect to win every single weekend. If we don't, we talk about it.

Obviously our short oval program has been strong. Like Josef said, the field is extremely tight right now. 28 car was a prime example of that. Getting track position was critical to the win.

No, to answer your question, we expect to be strong on short ovals. I think we've had the fastest cars in all the street course qualifying sessions, and just have missed out in the new Fast Six procedure.

The cars are quick. We're going to a permanent road course with Road America here, too. I've been working on some stuff for that race also. Our goal is to be competitive and fighting for the win every single weekend. That's what you have to do to win the championship.

Q. Is there anything about this track that fits into your wheelhouse?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Not in particular. I think when we're good here, our cars are good. You look at the history of Team Penske, they've always had strong race cars here. When you have the fastest car in the field, it's easier to win the race. That's more times than not what I've got. I think

that was the case today, too.

Q. Al Unser Jr. Next win will be tied with Bobby Unser. What does it mean to be among that company of legends with so many years to go?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I got to be honest. My reaction is more, I enjoy working with the individuals around me, I really do. That's no disrespect to the win list. You're not going to find someone that is more competitive than me. I very much know the stats anything you want to look at in INDYCAR.

I enjoy my time with my team. I really do. I like working with the team. So when I think about victories or I think about the amount of time I've been in the sport, that's what I really lean on now.

I like showing up to the track and try to do a great job. We did that tonight. It's fun to go racing. It's fun when we have fast cars, it's fun when we execute. I just want to see us do that more often going forward.

We're in a pretty good place. We keep building momentum in a lot of ways as a team. To Jonathan's point, what we expect from ourselves, I think we're building a lot of that back, which is great to see this year.

Q. You and Marcus had light contact, but nothing that sent you into the wall. How important is to it have the trust with you and all the other drivers racing up front?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I think you got to give a lot of respect to Marcus. He did a tremendous job tonight. He was super fast. I think he's become a great oval driver in this series.

If anything, I should have left him a little bit more room I think. I think I got a little bit high. Thankfully these cars, we've seen they're very robust. Even a light touch doesn't normally result in much. That's why you also see such close, hard racing. It's just the nature of INDYCAR these days.

It was a good fight. He drove a great race. It was fun to battle with him tonight.

Q. Josef, last year you're flipping on the frontstretch. This year you win. How much does it mean to you to come back and restake your claim?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It was nice to not flip. I enjoyed that part of it. I did do a sick rail grind, okay? I've got a dope highlight reel. I'm going to be honest with you guys. If I stop tomorrow, it's going to be like there's a cool list of

things I've done. I rode a car off at Road America in the kink. You haven't lived until you've done that. I don't know how many people have done a rail grind at Gateway.

I've F'd up and hit a curb on turn four in Indianapolis, smoked my foot. Put that in the highlight reel. It's been good. Nice to come back and get a win this weekend. We've had some other good moments, too.

Q. Was this drive harder than the 2016 win at Iowa?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: No. Not tonight. The car was great. I felt good tonight. I felt spicy in the car. No, tonight was not hard. It was an easy night with the team.

JONATHAN DIUGUID: (Indiscernible) and he let Rasmussen by to hit the fuel number I was talking about.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I was confused. He probably told me the right thing. I messed it up. That's going to be in the debrief. I'm going to be made fun of for that.

Q. Josef, you were so disappointed last week with a top-10 finish, biggest mover, because you felt like the car was capable of winning. To be able to produce a win with a car that was clearly capable of winning this week, how good does this feel?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It's great. We knew this was going to be a different story. We had a lot of conversations. I appreciate the team having my back and letting me go to work last weekend. They went to work. They did a lot for me.

It's frustrating when you're in a race like that, you can tell the car has the potential to do more, the team executed in a way that should have produced more. It's tough when you're the missing link. I hate that. I don't want to be that.

It was the reality of the situation. We got through it together. We knew it was going to be different when we came here. I'm happy we were able to capitalize it on this weekend.

Q. What was so different about this weekend than Detroit?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It's not Detroit. Enough said. That was the big difference (smiling). Nice, smooth oval.

Q. After practice yesterday, compared to after the win tonight, your thoughts on the new package that they brought here this weekend? Did you like it going in? Changed after yesterday's practice, the lower downforce package?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I mean, I haven't watched it back. I thought it produced a good show. I thought we had good race-ability. The key to these races is having multiple lanes. We had that all night. Provided we have that, you'll have the potential for a good race. Felt like it was a pretty decent race. I don't know what it looked like from the outside.

Yeah, I think I should reserve my thoughts, but I think the car is going to be a little harder to drive. I really do. I think as a race car driver, it's in your nature to want that. You always want more power, more difficulty. You want to be able to express your ability to drive the car more and more.

That's always my feeling when I'm asked about feedback. But when you look at the fan experience, you have to have two lanes working at this type of track. I think it's expected nowadays. It's not what it was like 20, 30 years ago. That wasn't the norm in INDYCAR. Now we've gotten to the point where people are going to expect multi-lane racing.

Provided we can do that, it's good for the show. I think we had that tonight.

Q. Josef, do you think the package maybe played into the fact you were fast?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: When you say 'fast'...

Q. The car was really fast.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: As a team?

Q. Yes.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I thought we had pretty good transfer from last year to this year. It was actually trickier. Our car last year was maybe a little bit better right off the jump, whereas this weekend we had to work on it.

You could see some other people elevated with that. When you change the package, it sometimes just migrates to a different group that was maybe closer to where you needed to be. We had to find it. I still felt like we got pretty much where we needed to be in the end, which is what your goal is.

I think coming back we can make it even better. Like J.D. said, we'll talk about it and continue to try to improve.

Q. Jonathan, what kind of challenges does a new package face for you?

JONATHAN DIUGUID: I think the biggest thing is there's a

new tire here this weekend on the right front which was in response to some of the things that occurred last year. A few other teams tested here more than we did. Those teams were strong during the race.

It's really about leaning on the notes we have from previous years and the experience we have in the truck. I know Luke, Josef's race engineer, worked very hard from when we showed up here and did the first practice session until the race. It's not like we didn't make any changes. There were large changes on the car, large setup adjustments. We have to come prepared and come with confidence and the tools.

Like Josef said, the people that are in the truck and engineering office are the people who put the car where it was today, and Josef executed for us and finished in front.

Q. Does St. Louis hold a special place in your heart? Do you circle it on the calendar?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I mean, I can only give you an honest answer. I love this track. It's one of the more fun places that we go to race, without a doubt. I love short oval racing. I don't think that's a secret.

But I don't look forward to this place more than others. I like everywhere we go, to be quite honest with you. I actually look forward to the places that I suck at the most. Wherever I've had a bad result, I look forward going to the most because I want to rectify the problem. That's the truth.

INDYCAR is a game that you have to be super versatile in. You got to be very well-rounded as a team, nimble. You got to be good everywhere. It exposes the weakness if you're not good everywhere.

I don't look forward to one place, say we got to score points here. We have to make sure that we're excellent everywhere we show up. That's what we're working on every day together.

Q. When Alex Palou runs out of fuel on pit road, is there communication? I saw you were catching him there.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I mean, I'll let Jonathan speak to that. He was in my ear the whole time.

JONATHAN DIUGUID: The timing stand did a good job. We knew the 9 and 10 were very short on fuel. Scott came in and took emergency service. We were scanning his radios. Said you're probably not going to make it to the pit box. Josef did his job.

Alex was supposed to pull over to the left, which he didn't. I think that is something we need to talk about. It caused some more problems for other people. Luckily we were right behind him so it didn't cost us any time on pit road because we got to be able to get to the pit box and go forward.

In general, having people run out of fuel in pit lane in the fast lane is not something we need to have going forward. We did a good job there and went to the front.

Q. Josef, how are you going to spend the week off?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I don't know. I don't know. I'll find out tomorrow. I'll make a list. I think everybody's going to enjoy the week off. I'm going to be doing what everybody else is doing.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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