

IMSA Media Conference

Sunday, September 22, 2024

Daytona, Florida, USA

Connor De Phillippi

Nick Yelloly

Bobby Rahal

Jesse Krohn

Philipp Eng

Press Conference



it.

CONNOR DE PHILLIPPI: Yeah, it was a monumental weekend for all of us. We never completed a 1, 2 finish, and certainly finally sealing the deal was just an amazing feeling, really.

Today it wasn't about us as drivers. It was about the team and BMW. At the end of the race, certainly we were battling. But really I was trying to go as fast as I could and keep the others behind as well. I saw them catching us. Both of us were kind of on slightly different strategies, but at the end of the day, we were both having to save energy.

In the end it worked out. We were navigating traffic and taking risk here and there, but overall we had to really just be -- it was so easy to make mistakes out there with traffic.

There was twice where I was next to a GT car, and I don't think he actually physically saw me. I don't think he wanted to be aggressive, but he just turned straight into me.

Stuff like that, I think we escaped, somehow. Everyone had at least two or three contacts. So just to complete that, not have any issues, tire failures going on, I was just praying that none of that hit us at the end and finally had some luck fall our way, which it did.

Super happy for everybody and proud to be part of the program.

THE MODERATOR: We'll skip over Bobby and go to our race winners in the No. 24, Jesse Krohn and Philipp Eng.

Jesse, why don't you start us off. Congratulations. How does it feel to win at Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

JESSE KROHN: This is such a legendary place. First of all, to be racing here in the top class with one of the greatest car manufacturers in the world with Bobby next to me, it's just unbelievable. And this is my 11th year with BMW, and for everything that we have gone through together, it culminates to this moment being here in the top class and winning this race. It means so much to me.

And I know that the team has had a hard time, as well. It's no secret we've had a tough year. So we knew that we

THE MODERATOR: Good evening, everybody. We are pleased to be joined now by our first- and second-place finishers here at the Tিরerack.com Battle on the Bricks. Identifying everybody from left-to-right, we have Connor De Phillippi, Nick Yelloly, Bobby Rahal, Jesse Krohn and Philipp Eng.

Start with our second-place finishers here. Connor and Nick, Nick, start us off. Obviously a very, very strong day for the whole program here. How big was this for the team, and can you talk about what it does for your morale as a group?

NICK YELLOLY: First off, it's a great day for BMW, obviously, to have a 1, 2 here. It was something that we were aiming for and have been obviously trying all year to get. I feel like we've had the opportunities to be at least on the podium a number of times, and things haven't quite gone our way, let's say.

So far this year and finally today we showed great pace, great strategy and drove really well, as well as a team, and of course I'm really, really happy for BMW Motorsport and RLL. RLL, obviously, are based only just down the road in Zionsville. So to have Bobby sit next to me on my left and have him celebrate a 1, 2 at the Brickyard is something really special.

For myself and Connor, it's been basically a year since we had our last podium after going on a decent run last year. Very relieved and happy for everyone back in Munich and, of course, BMW North America, as well. Onwards and upwards to Petit in a few weeks' time.

THE MODERATOR: Connor, you finished the race in the car, looked really, really close for most of it. Tell us about



had the package to do well. We just needed a little bit of luck on our side, and today it came, and it's also only because of hard work, hard work by the team and by BMW bringing us to this moment.

So it's a huge thanks to all of these guys.

THE MODERATOR: We'll slide over to Philipp. As Jesse just mentioned, hard work. How hard of work did you have to do to hold off your teammate and everybody else to win this thing?

PHILIPP ENG: Yeah, super happy for BMW M Motorsport, BMW and team RLL, for Jesse, my teammates, myself. It's been an incredible day. So many ups and downs early in the race. Much more downs than ups, actually.

But then we ended up in this amazing position to be leading the race. We knew that it was energy limited. So we had to -- or I had to save a lot of energy to make it to the end.

I knew that the cars around were in a similar position, but the team guided me very well through the whole stint. So I always knew what I had to do and how much I needed to save.

And it reminded me that it's quite an emotional win, actually, because it reminded me back to the days where life was a bit tough and buying fuel for my car wasn't so easy. It reminded me quite a lot to those times because that's what I had to do to make it to the end of the race and eventually get us the win.

Yeah, super happy for everybody. I hope this is only the first of many and the next one will hopefully follow in Petit Le Mans in a few weeks' time.

THE MODERATOR: Going to the team owner, Bobby Rahal. You've managed to win here as a driver, and won some Indy 500s and all of that with the team. How do you put this one into context?

BOBBY RAHAL: I have to tell you, given all the craziness of this week, this may rank as our greatest victory as a team. You know, I'm so pleased for these guys who have done a great job, not just this year but last year and this year.

Our relationship with BMW Motorsport, I mean, these people work night and day just as we do as a team to try to get us to this position that we achieved today. I'm just so thrilled for everyone in our team and at BMW Motorsport because it's been, you know -- it's been a tough year in a lot of respects.

Last year, we had a number of podiums, and I don't know, maybe we thought it's a little easier than it is, and this year, it's been more difficult. And to do it today, none of our competitors really had any problems and yet we were able to succeed.

This is huge. This is what you really work for. I have to say, I think going into Petit Le Mans, we have to think very positively about that. That's a long race, as this one was. But today, as I said, this may be, outside of my Indy 500 win, personally, my win, this may be the most important win we've had, and because it's just so timely and it just represents all the effort that all of us have put in, these guys, RLL and of course BMW Motorsport. Great day for us.

Q. Given the craziness, to put it mildly, this week, how critical was it to pick up the first 1, 2 on-track win with this car?

BOBBY RAHAL: Hang on, remember, we had a number of second places last year.

Q. This year, I think they got the first podium.

BOBBY RAHAL: I know, but we had numerous podiums last year. Regardless of what happened this week -- I won't go into that. If anybody wants to ask, I won't go into that.

But all these guys, us, these young drivers, Motorsport, everybody has worked their butt off to have a day like today. And we've had where we qualified well and just in the race, didn't quite work out.

For our team, and I think everybody in Munich and for everybody in Zionsville who works day-in and day-out on this program, this is huge for us. Because this is -- I don't want to say retribution, but this is reward for all of the effort that everybody has put in.

And so I'm so happy. I'm so happy for these guys, for our team, for the people in Munich who bust their butts for this program. I'm really, you know, I couldn't be happier.

Yes, I'm happy for us. I'm happy for me. Happy for us. But I'm really happy for the whole group. Because I, frankly, think we've worked hard and we earned it, and today was a great day for us.

Q. The pass for the lead, would you elaborate how you set that up? And second part, any fuel concerns or was it fine from your perspective in the car?



PHILIPP ENG: You mean the pass to the 40? It all happened so quickly, sometimes it's hard to recall after the race. I set it up already in turn 7, I believe, and it went all the way down to -- what's that corner? Turn 12? I just tried to get a good exit out of turn 12. In the laps early, I saw that he always tried a round line into that corner, into turn 13. Once I was as close as I was, that lap, I just took a chance and went for it, and it paid off. And he was very fair -- I don't know who was in the car at the time -- Deletraz? He's very fair. Very hard racing, but very fair racing with him.

I didn't get to hear the intercom what was going on.

BOBBY RAHAL: I heard, it was intense.

PHILIPP ENG: The team, they instructed me extremely well, what I needed to do and how much I needed to save. But I knew that we were really critical on energy. If I wasn't wearing gloves, I would have bit my fingernails off, probably.

Q. What do you think made this weekend be what it is considering you guys have had a lot of unlucky breaks over the course of the year and everything sort of just came together?

BOBBY RAHAL: Well, I mean, I think everybody works hard. I spoke to the guys in practice and, you know, Philipp said to me, The car is really good over the long run.

So he may not have had the one-lap pace or whatever, and that made me feel good because obviously that's pretty important. As I said, we just came back from a test at Road Atlanta, right, guys, and found some things there. The amount of work that our team, our drivers, our associates at Motorsport have put in is phenomenal. It's tough.

I just think that today we unloaded pretty good off the trailer. We had pretty good cars and made some tweaks here and there. These guys did a super job. I just think we all -- as I said, I asked, What do you think?

Yeah, I think we are good in race conditions. I think we are pretty good. We qualified fifth and eighth, I think it was, and we weren't the fastest. Three or four tenths off the Acuras, I think, was the fastest. But come race day that didn't matter, did it. Pit stops were good. Strategy was good.

To win one of these races, everything has to be in sync, and everything's got to work. And today was one of those days for us. And I just can't imagine, really, a better place for us as a team, for BMW, the Indianapolis Motor

Speedway.

As I said, I don't think you can overstate the importance and the value of this facility on your resume, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. That means a lot. And to win here, yeah, just awesome, and I'm so pleased. As I said earlier, all the work that everybody has put in, today was a good day.

Q. I believe you were one of the first to go on slicks after the rain. What role did that play in the overall strategy and scheme?

JESSE KROHN: I mean, they asked if I could do it. They said, What do you think? Are you happy to go out on slicks?

I was quiet for a while, and I said, Yeah, let's do it. Because it really looked like it's going to be the time for slicks.

Obviously, like Bobby said, everything has to go together so this played a big part of how we ended up where we did. It was probably the sketchiest six laps of my life. I just -- every time I even thought on going on power, I had wheel spin and the car was almost gone off.

So it was super tough. It was the right call from the team. That saved us a pit stop. Every time we stop, there is a chance of things going wrong. So definitely the right call, and it was hard on my shoulders, a lot of responsibility, but in these races in IMSA, you've just got to make sure that you are there in the last two hours with the car in one piece, and today we did it as a team.

PHILIPP ENG: Yeah, not on the phone -- you can curse, you know. Because I could see the word on his lips. (Laughter.)

Q. Was there any communication from the pit stand toward the end about the racing and the closeness of the combat between the two cars?

JESSE KROHN: There was a lot. Actually, I was listening to it, and I had to take off the headphones because it was stressful. I was like, I've done my job. Let it play out.

There was a lot of talk about the fuel, what the competitors are doing and how much fuel we have to save if we are going to make it at some point. It sounded like there's no chance, but Philipp just drove on fumes. And I don't know how he had the pace with the fuel numbers he was achieving, but this was really a great, great drive by Philipp and shows what a driver he is.

BOBBY RAHAL: I have to say, these guys know about rule No. 2 at RLL, which is don't take your teammate out. Although I have to say, when you pass on the pit exit, pass, I think it was, Philipp, I go, Oh, boy, I'm going to hear about this.

And then when Philipp passed -- went to the lead, I said, Okay, it's all evened out. I'm not going to have to deal with this.

No, they drove as professionals, they really did. I don't know if anybody said, hey, do this or do that or don't do this or don't do that. But they are professionals.

Today we really saw the best of this group today, these drivers who are super competitive, super smart. And, yeah, it was just a thrill to watch them do their thing.

Q. Now I have to ask, if Rule No. 2 is don't hit your teammate, what's Rule No. 1?

BOBBY RAHAL: I can't tell you.

PHILIPP ENG: Team secret.

BOBBY RAHAL: Team secret. Maybe I'll tell you privately what Rule No. 1 is.

Q. For Jesse and Philipp, you won in GTE cars before. What does it mean to win overall in a top class?

PHILIPP ENG: Well, I can remember the day very well that I got the call that I'm in the program. I was super happy. And the dream was to at least win a race, and here we are today. So it's a very special moment in my career to be sitting here right now and to be celebrating a victory for us. But a double victory for the brand is incredible, and that's what we are all working for.

Q. Philipp, I saw your great move for the lead on the 40, but I somehow missed -- at the last restart, it seemed like was the 40, 25, 24. I missed how you got by the 25.

PHILIPP ENG: Connor was a bit stuck behind traffic in the last corner coming back on the banking, and I trusted a run on him. I was lucky, I think, and then it was very fair. We were side-by-side going into turn one. We raced very hard, but we raced very hard as teammates, and we know there is something bigger than us. Congratulations again and thanks for joining us.

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