

IndyCar Media Conference

Tuesday August 16, 2016

Juan Pablo Montoya Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Appreciate everyone hopping on the call today. Appreciate Juan for being on the call as well. Really excited about this weekend's ABC Supply 500, taking place at Pocono Raceway August 20th to the 21st.

Juan is actually, from everything I've found, the only driver to win a pole at Pocono Raceway in IndyCar and NASCAR Sprint Cup Series competition. He actually won the race in 2014. He finished third last year. He has the best average finish among active drivers. He holds the record for qualifying here at Pocono Raceway with a speed of 223.92 miles per hour for a single lap.

Juan, you've obviously had success the last two years here at Pocono Raceway. What are you most looking forward to as you come back to the Tricky Triangle this weekend?

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: It's an exciting raceway for us. This is a little different, the first year we didn't test there. It's going to make it harder and challenging that first practice to get up to speed.

But it's always fun, because as you call it, the Tricky Triangle, for us turn one is a banked corner that creates a lot of understeer in the middle of the corner. Turn three, by being a flat corner, the car gets really nimble. It's finding that right balance for both corners is always really tough.

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and take questions for Juan.

Q. Could you compare Roger Penske with other owners that you've had. You spent so much time with Chip Ganassi. Can you compare how they do their business.

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: I think both of them are really interesting owners. I've been lucky enough to be always in one of the best teams.

You look at my career. I started with Chip back in IndyCar, then went to Formula One with Williams, Formula One with McLaren, I came back with Chip, now with Roger. I've been in a way always blessed. All four of them have been like my main owners.



They all behave different. They all have different ways of getting the best out of you. But they all seem to work.

I think the key thing is they all have great people behind it.

Q. You mentioned Frank Williams. Going from F1 to NASCAR and IndyCar, how much different is the Formula One ownership than, say, Roger Penske?

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: I mean, they're smaller teams here than Formula One. Formula One you have to build a car. You have a lot more employees, you have a lot more overhead. It's a little bigger.

But it works the same way. You end up working with the same kind of people, the same engineers. You always end up with the same problems. It doesn't matter whether they spend \$300 million a year or \$10 million. You're always going to drive the car, always push it to its limits, you're always going to find issues with the car.

Q. How much credit do you give your owners when it came to jumping from each of the classes that you've done? Such a difficult transition. You've done it so well. How much credit do you give the owners in helping guide you through each series?

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: I think I've been blessed for them to give me the opportunity. Same thing, when I went to NASCAR, Chip gave me the chance. We ran well, we made the Chase and everything, then we had a couple difficult years at the end with all the changes.

At the same time it was great for Roger to give me the chance to come here. Roger, he really believed in me.

I'll be honest with you. The first time I got back in an open-wheel, an IndyCar, I remember at Sebring, I couldn't believe how weird it was. I was shocked because I really thought I was driving a stockcar, I'd be okay.

When you lay so much further back, it was stressful. It was so weird to drive. Now it's like nothing. I remember when I did the couple races for RP in '14 in NASCAR, it was really weird getting back in those cars.

You can't take merit from every driver. Every series is

tough. You have to make sure you can perform the best you can.

Q. You've had success at Pocono when you were in the Sprint Cup Series. Obviously you've done well so far in the IndyCar Series. What is it about this track that suits your driving style? What is it about this track that you enjoy that seems to bring out pretty good results in you?

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: I think all the ovals do. Even back in the day, if you look at my results back in the day, the toughest things were the road courses. I used to even have problems qualifying back in the day. Street courses I'm always really good. Ovals I always exceed expectations.

I don't know. I like them. I think I'm very technical with the car. I really know what I want out of the car. Not so much that I'm really technical, but I'm very picky of what I want out of the car. If you have good people working with you, you can find that, it makes a big difference.

Q. Looking at your results the last couple of races, it's been a struggle. What are the reasons for that? Do you have optimism coming to Pocono because of the past success you've had?

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: If you look at the past results, I should have been on the podium in Toronto. We missed a caution. Then I was recovering. I was running side-by-side, on the outside of somebody in Toronto, and the 41 car was parked in the wall, so I had nowhere to go.

Mid-Ohio, same thing. Everybody pitted. They left me out.

It's been tough because we had cars fast enough to be there. My race pace was really good. Actually my race pace is better than my qualifying pace. I feel we don't do a good enough job in qualifying getting what I need out of the car. Always too much understeer. Always a struggle.

I think it's interesting. I think we can definitely do a good job. It's pretty exciting.

Q. Is it a little frustrating because obviously your teammates are ranked one, two and three in the points? Is it frustrating watching them have the success they're having?

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: No, I'm not really struggling for pace. I mean, we've been making the wrong calls. You look at Iowa. I was the fastest car there out of our team cars. I was easily going to finish, worse-case scenario, second. I felt I was a couple changes away from challenging Newgarden there. We had a problem

with our engine.

It's when you go every weekend, you're there, you're competitive, things just go wrong, there's nothing you can do.

Q. Your employer for next year has become a big source of speculation as guys are working on deals. Is there an update? Do you know where you're going to be next year? Dialogue with Penske?

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: No, I don't know. I mean, as I said, they're going to wait until after the season to make decisions and stuff. We'll see what happens.

I'm looking at a few options and trying to decide what is the best for me personally.

Q. It's your desire to return to IndyCar, that's your top option?

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: Oh, yeah, I love IndyCar. I want to make sure I can be in a winning car. Yeah, absolutely.

Q. By the same token, talking back and forth with Penske, is it a desire to return there? Do you know what their desire is for you?

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: No, we haven't really spoken about it too much. I know everybody seems to like me there and I think I've done a really good job. I won the Indy 500 for them last year. They hadn't won it since '09. I nearly won the championship. As a team we didn't execute well enough and it cost us.

Personally I think we have the potential to keep going, doing great things. I think my pace is really good. This year, everything that can go wrong has gone wrong. You look at Simon last year, it was the same way. This year, seems to be my turn.

Q. I understand in May drivers had the opportunity to sit at a table behind the windshield that the series is thinking about developing. Did you get to try that out? If so, what were your thoughts on it?

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: I haven't seen it. Put it this way, I haven't even seen it. I heard about it. I don't know if it's ready for next year. I have no idea.

I mean, it's a tough call because you want to make sure you don't create more issues by doing so. You know what I mean? You don't want to create a different issue by using that.

Q. It's been an interesting year with restarts. Guys have gotten really aggressive on restarts this year. Last year at Pocono we saw eight-wide because of the straightaway. How do you handle restarts? Do

you expect to see those kind of aggressive restarts from the field on a regular basis on Sunday?

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: I think that restart was like a one-off deal. Some people were not aware they were coming to the green. It kind of bottled up. It ended up being a crazy start.

I think you're going to have movement, but not as crazy as that. You might see three- or four-wide, but that's a lot already. Through turn one, you might get lucky to get two cars around there.

Q. When you talk about passing zones at Pocono, is there any better place to pass, or is it pretty much the same all the way around the track?

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: The easiest pass is on the main straight. Probably plays a big part how you drive there. Timing with the passes is really important, especially when you run in a pack. Sometimes when you're by yourself pushing to make a pass, you end up causing a bigger issue.

It's what it is, you know. It's a work in progress.

Q. You alluded to last year, the championship, where you had a chance to win, weren't able to execute. How tough was that? Is that something you dwelled on in the off-season? At what point did you put it out of your mind coming into this season?

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: It was what it was. I mean, it's tough, but it's what it is. I won a few like that, I lost a few like that. So move on. It's what it is.

Q. Is it something that the team has tried to learn from a little bit this season?

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: I think as a team, I think we learned a lot. I think they'll be much better prepared going into the last race to make sure we all work together so we can win the championship as a team.

But we'll see what happens. If you look at Dixon, been kind of lucky. He's been very fast, but he's made few mistakes. The gap to a different competitor from a different team is bigger. It might just come down to Simon and Will.

THE MODERATOR: Juan, on behalf of everyone at Pocono Raceway, we look forward to seeing you this weekend. We thank everyone for their time on the call. We'll see you at Pocono Raceway Saturday and Sunday.

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: Thank you very much.