

IndyCar Media

Conference

Saturday August 20, 2016

Will Power

Juan Pablo Montoya

Simon Pagenaud

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started with our morning media availability with some of the Team Penske drivers.

We're joined by Juan Pablo Montoya, Will Power, and the championship leader driver Simon Pagenaud.

Juan, we'll start with you. Obviously not the way you wanted to end the session today. Tell us what happened.

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: Just on cold tires. Simon was coming. We just misjudged the situation, make sure we didn't get in Simon's way. We tried to hurry up. It was cold tires, that was it.

Q. What does that do as far as qualifying?

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: No idea. At this point I have no idea if we'll make it or not. Just put ourselves in a hole again.

But it's okay. We'll work through it.

THE MODERATOR: Up to that point, how was your session?

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: It was really good. Our car was really good. Made a lot of gains for the race. Think we'll have a really good racecar. I think we're going in the right direction.

THE MODERATOR: Will, how did your day go?

WILL POWER: It was good. For us we really need to use all the time because we didn't test here. We got through a few items, did one run in quality trim, but not exactly where we want it to be. So, yeah, a little bit of work to do honestly.

The car is quite nervous right now. Need to kind of work it out.

THE MODERATOR: Simon, as the championship



leader, review your session this morning, how things look for you.

SIMON PAGENAUD: It's been okay. It was a good, long session. My heart got a little excited a few times behind Hunter-Reay and Juan. Glad we got out of the way without any problems.

The car was decent. We improved it throughout the session. We're really looking at making it good for the race. We still need to make more adjustments to get it to a good balance for race running. So far so good. I think the Hondas showed a lot of strength again in this configuration. I think it's going to be a pretty exciting race.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up to questions from the media.

Q. Simon, how are track conditions so far?

SIMON PAGENAUD: The track?

Q. Slippery or grip?

SIMON PAGENAUD: Yeah, I think the track will improve for us for sure throughout the weekend. I remember it was similar last year. You start the weekend. We need to put our Firestone rubber down to help ourselves really. I thought it was okay. I thought it was decent.

It was very good conditions: no winds, pretty nice temperature. There was not much difference between all three corners, which is unusual here. Might be different in qualifying this afternoon.

Q. Sorry to bring it up, but a year since Justin has passed. Are you pleased with the research that IndyCar is putting into cockpit protection? What direction would you like to see that go?

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: I think the series has done a really good job always about safety. They always looking at better things to make our series better.

I think in the last 10, 15 years we come a long, long way. You can't prevent everything. It's moderating. There's always a danger to it. As drivers, I think we're willing to accept that it's never going to be 100%. I think they're looking at the future, what's going to be the next thing that we need. But it's good.

They care for us. As a driver, sometimes you always want more, but I think they done a good job.

Q. Would you like to see the Triple Crown return? They had it from '71 to '89, Pocono went off the schedule. When they came back, it got revived. Would you like to see that again?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I mean, you got to have the track to do it.

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: I think Michigan would be a cool place since they repaved it. I think that would be a good place to race. I raced there. That was a cool place.

Q. Simon, 58-point lead. Do you feel this championship is within your control?

SIMON PAGENAUD: Yeah, I mean, you could look at it several ways, right? I'm just going to do what I've been doing. You know, obviously Will is in a good position, too. Everybody's in a good position.

But we've been strong all year. No reason to change anything. At the end of the day, the best guy will win.

It's within my control. What I can do is my control. I can't really take care of the outside factors. So whatever happen that I can't control, it would be whatever.

But, yeah, I feel like what I can control, I feel like we're in good shape.

Q. Will, how frustrating is it at Mid-Ohio you finish on the podium and actually lose points to Simon?

WILL POWER: That's how it's been this year. I think Chevy has definitely had the advantage over Honda at pretty much all the tracks except for the superspeedways. And Penske has been very strong on top of that. Obviously the guys you're battling are your teammates.

But, yeah, you know, Mid-Ohio, we had a great race going. I kind of slept on the restart. I should have been on top of that a lot more. Probably would have never presented the situation for him to pass me. But that's racing. He did a good job.

58 points... Still a lot of points on the table. That's obviously a pretty good lead, though. We're just going to race these last four races, race how I race, just hope to have a shot at the end.

I want to be there with a shot at Sonoma. That's the aim.

Q. Simon, you were behind Ryan and Juan.

Expand on the views. What is the perception when you see debris coming at you? A lot of drivers have been in that spot when the big oval accidents happen.

SIMON PAGENAUD: It's human instinct at this point. You see the smoke and you know the guy is going somewhere. The difficulty with the smoke is to see where that car is going. Obviously it's always going to go toward the outside, so you know that. But the difficulty is to pinpoint when the car is going to bounce back to the other side of the track.

When you don't see because of the smoke, it's quite difficult. You can't dodge the debris. It is what it is. You get lucky or not. That's all I can say really.

But, yeah, I mean, I was really close. There weren't too many debris flying, which was a good surprise.

Q. Juan, you hold the track record of 223.9.

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: Is it?

Q. Yes. Is that in jeopardy today? The question is, can you break it?

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: No. Can we break it? No. I hope nobody does today (laughter).

They ran 221.9. I don't think they'll get there. I hope they don't. I'll be happy if I can make it out (laughter).

Q. How will the approach to Texas be different, if at all, especially for Simon and Will, because you'll leave here knowing where you are in relation to the points, and you'll go there knowing where you are in relation to the resumption order? Is that going to be different at all?

SIMON PAGENAUD: I mean, no. I think you just go race. I think I start 15th because I was in the crash with Josef. We had to change the wing right before the red came out. I think we're starting 15th. I just know I have to go to the front.

It's going to be a shorter race, so I'm going to have to go pretty quick. I just know in my head that's what's going to happen. The cars, we don't really have the luxury to change anything with the race. I was very happy with my racecar there. Just going to have to go, personally.

WILL POWER: Yeah, I mean, it's interesting. My car was not that good. I do get to make some changes. We only get a 10-minute session. But, yeah, it's going to be short, so you definitely have to go quickly.

Q. Will, you alluded to battling a teammate for the championship. Talk about how it's maybe affected your relationship with Simon. What is different

battling against somebody who isn't a teammate for the points championship?

WILL POWER: I don't think you hate me (laughter).

I've been in that situation before with Helio. It's actually good. Nothing's changed. You know, we don't talk. We don't talk. No, I'm just kidding (laughter).

Yeah, I mean, obviously you get to see all his data and information, what he's doing. That can be good and bad. Sometimes it's an advantage if you're struggling. But it can go the other way, too.

It's good. It's expected, honestly. Every year you come into the season expecting to battle with your teammates. I had that with Juan last year.

I think the older you get, the less you kind of worry about personalities and all that. You do your business. You don't weigh too much on emotional stuff between people. It obviously doesn't matter. You get out on the track and the best guy is going to win. It's as simple as that. Whoever does win, good on 'em, because they deserve it.

SIMON PAGENAUD: In my opinion, it's a bit like a marriage, to be honest.

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: Are you married?

SIMON PAGENAUD: No. I imagine how it is (laughter).

I mean, we're going to have to be teammates for a long time, hopefully for a long time. We come to the track every week. If we don't get along, it's going to be a nightmare.

I think at the end of the day we both want to be fighting for the championship. We all want to fight against each other for the championship. That means our car is the best and we've done a good job. We have the shot at the end to try.

I think it's the perfect situation. There's no point on hating each other. It's not going to make us any faster. Personally, that's what I think.

Like Will said, you just do your business, focus on your thing, and the best will win.

Q. The question earlier about the speeds, Juan, when you set that track record, you were with the original Dallara DW12 kit. Last year with the intro of the custom kits, speeds are off four to five miles an hour. This year without the draft, you're probably in the same ballpark.

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: No, they're a little better.

They're quicker this year. The cars have evolved a lot. With the aero kits, we've created drag on the car, a lot more downforce. The cars are getting more efficient as the manufacturers evolve the kit.

Q. Will touched on earlier that your car is touchier. Are you seeing anything different with the dome skid here as opposed to what we saw in Indianapolis?

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: No, I don't know. It's the same thing.

WILL POWER: It's the same.

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: Just a racecar. Drive it and see what it does.

THE MODERATOR: With that we'll wrap it up.