

IndyCar Media Days

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Will Power

Media Day Presser



Q. Will, we've been having all the drivers come in and start by kind of recapping the 2016 season and then what you're looking forward to transitioning into this year.

WILL POWER: All right. I guess starting the first race --

Q. That'll be quick --

WILL POWER: Nothing happened (laughing). Yeah, I mean, it was definitely an interesting season for me. Normally I turn up to the year very fit and ready to go. That was definitely not the case last year. I just kind of wasn't on top of my game, just struggling with some physical stuff like fatigue, and then missing the first race. But I think going into Phoenix, which was really my first race, was more about am I physically fit enough to do this whole race because it's a very physical track, and kind of took that approach on a few races starting from there, which was a very different approach for me, kind of puts you in a position to be a little bit more conservative, and gave me insight into that can be a good thing. You know, and things really started to flow for me after Detroit.

I kind of thought at that point if I want to have a chance of winning the championship, I really need to have a run like Pagnaud had, which I thought was -- which was an unbelievable run. I didn't think that was possible. It actually happened, though, started flying well. Yeah, I have to say Pocono was my favorite race of the year, best win. Really enjoyed it, and was starting that three-race run for the championship at the end. But unfortunately the last two races were DNF's. Literally three races' worth of DNF's there in the last three races, so that kind of ruined any chance.

Q. How's your wife and how's fatherhood?

WILL POWER: Yeah, fatherhood is amazing. In the hospital there, when you see your child born, there's nothing that can explain that. That was just an amazing experience. And then you've got to take him home and realize that you don't know what you're doing. All the tips and everything everyone gives you just goes out the window, and you're just trying to keep your head above water, basically. But it's cool.

You've got Liz's mom standing there and her best friend standing there, so they're doing some shift work. It takes a lot of people to look after this little tiny boy. But it's great. Enjoying it a lot. Really am.

Q. Talk about this season.

WILL POWER: This season, we hardly did any testing in the off-season, and not much has changed. The aero freeze, really, we can't do much on that front. I think the manufacturers probably can do a little bit on the engine front. So you're turning up with very similar packages for every where this season. So I think it's -- yeah, it's going to be about fine-tuning -- I think that's what happens in the situation where everyone has the same formula for a few years, for a couple years. It becomes more competitive because everyone has a really -- everyone has their good baseline setups. It becomes more about getting the little details right, and I think that's the type of season that it will be.

Q. When you have teammates to the talent level that there are at Penske, how critical is it to start the season off and immediately get on the click, carry that momentum all the way through?

WILL POWER: Yeah, it's actually -- I feel like whenever you win the first race, it seems to just set something in place to help the crew and the team around on your car with confidence and probably the driver, as well. But I don't necessarily think you have to go out there and win the race. I mean, you can definitely have slow starts, as you've seen Dixon in the past, and come on at the end, and myself last year. It's always -- everyone is antsy at the first race to just go out and charge, but I think you've still just got to know that it's -- is it 16- or 17-race series? 17-race series, and every race counts the same amount of points apart from Indy and Sonoma.

Q. Is that something you had to learn over the years is to rein yourself back a little bit those first couple races, not be overaggressive?

WILL POWER: Yeah. It's more like -- yeah, I think it's more like as far as how hard you push like during practice sessions and qualifying. I think in the race you kind of just through experience know the situation and what it is and how aggressive to be. Yeah, I just think you learn that it's not -- you have to do well here or you have to -- I think it's a mistake I did last year. I got to the Grand Prix race here at Indianapolis and said, right, I have to win here if I'm going to have a shot at the championship, which was absolutely not true, so I don't think there's any point in the year, apart from the last race, unless you're right on the cusp with two to go

or something that you have to do something. I mean, you can only do your best.

Any time you're saying to yourself, I have to do this, you're going to get yourself in trouble I feel like.

Q. Helio was in here just a few minutes ago, obviously one of the older guys out here but fit as ever. Do you see yourself running out here five, six, seven years down the road?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I don't know. It's kind of a see how it goes thing for me. You know, like see how I'm doing and what I feel like. You know, it's impressive how long Helio and TK have done in the series, I think. Yeah, it's amazing that they're still able to go out there and win races and be competitive and championship contenders past 40. It's good to see. It really is.

Q. While you were taking pictures out there of us, Helio was telling us that his doctor gave him a physical yesterday and told him he was as healthy as a 19 year old. You may have to step up a little bit.

WILL POWER: Yeah, he looks like it, apart from the hairline and all that. (Laughter.) Wrinkles, gray.

Q. With a young driver like Newgarden coming in, you were the young guy when you came into the team, how does that change the chemistry among all four of you, and do you think you're going to have to work a lot harder now that he's there and eager?

WILL POWER: No, I think you're already doing everything you can to be competitive. I think he's going to be very strong. He's a young guy. He's fast, so he's got the energy. And you know, he hasn't been in a team like this before in a situation where he has three other teammates that are very competitive and experienced. You know, I think he'll learn some stuff off each of us like we will learn off him.

It definitely creates a very strong combination of drivers, though, within Penske. It really does.

Q. You've been obviously very competitive in the old race across the street, but I know that is really high up on your list to try and accomplish. What's it going to take for you to win the 500 this year?

WILL POWER: Yeah, it's good for the day. You've got to do all the homework and the hard work to be competitive and then put yourself in that position. I've won two 500-mile races in the last couple years, and I've just got to get this one. That'll do it. Yeah, just one more.

Q. How is Liz?

WILL POWER: Yeah, she's doing well. Yeah, she's

had a few issues with infection and stuff.

Q. A little more complicated than the normal --

WILL POWER: It was definitely, yeah, definitely more complicated. Definitely had some issues that we're trying to resolve now, hopefully without surgery. We'll see.

Q. Are you feeling better at this point than you were last year?

WILL POWER: Yeah, fitness wise, definitely. Definitely fitter. So yeah.

Q. Has that been something you've had to get adjusted to, different diet or different workout routine? Is that something that took a little bit to come to the realization that I have to do something different?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I had to, yeah, definitely work on the diet stuff and then just have like a month rest this year when I finished the season, doing nothing but relaxing and getting myself energized and then back into it and being very smart about my exercising, not pushing too hard, too far, where you fatigue yourself.

Q. Did you have some sort of food allergy they found?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I was tested for a lot of stuff, actually. Dairy was one of them, one of the issues, and there's a few other things in there that was not good that I was allergic to. Yeah, food was a part of it, and then pushing your body too hard was a part of it in the off-season last year, you know, before Christmas.

Q. Have you learned how to put together cribs and baby furniture and all that?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I did. I put the crib together, and I've been getting pretty good at without the instructions putting together little, what do you call them, bassinets.

Q. Have you been perfecting the diaper pit stop?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I'm actually getting good at it.

Q. What's the time on that?

WILL POWER: All I can say is the pee-pee tepee does not work. That thing just falls off all the time. It's like a bad design. You may as well just lay a towel over it. But yeah, I've been caught out a couple times there. It's like dropping a wheel nut. It's like, oh, God, again, no. But yeah, you get good at it. Lift the legs up, put it under there, tabs. Yeah. Yeah, it's unbelievable, such a little thing needs so much maintenance. It's unbelievable. There's nothing else on earth that requires so much attention at a young age.