

IndyCar Media Conference

Sunday March 12, 2017

Sebastien Bourdais

Dale Coyne

Simon Pagenaud

Scott Dixon

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started with today's Verizon IndyCar Series post-race press conference. Joined now by our third-place finisher, Scott Dixon. This is Scott's 90th career podium finish, and obviously a great way to start the season.

Scott, take us through the race, then your obviously good start to the 2017 season.

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, it was definitely tough today. Fumbled at the initial start. Probably should have started in second gear instead of first. Got a ton of wheel spin. Lost some momentum there.

Hinch did a great job on the first two restarts to get the lead there. You could tell Will was struggling for pace compared to us. Hinch checked out, then we finally got past Will. I think he had some issue going on as well. Then started to close the gap.

Then obviously at that critical time where you're trying to push the window for the pit stop, they threw a caution, which I still haven't seen exactly why they threw the caution. There was a small amount of debris in turn four, which typically race control, if it's not on the racetrack or going to cause any issues, they'll definitely let you get through the pit stop cycle, especially at that moment.

The leaders are trying to obviously stretch the window a bit, then you have all the back markers that are pitting early to try to get lucky with a yellow. The yellow fell, which hurt us.

On the restart, actually locked the rear tires. Nearly spun in one. Actually sent the engine into anti-stall, but stalled the engine. Luckily we got refired, slipped back to 14th or something. I'm not exactly sure how far we dropped back to.

Definitely a tough day to, you know, regain some spots there. Got some on track. We took a bit of a heavy strategy shift to try and pit early, get some quick laps out of the way, try to jump that group of four or five cars



that were going pretty slow, which paid off.

Had a pretty good race with Hinch there, Helio, passed some others to get back to third. At that point, with how the strategy was, the first two kind of checked out. All in all, good recovery.

Great weekend for the GE LED team. Good speed. Good to see the Ganassi group as a whole had really good speed, with four cars qualifying in the top 10. When you have a strategy like that, it's maybe easier just to draw out of a hat.

THE MODERATOR: What were the things that you and the team talked about last night heading into the race, your keys to success?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, I think everybody was a little unsure with what the weather was going to do. I know in the warmup, you try some engine settings and things like that to obviously combat if it was raining. So you kind of adjust to those.

Then with some of the settings you kind of have to flip a coin whether you're going to actually put them in for the race.

Luckily the weather was good all weekend. Great to see so many fans out here on the weekend. Pretty much, you know, I think a stellar weekend for all across the board.

The preparation, I think, was good for our team.

THE MODERATOR: Joined also by Simon Pagenaud, from Team Penske, who finished second in today's Firestone Grand Prix of St. Petersburg.

A new situation for you coming in this season as the Verizon IndyCar Series champion, and able to back it up with a strong finish in the first race. How confident do you feel after this first race?

SIMON PAGENAUD: Yeah, it was a difficult weekend. Certainly one of the most difficult we had in a long time.

It's funny, it was such a well-oiled machine last year. You throw one new component into it, in this case it's the brakes, and everything goes back to zero. You got to work on it again.

That's basically what happened this weekend. It threw

us off. We had problems Friday. Couldn't really tell what the car was doing because of the brakes. Then we fixed it, I would say, Saturday morning.

Then we made an adjustment for the problems we were having Friday. Then it was a disaster in qualifying. So we regrouped. That's where this team is incredible. It's definitely a champion team for regrouping like they did, understanding the issue we had in qualifying. This morning in the warmup, I was back home in my car. It was great to get that feeling back.

The race, the car was fantastic. We got very lucky at the start, I would say. We went through the chaos. I think God had something to play with it actually, because he put the car back where it needed to go. Very lucky.

Then after that, we were a bit lucky with strategy. But that was actually the plan. So thanks to Kyle Moyer and Ben Bretzman for their work on that. They gave me some clean air.

We had to save quite a bit of fuel to manage till the end. Bourdais was untouchable today. It's 1-2 French. Sorry for the French Revolution, guys. I'm very happy for him. It's been his hometown actually. He's been here since he moved to America. With Dale Coyne and Honda, they've shown a lot of strength. Fantastic for them.

I wish was 1 for me, 2 for him. Next time maybe. But very happy for him. Very happy for second. We started second last year as well. Hopefully it's our good luck charm.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Simon and Scott.

Q. Scott, Honda had four out of the top five today. Pretty well-documented last year that Chevrolet dominated Honda most everywhere. I know you've only been with them for a short time, but what do you attribute their strong race right out of the box to?

SCOTT DIXON: A little surprised actually in competition performance this weekend. We thought it would have been stronger, especially come qualifying. We know there's always some change over Friday to Saturday, typically, with what we're used to with them.

Honda has done a very good job, I think, in the off-season. I think they had definitely more of a deficit starting last year because they ran kind of an older engine for three or four races.

There's still a lot to learn, I think, on our side, and some areas to definitely improve. But I don't know. I think just the engine's really strong. I think the aero kit is basically in a freeze, nothing has changed on that. Configurations are slightly different. Maybe they've zoned in a little bit better and a little more consistent

drive. I think they've made big gains on the engine.

Q. Scott, how much would you attribute the Honda gain, would you give credit to Ganassi for a lot of that? Four really stout cars moving from Chevrolet to Honda. Should Ganassi take some credit for helping tilt the field towards Honda?

SCOTT DIXON: I'm sure Chip would say that, yeah.

No, I think Honda end of last year were very strong. But when you take four good cars from Chevy and then move them to Honda, that sways a little bit, too.

Generally, we were a little surprised, I think, with how our cars hit the track here, how much speed they had right out of the gate. We knew the car was good at Sebring, but Sebring doesn't really account for too much.

I think we had a pretty decent start with the new brakes, a lot of the development stuff. I think knowing we had to reset and go to a totally different package, we looked at a lot of different things that were in our control, too, mechanically and setups, areas that we can improve.

I think there was a lot of areas that we went into that we probably wouldn't have had to had we stayed with the same (indiscernible).

Q. Obviously Sebastien had a ton of success in Champ Car. Mixed bag since coming back here. What's his reputation among drivers?

SCOTT DIXON: He's strong. I'm in the fortunate position to obviously be teammates with him. He's a hell of a driver. He's got a lot of experience in many different formulas. Has won in pretty much all of them.

He's definitely one hell of a driver. Today they got a little bit lucky, but you still have to be able to finish it off. He's a guy, when that situation arises, he'll definitely get it done.

I think a lot of respect, at least from myself, and I think a majority of the field, for sure.

SIMON PAGENAUD: I was teammates with Sebastien in the Peugeot days. Seb, when everything is right, he's one of those guys that's really hard to touch, like today. He's shown his strength. He's won Champ Car four times in a row. He's one of the greats.

Q. Scott, is a day like this as about a good a day? When you heard you were coming back to Honda, to get off to this start, is this what you expected would happen in the first race back?

SCOTT DIXON: It's always hard to know. I think you set your sights on having the performance and being able to race for a race win, which I think personally we had the car to beat this weekend. It was definitely a very strong car.

I didn't capitalize in some areas. Today things just didn't fall our way. I think we were a little surprised at the pace on Friday.

Q. Brakes have been a pretty big topic of conversation this week. Now that you have a race under your belt, can you describe how they behaved over the course of the race?

SCOTT DIXON: For us, they have different characteristics. As far as the product, I think it's a far better change than what we had.

SIMON PAGENAUD: Yeah, same as Scott. I mean, for us, it changed, drivers had to adapt to it. Some drivers are more sensitive to it than others.

I found the biggest thing is the temperature range seems to be different to the Brembo. It's carbon brakes. The temperature is very important. You need to get the right temperature to extract the best out of the brakes. That's where we struggled a little bit.

But I think we're okay now. I think it's all right.

Q. Simon, starting 14th, we remember you qualifying first or second pretty much every race on the road and street courses. How concerned were you when the first-lap stuff happened, that you might get caught up in something outside of your control?

SIMON PAGENAUD: Yeah, I haven't started there in a long time actually. I was a bit rusty on that, too.

It actually worked out really well. I just trusted my instinct. The biggest thing is when Charlie hit the wall, and Rahal went spin, the biggest thing was knowing where to go was the biggest decision I had to make.

I was fortunate in that wreck. I think I got touched in the back actually because I had some damage I saw at the end of the race.

But I managed to go through. I managed to get some spots. It worked out good for us this time.

Q. Simon, you stopped one or two laps after Sebastien in that last pit stop. At one point you were gaining on him. Towards the end, he started pulling away. Were you in a situation where you had to save fuel, your Chevy wasn't getting as good of mileage as the Honda, or was he just faster?

SIMON PAGENAUD: Certainly it seems like the Honda is really strong on fuel mileage. That's something we'll work on with Chevy to find ways to make for better fuel consumption.

The biggest thing was traffic really. I mean, you know, Sebastien managed to go through the traffic. Then I got behind Charlie. There was no giving up there.

I unfortunately pushed really hard on my tires early on in the stint to catch up with Sebastien. As soon as I got behind Charlie, basically I was close, and it damaged my tires to stay that close.

From that moment on, it was pretty much over. I didn't want to risk it. I was happy with second. Sebastien was gone. Charlie wasn't going to let go. I was happy with second at that point.

Q. For years in this series people used to always talk about what's wrong with this series. Now it seems everybody is talking about what's right with it. Talk about all the positive momentum that's going on right now in the series.

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, I think there's lots to be fortunate for. We have great manufacturers. We have great sponsors throughout.

I think TV numbers have been good. We have great personalities from one end to the other, different versions in between. It's something everybody can relate to.

Still I think we have the best racing in the world with the formula that we have. The racing is something good. When somebody comes to a race to watch it or watches it on TV, they can be immediately hooked. The openness of the series is a real credit. There's no other series like it. Happy to be a part of it right now.

SIMON PAGENAUD: Yeah, I mean, he pretty much said it all.

Yeah, it feels like it's definitely growing. The biggest example I had was when I went back to France. I know it's outside the U.S. But I have not seen any interest for Indy car in the past. It's definitely growing. I think today finishing 1-2, it will continue to grow. We have Canal Plus, which is a TV channel, a big TV channel, showing the races live. That's big, as well.

On the U.S. side, I think it's just great formula, great racing. I think it's the best excitement you get. It's racing, but it's also a show. I think it's a great show for the fans. Everybody seems to be very excited at the end of the race, which meant that it was a good show.

So INDYCAR is on the right path. I personally as a driver feel very proud to be part of this era.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, congratulations. Thank you very much.

SCOTT DIXON: Thank you.

SIMON PAGENAUD: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: We are joined now by our winner of the Firestone Grand Prix of St. Petersburg,

Sebastien Bourdais.

Sebastien is the fourth driver to win for Dale Coyne Racing. It is the fifth win for the team, and also their first since 2014.

Sebastien, I feel like this is pretty much every storyline in the book, from last to first. You're a hometown hero, for the most part, you could tell by the cheers from the crowd. What does this mean to you? I know this city means a lot to you. You've really embraced it as your home. Come out and get that win must feel pretty good.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Yeah, that's a bit of an understatement.

I'm pretty much speechless. It's one of those things where you have a good weekend, things are on the rails, you got a good car, you're consistently top five, you think things are going to go to plan. Then yesterday happened. You're like, I can't believe I just did that.

Yeah, come out of yesterday, feel miserable about yourself. Man, I just threw that one away so bad. Then you look at the strategy. We're with Dale, Craig, Olivier, there's not much you can do here. The windows are small. Unless you're going to really be creative or have the biggest and best luck ever, you just come out of the meeting, you're like, I guess we just got to do the best we can, but there's no way we're going to make any kind of headway.

Then the race starts. Okay, all right, they all pile up into each other. I come out of there in 16th, whatever. Another two laps there, we're 14th. Then we have a pretty good restart, make a couple of pass. Then we pit as planned on the other side of the window, because you don't want to get caught out, obviously, by a yellow.

Everybody in front of you but one guy gets caught out, too. Next thing you know, you're P2 with what is a good car. What happened yesterday is pretty much irrelevant at that point. At that point I was, like, in my head, I was just thinking, Hmm, I'm pretty happy where I'm at right now. I'll take second any day.

Then Simon had a little damage on his rear bumper. I don't know how much it was affecting him. He was kind of struggling a little bit to get going. He was saving fuel.

Then we had a bit of a misunderstanding with Craig. He told me, Fuel is not an issue.

Okay.

I started to run, like, really hard. Got a run on Simon, passed him right away. I'm like, There's something up here. All of a sudden, sure enough, Oh, by the way, you got to make that fuel number.

Okay, that's not going to be so easy, in fact.

That's why Simon kind of ran us down a little bit. All of a sudden I had to save all sorts of fuel. It was a bit unexpected. The race kind of unfolded.

I kind of oversaved a little bit. Got going again for the pit stop. Once we were in the lead really, with the car as quick as it was, and the guys did execute in the pits no problems, it was just one of those days like the old days.

A lot of things come back. I caught myself thinking about 2003, when obviously we started the opposite. We dominated the weekend, were on pole, cleared the field, then all hell broke loose. I found myself tapping the wall in turn eight, threw it away.

It was kind of redemption day here. To come out on top with obviously a lot of friends and family on-site, the whole community supporting the effort, it was just a great feeling. I couldn't really be any happier for Honda and Dale for giving me the opportunity to put the band back together and make it happen.

Everybody works really, really hard. We're a small group. There is nobody at the shop that doesn't travel. But it works. It's a great little group. We're sure not going to stop there. We're just going to keep on trying.

THE MODERATOR: Joined now by Dale Coyne.

Dale, we went over the team statistics. The fourth driver to win for your team, your fifth Verizon IndyCar Series win. What does this one, in particular, mean to you, of all the things that mean so much to your driver?

DALE COYNE: The Watkins Glen win was special because it was our first win. The other ones were nice. This is above both. We brought him back from Europe a few years ago. He stayed here ever since.

We talked with him every year, just about. The stars finally aligned, we were able to get him in our car again this year.

It's just a lot of work. I know what everybody's put in over the winter, bringing a new engineer, his old team back together, so to speak. We had part of his crew guys from Newman-Haas, Olivier from last year who worked with him. Just a good engineering effort. The money we spent over the winter was starting to pay off.

So you took care of it when you got up there. It's been good. It's pretty special. We were hoping we could win a race or two this year. We're halfway there. Maybe we can do better than that. We'll see.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Dale Coyne and Sebastien.

Q. Sebastien, there must be something to this Craig Hampson/Sebastien Bourdais relationship. Why do you now have 32 victories together?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: It's tough to explain. Like I said, they're the two guys that understand me the best, have understood me the best, over the years. I've worked really well with, obviously is Craig and Olivier. They're both working with me this year.

It takes a very special mindset and relationship to really be able to cope with each other, optimize each other, and carry over the time.

It's pretty exhausting as far as relationships are concerned. It's very difficult to sometimes not be offensive to people when you're pushing everybody so hard. I know I certainly struggled when I was younger, you know, to try not to be a dick pretty much at times.

It's hard because you want this so bad, and you put so much into it, that at some point it's very easy to be overdemanding. I don't always feel, you know, or hear myself, the way you talk.

We've stayed friends the whole time. When the opportunity came to obviously work together again, I think Craig was apprehensive a little bit because I think he was just scared that all the great memories that we had together could be kind of hampered.

I told him, I said, You know what, don't be afraid. You're the guy I want to work with. Ultimately all I can ask from you is give your best, and probably a notch less, because he tends to overwork himself and drive himself to retirement. I'll try and make sure he doesn't do that because, quite clearly, he's very special to me. Olivier is, as well.

They're very complementary to each other. Olivier has brought to Dale Coyne Racing a program that I don't think they've ever have. That's just the beginning because I'm still working on him to keep going. That's phase number one.

We've come a long way in a short amount of time. When you have a smaller group, it's all a matter of trying to make sure you just don't wear anybody out and be overdemanding, and be rewarding when it's appropriate. I can tell you, it's going to be pretty appropriate to be rewarding right now.

Q. Dale, the running joke going into St. Petersburg is always, Who is in the second car for Coyne? How good is it to know there's not the last-minute scrambling that there has been in recent years?

DALE COYNE: I think that's been good. Ed Jones won the Indy Lights championship last year. He was looking for a home as soon as he won the championship. We talked to him at earlier, I think starting at Mid-Ohio last year. We were able to get that done. At the same time

we got Sebastien's done. It was nice to get them both done. We have the engineering, the chief mechanic, the team manager, have all your people in place, so that you can hit the ground.

It's a long off-season. We didn't want to waste any time. We were able to have all of it done right at the beginning of the off-season. I think that's paid off. It's nice continuity for the team. Just makes everything that we do that much more efficient.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: That's the thing. It was not starting from zero. It was not scrap everything and start over again. Obviously there was a lot of very valid and useful things that had been put in place by Darren and Cannon. We added to that. We didn't throw anything away.

It's never enough. It's never too good. But little by little, obviously, we're just trying to optimize things one at a time.

Q. Sebastien, last year you fulfilled what I assumed had to have been a lifelong dream, winning in Le Mans. This year you a win in your adopted hometown. What does it mean to you to represent both cities as a winner now in both places?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Well, I don't take credit for things I haven't achieved yet. As special and historical as winning the class at Le Mans is, it's not winning Le Mans.

It was huge. It was huge to be a part of that piece of history, you know, bringing the Ford name back in victory circle in Le Mans. Particularly because of the way the series is structured, it was only ever going to be a class win. But that was very special. We did that. Then we won in Daytona. We're kind of two-for-two this year. That's not a bad start.

And, yeah, to win here, like I said, in front of family, friends... First time we really moved here was early '05. We spent two years, two and a half years there, then we went back to Europe, and came back in March of 2012, never really looked back.

The house we got here, we built it, in Shore Acres. With the kids being in school a couple of blocks down the road, you get to make a lot of friends. We have some really good friends. We just lead a very normal life with normal, fun people.

It's just awesome to be able to share that with them. They were all excited. Obviously my parents were there, as well. It's always very, very special to have these kind of moments in front of the ones you love.

Q. Sebastien, I'm wondering, what was your relationship or your thoughts on this track before today? It hadn't treated you particularly well. Didn't your car catch on fire here a couple years

ago?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Only after I hit the wall real hard (laughter).

Yeah, no, it's been a love-and-hate relationship, that's for sure. We've had plenty of opportunities. As of late not so many. But the first one for sure, it was my first race as a professional level, and I threw it away.

After that we had some good races en route to win it. When I came back in '11, obviously I didn't race. Crashed in the warmup. Took the right side off of it. Dale wasn't too impressed with that.

Then in '12 the engine shut off when we were in seventh, I think. It just always seemed that, you know, there was potential, but we never really could put it together.

To be honest with you, yesterday was exactly that. I'm like, Here we go again. I just messed up and it's gone.

To be honest with you, I was thinking long and hard about it when we came close to that last pit stop. I was like, Man, don't screw this one up.

DALE COYNE: You?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Yeah, there was a lot of stuff happening under the helmet, that's for sure.

Q. I talked to you when you finished in Daytona. Freezing, raining, a long night. Here was the opposite. It looks like the best of Sebastien is coming back.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: You're only as good as your car. Doesn't really matter what conditions.

I think I've been pretty happy, whether it's been raining or hot or cold, whatever. It's just that special relationship you got with your guys to get the car exactly where you need it to be.

That's all it is. In the end the conditions don't mean anything. It's all about getting it right for you, regardless of the conditions, then you really stand a chance.

I don't have probably the widest range of operation to make it work. When I'm feeling good in the car, and the car is doing what I need it to, then I tend to do a pretty good job, I guess.

Q. Are you surprised at how Honda has come back after last season, when Chevrolet won 14 races? Sebastien, you had a Chevy last year. What do you think it's going to mean for the rest of the season?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Well, I sure hope it's going to stay that way.

DALE COYNE: I think we are surprised. Penske qualified 1-2-3-4 here last year. There's strength in

numbers. Honda has more numbers now. There's strength in the engine, it looks like. That's a surprise to all of us.

I feel sorry for Mr. Foyt picking the wrong side this year. We'll see. It's early yet.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Yeah, it's early. They've obviously repaved the track here. I think it threw probably Penske off a little bit. It's a very different game the way you use your tires. Tire degradation used to be a massive deal. Now it's not any more. It's a lot less bumpy. So what's true probably isn't any more.

Coming from the other side obviously, I'm very happy with the service we're getting at Honda. I think they've done a fine job. I don't know where they were at last year, but it sure looks like they're going to be very competitive with the high downforce stuff and again, for sure, on the superspeedway stuff.

The only thing I see is the Phoenix type of scenario where it looks like we're a bit draggy. You can't be the best at every type of tracks. You're going to have some really good days and some not-so-good days. If you take the span of the season, we'll probably have more good days than bad days.

Q. Dale, Sebastien talked about how he was thinking, Here we go again, after qualifying yesterday. What were you thinking after qualifying yesterday?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: What an idiot (laughter).

DALE COYNE: We took his shoelaces away so he couldn't hang himself.

We were all disappointed. You work hard to get here, those things happen. That's part of racing. We sat there wondering, we still got a 30% chance to win this race because we can go on alternate strategy. Chance of catching a lucky yellow, about 30%. We caught it right away.

It could have turned around. Someone else could have leapfrogged us back on the last two stops. Didn't happen. So the luck of the yellows worked out in our favor today.

Obviously when he got in the front, he took command of the front of the field. We did our part. He did his part. It worked out perfect.

Q. In terms of characterizing what you did today, do you see yourselves as a David slaying a Goliath? Penske spends more money. You you're a smaller operation. Is that how you see it?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: That's kind of the way it is, yeah. The great thing about INDYCAR is you can still beat those guys on any given day if you do your job and you do it well.

Yeah, obviously they have a heck of a lot more resources. They have people at the shop that do a lot of things that make it easier for their group on the road. We don't have that. Everybody that's on the road is at the shop. There's no off time.

But, yeah, it's still the magic about INDYCAR is despite the fact they've opened a couple of things, you can still really upset and create the surprise, even on pace.

We had the top-five car. When you got a top-five car pure on pace, you got to feel pretty good about it. That means you put behind yourself a lot of very good cars.

But, yeah, I mean, if we didn't think we stood a chance, we wouldn't be there. Dale wouldn't keep doing it.

DALE COYNE: That's what's the great thing about INDYCAR. In Formula One, (indiscernible) will never beat Mercedes no matter what the weather does, no matter the strategy, no matter who is driving either car.

Here, anybody can win. Obviously the guy that does more is going to win more often. But you can win. I think you take your resources, you're smart about where you spend your money, and you can get right there and beat these guys.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: I just wanted to add, thank him as well, because yesterday he didn't say a thing, which kind of is good and kind of is bad, because you don't know what he's thinking. He never said a thing. Shit happens, so...

Q. Sebastien, another one of your favorites is the next one coming up, Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach. To go in there already as a winner, what do you think your chances are of making it two in a row at Long Beach?

DALE COYNE: Long Beach is the one I'd like to win. I know you wanted to win this one.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: I won Long Beach a few times.

But, yeah, I think, to be honest with you, my best chances are probably on street tracks because that's probably where I can make the biggest difference, when experience comes into play. The tracks are tough. The cars don't always do what they're supposed to, especially when they have wheels up in the air, stuff like that.

Yeah, I mean, that's where I come more into play. But we'll hopefully have a lot of good days, and we'll just do the best we can on any given day. If it's happening again at Long Beach, then we'll take it.

But we're not going to focus on pure targets and results. We're just going to do our jobs the best we can,

see how good we get it.

Like we said, it's a fairly long commitment that we got together with Dale. I sure want to see through it, see how good we can get in our organization and optimize everything.

I was kind of hoping to get to a day like this, not exactly on day one, because now you guys are going to be like, What happened, if you don't win next time.

It's going to take time to get the consistency, to be doing what we want to do, which is winning races, at least being contenders week in, week out.

We've shown that we already have a pretty decent pace. We'll keep working on that.

Q. (Question regarding tire selection and how it affected strategy for the race.)

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Yeah, I mean, we only had new tires. That's a good thing about not turning a lap in qualifying.

Yeah, it definitely helped. We had three brand-new sets of reds. That, for sure, made a difference, made us look even better.

That's why when we cycled to P2, Oh, boy, we sure have a great opportunity there because we had the luxury of going new prime, new prime, and three sets of reds.

The car was really, really happy with the prime. It did perform very well, regardless of reds or blacks.

Q. Dale, Sebastien went into detail about what he did today. It wasn't easy. Quite a journey. Throughout this whole process of the race, what were you and the crew thinking? At what point did you start to believe he was going to make something happen?

DALE COYNE: You think that from the beginning. But the strategy evolves as the race goes on. Going to be a big yellow in the beginning, a lot of cars are going to pit, leave him out, or he climbs through the field because everybody pits, or is he fast enough to pass six or seven cars? All of those things play in the thing.

We had a yellow early, stayed out. Gained two positions on that. The first-lap carnage helped us a little bit. He had a hard time getting around Marco. It's going to be a long day if we try to do sneak-up-to-the-lead strategy.

Pitting early, the early strategy of the day, pit early, when you're in the back, you have to do something to leapfrog the field. It hurts us because your last laps are faster. We pitted a lap or two before Simon at the end, and he closed half the gap on us, because he was able to keep going in clean traffic. We had enough of a gap

that it was okay.

The strategy kind of evolved. We just sit there and I feel like what he's feeling in the car, how hard is he trying, is he going to be able to get by this guy. Is he better off to stay where he's at and work off of strategy from here on in.

We do the strategy. Now you're nervous, Do we have enough fuel to make it all the way to the end. We got a yellow, so that freed that up.

We played defense a bit. Everybody else can do the strategy we used in the first stint, in the second and third stint, Leapfrog us back.

We came in on lap 82. We were going to go to lap 83. We came in on lap 82 just because we said we have enough gap on Simon, we can come in and we're still going to be okay. If it goes yellow on 83, we're dead.

You think about the strategy things all day long. You watch the fuel mileage. You tell him different numbers, see what he can hit, work the calculations from there.

Q. Sebastien, do you ever allow yourself to think about where you sit in the record books? This broke a tie with Bobby Unser to put you sixth all time.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: No, I don't really. I mean, obviously, you know, you end up becoming part of a very special group. That's a privilege more than anything.

But, you know, I just feel privileged anyways, just to be able to do what I love, and make a living out of it.

I don't really spend much time looking back. I rarely watch the races that we win or anything. I just trying to enjoy the moment as much as I can, because for sure in those years with Newman-Haas, there's one thing I didn't do very much, partly because I was chasing F1 and a lot of other things, but at the end of the day I didn't savor those moments as much as I probably should have.

I try to do a better job with that because, first of all, they don't come around that many times a year. Second, it's when it's over that you realize it was that special. Try and suck up the moment, yeah, just really savor those because they're very special.

DALE COYNE: We're privileged to have him back, so...

THE MODERATOR: Thank you both very much.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Thank you.