

# IndyCar Media Conference

Sunday April 9, 2017

## James Hinchcliffe Sebastien Bourdais Josef Newgarden Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and begin our post-race press conference for the Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach. Joined now by our third-place finisher, Josef Newgarden, driving the No. 2 Hum by Verizon Team Penske Chevrolet. Josef finished third in today's race, his best Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach in six starts.

It was unpredictable today. Take us through your day.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I think it got a lot more mixed up with the strategy today. Dixon and me were on something different than the front guys, Hunter-Reay, Hinch, Rossi. I thought that added a dynamic that was more fun than last year. Everyone was on the same strategy last year, which let the race play out to not much action, unfortunately.

This year was a lot more mixed up. I did way more passing than I've done in the past couple years. I thought it was an exciting race.

For us on Team Penske, it was a good day. The Verizon Hum car, we had a strong car underneath us all day. I felt about it good in warmup. We had a car that was capable of challenging for the win if everything fell correctly.

Our strategy didn't play out with that last yellow. It just allowed everyone to catch up on fuel a little bit. We were on the same strategy at the end fuel-wise.

Our strategy of trying to run those guys down at the end and be fast wasn't really able to play out, which is unfortunate, but that's how racing goes. You have to choose one strategy and hope it plays out for you. Today it got us close. Third place is something we can roll with, try to get a win.

THE MODERATOR: A top-10 finish in St. Petersburg, followed by a podium finish here. How great has it been to start your first season with a new team?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It's always good. In INDYCAR, you have to be on it all the time. You have to have consistency to be a challenger for the championship, you have to have momentum to keep the spirits up and

everything rolling in the right direction.

For me to start the year off with the No. 2 guys with the Verizon Hum car, it's nice to have some consistency to start with. A top 10 was good at St. Pete. A podium down here is another strong step for us. I think the next thing you need to do is try to hunt down a win. Hopefully we can do that sooner than later. I feel like we're going to have some good speed at the next couple tracks we go to.

Have to keep our heads down, keep consistent. That's going to be the key for us this year, as it always is in this series.

THE MODERATOR: Joined now by Sebastien Bourdais, who finished second in today's Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach.

Sebastien, what a start to the season for you, as well. It's also your best finish here at Long Beach since your win in 2007. Obviously, your 54th career podium, one behind Will Power for 18th place all time on the podium list. Take us through your day and your general feelings following up a win with a second-place finish here at such a special place.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: You got 15 minutes?

THE MODERATOR: We actually do.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: A long day (laughter).

First off, congrats to James. He's obviously had a great weekend, drove a great race. Josef, as well.

But for us, it's been a really strange weekend. We unloaded pretty good. We lucked into making big changes for the setup. The car looked quick, so it's always kind of that moment where you're like, It doesn't feel right, but I'm not too sure I want to change it.

We tried to stick with it. It lost space through the weekend. I didn't lead the team in the right direction, I guess, when it was the right moment. So we tried something this morning that was worse.

So we kind of fell off of sequence and pace. So qualified 12th. Really kind of average. Everybody was a bit down. I was mostly responsible for it, so I didn't feel great.

At the end of the day, we had a good start. Unfortunately, a big piece of endplate or whatever it was flew off, and I ducked it. But the rear wings couldn't do the same, so it took pretty much the whole left rear of the rear wing and endplate and left rear winglet off.

Went yellow. We were, like, debating in the pits whether we were going to stop or not, because obviously at that point we're, like, 10th, something. It's like, Man, that really hurts. But we really didn't have a choice, there was too much damage to the car.

We came in, changed the whole rear assembly, put on the red tires, the red Firestone tires, and filled the car up. So from there we had a bit less fuel saving, but not obviously much. We just, you know, decided to stick with our two-stop strategy, then kind of made it work. Made steady progress through the race.

We were not really, really quick, but we played off strategy and saved a bunch of fuel, still kind of maintained a half-decent pace. It was looking pretty good.

Then obviously it got better and better as stuff happened in front of us, where Rossi had an engine issue, and it looked like Ryan's car shut off or something. I'm not quite sure what happened there.

But we definitely feel like we've got things coming our way. We held our own in the restarts at the end there, scored another podium for Dale Coyne Racing and Honda. Really couldn't be any happier for the guys. It's a great start of the season. We were sticking the car and staying in front of the standings. A lot worse days, let's put it that way.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Sebastien and Josef.

**Q. Seb, two top-10 finishes for you and your teammate. Looks like you're starting to build something special at Dale Coyne. Talk about that, what you're doing inside the program.**

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Yeah, obviously I haven't seen what Ed's race looked like. I think he went for the three-stopper. That was the intention at the beginning. Obviously drove a great race, finishing sixth. I have no idea how he did it, but he did a good job again. He's a really solid driver, really makes no mistakes. You know, he's up there. So really hats off to him.

As far as the program is concerned, obviously brought Craig Hansen and Olivier Boisson, my engineer from KV for the last three years. It's a really good chemistry.

It's all coming on top of what already existed at Dale Coyne Racing. Really just kind of getting accustomed, as far as I'm concerned, to the Honda aero kit, and the engine is really working well for us.

The fuel saving we could achieve today with the performance we had on the Honda was amazing. They definitely stepped up their game. It was really working for us. Really very happy for everybody.

**Q. By nature all racing is a pretty selfish sport. You're out there, you believe you're the best, you want to beat the best. As a competitor, how do you feel when you look back and see what James was able to do today, come all the way back from where he was?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Well, I mean, I think it speaks for itself. I mean, we can attest to it, but everyone knows James' story from Indianapolis. It's an amazing story. Nothing less than amazing.

So I think for him, it's a huge credit to what type of racer he is. I mean, I think he's a diehard racer through and through. No one can really question that ever, I think with James. He always is going to be known for that, after everything that he went through at Indianapolis.

Same thing for his team. I think he's got an amazing group behind him. I know part of those guys for having worked with them in 2011. They're just an amazing team he works with.

It's an awesome story. Congrats to him, like Sebastien said. We're happy for him and his team. Like I said, I think it speaks to the racer that he is. James has a lot of show about him. He's a fun, entertaining guy, great to be around. But, you know, at the end of everything, he's here because he loves driving racecars. He's proved that time and time again. He doesn't really ever have to prove that again.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Yeah, I mean, obviously I can't even come close to pretending that I know what he went through. His passion and his drive to come back, and to come back better than he was, I think it's just a testimony obviously to his passion and how much he wants this. He wants it real bad.

He's a fierce competitor. Yeah, I just got a lot of admiration for him. Nobody knows how he would react to obviously almost dying in a racecar, whether he'd want to go again in the car, whether you'd stop, whether you'd be strong, whether anything.

I think until it happens to you, you can't know how you're going to react. He's definitely come stronger here to show what he can do than before, than anybody. So it's great to see him do so well.

**Q. Josef, I think you hit 107 during the race. Maybe the fastest lap.**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Where we were strong was saving fuel and going fast. I think -- I don't know. I have to look back. It felt like we were the quickest car with

saving fuel and still going quick. We lost a lot of pace to Dixon through some traffic sequencing. We just closed right back up on him while saving a ton of fuel.

I thought we had a really quick car. It got a little difficult at the end when we got bunched back up. It was tough for me to get by Seb and to get up to James. I think we struggled when everyone was even.

When we had clean air, we could just work on our own thing, we had a very fast racecar, it was super quick. I have no complaints about that. The speed is just down to the speed of the car. It was where I needed it to be. Having come from that, not a great feel on Friday, I wasn't super happy with things on Friday, to having a great car in the race, that's all you can really do is try to work on the thing all weekend, get it to where you need it to be. I think we had it there in the race.

**Q. On the final restart, it looked like you were hanging back just a bit. Looks like maybe not quite as close as you could have been. Did that hurt? Do you think you could have caught Hinch? Were you concerned at all about Josef right behind you, as well?**

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Yeah, quite often on restarts, I first of all try not to make any mistakes. I'm more focused on trying to hold my position than trying to get the guy. You never know what's going to happen. You try to make a move, sometimes you become a victim of your trying, you lose a position. It's quite easy to do around here, especially on restarts. There's not much rubber you got to pick up on your tires, it's difficult to put power down. I think everyone was very composed, hold steady, to see how it's going to shake out.

It's a tough place to pass, especially when it's a straight-up fight. Everyone has the same tires, same strategy. Everyone is on 'push to pass' right after the restart. It really didn't look like there was much to hope for. Quite honestly, I was happy with where we were at, just looking forward to bringing it home and taking the points back.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, from my vantage point, it looked like two things. Bourdais tries to finish where he was. I was trying to do that to some degree, I wanted to get him. When you're at that point in the race, you don't want to do something stupid.

Trying to get that one last position on two laps to go, doing something stupid to take you to the back, you know, it's not worth the risk sometimes.

But then on top of that, you had Hinch just go as soon as he could. There was no get on the straight, set up, then restart. Which I don't blame him. If I'm in the lead, two laps to go, he restarting, just go as soon as you can. You know, there's nothing dirty about what he did today.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: That was fine.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I would have done the same thing as James. I think you saw both things, everybody was trying to keep where they were at. I was pushing hard to try to get Seb, but being smart about it. I think James was trying to get as early a launch as he could to protect, and that's probably what you saw.

**Q. Sebastien, do you feel that this year is kind of reminiscent maybe to '07? Do you feel the same energy and stuff?**

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: No, it's not. We're still trying to figure things out maybe. We had a really good car at St. Pete, and felt like definitely we could have qualified up there. It showed in the race we had pace. We could really hold our own and do a really good job.

This weekend, like I said, it was much more trying. We went the wrong direction, kind of back pedaled. Kind of never were at the right place at the right time.

It's a good group of guys. They know me better than anybody else. Like I said, I kind of let them down this weekend. I didn't steer them in the right direction. You got to learn from that.

The car is quite different from obviously those days in Champ Car. The competition is much higher. You used to qualify on pole sometimes with half a second or even more than that. Now it's just not happening any more. Half a second is the difference between pole and 12th place, in Q3, sometimes less than that -- Q2, sorry. You just got to be really much more detail orientated and do an even better job.

We're a smaller group. It's very recent. We're all trying to build something. Hopefully we can repeat and create some upsets as often as possible.

**Q. Sebastien, you got a win, now the runner-up. Talk about carrying this into Barber, a place you haven't won yet.**

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Yeah, but we've been very fast. I've been really fast there. I made a mess of it a couple of times. But definitely it's a place I really enjoy. I think everybody enjoys it. I really felt good over there over the years. We didn't have the greatest test, but I think we learned from it. We had a pretty good test at Sonoma.

To be honest, I think the car is probably going to help me more on road course than street course. I think street course package we're still trying to find what I'm really looking for in terms of needs. I'm sure hoping that when we come back to Barber, we'll be stronger than we showed at the test.

Yeah, really looking forward to this one. It's a fun place. When you get the car right, it's a lot of fun to drive the car.

**Q. Sebastien, I imagine it's not something you're totally knowledgeable about, but the Andretti guys are falling like dominoes. With the same engine behind you, were you worried at all?**

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: No. I mean, you never know what's really happening. I really don't know what happened to Ryan, but clearly it's not an engine related issue because again. That's not exactly the definition of an engine problem.

But yeah, I mean, obviously something happened to Alex, which is a shame. But stuff happens. I mean, you know, both manufacturers are pushing their engines really, really hard. It's a straight-up fight. You know, they're leaving nothing behind.

So, you know, I don't know what happened, but I know I trust Honda. They've really given us a great product. Like I said, it was quick and saving a lot of fuel. They definitely have done a great job.

**Q. Josef, did you hear from Tim or Roger after the race? What are their thoughts on your progression in fitting in with Team Penske?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Well, I hope they're happy enough so far. I'd like to stay. Not ready to get fired yet, so...

You know, you never know in INDYCAR, right? You know, I never want to sign multi-year contracts because I feel like you're never safe in this sport. You get fired at any point.

No, the great thing about Roger and Tim is they've been letting me just kind of settle into the situation and absorb everything, try to figure out how their operation works, let me kind of figure out how I need to interact with the teammates, with the engineers.

I felt it would go really quick. It actually is. I feel good about gelling with the team pretty smoothly. There are things that are different. This is the most eye-opening weekend for me starting out on Friday because I wasn't super happy. I wasn't happy because I wasn't 100% comfortable with everything with the car, the way that it worked. That's OK. It's just different from what I've experienced in the past.

There's going to be some weekends this year where I'm uncomfortable. I have to figure out how to work it out for myself. As soon as we get to that period, we'll be much stronger on the 2 car.

It feels great. Roger and Tim, they're two of the classiest guys I've ever met. They're so good to you. When they tell you something, they mean it. Their word is as good as gold. I trust those guys a lot. I think they've given me a lot of leeway just to figure things out. Two races in, I'm pretty happy with what we've done. We just got to keep trying to move the ball a little

bit forward. If we do that, we should be situated fine at the end of the year.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Do you get a bonus when you speak longer?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It's in my contract, speak well about Roger and Tim at all times.

No, they're great. They really are nice to me.

**Q. Sebastien, I think we're overlooking Ed Jones' performance for a rookie. Second race to be able to finish where he did. That has to be a great day for Dale Coyne Racing. What do you think of his performance?**

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: No, I'm super happy for the whole team. Super happy for Ed because he's a really good kid. There's nothing I can say that's negative about him. He's very open. He's straightforward, pleasant to work, just a good kid. He's quick, like I said, reliable, doesn't make mistakes. I'm happy for him. I have no idea how they got there, what happened to their race, whatever. They deserved the result. They do a good job. I hope it keeps going like that.

I mean, obviously, like we talked about many times now since the start of the season, Dale has made a significant contribution to his own progress. He's stepped up his game. He spent a lot of money. You know, if he can get rewarded for his commitment to the series, it's awesome.

**Q. For both of you guys. Can you talk about the first two races haven't gone to the usual suspects, how competitive it is, what it means for the series that you and Hinchcliffe have won so far.**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Well, I don't know, I mean, it seems like typical INDYCAR to me. Maybe not as bad as you -- I don't know that it's bad. I think you could say that Bourdais didn't qualify in St. Pete, so you didn't know his qualifying pace there. He started at the back. We all know we're all capable of winning from last place. They did a great job. Who is to say they wouldn't qualify right in the top three there.

I don't know if that's a surprise result. It certainly looked that way looking at the weekend. Who is to know.

Then here, I think James looked good all weekend. The Hondas looked strong. We felt good on the Team Chevy side, but the Hondas were tough to beat. I think James was good all weekend. It's not a surprise they were in a position to capitalize.

So I don't know if it's been super shook up. To me it's typical INDYCAR. Anyone can win these races. If you're in the top five or you're fast and you're starting in the back, you can still win the race from wherever on this grid.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you very much. Congratulations.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Thank you.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Been a couple years, but James Hinchcliffe back in Victory Lane. It has to seem like it's been a long time, a long time both in your personal and professional life. Welcome back to Victory Lane.

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Thank you so much. I mean, a lot has changed since the last time we were sitting up here. It's just so nice to be back. We came really close last year. A lot of people talked about 2016 as sort of the comeback year. Personally we really wanted to as a team to put an exclamation point on that by coming to Victory Lane. We came as close as humanly possible in Texas last year. Didn't quite get the job done. We were sore to not win a race last year.

We worked hard this off-season to perfect the package we had. Good speed at a lot of races last year. To roll off the first two races of the season, being in the Fast Six both times, if not for a caution falling for the wrong time at St. Pete, could have been in the top five or on podium there. To do it here and finally at this place, a track that I love so much, a track that's been very good to me in my career, one that I think is the Indy 500 of street tracks, it's the second longest running race after the 500.

I think because of that history, it makes it a very special event, one that every driver wants to win. The greats have all raced here, the greats have all won here. To get in the winner's circle was huge.

THE MODERATOR: The last of your wins came at NOLA Motorsports Park just about a month before your accident in Indianapolis. The pole last year at Indianapolis had to feel like an emotional comeback. Does this feel like a different kind of comeback, different moment?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Yeah, it does. I mean, last year the pole was a unique set of circumstances, return to the scene of the crime, so to speak. To do what we did there, what we accomplished as a team, all throughout the entire month, but especially on qualifying day, was huge.

This does feel different. I feel like we're back. I feel like we've been back for a while now. To finally do what was goal number one when we set out at the start of the season, to get back into winner's circle, to do as early in the season as we have, as convincingly as we did, it was a great race.

We started row two. Got into second place off the start. Lost one spot on the first exchange of pit stops, got a

couple back in the second. Huge credit to the Schmidt Peterson Motorsport guys in pit lane and obviously the car, to be able to save that much fuel for as long as we were, do that extra lap, that was the move that won us the race.

Had to hold off some guys on the restart. Cruising along, the last thing you want to hear is caution. We heard it twice. Held off Ryan on the first, Sebastien on the second. My left wing had completely shattered. There was nothing in it. Protecting the inside of Turn 1 because I was turning in whether you were there or not. I feel bad for Ryan and Alex. They had great cars. Was turning into a good race with the three of us there.

Like I said, just thrilled to be up here.

THE MODERATOR: Still in Los Angeles after Dancing with the Stars?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: It's almost my second American home. We obviously spent a lot of time out here for the show. Have been back here a couple times since. Even had some of my DWTS friends come out to the race, over the weekend, managed to have dinner with some of them. It's kind of like my second family out here. It's kind of cool.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take some questions.

**Q. Hinch, when you think about it, it's not just you that wins, it's the whole team, your engineers, strategist. How much confidence did you have in your strategist? You said yesterday you were skeptical about the distance.**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Yeah, it's always a tough call here, you know, because one caution falling at the right time or the right length of laps can throw everything for a loop.

You know, when Dixon dove into the pits there, kind of predicting the yellow coming up for whoever was off in turn eight, for Marco, a smart move. It didn't pay off, but especially after what we saw in St. Pete, they're protecting against that. It was kind of a good idea.

At that point now you're second-guessing, maybe did we do the wrong thing. Luckily it played into our favor. When those cautions fell at the end, I thought a caution was going to ruin my day. Luckily we had the car to hold them off.

**Q. You're pretty tight with Ryan. When he had his incident to bring out the last yellow, did you mark it off as one less major competitor, or oh, no, there's going to be a restart?**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: I think it was oh, no, there's going to be a restart. Ryan was on blacks in that last stint. We were on reds. We were kind of doing what we could to control the pace, keep the gap to him consistent. I didn't want to burn the reds out. We hadn't

run a new set start to finish to know what they were going to do.

We were kind of just controlling it there. When Ryan went out, we had the restart, got a car with reds behind us, the guy that won the last race, he's won here a couple times, it was definitely not an ideal situation.

But, again, a team effort and the team gave us a car that we needed to do.

**Q. You had two guys behind Sebastien who had new tires in Newgarden and Dixon. Were you worried about that?**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: When the first caution came out and they said Dixon was in P5, all right, seven laps he'll be leading the race. You can never count him out. Even calling the wrong strategy at the beginning of the race and he gets himself back up. We'll be looking into that (laughter).

So, yeah, I mean, all those guys, Pagenaud was up there at one point, a lot of ebbs and flows in that race. We were sort of the consistent one there. Like I said, it was being able to run longer on that last stint that really gave us the edge.

**Q. James, with you winning the pole at Indy last year, now winning Long Beach, the month of May 30 days away, how much does this positive momentum get you excited for another shot at the Indy 500?**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Yeah, I mean, we were excited for the month of May June 1st last year. We had a really strong month obviously with the GP, qualifying, the 500 itself. We knew with another year to kind of think about it, develop the car, with an off-season to rub on it, try to make it a little bit better, we were very confident before the season even started with the month of May.

With the competitiveness that we've shown as a team so far in the first couple rounds, that adds to it, certainly. But we still have two races before we get to the Speedway and the GP. Phoenix I think is going to be a struggle. I know we've seen an improvement from Honda everywhere else so far, but the short ovals were definitely our biggest deficit last year.

I think we have to go in there with tempered expectations. The resurgence of Honda has been super impressive. No reason we can't be competitive at Barber and go into the month of May running high.

**Q. Two races into the season and the big three, Andretti, Ganassi, Penske, shut out. You answered it with a smile. How does that impact teams like Schmidt Peterson, et cetera?**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: It just highlights how competitive the Verizon IndyCar Series is, to have a guy come from last to first, the smallest team on the

grid winning in St. Pete. Smaller two-car team, you know, winning in race two. That same guy is finishing second. It just shows how competitive it is.

The big teams, sure, I think they do have an advantage. It's so tight that any advantage is small. On race day, one little thing not going your way is going to pretty much ruin your day. You have to execute perfect on Sunday. That's what I love about this series, is that anybody can win. It's not Formula One. There's not two guys that are going to win every race.

It is truly a championship where you show up to any given round, any given driver in the field can leave with the win that day.

**Q. You've talked several times about how special a win here would be. What about Long Beach is special, in your mind?**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Well, you put your face in the ground when you win, which is amazing (laughter). Who would want that?

No, you know, like I touched on earlier, it's the history of this place. 43 years running, comes second only to the Indy 500. Who has raced here, won here, it's just a very special place. There's no three-day event that has this kind of fan interaction and fan attendance. This race is just so well-represented by the fans. That's who we're here for. We love coming here and putting on a good show for them because they show up in the 10s of thousands every single year to race.

**Q. Slightly cooler temperatures than we expect at Long Beach. How much did that help the reds or hurt the blacks? Did it make a difference in tire performance and strategies?**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: I think any time the track temps are a little cooler, it's going to help the tires in general. That's just physics at this point. I think some guys really excel when the temps go up. I don't know how we would have fared had that been the case. But luckily our Firestones held on really well.

The blacks were unbelievably consistent. Obviously the reds were a bit more consistent tire. When we were running around saving fuel in the second stint, pretty hard. I was floored how consistent the lap times were, how fast they stayed for the amount of fuel we were saving. Shows how great our car was, but also how great the Firestones were holding up.

**Q. You're obviously wired and excited. Can you take a deep breath, you now have five wins, the same number of wins Greg Moore had before he was killed. Can you talk about what that means to you, what role he played in your career.**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: It's cool. If someone told me after NOLA last year that five wins was the number Greg had, the number Jacques Villeneuve had, and I believe the number Patrick Carpentier had. Only PT is

higher than that in the list of Canadians in in Indy car racing. To drive at a level with those guys, I mean, it's tough to put into words.

Greg was a huge motivation and a huge inspiration to me as a child. I followed Jacques' career religiously. When Pat and Greg were teammates, followed Pat as well, to now be level with those guys is incredible.

You know what, when I came into this sport, I felt a huge responsibility, to be honest, to keep up the good name that Canadian drivers had in Indy car. There haven't been a ton of us. The ones that have been here have been race winners, they've been contenders week in and week out. I wanted to maintain that, you know, record for Canada, not be the guy that let us down.

So to have drawn even with all those guys now, is an honor. Hopefully we can start chasing down PT. Obviously has quite a few, hopefully a few more for us.

**Q. When you had the restart towards the end, Ryan Hunter-Reay pulled out like three seconds, all of a sudden a few laps later he was closing within a second. How concerned were you at that point? And is this the biggest race win of your career?**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Whenever Ryan Hunter-Reay is behind you, especially at Long Beach, you have to be worried. I've had some good battles actually with Ryan here in the past.

We knew we had the advantage on blacks. When he was closing, he was getting trigger happy with the overtakes. I wasn't too worried about it. We had more than he did at that point anyway. We just had to make sure the reds were going to hang on. I was trying to do the best to maintain that gap. The team was keeping me apprised when he was on the button, what the gap was. I didn't want to burn my reds out in case there was another caution. It ended up being the right call. It sucks that it came at a cost to Ryan, because I think it could have been a good little battle at the end.

Part two. Yeah, you know, it's tough to beat the first win certainly. But if you were to, like I said before, rate the tracks of the ones you want to win the most, this one definitely ranks higher. This is certainly as big for me as St. Pete, maybe a little less special just because you never forget that first. In a lot of ways, because the team did everything right, and it's Long Beach, man, it feels really good.

**Q. St. Pete, Long Beach, NOLA, Brazil, they're all coming early in the season. You're going to have to win one after Indy.**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Texas was after Indy. Really after Indy when we actually finished. You're right, now that you say that, we should. We'll win a couple more.

**Q. All the way back to NOLA, a bizarre, strange**

**race. Only six green flag laps the entire day. You really kind of pulled a rabbit out of the hat to win that one. This one you were the rabbit. How much more satisfying is it to just go out there and get a victory like this today?**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Yeah, I mean, winning like this means so much more than wins like NOLA. At the same time you take wins like NOLA because I've lost way more races because of situations like that than I've won.

When I watched the race in NOLA afterwards, I thought, Man, celebrating a little bit too much for a guy that pitted on lap 13 and won the race somehow, you know.

But you got to take 'em. This series is so competitive. Like I said, we got a lot of wins ripped away from us for a lot less weird circumstances, you know, so...

As much as winning is nice, everything it like this definitely feels a lot better.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, James. Don't be a stranger.

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Thank you so much.