

# IndyCar Media Conference

Friday May 12, 2017

## Will Power

## Sebastien Bourdais

## Helio Castroneves

## Scott Dixon

## Juan Pablo Montoya

## Josef Newgarden

### Fast Six Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Joined now by Juan Pablo Montoya, driving the No. 22 Fitzgerald Glider Kit for Team Penske Chevrolet in the IndyCar Grand Prix, will be starting fifth in tomorrow's race. Juan had a best finish of third here at the IndyCar Grand Prix and a best start of fourth. Juan, back in the car today for the first time in quite a while since you tested earlier this season. How was your first qualifying session back with the Verizon IndyCar Series?

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: I thought it was pretty good. The last run when we saw that Will ran, I mean, when I ran that flat the second session, I ran whatever it is, the 68 flat in the second session, I made a couple mistakes, and I thought, I got probably an 80 or something in me, I'm going to give it a go, and instead of going faster made a couple mistakes went slower in the first lap, and in the second lap I really nailed the start of the lap and I nailed turn 12 and when I went to Turn 13 spun the tires and bad spun.

Yeah, I got it like just a big drift, and when I went to the extra time, I was fourth ends in one second corner. That's it. But it's okay, last time I qualified was September or something last year, so I feel pretty good. I'm working with a new engineer with Raul and with Ron Ruzewski, and we seem to have really good chemistry, doing a really good job together, and to be honest, making -- our goal was to make the Fast Six, and we did, and to be honest, we had pace to be second fastest today no problem. I missed it by a tenth and a half, and I made a hundred mistakes in the lap.

**Q. How difficult or easy has it been to just kind of jump back in the swing of things, you're very familiar with Team Penske obviously but it's obviously an adjustment?**

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: I thought it was going to be. I really thought I was going to -- but not really. I went



out and it was fine. Where you lose is where you don't understand you need seconds with the red tires in practice. It felt really good in practice this morning, so it was like, just leave it alone, maybe take a front wing and send it and we did, and it was awful. I went fifth in the first group, nearly missed the first freaking group, and I ended up doing the Fast Six. So it's okay.

THE MODERATOR: Joined also by Scott Dixon, driving the No. 9 NTT DATA for Honda Chip Ganassi Racing team, who will be starting fourth in tomorrow's IndyCar Grand Prix. Scott, best start here at the IndyCar Grand Prix, best finish of seventh. This is I guess the third or fourth Firestone Fast Six for Scott Dixon, the only driver who has been in all Firestone Fast Six sessions this season. Scott, taking us through qualifying, it seems like you've just had a rocking qualifying season, and how has that been able to translate into good results for you throughout the season?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, it's been a good start, I think, for the team, definitely stuff to be excited about. I think we're still at -- especially at a track like this, at a pretty hefty deficit as far as the aero kit goes, but the engine, everybody at HPD have done a fantastic job with producing some power, so that's definitely a huge positive, and especially rolling into next week should be good.

But yeah, it's fourth place. We were kind of best in class and trying to close the gap, but it's obviously tough with the Penske and the driver lineup they have is always extremely tough to beat. But yeah, excited for tomorrow. Weather looks fantastic, and hopefully we can put on a good show.

THE MODERATOR: We're now joined by Josef Newgarden driving the No. 2 Hum by Verizon Chevrolet for Team Penske. This is Josef's best qualifying start here at the IndyCar Grand Prix. His previous best was 12th. Josef, this isn't a track that's been kind to you in the past with this strong qualifying position. How do you feel that'll help you in tomorrow's race?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I don't know, hopefully it changes a little bit from your previous endeavors here. We've not had a strong result. Last year qualified in the Fast Six but went to the back with a penalty. It's never been kind with one thing or the other, but that doesn't mean much for tomorrow. I'm not going to be

looking at history to try and figure out how our day is going to go tomorrow. I think we had fast cars all weekend. We had all our guys pretty much up there, and Will was really good. He laid down a good lap. I think we're going to be hard pressed to beat our teammates. That's what we've got to do tomorrow is beat Will, beat Helio, beat Juan, and you can never count out Dixon. I think he'll be strong in race conditions. It'll be tough. Hopefully we can right the wrongs we've had here in the past.

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: I thought it was huge. Since I came to IndyCar, three, nearly four years ago, I told them they should do that. It's like, why. Especially you're giving guys that have done it for a long time a huge advantage. New guys are always going to struggle to get to qualify because the difference in setup is massive. I got an idea this morning of what we needed out of the car, and I think it helps. Even though we screwed up in the first session.

**Q. Four of the five Penskes got in the Fast Six and the one guy who doesn't make it has won this race two out of the three years it's been held, so how do you even begin to describe that? It's like you had said earlier, you've got to beat your own teammates before you can even think of winning the race.**

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: I don't know, ask him. He runs every week with them. I'm just here to have fun. (Laughter.)

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, they're tough. The teammates are tough.

**Q. No, but the reason for the depth.**

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: It's just hard. I think a lot of people have a lot of chatter issues on the front tires, and I think if you didn't warm up the tires right or they didn't -- even if you didn't do anything wrong, if they don't come in right, as long as you get this massive understeer, and for me that's what happened in the last session. I went to turn out of the front tires, went over the curb, maybe hit the crowds, you know, and what can you do. Every other run I cut the brakes in the same turn.

**Q. Juan, it's one thing to test like you did at Barber a month or so ago, but this is a competitive situation; how good does it feel to get those competitive juices flowing again?**

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: I'm actually surprised I made it that far in qualifying if you think about it. I was hoping -- when they said we were going to run the road course, I remember last year you get the open test and you get two hours on Thursday and long sessions, I'm going to have time to build up, and then I looked at the schedule, and it's two 25-minute sessions. It's like, okay.

But it was fun. I mean, you've really got to be in the game. I mean, it's a really busy day. It's tough

because this morning, the track being so cold relative to now, it's completely different. We'll see. I think tomorrow if we hit it, we'll be pretty competitive. If we miss it, then we miss it.

For us, I mean, anything we do, the laps we do and pits that we do is going to be a bonus for the 500. I've got a really experienced group of guys but they haven't done it in a while, so I think we get the pressure of people just to -- I mean, let's leave the screw-ups this week, know what I mean? That's what really it's all about, even myself leaving, I did that pit stop, we were having a bit of issues with the building and stuff, but it still was screwing up. It's my responsibility.

**Q. Juan, how do you view this month of May? Is it much different than you've had before when you were a younger driver and you were trying to prove something and you were a championship caliber driver driving for points running your first or second 500 --**

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: I've only done four. How many have you done, 500s?

SCOTT DIXON: 14.

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: 14, yeah, there you go. I'm still a rookie.

**Q. How do you view this overall? This is different than any you've had before.**

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: It's fun because there's no pressure. I don't care about the points; know what I mean? I normally don't really care too much about points anyway, but this time a little less.

**Q. But is there any kind of chip on your shoulder to prove that you should have still been here full-time or something like that?**

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: But that could have been a choice of mine, as well, know what I mean? But what I had with Team Penske for now and in the future I thought was the best opportunity, and actually it allowed me to really focus on my son. Like for me it worked out actually really well because like the week after the 500, I'm flying to Europe for two months to be with him and he's running the European Championship there, and I just want to build him up, and the time was perfect.

**Q. Sebastien, another good qualifying effort for you when you've gotten off to a very good start to the season with the exception of Phoenix; how important is this, though, to be able to continue this momentum with Dale Coyne Racing?**

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Well, I mean, it's actually the first good qualifying effort to be honest. You know, we really struggled with pace and couldn't quite get things where we wanted to be. It's the first time we were a legit Fast Six car and we're in the mix, we're in the fight, this fight being in the middle of a Penske fest.

You know, it's quite good, really, you know, to be -- I feel like we're in a bit of the minority here with Scott. No, really hats off to those boys, and our Honda tech guy did a really, really nice job, as well, in qualifying, and we did a good performance, and we did everything we had to do and did it well, and it was pretty close. Made a small mistake on that last lap in Q3, I just went for it, like okay, we just need a little bit more, and lost the rear in the start of the lap. So that turned into a one-lap-only effort. But there were countless hours to build that car back up from what it was after Phoenix, which really wasn't much at all left. So you know, they worked every day except Sunday. It's a big testament to that small organization that's really got inspiration to grow and develop, and it's just a cool feeling.

THE MODERATOR: This is Sebastien's best start here at the IndyCar Grand Prix. We'll welcome in Helio, as well.

**Q. Can you qualify where it is where you guys are slightly lacking to the Penskes? As a driver can you see where it's just a little bit off in these kind of situations?**

SCOTT DIXON: Oh, we know what the issue is. I think with the road course kit that we have, I think the Hondas have been doing a pretty stout job. We've been on both sides of the fence, so we know exactly how both of them work. So next week should be good, so don't worry about that. But yes, excited for next week to see where it goes.

**Q. Sebastien and Scott, you both have been involved in first turn first-lap incidents in this race. How difficult a turn is that at the start of this race?**

SCOTT DIXON: Easy, right, you just don't hit each other. I think Helio has hit me a couple times, Turn 1 here.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: There is nobody in front of me, that's great, so we're looking forward to a good start. But even that I'm starting in the front, you've got to be aware of where the cars are around because you don't want somebody just lock a wheel or something like that. But this is the way the track is. It's exciting. It's difficult. It's fun. It's back and forth, so there is all these ingredients together. But I think to be honest, I'm really surprised there's so many people here with the fans. It's just a different atmosphere. So looking forward to a good race tomorrow, that's for sure.

SCOTT DIXON: It is tough. You've got typically quite cold conditions here, low downforce, and you're going into a very quick braking zone, and then, you know, it's easy to try and pick somebody up at the start, so everybody thinks that's the time to do it. You know, it's never on purpose. It's just sometimes you get a little greedy and create some contact and maybe ruin your day or somebody else's. But hopefully we can have a clean run.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Yeah, it's tough, as well, because sometimes you're five wide by the time you get there, and the start is so far back. But there's no Push-to-Pass, so that might help a little bit, as well. We're not going to get there with another six miles an hour in the draft feeling like a million bucks. We'll see what happens.

**Q. Scott and Sebastien, you both have changed from Chevy to Honda power this year. You've noticed with the long straightaways here, do you feel that the Honda has caught up a little bit to the Chevy?**

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Well, nothing has changed. The guys have worked really hard on the engine. The package is the package. It is what it is. It's more draggy starting at a certain speed. That's why at Phoenix you see our cars, you know, the Honda cars just being early if you run the downforce because you run the drag with it, or then you trim but you don't have the downforce you'd like to have in traffic. It's just kind of a Catch 21. You can't overcome that. So you just do the best -- 22? Sorry, in French it's 21. But yeah, I mean, it's just the way it is, and then on the Superspeedway side, it seems to be reversed from what we think we know, so the aero kit is more efficient than the other side on the Superspeedway version. Hopefully we'll have -- have our growing pains early out of the way, and now we can go and have fun with other stuff.

**Q. Sebastien, about the traffic situation, can you give some information about that? Will this be an issue or factor for the race?**

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: What do you mean?

**Q. All the lapping, slower drivers.**

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: It's a pretty big track, so I hope traffic doesn't really become a problem, but you know, it can always be. I don't see this being more of a problem here than anywhere else to be honest, but like if you have guys who -- it's still a little bit difficult to pass sometimes, so at Long Beach there were a couple of cars that were using the push not to be passed. That's the hard thing sometimes. I mean, hopefully we won't have to worry about that.

**Q. Scott, you had a sort of like really big sideways moment toward the end of one of your laps. Was that going to be a lap that could have got you on the front row?**

SCOTT DIXON: Absolutely. It was going to be the last --

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: That's how he drives, man.

SCOTT DIXON: That was going to be the lap. No, I cooked it good and proper there. Yeah. But it was not going to be a good lap.

**Q. My question is for Josef: You're starting near**

**the front for the first time in this race. In the early part does that at least change your strategy for the early part of the race? Do circumstances change in the early part of the race given that you're no longer in the back or middle part of the pack?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, you run a different race when you start P-3 to P-12 or P-18 or -- I think we were P-26 last year, we went to the back with a penalty. So yeah, we'll change up for sure. We'll run a different strategy, we'll just try and keep -- shadow these guys and what they're doing and maybe one-up them with something. But yeah, it'll change just a little bit, absolutely.

**Q. Helio, if you could talk a little bit about Juan being here for the month of May, how crucial it is for the team?**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, are you kidding me? This guy, six months off; is that right? Got six months off, and it just goes like with the salt. You know like with the salt? This guys comes like nothing happened. It's unbelievable. He's a pretty major talent, obviously, and I'm glad he's on our team. But it just shows that our cars are very good, and when you match with a good driver, too, it's right up there.

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: I really had to come back because I felt the atmosphere was too quiet and too serious on the team without me.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: We need somebody that we can pick a little bit because he pick on everybody, so we're really glad that he's here so we can make fun of him, too.

THE MODERATOR: Helio, this is your fourth consecutive front row start here in the Verizon IndyCar Series this season. Give us a little update on your qualifying run today and how that has pushed you towards a good season so far.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Yeah, no, I'm really excited. Now in the Verizon colors, it's going to look good, actually, the front row between the Verizon super aero, so looking excited to be honest, especially in a place here that's always very tough and is very technical. I had up and down for the first time we're at least very consistent during qualifying. Jonathan Diuguid, my engineer, and all the rest of our engineers, they work really well together, and let me tell you guys, it's tough. When you put all of those guys together, you have a little bit of strategy going on, and obviously it's very tough. But Will right now is definitely qualifying -- like I said before, when you match a good driver with probably where he feels comfortable and with a good car, I mean, he's made a very good lap.

Excited for tomorrow. Hopefully we have a good, clean start, and see what happens in the race.

THE MODERATOR: We'll welcome in our pole winner

Will Power, driving the No. 12 Team Penske Chevrolet. This is Will's 47th career pole in the Verizon IndyCar Series, which moves him to fifth on the all-time poles list, also his third this season and also the -- Team Penske has won all poles so far this season in the Verizon IndyCar season.

WILL POWER: Yeah, has it been me, Helio, me, Helio, me, and then we're going to switch it up, then it's going to start me again, Helio, me.

THE MODERATOR: You predicted this in Phoenix. You said you guys have been alternating.

WILL POWER: Yeah, but I'm going to stop the alternation here in like a week or so.

THE MODERATOR: Will Power also set a track record at 1:07.7044 seconds. Obviously a very strong qualifying run for you here today. Take us through your run and how you think tomorrow's race is going to play out.

WILL POWER: Yeah, the car was great on used tires, and I thought on the new tires, I had a bit of understeer. I thought that it would really come in on used tires. Yeah, in the Fast Six the car had a fantastic balance and did a really neat lap. I was actually up on the second set and then got too greedy at the end. But yeah, really cool to start at the front again. Really determined to have a good race. I've been knocking on the door every week, and one is going to go our way here soon. You put yourself in that position, it'll happen. That's the plan.

THE MODERATOR: You're the only driver that's won here aside from your teammate Simon Pagenaud. Were you surprised to not see him advance into the Firestone Fast Six?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I think he did go a little bit different on setup, but he's always up there, obviously. He's a champion, and you expect him to be there. But you expect him to be there in the race, of course. Sometimes you can't go right all the time, but yeah, I don't know where he's starting. Yeah. I mean, seventh is not bad.

**Q. You beat the track record by almost a second, and the aero kits have been frozen from '16 to '17. What was the big difference? Are these just like perfect conditions today?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, it must have been. Must have just been a little cooler, must have made it a better condition. It didn't feel any better, honestly. But yeah, I didn't even know it was under the lap record. Yeah. Yeah, very strong lap.

**Q. How close is your car to race trim? Do you do any changes with your engineer or you'll keep it unchanged?**



WILL POWER: Yeah, you have a bit of adjustability in the cockpit. It's a track where tires do not degrade, so usually your qualifying setup is pretty close to your race setup, like you're pretty much doing -- I don't think it'll change too much, trying to protect the rears or anything. I think if anything the car gets better over a stint with the fuel load goes down and gets lighter. The car starts to be a bit more nimble. So yeah.

**Q. It's a slightly different red tire this year. Firestone, I think, brought a new construction or a new compound, and have you noticed a difference in that?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, there's definitely a big difference between black and red. A really noticeable difference. You know, I predict that people will use all their reds tomorrow and one set of blacks basically because lap time is just so far off the red. Yeah, and I think the blacks have a slightly different front and it just doesn't seem to work as well this year.

**Q. Will, with Turn 1 being so treacherous as it has been in past years, do you find that the inside or outside is the best place to be right at the start?**

WILL POWER: Inside. Yeah, you don't want anyone sneaking up inside. It all flows out, yeah.

**Q. In 2015 you thought it was achievable that you could do a May sweep; is that more difficult to do this year?**

WILL POWER: It's hard to tell right now. You know, obviously last year it was -- you know, Honda seemed to have a bit of an edge. You know, obviously Chevy is very good at closing that gap quickly, so we'll see. I know they've been working very hard, so we'll see as it comes. I mean, it's tough to say right now, it really is. It really is hard to say how this will all play out.

**Q. And also today was a very long day but very short practices, and you had to get it all done in one day.**

WILL POWER: Yeah.

**Q. Do you like that schedule, or do you think it needs to be a little more track time?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, it was definitely -- you know, you're on the toes all day because you had the autograph session in between and then some appearances. I didn't mind it. If you can get on it pretty quickly, it's good. But if you were here -- yeah, obviously it worked out for me, so we should keep doing this. I don't think it mattered. I mean, yeah, all the sessions have been 40 -- yeah, it's good to have a night to think about it before qualifying, but definitely shortens the weekend up.

**Q. When you're fighting your way back up the championship standings, obviously you just heard Simon starting seventh, any extra pressure just to make up that ground now so that you're starting first on the pole?**

WILL POWER: There's no -- you can't have that feeling of urgency. It never works out. Just got to try and get the most out of each race and not even think about competition until later in the year. You know, that's when you start -- if you have a championship lead, obviously the guys closest to you at the end of the year, you're going to keep pitting when he pits and just stay on the strategy, stay just in touch with him. But right now, just trying to get the most out of every weekend. Made that mistake last year here, but that feeling of I've got to -- if I don't close that gap now, and it wasn't true, I closed the gap in the middle of the season, and if I'd had a reasonable race here I'd have been right on top of things going into the last race. Yeah, just got to be smart about it.

**Q. You had run a similar time to your pole qualifying time in practice. Did you expect the speeds to be around that mark? What was your expectation in terms of time?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, I thought that was a pretty nice lap today, earlier today in practice, so yeah. I mean, I didn't think it could have been faster than that. I was actually off on a lap but kind of lost it in the last leg there in the second run. But yeah, I think what was possible was 7.5. I don't think you can get much quicker than that.

**Q. You said you'd like to see the sequence start all over starting with you on the pole again next week. Is it hard to be here and not think about next week and the week after? What is it like for a driver to know what's at stake this month? You're sitting here on pole but clearly the 500 is sitting there.**

WILL POWER: Yeah, I'm just focusing on -- I didn't give it a thought, like you're just so focused on getting the most out of this day and lap and session type thing, you're just not even thinking about the 500 itself. I think that happens during the month, and then once you start running on the oval, you're just thinking about each day getting the car right and you're not thinking too far ahead.

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