

IndyCar Media Conference

Friday June 23, 2017

Josef Newgarden

Will Power

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started with our Verizon IndyCar Series post-practice news conference. Pleased to be joined by our fastest driver of the day in both practice sessions, Josef Newgarden, driving the No. 2 Devilbiss Team Penske Chevrolet.

Josef, a fast time for you out there today obviously with your teammate close behind you. Take us through your practice sessions and your thoughts going into tomorrow's qualifying.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, it was a good session for us. I think we've had good cars off the truck. Did we end up 1-2-3-4? That shows you that the cars are very good for all of us. I think we've got good, strong cars across the board. You know, we'll try to carry that into tomorrow.

It's going to be hard to be the best of all of us, even just us four, I think, because we're all quite close with what we're doing. We're learning every session from each other.

I was happy with today. I thought it got a little loose in the afternoon with the temperature coming up slightly. We were working on that. But, you know, pretty smooth run on the reds, which was nice to see. We'll try to carry it into tomorrow and see what we've got.

THE MODERATOR: We are also joined by your teammate Will Power, driving the No. 12 Team Penske Chevrolet.

Will, you're surrounded by teammates, but you are the reigning winner at this track. Do you feel like most of your competition lies internally?

WILL POWER: Yeah, it basically looks that way. Like Josef said, definitely we just keep learning off each other. That's going to be the key this weekend. I'm pretty sure we'll all be at the front in qualifying. Yeah, it's about doing a good job and trying to get the most out of your car, understand where your teammate's faster.

THE MODERATOR: Did you say you're pretty sure you'll be up front in qualifying?

WILL POWER: I'm pretty sure we'll all be up front in



qualifying. We'll be able to all fight it out in the Fast Six.

THE MODERATOR: I thought you were being confident.

WILL POWER: Yeah, we've switched personalities. I've suddenly become super overconfident.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: He's super cocky, Will. Especially on the simulator. So awkward, Will, so awkward.

WILL POWER: You're just goofy, man.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: You guys might know this, but we have a great relationship. We're happy to be teammates.

WILL POWER: Surprised he hasn't said it yet.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: No, I'm not going to say that.

WILL POWER: Any time Josef is faster than me --

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I don't know what we're doing right now. We're going completely off-script. He will literally call me at night after a simulator session and be like, 'Hey, I just got out, I drilled you.' If he went a tenth (of a second) quicker than me or something like that. I'll do it vice versa now, so we have a joke going back and forth.

THE MODERATOR: It seems that the Team Penske situation, while extremely competitive, does seem like it's grown into a bit of a family with the four drivers. Now that we've reached kind of the halfway point of the season, how is your mid-season review so far with Team Penske and the chemistry that you guys have built in that team?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I think it's been great. A lot of people have asked this year from me what I thought of it. I didn't really know last year what it was going to be like coming into it. It's not a knock on Team Penske. From the outside, I think it looks different. You're not sure what that atmosphere is like, what the environment will be, whether good or bad.

It's been fun to get to know it because I think we have a good relationship amongst all the drivers. We joke around a lot. We're very serious, we want to beat each other. I'd like to be the best out of everybody, just like

every one of these guys. But we seem to have a really good working relationship, which I think kind of comes from the top down with Roger. It's pretty impressive to see how he sets the tone for the whole organization. We kind of all follow it.

We do have a good relationship. It's not a façade. It's a fun environment to work in, it's competitive, but it's fun. I think that's why we've been so good, is we've been able to make each other better, feed off each other with every session.

THE MODERATOR: Will, as a veteran of the team, how would you say this cast of characters compares to the ones in the past with Team Penske?

WILL POWER: I think Montoya and Josef are almost polar opposites as far as personality goes.

THE MODERATOR: I think they're interchangeable.

WILL POWER: But, yeah, I mean, everyone was their strengths. I think eventually we all (indiscernible) the same driving style because you're just picking the best bits of everyone.

But, I mean, all different personalities, different nationalities. It's always very fun and very competitive. We all want to be the one to be at the top.

THE MODERATOR: Bringing the conversation back to Road America, you had some fun yesterday with a local celebrity, hanging out with Green Bay Packers quarterback Brett Hundley. What were you up to yesterday?

WILL POWER: Yeah, he was trying to throw it through a window of a Corvette going past. He got it. He got it in, actually. I just ruined it for everybody. He got it in, but I didn't.

I'm used to throwing it like a rugby. Like rugby, we pass like this. We don't throw over the top. I just had one attempt. I was like, Oh. Probably, yeah, should stick to driving.

THE MODERATOR: In rugby, it has to go backwards?

WILL POWER: Backwards. You watch the games, they're not all that different in the strategies, all that. But sometimes I want them to pass the ball around a bit. They just throw it once, catch it, that's it. Pass the ball, man.

THE MODERATOR: What were your impressions of Brett Hundley? What did you relate together on as professional athletes?

WILL POWER: It was really interesting. He just asked me about strategy, the homework you have to do as a racecar driver. It's the same for them. He had to learn

like a 600-page book, understand plays, when to say we're doing this play. He's got to be able to memorize it, tell all the other guys what they're doing.

You know, it is very comparable. You've got to execute the move perfectly. It's similar to racing.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Josef and Will.

Q. When it's such a long lap as this, is it hard to look after your tires on an out-lap so you still have life enough for them for the full qualifying run?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I think Will does it a little differently than I do, the way you look after your tires over those two or three laps, when you want them to come in.

I thought there's enough straightaway, you know, it kind of stays the same as a short course, you know. If you want to go hard on the out-lap on a short course, it's no different that it's being longer here, they have time to cool down in the straight. It doesn't overuse them, I find.

I do the same technique, going pretty hard on the out-lap with the tire. I know Will's style is a little different in the way he eats it. I think it averages out with the straightaways being lengthened from the corners. No difference in what I'm doing, at least.

WILL POWER: Yeah, it depends. Yeah, I mean, like Josef said, you do have a lot of straight here. The track is kind of abrasive, so you got to kind of still think ahead a little bit. The reds actually last well. I found like I went quick on the second run. They're quite good. Don't have to be worried about it like some tracks.

Q. Josef, you said in Detroit that you made a bit of a breakthrough setup-wise as far as getting your road and street course handling right for qualifying. Is today's result an example of that?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I think we're closer, yeah. I don't know if we're ultimately there, but we're definitely closer. You know, we started out of the box a lot better this weekend. It kind of followed into today. I definitely think, yeah, we've made a lot of progress.

Detroit was a good weekend for us to make that progress. But we still have some things that need to be I think better for me that I'm still looking for. We made big steps. If you think about it in 100%, I think we've probably gotten 75% of the way there, you know, but we're still trying to find those last little details.

Every track is different. That's the thing I find about IndyCar is, you know, you feel like you've been to every track, so you have an understanding of how to drive every track. But it almost seems like you have to make a setup specifically for each track. There's these little details you need for each specific track.

So Brian and me have been working on those little things every weekend we go to. Even Road America, there's thing we need to fine tune for here. We can't just go off the GP of Indy and say what we learned there we can just plug in here and we'll be good to go. We have to still figure out Road America.

It's a hard series in that you have to take a year to learn each track with the setups for each specific team, then execute on it. But I think we're a lot closer, absolutely.

Q. The benefit of a large team is being able to share information, how you all get better. Is it harder, like, mentally to want to do that when you're 1-2-3-4 than, say, if you are seventh, ninth, something like that? You still know it's better, but is it harder to go, We can help each other out?

WILL POWER: Yeah, you mean like giving information to each other, sharing information?

Q. Yeah.

WILL POWER: You don't have to say anything. It's all there.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I was going to say, it's kind of hard to hide.

WILL POWER: We have on-board cameras, have data, have notes from the session. If you wanted to hide something, you just can't, you know.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Really, it's like impossible. No joke. It's 100% impossible to hide anything.

Q. Here you have such a very narrow window whether you go three stops or four stops. What is that window? How soon does it start?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I mean, that's the problem. They should have added 10 laps, not five, because it's made it everyone has to save fuel. Everyone's going for a three stopper and saving fuel because it's such a long pit lane penalty, it's 40 seconds. They added the wrong amount. Should have been 10 laps, or even eight laps.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It's close, yeah. I mean, you could do either one, depending on where you are. But, you know, you can do the three stop still, so I think most people will try to do that.

WILL POWER: If you're out front...

Q. What lap?

WILL POWER: (Indiscernible).

Q. Josef, how much do you feel like you can kind of properly attack this track this year compared to last year where it was your first time in an IndyCar and you were coming off the recovery?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I thought we were actually pretty good last year. Like you said, I don't want to use

the injury as an excuse. We just didn't, you know, get it all together. I made a mistake in qualifying.

I thought we probably would have been pretty good in qualifying, maybe top 10, top five, maybe top five. I think we could have made the top six. I made a mistake in Q1. That put us to the back. We had a great race. We were fast in the race. We were inside the top 10 there.

So, yeah, I don't want to use the injury as an excuse. I just don't think we got it all together. It was probably more down to me just not getting it done.

I feel good about coming here. I think we've got a strong car with Team Penske. Should have a good weekend. I would judge that off the race. Our race performance was very good last year, so I think we can have a very good race this year with Team Penske.

Q. I don't know whether it was you last year or not, you ventured off into the crowds on Friday night, hang out with them, see what they were like. Do you plan on doing that again tonight?

WILL POWER: Yeah, went for a walk down there. Got the corn hole, first go. Boom, straight in first time. Didn't touch the sides. I said, I'm going to win this thing. It happened (laughter). It did. It was a perfect shot, man.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I didn't last year. I've been to this track many times without racing here. It's a very fun track to walk around at. There's a lot of great, you know, families, fans, just camping, having a good time. It's beautiful out there. I love this country up here. It's so beautiful. I'd probably move up here if the winters weren't so terrible. During the summer it's really nice.

Yeah, it's fun to walk around if you have time. I'd like to go out and chat at some people. It might happen, yeah.

Q. Going back to fuel consumption, rather than corn holes, 'push to pass', if you use it, and if you didn't, someone else did, could you save a whole lap's worth of fuel?

WILL POWER: Yeah, if you use 'push to pass', it does burn a lot more fuel, yeah.

Q. So someone who used that would have to duck into the pits a lap earlier?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Not necessarily. I don't know. You can use it and still save fuel.

WILL POWER: You can use it.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: More on the other side of your driving technique. If you're going to use 'push to pass' on a lap where you're saving fuel, you have to do more work in the brake zones. You just have to compensate for it.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you very much.
Good luck this weekend.