

# IndyCar Media

## Conference

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# Helio Castroneves

# Josef Newgarden

# Simon Pagenaud

## Press Conference

HELIO CASTRONEVES: We are here today in Road America. We had the first session here with Team Penske, Helio Castroneves, Simon Pagenaud and Josef Newgarden.

Simon, you did a very good job today first session. Tell us about your car.

SIMON PAGENAUD: You're such a natural (laughter). The guy is great.

I looked at a lot of your driving last night, I got better myself, yeah. So thank you.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: You're welcome.

SIMON PAGENAUD: The car is great. Team Penske is doing a great job this weekend. It's pretty awesome to feel like we have such good cars. Personally I think qualifying is going to be very exciting. Hopefully it's 1-2-3-4. So far it's been really good. Good program. I look forward to it this afternoon. It's going to be a good fight.

THE MODERATOR: Do you want to take over from here? I liked how this is going.

SIMON PAGENAUD: Tell us about your world, Helio. What's new in your world?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Thank you, Simon. You're right, definitely Team Penske is doing a very good job in the REV Group car and the rest of the guys are working all together.

I tell you what, I'm a little concerned. Hopefully Honda is not cranking up their engine. They're always playing game with us. I do feel we have a very good balance, no different than that. Simon was looking at the stuff last night. That's a good thing about Team Penske, we can share information. The good thing is we can improve ourselves. The bad thing is, everybody can improve. You're like, Uh.

It's great to have this combination, but we still need to keep focused here and have a good result in qualifying.



THE MODERATOR: Josef, we talked about this yesterday, just the fact that your teammates are your competition for just about everything, but it seems particularly here at Road America. With qualifying coming up, all of that data just out in the open for everyone to see, how do you put yourself forward amongst your teammates and the rest of your competitors? Can you not tell them?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It's difficult. You have to try to sabotage them. Yesterday I tried to sabotage Simon's day.

THE MODERATOR: How did you do that?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Twice tried to sabotage his day. You got to get in his way when he's on a fast lap. You have to feed him some bad information to look at.

SIMON PAGENAUD: I looked at it till midnight last night. Came back to the track and it wasn't good. Thank you.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I didn't do a good enough job. He's P1 this morning.

It's tough. We're all very close I think with what we do as far as how we're driving the car. Kind of like what Will talked about. Everyone ends up merging into the same thing at the end of the day. Whatever is the fastest in each particular trait of everyone, we kind of take the good from everything, or each particular person, try to put it together and make it the best.

It's hard to hide, though. Like we talked about yesterday, you can't hide anything nowadays with video, all the notes that are available. We have everyone's notes, can't hide your notes. Then obviously you have data to look at, too. It's a lot of information.

We don't try to hide anything. It's not a situation like that. We work really well together trying to make everybody better. Hopefully if we're doing our job it is 1-2-3-4 and we only have to fight each other.

I think for Roger and the entire team, that's the best thing we can do. That's what we've been trying to get to. I think this weekend we've been off to a good start. We have to finish it up with the qualifying and race tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Simon, congratulations. This week you were nominated for an ESPY. That's coming up on July 12th. Talk about the honor of that nomination, if it was expected for you, and how you're getting fans behind you to vote.

SIMON PAGENAUD: No, it wasn't expected at all. We went into this season in the hot core of it. The focus is solely on driving and racing, being the best you can. There's not much going on in my world except for racing during the year. So it was a very good surprise.

I actually saw it on Twitter. Krystin (Wiggs), my assistant, took care of it. It was really an honor, especially seeing my name next to Jimmie Johnson, somebody I've always looked up to. Lewis Hamilton is somebody I raced against in Europe. He's always been in my mind one of the best racers in the world. I don't know Ron Capps, but I hear he's pretty amazing, what he does.

It's cool to see my name next to these guys. It just keeps getting better and better for me every year as my dream becomes more true even every day. It truly is an honor. I don't know what else to say except I'm very fortunate for the life that I am in, and I hope that we can win this competition because I think it would be fantastic for IndyCar.

Obviously Indy 500 was tremendous in terms of following. Fernando brought so much to the sport. He put us on the map again. I think the sport's just growing and growing. If we could get that award, that would just be I think great for all of us, not just for me.

It's just incredible to be part of it. Hopefully we go to L.A. and bring the trophy back. That would be awesome.

I need you to vote. Do you guys vote?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: I'm already making some publicity, make sure people vote.

SIMON PAGENAUD: There's something very special coming from Helio. Make sure you tune up, because it will be fun.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. As drivers you're very competitive. Have you at all tried to master the hoola-hoop?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Probably the first time you hoola-hooped, right? No. We tried to master it in 10 seconds. When we made these videos, we had no idea they were actually going to be competitions. We thought they were just filming us do things. I think I would have tried to go a lot longer if I knew it was going to be a competition.

SIMON PAGENAUD: Josef could have gone all night.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: I would like a redo as well. Same as Josef, I had no idea it was going to be a competition. I would have done one practice first. Really throw us under the bus, that's it, do it.

**Q. A real question, more serious. Obviously the four Penske cars are the ones to beat here. You're on the top of the charts. What is it in the performance of Team Penske that makes your cars better, aside from the driver skill?**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: I think it's a combination, as we talk about, working together. We're trying to make that we have a superior car. I do believe maybe if there is no hiding games, I believe maybe our package, aero package, is suit this track better. Probably in combination with a good car, it's showing now out there.

But it's all about details, the way I see it. As we heard about it, all of us, really pushing. This place is so big, if you make a mistake in one corner, lose half a second, or if you get it right, you make a lot of time. Sometimes you're probably faster than everybody else in one part of the track, then lose what you gain on the other side. There is so much going on.

It is not only one thing. But I do feel that our cars, we finally can see that all the work behind the scene is paying off.

**Q. Helio, you drove here already in the Champ Car era. Compared to IndyCar, was the approach different in Champ Car than IndyCar?**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Big difference speed-wise. We're so much faster in the corner compared to what we used to be. The braking points...

**Q. More difficult to set up a Champ Car?**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: It's just different. The timing when you braking compared to what it used to be. We braking now almost, I mean, turning. Before, because you approach so much faster, you had the time to downshift. If you don't have the pedal shift, it's with your hands. There was a lot going on in just what's happening now.

The level is difficult right now. I feel it's more difficult because the way the car is. It brought up the car a little bit less difficult to drive compare what it used to with Champ Car. 900 or 950 horsepower, now we're so much closer, from 1st to 21st, 25th, it's really short. I feel it's a little harder now.

**Q. How is it driving through the carousel?**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: It's pretty hard. I mean, the wind seem to be affecting. It's very difficult if you position your car in one way or another. Suddenly starts snapping a little bit. It's definitely a challenging track, but I feel that everyone is enjoy this place.

**Q. Josef, how much support are you putting behind the proposed race in Nashville, your old hometown? How close do you think it can be to being added to the schedule?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: That's a good question. I don't know.

SIMON PAGENAUD: You sponsoring the race?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I'm definitely not. I can't. Maybe, I don't know (laughter). Depends on how the year goes.

I think a race in Nashville would be fantastic, I will say that. Even a street course race, I think it would be an awesome event. Nashville is a great market for us. It's already a strong IndyCar market, in my opinion. If you look at some of the TV ratings, Nashville is always right up there. I think it would be a great place for us to go race.

The group that's running it, I don't really know them that well. I've seen a little bit of their plans just on news articles, so I don't know any more than anyone else in this room to be honest. I don't know what the type of venue would be. I'd have to look at that closer.

I think it's feasible to run a race there. I think Nashville will get behind it. I think it's possible. Is this group going to make it happen? I have no idea. You know as much as me.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: If they use the bridge, I think it's a good deal. If they don't, it's just in the parking lot, you're talking about a situation like Houston, which wasn't the best of street course races. If we're going to go race there, I hope we would use the city streets and not use the parking lot only. That's what I would say.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I don't know. I mean, have to get further down the road to be a legitimate deal to look at that. I would certainly be very supportive of it, being from Nashville. Anyone that's been to Nashville knows how cool that city is. It's become even cooler over the last 10 years. I'd love to race there to be in Nashville running an IndyCar race. Would very strongly support it. How involved I'd be at this point, I have no idea.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: I could give you my tickets.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Thank you, Helio. You won't have that many people in Nashville, come up from Atlanta?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: I don't think so.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: We're always trying to trade tickets when we come to the track for our family, what

we have available.

**Q. Last year Will led 46 of the 50 laps. Simon, you were second for a while. Is there a problem here passing the leader? Was there just a problem passing that leader in that car on that day?**

SIMON PAGENAUD: I think it's mostly -- it depends on the tire wear really. When the tire wear, then you get more opportunities for passing. If the tires don't wear on the road course like this one, the aero becomes a bit of an issue to follow close.

Here, the tires do go off. Firestone does a fantastic job choosing the right tire for us. The reds will go off and the blacks will go off as well. I think toward the end of a stint, there might be chances and opportunities for a car that's better on long runs.

But it's down to opportunities, whatever happens. But certainly Will was very strong last year, and so was Dixon. We'll see. I think it all depends on tire wear.

**Q. Josef, looks like turn 14 is the trouble spot for a few people this weekend, yourself included earlier today. What happened there? What is it about that corner that's so difficult?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I mean, it's been a tricky corner just because I think it's been loose for everybody with some of the wind. The wind's behind us, so it's not helping us as much as it would normally.

I just got a little bit too excited with what I was doing inside the car. It was already loose on that run. I was still on old tires. I overpushed it when I shouldn't have. That was more my fault than a condition of the corner.

But the corner is very difficult. If you talk to a lot of people, I think it's probably been the most difficult corner on the track, mainly because of that wind. But for me, I made a mistake when the car was already too loose. I probably should have pitted and not overpushed it.

But that's okay. That's the time to do it, in third practice, and don't do it again. I've hopefully learned my lesson.

**Q. Helio, a track you used to race at, which would be Portland. How important do you think that market would be to return to an IndyCar schedule? That's another place that really turned out and loved the event.**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: You talking about the track or the street course we used to race?

**Q. Either. Just having a race return to Portland.**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Certainly that area, it's always been accepting of IndyCar Series. It's the heritage, the DNA, just like this place, just like Watkins Glen. Portland, it's no different than that.

I feel that every time you go back to places that we have some history, it seems to succeed. Maybe goes through cycle, you know. I think now is the right time to revisit those places and try again because, no question, in the past it worked. I don't see a reason to not work it again.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, good luck this afternoon. Thank you.