

# IndyCar Media Conference

Friday July 14, 2017

## Simon Pagenaud

## Will Power

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'll get started with today's Verizon IndyCar Series post-practice press conference. Pleased to be joined now by Will Power, driver of the No. 12 Verizon Team Penske Chevrolet, who finished second fastest overall in today's combined practice sessions. Will, I know that you finished kind of closer towards the bottom of the practice charts earlier today. I imagine you were probably trying a few things for the race, but able to show some speed in the second practice. How did your day go today, and what did you figure out that might help you in qualifying tomorrow?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I mean, got to try the red tires, which actually aren't that different from the blacks speed-wise. Only a quarter of a second maybe, three tenths. But yeah, it's a tough track to get the balance right. The grip levels are so different all the way around. You've got some bumpy areas with no grip and bumpy areas with grip, and then completely smooth areas. It's something else.

Very tough to get it all right.

THE MODERATOR: You have two poles here and also three wins, which is the most of any active driver on the field this year. What is it about this track that just suits your style so well would you say?

WILL POWER: It's just that I've been here enough times to have racked up some wins really. It's not anything special I do around here. Yeah, it's just your typical street course, and yeah, none of the wins were the same, and I did not do the same thing or the same setup or anything for each of them. Different every year. You've just got to really roll with the punches and be on your toes.

**Q. Will, you mentioned the bumpy sections with grip, bumpy sections without grip. Did that change during the session or can you kind of commit that to memory?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, it actually does change as the track -- I guess you can see it just gets blacker and blacker as the rubber goes down, which just means grip. The track progresses the whole weekend, yes. It changes.

You know, it's just a slow progression so you move with it pretty easily.

**Q. With the way the track is the last practice, does this kind of remind you of when you were a kid taking the car out on an old dirt road?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, there's definitely some times your car is doing that. If it is, you definitely need to make a change. But the last section is a bit like that. You've got some cement patches and off-camber areas and a very daunting last corner to get right. It's kind of opened up this year, so it's a little bit faster, yeah.

**Q. What parts of the track get the most attention when the feel the grip?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, probably Turn 9, 10 is -- Turn 9 in particular goes from a lot of grip to absolutely nothing.

**Q. That concrete there?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, smooth concrete, yeah.

**Q. There was a couple changes to the track this year. Have you noticed them at all, or is it quite similar to last year?**

WILL POWER: Turn 8, that whole stretch there is just really nice. Really, really nice, smooth. Smooth braking. That's the biggest change. The rest is very similar.

**Q. Have you found that you're having to compromise your line, the ideal racing line a lot because the bumps are exactly where you least need them to be?**

WILL POWER: Yes. In Turn 1 -- depending on the wind direction, you have to avoid the bumps at times. Today you've got a tower wind, so you don't bottom as hard. I'm not sure anyone else picked that up in the paddock, but I noticed that if you've got a headwind you've got to bottom harder. Tailwind, not as much. I'm always looking, always looking.

**Q. You're talking about how hard you're bottoming there. Is that the compromise for this track? With most of the circuit being smooth, is that the compromise?**

WILL POWER: Yes, that's true. That is a compromise, yes.

**Q. How long has that discussion been with your crew on fixing that?**

WILL POWER: I mean, we found a limit today, kinda. Yeah. I mean, if they resurfaced the front stretch, it would be such a nice track, you know. That's the only one left now. It's all up to that hotel, I hear, that's been

getting built for so many years. Yeah, that would make this track really, really, really nice.

**Q. You said when you put on the red tires you only got about did you say maybe three tenths of a second faster? It seems like the red tires should be much grippier and faster around here. But I understand Firestone actually changed their red tires this year to try and give more grip.**

WILL POWER: Yeah, yeah, they did. It's interesting. Just some tracks don't generate enough load to -- like if it was a smooth track, I'm sure that the time would be quicker. Once you get to the cement bits, it's not that big of a difference. But yeah, we thought there would be a bigger difference, but it's not. It's like last year. Last year, you know, Simon tried to use blacks in the Fast Six, which was close -- it's kind of like that. Like you'll be thinking about that.

THE MODERATOR: We'll welcome in Simon Pagenaud, who was fastest overall in today's combined practice sessions. Simon has a best start of second here on the streets of Toronto and a best finish of fourth. Simon, finishing fastest today, how did practice go for you, and what are some things you guys worked on leading in tomorrow's qualifying session?

SIMON PAGENAUD: Yeah, no, it's been great. It's been fun. I had French food last night, too, so that was nice. And I want to thank you. I see it's very busy here, so thanks for being here.

The car has been phenomenal the whole day. I feel very comfortable. It's great to be back in Toronto. This track is so much fun to drive on because it's different to other tracks. Here it's very low grip. You slide around in the corners. The tarmac changes throughout the corner, and it's giving you a great challenge. I really enjoy that. I really do. Every corner is different. You need to change your driving, corners to corners. It's not boring, I can tell you that.

I'm excited. I think, again, the DXC car is really good. Obviously the track is changing as all the series go on, so we're going to need to follow the track, but I think we've started right where we need to be. Obviously the difficult part from now on is to find the magic setup on the car for the red tires, and like Will said, there's quite a bit of a difference on the balance from the black tires to the reds. We'll see. I think we're okay, but I think that's going to be the tough part.

THE MODERATOR: You mentioned in one of your pre-race quotes that you don't feel like you've had the best luck here in terms of strategy.

SIMON PAGENAUD: No, this track has been funny to me. It's been interesting; we've never had much luck here with strategies throughout the years, since 2012. Hopefully it's not a common trend because I'm hoping that this year is going to be a good one. But we've

always been very competitive, and Toronto always has a twist in strategy and on the race and whatever happens. Like I said, that's probably due to the grip changes throughout the corners that makes our life very difficult. We'll see. Hopefully we're on the right side of strategy this time.

THE MODERATOR: Changing subjects just a little bit, we all know how busy you drivers are throughout the season, but this week in particular was quite busy for you. You went straight from the Iowa Corn 300 on Sunday straight to LA for the ESPYs, arrived here I imagine probably yesterday for the race here, the Honda Indy Toronto. Tell us about your experience out in LA and just the go, go, go nature of that experience.

SIMON PAGENAUD: Yeah, it was great. It was phenomenal time. Being part of such a cast of athletes was very special to me. Where I come from, there's only 6,000 people in my hometown. It's a farmer town. Being in LA around all these athletes and celebrities was quite something.

I was just very proud, very honored, very proud to represent IndyCar, as well. They did a tremendous job at preparing the event and making sure that everybody knew who I was, which was great. I was actually very surprised. We had a lot of attraction from the media, from other athletes, and I thought that was phenomenal to see.

**Q. Since you're talking about the ESPYs, did you feel the humor or the way that whole Peyton Manning smackdown of Kevin Durant went because that was probably the highlight of the night?**

SIMON PAGENAUD: Yeah, he did a super job. I mean, the whole show was -- I call it a show really. It was a show. The whole show was really good. The commercial -- not the commercial, but the little spots that he filled were really funny. He's a funny guy. I have to say, I was quite surprised with that side of Peyton Manning that you don't get to see very often. But he's a really good host, and yeah, he's got a lot more talent than I do actually on that side of things. But good time, very good time. By the way, I was right there with Snoop Dogg, so I thought it was cool.

**Q. I assume these NASCAR Pinty's cars are running Goodyears. Is that going to affect the balance for you if it stays dry tomorrow, and are you actually kind of like praying for rain so that you can lay down more Firestone rubber?**

SIMON PAGENAUD: I think any kind of rubber on the track would be good for grip to be honest. It's just going to change the balance, which way it's going to go. I don't know, we never run with them, so it's very difficult to know which way the car is going to go. When we're behind Indy Lights, we kind of know now which way it's going, but behind these guys we have no idea, so it's going to add a twist again to what could

be practice or qualifying tomorrow.

But yeah, there's a lot of times you just need to drive and just adjust to it yourself. It's not always easy in one lap.

**Q. Will talked about Turn 1; is that the toughest part of the racetrack for you now, also?**

SIMON PAGENAUD: No, I'm struggling more with Turn 8 actually, those little patches. They've redone the complete braking zone, and all of a sudden you turn in and there's a little patch here that's right in the wrong spot. But that's part of it. That's what makes it fun, too. Like I said, if it was all renewed tarmac, it would be too easy almost. So I think that's what's interesting.

**Q. Does this compare to Detroit at all?**

SIMON PAGENAUD: No, completely separate to Detroit. A lot less grip here, and again, the differences in surface makes it different in every part of the corner, so it's unique. There's no other places like this.

THE MODERATOR: Simon, thank you very much. We appreciate it.