

# IndyCar Media Conference

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## Helio Castroneves Josef Newgarden Simon Pagenaud Will Power

Penske Racing Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We can get started with Helio Castroneves, who finished second fastest in this morning's practice session. Helio has one pole here and a best finish of second as we head into tomorrow afternoon's Honda Indy Toronto. Your team swept the practice session this morning showing some great speed heading into this afternoon's qualifying session. How are you feeling about your car and your setup?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Yeah, our Hitachi Chevy seems to be carrying good momentum from last year, and all of four of us are sharing a lot of information, and that's extremely what -- we want to be in a situation that we're fighting against each other and not against everybody else.

Right now it's working in the direction that we're looking, but again, there was a big change between the reds and the blacks and with the track changing, so hopefully with the paths that we had yesterday and the track and a little bit similar situation, that probably might help us to cover those differences. So far, so good, but we'll keep working together.

THE MODERATOR: What does it take to be successful at this track knowing there are so many different track surfaces and each turn is different?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: You try to minimize those differences. When you go into one corner you go from asphalt to concrete and then go back to asphalt. Those are the biggest challenges not only for the drivers but for the engineers because you come back and you say the car is understeer but actually it's oversteer, and the track the next laps start getting more grip. So it's very interesting to see, as you can see the three amigos arriving with the sunshine, glasses. Wow, man, look really slick.

Let me introduce here José Nuevo Jardín. That's Josef Newgarden. We'll just start with the new times.

What can I say about the mumba power? As you can see -- actually I never understood why they say Three

Musketeers but they have four guys. Have you seen that movie?

THE MODERATOR: That's true.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Yeah. They say Three Musketeers but they have four guys. There's always an odd man out. Ha, ha, very funny.

THE MODERATOR: Who's the odd man out?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: It's pretty obvious who's the odd man out.

So with that, and then you have three other guys buzzing in your ear and you're trying to set up the car.

That's why it's so difficult in Toronto, but hopefully we keep going in the same way that we finished in practice one, except the No. 3 being at the top of the chart.

THE MODERATOR: I'll turn things over to Josef. Josef, best start of eighth here, but one win, but it was the second win of your young career at that time. What do you remember from 2015 and what went well that day?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Well, hello, everyone. Thank you, Helio, for that wonderful introduction. I'm curious who the odd man out is.

But yeah, 2015 was a good year for us. We got a little bit lucky that year I remember with the yellow, but we were strong even when we did get the track position and seemed to capitalize on it. This is a fun place to win. Toronto is a fun place to race IndyCars, and if you're able to win a race here, it makes it that much more fun, which is hard to do.

But I remember it being a difficult race. There was some rain mixed in, and that's going to be a potential for tomorrow's race, too. I think it's going to be typical Toronto difficulty where it's already hard enough figuring out your balance around this place, figuring out the race car over the concrete patches. It's standard difficulty that Toronto brings. And then trying to manage the race with the yellows and when they fall, it really seems to throw a wrench into the works most of the time. I think that's going to be the game tomorrow, and you've just got to try and time it right and figure out how to be on pit road when you need to be on pit road and not on pit road when you don't need to be on it.

THE MODERATOR: Simon and Will, we talked to you yesterday, so I'll ask you for a quick update on how this morning's session went and how you're feeling heading into qualifying.

SIMON PAGENAUD: Yeah, good. Just putting our poker face on because all these guys are just so fast.

WILL POWER: Yep.

SIMON PAGENAUD: It's going to be an interesting fight for sure. The Penske cars are very good. But Dixon is always coming. So we're going to have to be really strong. Rahal is really strong. Hunter-Reay showed a lot of pace, too. Like I said yesterday, the biggest thing is transitioning to the red Firestone tires is going to change the balance of the car, so there's a bit of guesswork right now in the trailer to try and find the right balance for those tires.

But overall I think we're in good shape. I can't wait to see how it unfolds. It's going to be very exciting qualifying, and you're going to have to put the perfect lap together to get the pole. We'll see. Hopefully it's us.

WILL POWER: Yeah, very tight, obviously, between the four of us, and yeah, pretty much what all the other guys have said. It's bloody difficult to put a perfect lap -- yeah, it's very difficult to put a perfect lap together. It's easy to make mistakes, and like Simon said, I think if you get pole, you'll be the one that doesn't make the mistake.

**Q. I guess for Will being you're holding the mic, you have of course all the Penske Chevys at the top in practice and then you have five Hondas and then you've got some Chevys. Is it your Penske shock package that gives you guys the advantage on this bumpy track that puts you like faster than all the other Chevys?**

WILL POWER: It's a combination of everything. Obviously we have a lot of good information from our teammates, keep building on that, and obviously we learn off each other, which pushes the lap time faster. But it's the whole package, not just one thing. Just the hard work that the team puts in. The cars are very good, and then all the information we get.

**Q. Yesterday in F1, Ferrari tested the aero screen, and I guess IndyCar is going to try that, as well. But Vettel said it distorted his vision and made him dizzy and he took it off the car right away. Have you guys seen the prototype of the IndyCar version of the aero screen, and do you think you might have a vision distortion issue with it?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, I've seen it. I don't think it's as steep as the F1 version, so until we test it, we don't know how that's going to play out. But it's definitely worthwhile having it if possible.

SIMON PAGENAUD: I think it's fantastic that we're going that way for protection. Safety has evolved so much these days that that remains the critical area for fatal injury. I think IndyCar is showing that they really want to go in that direction. I think it should be embraced, really, from the drivers, from everybody. The new car obviously has got this design.

When I drove sports cars in Le Mans, the first time I drove a closed car with the windshield, the vision was a little distorted, but you get used to it after a while. You adjust, and after six months, you don't realize it's there anymore. It's going to have to be part of it, and we're all going to have to adjust to it. As long as it's for safety, I think it's a good thing.

Like Will said, we're going to put it on track, drive it, and evolve from it, from the baseline, and then improve it. I think that's the key. Taking it off right away is not always the right thing to do. We'll see. Hopefully it'll get tested soon.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: He basically did a good job answering.

**Q. When it's the four of you battling each other, is it easier or harder? Do you have a different mindset when you're battling your teammates for the lead or for the pole because you guys get along so well? Or once the helmet is on, once you're in the car, he's just another competitor?**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: So I think to be honest, it doesn't distract. As I mentioned before they were here, when you start looking to this direction, we all have something to give, and it's just -- it just elevates the level of not only the car but the entire drivers, as well, because if someone does a little bit different in one corner, we can check it out and reproduce that and make it happen, as well.

The winner here is the team. The team is having a better chance to not only capitalize in victories, capitalize in fast laps and have more chances -- that's what happened, for example, in Iowa. Two guys was in front, two guys were in the middle of the pack. They tried a different strategy. Sometimes it paid off. When you have that kind of a level of drivers and the way we all operate, you can do that.

**Q. Helio, coming into this weekend off a win, do you think a little bit differently? Are you more relaxed or now a little more hyped up to try and get another one?**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Same as before. The win already stayed Monday. I allowed myself at least one more day to celebrate, but after that it was on to Toronto, and as soon as you turn the page of the weekend -- now we carry the good momentum. The team, our group, finally that's the result that we were expecting, and it finally happened. But in terms of

driving different or thinking different, no, I'm still pretty much the same.

**Q. Will, is there any one spot in this track, especially for qualifying, where you're thinking I've got to get that corner perfect and everything else will come together?**

WILL POWER: No, it just changes every session, every session, because your teammate is a bit quicker here or there. Doesn't matter. You'll see in one session where you're lacking a sector, you'll fix that, and then it will be somewhere else and then somewhere else. It's just constantly updated. The whole track is difficult. Every corner is difficult here.

**Q. Josef, take a non-driver through what it's like to drive around here where you're changing grip level so constantly even middle of a corner. You go from grip to shiny concrete to no grip. Can you take us through that? What would a layperson equate that to what you're doing here?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Well, okay. You could sing the "Ice, Ice, Baby" song in the middle of the corners. If you were to think about it, you'd think about the way your car feels on a dry surface, feels pretty normal at normal speeds when you're driving around town in your road car. That's kind of what it feels like on the entry. But then some corners you add like 30 speed bumps on a normal grip surface, so just imagine normal conditions, it's dry, and there's 30 speed bumps that you just have to drive through, and some of the entries like Turn 1, and then you get to the middle of the track, and all of a sudden you just hit an ice lake, and now you're driving your car in an ice lake. You don't really want to do too much. You don't want to turn. The car doesn't want to stop, doesn't want to accelerate. And then in the exit, I guess the grip surface would be like dirt. Maybe that's the most equatable grip surface to the exit. This is what I would think someone is going to think it is in plain terms. Pretty normal, dry asphalt, speed bumps, ice lake, then maybe dirt on the exit. There's your surfaces for the way someone could think about it. I don't know, that's my best description for Toronto, though. That's about how it is, yeah.

**Q. Helio, are we allowed to ask about your future yet?**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Sure. What do you want to know? You shouldn't ask me. There are people with more power than me actually to make things happen.

**Q. Personally how hard is it to keep thoughts about the future out of your head while you're trying to nail down your first-ever championship?**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: To be honest, if you start thinking about the future, that's where it starts being distracting to be honest, right at this point. The only future that I'm thinking about is the race, which is Toronto, which is only one day from now, and right now it's qualifying. It's difficult to assume, and right now there is a lot of speculation for sure, and even between

when we have some conversations, we're just still on the same page. I mean, the team is going to make a sports car team, and we all here would love to drive. I mean, no question about it. We would like to drive whatever they have an opportunity like you have in the past. But at the moment, there is no commitment, no official decision, and I'm just focused -- in my case, I'm just focusing on doing my best for the race here and the championship.

**Q. Do you feel the decision is in your hands?**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: A lot of decisions are -- it's not in my hands, or results. Sometimes it's common sense. But at this point, I feel that I'm going to do everything I can. If we're in that position to make it harder for everyone if there is a decision in the end to change or not. To be continued.

**Q. Josef, this question is for you. Just curious how the transition has been to Team Penske this year. Obviously the chemistry seems to be going quite well.**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, it's all a facade. We actually hate each other.

No, it's been actually really good. It's been probably more surprising than anything to me the environment and the relationship between everyone. You know, I think you don't really understand from the outside what it's going to be like working inside Team Penske. I think you see something different on the outside, not in a bad way, you don't get a strong feeling for what working inside the organization would be like, and once you're inside and you're part of the group, you quickly learn that it's a great working environment.

I think a lot of it comes from Roger and Tim and the way that they structure the team and the way they'd like to see the team run and operated. Like for instance, with us, we're very team driven. We all work together. We're not hiding anything. It's a very collaborative effort between all the drivers, and that's I think more the secret sauce of why we're so good. Everyone always asks about the resources or our damper package, but I think a lot of what pushes this team forward is just the work that we get to do together with the engineers and all the mechanics in between the sessions. Any little detail that we can find between one group, we automatically apply it to all of us, and so you don't really get too far ahead with one team. That's why you see all four of us up there pretty often.

It's been a lot of fun for me. It's been different than what I've experienced in the past over my last five years, but nothing that's been in the way of figuring it out and making progress and enjoying it. I've had a great time. It's been good, and I think we keep getting better as the year goes on, and hopefully that trajectory kind of continues through to the end of the year.

**Q. Talk about the new aero package coming up; I**

**know I've heard comments from the drivers about wanting to get away from this 100 percent throttle racing and maybe do some lifting in the corners and braking. Have you guys talked to IndyCar about the new aero package? Is that one of their goals, to reduce the downforce so that you guys will not be doing 100 percent throttle racing?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, yeah. It's been a huge effort by IndyCar to appease everybody, which is not easy. You've got manufacturers, you've got teams, you've got costs, and then you've got the drivers that have their opinions, you have the fans that want to see something. So it's not easy for them to find the right balance.

But I think IndyCar took a lot of input from the drivers. They did a lot of testing last year with different versions of body kits and the current kit even, just taking pieces off and understanding the way it works and what's going help racing, what's going to make racing worse. So yeah, I think there's been a huge push to try and find what the drivers want, and what drivers have been asking for is less downforce, more power, and more specifically more underside downforce, let topside downforce. That's been the discussion for the last however many years.

I think everyone will tell you the same thing; that we've been looking for that. Specifically on ovals, we like to be able to follow closer with the cars without disturbing the air as much. We want it to be more in your hands. The more the driver can make the difference, the more we enjoy that. We want to be able to show our skill sets and show our value inside the race cars.

But then you have to temper that with how are we going to create a good show and is this going to be a good show for fans. I think we've been trying to get a balance of that with IndyCar, and I think hopefully with the package that's come out, I think it's going to bring a lot of that, and for racing's sake, I think it's going to be a lot better with the way the kit produces downforce. I think it's going to be a lot easier to follow cars. I'm excited about it personally.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Just to add to that, you saw what happened in Texas, for example, where all of a sudden you had a lot of money wasted, to be honest, especially for the team owners. I estimate and they're talking about \$3 million just in damage with so many cars that crash. No team owner wants to see that in the IndyCar Series, and as Josef just mentioned, you've got to balance things out, and the safety aspect also is a big part of it.

Now we have all these things, Push-to-Pass, everything to make it more overtaking, but if you can't follow, you can't apply, and that's becoming a little bit harder. Firestone is doing a phenomenal job with the degradation of the tires, meaning whoever puts new tires they're going to have a little more advantage, or

vice versa.

All of this at the beginning of the year, the IndyCar Series has been focused on to make better, safe and competitive and fun to not only us as competitors but also for the drivers at the moment with the 2018 car. That's the goal.

**Q. I think the only one who can answer this question is probably you, Helio. Back in the CART days, you had the Handford device, if you recall, which basically created a big hole in the air and a lot of sling-shooting on ovals. Do you think that would be something worth looking at for the ovals to be able to -- Push-to-Pass on the ovals, right? To be able to pass more instead of having this follow-the-leader stuff that we see?**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: It's always an experience. It did work back then, but we were obviously achieving speed about 250 miles an hour with things that we had back then, and that's obviously way off chart in terms of safety. It depends on what kind of ovals.

At the same time, these days, the Indianapolis 500, for example, you can't get away. Whoever is leading the race is going to end up having passing in the matter of a few laps. It's one of those things that they consider. They don't want to destroy the rhythm in some places, creating the handful of wins that we had in the past, but at the same time, you want to keep in an area that will be competitive. Let's see. Right now we've just got to see -- first of all, we've got to go -- to get to step 10, we've got to get through step 1, and that's where we've got to go. I believe very soon they're going to be testing the new car, and I feel everybody is going to be really watching that.

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