

# IndyCar Media Days

Sunday July 16, 2017

## Josef Newgarden

## Alexander Rossi

## James Hinchcliffe

### Media Day Presser



THE MODERATOR: We'll get started with our Honda Indy Toronto post race press conference. Joined by our second-place finisher, Alexander Rossi. This is his best finish of 2017, also his best finish since he won the 100th Indianapolis 500 in May 2016.

Alex, you told me earlier you knew exactly where you stood Friday when you arrived.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: It was really bad, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: The improvement your team made over the past couple days to get you the second-place finish has been incredible. Take us through that effort and what led you to this podium finish for you today.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, we were really at the bottom of the barrel, staring into the bottom of the barrel, I guess, Friday afternoon. We were really lost. We were the slowest, Andretti Autosport cars. Here is a tough place to be coming from to start off strong.

We had a lot of soul searching Friday night. We stayed quite a bit later at the in a long time. We just really analyzed everything that we could, and made some pretty solid changes overnight that suited me really well Saturday.

That gave us something to (indiscernible) Saturday afternoon. Today again we made a pretty big step forward. It's a huge relief to finally get a podium and get it off our back. Something we've been close to and searching for a long time, and it hasn't happen. Finally we made the right calls and made it. I'm thankful to the team for that opportunity.

THE MODERATOR: Of all the places to make large improvements as a team, Toronto is not usually a place that teams are capable of that because there are so many different corners to this track. What do you think the team was able to figure out or put together that helped them figure that situation out and make some large improvements?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: It's a really good group of guys. If you look at where we were last year, the last four cars in qualifying, to having three cars in the top 10, really having something to fight for today, it's a

testament not only to this weekend and the strength the team has shown, but also this off-season and how much better 2017 has been for us, has been for Honda.

I think things are starting to finally come together. We've been looking for a breakthrough this year. I think this is it. Hopefully we can take this momentum and carry it forward to tracks we should be strong at. I look forward to doing that for the next races remaining. Hopefully we can climb up and get that win.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Alexander.

**Q. With your extensive road racing background, I think for some it might be surprising that it would take you this long to finally reach the podium on a road and street course. Why do you think it took you that long to adjust? Do you think this could be the first of many podiums or wins, too?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, I certainly hope so. I think it's no secret that we as a team have struggled the past year and a half, and this year was the first time we really made a step forward on the road and street tracks. The ovals were definitely our strong suit in 2016. I think there were a couple this year that got away from us anyways from mechanical issues and whatnot.

I think this was a bit overdue. But this is an incredibly competitive championship, more than anyone really gives it credit for except for the people that are involved. That's something that I learned right away in my debut in St. Pete in 2016.

When you get a podium and a win here, it feels like you've accomplished something pretty cool. So, yeah, hopefully it's the first of many. Like I said, momentum is a pretty powerful thing in this sport, and we'll definitely use this to carry us forward for the rest of the year.

**Q. I want to know, the yellow, when it came you just pitted. At that point did you realize the luck was falling your way and you really had a shot at the podium?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I mean, it wasn't going against us this time. That was positive. And I knew when we made the decision to pit, James was really struggling, so we pitted not because we were anticipating a yellow, we pitted because we wanted to get clean air.

We made the most of the out-lap because we jumped all the guys that stayed out longer than us. That was the key moment of the race. The yellow coming was just good fortune. We've had enough bad fortune that it was nice to finally get it.

**Q. Also you had some company there with teammates Ryan Hunter-Reay and Marco Andretti up there in the top six. How important is that backing it up with your effort?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Oh, it's hugely important. As we always say at Andretti, when one car finishes, one car is doing well, kind of all cars rise. I think it was a very good example of that today. Yeah, like I mentioned before, the difficulties we had last year especially in Toronto, they were pretty significant.

So to rebound like we have is pretty incredible, and something that's very hard to do in this championship, and this sport in general. You know, I think the addition of Eric (indiscernible) and Jeremy (indiscernible) have been huge in the contribution to that. I feel like we have a really good group of people and we're making progress every weekend. That's what we got to do.

**Q. A lot was made about the weather going into today. For both the drivers and the fans, despite the fact that it didn't downpour, there were trickles here and there. How much was the threat of a storm playing a factor on the course and in your mind?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: It wasn't playing a factor on the course, but in my mind it definitely was. Turn six was getting really dark. I was just waiting to come through there in one lap and it would be completely wet. There were dark clouds, there were specs of rain on the visor.

When you're at the limit on these types of tracks, it can be detrimental or very positive depending on what end of it you are. We were paying very close attention to it. I'm just happy that it held off for the fans.

I would have been loved to drive in the weather. I think we would have able to close on Josef if that was the case. It was a great show for the fans and a huge turnout and we're happy to be here in Toronto.

**Q. Are you surprised the race went green so long at the end there? And comment on the marbles. With the marbles and everything else, are you surprised you didn't get another yellow towards the end?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Not really. With the quality of drivers in this field, there's a lot of races we've gone green to checkered without any yellows. No, not surprised at all.

When you see how close it is in qualifying, how quick everyone is, the level of performance that everyone seems to have, it's what you got to do now. You got to mentally be ready for that. You got to have a car that

can do it, as well, because you don't have the ability much any more to recover the tires under yellow. You got to be able to manage the tires and the thermal degradation you get, as well.

Forget the other part of your question. Oh, the marbles.

No, I mean, the marbles I think are bad everywhere. That's just part of the sport. When there isn't a yellow, a chance for the sweepers to get on track, it makes overtaking pretty difficult. It's just something you got to deal with.

**Q. With you and James and Josef pitting earlier than everyone else, how much of a concern was fuel? When did you find out that fuel wasn't going to be a concern?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, I mean, it was something we were paying attention to. And we had to hit a number. It wasn't insane. The Honda engine is pretty good at fuel mileage and still being able to run at a pretty decent performance.

Yeah, we were saving, but it wasn't anything that was too difficult to achieve. With the five laps in the final stint, we got to go ahead and that's when we started to close on Josef again. Unfortunately it wasn't enough. He was so strong all day, it was going to take something significant for us to top him, but we gave it our best shot.

**Q. Between you and Josef, you're both considered two of the young stars of the series. This could be the first of many battles you have throughout your career. How important is it to see drivers of your age group out there winning races, fighting for victories?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, it's very important. The crazy thing is the old guys are still pretty damn fast. Figuring out how to beat them in qualifying is something we got to do, keep working on.

But, yeah, I mean, it's important that the young guys are getting results, right? That is what's going to keep the sport growing and moving forward in the progression it is going at the moment. Good to see Josef is doing so well. I'm chasing that next win. He's gotten a couple more than I have. We'll keep working at it.

Like I said, there's a lot of really good guys in this championship. It's good just to be able in the range, within a fighting shot of getting wins.

**Q. Looking ahead to Mid-Ohio, what is your outlook on that track? How much did you like racing there last year?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Mid-Ohio was one of the only tracks I knew last year. I liked it a lot more than other places because I wasn't guessing where I was going

on Friday morning. I'm looking forward to getting back there and improving on what we have.

I think it was the first time we made the top 12 in qualifying in Mid-Ohio last year. That was one of our better races. I think the improvements we've seen this year, we can expect to be hopefully in the top six. Qualifying is very important there. As we all know, it's hard to pass. We need to focus on that and hopefully be in the top three in qualifying and go from there.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Thank you, guys. Appreciate it.

THE MODERATOR: We will continue with our post race press conference. Joined now by our third-place finisher, James Hinchcliffe, driving for Schmidt Peterson Motorsports. It matches his best finish here at Toronto, also third last year.

It seemed like when you first started coming here in an IndyCar on the streets of Toronto, you didn't have too much luck. Able to turn that around the last two years. What has led to that?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: We had lots of luck when we came here before, it was all bad luck. Nice that the last two years it's kind of changed. I would be remiss to not mention that both these podiums really came as a result of strategy going our way and yellow flags falling our way.

But as much as I feel for the guys that got caught out by that one, I've been on the losing end of that one enough. We definitely had a string of bad luck so far this season. To have something that kind of went our way was great.

We obviously were struggling on the reds. There's no secret about that. Once we got those black Firestones on, the car came to life. In the last stint, we were hounding down Josef and Alex a little bit. I was hoping that the race was 10 laps longer. Might have made it interesting at the end.

Happy for the whole Schmidt Peterson Motorsport crew, happy to give the people of Toronto something to cheer for, because they came out in force today.

THE MODERATOR: Was rain a concern as you were heading into the final laps of the race?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Yeah, definitely. Even the end of the first stint, there were a couple drops coming down on the visor. The clouds were looking really dark as you were coming through turn five, heading into six, you'd kind of see them. I didn't want to get on the radio and ask because I didn't really want to know, if I'm honest.

I just kind of kept my head down, kept my foot down, and luckily I think the second time that happened, like as soon as the race ended it started to rain. We're glad that Mother Nature played nice today.

THE MODERATOR: Seems like everybody knows the answer to this question. If you had to put it into words, how much does this race mean to you, to perform well here?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Yeah, more and more every year. The support I feel from this city grows every single year. It's just incredible. It's the most humbling thing. We did our parade lap in the trucks before the race. I don't think I've seen the grandstands that full here, certainly since I've been behind the wheel. And, you know, the energy in the crowd was huge.

Even Friday I remember sitting in the car in pit lane, looking up at the stands, Man, this is a Friday, this is really impressive. It's so awesome to feel the energy back in this event. It's obviously one that has meant a lot to me for a long time. We went through some kind of tough years there, but certainly with Honda Canada's support, we've done a great job of keeping it going and building momentum and getting stronger every year.

This is by far the best we've seen in a while. Hopefully that's a trend we can keep going and hopefully we can get a couple steps higher for the people of Toronto.

THE MODERATOR: Last year at Iowa, you made your hundredth IndyCar start. When you look back at the number of years you've been in this series, does it make you feel a little old? Do you feel like you're starting to become a veteran of the series?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: I thought turning 30 was going to make me feel bad, but apparently a hundred race starts is worse than that. I guess the old saying is true: Time flies when you're having fun.

I had no idea until like the Wednesday or Thursday before Iowa, It's your hundredth start this week. Excuse me? It's incredible to have had a run this long. Hopefully it's just the first hundred.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for James.

**Q. James, last year you said that you lucked into a podium. This year you wanted to earn it. Did you earn it today?**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Yes and no. I mean, I'm not going to lie. I don't think we had the fastest racecar at the start of the weekend. I think getting into the Fast Six in qualifying was kind of through pure commitment on that one-lap run in Q2 rather than us having a great stint-long car. I don't think we had a long-run car especially on the reds.

When the track rubbered in and the blacks were on, the car really did come to life. Hounding down Josef and Alex there at the end proved we had pace. It took us a little bit of luck to get up there. Once we were there, we held on.

I have think we need to work on our car when conditions are a little slicker. The more Firestone rubber we got down, the more it suited our setup. I'd like to say it was a clever ploy to set up for the end of the race, but that wasn't the case. It was circumstantial. We'll go back to the drawing board, hopefully come back better next year in all conditions.

**Q. You benefited from that yellow. Is that kind of the good and the bad of IndyCar, that a yellow can fall, the guys in front go back, the guys in the back get a break?**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: For sure. I mean, it keeps everybody guessing, keeps everyone on their toes. Like I said, I've been on the losing end of that and it sucks. I generally feel bad to the guys that happens to. You're doing a good job, you're pulling away, your tires are lasting longer. You essentially get penalized for it, which doesn't seem fair. Some races it's going to benefit you. Some races it's going to bite you. I think over the course of the season, it probably evens out.

**Q. I know you just mentioned if it was 10 laps longer, you might have been able to catch up to Josef and Alex. At any point did you feel as though you could have moved up in that third-place spot into second or the lead?**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Obviously when Alex got ahead of us in that first round of stops, he was much quicker at the end of that stint on reds. He opened up a gap when we hit some traffic. Through the second stint, couldn't really catch him. I think if anything he maybe pulled away a little bit. Didn't really feel like we were going to be able to close in on him.

I wasn't thinking about Josef at that point. In the third stint, the middle part of that, the team gave me permission to use a little bit more fuel. I was allowed to push a little bit harder, the lap time really came down and the gap started closing. Unfortunately it had gotten too big in that second stint and through the pit stops.

Congrats to Josef and Alex for a tough-fought race. Hopefully we can be stronger next year.

**Q. James, you're still a young guy in this series.**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Kind of you to say.

**Q. As one of the young guys, Josef and Alex are considered the future of the series, how important is it for these young drivers to be out there now fighting each other for victories?**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: I was thinking about that. I look at the podium, this is exactly what IndyCar racing

is going to be. It's kind of already here, which is great to see. I think it's great for the series, great for the sport, that the guys are going to be flying the flag for that next generation of driver are already at the front and challenging for race wins.

It's what the fans want to see. It's selfishly what Josef and Alex and I want to see. Hopefully we'll keep it going.

**Q. (Question about hosting an event after losing an event compared to when you do well.)**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Definitely puts you into a different mindset heading into a Sunday evening. The joke was we're either going to have a reason to celebrate or commiserate. Luckily we're going out. Last year and this year it's been to celebrate.

**Q. James, since Long Beach, there's been a lot of races where you've been in the top 10, then had some kind of misfortune different ways. How nice is it to be up there and stay up there for a race?**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Yeah, I mean, obviously you want to earn it. You want to qualify up front. You want to race up front. You want to earn those spots, like we did in Long Beach. We suffered a lot of bad luck, a lot of wrong place, wrong time since that race.

To have the occasional yellow fall your way is not the worst thing in the world. It is the nature of the beast in IndyCar racing. Like I said, we've been on both sides of it.

So to kind of have luck, I was joking beforehand, I don't even care if I have no good luck, I just want no bad luck. Just let me do my thing, let it play out where it does. When a day goes like this and the team is able to capitalize on an opportunity like that, it's great, a great day. We took the opportunity and were able to close the deal.

**Q. How important was it for you in that first stint when the car wasn't handling well to sort of stay at the front of that train?**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: That's probably the loosest racecar I've had on a street circuit. That's one of the most terrifying things you can do. It took every trick of driving racecars I ever learned to keep those guys behind me. Luckily we did.

(Indiscernible) got us in the stops on the rotations there. Had we struggled more on track and more guys got ahead of us, we wouldn't have cycled through where we did. For as bad as that stint was, we take something away from the fact we were able to keep those guys back there.

**Q. James, this is your third time on a podium on a street course this season. You also ran up front at St. Pete before the caution came out. What about these courses suits your driving?**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Yeah, I think we've just had our strong setup. The tire suits our car. We've been quick in qualifying on street courses. We've been in the top six in every street course we've had. Podiums on three of the four.

There's certainly something in the setup that is suiting that type of track. I think as you go through the series and gain confidence in this type of circuit, that helps, too. I think I'm driving better on this type of circuit. We have two other types of tracks we need to get that same level of consistency on.

**Q. Your popularity grows every year exponentially here in Canada. Years ago Paul Tracy was inspirational for Canadian young drivers. How much Canadian pride do you wear?**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: It's crazy to think for so many years I was the kid with a card and a Sharpie chasing drivers around the paddock, looking up to guys like Paul, Greg, Alex, Jacques, Pat. It's a bit surreal to think that's now kind of my role. I try to do well with it. I try to be a good role model for kids. I try and represent the city of Toronto and the whole country as well as I can. I feel that. I feel that responsibility.

We've had not a ton of IndyCar drivers, but every single one we've had has been pretty stout, all the way back to even Scottie Goodyear. That's the earliest I remember. It is a point of pride to try and represent the country well, try to keep the streak we have of Canadian IndyCar drivers up there. The support I felt has been incredible. As you say, it grows every year. I can't thank everybody enough for that. Results like this are why we do it, try to give them something to cheer for.

THE MODERATOR: James, congratulations. Thanks very much.

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Thanks, everyone.

THE MODERATOR: We'll continue now with the winner of the Honda Indy Toronto, Josef Newgarden. This is the second win of 2017 for Josef and the fifth win of his IndyCar career. It's the second win on the streets of Toronto. He previously won this year at Barber and also won in Toronto in 2015.

Josef, congratulations. I know pit strategy, maybe even a little bit of luck, played into a great finish for you. As we all know, luck never plays purely a role in a race win. It takes a lot of team and driver effort to get that result done. Take us through your race and ultimately how you moved to the front.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I think track position was a big thing today. I didn't get to see the race from really the middle or the back. But I have to think it was very difficult to pass people today. If you got track position, I think that was king.

Obviously we were good. We've been good all weekend on old tires and certainly the primary tires. I think we missed out a little bit in qualifying and were disappointed with the Q2 segment, how it kind of fell for us. I thought we were better than that. Certainly could have been up closer to Will and Helio. We wanted to dig deep and have a good race.

Like you said, I think the yellow for sure played a part in winning this race. It was a good call at the right time for the 2 car guys and Tim Cindric. That was the first domino for us to fall and after that it was a matter of managing a race, making good fuel mileage and driving fast.

Once that scenario came about, I thought we had everything we needed to win the race. I was very confident in our racecar going into it with everything that the 2 car guys had given me.

Tough day, not easy. Glad the rain held off. It would have been fun to run in the rain, at the same time it's nice when you're out front to have a straightforward race. I think that played into our favor as well.

THE MODERATOR: Were you concerned after qualifying with track position? Did you ever imagine you could end up on top if perhaps that domino hadn't fallen in the race?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I think if it didn't fall against us, we could still potentially come out victorious. It's impossible to predict, if we didn't catch the yellow, would we have won the race? I have no idea. Maybe we would have finished fifth or fourth or something.

After the first start, we found ourself in fourth position after we missed Will and Scott's incident, so it was a really good start for us.

From there we still had a plan we needed to have track position. That was our go-to plan to differentiate ourselves between us and the leaders. If the yellow didn't fall, we were still doing something like that. How it would play out, I have no idea. The yellow just worked perfectly.

We were still fast, still up there. Always will take a little bit of luck. I think we all would. It's funny because Rick Mears told me one time, this was one of the best things I've ever heard. He said, You'll have more days where you should have won the race and things go against you and you don't win the race, then you have days where it goes your way and you end up winning the race. So the days it goes your way and you get something lucky, you just take them. Because there's more days where you could say, We should have won that race. So I'll take a lucky yellow any day of the week.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Josef.

**Q. What is interesting about this year is you've won at the two tracks where you got your first two victories. How strange is that for you?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It's odd. Very odd. I think we missed out at Road America. I really think we had a win in our grasp there. Obviously didn't play out for a couple different reasons with tire strategy, the way the yellow fell there, actually fell against us, in my opinion. We'll take the yellow today. At Road America when it came out, I would have loved for it not to.

It's almost in a weird way payback for Road America. But I definitely thought the same thing. I was like it's so weird that we won at two places I already won at, the first two places I won races. For me it would be nice winning at a place I haven't won yet with the 2 car and Team Penske. I would love it for myself and love it for the team.

I don't know what that says. These places, this is the second time that a yellow fell in my favor here at Toronto, too. I don't know if it's a little bit of Canadian luck. It seems to give it to me here.

**Q. What does this finish do to your outlook towards the end of the championship? How do you feel at the tracks that are coming up on the schedule?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It's a good day for us. Specifically on the 2 car, it's a good day. I think for Team Penske as a whole it's a good day with where Scott finished. I haven't seen the full breakdown. I'm assuming it was a very good day for all of us, a very good day for us on the 2 car. I'm excited about that.

The big thing for us is we can't get into many more incidents like we have the first half of the year. I think month of May is really what killed us in the points championship. We had a bad GP with a pit lane speed limiter issue, and a bad Indy 500 wrecking out with 20 to go, getting caught up in something. We've had some races that we've had to pick up from a deficit, and I think if those weren't there, we'd probably be leading the championship.

But other guys can say the same thing. They'll say, We had races like this, too. It kind of yo-yos back and forth for everybody. Everyone is going to have good races and bad races. We have to prioritize having solid finishes from here to the end. I think if we're the most consistent, we absolutely can win the championship. It's going to be the guy who does that the best.

**Q. Another victory north of the border, should make you an honorary Canadian.**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I love beating Hinch in Canada. I love Hinch. He's a great representative. He was joking actually. We got on TV in Victory Lane. He's like, I'm going to promote Nashville when we go

there, because I'm from Nashville.

He is like, We're going back and I'm going to beat you in Nashville.

It's fun being up there. Love Canada. Love the sport.

**Q. Can you discuss the similarities and victories between the victory today and your last?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Well, this one, that's a good point. They were both difficult. They both feel stressful. It's a street course. Whenever you're in the lead on a street course, it always feels stressful. It doesn't feel easy. You're in the lead, have a good gap, manage it and finish the race. I feel like a street course always brings a bit of stress with the walls and all the variables that you're always dealing with.

Today there was a little more with the rain. I was concerned about that, how it would throw a wrench into the works. It starts raining when I'm on the wrong end of the track, that wouldn't be very good.

There were things that stressed me out for sure. But, you know, it was a fairly straightforward day. I think probably it felt a little bit easier than the first year when I had my first win here and the second win of my career. The more you do it, the more you drive the cars, the easier it all becomes.

Today was just more of a normal process, you know, just doing what we always do when we come to an IndyCar weekend. That was probably the main feel difference.

THE MODERATOR: Josef, congratulations.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Thank you, guys.