

# IndyCar Media Conference

Thursday September 14, 2017

## Josef Newgarden Simon Pagenaud Will Power Helio Castroneves Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'll continue with our post practice press conference. Joined now by the members of Team Penske, Helio Castroneves, Josef Newgarden, Will Power and Simon Pagenaud. You enjoyed a two-hour practice session. I believe Will was the only one that turned a few laps in this morning's session. The rest of the team I imagine will be going out to check out the track.

Will, you did take a few laps out there. Let us know what you noticed, anything you notice that changed over years past, things you learned while you were out there.

WILL POWER: Yeah, I just did four laps or three laps to check out the track. Yeah, things have changed since the test. It's quite a bit hotter. Yeah, it's a tough track because wind and track temperature really changes the car.

THE MODERATOR: Josef, I know throughout the season the team mentality has been to share everything, share data, share information. Here we are at the final race of the season, and you have all of your teammates and Scott Dixon knocking on the door of your championship lead. How much of that sharing is still going on even as we enter this final race?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Oh, it's business as usual. I think that's the way Team Penske operates. It's also what's helped us have so much success this year, is that's the way we operate. It seems to make us better every weekend.

I think we're going to need to work together if we want to be better than the field. It's not going to be, in my opinion, straightforward or easy to be better than everyone this weekend.

Everyone has been very strong. Certainly Honda has been a very strong opponent this entire season. They're not anything to underestimate. So that will continue. I think we'll work together as best as possible, then we'll fight it out pretty hard on the

racetrack come race day.

THE MODERATOR: Helio, I know the series championship has eluded you throughout your career. Here we are in a final race. I believe you're 22 points back. Everything is within reach. How much would it mean to you to finally get that series championship?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: It's always great to be in a position to achieve any goal that every athlete always set in the beginning of any athlete's career. Well, right now we're just talking about sharing. Will went out, we were able to see his information, make some change if we needed to for the afternoon.

But we continue doing our job. We got to bring this championship to Team Penske no matter what.

THE MODERATOR: Simon, you're here in a unique position, defending your title from 2016. Leading up to this point, did you feel like you had a chance to be back in this position, leading into the final race?

SIMON PAGENAUD: Yeah, I mean, when we start the season, the goal is to go for the championship, especially with a great Team Penske that we all on. The goal is to come back and win another championship.

So we here. It's a much, much easier situation than last year for us on the No. 1 car. The goal is simple: attack and win the race, then we'll count the points afterwards, see where we are.

But super satisfied to be where we're at, super excited to be at this beautiful racetrack, beautiful venue. Hopefully the world will follow our exciting championship finale. It's incredible to see five, six drivers really in the championship for the last race. So I'm excited. I think the fans are excited. I hope you guys are excited. We'll see what happens Sunday.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. If each one of you can answer this. Some drivers have said there's, like, three hours' worth of tires for a six-hour test day. Do you feel like you could use more tires today to make it a worthwhile test day?**

SIMON PAGENAUD: Sure. I mean, it's six hours, we only have three sets of tires to use. We're all waiting patiently for the afternoon because it's going to be

hotter. You got to use the very little amount of tires you have for the right conditions. You can't really go around just to do laps and get ready yourself. You really just have to optimize everything in this situation today.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Very similar to what he said. We're just waiting for the weather to be at least closer to what it will be in qualifying or tomorrow's practice or race. As we all know, the track is very challenging, plus abrasive, which is difficult when you trying something with the tires after about five or six laps, already going to the next level. So you always got to keep that on mind.

Right now I think not only ourselves but everyone, at least 10 other cars thinking the same way. As we going to go out, the track going to get better, even with the weather. It will be interesting to see this afternoon for sure. But it's a lot of time.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: It was great to have at least a head start, a basic setup. However, when we came here, it was actually super cold, no sun, and sometimes it could throw a curve ball. But we all understand what we need to do. I feel that right now we're in good shape.

**Q. Josef, going back to Road America, the restart with Scott, the pass he ended up making on you, what have you learned from there? If that situation comes up on Sunday, what can you do to prevent that from happening?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I guess the good news is we're not at Road America because you don't have the straightaways you do there. You're way more exposed, I feel, at Road America if you're on the wrong tire on a restart. In that situation, that's really what unfolded.

I think if it happens here, you're less under threat on the straightaways, but you still have to be cognizant of what's happening. It is generally better to be on the red tire for a restart.

I feel like it won't be as difficult as what it was there with the long straightaways. That's what really created the opportunity for Scott to make a move on a different tire compound. I think we'll have less of that risk here this weekend.

**Q. Will, how is your mental state coming into this weekend where you're not that close but still close enough to where you could leapfrog these guys? Less of a pressure situation?**

WILL POWER: No, I don't know. I mean, I'm just focusing on getting the best out of the weekend. I'm really focusing on getting pole, winning the race. Then I put myself in the best possible position for something to happen to these guys.

But, yeah, I mean, that's all you can do. Really no different than any other race. Yeah, maybe a little less pressure because you're not right there, but still very determined.

**Q. Will, yesterday you mentioned how you didn't really feel a lot of pain in the knee in the garage area. What was it like those four laps on track?**

WILL POWER: No problem. Didn't feel anything. As long as it's bent, it's no problem. It's just straightening it is the issue. Good news in the car is you're always bent knee.

**Q. Is your goal to win the race or win the championship, Helio?**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Win the race or win the championship?

WILL POWER: Both, obviously. A lot of stuff has to play out.

**Q. This is for Jeff, too.**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I'm Jeff, that's me (laughter).

Yeah, well, I think you have to aim to win the race. That's what's going to win you the championship. I mean, you'd like to do both. I would say win the race, and the championship will sort itself out.

**Q. Helio, have you spotted a spot where you like to climb the fence here at Sonoma?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: That's a Helio thing. I can't take that from him.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: It's funny, you look to him but asked me the question.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: He looked to me.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: It will be a surprise. I'm always checking, man. I check everything. I'm checking you right now (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you very much. Appreciate it.