

# IndyCar Media

## Conference

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# Simon Pagenaud

## Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'll welcome in Simon Pagenaud, who finished second fastest in today's overall practice session. Simon, I don't want to misquote you, but I believe you said something on the NBCSN broadcast this afternoon that was something to the effect of, "If I'm up front for the race, I feel like it would be hard for anybody else to catch me." What has happened so far this weekend in practice today and the test yesterday that has made you feel so confident?

SIMON PAGENAUD: Yeah, the car is really good. I'm very happy with how the car behaved, whether it's on new tires or older tires, and I think our pace on older tires is best to anyone right now. So I feel very confident that if we start up front, we can be gone. Adapting is going to be key to the race. I feel confident, yeah. I think last year, you know, obviously qualifying was the turning point on the weekend. We didn't have the pace up until qualifying, but today and yesterday, I feel like we have the pace at any time. I've just got to put the lap together. If I put the lap together tomorrow, I think we'll be challenging for pole position, and once that's done, I'll feel a lot more relaxed about our chance to go for the win.

THE MODERATOR: Looking ahead to tomorrow's qualifying, a lot of people are speculating that it's going to be very important heading into Sunday's race. What are you anticipating out of tomorrow's qualifying session?

SIMON PAGENAUD: Yeah, it is hard to pass and follow. It's obviously an interesting track with a lot of elevation changes, and then when you're behind a car with those elevation changes, it really affects the aero of the car. Same with the wind. As soon as you slide a little bit, you really just -- you really put a lot of stress on the tires, and then the tires go off. So if you're in clean air, it's really good.

That's why qualifying is so important, and that's why there's so much emphasis being put on that one lap. But it's going to be a lot of work tonight to just review every little detail, and I think as you can see, the Penske cars are obviously really, really strong this weekend, but it's going to be a good fight with the teammates.

**Q. Do you think there's more in that car? Do you think the crew will be able to give you even a**

**couple more seconds?**

SIMON PAGENAUD: Seconds, no.

**Q. Quarters of second?**

SIMON PAGENAUD: It's a quarter of -- hundredths maybe would help. It's going to be down to -- we're fighting for hundredths of seconds right now. Any shifts, any upshifts, even though it's electronic, any reaction of the engine, any little details you can work on to optimize everything is going to be important. We're going to be looking at everything tonight. That's the one thing, the 1 team has been tremendous in preparation in this weekend at looking at every detail. That's what we're going to need to do to get that pole, and me on my driving is going to be the other key. It's going to be hard to get the lap right because you only get a few laps, one or two laps on new tires, and that's all you get, so if you don't get it right, you don't get the pole.

**Q. Since you're not the point leader coming in, is it a little bit freeing because it lets you just go and you can just run your race and just try and win it and leave it out there?**

SIMON PAGENAUD: Yeah, for me it's simple, just pure attack mode this weekend. No real thinking of anybody around me. It's just me and my race car and my team. Obviously I've got a lot of information from teammates that's useful, but so far our program has been going on rails, and I feel good about it.

Yeah, just have to find a way to extract the best out of myself. That's going to be key, just like I did last year.

**Q. How do you think about those new Firestone tires for this weekend, red and black?**

SIMON PAGENAUD: Yeah, it's interesting. You know what, it's quite different to last year. Last year my car came alive on the red Firestone tires. This year I feel like it's a lot closer between the blacks and the reds. I think you'll be surprised. I think there's going to be an interesting tire game in qualifying that we'll have to see. But I felt like the blacks are pretty good, very consistent. The reds have more pace, but they don't last as long. Definitely a lot shorter life.

It's going to be interesting. Yeah. We'll see tomorrow.