

IndyCar Media Conference

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Josef Newgarden

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We will welcome in our race winner Josef Newgarden, now a three-time winner here at Barber Motorsports Park. Today driving the No. 1 Hitachi Chevrolet for Team Penske. Josef --

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: A little discombobulated right now.

THE MODERATOR: As you said a few times today, the race was a little more eventful than you probably would have liked it to be, but ultimately able to sail to a strong finish here at Barber Motorsports Park. Take us through your race and trying to hold everybody off, when to go to rains, when not to, all that stuff.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: More hectic than you would want at the end. It seemed like it was pretty straightforward all day. We weren't having yellows. It was dry. Then that rain made it very nerve-racking. I think for us we did the only thing we could. We went to rains as soon as it intensified. We had to. I think it was the right thing to do, just because we're in the lead, we have the most to lose by not putting on rains early.

The only thing that did was we kind of burned off the fronts of our rain tires because it was still dryish, there was still dry parts of the track. So we weren't getting the tires cooled off enough, which rain tires they're designed to be driven in the rain.

But once it started to intensify, those guys, Hunter-Reay, Bourdais, who were making it look pretty good -- they actually did a great job when it was still pretty wet. Once it got too wet, they obviously had to pit. But they kept it on the road, which to me was very impressive, and they did a great job. Fortunately, the weather cooperated with what we needed, and I think that's ultimately what got it done.

THE MODERATOR: As you move on in your career and you start racking up multiple wins at a certain track and people start thinking, wow, there must be something about Josef Newgarden at Barber Motorsports Park that's special, or he must have some sort of trick or secret that he's just got it down, and you see this with a lot of drivers that had multiple wins at tracks. Do you feel like that's the case? Are you building something like that?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I hope not. I don't buy into it

as much. I think Scott Dixon's been arguably just as good here as Mid-Ohio, which people might go that's not true at all. But he's had so many second places here and so many potential wins that these types of tracks, I think, Scott's good at, but he's good everywhere. It just seems like there's some places that just work out better.

Hopefully, we get multiple wins -- I guess where I'm going with this is I hope we get multiple wins at other tracks, and it's not just one place where people think you're good. I think we've got a good road course car. I think that's what helps here. Especially last year and this year, I think Team Penske's car has been very strong, and that's what's made a difference. Hopefully, we can be strong at Mid-Ohio and Sonoma, which are similar type tracks. I think we've got a good road course car, we can do that too.

I don't buy too much into you have a track that you're just dominant at. I think, if you've got a good road course car, we can make it work everywhere else. So hopefully we do.

Q. Seems like a lot of that strength comes from your team in Team Penske. Both of your teammates are former winners at this track. Does that lead to all of this information and data sharing from past success at the track?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I mean, like you said, everyone's been very good here. Will's been very successful. Simon's been successful here. They have good cars. Team Penske makes a difference with what they do, their employees. Everyone that's got their hands involved in it, they make the difference at the end of the day.

So all of that, combined with Team Chevy, I think, has done a great job this year. They've really given us the engine that we need to compete against Honda, which has been a challenge this year. They've been very good, but I think Team Chevy has done a great job giving us the power and reliability, and today we had the fuel mileage. They make the difference too, not just the team.

And then obviously, having Hitachi on the car this weekend was great. Because we got Verizon a win to start off the year, and now we got Hitachi one too. I'm pretty happy as far as 2018 goes.

THE MODERATOR: Before I open it up for questions,

for those of us that aren't too familiar with rain racing, how much more physically demanding is a race like that? Is it or is it not?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It's more stressful. It's stressful in that, if it's just wet and it's not changing conditions, it's one thing. You can kind of deal with that very easily. Same thing with the dry obviously. If it's just dry, then you don't have to worry about the middle ground or making a mistake in a transition. It's really the transition into wet or transitioning from wet to dry that can be very nerve-racking.

Physically, it's not that difficult because the cornering speeds are so much longer. In the dry around here, it's very physical, really, really physical, one of the most physical tracks we go to for this race distance. In the rain, it makes it a lot easier because your cornering speeds, like I said, are so much lower. It really helps you out as a driver where you're not leaning on neck. You're not leaning on the shoulder as much. You can kind of take a break.

But from an anxiety standpoint, it's a lot when it rains. You're very nervous at those points.

Q. Josef, when you pitted in lap 71, you came out maybe eight or nine seconds behind Bourdais. Would you have been able to catch him? He was on a one-stop strategy.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, but I don't know what you mean. Would I have caught him on rain tires?

Q. No. Against the pit stop.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I don't know if he would have made it in one stop, to be honest. If the rain didn't come out, I think he might have struggled to stretch it and had to slow too much, I think personally. It's just a different situation. We were working on building the gap. He was working on saving fuel, like you said.

But I think the rain is what changed the whole thing because you could have been running a lot faster till the end. We would have gotten more laps in because it was against the time clock. I think he would have struggled to make that work a lot more if it stayed dry. Yeah, that's what I would say.

Q. Josef, walk me through the challenge from yesterday on the wet, starting again today on the dry, and then finishing again in the wet.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It's pretty simple today. It didn't rain. The track wasn't that soaked. That made a difference from yesterday. Yesterday there was just too much standing water, and it just intensified and got to the point where there was so much, you just couldn't run in it with these cars.

But today that level of rain was getting more to the point where we started the race yesterday. It wasn't even quite to that level. So it was plenty easy to run in

the rain today.

But, yeah, it was very odd rolling into the track this morning, just having to race again. Nothing wrong with that. It just felt strange because it's not something we normally do. It felt very abnormal to get back in the car and restart, and you're just trying to stay focused on getting the job done over the last evening.

Q. Josef, can you explain the reason why you chose the reds for the start. What kind of strategy did you have?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: We just thought it would be a quicker tire, better grip, especially on a green racetrack. We thought it would be a bit better. I thought they wore out quite a lot. I was really struggling with rear tire degradation just because the track was so green. We thought better grip, going to be a faster tire.

Really, actually, if you look at the race, I think the red tires were just better. You had dropoff between the black and the red tires. They were pretty even dropoff. It's just the reds were overall quicker.

I think that would have been the tire of choice. If it stayed dry, I think we would have gone reds there at the end. We did the blacks in the middle, but I think at the end, we would have used reds on and tried to run those out to the finish.

Q. Were you surprised when Sebastien (no microphone)?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yes and no. They were making them work as long as they could. But then you saw it got to a point where it's too wet. He was about wrecking every lap. I mean, we could have stayed out and risked it like them too, but for us it made no sense. We had everything to lose. They had everything to gain. So I don't blame them with what they did. If it stopped raining, we would have been -- we just would have been in bad luck then. It would have been their race to win if it stopped raining at that point because they would have been able to make it work.

But it was just a matter of how much water is going to come. That's the biggest thing. We were racing the weather. If you listened to my radio, that was what Tim was saying. We're racing the weather right now. We're not racing anyone else. The rain was either going to come more and work out for us or it wasn't. Fortunately, it just kept coming down, and the more it came down, the more it just played into our hands.

Q. (No microphone)?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, that's IndyCar racing. I think that's what you saw a little bit last week with Rossi at Long Beach. It's like, when you're not saving fuel, it can look a little bit deceiving. I think we had great pace. Our car was very fast, and we would have been fast regardless. If we're not saving fuel, it's

probably going to look more exaggerated. That's, I think, why the gap built so aggressively because I was just, for the most part, running at my pace that I could. Yeah, it makes it look a lot better for sure.

THE MODERATOR: Josef, thank you. Congratulations.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Thank you.