

IndyCar Media Conference

Saturday May 12, 2018

Will Power

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Joined by our race winner Will Power, driving the No. 12 Verizon Team Penske Chevrolet for Team Penske, coming out victorious today in the IndyCar Grand Prix, his third victory here on the Indianapolis Motor Speedway road course. Will, there's several things to point out in terms of the key moments of the race: Your pass to get the lead back from Robert Wickens, and then your team's clutch performance to get you out ahead of him from the pits on that last pit stop. Those last few laps battling with Robert was very exciting. What was going through your mind?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I mean, it started with him using reds in that second stint and I was on blacks and trying to hold him behind, and he went to go pass, there was about -- it was about not letting too much damage be done, so I maintained it, got it to five seconds basically, and was able to do a very quick in lap, and by the time I got out behind him, it was only a three-second gap, and obviously he was on blacks and I was on reds, so I returned the favor and really caught him and was -- had a good race with him down to Turn 1.

Once I got past him, it was pretty straightforward because we were much quicker because we were on the reds, and yeah, yeah, and then it went yellow, which made for a very difficult last stint, having to save a lot of fuel, and keeping a gap from Dixon so he wouldn't use his Push-to-Pass and attack me. Yeah, drove very hard. Yeah, so many things thrown at us today, but we came out with the win.

THE MODERATOR: And then that final pit stop, not that you needed any kind of tire, you were pretty fast in terms of your other competitors on track, but that final pit stop to just sneak right out in front of him, how key was that?

WILL POWER: Yeah, that was the key to the win there, I think. I feel like the guys getting out in front of Wickens with that final stop was just like literally a nose ahead, so yeah, I was very happy about that. And then it was obviously about having a good restart and when to fuel save.

THE MODERATOR: You and Team Penske have been able to celebrate so many things together throughout your career, but what does it mean to get the 200th win for the team here?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I mean, it's been a slow start for us, so it's just fantastic to get the win. But 200 wins in IndyCar just shows Roger's determination and the way his team works and his passion for winning. It's a real pleasure to drive for him. You're given equipment week in, week out to win, and yeah, I have to say it's amazing to be a part of that history of Penske Racing because it's such a deep history.

So yeah, I'm so grateful to be able to drive for this team.

Q. After the race you looked pretty exhausted. Was the heat an important factor or a problem?

WILL POWER: Yeah, it was very hot, and I don't think I drank enough before the race, and then I didn't drink in the race. So yeah, I was just dehydrated. Just was dehydrated after the race. It was my fault. I should have hydrated better before the race. Just sometimes you're so busy doing appearances and stuff you forget to, and you think you've got a bottle in the car but when you're racing hard you forget to drink, and you get to the end, and suddenly you're like, man, I don't feel good. While you're racing you're fine, but as soon as I stopped, I was like, ooh. It was a pretty hard day.

Q. I guess the key to getting you back in Victory Lane was getting Myron back on your pit box?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I've got a good record with Myron. He knows what he's doing. He's very good on the stand, as is Roger, but yeah, it's good that I have two guys that the team, my crew knows and I know well now, so it's easy to swap in and out between Roger and Myron, if Roger can't come or obviously he's on Helio's car for this month.

Q. Roger said after the race this obviously generates momentum for you guys going into -- in two weeks. Can you talk about how much you want that next win? I'm talking about the Indy 500, how close you've come, and does this, in fact, create momentum as far as you're concerned?

WILL POWER: It does. Yeah, I've had this a couple times now. This is my third win here, and it always helps you because the team has more confidence. I'm very upbeat and have a lot of confidence, and I've had my eye on the 500 anyway since last year. Really, the new car, it's going to be about sorting it out, and it's a chance to get ahead of everyone else. Just really got it on my mind. When I have a race on my mind in the past, I usually win it at some point.

I've been trying to do that here for so long. Yeah, it would be fantastic to get that done. Obviously you've just got to not even think about winning, and you've just got to put your head down and put together the whole month in the right way, and then you have the chance.

Q. You said, I think, on television you may not have driven harder than you drove here today every lap.

WILL POWER: Every lap, yep. Every lap was like qualifying. That's the first time I've had to do that in a way. I've been wanting to do that in race for so long because I hate fuel save and all that kind of thing, when you've got to save fuel, save tires, but man, today I drove just absolutely perfect all race, just hitting my marks, hitting my brake points and just really extracting the most out of the car.

Q. You're used to racing guys like Scott, Sebastien, Josef, et cetera. Racing Rob today for the win, kind of exchanging the top spot, how was he to race and did you notice any strengths or weaknesses he had?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I mean, I don't know, I haven't raced him enough, but we passed each other twice no problem, it was clean racing. He's obviously very good. I think big fuel save is probably a new thing for him, so -- Dixon and myself have been doing it our whole careers and we're used to trying to extract lap time and fuel save. Yeah, but I'll tell you, he's definitely -- I mean, he has as much experience as I have like at a top level. He's been racing at a high level for a long time, but he's definitely a guy that will be a champion in IndyCar. I have no doubt in my mind, at some point in the right situation, and that could be this year he will be a champion.

Q. I asked this question of Dixon earlier; when you were battling with him in that final stint, were you surprised that Chevy got as good a fuel mileage as a Honda?

WILL POWER: Yeah, we have noticed that Honda has had some pretty good mileage, but they gave me the number. It was a big number that I had to get. I did my first lap, and I only was halfway there. I'm like, man, this is going to be tough. You know, I leaned it out more, which is a power loss, and then I got the number. I was able to get the number every lap and maintain a pretty good pace. Yeah, we don't know -- it's hard to say. I really don't know what the difference is in fuel mileage. You know, it seemed as though they had better, but Chevy today -- that's the thing about Chevy, they're constantly working on it. If there's any deficit anywhere, they find a way to bridge that gap and do it quickly. I love driving with Chevy for that reason.

Q. Will, you talked about kind of being dehydrated, but you said you were hitting all your marks and doing everything perfectly. How hard is that when you're getting toward the end and you were dehydrated?

WILL POWER: No, I wasn't feeling it. In the car, man,

it doesn't even register. You know when you start to hear your heartbeat in your ears is when you hear that -- that's when you know you're starting to struggle a little, which I actually did hear, but that's what you do all the fitness for. Like I do some pretty high intense fitness, and it's no different to that. It's no different to hanging out at a high heart rate on the bike for two hours or doing a tough rowing session. That's why you do it. You've got to be able to pump it out all the way through the race. Who cares how you feel after?

Q. Looking at the big picture, this is kind of a familiar position to be in the championship to where you have some misfortune and setbacks early in the year, then you get that first win and you start to close the gap. Does that frustrate you at all? And kind of looking forward to the 500, you want to win that race, but how important is it to get a top 10, top 15 and stay in the mix?

WILL POWER: Yeah, you need top 5s, but yeah, very frustrating start to the season, considering our pace. Yeah, super -- obviously really want to get a result in the 500 just because it's the 500, not because of the double points or anything like that. Just everything that goes with it. It's such a big race.

Yeah, it's great to get back in the mix. Like just frustrating when you're not within striking distance, you know, when you dig yourself a hole early in the season. But I feel like this will call back some good points. We'll be definitely closer now.

Q. You were talking about how the fuel saving kind of sucks, but did you think about how that might have been an advantage during the race with your closest competitor who didn't have that experience, as you said?

WILL POWER: Yeah, that's right, it was. Just when you've been doing it so long, you know how to go fast and save fuel. You know, it's still funny, you save fuel but you push like qualifying because you've got to make the time up in the corner as you're saving the fuel. So it's not like it's easier, yeah, to go fast and save fuel. It's very tough.

Q. What was it like having your teammate Helio back out there after he had been in sports car the last few months?

WILL POWER: It's just good having him around. Obviously a very positive guy. I feel like he deserves to be in IndyCar. To me last season he was the fastest I had ever seen him, and he's still very fast and capable. It's cool to have him around, a guy that's got a lot of experience, especially at the 500, and we have a very comparable setup and feel for the car. It's good for me to bounce ideas off him.