

IndyCar Media Conference

Saturday May 19, 2018

James Hinchcliffe

Pippa Mann

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Pippa Mann.

I know today didn't go as you anticipated or hoped. Take us through your day, obviously the emotions that come with it.

PIPPA MANN: Coming into this May, I knew things were going to be tough. I normally get time in an IndyCar once a year. With a new aero package, not getting to do any of the testing ahead of time because we don't have a budget that allows for that. All of the people who have supported me to be here, Dale Coyne Racing, the entire crew on my car, worked so hard to turn that car over from a road course car to an oval car so we could shake it down, get me through my refresher on Tuesday.

Wednesday and Thursday, I'll be honest with you, we thought things were going pretty well. The car handled great. It was really good. It was pretty good in traffic. We thought things were rolling along pretty nicely. The no tow reports, they looked fine.

Then yesterday morning, I rolled out, 226 out of the box. Great, this isn't bad. Now let's trim the car. Went through it again, nothing. That's when we started to realize we might really be in trouble. We tried everything we could think of yesterday. The boys stayed really, really late last night. We pulled the rack off the car, we resanded the car, resanded the floor. We went through all the brakes again because we thought we had some brakes that were dragging a little bit out.

I knew if everything we did last night still hadn't made us go faster, we were going to be in trouble today. But you have to try and get out there anyway. When we got back in line for the last run, we took every single trim we could possibly could to the racecar, we did everything.

Obviously it wasn't enough. What's worse, it was slower than our time before. Once you pulled your time, if the car is still functioning, you kind of have to finish the run because what if somebody in front of me just didn't get through tech and I withdrew and didn't complete my run and pulled off the racetrack?

It's the worst feeling in the world. The team worked so



hard. Earlier today I really thought we were going to get it done. Then we went out, again, for the first run and I knew we were in the fight in final trim. We took it further than any of our cars have gone. Big stats.

If we understood what was going on, we wouldn't be here.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for coming up. We appreciate it. See you next year.

PIPPA MANN: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Now joined by James Hinchcliffe.

James, I understand this is a very difficult situation. It's not how you hoped your expected things to turn out today. Take us through that last run and what you were feeling from the car when you felt the vibration.

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: I just want to first start off by saying, I haven't been on the Internet, heard anything myself, but heard some stuff from other people. This is in no way Pippa Mann's fault. This is our fault. If there's anybody out there that has anything bad to say about that, you don't know motorsports. Keep your mouth shut.

The track kept getting a little bit quicker, so we were pretty optimistic, to be honest. As soon as I left pit lane, I felt a horrible vibration. Called it in. Weirdly, it started to go away. I thought I had some pickup on my tires or something. I called into the team, I think it's all right, I'm going to keep going. Turn three, it all came back again. It was violent.

Came in, we have since diagnosed a tire pressure sensor failure, kind of broke off the rim, was rattling around inside the car, which at 200 plus miles an hour doesn't feel good. I think we had to come in. If we had to stay out, good chance we would have gotten tire failure, you would not be in the show, have a broken racecar.

It worked out timing-wise, not enough seconds in the day to get our last run in. For sure the car had speed to be in the show. I mean, not the fastest car by any stretch this month, but we weren't expecting that. But certainly enough to be comfortable in the show.

Bummed for all the guys on the team. Everybody worked so hard. This race means so much to every

single one of us that works in the paddock, not unique to our team by any stretch. Pretty bummed attitude back in the garage at the moment. But we're a strong group. This track, believe it or not, has done worse to me in the past, and we came back swinging, so we'll be fine.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for James.

Q. In 2011, Ryan Hunter-Reay failed to qualify. They purchased the car from A.J. Foyt. Is that something you would be willing to do if your team ownership was willing to go that route?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: I mean, I'm here to race at the end of the day. I work for Sam and Rick. Whatever Sam and Rick tell me to do I'll do. I believe there's some options being investigated. At this point I don't know any more than you do.

Q. Go through the last bit where you were in line, then just sitting there, were you expecting the gun to go off at 6? What exactly happened there?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Personally I thought it was 6. I guess a few years ago it changed to 5:50 for TV. They got their drama. So that worked. But, yeah, I mean, Pippa and I were both running to get back into lane one there. I mean, man, you can play Monday morning quarterback all you want, try to look at things that could have been done differently, decisions made by certain people to maybe help the cause. They weren't.

At the end of the day it's our bad. It's a function of kind of getting through tonight and then moving on to the next one.

Q. Bit of a hypothetical here. You obviously didn't get to get up to speed when you had the vibration issue. What was the sense within the team about whatever setup advancements you made? Do you think you had that speed to get in?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Yeah, I mean, tragically the first run we did, we did find a problem with the car. We know exactly what took the speed away we had yesterday. That being rectified, we kind of expected, the margin not being super big from our previous runs to get in the show, we were sort of expecting a bit of a jump in pace. I think Jack did a pretty decent jump in pace on his second run. He had a similar problem to myself.

Yeah, pretty confident. It's one of those weird situations where for it being after 5:00 on Bump Day and being out of the show, we were still actually relatively okay with it. We had confidence in the package that we had at that time.

Q. I don't know how to explain this properly, but the way we had guys going out to get in the Fast Nine, guys to get bumped back into the field or keep from getting bumped, would you like to see that split where one ends at 5:30, then the last 30

minutes set aside for the bumpers?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Yeah, sure, now I do. It would be great. Until that scenario comes up, nobody really thinks of it quite going down like this.

I'm sure IndyCar will look at it. Whether that leads to a change or not, I don't know. At the end of the day, the rules are black and white. We knew the procedure going into it. We knew what we were getting ourselves into. It's just the chips didn't fall way. It's not a lot a whole lot more complicated than that. If they look to changing it in the future, cool, we'll go by those rules and try to work things out to our advantage.

Q. (No microphone.)

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: I'm not going to criticize anybody for going out and trying to improve their qualifying time. There are some guys that are trying to bump in the Fast Nine, some guys that maybe weren't really quite close enough to being in trouble that still went out even though they had no chance to get in the Fast Nine. That's their right. They have every right to do that.

If there's any decisions to be made in terms of letting those guys go out or not, it's way above my pay grade. It's not something I'll ever begrudge anybody. Nobody screwed us. The system didn't fail us. We failed us. We just have to do better. I know this team is capable of better. We are better than this, I know that. Everybody in the garage knows that. We deserve to be in this race. Just not this year.

Q. When it comes down to seconds like it did, how frustrating is the impact of the weather we saw today?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Yeah, there again, there are so many things that stacked up against us today. That's the nature of the beast. That's Indy. That's qualifying here.

At the end of the day everybody got a run, which is the rule. Our run wasn't good enough, so... Blame the weather, blame other cars in line, you can blame whatever you want, but just didn't happen today.

Q. You talked about this place being a cruel mistress. Changing the subject a little bit, Bump Day, we haven't had it since 2011. You're obviously on the wrong side of it. What are your feelings about Bump Day?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Everybody has been hoping for a Bump Day since 2012. It's part of the tradition of this race, the excitement of about this race. 33 cars start, that's the deal. It always has been. Barring extenuating circumstances, I'm all for it.

It sucks to be sitting up here saying that at this point. The purist in me, the motorsport enthusiast in me thinks this is good for the sport. That's more important than what's good for James Hinchcliffe today, so...

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much. We appreciate your time.

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Thank you.