

IndyCar Media Conference

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Danica Patrick

Press Conference



DANICA PATRICK: You hope it's boring, and it was pretty boring. So as far as a run goes, to be going as fast as you can possibly go. Yeah, it was pretty comfortable. I'm grateful for that, and I said to my engineer Don on pit road, I said, we're pilots. We're there in case something goes wrong, but other than that everything should be pretty predictable, pretty boring up there. You're pilots just ready for emergencies. That's what we're doing in the car, we're ready for understeers, oversteers, and you're there for it, so luckily it was pretty good.

THE MODERATOR: When the announcement came that you were running in this race, the team announcement came a little bit later. What has Ed Carpenter Racing brought as an opportunity for you and how happy are you you ended up with them?

DANICA PATRICK: Even more now. Like I was -- I mean, the way it went, there wasn't a spot available, and there was a spot, then there wasn't a spot available, and then there was, so when it came back, I mean, I pretty much just worked the deal out myself. I mean, I called Ed and I told him how much I wanted to do it, and he already knew that, but I mean, I really -- that's what it takes. I didn't really care about the business side of it all that much. I mean, I just knew that I was going to be in a good car, and that's what mattered to me.

And of course, sort of honoring what I had already done here, which was be able to run up front. That was what was really important to me, nothing else, and so Ed has been fantastic from the beginning. Again, even though he's, of course, qualifying on the pole by a mile and racing in the race, but he's also running the business, and he's been really good at managing both. I'm grateful for it.

I'm grateful for all the people involved because it's -- it takes a team, especially right at this point with qualifying and with everything from projecting the balance shift with the track temp, ambient, humidity, wind, gears. Like I mean, there's so many numbers flying around in those engineering rooms that they go right over my head but that people are managing. So he has an incredible team of really good people, and as I've said to many people, there are people on the team that I have worked with in the past in IndyCar, so there was a comfort in that as well as the comfort of just knowing that they knew what I could do and that

they had confidence in me.

Yeah, incredible, though. How about Ed? That's awesome. He deserves it. He works really hard, and they pushed hard in practice to get ready to sit on the pole.

Q. Now that qualifying is over, what are your thoughts as you head to your final race?

DANICA PATRICK: Yeah, I mean, some people were asking that on pit road right after I got out of the car. I'm like, guys, I'm within minutes. I'm not really thinking about that yet. And I'm still not really. I basically sat on pit road and watched everyone qualify and sat there and said good job to everybody and went down and saw Ed and came up here. Not really putting a lot of thought into that yet, but that is what we worked on until Friday. I mean, we did that Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and we made two runs on Friday in qualifying trim, one run yesterday, and then there was like a two-minute conversation earlier this afternoon about tomorrow.

But as far as the race goes, we're just going to get ready for the group running tomorrow, which I'm sure, while we feel warm and fuzzy right now, we're going really fast, you hold it wide open, everything is great, tomorrow is going to be a whole different day. I mean, it's going to be chaotic and there's going to be a lot of cars and there's going to be a lot of people complaining about not being able to turn.

Tomorrow will be a big day to hopefully make one really good change to get it to turn and then fine tune. I mean, that's really I feel like what tomorrow is for.

But it has crossed my mind that in a week -- like this morning, I was like, in a week I'll be getting ready. And then a little bit this afternoon, I was like, in a week -- nope, I think I'll still be out there. In a week, yep, it'll be done, from now. I mean, it's crossing my mind that there's only a week left. But other than that, I'm not really thinking about it.

Q. You knew a lot of people within the team, but Spencer is somebody new. Having a chance to work with him for the first time, what's he like, and how valuable has his feedback been?

DANICA PATRICK: Well, we joke around that we haven't even heard him speak yet. He's a quiet boy. Can I say boy? Because I'm quite old now. Although Don, my engineer, calls me young lady, and I am

thankful. I told him thank you for calling me young lady, and then he reminded me, dear, it's all relative. So I'm reading between the lines. I get it.

But he's been very nice. I mean, Spencer in all honesty, he's been really, really nice, very -- I feel like he's soaking up information, too. I mean, he's younger. But I've asked him a few questions, and he's been helpful. I really like him. I think he's very talented.

Q. A lot of people look at the four-lap runs around here as the four most intense laps of their lives, but you actually seem to enjoy it. You're never going to get to do this again, so when you look back and think --

DANICA PATRICK: I'm not crying. My eye has something in it. (Laughter.)

Q. But when you think about it --

DANICA PATRICK: It really does.

Q. When you think about it, you don't have to do this again. You don't have to lay it out on the line and go for it. Are you going to really miss that?

DANICA PATRICK: I think I was literally just talking about this, and I said how it's really hard to be having fun when you're this nervous and stressed out and that I'm glad it's going well. It adds pressure, and as I get more nervous, the better it's going, the more nervous I get, because the more I feel like I have the potential to then let down the team or myself or somebody -- let down the potential of the car. So it makes me more on the line, of course.

But then I sort of followed it up by saying that -- like I won't miss -- I don't think I'll miss too much how nervous you get and how uncomfortable -- I'm not going to miss that discomfort, and it's a lot. Like you have a knot in your stomach for a while. There's really not a lot of things that get that much of a rise out of you, not that I do anyway. So yeah. I mean, but fortunately those moments also have given me some of my most memorable moments, as well. I don't know. I'm sure there will be something I miss about it, but the discomfort I won't.

Q. You said the other day that racing has given you everything. It's given you a lot of fame and fortune and has made you who you are and it's going to make you even grander maybe even after you leave here. What is it like to be a celebrity and be dating Aaron Rodgers of the Green Bay Packers?

DANICA PATRICK: There it is. I can't wait to go to Lambeau. I was a Bears fan.

Look, I've known Aaron for quite a while, and I always told him I'd cheer for him, and as I said before, I cheered for him, I just didn't want his team to win, right? But now, of course, I cheer for the whole team. I just think it's nice, we have a lot of obviously things that we can compare and contrast in our worlds of being

physical people and everything from the fan side to the media side to the business side to just the juggling of all things. You know, the emotions of it all. It actually has been really nice and really helpful in even this last transition of just reminding me of little things along the way. He was at a golf tournament in South Carolina, so he said he was going to -- he thought he could make it back to Green Bay before qualifying, and when I heard that he was done -- he texted and said he was done playing, and then I was like, I don't think -- yeah, I'm going to be out there in an hour, so I don't think you're going to make it back, so he stayed at the hotel and watched it.

Yeah, it's great.

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