

# IndyCar Media Conference

Sunday May 20, 2018

## Ed Carpenter

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: If I have my specifics correct, in the history of Indianapolis Motor Speedway, only 10 drivers have won the pole at least three times.

ED CARPENTER: Am I one of 10 or 11 now? It's still pretty cool.

THE MODERATOR: It's not very many. You said this was a pretty easy one, though. I thought that was interesting.

ED CARPENTER: It's never easy qualifying here, but it was -- that was on the radio mostly. It was a compliment to my team. Every other pole I've won here, at least one of the laps, I was right-hand down loose on the last lap, and the balance was just perfect for all four laps. So that's what I meant by it was easy, just the balance was perfect, but it's still never easy doing what we do. But they certainly gave me a great car today.

THE MODERATOR: I heard the big roar when the 230 went up on the board --

ED CARPENTER: It may have come from inside the car because I don't know that I was expecting to see that, either, but the 20 car had a lot of speed in it, and we still had a long ways to go at that point. I had seen other guys drop off a lot, especially guys picking up understeer in the middle of the run, so we were able to put down four pretty consistent laps for the time of day. It was a lot of fun.

THE MODERATOR: It continues to get sweeter competing here, doesn't it?

ED CARPENTER: Yeah, I mean, obviously I don't want to just be considered a guy that can win poles here. I think we always work hard on our race cars, but we really put in a lot of work this last week, especially with the weather approaching, not knowing how many days we were going to get. I truly am focused on the race, which we always are. I just keep getting in the situation where my team gives me really fast cars, and when you're in a position to go compete for poles, it's hard to not do it.

Really excited for Sunday. I think this new car, it does race a little different than the other cars, and clean air maybe is a little more important than it has been in the past, so definitely feel fortunate to be in this position

coming up for next week.

**Q. Ed, you talked about the balance that your car had. We hear a lot about the smallest detail that you need to get to hit that sweet spot that your car needs to have. Where did that process start for your team today, and how did your team find that sweet spot?**

ED CARPENTER: Well, so it really goes back to Thursday in a way because we started doing -- we didn't do any qual times until Thursday, and the car wasn't very well balanced, so we kind of had a think about it, came back with something different for Friday. It was much, much better. Felt pretty good Friday night.

Obviously we didn't practice yesterday, so the only run I did was the qualifying run, and we missed on the balance a little bit. So I had a pretty big handful, but it was so quick. The fourth lap obviously fell off, but knowing the situation, I wanted to just make sure we were in the top nine, and we looked over everything from last night, made a few minor adjustments, and it came right to us.

**Q. I know at the test when I talked to you about managing all three cars, you said this was the one month out of the year where you take orders from Tim Broyles --**

ED CARPENTER: Really Colleen and my wife Heather, they're the real bosses of the whole thing.

**Q. But to know that the whole three-car effort was in the Fast Nine, that has to make you especially satisfied with this pole.**

ED CARPENTER: Yeah, I'm super proud of the team. It's one thing to build a fast car here. It's a whole 'nother to build three fast cars, especially one of them not being a full-time crew. So the effort that Tim and the whole team put together to have everybody prepared and giving myself, Spencer, Danica all really good cars and equal chances to be in the Fast Nine and go compete for a pole, that's all you can ask for as a driver and as a team owner. Really blessed to have great people in our organization.

**Q. Ed, this is your third pole. I think you finished 11th last year and the three previous years down in the late 20s and 30s. How much do you think about that all the time?**

ED CARPENTER: I mean, you think about it a lot. I've been around here long enough, different things

happen. You never know how many more opportunities you're going to get. I've been in this position three times now. '13 we didn't really manage the race, and our strategy going into it wasn't as strong as it could have been, being in that position for the first time.

Probably if -- we came back in 2014, ran a really strong race up until the point that we weren't in the race anymore and were really well positioned for the last 20-some laps.

2015 was just a bad year for us. We didn't have our stuff together. As you see, Indy can do that to you. It's never automatic. It takes hard work and things change year after year. History shows that even the best of teams have tough days here.

'16 we had good cars, just can't remember, I had something happen in that race. Something.

But just hoping that things go well for all 500 miles. We certainly have a car that's fast enough to run up front, and the way it's been driving all week, I feel like we have a good enough handling car on long runs to be in a good position to be a factor if we can go out and execute on a sound strategy.

**Q. Ed, how are things?**

ED CARPENTER: Things are good.

**Q. You brought in Allen McDonald to the engineering team this year. You're working with him. He's obviously known to provide fast cars around this place and other ovals. Is that part of why you brought him in, and what's it been like working with him?**

ED CARPENTER: Well, it's been great working with Allen, who we call Big Buddy because he calls everyone Big Buddy. I've known for a really long time, and he's a super nice guy. We had some turnover during the past couple years. Lost a guy, really good engineer to Andretti Autosport. We brought in another guy that we thought was going to be with us for a while from sports cars; he wanted to go back to sports cars, so we found ourselves in a position to be looking for another race engineer again. And right about that time, Allen became available with Sam Schmidt making major changes over there. It was just perfect timing for us.

I couldn't wait to work with a guy like Allen. He had worked with one of the greatest drivers in the sport ever, in my opinion, Dario Franchitti, and they had a lot of success together, so I was really eager to work with him and try to learn from him to see what I could do to become a better driver myself, with all the really good drivers that he had worked with in the past. He and Matt had worked together previously and had a good relationship. Tim and Allen had worked together previously, so there was already a lot of chemistry

there, and it's been a lot of fun. We're certainly having a good week.

**Q. Spencer has been with ECR for a while, but he's never had a chance to run at Indy. With the P6 today, can you talk about his growth since going with him full-time?**

ED CARPENTER: I mean, I think it was probably a surprise to some when we decided to put Spencer in the car full-time, but he started racing part-time with us two years ago. This is his third year. He's the real deal. He's a talented driver, and guys need opportunity and time to grow, and that's what we're trying to give him. And he's making me look good right now with a good performance. I think it's helpful that he's been here two years. I mean, he's learned a lot. He hasn't been in the best situation. He's made some mistakes and been through some hard times. But he comes in, he's finished both 500-mile races he's been in, so hopefully we can keep that streak going. But he knows how to drive the car. He's fast. So really proud of what he did this weekend as well as Danica.

**Q. Next week will be an international crowd that will come in here from all over to watch the race. The pole weekend seems to be an Indiana crowd, people that are able to drive in for the day, a lot of people from Indianapolis, and you were easily the most popular driver in qualifications. How does it feel to have that kind of community support? You're kind of like their hometown hero here.**

ED CARPENTER: It feels great. I think I've been around long enough that -- I've been here long enough to build a fan base, and I love this town, and my wife and I Heather try to do as much as we can in the community, whether it's -- Heather does a ton at our kids' schools, and we love this community and love being a part of it, so it's nice to feel the support for us during the month of May and having the town behind us.

**Q. I live in the town of Speedway; how beneficial is our community and Indianapolis to your winning?**

ED CARPENTER: I don't know. I mean, obviously it would be a whole lot of fun. But I guess until I'm in that situation, it's hard to totally answer that question. But I certainly love racing here and love the support that I get from the local community.