

IndyCar Media Conference

Sunday June 3, 2018

Will Power

Ed Jones

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'll get started with our Verizon IndyCar Series post-race press conference. Joined now by our second- and third-place finishers, Will Power and Ed Jones. Will Power, finishing second in the No. 12 Verizon Team Penske Chevrolet, started third in today's race, and it is his fifth podium finish here on the Streets of Belle Isle. Will, you said yesterday that you felt like you worked really hard for a seventh-place finish. How do you feel about your performance today and ultimately the podium result?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I feel like this was about as good as we could get, give how fast Hunter-Reay was. There was just no way anyone was going to beat him. We just seemed to struggle a little bit on full tanks and cold tires, but very happy with the result. You know, I feel like with what we had, that's the most that we could have got out of that race, so very happy.

THE MODERATOR: Also joined by Ed Jones, who finished third, also Ed's third career podium in the No. 10 NTT DATA Chip Ganassi Racing Honda for the team today. His new best finish here at Belle Isle, and finished sixth yesterday. Ed, it was not an uneventful race for you because you had that moment where you went three wide towards the beginning of the race, but how were you able to stay up front and end up on the podium today?

ED JONES: Yeah, for sure, it was a pretty entertaining race for me. I tried to pass Will at the start. I got by him, and then he got me back, and on the cold tires here, it's been very tricky. The cars handle pretty odd, so I made a mistake and I lost the car then and I lost a few more positions. But I came back through the field. I thought what really made our race was our pace on the red tires as the stint went on. Today with the rain, I think the grip level dropped quite a bit initially, and a lot more people struggled on the reds early on with degradation, whereas I feel like that was one of our stronger points. And then we were able to maintain that.

We had the pace where we were. Unfortunately we didn't have enough to get by Will again, but it was a great job by the team the whole weekend. Scott winning the race yesterday and then me on the podium today, we're just aiming to bring the team forward and have some one-twos eventually.

Q. Will, Chevrolet kind of struggled this weekend. You finish second in Penske's backyard. What a race you had. Talk about just coming back from not a good finish yesterday to a great finish today.

WILL POWER: Yeah, I think it was all about qualifying. I guess in a way it was good that it was wet because it helped us to get further up the grid. Had very good pace on the blacks at the end of stints or halfway through, so that kind of put us in a good position. Yeah, and like I said, I just think that's as much as we could get out of what we had today.

Q. And Ed, third place today, sixth place yesterday, two top 10s coming out of this weekend. This place can be tough on drivers; kind of overall takeaways from that?

ED JONES: You know, after the last two races, things haven't gone well for us, so it was really important to get the momentum back and have two solid results this weekend. We worked really hard on it, as well, and there was a lot of pressure to do that, but the team gave me the car to do it, and I was able to deliver.

Q. First time in a straight-up fight you've been able to finish ahead of a legend, your teammate Scott Dixon. What's it like to be able to beat him in a race where you didn't have an issue?

ED JONES: Yeah, it was a big confidence boost for me. I've beat him in a few other races but it wasn't a straight-on fight, it was different strategies and things like that. To be able to race him and pass him on track to move forward, yeah, it's a big thing for me. I've been trying to learn a lot from Scott, and we're open to helping each other out. At the end of the day, we both want to drive the team forward and get to winning races.

Q. Will, it's been the week that was for you; when you think that a week ago right now you were still celebrating the biggest victory of your career, just what's it like to have this week over?

WILL POWER: Actually I'm looking forward to going home. I haven't been home in a month, so just to have like three mornings where I can sleep in a bit will be pretty cool, and be home, spend some time with my little boy and my wife. Yeah, it's been the most hectic time of the year, and yeah, we look forward to the week off after Texas. I think that'll be very welcome by everyone in the paddock.

Q. How weird was the start with the pace car

incident?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I mean, I just think no one wanted to run over the debris. I think Rossi was the only one that went through it, and Wickens got stalled, and we only had one set of new reds. I felt really bad for whoever was in the pace car. It's very easy to do as you go over that crest, and the traction control must have been turned off. So yeah, I felt -- wasn't really his fault. It's just such a bad corner. Like it's very easy to do.

ED JONES: Yeah, I thought the same thing. Once I think the three of us kind of created a road block, no one else could get through. With the debris it made things easier to decide what to do. I just didn't want to get a puncture or anything like that, and there was a lot of cars behind, if they didn't do it, it could have compromised our race.

Q. Will, at this point of the season -- the year you won the championship, 2014, you had the same number of wins, so how poised are you and focused towards a championship are you?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I mean, after the 500, it's just 100 percent focus on a championship. Well, it is all year, honestly. Pretty rough start to the year, a lot of little mistakes by me, but overall in a very good position. Qualified out of the top three once all year. Yeah, we just focus forward, very determined. I felt like I had so many close seconds in my career, so I really want to get another championship.

Q. Back to the pace car incident, what goes through your mind when you're just sitting there in the middle of the track stopped for so long? Is it tough to keep your mental focus on what you're doing?

WILL POWER: No, my first thought was just switch my engine off, once the team said switch your engine off and just wait. Took a while, and then I'm thinking with the whole field stopped, that's a lot of starters, like that would take a long time. I don't know how long that whole process took, but yeah, that would have been a first to see that whole field stuck in one spot just on the pit lane exit. You know, that's racing, right? I've seen plenty of pace car crashes. Like I've seen plenty of people coming off in the wet and crash, and not abnormal.

Q. Will, what were your thoughts after the way Alex had kind of dominated the race? What were your thoughts when he came around that corner and you saw that he was in the runoff area?

WILL POWER: Yeah, what I noticed was he was very quick at the beginning of a stint and then he backed up. I think I knocked nine seconds out of him in one stint, the second stint, and obviously Hunter-Reay was putting the pressure on big time. He just went a little long. I mean, yeah, it's pretty tough when that happens when you've kind of dominated all day, and flats out a tire. But yeah, that's racing.

Q. I've heard stories about racing back home on sand helps you in slippery conditions. How much did that help with the conditions this weekend?

ED JONES: Yeah, it's quite odd. Growing up in Dubai and karting there from the beginning, when I got to wet weather people thought I was going to struggle a lot more, but we'd go to the kart track, sometimes the track would be seven seconds off, so close to like rain, how slow it was, and just the car control you learnt from that was quite a big thing for me. My first ever race that I did in the wet, I was on it straight away, so that's always been helpful for me. Obviously you can't compare exactly to the rain, but a lot of it applies in car control is always the biggest thing.

Q. This is also ABC's last broadcast for IndyCar for a while, and just get your thoughts on that, either of you?

WILL POWER: Yeah, you know, they've been a great partner. Obviously is it 60 years they were doing the Indy 500?

Q. 54 years.

WILL POWER: 54 years, which is amazing. But everything comes to an end at some point, so looking forward to next year with the TV package that IndyCar has signed. So yeah. But yeah, been great with ABC, great group of guys. They all did a fantastic job, and yeah, obviously sad to see some of those guys go.

ED JONES: Yeah, same. Same as Will.

Q. We go from the superspeedway of Indianapolis to the street course and then back to a superspeedway at Texas. Your thoughts on that, the diversity of that schedule and adjusting from race to race in the Verizon IndyCar Series?

WILL POWER: Yeah, it's just amazing how good you've got to be at so many different disciplines because no oval is the same, either. So yeah, Texas is going to be a totally different animal this year with the downforce level. Who knows how it'll play out. But yeah, you've got to just be good changing and adapting very quickly, and that's what IndyCar is all about. To be a champion, you've got to master every single discipline, which there's many.

ED JONES: I agree with Will. That's what's great about IndyCar racing is adapting to all those different types of circuits weekend to weekend. It's a big challenge, and yeah, you've got to be able to do that quickly and be on top of your game straight away. I think Texas is going to be extremely tough with the new downforce levels, and also looking at the heat there, it's like 104 degrees, so yeah, we'll see when we get there.