

# IndyCar Media Conference

Saturday June 9, 2018

## Simon Pagenaud Alexander Rossi

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by the second- and third-place finishers of tonight's DXC Technology 600. Simon Pagenaud, driving the No. 22 DXC Technology Chevrolet for Team Penske, and Alexander Rossi driving the No. 27 NAPA Auto Parts Honda for Andretti Autosport.

Simon, we'll start with you. Your best finish of the season so far. What a great place to do it with your DXC Technology partner, also the primary sponsor here. Take us through your night and ultimately how you were able to stay where you actually qualified all night long for the most part.

SIMON PAGENAUD: Yeah, it was a good night. We started really strong, really loved the car to start in the heat. As the temperature dropped, it got a little bit more difficult for us. We adjusted the car the wrong way as the temperature dropped. Got pretty loose for us midway through.

It was a pretty fast-paced race as well, quite physical. Yeah, I mean, I was just trying to manage the balance. It was quite fun actually. We had to keep up with the tires, keep up with the balance of the car throughout the stints, and also relay to the pit what you needed for the next one.

It was fun. I mean, I had a lot of good battles, especially with Alexander at the end. Gave me some gray hair, the last 30 laps. But we managed to hold him off. That was really cool.

Just to get a good result like this for us, I think the 22 team needed a break. I think we got one tonight. For DXC, it's pretty awesome. We had about three thousand employees from DXC tonight, so it was good to have a good showing.

THE MODERATOR: Joined also by Alexander Rossi, his fifth podium of the season thus far.

Alex, in a night like tonight where there was a lot of action on track, how important is it to have a strong finish like this, especially consistency-wise for the championship?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I mean, very important. I tried I think on the penultimate restart to go high on Simon in

lane two on turn one. That was pretty bad, almost catastrophic. After that, I realized lane two wasn't really going to be an option for us. Despite the runs I had, Simon was doing a good job covering the line into one.

After last weekend, there was really no point in taking unnecessary risks. But the NAPA car was good enough to fight Scott probably. I don't know if we had enough to beat him. But I think we were really good on tire life, ultimate pace. There wasn't a car I felt less superior to, I guess.

A good night for the whole NAPA team and Andretti. Yeah, we'll just take another podium and focus towards Road America.

THE MODERATOR: It seems not a lot of drivers and teams really understood or could predict what was going to happen in tonight's race. There seemed to be a lot of unknowns, maybe more so than usual. What do you think attributed to that?

SIMON PAGENAUD: I think it's the new aero package we have. It's always complicated to guess how the racing is going to be just because the temperature for an aero car like the IndyCars is very key to grip basically. We are like planes. The thicker the air, the best grip we have. It's just very difficult to simulate a race when you come and test three months before.

Quite frankly, that's the reason. I feel like the racing is always better than what we expect, especially tonight. I thought racing was good. There was quite a bit of passes.

The interesting parts were the pit sequence, a lot of good passes on new tires. To me, that was good racing. It was obviously difficult to make it work. It's not supposed to be easy.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I think the difficulty, not difficulty, but the unknown really is just a feature of Texas. I think we've had it kind of the past couple of years. Firestone is always trying to come up with a better tire, different tire, one that has better grip or degrades a little bit more. It's always been an evolving thing that IndyCar and the teams and Firestone is working to create a great show for the fans here and those back at home.

I think that's the main reason. It's just a feature of this

place, why it's so fun to come here, because you never know what you're going to get except Scott is going to be fast and Team Penske is going to be on pole. A few common threads.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.

**Q. How much did the altered pit delta, because of 60 miles an hour limit down the back straight, how much did that affect your strategy?**

SIMON PAGENAUD: For us, it didn't affect anything. Just have to adapt to whatever the rules are. I thought it was a good call because, quite frankly, if someone spins there, you know, we don't have much room to exit. With less downforce, it was a lot more difficult this year.

The biggest thing is you don't really want to put drivers at risk with somebody spinning out of the pit lane, like Zanardi had. That was an horrific accident. If you can avoid that, still make it safe into turn three, it's a win-win situation.

I think IndyCar made the right call. I don't think it affected the racing at all. Obviously when you pitted, you were at risk if you pitted early. The goal was to go as long as possible. But didn't really affect us in any ways.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, I mean, like Simon, you don't really change much. You try and go long in order not to get caught out. That's similar with most races, I think.

But I just want to tip my hat to IndyCar really and the officials. They really listened to us as drivers. We were very concerned Friday with the apron on pit entry. They immediately made a change to fix it. That's something you don't see in other series. I think that's huge. We're very thankful as drivers they take that into consideration.

**Q. Talk a little bit more about the blistering, Simon, it seemed like you had it much worse. How much could you feel it? It dictated your race but didn't ruin it.**

SIMON PAGENAUD: It didn't dictate my race at all because I didn't know I had blisters. Penske shocks are doing a great job.

I'll tell you what. The biggest thing before the race I asked my racing engineer and I asked (indiscernible) at Firestone, Is it safe? She said, Absolutely. When the tire manufacturer tells you you're going to have blisters but it's safe, you feel more confident going into the race. It's amazing a tire manufacturer can have that kind of confidence.

Again, my hat off to them for being able to race on these speeds here, such a demanding track for the tire, but they did a great job.

The handling changes a little bit, but I couldn't feel it for the wheel or the car, so no problem for me.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I agree. I mean, I think we were one of the cars that blistered kind of the least. So, yeah, I think Firestone has done a great job really every time we come here to learn from the year past. This year was no exception. I don't really have anything to add based on what Simon said.

**Q. Alex, during the first stint, you were passing cars left and right, worked your way up pretty well. After the first pit stop round was over, you were back where you started. How frustrated were you at that point to know now you have to do it all over again?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I think I was more confused because, like, we went into it with the strategy of we need to get later than everyone else, that will pay benefits. I'll tell you what, lap cars is a big issue. I know the rule book states what it states. I don't know if that's the right thing or the wrong thing.

When you have cars that are a lap down, you're racing for position, they do nothing to help you, even if they're a lap down to the whole field. It's something that we talk about in drivers meetings all the time. It's probably an off-season topic that we all need to discuss.

I don't think that cars that are a lap down, I don't think there's any other series that kind of allows them to still race. I mean, it's frustrating. I think that's what hurt us by going long. We caught the tail end of the field. Despite the fact we still had great tire life, plenty of fuel, a good pace, I couldn't get around cars that were a lap down.

That's the way it goes. Still we finished on the podium, so I don't think it was a make-or-break. It was confusing, put it that way.

**Q. Simon, since we've gone to the DW12 package in 2012, it seems like TMS has been a moving target for IndyCar. After tonight, how would you rate the package that we had tonight?**

SIMON PAGENAUD: Well, it's difficult to race it because I know that the fans expect something different than what the race is like. From a driver standpoint, I love it. I think I have to work more on my car to find a way to pass people. I think it's possible.

We passed a lot of cars. It was a different kind of racing than what you've seen last year. I felt safe. I felt like I was really driving the car, really taking care of my tires, like I said. I had to think about what I needed. To me, that's racing. To me, that's the quality of being a racecar driver.

I don't know about the show because I got to watch the race. But to me it was pretty active. It felt pretty good.

I'm not IndyCar, I don't decide anything. It is what it is. You get what you get.

**Q. Simon, this run has to feel really good considering the championship picture as you start to look at the rest of the season.**

SIMON PAGENAUD: I guess much better finish. I tell you what, a much better finish here than Detroit. That's for sure.

It's never over anyways. We saw the last year, Newgarden really started his momentum mid-season, went on and won the championship. I did the same last year really. I started really doing good job in Toronto.

This year's been a tough start. There were a lot of unknowns. Got taken out a few times, which hasn't happened in the past. It's not all unknown, not easy to understand. From then on, luck always turns around. It goes by cycle.

Now it's about executing. Myself, everybody on the team, really executed well today. It's a good example of what we need to do every weekend.

It's racing. Well all go through ups and downs. It doesn't mean you're losing talent. Momentum is what keeps you going.

**Q. Alex, was it a little bit easier to pass people than you thought it would be? Was it harder?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I think it was a little bit easier, yeah. I mean, I think we all as drivers kind of go into these races a little bit pessimistic. By no means was it easy. I think once guys got to 15, 20 laps in their tire life, they started to by the looks of things lose the front. If you could stay under, you'd be able to get a run.

Yeah, I don't think it was nearly as bad as we were all predicting. I think that's a feature here mostly because we never run when the sun completely goes down until we get to the race. That makes a huge difference.

Track temperature, as Simon kind of mentioned, earlier on makes a huge difference on these cars, how we make grip. Once the sun came down, it was definitely a step easier.

**Q. Simon, Alex was nipping at your heels kind of like Norman. How did you hold him off?**

SIMON PAGENAUD: Felt just like playing ball with Norman (laughter). It was a tough.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Means you're the ball.

SIMON PAGENAUD: You made me run for sure. I guess it's the other way (laughter).

I knew he was really strong off four. I knew he was getting really good restarts also. The way the Honda

restarts, really strong, I knew I had to cover the inside. I knew I wouldn't have a chance on the outside. I tried earlier, it didn't really work.

My car was working really well on the shadow line. That helped me out. I got aggressive with the (indiscernible) to hold him off because he was super fast behind. I tried to do everything to break the draft Helio style. He taught me a lot on that. Best I could do really. Yeah, I think Dixon was really strong tonight, so congratulations to him.

THE MODERATOR: Simon, Alex, thank you very much.

SIMON PAGENAUD: Thanks.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Thank you.