

IndyCar Media Conference

Friday June 22, 2018

Will Power Sebastien Bourdais Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are joined now by our third fastest driver of the day, Sebastien Bourdais, driving the No. 18 Team SealMaster Honda for Dale Coyne Racing.

A former pole winner and a former race winner here, wasn't here last year, unfortunately, I know you wish you were, but take us through your practices today and your thoughts heading into the qualifying tomorrow.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Yeah, no, pretty happy. I think obviously we didn't test, a couple of guys did. Felt a little bit off this morning. We're pretty confident because it was just mostly understeer in the car.

Yeah, just pretty happy with the day. Our guys did a good job. The Firestone red tires are definitely giving a huge amount of grip in comparison to the prime. But for us, it really wasn't much of a balance change, so that was nice. Could definitely get a pretty decent run. Consistency was quite good, as well.

Yeah, looking forward to the rest of the weekend.

THE MODERATOR: Everyone that we've been talking to so far today has mentioned what a classic IndyCar track this is, historic track. Seems to be high up there in terms of favorites. Is it one for you, as well?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Yeah, definitely. I think it's that place when you get the setup right, you put the lap together, it's extremely satisfying. Probably one of the most fascinating tracks that we go to as far as drivers are concerned because you really just have to let it flow, let it go. That's where the car are stretching their legs, looking fast even on TV. It's always great fun.

Obviously, it seems to be a good parity between the engines, as well. Just looking up there for Honda. Hope we can, like I said, just keep building on it, make a few tweaks to it, climb a little bit for tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: We've also been chatting a little bit about how most everybody got a breather last weekend.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Off weekends are overrated.

THE MODERATOR: Not so at all for you. You went to

work. Talk about the grind of that, going back from such different cars, as well.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Yeah, I mean, I can't even start to detail and describe to you how much crap I get from my teammates when I get to Le Mans. That's all they hear, Sebastien, Sebastien, Sebastien. Take pictures, this is and that. It's becoming a little bit crazy, to be honest.

It used to be a tough week for me, but it's become a very complicated week. On top of that, when you squeeze it between two IndyCar races, you come out of the plane on Monday morning, go straight to the engineering, it's just like you get completely overwhelmed with everything and everyone, media people, stuff to do.

Yeah, I think I could actually complete a week of media and signing autographs and still not be done with it. It's interesting, for sure. So I was definitely looking forward to getting into the car for the race because I probably did a total of 10 laps before the race started, which is pretty normal. The lap is long, you got three drivers.

It was great to be back. Just a tough week because you got that Monday, then you go straight onto Tuesday. It was filled with stuff to do. You get ready for Wednesday and you go to bed at 2:30 in the morning, again on Thursday, then you get the parade on Friday, some meetings. It's like, When do we get this thing started so we can start driving a little bit?

The race was great. We put on a great performance for the Ford guys, Chip Ganassi Racing. Dirk and Joey did an awesome job. We drove the hell out of that thing. It's all we had. Felt really good we could salvage a podium at the end. The guys definitely deserved it big-time.

For me it was great. Obviously, I flew back on Wednesday, back to the IndyCar world.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. I know you're all about the here and now, Dale Coyne Racing, but seems like a lifetime ago, this is a pretty special track in your earlier IndyCar career. I'm sure you have a lot of great memories from the days when you ran for Newman/Haas here. What are some of the things you remember when you come through the gates?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Yeah, I mean, I have to say it's probably the best memory I have from a qualifying, that 2007 pole lap. I think it was like 40 point something. It was ridiculous. That thing was so good. I mean, it's when you make one with the car, and it's just on another planet. It was a huge, huge amount of fun. We ended up winning it, finally like after five years of touching it and missing out.

Yeah, it was a very special race for Newman/Haas. Obviously the home race. All the families from the team were coming and everything. It was always very special. Yeah, to win here always meant a big deal. Yeah, I'm always glad I could do it. Hopefully, we can taste it again someday.

Q. And Carl (Haas) had cronies here for the weekend, too. The hospitality tent was always jammed pack.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: I don't know. You'd probably know more than me. It's just one of those where, yeah, like I said, there were a lot of friends from the team and all around. It was a pretty special moment for everybody involved.

THE MODERATOR: I want to welcome in Will Power, fourth fastest in this afternoon's session.

Give us a quick overview of how your car has been performing, looking ahead to qualifying tomorrow.

WILL POWER: Yeah, definitely changed the setup a bit, then went back. I think the track was really low grip at the beginning of every session, then got better. Kind of a little bit hard to pick what to do.

But obviously Josef is really quick, so got plenty of data to look at. Just keep working away at it.

THE MODERATOR: We'll continue with questions.

Q. Fuel consumption. Will we need a full course caution to stop you guys having to fuel save all the way through?

WILL POWER: Yeah, probably for the first (indiscernible) it will definitely make it easier. If it's all green, you're probably going to be saving fuel.

Q. Has this car's lack of drag made a big difference to your fuel mileage?

WILL POWER: Actually at this track it's a very similar drag level. Very close. Just a lot less downforce. The fact it's less downforce, you're braking earlier, getting on the throttle later. That saves a bit of fuel in itself.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: It's on that side of the pond.

Q. Honda is completely happy?

WILL POWER: Yeah, they seem to have the mileage thing down. It's unbelievable.

Q. Sebastien, is it strange for you to go over to Le Mans, be driving for the Ganassi team, come back over here and go back to Dale Coyne?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Yeah, obviously I've done this for a long time. That's the third year I do the jumping around between an IndyCar team and the GT program. Yeah, it has become kind of normal.

It's great. I mean, I have a great environment on both sides, a chance to win races every time. It's just a lot of fun really.

THE MODERATOR: Guys, thank you very much. Good luck this weekend.