

IndyCar Media Conference

Saturday July 14, 2018

Scott Dixon
Simon Pagenaud
Will Power
Alexander Rossi
Ryan Hunter-Reay

Fast Six Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Joined now by Alexander Rossi and Scott Dixon, who will start fifth and second respectively in tomorrow's Honda Indy Toronto. Alex, we'll start with you, a new best career start here on the streets of Toronto, also a podium finish for you last year. Take us through your qualifying session and your thoughts heading into tomorrow's race.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Pretty disappointed, really. I think the first session we were competitive. We were in the wet. We were out there with Scott, and it was a pretty easy job to kind of do that lap and transfer.

The second round was completely dry, and we weren't mega, but we were kind of on a conservative setup still. We felt pretty confident going into round 3. It started to rain a little bit again, but it didn't completely take away the track from us, and just didn't have the pace for some reason. We were a second -- me and Ryan were a second off of the front row. Very disappointing. I thought we had a car to fight for pole, especially after this morning, so row three is not great.

THE MODERATOR: Also joined by Scott Dixon, starting second in tomorrow's race, but did set a new track record in round 2 of qualifying of 58.5546 seconds, and that is a new track record on the new configuration here on the Streets of Toronto. Your thoughts on starting on the front row tomorrow and hopefully making your way up one more spot in tomorrow's race?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, a little pissed at myself to be honest. I think we were on a really big lap there on the last one there and messed it up pretty good in 5 and had to abort. Frustrating, I think the crew and the team, the car has been really good, but personally just didn't put it together. Still on the front row. Still a good spot. I think we have got a great chance, and the car has been tops all weekend, but yeah, disappointed with that.



THE MODERATOR: Joined also by Ryan Hunter-Reay, who will start sixth in tomorrow's race. Three podium finishes here, also a race winner here, previous win here in 2012. You mentioned in your interview that it's just so easy to touch the wall here and there are still things that you want to work with on your car to get it to where you want to be. What are some of the things that you feel are missing right now?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Well, that last outing, grip, I don't know where those times came from. You know, I don't think you're ever really fully satisfied with your car around here because it's such a messy lap, but I felt like in the dry session we really -- Q2 or whatever it was, we were quick. We were P2, and then I don't know what happened. Just at the end there, just couldn't find the grip. The concrete patches were really slick and didn't put a lap together. Definitely another zip code to where Josef and Scott were on that one. We'll just have to pick up and make a good race car here.

THE MODERATOR: Joined also by Will Power, starting fourth in tomorrow's race. We heard in your post-qualifying interview that you feel like you made a mistake on that last lap. Take us through exactly what happened.

WILL POWER: Yeah, I just made a mistake in 5, just flipped and went almost to the wall, so was really pissed off. Had a really good lap going, and yeah, I guess similar to Scott, just really annoying when that happens, but it was just a variable grip with the sprinkles. Yeah, had the car to do it but didn't.

THE MODERATOR: Joined also by your teammate Simon Pagenaud, who was last year's pole winner here, starting third in tomorrow's race. Simon, everyone sounds pretty down and disappointed. How are you feeling about your starting position heading into the race tomorrow?

SIMON PAGENAUD: Well, I've had worse days, so this is nice. I mean, it's obviously great for Team Penske because we've been struggling a bit on the street course package, and we're showing this weekend the improvement brought to the team, so really glad to see all three of us in the Fast Six. The car was great, honestly, and the session was a lot of fun. Those are my favorite conditions when it changes, and you really have to adapt and take chances, and it was a lot of fun. The track is really, really awesome to drive with this

package and these cars. Could I have done better? For sure, I think we could both do better, but pretty satisfied with third and being with my teammate over here.

Q. The common theme here is three drivers said that they were pissed at the performance even though you're in the Fast Six. Is that just a reflection of how competitive this championship is getting, how much is on the line?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, you know, there's always a lot on the line. I think the competition right now, as I continue to say, is extremely tough. So if you give a little, it's hard to get it back. Personally for me, it was just -- I think we had a really good car. We've had a really good car all weekend. Practice 3 we had a few moments, but apart from that, the car has been really fast. I think that's why I'm disappointed.

WILL POWER: Yeah, I had a good car. Really fixed it from yesterday and felt like I had a shot at the pole, so yeah, competition is very tough, and when you let it go -- when you have a shot at it and you let it go, it's really annoying.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, for me, after this morning we kind of only used one set of blacks and we were thinking we were going to be in a pretty good position for qualifying to go for pole, and to end up on row 3, yeah, is disappointing. It's frustrating because I thought we were super competitive even through qualifying, and then just to have it go away from us for no particular reason is frustrating. That's the way it goes sometimes.

Q. Will, explain to a layperson how difficult it is to predict the grip level -- you're going into 5, and I heard several of you had a problem in 5, but that was a minute ago, and whether it's sprinkling or not sprinkling, how do you predict the grip level you're going to have when you get there?

WILL POWER: Yeah, it's kind of difficult when it's sprinkling because the cement patches lose a lot more grip than the dark stuff. That's exactly what happened. The lap before, there was a lot of grip there. That lap there was none, and you just washed forward. Obviously Josef being the last guy had everyone run over that and kind of take that moisture away and I guess kind of help. But yeah, they're the hardest conditions. It's just simply so tough when it's kind of sprinkling, not completely wet, just a little bit damp and you don't know where it's slippery.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILL POWER: Yeah, but you know the lap before it worked. Just, yeah, when you have the potential, it just pisses you off.

Q. Talk about the repave and how it reacted to the wet conditions in qualifying.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I think in general, I really didn't

like this track until this weekend they repaved into Turn 1, so it's completely changed my perspective of this place, and it's one of my favorite street circuits now. Hats off to everyone at the sanctioning body and the city of Toronto for doing that because I know it's no easy feat. Awesome in the wet. It was great. In the dry it's great. I think it'll allow Turn 1 to be a passing zone now. Before it was still bumpy on the inside, pretty low percentage chance, so now we're able to improve everything from practice for the race. Hats off.

Q. Simon, you set the record last year and then all six of you on the stage beat that record. Some drama and some great theatrics to watch. Your thoughts on that, and obviously you were able to beat your own time, but to see the five guys next to you do that, as well.

SIMON PAGENAUD: Yeah, well, it's evolution. The cars are really fast this year. We're going down the straightaway at greater and greater speed. The engine is also improving every year. It just shows the efficiency of the engines. IndyCar's aero package is very interesting. It makes for a great show. I think the cars are really good-looking, as well. It's awesome, awesome to be in this sport at this time. I think we're about to see something very exciting for the next years to come. Yeah, the goal was to beat Gil de Ferran, by the way, so we're going to do it next year.

Q. For anybody who wants to answer, going out there, Fast Six, red tires, wet track, is it kind of like driving on ice a little bit?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Like Simon said, it's a lot of fun doing it, but you get out there and you never know how much you can get away with. There's not many racetracks in the world where you have to deal with crosswalks and stuff like that. You don't know how much moisture is going to be on the paint, where you need to really put the left front or the right front tire under braking. One time going into 1, I got away with it, and the next time I came in there I had a huge lockup and barely gathered it up.

That's the beauty of street racing and changing conditions. It's a lot of fun, but man, the line between hero and zero is very, very thin.

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, same. It's just slippery. I think same as everybody else, it's a lot of fun in those conditions. It's more fun when it works out for yourself, obviously, but I think that's the cool thing about IndyCar racing. You get a lot of variance in these circuits and even from year to year they change a ton. Kudos to everyone here in Toronto and the city of Toronto. It's been a long wait for that front stretch to be repaved, and it's definitely an improvement. But yeah, these conditions are tricky, but I think a lot of us enjoy them.

Q. I realize there's a bit of disappointment up there at the moment, but are there any positives that can be taken from today's session heading into the

race tomorrow?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Front stretch paved, I think that's a good thing. And thank you for that, by the way.

Q. Can you think of any positives from the session?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Well, we race tomorrow, that's a positive. You didn't get the pole today, then you can win tomorrow. We could all crash, I don't know. It could be positive, it could be negative, who knows.

WILL POWER: I think the track is fantastic. It's like a road course. It's really, really nice.