

IndyCar Media

Conference

Sunday September 2, 2018

Takuma Sato

Alexander Rossi

Scott Dixon

Ryan Hunter-Reay

Sebastien Bourdais

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We welcome in our second- and third-place finishers. Ryan Hunter-Reay, finishing second in today's race, a new career best finish here for Ryan.

Ryan, a lot of different strategies playing throughout the race. Take us through how your strategy went and ended up on podium today.

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: We ended up saving the most fuel today, that's for sure. Didn't end up paying off for us. We were the only car that didn't stop in that first melee caution. Saved a lot of fuel.

Really where we lost the race was a little miscommunication from pit lane to me. Ended up telling me it was full course caution, go to wheel eight. In that we were so desperate on fuel, it was pretty important to go to wheel eight. Well, it wasn't full course caution yet. Takuma was just coming out of the pit lane. I was not able to attack through the messy section there, so...

Feel like we gave it a way in a few ways today.

Congratulations to Takuma Sato and Rahal Lanigan Letterman Racing. They definitely played the cards today and came out on top.

I feel like we had the car to beat. With the fuel numbers we were making, it was looking like it was our day. But the incident with Veach, when the caution came out, that brought all those guys into play. We never would have seen them had that yellow not come out. Should have, would have, could have. All in all a decent day.

THE MODERATOR: We'll welcome in Sebastien Bourdais, finishing third today. His fifth podium at this track in six starts.

Sebastien, obviously a very strong track for you. How



rewarding was today's podium finish knowing all the struggles and challenges that your team overcame yesterday?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Yeah, I think it's just a great reward to all the hard work that the guys put together this weekend. Like you said, that 18 crew helped with the 19 and 39. Really pulled a heck of an effort yesterday to get us on track in qualifying. It didn't really seem to matter in the end for the race because I guess it wasn't meant to be easy again.

I had to go to the back after the crash at the start with a broken front wing. Nothing we did, just got caught up in the mess in turn three. I was pretty surprised that we actually were able to continue because it was a fairly sizable hit with James that was sideways in front of me. Yeah, it was just a front wing. Yeah, we dodged a bullet there.

Really didn't think that strategy, the two stopper we were trying to attempt, was going to work. We had a few guys ahead of us that were doing the same. We were about a second slow compared to the lead. Pretty much the guys who bailed out early and came out of the pits, they were either in front of us or right behind us with no fuel saving to do. Really didn't think that was going to work.

We made our first pit stop. Sure enough, the yellow came right now. Lucky break there. Definitely a lucky recovery. But I think it's a nice reward for the not so good luck we've had lately. Definitely a great reward for the guys.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Ryan, clarify the ending there for me. You had more 'push to pass' than Takuma? Did you have to wait?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: I had to get to a number. We were saving fuel so that I could go at the end of it. It was a little bit more fuel than I thought I would have to save. Takuma was using overtake each lap to try to open it up a bit so he didn't have to fight at the end.

Once they took the leash off, I could run, I was able to close the gap. At that point catching him, once I caught him, I used up the tires, got them pretty hot at that point. Just in the aero wash, I wasn't able to get close enough. Got a few runs coming at him out of six. Wasn't close enough to make any bit of a high

percentage move.

Yeah, just a little bit too late. Too little, too late.

Q. Even if you run him out, you don't think you would have passed him?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: No, because you can only use the overtakes on the straights. You have to be fast enough into the corners. We're in the corners for so long, the tire temperatures are so high, you end up cooking the front tires. You just can't roll the speed. That was our limiting factor.

Yeah, like I said, too little, too late. I think our opportunity to win the race was on that out lap for him earlier.

Q. Ryan, oldest driver in the series, Takuma is. He was your teammate last year.

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: We're not the oldest drivers? That's good (laughter).

Q. With Takuma winning, I know it sucks that you're second, but what does it say for a guy his age that's still able to get out there every race and be Takuma Sato?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: He's an ironman, no doubt. Just like the guy next to me, same thing. These guys haven't lost any speed over the years. When you have the experience and you have the speed and the fitness, the mental sharpness, it's the right combination, so...

Makes sense to me.

Q. Ryan, how difficult was it to find the right balance between saving fuel and closing the gap to Takuma?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Well, I just had to make the number they asked me. That was number one. The whole time I just thought, Man, I'm tired of saving fuel.

Last time I didn't have to save fuel was Detroit. We won that one. It's part of the game. But we decided once that first yellow was so long, that's the strategy we're going with, we're sticking to it. The fuel number is the priority, not the position on track. That's where we ended up in the end.

Q. When you sit back after the season, how you performed, will this be a little consolation, getting a podium finish, what might have been this year for you?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Today kind of hurts more than anything else. I feel like it's one that got away for sure. After leading so many laps, yeah, I feel like it's one that got away.

When we don't have any drama on a weekend, no issues, no DNF's, we usually finish pretty well.

Q. Sebastien, you've done this once this year, won a race where you had to go back and work your way forward. Is it frustrating? You still think you have a shot when you have an incident?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: No, you just keep digging. Obviously doing a two-stopper was a lot of fuel saving. The second yellow kind of reduced the fuel saving to zero at the end. We were saving a lot of fuel at the beginning. You never know what can happen. It didn't really look like it was going to work at all, like I said.

You keep trying as hard as you can. Even if you're not going for the win, fighting against the leaders, you can still make up some positions. Obviously you're just hoping at that point that a yellow falls out as soon as you're done with your pit sequence.

You got to play the lucky card a little bit. But, yeah, when you get a tough break at the start, that's pretty much the only way you can recover.

THE MODERATOR: Guys, congratulations. Thank you very much.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Thank you.

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Joined now by Alexander Rossi, who finished eighth in today's Grand Prix of Portland.

Alex, a lot of different strategies playing out, a lot of different drivers on different plans for the race. Your overall impressions of how your race went, ultimately losing three points to Scott heading into our season finale.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: That's a nice way of putting it. I mean, it was a terrible day. We had a very fast racecar. It was pretty easy to control everything from the front. I think we had a seven-second lead at some point. We were following our strategy, making sure we maximized the Firestone reds because they were definitely the preferred tire.

Then the yellow came out and we got caught. One of the things out of your control. I don't think anyone today did anything wrong. We did what we were supposed to do, put ourselves in a position to win and it wasn't meant to be.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Elaborate on the race strategy. Looked like Takuma had a favorable strategy. Secondly, your reaction to the racing at PIR, first time in 11 years?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I don't know that he had a favorable strategy. I think Takuma just pitted and got the yellow that he needed. That's part of IndyCar racing. Kind of what makes it a lottery at times, allows all these different types of strategies to come forward,

fuel strategies.

There's no way that Rahal could have predicted with Takuma what was going to happen. It's one of those things that came to them.

Being back at PIR is amazing. The northwest region is something that's been missing from IndyCar a long time. The fan reception has been amazing. It's a beautiful location. It's been a privilege to come here.

Q. When you pitted and there were 15 cars ahead of you, Newgarden came with the leaders. Did you think they were going to have to pit again, or We're screwed?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I mean, in hindsight we were screwed. But you don't know at the time, right? You don't know what else is going to happen, where people are at on fuel. You just got to try and go out and pass as many cars as possible in front of you, maximize that. I think we did a good job of it. It's very difficult to pass around here.

But, yeah, I mean, once you get caught by a yellow, everyone else basically gets a free pit stop. That's what strategy is. If you pit early, get the pit stop out of the way, a yellow comes, they get all that time closed back up before you have pitted. That's basically how it works.

Q. (Question about making it on one more stop.)

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I don't know that I understand that. I don't know if that has to do with anything.

Q. (No microphone.)

ALEXANDER ROSSI: No, Veach did. The Veach caution was the one that messed us up.

Q. Your caution got messed up?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Just made it easier for guys to make it on fuel. We were already behind the 8 Ball.

Q. You mentioned the yellows are like a lottery in IndyCar. Do you want to see that lottery go away?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: It's part of IndyCar racing, man. There's been pros and cons about it. There's been a debate that goes back and forth seemingly a couple times a year. It's just the way it is. It's part of the rules. We all understand the rules. You understand the risks of going long, the potential benefits coming in early. That's just part of what it is.

I have no opinion on whether it should stay or go. It's just what IndyCar racing is.

Q. It looks like when you pitted at 68, dropped back to 14th. It's so difficult to overtake. In principle, when you stop for fueling, is this maybe also one of the main reasons you're losing position?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I have no idea. I don't remember lap 68. I assume that's my second stop.

No, the yellow had already come out, so we have to pit at some point. Don't have a choice. You don't have unlimited fuel.

Q. It's so difficult to pass.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I'd rather pit under yellow than take a restart in the lead, then have to pit under green two laps later, so you don't have a choice.

Q. (No microphone.)

ALEXANDER ROSSI: You have to pit. Doesn't matter.

Q. It's the nature of the racetrack?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: It's the nature of a closed pit. Doesn't happen anywhere, it happens at Road America.

Q. (No microphone.)

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Okay, yes, I guess. I don't know how to answer that question.

Q. You're 59 points back, but is this the situation you would like to be going into Sonoma, a two-horse race essentially?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: If you're going to have a day like today, you obviously want to gap yourselves from the person behind you. Obviously lose as little as possible to the leader. I think that's what we did at the end of the day.

Yeah, I was hoping to be closer going into Sonoma. That wasn't meant to be. With Sonoma being double points, honestly there's so many scenarios that can play out, you just got to go into it and focus on trying to build a fast racecar and qualify up front, hopefully win the race. If it's meant to be, it's meant to be. Otherwise you'll finish second.

Q. How big of a difference do you feel there was between the red and black tires? Do you feel like you guys picked the right strategy starting the reds, switching to blacks?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, for sure. The reds were substantially better, which was surprising honestly. I think it was the hottest day that we've had so far this week, even differentiated the two compounds even more. So, yeah, I mean, I was happy we started on used reds, that we did most of the race on reds, that we got the blacks out of the way early. That allowed me to have a restart against Josef. Definitely going all reds for most of the race was the way to go.

THE MODERATOR: Alex, thank you very much.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: We'll welcome up Scott Dixon. Scott finished fifth and extended his points lead to 29.

Scott, in a race where it seemed like I don't know what else could have gone wrong for you, yet able to

salvage this finish, how were you able to still work out a strong finish at that race?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, definitely thought it was over before it began. Old saying: better to be lucky than good. That definitely played out today.

Had nowhere to go at the start. It was just one of those things. Tried to slow down, went sideways, hit from behind, off in the dirt. Hit pretty hard actually. Luckily I pulled the clutch once the dust cleared. I didn't think there was going to be a left front wheel on it. I looked, the wheel is there. Put it in emergency mode, started to get reverse. Was enough room behind me. Backed up. Got the guy to truck out of the way. Couldn't believe the thing was still driving.

I knew it was going to be a pretty lucky day from that point on. Then we basically just stuck to a two-stop strategy. That played out for us with how the cautions fell. Unfortunately we then had a speeding drive-through penalty on pit road which we'll have to look at that. Definitely didn't unlatch early. The wheel overcorrected, got pinged for 50.2. That was definitely frustrating.

I thought at that point we were definitely going to be out because I thought we were going to get lapped. Luckily the pit sequence had already started for the leaders at that point, too, so it enabled us to stay on the lead lap. Got lucky with the caution.

Crazy, crazy day. Had a good race there, with Pigot. We really struggled out of seven and didn't have the speed down the back straight. I don't know if we were bottoming the car too much, especially on the reds, he just drove on by us. Overtake wasn't even engaged at that point. He did a hell of a job. Able to salvage a fifth with a pretty beat-up cars. One of those days you definitely have to take at one hugely lucky day.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. I don't know if you've raced here in 15 or 16 years. What do you think the PIR this time around with this kind of field?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, pretty cool. Actually I think my race was quite similar at PIR last time I raced here. It was my first year with Ganassi. Crashed on the first lap, went a down lap down, ended up finishing seventh. Mixed result day that day, too.

Love this part of the world. Portland, the people are so friendly. The fans are really knowledgeable. It's even cool to see a lot of people walking around in the old school CART shirts, IndyCar shirts, Newman/Haas shirts everywhere. The problem I had this morning was getting to the track, nearly missed the drivers briefing. Got here with like a minute to spare. Normally it was taking us 10 minutes to get from downtown to the track. It took us over 45. Backed up

off the freeway. Hopefully they can improve the entry. Good problem to have.

Just stoked to be back here. IndyCar, the promoters, everybody involved, did a hell of a job.

Q. Pretty challenging comparatively?

SCOTT DIXON: It's always challenging no matter what. The competition is so tough. It's never going to be easy. To me, every year it gets harder. We see that with the championships, but even single race wins are extremely hard and tough to come by.

Q. Anything go through your mind when you're in a cloud of dirt?

SCOTT DIXON: I felt like I wanted to cry for a little bit, actually. Then once I knew the dirt cleared, I had all four wheels, still the engine was running, I'm like, Oh, maybe it's not so bad.

Yeah, I basically thought the day was over. I knew starting where we were starting was going to be tough. We had a pretty clean start to get through one and two, obviously three looked pretty tight through there. I was racing pretty hard with the car beside me. The 5 and Veach kind of got into each other there.

Q. Right now going into Sonoma, is this the situation you want, basically a two-horse race, you're in the lead? Is this the best situation for you going into Sonoma?

SCOTT DIXON: No. The best would be going in about a 106-point lead. Yeah, you know, hey, we got super lucky today. You got to take those days. We've been on the other side of it before. Some situations we've lost championships like that, too. It sucks when you're on the other side. Maybe it happens to us at Sonoma. We hope it doesn't. But it has full potential. You can see the quickest guys today ended up having the biggest problems.

We'll go there, we'll try to have the fastest car we can prepare, qualify where we can, put our heads down. That's what we can do.

Yes, it's a lot nicer, last couple years it's been five or six. They'll class it as four, but they'll have to do a lot to win. Going to be a lot of cars, 26.

Q. You said earlier when you were involved in this accident, a lot of dust, you were not sure what happened to the car. Was there any advise from your crew to check something for safety reasons?

SCOTT DIXON: At that point, too, it had taken the radio antenna off, so we could only talk for a very short period on the pit strategy. I don't think they could hear me at all. At least it was working one way in the right direction.

So, no, they asked me to drive past slowly on the second lap after we had crashed just to check things

before the pits had opened to see if they needed to replay anything. The left suspension was bent. The steering was not straight, felt a bit funky through a few of the corner.

But, yeah, super lucky considering.

Q. Given what was on the line and where you started after the incident, is this the hardest you've had to drive in your career to try to salvage a points lead or...

SCOTT DIXON: We just were super lucky today. That's all you can put it down to. It was hard racing. Pigot and I at the end, there were some definitely fast cars at the front. I feel like we salvaged the best we could. Cleaned up seven a bit on that lap, might have been able to salvage one more spot. Hopefully that doesn't come back to bite us at Sonoma.

That was probably the most adverse race as far as crap going on. But, yeah, hard to beat that one.

Q. Think back to the last lap in 2007 at Chicagoland, with the winner of the race winning the championship. You run out of fuel on the last lap. Do you think after today maybe karma is going to be a bit of payback for that day?

SCOTT DIXON: That's why Dario still buys all my meals. I gave him that one (laughter).

Those days suck, man. You can't do anything about that last corner, last lap of the championship, and to run out of fuel, you lose the championship. That one definitely hurt a lot.

Got to be in it to win it, man. Dario did a hell of a job. Their team did a hell of a job. It was meant to be. Have to go into the next race and do the best we can.

THE MODERATOR: Scott, thank you very much.

SCOTT DIXON: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: We are joined boys the race winner of the Grand Prix of Portland, Takuma Sato, his third career win in the Verizon IndyCar Series, his first since the 2017 Indy 500.

Climbed back from starting 20th, Takuma. You have won on a temporary street course, on a superspeedway like Indy, now a permanent road win, how much does that mean to you?

TAKUMA SATO: Means a lot. Firstly, thank everyone for all the support for IndyCar, to come back to Portland. I was very excited. I did the press conference on Wednesday. I knew nothing about Portland. Obviously knew the history, such an important place for the North American racing. The fans so educated. Generation by generation, so much great place.

It's a fantastic weekend for all of us. Who won, I don't care. Obviously I wanted to win. I won a street course, won a superspeedway, very close to the short oval, but road course, my first career win. Means a lot.

Obviously important. Number of wins, always wanted to have more. I think three wins from Long Beach, Indy 500, such a history in Portland in this fashion, I think I'm really, really happy today.

THE MODERATOR: It's not often we see a driver on a permanent road course start back in the field, be able to make their way up for a win. What went on during the race strategy-wise that enabled you to move up to the front?

TAKUMA SATO: It's not necessarily ever easy. Put it this way, it's very difficult to overtake anyway.

Looking at the qualify, yes, we failed basically. We were 20th. But if you look at the gap between the top front row to the end, it's a very fraction. I think everyone can have a chance. It's difficult to overtake. I think we look at the strategy very carefully. Three stop is normal way. Two stop yellows come in, you need to save the fuel obviously. I was talking to my engineer. We had to try something different. Today is the one it worked beautifully because I started save the fuel from lap two onwards. It was very strategically careful, hit the numbers for the fuel. Then I think it was great. I mean, obviously a couple of yellows came on the very positive for our strategy.

Some guys obviously not happy with the timing, but we had a very bad timing and bad luck in the past, too. Today we were a little bit lucky, but also our strategy was perfect. The car was really great. I was able to commit so much. In the end, in the last stint, the battle with Ryan was kind of fun because we raced kind of a time race. We came out of the pit all together. Eventually we were very close to side-by-side. We both raced very well together. Teammate last year. Ryan is one of the most competitive drivers, I knew he's coming. I kept on a good gap. It was a very good win for the Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. This is an easy race for your Japanese friends to make it to. Did you have a big crowd this weekend? I'm guessing next year you'll have a bigger party here now?

TAKUMA SATO: Yes, I think here is a very easy. All the West Coast is very easy for Japan to come for the travel. We have a very enthusiastic fans from Japan. There's a couple people over there. Also community here, of course, the Portland is great Asian community, including Japanese, a lot of business, too. We can hear a lot of Japanese cheering on the parade lap. That was great. Especially winning in front of such an enthusiastic crowd, Portland, something I expected, but

this was more than expected. I think the people genuinely here so enthusiastic, very happy that IndyCar came back here.

Q. You're able to go out there and ride with fierce tenacity. How does it feel to be able to compete at this high level you're at right now?

TAKUMA SATO: Are we talking about age?

Q. Yes. Does not seem to matter with you.

TAKUMA SATO: I hope it's not matter. I am 41 years old. It's not amongst the youngest group. In fact, one of the oldest.

But I feel great. I don't see I'm degredating [sic]. I keep pushing. Obviously I have to push more I've aged. Recovery speed is naturally going slow. I have a great physio who give me a lot of preparation. Over the course of the winter we had intense training program. In fact, it's pay off. I can do another stint for problem.

Qualifying was tight yesterday. Even though I was 20th, it's one and a half off the guys. It is incredibly competitive. That means even the 20th, you have capable to be very competitive. That's all about sports. That's name of the IndyCar really. You can win from the back row. That's significant.

The car actually, it's a very interesting, especially Mike Lanigan very supportive all the. Go, Takuma. Even when I was with Foyt, Andretti, he came and always give me cheering. So did Bobby. I'm particularly happy to give such a first win for all of us, really come from 2012. Today, I mean, Graham was really unlucky. It would have been following in his dad's footpath with his dad winning here. I was very proud to put my 30 car in Victory Lane today.

Q. From qualifying to today's race, did you make any significant changes? In the final part of the race, Ryan was able to close the gap. How was your fuel situation at that time?

TAKUMA SATO: The qualifying was extremely tight yesterday. Even I was 20th, it's only one and a half 10ths off from the next segment of the guys. It is incredibly competitive. That means even the 20th, you have capable to be very competitive. That's all about sports. That's the name of the IndyCar really. You can win from the back row. That's significant.

The car actually, it's a very interesting question because I talked to my engineer yesterday. The car was actually happy yesterday. Perhaps it was kind of racing car feeling, very sharp, fast qualifying car. It's a shame because we couldn't make such a fast car in qualify, but during qualify I was very happy because car's balance was very suitable for the longer distance.

In fact, today other than a little bit the massage for the package is almost a qualifying car because I knew this

car will be very consistent. That is why I told my strategy meeting this morning that I really wanted to go to the two stop. The team initially against it because strategy-wise is not fast, it's going to be very difficult to do because you need some help from the aero.

Hindsight is, okay, from 20th place, everybody is so competitive, how you going to basically passing up, moving up? It is very difficult, too. I just wanted to make it happen. I think it's work out beautifully. It was great.

Like I said before, I start saving fuel from lap two onwards. That gives me one of the last guy to pit stop. Therefore, I think I had six lap of the advantage of fuel over Ryan. So that's why when I come out of the pit, I knew it was a second of the fraction of the difference. That's why I jump right in front of Ryan, because I pushed so hard the last two laps before I get into the pit. I knew it's going to be very, very tough. I held really okay because I had a red tires, comes up -- warm up beautifully. That was the intention. And Ryan came just coming out of turn six, try to be side-by-side. That's help me, too.

Since then onwards, I think we are good on fuel. Maybe Ryan had to save still the fuel for the part of the half, but I could go for it. But I saved my resource, meaning tires. I could go faster, but I just wanted to maintain the one and a half seconds gap between he and I. Therefore, he couldn't get closer to get the tow effect. I knew I saved a lot of the 'push to pass', like 120 seconds on the last half of the stint, so I was using it.

In my calculation, it was still okay because I knew last five laps he's going to charge, he's coming to the charge. But I have something in my pocket, too. I was able to maintain the gap. It was a good day.

Q. After the reception you got in your home country after your Indy 500, I thought we'd see more Japanese drivers in IndyCar. Why is it that we are not?

TAKUMA SATO: I think they're on the way, I hope. It's difficult. Obviously after winning, entire Asia, particularly Japan, has got much, much more interest for the IndyCar. But the driver needs to be long-term development. A lot of potential young drivers is there. It's partly financial reasons, as well. I think if we can get a young driver to come to the Road to Indy, there you go. You have a great scholarship in North America, saying obviously to Honda, a lot of Japanese young drivers, too.

In fact, in Iowa and some of the race, very competitive young Japanese driver came to watch the race, as well. I think it's just wait a couple more years, hopefully we have a number of young Japanese drivers trying to follow in my step.

Q. A lot of drivers talk about using these last few races to build positive momentum into next year. What does it do for you and RLL going into 2019?

TAKUMA SATO: Yeah, sure, it help everything. The winning is everything. Not everything, but winning is helping for any circumstance. Obviously we have option for next year. We always looking into a business, as well. But also the most importantly, my passion and wanted to win for the team, that's came really all together. It's very helping for the situation.

But the future is at the moment uncertain. Hopefully this is a boosting to the talk to next year.

Q. You've now won on a road course, a street course, superspeedway. Does this give you any extra motivation to get a win on a short oval next year?

TAKUMA SATO: For sure. For sure. Short oval, don't get me wrong, but I was close in Iowa. I overtook Hinch on track. It was a little bit the timing of the pit. Obviously the Hinch pulled out brilliantly, so he won it, Pigot second. I think I was happy in third place, but I was very close to win. A couple years ago in Milwaukee, I ran 150 laps for Foyt. There is always a chance.

Hopefully this is definitely give us a boost for the next year. I'm hungry to win short oval, too. That's complete my ambition for the IndyCar Series.

Q. Does it also give you a little bit of a boost knowing that you set the record for coming back from the furthest starting position to win here?

TAKUMA SATO: That's nice have the record. Yes, true. Today wasn't just out of sequence of the lucky win by yellow. Yes, it was lucky, but strategically it was a planned at winning from the two-stop strategy.

The chance is always there, but you have to be really challenging all the time. Today is a time for lucky day for us. That's basically the Rahal Letterman Lanigan team did brilliant commitment, therefore we were positioned to challenge and get the win.

I think it's nice to have a record, but hopefully we have more wins. That's the record I want to do.

Q. As far as I know you have a great national Japanese championship. Did you ever approach young Japanese drivers to give them contact help in American racing?

TAKUMA SATO: Sure, I always talking. I'm always interested. By this stage, of course, I don't want to be beaten by any driver, of course. By all means, it's such a privilege to be beaten by my country's new hope. I wanted to have it. I wanted to be competing with my Japanese followers. That's why hopefully with all the sponsorship chance.

But, yes, Japan locally it is incredibly competitive. If

you look at the super formula, it's very competitive. Driver skill over there is very high. However, a young driver like Formula 4 to Formula 3, these drivers really has to open mind to come to the North American racing, do the Indy Lights, do the winning, get the scholarship, get the taste of IndyCar. I think you have a lot of chances and opportunities here. Can you grab it. You can make it happen. This is I think really America is kind of, how can I say, really a dream come true. You can make anything happen like I want was Long Beach, Indy 500. They give me opportunity to compete at such a highest level.

Hopefully another win is a keep reminding for the Japanese driver to consider not all about Formula 1 in Europe, this is great racing here in the world, I think is North America IndyCar is one of the best series in the world.

Q. What was the Japanese word you used earlier?

TAKUMA SATO: It means good luck basically, cheering.

Q. How do you spell that?

TAKUMA SATO: Ganabare.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.