

NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

Saturday May 11, 2019

Postrace Press Conference

Jack Harvey



THE MODERATOR: We'll welcome in our third-place finisher, Jack Harvey, driving the No. 60 Sirius XM Auto Nation Honda for Meyer Shank Racing. Jack, obviously a great result for you today. Also, I believe, correct me if I'm wrong, your first INDYCAR race in the wet. How did you like it?

JACK HARVEY: It was a bit more of a handful than I probably would have hoped for. It looked like we were running pretty good in the dry. I mean, I thought it was the best start I've had in INDYCAR, too; to be able to split Felix and Scott at the start was pretty solid. And then I think we ran on pace, top 3 in the dry. Car was great.

I think Scott was a little quicker than us at the start of the stints. Felt like he came back to us at the end. And then all race you could see a few spots of rain always around, and it's just difficult in that moment, and I'm sure Scott has been in this situation many times because you don't become a five-time series champion without going through a thing or two, and maybe he was a little bit more ready for it than I was because I was always trying to push as hard as I could without jeopardizing the good result I felt like we were on the cusp of getting, and then it really rained and came down, and again, I think when the track was really wet, I think we lacked a little bit of raw pace. He blew past us, blew in front of us by about a second a lap.

That being said, at the end of the game when the track started to dry out, it came back to us. I think it was very much a race of ebb and flow. To qualify third, to finish third I think was a result that if you'd have offered it to us before the weekend started we would have taken it, and hopefully this is just that springboard for us, for first off of May. Hopefully it gives us some good momentum throughout the rest of this month, but also looking forward to the future, to the end of 2019 and looking forward to 2020.

I think everybody at Meyer Shank Racing has done an absolutely fantastic job. Our entire team and Arrow Schmidt Peterson Motorsport, I think this weekend our car has been good all the time and it's great to put on this level of performance to all stations to Sirius XM, so pretty happy.

THE MODERATOR: You're also there's no question a very experienced driver, but as you gain more and more experience within the NTT IndyCar Series, how helpful is it to you and how cool is it to you to be mixing

it up for wins with series champions like Simon Pagenaud and Scott Dixon?

JACK HARVEY: Well, I mean, it's a balance for us because we're excited to be here. You're trying to take as much risk as you can without jeopardizing anything because you're doing 10 races, but at the same time in the same breath, we don't just want to be one of the cars. I think we showed that today. Yes, we're happy to finish third, but we're going to push, and if second is available, we're going to go for it. I think this was a really exciting result for us today because if we could do a full-season drive in 2020, to mix it with Simon and Scott would be great. If you could do it more weekends than you don't, then good things will happen at the end of the year.

But to share the podium with both of those guys I think is pretty special. Our first podium in INDYCAR today, and hopefully it's the first of a few, and we're just going to keep using it to keep learning, get more experience, and hopefully it won't be as much of a shock when we get in here again.

Q. Even in the dark you could see Simon's car because of how bright it is --

JACK HARVEY: Yeah.

Q. But when he was closing in on you, did you feel like you might be able to hold him off, or did you just realize that he's got the setup right now?

JACK HARVEY: There was a few laps where I thought we could hold him off, and then you talk about a bright car, into Turn 1 I saw this yellow dart suddenly just like arrive straight at the apex and thought, man, that was pretty brave, and thank God his car is so bright. Clearly Simon had a very quick car today. We were racing together in the dry, we were racing together in the wet. He had a bit more pace than we did at the end there, and I thought his move was pretty good on Scott, too. I was a little bit behind it, but around the outside in Turn 8 and then on the inside through 9, it was a pretty stout day and I think I heard Scott mention, you see how much it means to win just a race, because it's so difficult all the time.

I think we've been on the edge of a good result like this for a while, but actually trying to gel those pieces, put it all together have been tricky, so that's why I think you have to enjoy every podium, every win that comes, especially in this place because I feel like the Indianapolis Motor Speedway is a racing driver's

Neverland. It's where we come to try and not get old.

Did I think we could hold him off? Yeah, I certainly hoped we could, but in the end, we couldn't quite.

Q. We had some of your pit crew chatter on the NBC broadcast and they were talking a lot about a plan, stick to the plan. But surely with how complicated this race was that went out the window, so how did you stay up running and maybe how much did that plan go out the window?

JACK HARVEY: Well, they said stick to the plan, but before the race we had about four plans, and I was like, Which plan are we sticking to. You know, and in the end, there was multiple scenarios that we had chatted about that could happen. Indiana weather really played its part today, and I think the day, they timed it perfect because as I was coming out of the pit lane is when I think there was a yellow flag, and at that point the rain kept coming, and I thought, we must be in good position now. I think sticking to the plan is more about not panicking and just -- we've chatted about it, here's what we're going to do if this situation comes up, stay calm, stay composed and lets get to the end of the race.

Q. Jack, I have a more business-related question. Do you think with this good result in your home country, in England, you can pick up additional sponsorship despite the confusing Brexit situation?

JACK HARVEY: I mean, I don't know if anyone really knows what's going on with Brexit, do they? As a starting point. I mean, internationally I think INDYCAR's fan base is growing, as well. It's very cool that everybody can watch INDYCAR races on SKY this year, SKY Sports F1. So the fact that it's even on TV and the fact people are watching it I think is a great thing for the series in general, and hopefully if the right person is watching on the right day and they see us getting a result, if we can just get in contact with them somehow, then certainly we're always pushing to have support from home.

You know, I think it's just going to be a case of how do we find them, are they interested, and in the end the approach is no different than when we're trying to look for sponsors anywhere in the world. It's are you interested, can we work together, what can we do together.

I think just the business-related answer, I think hopefully results like this will help catapult us into a full-time drive.

Q. (Question about Brexit).

JACK HARVEY: Yeah, I don't know, Brexit has gotten so complicated that I've stopped following it. Yeah, if someone knows what's going on, then you can feel free to bring me up to speed on it because I think that's more confusing than how the race played out.

Q. Jack, talk about the difference between trying to run four or five races spaced out by four or five or six months and what you've been able to do this year and consistency and just getting into a groove.

JACK HARVEY: Yeah, I mean, from last year at Sonoma to exactly today, we haven't missed any testing. We've not missed any practicing. We've not missed anything. Our schedule slows down a little bit after the 500, but for me the momentum that I would have been able to gain, the confidence just by being in the car, at least as often as everybody else, has been great because things feel normal to me, then the next weekend I can go out and start immediately working on techniques and issues and this is how I'm going to find speed, be a bit smoother here, think about this braking shape or whatever it is. That being said, I think it's really helpful for the team, as well. I thought our pit stops looked pretty solid today, just the way that we operationally are working. The whole team really are gelling and are in sync, and just unfortunately it takes time.

I think this year, I look at the season so far, and without my drive-through penalty in Barber, which was just a self-inflicted error, I think we would have had four top 10s in five races, which that would have been pretty awesome at the start of the year, if you said, hey, you're going to achieve that, would you take it now, and we absolutely would have all taken it now.

So I don't think it's exclusive just to the driver on building a rhythm, feeling comfortable, gaining more confidence. I think that applies to the team, as well, and I see Mike in the background, maybe he could speak to that, as well. This team is gelling, and I think we all feel like we've been right on the edge of this result, and I think the difference is today instead of talking about it we showed it.

Q. Jack, you drive for Mike Shank Racing, and you talked about how great the team was today with their stops, but can you talk about how important the collaboration is with Arrow Schmidt Peterson?

JACK HARVEY: Yeah, it's a total team effort. You know, and the way that me and Mike even got together is an interesting story, but ultimately I think we believed in each other enough to embark on this adventure together. It was always a two-year deal, six races last year, 10 races this year, and we hope it might build into something bigger again in 2020.

I think trying to do it with Arrow Schmidt Peterson Motorsports has been great. I raced Indy Lights with Sam, so I know a lot of people there. I did two races in '17 with them, as well. So I think, again, it's just partnering with good people, and clearly the car has been good, so being able to have that technical relationship with them I think has proved to be quite a big help.

You know, we're just going to keep refining it and keep improving on every aspect that we can, and our relationship with them, what we're doing, as well, and like always, just trying to build as nice a jigsaw puzzle as we can with the pieces that we have.

Q. Jack, is there any way to compare the emotion you feel today to what you felt at St. Petersburg after you got your first top-10 finish?

JACK HARVEY: Oh, this is way cooler. Yeah, I'm going to remember this for a while. These kind of days are what we work so hard for, from all the off-season, bad result at Long Beach, which frankly wasn't anything to do with -- wasn't our mistake, but it happens, that's racing. But the thing is, as well, these results are what really can carry you through a bad time, especially coming into May. We are hopeful that it is the springboard for a good month. We all said it before the weekend started, that a good result here really sets us on the right path. It's as special a day as I can remember, but as Scott said earlier, it's so difficult to come and compete at this level. You're racing against the best drivers in the world in what was difficult conditions today, so I was absolutely thrilled that we got that result, and selfishly, I think it's nice that we can go back to everyone at Meyer Shank Racing, back to everyone at Arrow Schmidt Peterson Motorsports, Auto Nation, Sirius XM and say, I can do this, I can compete at that level, I can get the results; thank you for your trust in me, let's do it more often. You know, and it's that result for me anyway, it's nice to be able to go and hang your hat on nicely and take confidence from it and say, right, let's do it more often because how we feel tonight and how we're going to feel in about two hours' time is going to be pretty awesome.

Q. Piggy-backing on what you just said, putting you on the spot when your boss is in the room, this team has some sort of magic skill to add races after a partial season program, most notably on the sports car side of things. Is that totally out of the question with your program?

JACK HARVEY: I mean, I'll give you my personal stance on it. Me and Michael have chatted about it. I think -- I'm available every weekend that INDYCAR is going to race if need be, so for as much as I try and focus on just my driving aspect, we do have those conversations. We'll see what shimmies and shakes out. But I think for all of us collectively, I think we're 2020 focused, but if the right opportunity came up to add another one in 2019, then certainly I'm game for it.

THE MODERATOR: Just to make this super official so Jack can have it in writing later, for the transcript, that was a yes, it could happen.

JACK HARVEY: Yeah, I said that.

Q. It seems that every driver that drives for Mike Shank, whether it be the late Justin Wilson or AJ

Allmendinger or yourself, they all come away thinking, man, he's a great guy to race for. What is it about Mike Shank that makes him -- not only do you guys race for him, you end up becoming friends with him.

JACK HARVEY: Certainly. Stayed at his house before -- it's hard to say because he's still right in the room. (Laughter.) I don't want to be accused of having some brown on my nose if I say too nice a things.

Michael is a great guy, and what he instills in himself funnels through the team. I remember one of the first tests we went to, he was up in the top of the roof of the trailer trying to help the guys load the car in, and I think when people say you get out what you put in, Mike is a great leader, he leads by example, he sets the tone. I think he holds us all accountable in the right way. That being said, he encourages us when we need it. Before the weekend started, he's like, we can do it this weekend, I just know we can. I'm like, yeah, I think so, too. He's like, no, I really think we can.

The thing that I have appreciated about Mike from the very first phone call we had way back in must have been April 2017, we have a very open and honest relationship. I tell him when things are bothering me, he tells me when things are bothering him, and together we find a great solution.

I actually love everybody at his racing team. Everybody at Meyer Shank Racing has really embraced me as what feels like a small team and feel like I'm a part of that. I love to come and support the team at the IMSA races, too. There's no one else on the grid I'd rather be racing for, and certainly the goal for all of us is just to expand our current program into 2020. What I said about Mike when I was told that's who we were going to be racing with in the 500 in 2017 is he's a winner. He wins at pretty much everything he does, and he's competitive, and that's contagious, and you want to be around it, and apparently you want to win for him.

I'm happy to contribute a trophy to his cabinet and hope it's the first one of a few.

Q. You finished second in the Indy Lights championship two years in a row and then the next year you don't have a ride. How much of a comeback is this for you knowing where you came from and where you are now?

JACK HARVEY: It's a big one, bigger one than I would have admitted before I got a podium. It's not easy coming to the track and watching everybody else race when you're sitting on the sidelines. That being said, I am extremely lucky, especially I have a lot to -- two people in particular, my manager Bob Corona, Marc Cannon from Auto Nation, I think those two guys really saved my career. They both stuck with us at a time when I desperately needed somebody, and we worked really hard to try and put the 500 together in 2017, and we did, along with what was then still Michael Shank

Racing and Andretti Autosport.

You know, you look back at that moment as a real pivotal step and one that I needed. And this personally gives me a lot of confidence because it's been a little while since we were competing week in, week out, a lot of -- I haven't gone short of opportunities, which I'm grateful for, but being thrown in the deep end all the time is tricky and you don't always get the results and you lose a little bit of confidence and whatnot, where this weekend I knew we were going to be good coming into it. We delivered on that, and I think just for me alone, I feel like this is a big confidence boost, not arrogantly but just in a humble way. I talk about showing it to ourselves, but I just showed myself that I can come and compete at this level, and I'm very lucky with the people I surround myself with at the track and at home. They haven't let me ever lose sight of that and my talent.

But sometimes you've got to prove it to yourself, and sat next to a piece of trophy is a nice thing. Third is great, but first obviously is even greater, so I think everyone saw how happy we were and how happy we are to finish third, but to win is still the goal, so a little bit of work left to do.

Q. You said that earlier your team alliance or incorporation with Schmidt Peterson. Nevertheless, Michael Shank Racing is a one-car team. Is it difficult just to be yourself and not compare any experience or notes with a second driver?

JACK HARVEY: I think that's what makes a good team is that when we get in the engineering room that we operate -- two teams as a three-car effort. James and Marcus are both great teammates to have. They both have a lot of experience in multiple different racing forms. James is a long-term INDYCAR race winner and seasoned veteran, and Marcus has been in Formula 1 for several years. They bring a lot of experience to the team, a lot of good ideas, and we push and bounce around different ideas. We push each other to be better. Some weekends each of us have just a little bit of edge, but I can tell you that we all work extremely hard to try and be the one who's got the edge. I think what makes a successful team is being competitive with each other, being fair with each other, but also to a larger degree being open with each other, what was good, what was bad, what worked, what didn't work, and how collectively we get the best possible results.

I think the perfect day for the whole team is if we lock out the podium just with the 5 the 7 and the 60 car, so that's what we're going to keep working hard to try and do.