

NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

Friday May 24, 2019

Press Conference

Ryan Norman

Speaker1 Title

Rinus Veekay

Speaker2 Title

THE MODERATOR: Our second and third finishers in today's Freedom 100, one of the more difficult press conferences of the year to bring you guys up after especially another amazing finish in the 17th Freedom 100. Rinus Veekay, we'll start with you, third position. You were in the mix. There was a point where race control gave up calling the last leaders because the two of you were exchanging the lead virtually back and forth every single lap. Take us through that fight, especially mid-race with Ryan.

RINUS VEEKAY: Yeah, I think I had a pretty good race, came from T7 at the start and had a good first lap and then it got wrecked afterwards. I started afterwards on P4, I think, at the restart, and yeah, just got in the lead and then Ryan was behind me, and we were just switching position all the time, and eventually got away from the field a little bit, but then unfortunately a yellow flag came out, and it was going to be a restart with eight laps to go. That mixed up a lot of things, and I think everything I had prepared for was not going to happen because of that on the last lap.

I got a little bit in the mix of all the cars and couldn't really do anything, and just lost momentum with the two Andretti guys and then finished third. But I think I'm still very happy with the result. Good points, and I think as a team with Juncos Racing we showed some dominance today.

THE MODERATOR: You two were the two winners at Gateway last year on the oval. What have you taken away from your march up the Road to Indy that helps you -- this is a very different oval, this is a very different experience today at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Coming over from Europe, how has it been getting used to the ovals and especially managing yourself on a day like today?

RINUS VEEKAY: Well, coming from Europe, going to ovals was a whole new thing, and I think from the start it all felt quite good, actually. I think the first lap was already positive, and then yeah, just already had a few races on ovals and also in Gateway where you have a flat-out corner, where I could practice lines and, yeah, working with dirty air. But eventually, yeah, this is a lot different, a lot different. It's a lot quicker and a lot



bigger.

No, I think it's been, yeah, quite a good race for my first superspeedway, and I cannot wait to hopefully be in the big cars next year.

THE MODERATOR: Were you able to take it in a little bit, the crowd and the atmosphere, or was it all focus once you got finished with driver introductions?

RINUS VEEKAY: Well, it was going to be all focus, but there's so many people and so many people cheering. So yeah, they are quite good fans. So yeah, you could hear them, you could feel them actually, and no, it didn't really take away my focus on my driving, but of course in the back of your head you know there are a lot of people watching.

THE MODERATOR: Second position, Ryan Norman. At Andretti Autosport, your teammate obviously nipped you right there at the finish. The five of you were going back and forth, but especially after that last yellow flag. Take us through the break of concentration from the red flag to again the second yellow. You were saying the second yellow was almost more of a break in concentration than the red flag.

RYAN NORMAN: Yeah, I think just because Rinus and I were pulling away a little bit and were kind of in a rhythm of playing shottin' each other down the back straightaway and then on the front here. But I mean, even after the yellow on the restart, the car felt really good and was able to get right back into it. So it was just -- sadly the timing of everything didn't work out so well, but the car was on rails, I was able to place it pretty much anywhere I needed. It just didn't work out in the end.

THE MODERATOR: Your teammate Robert McGinnis said there was almost no plan because as close as the racing is here you can have a plan going into it but you have a restart like you did with the yellow flag and that kind of -- it goes out the window because you have five cars that are pretty much jockeying for position in the last eight laps. You talk about the timing maybe not being -- what is your plan as you take the green flag in the back of your mind, what you're going to try to do in the last eight laps?

RYAN NORMAN: Well, I mean, my plan really through the first three fourths of the race was kind of stay up front and keep the front tires clean. Last year when I

stayed back farther in the group my front fell off pretty hard and I was getting a lot of push. I just tried to stay up as much as I can knowing that I was saving my front tires, and then with about 10 laps to go, that's really when the battling starts, and at that point you really can't plan for it. It's all just kind of reading the situation as it goes.

THE MODERATOR: I know how badly you wanted that victory at Gateway last year and that pole position at Portland, and I know how badly all of you want -- it's a very prestigious title to be the Freedom 100 winner, and I know how gutted you were after that finish. Put into words a little bit just how you're feeling right now, how you take positives from this at the end of the day.

RYAN NORMAN: Yeah, I mean, it's definitely the most disappointing podium finish I've ever had, but no, I mean, it was good. I was able to -- we had a little bit of a rough start this year, and definitely it was good to put the car back up there and going to definitely take this momentum into the next races and just keep this going. Still got a long way in the season, so I'm looking for the next one.

Q. Obviously you and Oliver talked after that finish. What were you guys talking about at the end there?

RYAN NORMAN: So before the race, we were kind of just talking in the truck and we were planning on being one-two. That's kind of like how we were talking. We didn't really obviously know where it was going to end up. But I'm glad it was him. So I mean, it's -- proud of him. He drove a great race, timed everything very correctly there, and we're good friends, as well, so I mean, it was just a friendly gesture, I guess.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you.