

NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

Saturday June 1, 2019

Press Conference

Josef Newgarden

Team Penske

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by race winner Josef Newgarden. It appears you had a bath and changed clothes. What happened?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I think I was going to get sick if I stayed in those clothes. (The fountain is) very cold. Race suits are not very conducive to water. It's like a sponge. It's really bad. It started to turn into a wet suit in like five minutes, started warming up. It wasn't a good situation.

Being fresh is a beautiful thing. People get in the fountain. You just have to oblige, I guess.

THE MODERATOR: Swan dive, cannonball?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It was short. Shallow, not the nicest depth. I wanted to get on the lion, but I was told to not do that, otherwise we get fined. I didn't want to get in trouble. I hope that bottom portion was OK.

THE MODERATOR: 12 race wins now in your career, second this season, first in Detroit. One of the stranger victory celebrations, maybe not.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I mean, I don't know. It was great to have a victory here. I think we've been strong here in the past. We've not been able to fully get a win. '17 we were good here. Last year we weren't very good. We struggled last year with our cars.

I think we turned that around. We put a heck of a lot of emphasis on our street course cars. Team Chevy has done a great job, making sure we have everything for the engine. Every year we circle this event, outside the Indy 500, you circle that and Detroit as a group. We wanted to be better here.

I think as a team, we executed. We had the car. We definitely had the compliance, the speed from the car. I think Chevy gave us the power, the drivability. Today was a lot about drivability, especially in the wet. We had all that that we needed.

Everyone did their part. It's a big thanks to the team. They did an amazing job. Tim Cindric called the race, in my opinion. He got us to win again. We had to execute obviously. I think we were quick. Getting that call from Tim was perfect when we had it.



THE MODERATOR: The season points leader. Did you run out of fuel at the end? Was it close?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I didn't, no. It wasn't that close. It was a tight turn getting into the fountain. I went to neutral and it stalled, or I stalled.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Talking about the pit call, in a timed race that call came right in the nick of time for you. Ed Jones was in the tire barrier and there was the yellow. Those are things you can never plan on. How perfectly did that work out for you?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: When you talk to Roger (Penske), he'll tell you that you make your own luck. It is true. We were making that call regardless. The yellow certainly helped us. We were sitting in a good position either way. It would have been very fun, very difficult to win the race without the yellow. But the yellow just fell perfectly right into our strategy.

I think when we pitted was the right time to pit. You could tell the rain tires were starting to go off, the rears were overheating terribly because it was getting dry. You could see (Alexander) Rossi was struggling. Dixie (Scott Dixon) and me were catching him. Dixon looked good that part.

We pitted at the right time and the yellow helped us even further. It was a great call.

Q. Was track position key to holding off Rossi in that battle at end?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I think he was the guy to beat today. He's been very fast all weekend. You could see in the end, honestly we were pushing flat out at the very end. Pulled nearly a 12-second gap to third place. We were completely on the button every lap, as fast as you go. It was damp out, not fully dry. We were going as hard as you could. Pretty toe-for-toe there for the most part.

Yes, to answer the question, having track position was critical.

Q. What has this whole experience like coming to race in Detroit? What do you like the most?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It's really a great event. This is the only place we race on an island, which is quite cool. It really has been neat to see the island develop since 2012. That's the first year I came here. It's really

developed every year, gotten better. Even things such as the fountain have been renovated. Now everyone jumps in it. It's cool to see how far the island has come because of this event.

I like it. Detroit has become a fun destination for us. The city itself has grown a lot. It's gone through a lot in the last 10 years, but it's certainly in a great place right now it seems like. We like coming here.

It's just tough physically after Indianapolis. I think regardless if you win the race or not, everyone that's part of the NTT IndyCar Series, we're all pretty fatigued after Indy. I know I feel the fatigue. It's just tough with all the content that you go through every day there.

It's almost like a fantasy when you're here, you're like dreaming. Dave (Faustino), Will's engineer, was saying, 'Are we really here racing now?' You're in a daze after the 500. It goes pretty quick. You need to make sure you have a great weekend because it's so important from a points standpoint.

It's weird to be here in one way but it's also very important to make sure we have a very good weekend.

Q. What does it say about your engineer dynamic that with Gavin (Ward) you won two different kind of street courses? What makes you gel with new ones since you've had a number?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I said it before, but I get to work with the best people. I always get good engineers. I've not had a bad one. Maybe none of them are bad. Maybe they're all good.

Gavin, he's a gem. He's really good at what he does. He's got a great head on his shoulders. By that I mean, like, the way he works, he's very team-oriented, such a team player. He's very positive, very optimistic. Which actually goes pretty well with me. I normally am very optimistic to. I feel like every weekend we show up, we can win the race. I think that combination together works really well.

He's very talented, a good engineer. A lot of experience from the F1 world. Been in racing many years, still quite young, but he's good at what he does. He's diligent, works hard. All the guys love him, I love him. He fits well. It's hard for it to not work well.

Q. How important is Tim Cindric to your overall strategy?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Tim is critical. In my opinion, he's one of if not the best strategists on pit lane. I think Roger would tell you that, too. He's probably the best guy you could have on your stand. I feel lucky that he calls my races. I think we've developed quite a good relationship.

He's a boss, but at the same time he's become a friend, a great teammate to me. He coaches me when I

need it. Just keeps me going forward. That's what you need from a strategist. They keep you going forward in the right direction.

He's very good at what he does. A lot of pressure with the team president. I don't know, I look at it that I've got the best guy on my stand and it makes me feel pretty confident in the race.

He had the chalice today. Tim was handed the chalice of excellence before this race. I'd like to think that's part of why he made that great call. Lady Luck fell at the right time.

If nobody knows about this, look up the chalice of excellence, you'll figure it out.

Q. 15 hours till qualifying, excited about tomorrow?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I think it's going to be a more straightforward day whether-wise unless it's shifting again. Looked like it was earlier today. It will be a different game than what we saw today. Today was very mixed up. Not necessarily what you want to see when you're up front because it can be difficult to get a race like this right.

Fortunately it worked out for us, but I think tomorrow will be more straightforward. Qualifying will be important again. Hopefully we can get up front, run another solid race. It's important for points so we can have a good day.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.