

# NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

Saturday June 8, 2019

Press Conference

## Josef Newgarden

Team Penske

THE MODERATOR: We're joined with our race winner, Josef Newgarden.

Josef, congratulations. Your first superspeedway win out of 13 wins in the NTT IndyCar Series. How does it feel to get that one checked off the list?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It feels great. I'm going to be honest with you, we've had good cars here, we've just not been able to make it happen. My voice is going away. I've been sick. Actually don't feel very good. I did not feel good tonight. The car was so good, I just tried staying in it.

This win was down to the team right here. They keep putting me out front, putting the pressure on me. I guess it's a good thing. It's good when they put you out front, put it on you. They did a great job tonight.

I knew once we pitted and got back to where -- basically got back to where we were before the pit stop on the green flag sequence, I knew once we got back there, we had such a fuel advantage on everybody, if we could get to the lead, I could crank out super quick laps and jump everybody. That's what we did.

It was a great plan. We had to make hay after that pit stop. We had to get back up behind the lead pack. Once we did that, I thought, 'Man, we're just in position.' Guys did a great job.

Feels awesome to win here. I knew we'd get it done here at some point. We've had fast cars. It never has materialized. Tonight it happened.

THE MODERATOR: We've been hearing from a number of drivers throughout the weekend talking about what they think their chances are in the championship. We know a lot of drivers are thinking about it even though we're just past the halfway point of the season. Is it something you're thinking about, especially as you continue to finish ahead of the drivers that you're mostly competing with right now?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: We're in a good spot, there's no secret about that. But it's early. It's still early. You're halfway now. You could have a stellar first half of the season and a terrible second half or vice versa.

I think you got to stay consistent throughout. You got to



stay on top of your game. I think we got the best group for it. I have all the faith in everybody at Team Penske. I think we have a great crew. Wouldn't trade anybody any day of the week. Best of the best.

I feel confident. We just got to keep doing what we're doing. It's a little early to predict where everything will finish up. If we keep doing as we did in the first half of the season, we're going to be looking to challenge for a championship.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Josef.

**Q. (Alexander) Rossi was trying to make a pass on you, what was going through your head, lap after lap he was coming after you?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: He was really good in traffic. We were kind of vice versa. We were really good out front. I knew that. If we can just get the car out front, we can run just as quick as anybody, make quicker. Once we got out front, we were pumping out super quick laps.

Rossi, I looked early in the race, he was very good in traffic. His car looked stellar behind others. I knew he was going to be difficult to beat. He had a great car. He drove me clean. He drove me hard.

I think we just had enough. I think we had enough power there from Chevy. Our car was handling well enough out front we could get the job done, pretty much stay on the throttle as much as we needed to just to stay ahead of him.

Yeah, it was tough. He was very fast tonight. Good night for points, good night to get a win, but he was stellar.

**Q. On the penultimate restart when Dixon was trying to go around you, how close were you to actually conceding that?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I mean, I was not going to give up the bottom lane. It's tough because on the restart you're almost a sitting duck. You're going so slow there, and the draft works so well at night, especially when it cools off, you're so draggy. Being in first is such a disadvantage.

If he had cleared me, it would have been game over. Didn't quite clear me. I had probably just a tire on him. It was enough to hold my lane. If I didn't have that, yeah, I think it would have been game over for me. I

tried everything I could just to keep the bottom lane there.

**Q. That pit stop, the execution was perfect because it got you out ahead of everybody else that had already pitted. I think everybody that was in that cycle said, Where did he come from? How huge was that pit stop?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I'm telling you, if you look at those five or so laps I pumped out, I guarantee you that's the quickest in lap. If not, I can't go quicker on an in lap. I knew it. Man, we're going to have a good set of laps here to pump out and just jump everybody. That's what we did.

We were running fast, good in lap, good execution from the boys in the pit, put us out front. I knew once we were out front, we could hold it off.

It was well executed, well planned. Tim did a great job. The boys did a great job. It was up to them to put me in position, and they did. We brought it home.

**Q. I was talking to Simon Pagenaud, Graham Rahal, they addressed a little bit of that late restart. They got bunched up, ended up making contact a little bit. Take me through managing that late restart. Graham kind of felt like you were past that start zone.**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It leader's discretion to go when he wants. I thought I was in a fine enough position to start where I did. I don't know what to tell him. I went when I needed to go. It's your discretion. That's the rule.

I haven't seen it. I don't know what happened to those guys in the back. I went when I wanted to go. I think I went out of four, which you're supposed to go out of the last corner, so...

**Q. First superspeedway win for you, I believe, is that correct?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Sounds right.

**Q. What does that mean to you to get that knocked off your bucket list?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It's nice. I mean, we've had seconds. We've had thirds. We've been on the podium. We just never got the win. I know we've had great cars. The team has done a great job of putting us in position to win those races. It's just not worked out to this point.

The seconds and thirds were nice, but you want to finally win one. I was just, yeah, really pleased we could get that done. Maybe we can get some more now after this. It's down to the team, the car. Like I said out there, they won this race tonight, I think. If they keep doing that, maybe we'll win some other superspeedways.

**Q. You've had a great first half of the season, from**

**the start you've been leading the points. Now you're going to probably one of your best tracks, Road America. You have to feel like there's more to be gained yet this month.**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I hope so. I mean, I think we've got good cars. I always feel we can win anywhere we go. I always feel confident of that. But things change.

Road America... There's tracks where you're historically good, you go there and have an off year. Things change, tires change, the car changes. We've just got to stay alert and aware of where we're good and where we're not.

What I mean by that is, it's never guaranteed where you're going to be good for the second half of the season. I think you just got to be open-minded that there might be some tracks we weren't good at in the past, maybe we're good at this year, just capitalize when you can. You have to take advantage of the opportunities when you have a good car.

Tonight was about taking advantage of a great team. They called a great race, they executed. If you can take advantage of a night like tonight, it's a big win.

**Q. Tell us about the victory chalice.**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Gerry is the champion right now, OK? Gerry Cowan has the chalice. It was bestowed to him this evening. It was filled up. I don't know what he filled that chalice with when he brought to it Victory Lane. I didn't want to go near it.

It's a mythical cup. I don't know if anybody knows about this. I don't know where it came from. We're still trying to understand the history of it. It's a mythical chalice. It gives people powers whoever holds it.

Tim had it in Detroit, made an amazing call. We won the race. I'm just saying, whoever has that thing, watch out, they're going to have a good weekend.

**Q. How did Gerry get it?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Gerry got it from just being an incredible human being. Doing a great job. Going above and beyond for everyone. Jerry take great care of me. He always preps my helmet. Always cares about how I'm feeling about the race. He's a deserving champion.

Two weeks from now in Road America he's going to have to pass it on to the next recipient.

THE MODERATOR: This is a Team Penske tradition now. When did it start?