

NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

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Press Conference

Will Power

Team Penske

Alexander Rossi

Andretti Autosport

THE MODERATOR: We have Alexander Rossi from Andretti Autosport in the media center.

Alex, good day today. Fastest of the day. I hate to bring up the past, but this hasn't been a place where you've been the fastest of the day very often.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I think that's very untrue actually. I think we were quickest in qualifying last year, except for the Fast Six.

THE MODERATOR: Let's talk about how you feel about this race coming into this weekend.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I could. I mean, I kind of alluded to it. I think we've been strong here pace-wise. The end result has never been really great on Sundays for one issue or another. I think in general, the team has been pretty strong here.

We came here obviously looking to make this one of our tracks that we've had good results at hopefully after this weekend. I think the team is doing a good job. I think all cars are working in a positive direction.

We'll just have to stay on top of the track as it evolves, which is always key on these weekends with ever-changing track conditions.

THE MODERATOR: Is there a portion of the racetrack you like particularly?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: All of it really. It's a great track. It's always a privilege to come here. It's nice to be able to stretch our legs a bit in terms of the lap distance. Only other track we have similar is COTA. It was a great race for us.

Yeah, I mean, I think all the drivers are of the same kind of opinion: we love driving here. The fan turnout is always amazing. The autograph session today was fantastic. It's a real privilege.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. The lap that you went fastest wasn't very clean. Is that the kind of lap that it will take to win the



pole?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, no, that lap wasn't good for us. I think we gave up a lot of time in Turn 6 and Turn 13. We should be a bit better than what we were.

It's always interesting. We come to these tracks where not a lot theoretically has changed, but the car that you had pretty good performance with and balance with the previous year doesn't necessarily translate the same the next year. It's something we all have to stay on top of and continue chasing.

Not too happy with the car right now. I mean, I'm pleased obviously there's pace in it, but it's a handful to drive. Yeah, hopefully we can make that a bit better for tomorrow.

The second part of your question, the race running is pretty substantially different. The tires, seems the alternate tires definitely do have a falloff. We're all trying to understand what that is and what that looks like come Sunday.

Q. What parts of the track are you faster than the competition? What kind of shape is the track in?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I haven't been able to look at that part yet in terms of the segments are different to the competition. I always have been comfortable in high-speed corners. There's a lot of those here. I'm sure we're pretty strong there.

The track is in great shape. Obviously, we all saw in what we did in the kink with the addition of the SAFER Barrier, which is a super positive thing. We're thankful to the track to go ahead and do that.

As I said at the beginning, we all love coming here. An amazing racetrack to get to drive on.

Q. When you're out there and have a great lap going, is this place just a blast?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, but it's a big lap. If things are going well, it's fun. If the car is not quite where you want it, it's a long time out there struggling, so... It can go either way.

But, yeah, in general driving an IndyCar at Road of America is pretty awesome.

Q. There has been discussion about your future plans. Does that bother you?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I mean, no. I think you guys

know me about that point.

But it's not my narrative. It's the media's narrative. It's pretty easy to go out and do my job and try to win races each weekend.

Q. Is it a distraction at all?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: No.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Alex.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Joined now by Team Penske driver Will Power.

Good, strong run. You've had cars here that obviously have run well, qualified on the front row all three years. Last year, probably been waiting to get back after a bad start to that race. I assume you've been anxious or eager to get back here.

WILL POWER: Yeah, definitely. Obviously last year, it sucks having to watch a race from the outside. Didn't even get to really do a lap. See if we can make the first lap, then think about the rest.

The car was really good. Really happy with it in qualifying trim. Just a matter of massaging on it overnight, get it right in the window. I think we're there.

THE MODERATOR: What do you like about racing here?

WILL POWER: It's just a cool old-school track. I mean, it's pretty low grip. The car moves around a lot. Like through the carousel, you're sliding all the way through there. Yeah, don't get these sort of tracks anymore. Just a track with a lot of character, old-school. You make a mistake, you certainly pay for it. Yeah, just enjoyable place.

THE MODERATOR: After the long run into turn 12, a lot of hand movement out of 12. Is that a pretty tricky spot?

WILL POWER: Yeah, the way the exit curves are, if you get over them... If the whole track is like that, bumpy exit curves, it really upsets the car.

Watching the carousel, the same thing. Just working the wheel all the way through. This whole track, you're on the wheel.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Is it strange to have the warmup practice today? Is it useful?

WILL POWER: It's actually a great idea rather than morning warmup. It's in similar temperatures to when the race would be. It's to me better than the Sunday

morning warmup. Yeah, it's good.

Q. Are you making another one of your famous Friday night rides?

WILL POWER: I've been taking my little fellow (son, Beau). He loves riding on the bike, taking him around. Already been around the campgrounds. Yeah, probably.

Q. What is his reaction?

WILL POWER: He just loves the bike. The faster you go, the more he smiles. It's just great to see the atmosphere, I guess you could say, all the people camping down there, playing corn hole, some people had bars set up. You see a lot of old-school IndyCar fans, been going to the Indy 500 40 years, been going to this track since the '70s or '80s.

Yeah, just cool to see. You'd sell more merchandise at this track than a lot of other tracks just because of the sort of fan that turns up here.

Q. Some Formula 1 drivers have commented about their level of fatigue after races. Marcus Ericsson commented on social media. What is your opinion?

WILL POWER: Well, you look at the Formula 1 cars, we compare it to an onboard lap of us at COTA versus (Lewis) Hamilton's pole lap, he looks like he can be one-handing it around that triple-apex Turn 17. He's got one hand on the wheel, where we are just sawing at the wheel trying to hang on.

It's too easy, man. They have too big of tires, too much downforce that made it too easy, I reckon. To be the pinnacle of motorsport, they need to make a more challenging car to drive from what I can see.

We've been there. We had body kits with a lot of downforce. It's just too stuck, too stuck, too easy. Everything was easy.

Q. Do you have to pace yourself physically for a weekend like this?

WILL POWER: No, I think you need to be fit enough to go all the time. It's got long enough straights. This is not that much of a physical track. Although you work the wheel, it's kind of low grip, so the G Force isn't there, the wheel weight is down a bit. You got so much time to recover compared to somewhere like Mid-Ohio or Barber.

Q. Is this track abrasive on the tires? How long would the red tires last?

WILL POWER: Yes, it is actually. It's a softer red supposedly this year. It definitely goes off quite a bit, tire degrades. It will be interesting to see how everyone plays that strategy.

Q. I believe this is the longest you've gone to start a season and not win a race. Is this frustrating for you?

WILL POWER: Yeah, it is. I don't think it is the longest actually. I think I've been longer than this without a win. 2013, I didn't win till the very end.

Yes, certainly frustrating. You think about COTA, led so many laps. St. Pete, wrong strategy called there. Yeah, it's tough. You can't be making mistakes strategy-wise. The driver can't be making mistakes in any respect.

You got to qualify at the front, putting all those together, then trying to put a race together. You keep knocking on the door, it will open, you'll get it. That's what we kind of plan to do.

Q. Do you stress at all or are you even-keeled?

WILL POWER: You got to be even-keeled. You're doing your best anyway. Stepping over that, you start to make mistakes.

Yeah, it's just amazing some years when it flows for you. I look at Newgarden, plenty of just easy, easy -- I'm not going to say it's easy to win, but being placed in the right spot with strategy, being able to use his pace. I would dream of having that. I haven't had that for a long time. Dream of just having a nice run.

Q. In the three years since IndyCar has been back here, it seems this track really favors the leader. A lot of passing throughout the field, but the leader doesn't get passed. How difficult is that to catch the leader?

WILL POWER: Yeah, man, I didn't get to race last year, but it's just total track position race. They could fix that so easy with a no reply 'push to pass' system, you'd just have some serious battles out there.

But, yeah, it's hard. I just think the 'push to pass' system is wrong. Either give us a lot less so you don't reply every time, or you have a no reply system.

Right now you got so much, as soon as you hear on the radio he's on it, you're on it. He is on it, you're on it. You're on it on your in-laps and you're on it on your out-laps.

Everyone for me is doing the same, so for me, we don't have 'push to pass'. You may as well not have it if everyone can reply, and you have a guy on the radio every time someone clicks it, you'll click it.

It used to be 10 clicks. You were very sparing. You had to be sure the guy was going to get you to click it. People would save some. Guys would have less at the end.

Yeah, right now they've just given you a whole bunch and everyone just uses it all the time. You can use two seconds, which helps you.

Yeah, I think it's the wrong strategy.

Q. James Hinchcliffe said he can tell when someone is on push-to-pass or has a run. Can you?

WILL POWER: You can tell someone is getting a run, absolutely. You can't tell someone is on it. Well, yeah, I guess you look, you can tell when someone's got a run on you. Bonk, you'll hit it. Keep looking. Unclick it, click it again.

You should only have one hit, one chance, bang, you've wasted a whole one. Then you're really thinking. Or the guy can't reply. Something like that.

Right now, because everyone has so much experience with it, everyone uses it in such a good way, it's not good for the fans.

This track, in particular, I thought, man, you could have such an awesome battle if you had a no reply system.

Q. How much does using push-to-pass affect fuel consumption?

WILL POWER: Significantly. It used a lot of fuel, no question. Especially if you're in a lean (indiscernible) or something, you hit the 'push to pass'. It kills your number.