

# NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

Sunday July 21, 2019

**Press Conference**

## Josef Newgarden

Team Penske

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Josef Newgarden. Fourth win of the season, 14th of your career. Now a 29-point lead over Alexander Rossi in the series championship. What stands out the most, fourth year in five that you've led the most laps and led more than 100 laps in all four of those races. Just seems to be your place.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I don't know if it's our place. I'm much happier tonight, I can tell you that. I was really a little bit frustrated yesterday just because I knew we had a pole-winning car, we didn't put it together. It's competitive.

Look, yeah, I'm very competitive, and I don't always show it, but you want to do well every session, every practice, every qualifying. You want to be the best. If you don't want that, then why are you here?

I feel much better tonight. I really wanted us to win the race. I thought we had a good car to do that, a car capable, a team capable. I'm really pleased we were able to execute as well as we did tonight. We just did a good, solid job, car was perfect, pit stops, great strategy from Tim and the boys. We got another win here.

Kind of redeemed ourselves from last year, too. Last year I felt we had the car. It honestly fell apart with the 100 laps to go. Why did it fall apart last year and how do we make it right again? I think we achieved that tonight.

THE MODERATOR: You mentioned being a little sore yesterday when you came in here. How did you work through that? Was there a point in the evening or in the day, it's time to move on?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I was ready to just go racing right afterwards. We could have lined up immediately and I would have been ready to rock. That's where I was. Tried to use the second session and benefit from it as much as we could. Everyone had the opportunity to improve last night, so we just tried to make most of out of it, get ready for tonight.

It was fun that we raced under the lights. If the weather didn't happen, it wasn't really going to be a night race. It was actually kind of nice that the weather delayed it from that standpoint. Every other standpoint, it wasn't a



good thing. No one likes waiting around. We certainly don't like making the fans wait. The ones that went home, completely understandable, got pretty late there. The ones that stuck with us, it was real nice they got to see a full show. I think we're all pretty pumped about that.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

### **Q. Yesterday after final practice, did your team make significant changes to the car?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: You know, we tested a lot of things and we didn't make a lot of changes. I should say a lot of the changes we tested, none of them stuck. We ended up back where we started the evening session. We tried some things, ended up what we started the session with was the best car, so we went back to that, stuck with it for the race. It panned out okay.

### **Q. Dramatic weather, the big delay, did you feel any significant changes with the track conditions?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, it was different. I think the grip was just higher overall, a little more downforce, a little more power from the engine. That's the biggest thing you notice with the track temp coming down and the ambient. I felt the balance got a little tougher as the night went on. It became more difficult to follow other cars as it cooled off.

You noticed that. People, you could kind of carve people up really well for the first half of the race. Seemed like the last hundred laps just got more difficult. I think the grip was coming up, but the balance went more loose. The cars were a handful to drive. I think people were getting loose off the corner.

Just became harder to follow towards the end of the race. I think we were still just a bit better than most people at cutting through the pack. That's what matters here. I have think you can be fast in clean air, a lot of people were fast in clean air. It's how you get through the pack. That's what this place is about.

### **Q. Rossi catching up in points, did that give you a greater sense of urgency heading into this weekend?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: No. We finished fourth. That's where we were. I mean, the way I always drive is, it's going to add up how it's going to add up at the end of the year. You got to maximize your weekends that you can. I don't think there's urgency now.

Look, there's a lot of people still in it. We just got to make the most of each weekend. If you got a winning car, we try to win. If we have a fourth place car, try to finish fourth. That's what we've been doing.

You're going to have those ups and downs. But it's about who rides it out the most even, I think, we'll see where we tally up at the end.

**Q. Yesterday you said you were frustrated, angry. Does any of that carry over to the next day?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I mean, look, it's all right. I don't normally like to be short and externally frustrated. But I was just frustrated. Sometimes when you're feeling competitive, you're always feeling competitive, but a lot of times you can hold it back if you're pissed off about something. Sometimes you just want to go back out and redo it. That's kind of where I was yesterday.

But after an hour of being pissed about it, we just went to practice and we move on. That's all there is to it. Yeah, I mean, you're going to get that. Look, we all want to kick each other's butts. That's what it's all about. Like I was saying, it's a competitive sport. We all want to be the best. That's what makes it fun.

So, yeah, I was fine after we got to practice two.

**Q. I asked more in that redemption sense from last year, something trying to make it up from yesterday.**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: No doubt. That's why I was ready to race immediately. Let's just go. I'm ready to go, because we got the best car, I thought. So, you know, tried to still take the opportunity obviously in practice two to get better.

Yeah, I mean, I felt ready to rock. I just wanted to make amends for not getting the pole. The pole is not the most important thing. I kind of look at it like it's two races in the weekend. Qualifying is its own race and the race itself is its own race. The race specifically is more important. You want to win both.

That's where that competitive spirit was. Yeah, I wanted to get it right tonight. That's when I really wanted to make it work.

**Q. Going into next year, are you hoping you won't have to count on Mother Nature to make it so?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I don't mind. I like day or night. I think night is better just because it's always more exhilarating I find. The more races we can have under the lights with IndyCar would be better. They look better. It's obviously cooler in the summertime, easier on the fans, easier on us. I think it's just a lot more fun. It really brings the atmosphere out and makes it exciting.

Yeah, I'm all for night races. I'd like to have it again at night. Hopefully weather is not the reason we're doing it. It's tough because I think it hadn't rained here in like two or three weeks, then it rains literally 20 minutes before the race is supposed to start. It's just crazy how these things work out.

Fortunately we got it in. Yeah, it's always a bummer when it rains. This place is a little bit difficult because you get the weepers here. If we didn't have those, we maybe could have started an hour or two sooner. We had to work with what we got.

IndyCar did a good job of getting us out there, Iowa Speedway did an amazing job. Again, thanks to the fans who stuck around. We understand the ones that had to go home. The ones that were here, we hope they enjoyed the show.

**Q. Did you feel any urgency? You had to race under control, all of a sudden at the end after Scott Dixon got the new tires on, he came zipping up through the field. When you started to see him in your rearview mirror, were you going, This could get tricky?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I heard that. I heard Tim say, Scott is two seconds back. I'm like, Scott? Where the hell did he come from?

But you got to expect the unexpected in these races. I was like, Okay, if he's ready to go, I'll turn it up. I was kind of just -- I wasn't taking it easy, but I was saving the tires, bidding my time up front.

If he wanted to box, I would have been ready to roll. Just tried to not let him get close enough.

**Q. It seems with the temperature change and the evening start, there had to be changes made to the car. Obviously Team Penske has a lot of knowledge of how to set up the car. Do you think all three of your other two teammates set up the same?**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Very similar. There were a couple small tweaks like always, but we were pretty close this weekend. Yeah, so not too different.

I think a lot of people made similar changes because of the weather. You generally raise the car up because you're going to produce more downforce, the other car is going to sink a little bit more. Just little tweaks like that, some gear changes. We did all those little things.

It didn't need much. It was really, really small from the weather change. Again, we were on top of it.

**Q. The memorable moment that I take away is Rossi came, you lapped Rossi, then he came fighting back. That was tense for a couple laps.**

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I was working on him. I think I overheated my tires a little bit trying to get by him. Then I was struggling for like five or six laps once I

got by him. I was really struggling. He was coming back at me.

Once I got through that overheating period, it was fine and we could move forward again. That's how this race is. You got to really manage the cycle of the tires. They go through all these phases. You have one threat, you have to run a whole stint.

There's three or four different moments that the tires have, you got to manage that. You have the beginning, then they kind of go through a rough period in the middle, then they kind of come back towards the end, then really drop off at the final part. It's like managing all those different partnerships. Kind of a story for each set that you have to work through.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations. We'll see you in 20 minutes at Mid-Ohio.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Cool.