

NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

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Press Conference

Tony Kanaan

A.J. Foyt Racing

Ed Carpenter

Ed Carpenter Racing

Josef Newgarden

Team Penske

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Tony Kanaan from A.J. Foyt Racing. Good to see you.

TONY KANAAN: Good to be here.

THE MODERATOR: Strong run for the 14 car. Has to be gratifying. Your first podium finish in two years.

TONY KANAAN: That's a long time.

I told the boys on the cool-down lap, I probably remember where I had to stop my car.

Yeah, great result for us, great weekend. Overcoming a lot of adversities throughout the year. We've been hearing a lot of things, good things and bad things, some support, some people thinking we shouldn't be doing this.

This is a great night for us. It paid off. When I joined A.J. Foyt Racing, it was to make this team better. We've been struggling quite a bit. This is a great night for us.

The boys did a great job. Now it proves it's making us stronger, definitely. A result like this, it's a huge boost for everybody. So happy.

THE MODERATOR: I would think that last restart you had a pretty good sniff at the lead, pretty excited.

TONY KANAAN: Yeah, (Takuma) Sato got a run on me on the restart. I think when he took off, obviously he was behind, people know how I restart, he got a little bit of an edge. After that I had to measure and decide what I wanted to do. Do I need to attack? Did I have anything to attack? If I was going to keep it in the podium, which is a great result for us...

Once he took off and opened a little bit of a lead, I said, I'm going to sit here and see what happens. I was waiting for him to hit traffic. Unfortunately when we all hit traffic, we all got in trouble. I got a little bit loose. Ed got me. It was one of those things.



I think we were strong. We had a great strategy. The Chevy and the fuel mileage we had, very, very good fuel mileage that actually got us to the point that we got lucky with that yellow.

Once we had the track position, the car was fast and we were able to perform.

THE MODERATOR: I take it that was fun?

TONY KANAAN: It's always fun when you finish on the podium. It was a great race. First 50 laps I think it was a little boring. After that it got extremely exciting. Yeah, I had a lot of fun.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Tony.

Q. After qualifying yesterday you were quoted to say you're struggling with oversteer. How was the car in the race?

TONY KANAAN: Qualifying yesterday was kind of weird. We had a bunch of oil dry on the track. The way we qualify nowadays is by championship points. I was the fourth car out.

We got loose. The car wasn't very good. It was very frustrating. In the night session, the car was pretty decent. I was pretty happy. But I knew that track position was going to be everything.

I had a pretty good start, passed six cars on the start. Put ourselves in the top 13. I said, All right, let's start racing from now on. Obviously we got a break. Once we got to the front, we were pretty strong.

Q. Maybe I'm wrong, I have the impression your cars came late concerning speed, lap 175 or 180. Were you struggling before?

TONY KANAAN: We race when it counts. Why do you want to waste your breath when it doesn't count anything? 20 laps to go, we go.

Q. Tony, there's been a lot of changes with Scott Harner come in to help Larry (Foyt) run the organization. Is this the first sign of a lot of that work coming together for the team?

TONY KANAAN: Yeah, I think Scott came in late, late February or March. Things are happening. They take time. We do have a great organization.

All credit to Larry. It's nothing that we haven't asked



Larry to do that he hasn't done for us. It's on us. It's on me. It's on my engineer. It's on Harner. It's on the entire team.

ABC provided us every single tool with the sponsorship for us to perform and we haven't done it. Slowly we turn it around. We brought Don Halliday back, which is a guy my first year here in America, '96, he was engineering myself at Tasman. He came in to do some damage control. It's been great.

Yes, it was a good result. Obviously let's not get ahead of the game. We still have two races to go, still have a lot of work to do. I'll take it, enjoy it tonight and go back to work tomorrow.

Q. What year was that with Tasman?

TONY KANAAN: '96.

Q. How old were you?

TONY KANAAN: I'm 32 (laughter). You want to see my Brazilian passport?

THE MODERATOR: We'll bring in Ed and Josef.

Ed, looks like the oval finishes we've seen from you so many times. I would expect your last oval race of the season was pretty enjoyable there at the end.

ED CARPENTER: Yeah, I mean, it could have been a little better if we had a little bit longer straightaway or another lap. But it was nice to finish on a high note, especially after the day we had yesterday.

We were really bad yesterday. I really wasn't comfortable. Having a hard time figuring out how to get the car to work. The guys did a really good job keeping their head down and staying focused, dealing with my whining all day yesterday and overnight. They delivered today.

Really feel like we had a good car the whole race. They asked me pretty early on what I needed. I was just like, We really need track position. I think we have good pace to run with anybody. Fortunately we caught a couple breaks with the yellows, put us in a good position. We were able to almost close it out.

THE MODERATOR: You cleared Tony with two laps to go. Did you really think you had a shot or give it the best you got?

ED CARPENTER: I had every intention of driving for the win. It's a difficult place to pass. We were really good on long runs. They were coming back to us. I do think another lap or even another corner we probably could have had them. There wasn't enough time. That's the race. Happy with second.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Ed.

Q. As a team owner, had to go to fifth place today to get to a Penske, Ganassi or Andretti. What does that tell you about your team's performance and the series?

ED CARPENTER: Well, first off, the series is unbelievably competitive. The Penske guys have won every oval race up to this point. It's just because of the quality of drivers they have and they're a quality organization. It could have easily not been that streak up to this point.

You just have to miss it. Like earlier I said we were terrible yesterday. It wasn't like we were that far off. We were just enough off that it makes you feel terrible in this series because the competition level is so high.

I think that's what you saw tonight. You have a caution at the right time that mixes the field up. It can totally reset things at any given moment.

It's rewarding to be up front. It's nice to finish my year off on a good note. Nice to be racing up front with this guy. Been a while. I'll enjoy it. Wait till May to try to go fight for another win.

Q. How much does this help you going into the off-season, sponsorship hunts? Good momentum builder?

ED CARPENTER: It helps my psyche I think more than anything. (Wife) Heather can tell you I wasn't very happy last night. Certainly tonight will be a lot better. The hardest part now is just waiting to go again.

We've got a resilient bunch. Like I said earlier, proud of the effort, proud of them sticking with me and delivering when it counted.

Q. How much longer do you think you would have had to go before you would have been able to catch Takuma?

ED CARPENTER: I think if we would have gone to Turn 1, I would have gotten by, to be honest.

Q. You have an Ed Carpenter Racing alumni member next to you. He's battling for a championship. To see the progression he's made, the fact you're still up there winning races, competing for race wins, what does that say for everything you've put together?

ED CARPENTER: I think we're up getting ready for the podium, Tony made a really mean comment, said, We're all 40 years old up there.

Hey, I'm 38. Like I'm a legit 38. I don't really know how old you are. I don't know how old Takuma is. Everybody lies about their age. I am a legit, honest to God, 38 years old. March 1981.

Working with Spencer (Pigot) and Ed (Jones), these children that were starting racing when I was already in Indy cars, it keeps me young, even though I'm going

gray, losing my hair and everything else. It keeps me young. I love racing with these guys. Josef and I are still very close and good friends from our time together.

It's just fun to be in the mix with them again.

THE MODERATOR: Ed, we appreciate the show you put on. Shows you can still do it.

ED CARPENTER: That's good to know. Good to know.

THE MODERATOR: We bring in Josef Newgarden. Josef, perspective-wise you gained on your championship tonight. More points ahead of your nearest competitor, and your nearest competitor now is a teammate. Big picture-wise, a good end to the race and to the day, but maybe not what you hoped for 20 minutes before the checkered flag.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Well, I'm really proud of our group. I thought they did a great job tonight. We had actually missed a bit on the long run. I would say our setup didn't favor the tires for the long run, which we didn't forecast perfectly. I don't put that on anyone. Sometimes you didn't gather enough data. I really thought we were in the right window last night. We learned tonight we weren't for the longevity of tire life.

Even with that, the team did a typical fantastic job of great calls, good pit stops, and just put us in a position to keep fighting and scoring great points. That's what they've done all year.

I've been really lucky to have a unit behind me that I think is the best on pit lane. I got that advantage in my pocket, I got the best of the best around me. Showed it tonight.

They put me in a good position and we came out of here with some respectable points. Could have been worse. It is what it is at this point. It's not too bad. We've got something to fight with now I think for the last two rounds.

THE MODERATOR: With all due respect to the other races we've seen this season, these restarts were some of the most exciting of the season. Talk about it from your perspective.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It's hair raising just because there's not a lot of blame usage here. If you take a lot of risk, you can try and come up a lane and a half for a couple laps there. It's risky. This track just breeds risk because of the way the marbles accumulate, the way the lanes are used.

It's not a place like Iowa where you have a clear two- or three-lane track, it's consistently that way. It's just not that way here. I think that brought a lot of excitement, what your referencing. Made it difficult.

People were sliding all over the place. The track got really slick. Moved people around a lot on the those restarts. I hope fans like that. It was difficult inside the racecar but maybe more exciting to watch.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Do you feel like you're playing with house money as it heads into the final two races with your championship?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Well, I mean, I don't think we can feel too confident or secure where we're at. I really don't. I think we're in a good spot, without a doubt. It would be silly to not recognize it's a good position.

It's not something that you can just sit back and rest on. It's going to be tough the last two rounds. I wish we could have gotten a little bit more here the last three races. For sure Mid-Ohio, you look at that and say it was what it was. If I would have done a better job, that would have helped. Pocono could have been a little better. Here definitely could have been a little better.

We've not had a smooth last three races. We've got to clean that up now for the final two. I think we're in a good position, but we can't do anything different than what we've been doing all year. We have to keep sort of attacking with some caution I think.

Q. Now that second place is Simon, you know the quality of equipment he's got because you have the same type of equipment. How much does that play on your mind, to know how tough Simon is going to be in the final two races?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I don't know if it helps or hurts. I know what he's doing all the time, and vice versa. We're a unit that works together, him, Power and myself. Yeah, it's a dynamic I know very well. I got to think that's going to be a positive.

They're all going to be tough. Simon is always difficult. He's a very strong driver. When you look at the whole picture, Rossi is still a fantastic driver that's tough to beat. Same thing with Dixon. I don't think it's anywhere from over.

Portland could flip this thing on its lid with a hundred points at Laguna. It's going to be down to the wire. Here not anywhere from a blowout here. Just got to keep your finger on the pulse.

Q. Take us through the final lap, what happened between you and Santino.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I already gave two cents on NBC. I'll be disappointed if people think I'm a whiner after giving my assessment. Rarely do I ever try and put someone in their place when I think they need to be put in their place. I think Santino needed to learn a lesson.

This is no disrespect to fans or anyone. Most people

will not understand what he did wrong in that final corner. They've never driven an IndyCar. They don't know the subtleties of it. I think what he did was very risky. He needs to learn from that. I told him that. It's really a racer's thing.

Hopefully he gets that. I think when you go to bigger ovals, it's even a bigger potential problem. Yeah, like I said, I gave an assessment on NBC. That's how I felt about it.

Q. When you got going again, down the front straightaway, did you know all those cars were not for position? Wound up being not as bad.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I was happy I wasn't in the fence, to be honest with you. I was surprised I wasn't in the fence. The engine was still going. I wasn't in the wall. I was trying to get it out of any stall. Thank goodness, I'm kind of straight. I can't believe we're still going here. I couldn't believe it. I thought we were going to be in the fence.

Yeah, I had no idea about the other cars. I was trying to stay out of people's ways, which is what you need to do, keep my car straight and consistent, just get across the line.

I felt fortunate the engine was still fired. Didn't turn into a bigger disaster. I still don't know how it didn't. But fortunately it didn't.

Q. I know you don't pay much attention to anyone else other than your own car, team. Takuma has been a punching bag the last week since Pocono. For a guy to come out and win the very next race, what does that say about the guy? Pretty impressive to bounce back like that.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Literally the definition of professional sports: hero maybe one minute, zero the next, hero again. That's just how it goes. Everyone thought Takuma was the worst thing on the planet of earth leaving Pocono. Now it was like it wasn't his fault. Now he's probably a hero again. Next week he could be a loser one more time. No one knows.

You live day by day in this sport. It's every day you're judged. A great day for him obviously. All these teams put in a lot of work. I'm sure it's very gratifying for those guys. Really everyone in front of us did a great job. Santino had a great race. All these guys did a pretty nice job. I'm sure for Sato and his crew, they're going to be pretty happy about it.

I wish it was us. It's hard not to feel happy for everybody because there's a lot of work that goes into this paddock from all the teams.

THE MODERATOR: We'll see you in about five or six days.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Thanks.