

NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

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Press Conference

Alexander Rossi

Andretti Autosport

THE MODERATOR: Alex, how do you describe today? It looked like rear tires went away on you there in the second stint and it was a struggle thereafter.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, everything. I mean, I think the blacks were much friendlier for us, which was unfortunate because we started on the used reds. We made the decision to go opposite of the two cars in front at the start because we knew we were ultimately racing them.

We took a gamble. We were pretty committed to trying to do something different, and if we ended up third swinging, it was better than just being complacent and coming home second.

It was a risk that didn't pay off, unfortunately, but yeah, it was -- it just wasn't meant to be.

THE MODERATOR: You had a memorable moment early in the race with Simon Pagenaud. Talk about that maybe a little bit. Good, hard racing.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, that's what IndyCar is about.

Q. Alex, commiserations but awesome job all year. When you were battling with Pagenaud, were you thinking in terms of him possibly beating you to second, or is it all or nothing at that point?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, I mean, you don't really care. I mean, it was just a car that you were trying to beat because -- yeah, you were trying to win, right, so you don't want to go backwards. At the end of the race when we knew that the championship was pretty much out of touch, it became about trying to close down on Simon.

But yeah, I mean, it just was -- for whatever reason, we didn't have the tire life that we needed. I think we were one of the better cars on blacks and were able to pull back a pretty big deficit, even on the final stop there after that restart. But our bed was kind of made after the first stint. It was pretty diabolical.

Like I said, we wanted to take a gamble to try. It's unfortunate that two years in a row we're in a position to where we have to kind of roll the dice. I'd rather be in either leading or within more of a realistic shot so that you can do more of a normal race-type thing. But



regardless, I doubt that even if we started on new reds we had the pace to win. We probably had a third-place car, which again, wouldn't have been enough anyway.

Q. I know this is a little trite and way too soon, but how would you rate your season? I know you came up a little short, but still, overall, how would you rate it?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, I mean, I think we minimized a lot of our mistakes last year. Ultimately I think in one way or another, we gave Scott a championship. I think we didn't do that this year. I think just Penske and the 2 car specifically were stronger than us, and that's going to happen.

You can't take away from the fact that Josef led all but one race this season. And from a sporting perspective, probably the right guy won. He came into this thing with a pretty big lead, and if it had gone away on double points, I would have loved it, but ultimately it probably wouldn't have been the outcome that should have happened. Josef did a great job, Simon did a good job there at the end, and we just were a couple points short.

Q. You just said you took a gamble or the team took a gamble and it didn't pay off. What should have happened to put it into a positive --

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Just the reds should have been better. We were looking at kind of -- it's hard because it's a new race with no historical data, so we were looking at qualifying and the fact that used reds on a second run were as quick if not quicker than the new reds, so we took that as an indication that maybe the reds would hold on longer than people were expecting.

Ultimately that wasn't the case. There was -- it was an educated risk. It just wasn't a shot in the dark, crazy, zero probability shot at something. But nonetheless, the conservative strategy would have just been to match the cars around us and hope to pick up spots through the start or attrition or whatever.

But yeah, I just think it comes down to if you have the car, any strategy that you go on can look pretty magical. But we just didn't have it today.

Q. Felix came through pretty strong towards the end there; did you have any issues with that? He made some pretty solid moves, pretty aggressive moves I would say.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: No. I mean, I'm all for it. I'm

going to give them to people, so I'm not going to complain when they give them back. That's the way racing should be in my mind. Felix did a great job considering the setback he had yesterday.

Yeah, I had no problem with it. Everyone was racing for their own championship, whether it was us or the rookies, so they have as much right as we do to get positions and try and win the race.