

IndyCar Media Days

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Juan Pablo Montoya

Will Power

Media Day Presser

THE MODERATOR: We're set to relive the 99th running of the Indianapolis 500. We'll start with Will Power and Juan Montoya.

Gentlemen, welcome. Hopefully Media Day has treated you well, the off-season has treated you well. You have been all over the world. You have been very, very busy.

Let's talk about that 99th running. Will, for you, it wasn't exactly how you wanted things to finish. Going back and watching the last 10 laps of that race, it almost seemed like you were exactly where you wanted to be. You held everybody at bay until Juan got you in the end. What's going through your mind in the last 10 laps?

WILL POWER: I mean, the last 10 laps, I could see Dixon was struggling. He wasn't able to tow up, which was a good thing. He was holding everybody else off, which was a good thing. Then Juan just dropped and passed me straightaway.

I thought I was in the best position coming into the last lap, I'm where I want to be. I think Juan did a very good job of taking the air away, creating some push in my car so I had to lift out of two. At that point I'm like, It's over. But then if I go through three flat, I might have a shot over the line.

It was a great battle. I mean, it was a good finish for Penske, 1-2. It was my best finish here. Would have loved to have won. But that's just experience for next time.

THE MODERATOR: At what point did you mentally know you couldn't win it? Was it coming to the yard of bricks?

WILL POWER: As soon as I lifted in three. Even out of two, down the back straight, I adjusted everything I could in the car. Just had too much push. Out of two, there was still some hope going into three. Once I lifted there, I'm done.

THE MODERATOR: Juan, an amazing win for you. Looking back, turn two, five laps to go, you had a big



moment where you were really struggling with the car, following Dixon. Then you regrouped. It was the move you did in three with three laps to go that rocketed you not only around Dixon, but you got Will in turn one.

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: At that moment, got a little too low. We all struggle with understeer in traffic, find ways to get away from that, find some clear air. I just shoot a little too low, clipped the grass. Scared the hell out of me. I was lucky enough to catch it.

The car had plenty of speed. The Verizon car was good that day. As Will said, coming through the last lap, I saw Will. I'm going, Oh, I might be in trouble. When I saw him really close going into two, I saw where he put the nose. That was good enough. When he pushed up, I looked at the gap, I said, I'm going to get there.

THE MODERATOR: Obviously it's a long day. You had the contact under caution on the very first lap. You ended up starting 30th.

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: 32nd.

THE MODERATOR: When you have a situation like that, do you have to remind yourself that you have 500 miles?

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: I think NASCAR really taught me that. 500-mile races are very long races and you got to be patient. Just take your time. You struggle to pass the guy in 31st place. You have understeer, the car feels terrible, it's going to be a long day.

You just take your time. It's like one, then the other, then the other. When I realized I was running P8, I'm not too bad. But it's hard because each passing takes a long time. You know what I mean? Everybody fighting for the position so hard. Once you pass them, then you got to go through the next guy, go through the same thing, go through the same thing. It's pretty tough.

THE MODERATOR: If it was 2000, you had the same situation, was it maturation you had?

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: I was impatient, making

crazy moves when you don't need to. There's no need. There's no need to risk the car. It's hard because some people that you get next to, you're going to pass them, they still turn like you're not there.

I know you've seen me, so why are you being such a moron?

THE MODERATOR: I know patience is a virtue when you got out there in these long races. When do you realize that you have to settle yourself down because you have a long way to go?

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: I think that's the hardest thing. That just comes with years of experience. When you're young, you're greedy. You just put the car in there. Sometimes you still do the same, but you think about it a little more (laughter).

WILL POWER: It does come down to experience. If the move's 50/50, you shouldn't be doing it, yeah. You learn. You learn about the people you race against, too, who you can trust, who you can't. As you get older, that's the key to winning a championship is that: patience.

THE MODERATOR: When you say 50/50, do you realize when you were younger what is now 50/50 was maybe 30/70 before, that the odds have changed?

WILL POWER: Yeah, when you're young, you got to work it out somehow. Crashing is one way (laughter).

But these cars, because you can't really bang wheels because of the way they're designed now, actually pretty good for wheel-to-wheel. You can go for a gap that you never would have gone for in the old car, because you'd fly up over the tire.

These cars have created more aggressive racing for sure, because they're safer to rub side to side.

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: Road courses (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. At Team Penske you have four cars, four very talented drivers. How hard is it to race against each other here? I would think you know what each other has and somehow you have to get your car to be the best at the very last of the race.

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: I think it's a weekly thing. It's not Indy. Every weekend we go to. I think that's why we qualify so well because we push each other so hard. We can see where they're quicker than you, where you need to improve, where you're okay. You keep getting yourself better. We get a lot of good information out of the four cars.

I think we respect each other a lot. We're very good friends. We work very well together. That's the key. I think if our relationship wasn't good enough, we probably wouldn't be here.

WILL POWER: Yeah, I mean, I agree. It's been great actually, how much I've learnt since the team has been a four-car team. You have so much information available from really good drivers, you're continually adding to your own strengths.

Yeah, it's a very strong combination.

Q. Will, I was wondering if you learned any lessons from finishing second last year? Any moments of the race you look back on that you think is a teachable moment?

WILL POWER: Yeah, you definitely got to put yourself in the position. The final restart is real important, to have a good one, be in the top three battling it out. Almost really top two.

But it's really difficult to know where to be because if a yellow falls with six to go, five to go, that might be the end of the race. I happened to be in a great spot to win the race last year if I had enough front. I would have had a great chance of passing Juan. But it wasn't to be. Who is to say it didn't go yellow that lap, Juan is in the lead, it's hard to tell.

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: There's never the right answer. Which one is the last restart? Is it the one you think it is or the one that maybe doesn't come. When do you risk it? If you risk it too much, you're out of the equation. You just got to play it as it comes.

THE MODERATOR: As we embark on the 100th running of the Indianapolis 500, to win the Indy 500, Juan, you've won it twice, this one seems extra special. To win the 100th, talk about the importance, if this would mean any more to win this one.

WILL POWER: As a team it means a lot because it's Roger's 50th running as a team. Yeah, there's going to be a lot more media attention, attention around this race.

At the end of the day you put your head down, get the car and everything in position to win it. It would be obviously phenomenal to win the 100th running. I don't think you want to focus on the fact it's the 100th, you want to focus on the race itself.

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: If you have to work harder because it's the 100ths, then you haven't been doing your job.

THE MODERATOR: When you strap in the car, to look at it from the outside, do you have to block out of your mind that this is the Indianapolis 500? Do you still get the chills that you are running the greatest race in the world?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I mean, I think it's a month-long thing, a big buildup. That creates some nerves. Once you're in the car, like, I didn't think about it.

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA: I didn't think about it. Everything with the introduction, the picture, the cars on the grid, really nice. Once you get in the car...

The parade laps, you're more worried about doing something really stupid. Personally, I am. That's the number one thing, just don't be the first idiot to crash (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: Best of luck in the 100th running of the Indianapolis 500. Thank you, gentlemen, for your time.