

# IndyCar Media

## Conference

Saturday April 2, 2016

# Simon Pagenaud

## Will Power

Postrace Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'll get started with tonight's post-race media conference. We're joined by the driver of the No. 22 DeVilbiss Team Penske Chevrolet, finishing second tonight Simon Pagenaud. Back-to-back second-place finishes to start the season, and now leading the championship. Talk about your night.

SIMON PAGENAUD: It was an interesting night, totally -- it was exactly as difficult as I thought it was going to be. It was a great race, very, very difficult to follow people, very difficult to get your balance right on the car, but we started with a lot of oversteer, struggled a little bit the first two stints, were having a lot of tire degradation. We adjusted really well in the race, but then we caught a yellow at the wrong time when pit lane when the yellow came out, so went a lap down, but fortunately my guys were just fantastic in the pits. I just want to say that's when you see how much of a team sport this is. The guys have been tremendous since St. Pete, and at the end of the day we were able to save a bit of fuel, the one stint before the end, and they did a magic pit stop so they put me back in the front. Once you're in the front with clean air, it's a lot easier and the car was spot on. I was quite content with second. Like I said, we're building a championship contention, so pretty happy tonight.

THE MODERATOR: You're now the championship leader. Your thoughts on that?

SIMON PAGENAUD: That's great. It's according to plan. Everything that didn't go well last year is going well now, so again, today is definitely -- I had a lot of help from my guys, but I also had a great race car thanks to the team, and yeah, so you know, we've just got to keep doing exactly that. It's great to see Will back and great to see he's also healthy, and to be able to put it all together is cool.

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Will Power, the driver of the No. 12 Verizon Team Penske Chevrolet. Will's ninth career podium finish, his best finish on an oval since he finished second at Indianapolis last year. Talk about your night, Will.

WILL POWER: Yeah, honestly the guys in the pits were awesome. It was so difficult to pass, we just sat there and saved fuel and kept catching those yellows. They were going long, and kind of saving the tires a bit, too. Just that last start made a mistake. Unfortunately came into the pit box there and kind of knocked the tire, so we had a slower start because it was all my fault. But yeah, very happy to finish the race in third. You know, it's gravy. It's my first race of the season, so I'm very happy with that.

**Q. One question for both of you. After Helio and Juan had tire troubles, how much were you concerned that maybe similar or the same could happen to your cars?**

WILL POWER: Actually I wasn't even aware. Actually I think Tim Cindric said to me after Helio's cut tire, I didn't even know. I didn't know what happened, so I wasn't thinking of it.

SIMON PAGENAUD: I got the information, but there's not much you can do as a driver, just keep pushing and see what happens. So at the end of the day, you've just got to keep doing your job. You have it in the back of your mind when you start getting a vibration and stuff like that, but that's part of the job.

**Q. Is it a little confounding when a guy like Dixon has a lead and runs that many laps in a row to be able to try to make any kind of move against that driver?**

SIMON PAGENAUD: No, I'll tell you, I was really content with second. Like I said before the race, this wasn't my strong suit in the past. That's my best result on a short oval. It's not where I've been the most comfortable in the past, so now things are changing. If where we're weak, we finish second, that's really good. It's a long championship, and I'm trying to be consistent.

The thing behind him, we had the pace. It's so difficult to pass, there was no interest for me to take that many risks and try. I mean, I was trying, don't get me wrong, but Will was trying, too, at the end, but there's only so much you can do at some point of the race.

**Q. I know you haven't had time to talk to your team, but Helio led a lot of laps at the beginning and then had the problem with his tire and then Juan led a**

**lot of laps next and he had what looked like the same kind of problem where the tire kind of -- maybe it went flat but it kind of squished off the rim a little bit. Were you careful with your tires? Is that a strategy you both had because you were a little farther back?**

WILL POWER: Actually I was. I was very nice on my tires because I knew you couldn't pass, so why get so close. Yeah, and I was aware that the more you punish it, the more chance you're going to have of a big vibration. It's not the tire that's the problem. It's the amount of downforce we have here. It's too much, and that's why we couldn't pass, and that's why the tires -- some of the tires had vibrations.

SIMON PAGENAUD: Yeah, I would say at the beginning I couldn't be really aggressive with the car because we were too loose, so I didn't really punish the tires then, but then once we got the car dialed in, I didn't want to go too aggressive on the tires and I unfortunately got the wrong side of it, and I discovered what to do, so at the end, I just was a bit more gentle, especially on the first five laps. But I believe what they had was a cut tire, so there's nothing you can do about that. But I would second what Will said.

**Q. With this massive amount of downforce, did you already recognize on test day that maybe vibrations or maybe tire problems would occur in the race?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, people were having vibrations, and there's not much Firestone can do about it when we have so much load in the car from downforce. But I didn't honestly have a problem in the race with it. I'm not sure many people did. The tires were fine. Like Simon said, the two problems were cut tires, so nothing you can do about that.

**Q. David Faustino told me on Thursday that your championship drive begins tonight.**

WILL POWER: Yeah.

**Q. So how do you feel? Heck of a result for you and you've got some ground to make up and you can't make it up all at once.**

WILL POWER: No, it's a long season. Obviously for me it's just finishing tonight, and we'll see as the season goes along. Just have fun with it, not really any pressure, and we'll see what happens in the end. Like you said, it's a very long championship, and you've got a couple double-points races. I think I can crawl back.

**Q. Will, you were closing on Simon and Simon didn't look like he was going to have a shot or would be willing to take that risk. Were you willing to take that risk to try and pick up second?**

WILL POWER: Well, no, I could see Simon was

struggling out of 3 and 4. I could definitely get around, but I was like, I'm not going to -- unless it was a sure thing, there was no way I was going to take a risk with my teammate. It's just not worth it. I just wanted to finish the race.