

# IndyCar Media Conference

Friday June 3, 2016

## Simon Pagenaud Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and continue with our Verizon IndyCar Series post-qualifying press conference. Joined now by our pole winner Simon Pagenaud, driving the No. 22 Penske Chevrolet. Simon, congratulations. First of all, I believe your third pole of the season so far in 2016. Obviously a lot of really great success for you this season. Coming off of Indy, how great does it feel to pick up where you left off on the road and street courses?

SIMON PAGENAUD: Yeah, it's -- well, I mean, Indy was obviously a bit of a disappointment with the mechanical issue we suffered about halfway through the race. We felt like we had a car to fight at least for -- contend for the fight at the end, so yeah, it was unfortunate for sure, but I'm glad we're back on top here, and our form -- I knew the car would be good here because of the way it was in Long Beach. Just great that we could extract the lap time out of it. Obviously there was a bit of strategy on our side with the Firestone tires. We chose to go on the black Firestone tires, and they're working really well for us, and it paid off. So I'm really, really delighted.

THE MODERATOR: Even though you didn't set the track record, your teammate Helio did. A lot of fast times out there today. What would you attribute to such a decent breaking of the track record?

SIMON PAGENAUD: I think the aero kits are showing their relevance at this time. We could see it at the 500, as well. Obviously there's quite a bit of difference between the Honda package and the Chevy package, and I think right now it's becoming interesting. We see some evolution on front wing on our side on the Chevy side, for example, but I think the whole package is just getting stronger every year. You know, we get more horsepower from the engines. We get more downforce from the aero kit, and also last year was the first year where they had concrete here, so it was brand new, a bit dusty, now it's washed off and is obviously more grip on the racetrack, so that's why we went faster.

**Q. Simon, obviously a huge strategic play to get the pole on the blacks. How the heck are you going to translate that? You've got an extra set of reds available compared to everyone else?**

SIMON PAGENAUD: Yeah, certainly it's going to be

very important for the race. We know the red Firestone tires have a tendency to degrade a lot here because of the concrete and the way that the concrete is. But it was interesting to see that our car was so well-balanced on the black Firestone tires. I just felt like I could extract myself -- I could extract more out of myself on the blacks. There was more of a comfort zone, and that's why I picked that set of tires.

But I think it's going to be a big advantage tomorrow indeed.

**Q. You had a fast car last week but lost a cylinder, still had a decent finish, but yet with the double points, everybody else kind of closed the gap on you. Was that the one thing that you took away from there as kind of a big disappointment was your points edge getting eaten into?**

SIMON PAGENAUD: It was the only race I didn't care about points. What I wanted was to go out and try to win it. I was actually quite pleased that we only lost 20 points quite frankly. Dixon didn't have the best day. Neither did Montoya. So I thought we got pretty lucky. We don't need to have too many bad weekends. I knew we were going to have bad weekends because you can't have a perfect weekend every day, but unfortunately it was the 500, but you know, what I'm contend with is that we showed again that we're very strong on these kind of tracks, and I think next year we can be back and hope to contend for the win again.

**Q. How is the track conditions, and I know there are bumps out there, a lot of suspension transfer, et cetera, but how did you feel?**

SIMON PAGENAUD: Great. Personally we put a lot of effort into the suspension at Team Penske, and the car feels really nice. Obviously it's bumpy, but we all know that this place is bumpy, and that's what personally I really enjoy. I think it's got a lot of character, this track, and when you're able to brake a little deeper on the bumps than another driver, it creates good diversity and challenge, as well. I don't dislike it, I really don't. I think it shows the best cars and also the best drivers. I really like this track. There's a really high commitment level. You don't really have time to breathe. Leaving Indianapolis, I'll tell you, this was a bit of a shock to the body today, but a lot of fun.

**Q. We had the long month at Indianapolis and now**

**we've got a double-header here and Texas next week, so that's three races in 13 days after the month of May. Not so much for you guys, but how difficult is this period of the schedule for your crews?**

SIMON PAGENAUD: Yeah, I think it's -- since we haven't really lifted the throttle since -- I believe since Barber. Even after Barber they had to work. We went testing, went to Texas for testing, and my guys haven't had much time at home. I think -- I was talking to my crew chief yesterday, and I think he went home half a day since Barber. Yeah, it's a little tough on them. Obviously for us drivers, we have all the comfort that we need. You can rest more than they do. But certainly for them, knowing that they also do the pit stops and they've got to stay fit is really difficult. I try not to bring them too many donuts, but I try to treat them as well as I can.

**Q. A few years ago you got your first win here in an IndyCar. What did that win mean for you and going forward how it propelled you from there?**

SIMON PAGENAUD: What did it mean to get a win here? Well, you know, it was -- at the time I was just getting to IndyCar, it was certainly a big step in my career. You always want to unlock that door and win your first win in a major series like the Verizon IndyCar Series. I think it allowed me to believe even more in myself and keep working on my race craft. That was a big step.

You know, obviously we all knew that I could win in sports car but we didn't know that I could win in an open-wheel car. So it was a big step forward, and now more and more I'm gaining more and more confidence every time. It's a good time in a career. It's a really good time, and I think that's what every driver is really -- they want to get to that level at some point, so I really, really enjoy this time of my career right now.