

# IndyCar Media Conference

Sunday June 5, 2016

## Will Power

## Simon Pagenaud

## Ryan Hunter-Reay

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started with our post-race press conference. We're joined by third-place finisher Ryan Hunter-Reay, equals his best finish of the season.

Ryan, talk us through your day.

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: It was pretty drama-free. Just drove as hard as I could the entire time and wound up third unfortunately.

Congrats to Team Penske.

It was nice to finish third after the heartbreak of Indy, to have a solid run today. Obviously we're not happy with third.

SIMON PAGENAUD: Are you serious? Come on, be happy (laughter).

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: You're just banking points like nobody's business. I would be happy if I were you, too.

SIMON PAGENAUD: You had a good race.

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: I was pushing the 'push to pass' at the end, trying to close the gap. It wasn't really working that well, so...

We had good pace, but it wasn't enough to close up and make a run for Simon or Will.

Tough day. Very physical circuit. Two very physical races. I'm definitely a bit relieved that it's over at this point.

THE MODERATOR: We're also joined obviously by second-place finisher Simon Pagenaud.

Take us through your day, Simon. Sounds like you're fairly pleased with the result.

SIMON PAGENAUD: Yeah, it was a great day. I think



most importantly it was great for Team Penske. We got a 1-2. Helio was really strong. I feel really bad for him. He had a good race going. He was really strong. He got caught up.

On the HP car, we were strong all weekend, led a lot of the race. We were really strong on long runs, not so strong on cold tires.

The restarts really made it difficult for us. Will was really good and aggressive. He made a good pass on us. So, yeah, Will went really deep outside turn three. Didn't have the confidence on cold tires to do that. There was no point colliding or trying too hard.

I thought maybe with the long run I would get back to him, which we did at the end, but it wasn't enough. Good job to him. It's good to see him back in Victory Lane. Again, 1-2 for Roger.

He and the whole Penske organization, they do so much for this island here. It's a beautiful park, we have a great race going, great event. I think I'm really happy we put on a good show today and bring a 1-2 home.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.

#### **Q. The momentum boost you can take from this, Ryan, heading to Texas, you've run pretty well there.**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Yeah. Like I just said, it was our first day in quite a while where nothing went wrong, so that was nice.

But, yeah, Texas is a very tricky racetrack. Every year it gets older, the surface gets more abrasive, the tire falloff is more dramatic. It's going to be very tough, no doubt about it.

You have a very small window to get Texas right on the setup. We'll be working at it. We finished second there in the past. Hopefully we'll go for one better.

#### **Q. (No microphone.)**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Honda is doing a great job right now, at the Indy 500, here today. It's down to us to get the result.

#### **Q. Ryan, how physical a race was this for you?**

**You were struggling with the wheel.**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Oh, yeah. It was brutal. We ran it a little too low. We missed it there. The bumps were worse this year. You hear us IndyCar drivers talk about that. Everybody is like, Oh, be quiet about the bumps.

But we run the cars on the ground basically already, right? When they do bottom and they hit on a big bump like that, our seats are this thin on the bottom, it goes right through your back. It hurts and it makes for an extremely physical race that way because you have all the kickback in the wheel.

Detroit is one of the more physical tracks. Doing two races coming off a mentally and physically fatiguing Indy 500 month is as tough as it gets for sure. I wish there was something that looked more dramatic for you and the fans to see in the car. We're wrestling those things. We're pushing it to 110%.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Ryan. We'll continue with questions for Simon.

**Q. You had the best car in yesterday's race, finished 13th. Arguably you had the best car in today's race and don't win. You seem pretty happy about it. What is your feeling leaving this weekend? Yesterday probably bugged you a little bit because your car was that good.**

SIMON PAGENAUD: That's the Verizon IndyCar Series. That's what it's all about. You can be as frustrated as you can be. There's nothing you can do about it. At the end of the day it's about where you are.

I think today, strategy played really well for us. Sometimes it goes your way, sometimes it doesn't. You have to accept it, otherwise you're going to be very frustrated as a driver.

We really did have a strong car all weekend for sure, but it doesn't mean you're going to win everything. That's why I'm happy.

We leave here with an 80-points lead. We were strong everywhere. We were strong in Indy, just couldn't finish the way we wanted it. Hopefully we can be strong in Texas and it will be okay.

But, yeah, I'm very happy. I think we salvaged a pretty good weekend. Helio had a pretty bad day today. Dixon is behind. Those are the main contenders. So 80 points lead is big.

**Q. You've known Will a long time. Do you think over the last few weeks he's been pressing a little bit? Montoya made that reference yesterday.**

SIMON PAGENAUD: I don't know. Quite frankly, I focus on myself. It is so much already you need to extract out of yourself, you can't really focus on the others.

Will is doing his job. Juan Pablo is doing his job. I have to focus on myself. It's so intense. To be at your top level in this series, it's so intense that you can't really focus on things that not going to help you. So I can't really answer the question.

**Q. Simon, a streak like you had earlier is something that you'll enjoy looking back on forever. Do you feel after the 500 and this weekend, is it a little bit cut short? How do you go on to Texas feeling?**

SIMON PAGENAUD: I think if you ask a lot of drivers, they'd be happy to finish second today. No, I'm pretty happy. That's three second places, three wins in, what, eight races now, seven.

THE MODERATOR: Eight.

SIMON PAGENAUD: Eight.

So I'm satisfied. You can't win them all. Sometimes second place is what you're going to get. We definitely had a car to win.

Yes, it's more satisfying to win. But second today, I think considering who won, it's very good. So, no, I'm pretty happy. Big picture: championship.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Simon.

SIMON PAGENAUD: Thanks, guys.

THE MODERATOR: We're joined now by the winner of today's race, Will Power.

Your 26th career win here in the Verizon IndyCar Series. I know everyone you've talked to since the end of the race has mentioned that. It's been a little while since your last win. How great does it feel to get back on top of the podium?

WILL POWER: It's been great. Been a weekend where we're knocking on the door. In practice, obviously had a bad first qualifying, and then was fast in the race yesterday, had an issue. Was fast in qualifying this morning, fast enough for pole, had my two best laps taken away.

It's very satisfying. Very satisfying. Been a tough season, I would say. Yeah, I kind of kept the pace, kept plugging away.

THE MODERATOR: You touched on this a little bit, but

the tough race that you had yesterday, did it help you knowing that you could come back today with a doubleheader weekend and try again?

WILL POWER: Yeah, it did. We started ninth yesterday, were able to work our way all the way to the front. Yeah, I always felt around here, it doesn't really matter where you qualify, it's usually a pretty mixed-up race.

It did matter today. Pretty straightforward race. Nothing out of the ordinary. You just had to be good on restarts. Had a great start, which got me out ahead of Hunter-Reay.

THE MODERATOR: Of course, not only a win, but a win in your team owner Team Penske's backyard. What does it mean for you to be one of the four to bring the win to Roger here?

WILL POWER: It's great. Roger this morning, very keen, said one of us need to win, and for Chevrolet. Believe me, I'm very happy to be the one.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Will.

**Q. From your point of view, if you could describe the move where you passed for the lead in turn three, you had to really stick it in there perfectly or one of you was going to end up in the wall.**

WILL POWER: I knew on that restart I had to get Simon. It was my best chance. Had cars in front of me, which makes it very difficult in turbulent air.

But he's the championship leader and also my teammate. I had to make it a very clean move. So I went to the outside. I wouldn't have done it to go up the inside, too much risk of taking him out.

It was a surprise to get him on the outside. It really was. Gave him room in the apex, ended up getting down to first gear, got out. Yup, that's it, what I needed.

**Q. You have a pretty serious workout routine back in North Carolina. How demanding were these two races on you?**

WILL POWER: It's very demanding. You go somewhere like Barber, smooth, so high on the G Force. Here it's constant kickback through the wheel, bottoms out. And some very fast corners. It's very physical, very tough.

Had a few issues in the off-season, so my normal level of fitness was not where it should be at the beginning of the season, which made it tough in races. I'm back up to where I need to be.

**Q. Juan came in here yesterday and was pretty straightforward and said you'd been pressing. Did you have a conversation with Juan? Do you feel like you've been pressing? Tough weekend, tough May. Do you feel like that?**

WILL POWER: No, I don't feel like I was pressing.

Is that what he said? I don't know what that means. A button or something (laughter)?

No, no, I'm doing my normal thing. I've changed nothing, honestly. It's just circumstance, you know, that puts you in position to win a race. It's not pressing. I didn't have an issue at all.

I mean, I passed him. No problem.

**Q. Did you have a robust conversation with him? Did you sort things out?**

WILL POWER: Yes, we did. You know, we're teammates. That move was for the win at the time. Obviously he didn't want to give up the lead, because he obviously knew that himself. We're both going for the corner. We touched a little.

You know, it's fine. It's racing. At the end of the day, we're teammates, but we compete on the track. As long as we can talk about it, sit down and talk about it. At the end of the day, be fine with it, it's all good.

**Q. Were you fine with it?**

WILL POWER: Absolutely. I was absolutely fine with it. Shook his hand. Hey, that's racing.

**Q. This win through a tough stretch, I think you're eighth in the points, 118 behind, does that put you a bit back in the race? How do you see your title prospects?**

WILL POWER: Somewhat. As long as it's mathematically possible, you have to keep at it. You get double points at the end.

Simon has had a phenomenal run, when you think about the number of second places, let alone the wins that he's had. Very consistent. He's doing the right thing right now to win a championship, which he's always right up there knocking on the door. It's going to be tough, very tough to get back there.

I don't know who is closest to him. It seems like it's rotating. You have Simon out here, then guys like Helio, Dixon, myself. You keep rotating, good results, bad results, good results, bad results. No one is consistent yet to make a challenge.

**Q. When you won the road course race at Indy in 2015, you were up there as king of the road. That**

**was the last time we saw you in Victory Lane. How long has this last year really drug along for you?**

WILL POWER: It was frustrating last year because I felt I was the quickest. I had more poles than anyone, led a lot of laps. It just amazed me when yellows would fall, throw you completely out of the game. That's IndyCar racing. Sometimes it's just very frustrating because it can be just pure luck where the yellow falls.

Look at Helio today. Caught out by yellow. Almost a drive-through penalty for that, which I don't like. He's done a good job, worked his way to the front, saved more fuel, gone a lap longer, literally it's a drive-through penalty if you do that. You get put to the back. You're literally leading, goes yellow, everyone pits, you go to the back. I believe that's something that should change in IndyCar.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

WILL POWER: Yes, we've talked a lot about that. When Beaux Barfield was here, it changed. The pit remained open on the yellow. The problem you have is you have people racing back to the pits. If there's an incident, people are going past that incident too fast.

But now if you look at Formula One, you have these, what are they called, virtual safety cars. We can do that. We can slow everyone down to the same speed on the track, whatever that may be, 60 miles an hour, go around on a limiter until everyone pits, and it prevents that.

It's an easy fix and we should do it. It even makes it safer. Everyone slows down to a limited speed where they have it on their dash. Then we can pack up and have restarts and all that stuff as well. It makes it safer in the pits. It makes it more fair on the track. It makes it more sportsmanlike, you could say, so it's not a lottery.

**Q. What is the most memorable thing Tim told you or advised you today on strategy?**

WILL POWER: No, I can't remember. Fuel numbers. He said basically, Simon is the real leader here, you have a bunch of cars that have to pit in about 10 laps, be careful. He always tells me to be careful. Obviously I know that (laughter).

You don't want to have two Penske cars in the fence. Not a good thing. Had to be very smart about it, calculated, and execute the move without any problems.

THE MODERATOR: Will, congratulations. We'll see you in Texas.

WILL POWER: Thanks.