

IndyCar Media Conference

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Will Power

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Joined now by the winner of the Kohler Grand Prix at Road America, Will Power, driving the No. 12 Verizon Team Penske Chevrolet. Will, your 27th career win, also your second here in 2016. You're on a roll. What's going on?

WILL POWER: Yeah, it's finally back to my normal fitness level, and just the way I do things. Obviously the start of the year was very tough for me. I couldn't train in the off-season. Didn't do the first race, so my fitness really -- I usually turn up for the season very fit. This year I turned up way off where I normally am. I've got my normal energy back and I can perform like I normally do, and that's the difference.

THE MODERATOR: Being back here at Road America, what does that mean to you as a driver coming back to compete on such a historic racetrack?

WILL POWER: It's just a cool, old-school track. There's not many of them around that we go to anymore, and any of the ones that we do go to -- you go to Mid-Ohio there's a big crowd. You come here, it was amazing just walking around on Thursday, there was so many people. But even Friday night I went for a walk through the camping grounds and it was just awesome to see so many people having fun and just so many people, and on your parade lap, it was just such a big crowd, it was crazy. It's great, great for IndyCar. We should have been back here a long time ago.

THE MODERATOR: What was going through your mind late in the race when there was that late yellow and you knew a restart was coming up with just a few laps to go?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I was like, oh, you always dread that late restart, but I thought I'm going to make the absolute most of it and do the best I can and try to get a jump. I knew I had Push-to-Pass in hand, which I thought before the race is going to be the key here, to keep that for the end, and that's what I did. If I didn't have that, TK was going to -- he would have had a really good shot at getting me. He was very quick, and on reds, too.

Yeah, very satisfying race. Very satisfying because I

felt like I'm back where I was, and that's a good feeling for me.

THE MODERATOR: I heard somebody ask you this in victory circle, they asked are you thinking about the championship now, and you replied I was thinking about the championship before this race started. What's on your mind now with another win?

WILL POWER: Yeah, if you look at the points situation, obviously things can change so quickly. You look at the last race, there can be something like an 80 or 90-point swing if the guy you're racing has a bad day and you win. You know, and then you've got seven more races. It's just so many points left and so much to happen. Obviously Pagnaud has had a very good-flowing season up to this point, but that doesn't continue, it never does. You always -- you have your good runs, it goes in cycles, and we're very determined from here on out. We want to be there at the end. We want to win the championship, simple as that.

Q. You've got your teammate you're going after, but Dixon had a really bad points day, so you're getting closer to leapfrogging him. Every guy you pick off, how important is that?

WILL POWER: Not even looking at the people I'm picking off, just going out there and trying to win races. Obviously the gap -- that's what you're looking at. Who cares about everyone in between. It's the points lead that you have to close. You've got to continually finish ahead of that guy. That's how you win the championship from here. You've just got to, every time, knock him off every weekend.

Q. Are you going to start to petition to do more races in Wisconsin? At the mile last year you flat-out dominated that race, too.

WILL POWER: Yeah, that's right. Yeah, it's a pity we're not going to the Milwaukee Mile. Yeah, that was also one of my most satisfying wins was -- that was in 2014, and that started my run to win the championship. Same here. I screamed on the radio when I won the race here because I was so excited. I was just so -- like just all weekend I wanted to get pole, I wanted to win the race, and I did it.

Q. How hard is it to have a dominant weekend like this anymore? You used to have it a lot kind of in

the old car, but in the DW12 era this doesn't happen often. How satisfying is it to have a weekend like this?

WILL POWER: Yeah, it is, it's super satisfying. The races have been very green this year, and I was just so pissed off that I wasn't fit enough to qualify like I normally do. I wasn't where I needed to be. It wasn't really a fitness thing I guess in qualifying so much, but there's so many times that we should have challenged for pole but we made a mistake or got traffic or got a penalty, and a lot of those races were green, so we lost a lot of points there. But there was a point in the season where I just felt like I couldn't use my talent, when you don't quite have the energy to do it, but now I do, so you start getting into the flow of things and feel like you're a challenge every weekend to win.

THE MODERATOR: You mentioned you have a new fitness routine or a new diet or something that you're doing differently that gives you the energy now. What kind of things are you doing that's caused this energy swing?

WILL POWER: Well, it's just getting back to where I was. I had some health problems in the off-season, so I couldn't train. Some of that was some food allergy stuff and a couple of other things. But it's just slowly building myself back up so I could do my normal regime. I haven't changed anything the way I exercise, it's just being able to do it, and then having car fitness.

Yeah, then diet played a role in that. Suddenly I couldn't eat certain foods. It really, really destroyed me.

Q. The records will show that you led 46 laps, never gave up the lead on the track, were out by several seconds a few times. Were you that much better than everybody else today, or was it just a matter of getting out early and getting out after the restart?

WILL POWER: You know, you had to look after your tires, so it was not a matter of -- obviously I could have gone a lot faster at the beginning of the stint but then you'd struggle at the end, so I really tried to maximize the whole stint, like never really lean on it or slide, which is the fast way anyway, I was just very particular about that because I knew that that would be a factor. And as the track rubbered up, I started to be pretty quick at the end of stints.

If we had to push, we could, pull the lead, and then we'd save fuel like we wanted to at the first stint and did everything we needed to do to win the race basically.

Q. So you were just playing with them?

WILL POWER: No, not at the end there with TK. That

was everything I had because he had reds, new reds, and he was coming fast. But I'd saved Push-to-Pass for that reason, because I knew if there's a late restart, you want to have a lot of Push-to-Pass because it's such a huge gain here.

Q. When we were at the mile for four years, it always seemed in the back of the minds whether the race would stay in Milwaukee. What's the feeling now after today with the show and the race and a weekend like IndyCar had this weekend about the future of having IndyCar here at Road America on a more permanent basis like it was as opposed to Milwaukee was a little more clouded?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I mean, obviously, when you look here, we'd be crazy not to come back. I think it's a three-year deal. I actually don't know, but that's great. I just think the series needs to go to tracks like this. It's tough on street courses because you don't have them long enough to build that fan base, and you need to come back to these old tracks on the same time every year so it becomes a routine for me, and you can build a really good fan base. I just think permanent road courses are much easier.

The street courses, yeah, Long Beach and St. Pete that have been around a long time, you see Long Beach always gets a big crowd because it's been there so long. It's just tough to find street courses now that stick around long enough. That was why I was really happy we were going back to Watkins Glen because it's the same thing, a track with a lot of history. IndyCar has been going there, Formula 1 before that. It's got a big history of open wheel racing, and same with here. That's how you build a series.

THE MODERATOR: Will, thank you very much. Congratulations.