

IndyCar Media Conference

Sunday July 10, 2016

Josef Newgarden

Will Power

Scott Dixon

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started with our post race press conference. We're joined by our third-place finisher, Scott Dixon, and our second-place finisher, Will Power.

Will, your third straight podium finish. Really seemed to charge at the end. How did your race go today?

WILL POWER: It was good. Took us all day to get to the front basically. Kind of went really long on the first stint, lost quite a lot of positions there. Then slowly made our way back. We needed long stints to get back to the front because our car was really good over a long distance.

Yeah, I'm not sure we would have had anything for Newgarden. He was on his own on another planet. Really happy with second, though. Really, really happy. We've never run well here. We finally found a setup that's not bad.

THE MODERATOR: Scott, talk about your day.

SCOTT DIXON: I think considering how the weekend started, it was pretty damn good. We tried a few different things on Friday. Unfortunately we tried to stick it out. I think we were 16th or 17th in the final warmup. Just threw last year's setup on it and basically ran that, which was similar to what the 10 car had been running all weekend.

I think unfortunately with a wholesale change like that, we spent much of the race just trying to dial the car in, at least the balance, and we had way too much understeer early on. It was nice to start the race, was pretty consistent, but fell off a lot towards the end.

I feel we would have been definitely in the hunt at the end. As Will said, I don't think anybody really had anything for Josef today. Huge credit to that team. They did a hell of a job. Josef deserved that big-time. Good to see him get a win.



For me it's nice to have an Iowa go somewhat smooth. First time on the podium. I'll all smiles. Big thanks to the Team Target for giving me something that was close to the front.

THE MODERATOR: Maybe both of you can comment on the conditions out there today.

WILL POWER: It was really good. The beginning, when the tires degraded a lot. At the end, a lot of wide-open racing. I don't know. I think they can take a lot of downforce off still here. I think the tires need to degrade more. It was so much fun at the beginning when you were sliding around. At the end you were just stuck. But it was still fun racing.

It's a great track. You know, it's all about getting the formula right. I think it was really good racing today with what we had. A lot of fun.

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, I think it's definitely different racing here during the day. It's a different dynamic with the track temperature being up a lot higher. The tire falloff was pretty significant.

I think when we had the night races, the last stint or two you could run pretty much flat through all those hundred plus laps.

I think the track is getting a little more character with some of the patches, a little bit bumpy in some spots. You still have two lanes that are very useful.

It got spread out a little bit today. But I think as far as putting on a good show, good racing, it was definitely tough to manage the tires, you know, manage your car, and try to chase it a little bit as the track gripped up through the later hours.

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

Q. Scott, you had a run at Josef down the stretch. Did it become quickly apparent what he had was too tough to overcome?

SCOTT DIXON: I kind of looked at it going into one and two the first time. Then I could see that he was running the tight line, which was going to be quicker, but I was hoping it would burn the tires off pretty fast as well.

The team had been running that line all day. I knew he was going to be very tough to beat. Seemed like he had a pretty spot-on balance. The car had a lot of grip that the rest of us didn't quite have.

I think at the start, tried to push it for the first five or ten laps. Then I could feel I was abusing my fronts pretty heavily. We had a tear-off stuck to the front part of the wing, which under caution we tried to get off, running closely behind Josef. The run before we didn't have that balance issue. I knew he was going to be extremely tough to beat.

Q. Will, you said Josef was driving on a different planet. Do you have an explanation as to why his car was so dominant compared to the rest?

WILL POWER: No, I think the team did a phenomenal job. They obviously hit the setup dead on. This track, if the car is not working, you can really struggle. They just nailed it absolutely.

Full credit. They're a top-class team. Obviously not with the budgets that Penske and Ganassi have. They generally do a really good job with their resources. Full credit to them.

Q. You both were able to make up some ground on the championship today. How important is that and what do you need to do going forward with that?

SCOTT DIXON: I think Josef made a pretty good chunk up on that today. We always kind of see this, whether it's going to play true to what we see every year, where it starts to flip here pretty quickly, make a real championship of it.

Don't want to wish somebody bad luck, but he's probably going to have to have some. He's doing a great job. On days when they're not at their best, they're still getting good points. Huge achievement for their team. They're going to have to work for it. That's what it comes down to.

A lot of championships, I find that towards the end it becomes a real race for the points.

WILL POWER: Yeah, I agree. It's funny, I don't know why, if you get a big points lead in the middle of the year, somehow you know you aren't going to have that coming down toward the end. Scott is right. You're bound to have a bad day, you're going to. It's just what the other guys do on that day when you do have a bad day.

Hopefully it's a day we're winning when he's having a bad day, you knock off a lot of points. 70 points, the last race can swing 70 points. He has a bad race, a

DNF, an engine problem or something. Got to keep chipping away, keep chipping away each week.

Q. Will, you passed your teammate Pagenaud. Your car really seemed to come alive. I don't know if that's because your tires were better. Then you passed Dixon. Talk about how your car was so strong at the end.

WILL POWER: Kind of in the previous stint, really degraded the front tires. I was aware of that. Really (indiscernible) on them for the first 15, 20 laps of that stint without losing too much ground. Found a couple good lines, looked after them.

Scott I think went after Newgarden pretty hard. Degraded his tires. Simon didn't seem that good over a long stint and we were. Gave me an opportunity to get both those guys.

It was great. I was stoked. Always good racing guys like Dixon, because he gives you room.

SCOTT DIXON: Just. Should have put me in the fence (laughter).

Q. Talk about the pass. You gave him room, but just barely enough room.

WILL POWER: I saw him coming by. If he goes any more, we'll crash. If it was some of these other guys, I would have been almost lifting out. But it was Dixon. He's clean. You know, yeah, got a lot of respect for him.

Q. Everyone talks about how physically demanding this track is. What was it like for both of you out there today? Given Josef's injuries, how much more impressive does that make his victory?

WILL POWER: I think considering his hand and all that, man, when we were running wide open at the beginning of stints, it was physically difficult. He was having to grip that wheel. Full credit to him.

I said before the race to my wife, I said, Newgarden is going to win this race. I knew it. I could just tell from practice, the way he qualified, how good he is around some of these places.

Full credit when you have a shunt like he had, come back from injuries, to a physical place like this, and win. He didn't test here either. So very, very good.

Q. With the rain this morning, did that throw a wrench into any of your setup plans? It ended up being five or ten degrees cooler than originally expected. Did you have to make any sort of changes to adjust for the different weather?

SCOTT DIXON: We had wholesale changes anyway.

We knew it was going to be tough for us to hit the mark in the first couple stints.

I don't know. I think the rain, because we had the ARCA rubber last night, I think that was probably pretty good for it to wash some of that off. It didn't seem that bad. First couple stints were pretty low grip. The track temp was way up, being later in the afternoon.

I don't know. I think everybody ran as much downforce as they possibly could. When you have days that factor in the ambiance a little bit, you can trim a little bit more, like we saw at the Indianapolis road course, that changes it. But today I think everybody was just running pretty much as much as they could.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, gentlemen.

SCOTT DIXON: Thanks.

WILL POWER: Thanks.

THE MODERATOR: We'll continue with our post race press conference, joined by Josef Newgarden.

Josef, a bridesmaid no more here. You made your way up to the top step of the podium. Take us through your emotions as you were leading a very dominating performance.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Well, it was a lot of fun, I will tell you that, maybe because the car was so good. I mean, it wasn't really falling off much. It just seemed really good. So it was fun.

Some stints it was like a video game. You put on new tires, catch people at the right point, you could just slice and dice. I think that's a lot of credit what we've built at this team with Ed Carpenter Racing. We had a good car here last year. We had a good shot at winning it then. We had a great race, but we were disappointed we couldn't get it done last year. We really wanted to get it done this year. We finally got it done, like you said.

The car was amazing. Absolutely what we needed. I think we were a little tick better. I have to give a shout out to JR Hildebrand. He made it that much better. Unfortunately we weren't able to test. But JR, I don't think we realize how lucky we are to have someone like him at our disposal whenever we need it.

We took a great car that we had last year that I think was a race-winning car, he made it better with his input. Thanks to JR Hildebrand. We got a great crew, great people. Finally got it done today. Happy to get that oval win for the team.

THE MODERATOR: 282 laps led, an all-time IndyCar record. History made tonight as well. Does that sweeten the deal at all?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I wasn't even thinking about that, to be honest. I didn't know that was a statistic to chase. I didn't know that was a statistic actually. That's cool. That's just even better. That's cool that we got that, too. More happy for the guys with everything we got done.

For me, I was just trying to get to the end. That was kind of my main goal, was getting to the end.

It was very apparent to me early on that we had a car that could win. For me, I was like, Well, shoot, I can't give up on the thing. If we weren't very good, doesn't mean I was going to give up, but I probably would have backed off a little bit and tried to conserve. But I couldn't. The car was so good that I couldn't let my guys down. I just tried to focus on gritting it out and getting the most out of the thing.

Like I said, just an amazing day I think for our entire team and all our people that work on this car and get it in the shape that it is.

THE MODERATOR: When you had your crash in Texas, I know you were very determined to stay in the car as much as you could, keeping in mind the championship race. You've now moved into second place, 73 points behind Simon. Does this all seem like a reality to you?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: That's cool. I didn't know that yet. I was curious how far we'd move up. If we want to challenge him, we have to continue to march forward. 72 points is a huge deficit. He has a very big lead over everybody.

You can't just finish well. I think for us we've been finishing well, we've been in the hunt. You want to beat him, actually have to beat him in the races I think. He's going to be strong everywhere we go. He'll show that.

We'll go to Toronto, try to do the same thing, try to have a good weekend, not have any crashes. We know Texas is coming. That's going to push us down. That's going to be tough to swallow when we get there. I think if we make enough hay, we'll still have a shot at winning the thing when we go to Sonoma.

I'm not too concerned about it yet. It's all about making hay when you can. You have to win races. At the end of the day we'll see where we're at. Hopefully we're close enough at Sonoma that we can challenge for a championship.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Josef, does it mean you will employ JR for future tests?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: JR is so good. I mean, to me JR Hildebrand should be in a car right now. I think he should be driving full-time personally. That's easier said than done. It takes a lot of money to put these cars on the track.

The caliber of driver that he is, he should be driving already. He's not a test driver. I think he's just a great driver. So for us to have him available to us is pretty fortunate.

If we ever had to test again or races where I wasn't going to be there, I'm sure JR would be the top of the list for them. He's the best guy available. That's kind of why I mention it. He did a great job at the test. Great teammate, great driver. Love to see him driving full-time at some point.

Q. I think I asked you three times. With your hand and your shoulder, what do you think it says about you that you dominated a physical race like this while dealing with physical limitations?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I'm not going to lie to you, I kind of impressed myself. Don't take that in like a cocky way. I was really nervous coming into the race. I didn't want to tell anybody that. This place is super physical. I can't express to you how physical it is.

A couple things can make that easier. If you have as good of a car as I had today, it makes your race so much easier to drive. If you have a car you're fighting, you're loose with, your constantly sideways, it's a lot more physical to drive.

I think I caught a break by having a great car. That made it easier. Man, I was surprised I could hold on. I was a little nervous about it. My game plan was I was going to ease up if I couldn't hold on a little longer. I never thought about pitting.

I could tell in the first stint, I was like, I got to be stupid if I can't get through this whole race. This car is so good, we can clearly win it with this car. I'm going to feel like an idiot if I don't get to the end. That was enough motivation for me just to get through it.

I don't want to make it a cop-out. I don't think people should feel like I did some crazy feat. The hand is still a little broken. I was able to use it. It wasn't too painful. The clavicle feels good with the plate in, was stable. It was a little more uncomfortable than normal around here, but it was doable. I don't think it was anything crazy.

Q. Two weeks ago at Road America when I asked you about how you were going to feel the next day, you said you were going to spend the day in bed or on ice. This track is probably more difficult because of the lateral Gs. How much more difficult did you feel it was today than you did at Road America?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Well, I don't know yet. I don't feel good at the moment, I'm not going to lie. I hope I'm feeling better tomorrow because we're at Toronto next weekend. Toronto is going to be difficult, too, with all the bumps, everything that goes on around that track.

I would hope I'm feeling better. It's going to be tough. Yeah, I don't know. I don't think I have an answer for you yet. I don't know where I'm going to be at. But I have confidence that I'll be able to get through that.

This place, to emphasize the physicality of it, I think I speed for everyone, Road America is a very physical track. This track is the most physical that we go to all year long. It's a seven-eighths mile oval. You have no break. When you have a break, it's maybe for three or four seconds down the backstretch. That's your only break.

You're talking about running 14, 15 seconds continuously loaded up, three to four Gs on your body, and the wheel weight is about 15 foot pounds. You're holding that the entire time. That's not easy to do. If you go into the gym, hold up a 15-pound plate, it's hard to hold that constantly for two hours.

I think most people would agree that's why it's physical, that's why it's difficult. In some regards, I think Toronto will be easier, but it's still going to be tough. I'm hoping I feel good tomorrow and be able to get through that race good.

Q. In that first period of racing before the first caution, you lapped everybody up to second place. How big a bummer was it when that yellow came out and nine guys decided they weren't going to pit, all of a sudden it's 11 cars on the lead lap?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: They were telling me that. I saw Simon. He kept creeping closer. I was waiting for that next set of tires. I think we could have gotten him, too.

At the end of the day that didn't really matter. The fact that we had a good cushion was all I was worried about. We had a really good cushion to Simon. I felt confident that whatever happened, we get yellow flags, I kind of wanted yellow. If we got yellows, I was going to be able to hold people off and keep going.

The yellow gave me a lot of rest period. I was kind of happy when we had the yellows when we did. It allowed me to recover a little and go hard again.

Q. Josef, you touched on a lot of things, obviously JR. The pit crew, you've been in similar positions in the past, something has gone wrong through no fault of your own. How good were they today, especially on the last stop?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I'm a big believer that you learn from your mistakes, you learn from your experiences. That happened in the car with me. That happened with all our guys on the pit crew. We knew we had a car to win here today. I think all those guys had their game together for sure.

I had complete faith. I never come into the pits and think that we're not going to get it done. I never think that. When it happens, some of it's normal. Everyone has bobbles every now and then. I make mistakes on the track, too. You can't really get down on people.

Like you said, they were clutch today. No hiccups. The car was perfect. Made great changes. They were aces in the pits. There was really nothing left on the table. I don't think we could have done much different today to get the job done. I was just so happy for everyone. I think we fired on all cylinders.

Q. Given what you've gone through, how much vindication is there, not just getting a win but getting at a place you had back-to-back finishes at?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I think you always feel nervous. For us, we knew we would be good here. The car hasn't changed too much. The track hasn't changed significantly. It was a little different race today because it was in the day and not night. I think that changed the element of the way the tires fall off, the way the stints flow.

But I had total confidence that we could get it done. I always get nervous at the end. You go into a race. When you know you have a car to win, you feel confident. I'm always a little bit nervous about the unknowns, the things you can't control. Maybe you get run into. That happens. Maybe you have a bad stop. Maybe mechanically something happens.

I'm not saying I didn't have confidence in the crew, but you just don't know what could happen, what could go wrong to ruin it, I could make a mistake, slide into the fence. That's what makes me nervous.

I always felt confident we would have a shot today. We've been good the last few years. I knew our car

was great. We knew what we were doing setting it up. I had total confidence we would have a shot at going out there and competing for the win.

Q. (No microphone.)

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, I really was actually. I thought on new tires we would be together for a lot longer. I wasn't going to pull away. It actually seemed like we had amazing new tire pace. We could rip fast laps for a good 10 or 15 laps in a row, make a gap.

I was more thinking we were going to be close together for 15, 20 laps. As soon as we hit traffic, that's when I'm going to get away. That's where I felt like we really shined today. I knew we were going to be strong like that.

I was a little surprised at our straight-up pace. We were fast. Like the thing was just quick. That's why I wasn't worried about restarts either. I knew we could just pull away. The car was so good, come to the restart, do everything you need to do, hit it right, we're going to be up the road in just a little bit.

Q. Back to your hand. Will and Dixie were talking earlier about how much the grip changed over the course of the race. I wondered if it was tougher on your hand when it was looser at the start of the race or...

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It did change for sure. I think at the start of the race it was easier. I think personally it gripped up towards the end. A little cloud cover came in. I actually got looser as the race went on. I was always struggling with understeer. I think everyone was for the most part.

I got loose towards the end of stints. I didn't really like that. It's more physical generally when it's loose. You have to do more movement in the car. You really have to be able to react.

When it's understeering, it's a lot slower. Everything happens really slowly. It's pretty easy to control understeer. The wheel is generally lighter when it's understeering. It's lighter when it oversteers. For me it got tougher when my car went to an oversteer balance. We balanced it out the last stint. It was pretty good for the last stint.

It got tougher for me with the track grip and the balance changing more to oversteer. I really tried to have the car understeer today and all weekend because it was easier to manage. I didn't have to be really reactive. It's lighter on the front end generally.

Q. Heading into the next three rounds, Toronto, Mid-Ohio and Pocono, how confident do you feel

you'll be able to pick up a bunch of points for the championship?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: I think we were knocking on the door at Mid-Ohio last year. We've been good there before. We've had a shot at winning that race I think. I feel confident that we can be there and be in a good position to challenge at Mid-Ohio.

I think Pocono is going to be tough for everyone, going back understandably with everything that happened last year. Just from a racing standpoint, I think we had a good car there last year. We should have just as good a shot at winning Pocono. We were second last year. I think we'll have two good cars there.

I don't feel bad about any racetracks we're going to. Kind of bummed about Texas. I think we had a car capable of winning there. That's the one place we're not going to have a shot going back trying to win thing. That's really the only one for me that I'm prepared for that we're going to lose a lot of points.

THE MODERATOR: Josef, congratulations. Thank you very much.

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Thank you so much.