

NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

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Rinus VeeKay

Ed Carpenter Racing
Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome and congratulations.

RINUS VEEKAY: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: It's your first career pole in the NTT INDYCAR Series. You are no stranger to success here at IMS. You've had four podiums in six Road to Indy races here, including a win in the Indy Lights. I'm sure this is definitely a highlight of your young career so far. Tell us about your day.

RINUS VEEKAY: Yeah, thank you. Definitely is a highlight. We've been working hard to finally get that first pole position. Yeah, everything got right once I did my first corner with warm red tires. The whole setup, everything felt perfect. I knew this was going to be a car to challenge for the pole.

I'm very happy. I hope I can translate it into a win or podium tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: We'll get right to the questions.

Q. We were here in August and you were the fastest teenager in Indy 500 history. You're the fastest kid at the Speedway. How does it feel to back it up at IMS on two different types of layouts?

RINUS VEEKAY: Yeah, that's great. I know Ed Carpenter Racing gives me a great car here at Indianapolis, their home race. I like Indy. This is basically my backyard. I live next to the Speedway.

It's nice to finally get all the hard work rewarded. Yeah, first pole was definitely a big goal to end the season with at least. Happy that I finally have it now.

Q. On July 4th it was a bit of a breakout race for you back then with your first top five in your second race. You got to really feel good a good result could be coming your way here.

RINUS VEEKAY: Yeah, yeah. I know we have a good racing car. We have a really good strategy team. I know there's still a lot of potential in it now. I think we can really go for that first win.

I'm just happy with this qualifying because I always have kind of struggled with the red tires because we have so limited practice with the red tires. Finally got it. Did everything perfect. I'm very happy.

Q. I know being from The Netherlands you like milk. With this being the Harvest GP, how much do you like cider?

RINUS VEEKAY: Cider? I don't drink alcohol.

Q. Apple cider doesn't have to be alcoholic, just so you know.

RINUS VEEKAY: I might try it soon then.

Q. Talk about the conditions out there today, what you can expect in the race tomorrow.

RINUS VEEKAY: Yeah, it was a really weird track today. In practice it felt quick, the track, but it never really felt right I think for anyone.

In qualifying the whole car really got balanced, I think also because the track got better. Yeah, I think we have a really fast car because it's cold. This was a late qualifying session, but I think still the track is going to be quick.

Yeah, there's going to be a lot of potential for the tires staying good for longer because they don't overheat. I think this will be a good race. I think there will be quite long stints.

Q. This season you've had a lot of ups and downs, a lot of close finishes. Finally you have your pole position. Do you feel validated finally, you have something under your belt? Also how does this make you feel for the remainder of the season for Rookie of the Year?

RINUS VEEKAY: Yeah, it feels amazing. Now I finally know I can do it. I've always kind of struggled, like I just



said, on the reds. To finally show that I learn every race, that's great.

I think, yeah, just heading into tomorrow, two races this weekend, confidence is super high for me, but also for the whole team. Everyone finally gets rewarded for all the hard work.

I think this translates into better weekends, better finishes this season.

Q. How did it feel being out on the track with the sun so low? Does it cause you any problems?

RINUS VEEKAY: It was a little hard to see the braking points for turn 12 on the black stint. Then the sun got lower than the grandstands, so I could see my braking point very well then.

But, yeah, it was a little issue on the first run, but luckily the second run everything was fine and I could just do my own thing.

Q. Do you think this may cause some issues during the race tomorrow?

RINUS VEEKAY: I don't think so. I think the race is not going to be that late that the sun's going to get that low. Maybe we'll have that with some bigger visor stickers on the visors.

Q. What do you expect tomorrow might be your biggest challenges?

RINUS VEEKAY: Well, starting from pole for the first time, it's different. It's new for me. I have to defend 24 guys behind me. I'm going to do my ultimate best. But, yeah, there's going to be a lot of new stuff. I think every other lap is going to be a challenge. I'm ready to take on the challenge.

Q. Coming up through the Road to Indy, you've had success at every level. How does it feel to get one step closer to the top step of your entire progression up the ladder?

RINUS VEEKAY: Yeah, it feels great to finally show this. Of course, it's been a weird season. I've had some really good races, but also I've been a little bit unlucky in some places. It's nice to finally show on a road course that I'm just right there with the big guys in qualifying.

I think giving the confidence boost like this to the team, yeah, it's very important. I think everyone will be even more motivated and we'll be even better for the rest of the

season.

Q. What size wooden shoes do you wear?

RINUS VEEKAY: We have European sizes. I only have one pair, which is 44. They're a little tight, but yeah. Might save them for the podium to drink some champagne.

Q. You mentioned the cooler temperatures. Tomorrow it's never going to get out of the 50s. Do you anticipate there could be some issues with cold tires out of the pits, especially on the black set?

RINUS VEEKAY: Yes, I think it will be more difficult to get up to speed, keep it between the lines. It's always been super warm, so you always kind of have grip from your first corner. Yeah, I could feel it was hard to get temperatures in. It kind of took an extra lap of tire wear before I could push 100%.

That's definitely going to play a role in strategy tomorrow. I also think at least our car is, yeah, more brutal when it's colder. I think it's going to be closer racing, yeah, just more fun tomorrow.

Q. Do you think you are going to have rookie jitters because you have all the veterans breathing down your neck at the start? Will you be thinking about that?

RINUS VEEKAY: Of course. There's very good drivers behind me. Yeah, I think for tomorrow it's going to be only focus forward, make sure I execute everything perfectly.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much. Congratulations, Rinus. Enjoy the pole.

RINUS VEEKAY: Thank you. See you tomorrow in Victory Lane.

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