

NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

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Alexander Rossi

Andretti Autosport
Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We've been joined now by our second-place qualifier, Alexander Rossi from Andretti Autosport.

Alex, tell us about your qualifying run today.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, it was okay. I think we got the car better every session. I think we really got everything out of it we could there in the Fast Six. That was a pleasant surprise. I think we thought we were kind of probably going to be around fourth or fifth. To be on the front row is good.

It's pretty par for the course if you're going up against Will Power in a Fast Six qualifying, going to be pretty hard to beat him. So we'll take it. We can have a good result from there, for sure.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions for Alex.

Q. This is a little bit later in the year. It's a lot hotter. It's a tight track. How is that going to affect the driving style tomorrow?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I don't think it's going to affect the driving style too much. I think Firestone has done a good job with the tire. It seems to handle the heat pretty well for the most part. So, yeah, I mean, I think it will be pretty much the same as usual. It's usually pretty hot here in March regardless. This is always one of our tougher races from a physicality standpoint. Just the heat and humidity, a street course, also one of our longer races as well.

But, yeah, I don't think it's really too much different than last year.

Q. I noticed in the warmups you're looking to catch the braking just right, went a little bit long. Is the track that much different from March or was that trying to push the edge?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: We didn't drive in March, so I don't know.

Q. Well, St. Petersburg normally.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I don't know. We have the Aeroscreen, which is 60-odd pounds as well. I don't know if it's track or car.

Yeah, practice, that's when you got to find the limits for sure. It's pretty much par for the course, especially when with this kind of newer schedule that we have with the obvious restrictions and such, you only have the one practice session. You got to try to fit a lot in, a lot of learning in, in a short period of time.

Q. Coming to the timing line, most of the cars sometimes would go too fast and not catch the last turn properly. Did you find any trouble with the timing line?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: No, I thought it was all right. I guess the Andretti Autosport cars were doing a good job.

Q. Tell me about the Aeroscreen, what it's like on a road course. Scott said it was probably going to have an issue with depth perception. How has it been for you so far this weekend?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Quite honestly, the visibility has been great. From that standpoint I haven't even really noticed it.

It doesn't change the driving style a whole lot. It changes a little bit about what you're looking for from the car. It's a little bit harder to see the tight stuff. The change of direction is a little bit slower.

Really the biggest issue, if you call it an issue, is just the heat. It's hot. I think we've all kind of touched on this topic throughout the year. Really this was always going to be one of the bigger tests to run when we get there next year. That's usually a very hot race.

The street courses are probably the most physically demanding just because they're so bumpy, low grip. You're fighting the car a lot more than you would on a



permanent course. They're slower, so not as much forced air coming in. I think an area we need to improve on.

In terms of the heavy hitting items, the visibility, which was a question for everyone, I didn't think about it till you just brought it up. Hats off to INDYCAR for that.

Q. Do you think the Aeroscreen changes from a physicality standpoint how these cars are?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, I mean, they're harder for sure. You don't get the cooling that you used to. It will be interesting tomorrow to see how guys fare. I think everyone is kind of managing it right now. It's hot, but you're only doing six, seven laps at a time. It will be interesting to discuss it after a 100-lap race tomorrow in some of the worst conditions, probably 85 degrees, direct sunlight, high humidity, street course. All the factors line up.

Yeah, it's going to be very physical. Yeah, I mean, I guess I'll have a better answer for how it actually is come tomorrow afternoon. Hopefully it's not too bad.

Q. Will strategy for you tomorrow to be to get the jump on Will on turn one? If you do, do you think you can hold him off given he's strong here?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, for sure, we're going to try. Whether it's lap one or into one or whenever, we're going to try to get it done. Regardless of who it is, clean air in these cars is hugely important. It just makes everything easier. The pace is higher. It's easier on the tires. Makes your life simpler.

That will be our goal. Our car on blacks is incredibly strong, probably stronger than anyone else out there, aside from maybe the 88 car. Yeah, we'll see how it goes. Yeah, we're definitely going to try to get the lead early and manage the race from there.

Q. Any fuel savings by being behind him? Can you go longer on your fuel, get a jump on a pit stop?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, I mean, that's always an option, right? I think we don't really know what the mileage target is yet just because we've been focusing on qualifying. In warmup tomorrow we'll see how easy it is to get a number, and that will give us an idea of what is possible tomorrow.

Usually in races like this it's not so much fuel saving as it is just who runs out of tire first. You're usually pitting for tires or holding on, trying to get to the end of the fuel window. I think tomorrow will be probably pretty similar. I think the

tires are good for 25-odd laps. Beyond that it will get tricky. It will be whose car manages the deg throughout the stint better.

Q. In a lot of ways you and Colton can finish the season quite strong. How much do you expect to be contending with him tomorrow to try to get the victory and go into the off-season strong?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I don't really care who it is, just trying to win a race before the year is done whether it's a teammate or not. Yeah, he's obviously quick. He's done a good job all year. He can probably finish third. Well, Will will try to beat him in the championship. I'm not in the championship. I don't really care. I'm just trying to win a race.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Alex, for joining us.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Thanks, guys.

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