

# NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

## Colton Herta

Andretti Autosport

## Jack Harvey

Meyer Shank Racing

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. We are joined by our NTT P1 award winner, Colton Herta. It is Colton's fifth career NTT P1 award, his first of the season. His father actually won the first pole award here in 2005.

Colton, congratulations. Why don't you tell us about your day.

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, it's been going good so far. We've shown strong pace all weekend. Haven't been outside of the top four in any session. Really all the Andretti cars have been really strong for most of the weekend.

So, yeah, happy to get the pole obviously. Happy to get it with Dan Towriss here with Gainbridge and happy to be part of Honda. It's going to be an awesome race tomorrow, interesting, two-stop. I need to do more research on that tonight.

THE MODERATOR: What is it like to add to your family's history at a track like this? Is that a cool stat that you and your dad have won a pole here?

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, it's really cool. I think the first place that happened was probably Laguna Seca, maybe Road America. It's cool. It seems like we're good at the same tracks. He had a pole in Ohio. I had a pole in Ohio. He has a pole at Portland. I have a pole at Portland. He has a pole here, I have a pole here. Weird how that works.

Yeah, it's cool to kind of carry on the legacy as best I can. More importantly getting the job done for myself and my team. I think we did just that today.

THE MODERATOR: I'm going to make a bad dad joke. My dad would have said: It's in your genes, not your Levi's (smiling).

We'll open it up for questions.

**Q. Does this pole position feel different or more special because this is the first one with your dad on your team?**

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, I mean, obviously that's super special. I think the most important thing for me was getting a pole here eventually. I've been so close every year that I've come here so far since my rookie season. Really had the pace to every year, but just haven't gotten it done.

Excited for obviously my dad to be on the car. That was the first pole he shared with me. He was super excited about it. Then obviously just carrying on with the program that we've had this whole two days. Really happy to kind of get the pole and get it going. Right from practice we were really fast. To cap it off with pole and hopefully with a win tomorrow would be amazing.

**Q. There seemed to be a lot of guys out there that were struggling to set a fast time on reds. For you, it seemed to not be an issue. Is that how you felt, as well?**

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, I mean, I went into this session thinking that it was going to be a black race, like it was last year. Now I'm kind of scratching my head because I know a lot of guys might not be able to make it work, but it seems like we might be one of the guys that might be able to make it work on red tires, used reds. We'll have to wait and see. Have a lot of data to go through tonight.

For me, the grip level was very similar to the new reds after they had a heat cycle on them, which is very strange. Haven't really seen that in my INDYCAR career yet. That's something to look at, something to think about. It will definitely make the race more interesting if guys are choosing to run those used reds over new blacks.

**Q. You're saying the used reds by the time you got to Q3, it was almost like strapping on a set of sticker reds, yeah?**

COLTON HERTA: Similar, similar. Obviously (indiscernible) is a little bit worse. 60.3 in the Fast Six,

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whereas on new tires -- new blacks, the best time I saw was a 61.0. Obviously you have to look at track conditions. The super trucks were out right before it. That maybe has something to do with it.

There are some guys out there that may look at using used reds, but I'm not sure yet. Can't be sure till I look at the data.

THE MODERATOR: We've also been joined by our second-place finisher today who will start on the front row with Colton, Jack Harvey, driver of the No. 60 AutoNation Sirius XM Honda.

Tell us a little bit about your session.

JACK HARVEY: Yeah, really great day. I think we made some good changes overnight. We had a really good practice two. From what the guys said, we looked good on blacks, looked good on reds.

Obviously didn't quite have enough to challenge for pole. I thought we did there for a little bit, but then they said Colton had done a 3. At that point I knew we already peaked.

I actually thought the 5 in Q3 was a really good time. Just kind of catching the tail end of Colton's comments, I was actually surprised how close the Q3 time was to the best that anyone saw on new reds. It will be interesting overnight.

But it's such a special weekend for us when it being AutoNation's home race, they're celebrating their 25-year anniversary, also \$25 million raised. It's a great weekend to have a great weekend. Really happy with that.

Obviously nice to share the front row with our pseudo-teammate. I still get told off because I'm not sure exactly what is the way to phrase that with Colton and Andretti Autosport. Yeah, really solid day, mate.

THE MODERATOR: We'll continue with questions.

**Q. With this course, traffic, qualifying, practice, being a concern, how important strategically is it for you two to start out front, at least have a clear track probably until the first pit stops?**

COLTON HERTA: I think it's probably really important to have track position. We've seen it in the past. But it's not to say that it's hard to pass -- it's impossible to pass, rather.

I think the biggest thing is going to be who can make the best fuel number and who can go a lap longer or shorter

depending on how quickly you get the tires up to temp. I think that's going to be the name of the game for tomorrow.

We don't know. We thought the tires were fine last year until we got to the restarts. There was a huge amount of marbles, very low grip. That could happen again. We saw how many yellows that caused. It seems like the tires might be a little bit different this year, but you can't be too sure until you're in the race.

**Q. Jack?**

JACK HARVEY: I think it's massive. We were looking at strategy before. With them shortening the race, whatnot, it looks like going to be a two-stopper.

I think Colton said it really well. I think having the clear track, we hope just to stretch our legs, try and hit a good fuel number, undercut by a lap, overcut by a lap.

The further you get up to the front, it's harder to make those moves, especially when it's your teammate because you know what strategy they're going to be on as well.

It never hurts to be starting at the front, mate. We'll have to wait and see what happens to the tires. Restarts last year were typically difficult. I think the first one was fine. When they were consecutive like they were for that stint, it made it pretty tricky.

I think we just want to have a smart, sensible race, get the season carrying on in this good way that we've found.

**Q. Colton, after last Sunday, you got a little bit of a hole to climb out of. I guess there's no better way to do it than starting first. How important would it be to rebound that quickly?**

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, we really got a confidence boost right from the first practice, reassuring the speed we have in the car. Obviously qualifying last weekend was a bit of a struggle for us. We were barely making it to ninth. To have the pole this weekend is going to be huge for us.

Obviously just to add on Jack's point, it's so important to be able to stretch your feet here. You saw me and Rossi got out early last year, were able to build a huge gap.

Clean air is going to be the main thing tomorrow. If we can get a win, that would give the team so much confidence. Like you say, we do have a hole to dig out of, so why not start here.

**Q. Colton, fifth career pole position in INDYCAR. What did that pole lap actually feel like? It looked like you**



**may have been able to go a little bit quicker on the very last lap if you had a chance.**

COLTON HERTA: I think I did go quickest on my last lap.

**Q. After that, did you have anything left in the tire at all?**

COLTON HERTA: I think it just seemed to get better and better for some reason. I think for used reds, that might be the maximum. But it didn't seem like they were going to drop off that much. Traction was still relatively good. Obviously lateral loads were still actually really strong.

Yeah, that's why I think I'm going to be scratching my head tonight on what we want to do for tire allocation tomorrow and what strategy is going to be because it's going to be interesting if guys choose to go on these used reds.

I mean, for sure, after seeing what happened today, I'm really going to push the team to be on those used reds tomorrow on warmup and try to get a good run in, see whether it's a viable strategy or not.

I think maybe there's a little bit left in the lap, but I think it was going to be third lap.

**Q. Jack, how hard do you race Colton down into turn one, considering you're probably pretty hungry to bring home a win not only for yourself but also Mike?**

JACK HARVEY: As hard as we can without crashing really. The thing is, we all want to get through the first lap safely. We all want to get through it P1 obviously. If we settle into P2, try to stretch away from the others. That would be a great result. It's the third time now the No. 60 started on the front row, always starting P2 to a really great driver.

I thought my lap in Q3 was really good. Maybe if you piece together the aspects of some of it, maybe we had a 4. I think that was the maximum we had today.

Overall just good (indiscernible). Make sure we practice well, warm up well, get through turn one safely. That's the number one thing.

**Q. Jack, you've proven to be quite the qualifier over the last year. You only qualified outside the top 10 three times last year. What is it about your driving style that gives you a knack in qualifying?**

JACK HARVEY: I like the red tires. Give us some more grip, we'll try to extract the maximum we can. The thing is, mate, it's not just me, it's a team effort. With our technical

partnership with Andretti Autosport, I mean, you see all their guys always being very quick no matter what.

I think we've got a really good car. I think Colton mentioned earlier in Barber it was a bit more difficult than it was this weekend. But it's extremely competitive, really tight on time.

I think normally we hit our theoretical lap pretty well. I think that helps. After that, it's a team effort. The car has always been very good. I trust my engineer a lot to give us a good car. Got great teammates who are going to do well. After every session, even if you're the quickest guy, you're the second quickest guy, there's still a lot to look at and learn from.

Just being in a great environment really is what helps to be good in qualifying.

**Q. Jack, obviously you guys don't like to talk about luck. Last year you probably were the unluckiest guy on the grid in terms of qualifying not really representing what we saw. What was your highest finish, a sixth or seventh? You qualified on the front row. I wanted to ask, do you kind of just consolidate and try to bag at least a podium? What is your thinking in terms of how aggressive you really get? I don't just mean turn one but throughout.**

JACK HARVEY: If the opportunity is there to win, mate, we'll go for it. I think one of the best things about starting on the front, if we get through turn one well, we just see how the race is unfolding.

I think at this stage of the year for anybody, if you can win, that would be epic. If we came out with a podium, hopefully no less than where we're starting, that would also be a really great result for everybody. It just keeps the season going in a positive direction.

I think last year we did really have some great qualifying performances. I think some of the bad luck was self-inflicted with some strategy calls and whatnot. Some of them were maybe being bad luck.

Like I said to the guys, I think it will ring true now, the more times we put ourselves in a good position to have a good race, it's going to come your way. I'm happy that coming into this weekend we put ourselves again in a good position to have a great race.

After that, we just have to try and execute what we think is the best tomorrow. If it's good, then we'll pat ourselves on the back. If it's not good, we'll try to learn from it, go again next weekend.

**Q. Will you race your pseudo-teammate any different from a Penske or a Ganassi car?**

JACK HARVEY: No, I don't think so. I am pretty respectful to all the guys. I think that's the nice thing about working together as a team. When it comes on track, I expect everybody to race me the same no matter what it comes on.

I always really enjoy racing with Colton. I don't think getting through turn one is going to be any big issues or big dramas. Certainly, like I said, if the opportunity is there to win, we'll go for it. If it's not there to win, we'll consolidate hopefully as high as possible.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you both, Colton and Jack, for joining us. Best of luck tomorrow in the Firestone Grand Prix of St. Pete.

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