

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Linus Lundqvist

Benjamin Pedersen

Sting Ray Robb

Press Conference



LINUS LUNDQVIST: -- trickiest races I've done where it started off in the wet, but quickly a dry line started to appear. It was just about looking after your tires. Once it starts to dry around this place, it goes pretty fast.

I tried to keep some life in my tire, which wasn't easy. Benjamin did a good job and gave me a good run for my money all the way up until the checkered flag. Yeah, really happy to get away with the win.

THE MODERATOR: Just the start itself is always a question mark on a track that looked like that. Everybody made it through cleanly.

LINUS LUNDQVIST: Yeah, at the start of the race, the first five, six, seven laps were pretty straightforward. It was looking to be a pretty average wet race. Then, yeah, it started to dry pretty fast.

I think with like 15 laps to go or something, I already started to see rubber coming off my front tires. I realized, Oh, God, this is going to be a long one. I got some PTSD flashbacks from Gateway last year where I had a tire failure. I started feeling every vibration in my tires. I am like, Oh, God, not one more lap.

Yeah, happy to see the checkered, for sure.

THE MODERATOR: Benjamin, the pressure you were putting on at the end, did you think you had what you needed?

BENJAMIN PEDERSEN: I thought I did until the last corner. Even we touched just a little bit trying to go for the pass. But, yeah, it was a long race, long race managing tires, pace, cooling tires. Yeah, I think we just needed one more lap, but there was no more.

THE MODERATOR: How did you manage the tires? Was

that a thought going into this?

BENJAMIN PEDERSEN: Yeah, there was a phase where I saw Linus wasn't saving quite as much, cooling them. I put a lot of emphasis into it. I think I lost a little pace in that process. I knew it would come back at the end, which it did.

Yeah, the tires were completely falling apart towards the end, flying off. We won't be using these tires again (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: Sting Ray, first podium of your young Indy Lights presented by Cooper Tires career. Tell us about your day today.

STING RAY ROBB: I am happy with third. I think it was a good run. These guys were in a whole 'nother ZIP code it seems like. So good job to you guys.

Just talking to them on the way up here, it sounded like they had a little bit of excitement at the end. I wish I would have been a little closer to have seen that in person.

Yeah, I'm happy with it. First podium of the year. First podium of my Indy Lights career. We're going to move forward and head to Indy GP with our heads held high.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. When you guys tested here it was wet, wasn't it? Do you think that really helped this weekend for you guys to have a little bit more pace? Three of the top four were teammates.

LINUS LUNDQVIST: Yeah. Obviously every time you run in the wet, you learn something new. Especially in the place we're going to race at later. Sure we had some advantage of that.

Honestly, when we had our test day, it was half the day in the wet, half the day in the dry. A perfect mix to see what was coming this weekend.

I think even last year we showed that we had good pace in the dry, and I think we showed at Mid-Ohio at the last race last year we have a good car in the wet as well.



I think we felt pretty confident as well when we saw the rain this morning.

Q. Benjamin, you've been close to the top step of the podium. Is there a point when it gets discouraging you don't have the win or...

BENJAMIN PEDERSEN: Definitely not discouraging. It's really important to always be in the mix. We were really close today to getting the first one. I'd much rather finish second than fifth in terms of a championship perspective.

I'm patient. I'm putting in a lot of work. I'm sure it's coming soon.

Q. You've been spending a lot of time around INDYCAR teams at the last couple events. Has that helped or changed your preparation at all during a race weekend, how you approach a race weekend?

BENJAMIN PEDERSEN: Yeah, it's opened my knowledge a bit with being smart about the tools I have in the car, being a bit more proactive with certain things. So that's been a big help, being exposed to some INDYCAR things.

Yeah, it definitely hasn't hurt me, to put it like that. We have different maps we can use in the Lights car here. In the race we started on a rain map, then we went to a dry map. We kind of had to figure out when to do that.

Yeah, I definitely have learned a lot in that process.

THE MODERATOR: The obligatory Cooper Tires mentioned. The job those tires did in the wet, going away, managing it, how would you describe what you had to go through today?

STING RAY ROBB: I think I'll start.

I think that for a rain tire, they did pretty good in the dry (laughter). They looked like they went through a cheese grater at the end of the race.

None of us had any punctures, no issues. We were able to keep it on the racetrack. It did get a little sketchy for all of us. We were all looking for water wherever we could. Cooper Tires did a great job. As well in the dry. I mean, we saw yesterday during the high temps of the weekend, as the grip goes up, they didn't wear as we expected them to, and they lasted a long time in qualifying. I'm super happy with the tires that we got.

THE MODERATOR: Was there any thought of coming in and trying to go to slicks at any point?

LINUS LUNDQVIST: No discussion. The thought was definitely there when you saw the dry line. You figure it's never going to work. It takes a little bit too long in the pit lane for us.

Yeah, I was actually a little bit surprised how good the rain tire was in the beginning. I was expecting it to be a little bit more slippery. Maybe I was pushing a little bit too hard actually at the start. Sort of paid for that in the end.

The tires held up well. Like I said, a little bit sketchy towards the end. That's the fun of it.

THE MODERATOR: Maybe some momentum heading into the month of May. You have a big one on the road course at Indianapolis Motor Speedway in a couple weeks.

BENJAMIN PEDERSEN: Yeah, we've all had a lot of test days there this year, open tests, private tests. Yeah, ready to go (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: Well, congratulations to all three of you guys. Enjoy the rest of the day. We'll see you in a couple weeks at Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

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