

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Linus Lundqvist

Christian Rasmussen

Sting Ray Robb

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'll begin with Christian. Getting it done today. Tell us about your first part of the race and then wrapping it up here this evening.

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Yeah, really happy getting my first podium here. I feel like it's been come for a little while. We've had some unfortunate stuff happen that we haven't really been able to get where we deserve to be.

But, yeah, the first race was pretty good. I didn't have the pace to keep up with Linus at the start, but I felt like the pace was coming towards the end. I kind of messed up a little bit with two mistakes into 12, but a little bit bummed about that because I felt like we could have challenged for the lead, but still happy getting my first podium.

THE MODERATOR: Sting Ray, another podium. Never a bad thing, right?

STING RAY ROBB: Yeah, I'm getting tired of the threes. Third three in a row. Maybe we can go two steps higher next time.

THE MODERATOR: How about the rain and the dry? You were dealing with a little bit of everything today.

STING RAY ROBB: Yeah. I mean, we started out in fifth this morning, which feels like a long time ago now. On the start I actually was in 13th for a little bit. So fought our way back to eighth in the dry and then fell back again in the wet on the start of the race and then after that caution we started moving forward.

To be honest, I thought I was fourth or fifth when we crossed the finish line there at the end. It was a good surprise when I came to the pits and I only saw two cars in pit lane in front of me.

Huge shout out to the team. That was an unbelievable day. We had every element that we could just like Barber, but this time we got to choose what we wanted to do with it instead of just kind of at the whims of Mother Nature.

THE MODERATOR: I'm sure you both had goals coming into the weekend. The next race, obviously, another double-header when we head to Belle Isle on the streets of Belle Isle. Did you achieve those goals? Is there momentum now heading into the next couple of races for you guys? Christian, go ahead.

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Yeah, I think so. It's a lot about momentum, and I feel like we're slowly getting that started today with a fourth place finish yesterday and a second today. Hopefully we can climb our way to the top. That's the plan.

THE MODERATOR: Sting Ray.

STING RAY ROBB: Detroit is a crazy track, right? I think the momentum is going to carry. Like you said, the goals for the weekend, I think that we had some, and we didn't quite achieve those, but two podiums is pretty good.

I'm just looking at the points right now. I mean, we're sitting in third. That's not insurmountable in the next couple of events to Lundqvist there in first. I think that you just have to win races to win the championship this year. Just the way the points system is. When we go to Detroit, that's what we're going to look to do.

I know that Andretti has a good car there. I've been there once already as of last year. Had a double-header there. I think this year we've been learning every race, and it's showing. We're slowly picking up that pace. I'm excited. I think it's going to be a rest of the year, but yeah, today is unbelievable.

THE MODERATOR: Maybe just talk to the delay. You go out. You're full go. Then you get the rain delay. You've got to sit out for you a couple of hours. Two and a half, maybe three hours maybe all told. And then you get back in the car to complete a race. Obviously, it's something that my recollection probably has never happened in both of your careers, right?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Definitely not. I've been racing since I was 5 years old, so that's, what, 16 years now. Never had that happen. That was quite fun. Well, not fun because we, obviously, wanted to finish the race, but we got to watch a little bit of INDYCAR, which was an exciting race as well. Yeah, it was good. It's all good.

THE MODERATOR: What did you think of the INDYCAR race?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: It was crazy. There were cars flying off left and right. What I got to catch of it was pretty crazy.

STING RAY ROBB: I was sitting in the stand right next to Michael Andretti, and I got all the emotions of Michael I think today while sitting next to him. He was angry. He was excited. He was, like, ah, confusion. I think it was just a guessing game today for INDYCAR.

I'm thankful that we actually got to run today. I thought it was going to be a little bit too late for us, but I found out ten minutes before the end of the INDYCAR race that we were going to go green in 30 minutes. I was, like, oh, okay. Better go put my suit on. Let's go. Just a day of confusion, but it worked out all right for us.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations on the podium. We'll see you in a couple of weeks at Belle Isle.

THE MODERATOR: Fifth win of your career, Linus, and we were talking with the other guys about sitting out three hours or so before hopping back in a car. It was just a crazy day to win on a day like this. How special for you?

LINUS LUNDQVIST: Very happy. Very good. It's been a tricky day, but not just for us drivers, but I think for the whole team as well. All the mechanics and engineers and all the tire guys, they really do the hard work. On a day like this we don't know what to expect, and then when we got the clear to go racing, we only had a ten-minute window to try to set up the car from the dry to the wet. They did a really good job on that.

Yeah, I just did my part. Pushed in the beginning and then just managed a gap. Like I said, it's been a long day, so happy to get away with a win.

THE MODERATOR: Momentum heading into Belle Isle in a couple of weeks, what is it for you?

LINUS LUNDQVIST: Good momentum, I would say. Obviously, Belle Isle is probably the -- well, my favorite track going on the calendar. At least looking from last year.

Excited to be back. Cool with another double-header. I think it's nice. The more racing the better in my opinion.

It's going to be cool heading back to a street track as well. St. Pete, we had the pace, but we never really got the result that we wanted. I think we're looking quite good. Obviously, a bit of a break. Going to enjoy the Indy 500 first, and then focus on Belle Isle.

THE MODERATOR: Just to speak to the grind that this has been this week for you and the weekend and maybe you talk to a little bit about the momentum you guys have. How do you keep up that momentum? In this sport a blink of an eye you can lose it pretty quickly.

LINUS LUNDQVIST: Yeah, exactly. I think both me and Christian showed that in the race yesterday that, obviously, it can go from a very high to quite a low very, very fast. It's just about keeping the momentum and being a little bit smart about it because, obviously, it is a very long season with 14 races, but looking to last year when we had 20 races, obviously, the mistakes here are going to be even more costly this year. It's just about building the momentum and getting into a good rhythm of just having good pace at every track.

I think the different tracks that we've been to so far we've showed that we had a good package, but Detroit is going to be a bit of a different one. I feel like we can have a good car there as well.

THE MODERATOR: Maybe we'll wrap it up with this for all three of you guys. A trend developing? What would you think it is right now after a few races in this series?

STING RAY ROBB: I'm going to say threes are kind of my number this year.

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I'm trying to turn that trend around because, wow, we've not been very fortunate so far. Hopefully this will be the trend for the rest of the year.

THE MODERATOR: For sure. Linus, what's the trend right now?

LINUS LUNDQVIST: I would like to continue on this trend. (Laughing). Obviously. Shocker, right? I look forward to a close fight. I think at every race it's been very close between HMDS and Andretti, so I think it's just going to be who has another tenth or two on the day and on that special track and maybe take advantage on the tracks that you are a little stronger at.

Yeah, I expect a full fight both from these guys and also my

teammate, and I know that we're pushing very hard to stay on top of it.

THE MODERATOR: Is it me or it just seems like this season has been ultra competitive? Maybe more so than in the past. That's with all the respect to what's happened leading up to this. Is it me, or is there something more this year that's going on some?

STING RAY ROBB: I think the field is super deep. I actually had a chance to go back and watch our morning race today before our afternoon race, and Kirkwood said it on the broadcast there. He said the field this year is just racy. Everyone wants to go forward and is super aggressive, and it's just super competitive. You are seeing way more passes I think this year than you saw at all last year.

I don't know if that's just teams being more even, deeper field. I just feel like this is one of the best class of drivers to come through in a little bit. I can say that because I'm in it.

THE MODERATOR: Certainly the entry list is as big as it's been in basically a decade or so. Christian, do you agree?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I agree. Like Sting Ray said, it's very deep. I feel like there's five, six, seven drivers that are able to win races, and like he also said, definitely very racy. We saw that yesterday.

Yeah, hopefully it will be just as competitive for the rest of the season. At the end of the day it's about competing around the best people that really pushes you forward as well, which I think is really important for a developmental series like Indy Lights is, so it's all good.

STING RAY ROBB: I'm going to add, I want to know the number of how championships are in the series this year? Just, like, across the globe. Linus, you've got a championship.

LINUS LUNDQVIST: Three.

STING RAY ROBB: Three total. Christian has two. I have one. Kyffin has one. Brabham has a couple I think. Hunter is championship material. I mean, it's crazy.

THE MODERATOR: Ernie has some championships to his credit.

STING RAY ROBB: You look at the field on how many trophies should be close to those names. It's pretty impressive.

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