

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Colton Herta

Felix Rosenqvist

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Felix Rosenqvist.

This is your best finish of the season. Your last podium finish was in Road America in 2020.

Tell us about your day.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, it's been a good weekend. A good race, as well. I don't think we've been the fastest all weekend, but I just did the basics right.

I think we did a good lap in qualify, got us to P8. Then the strategy in the race. Obviously in Toronto it's hard to pass. The plan was if you have an opportunity, try to pass, nail the pit stops.

I think we had an advantageous pit stall this weekend in the left turn, which probably gives you like a second, second and a half compared to some other guys who are in the right turn. All those kind of things together I think allowed us to go forward in the race.

We were saving a lot of fuel early on. It looked like we were going to have a big advantage there at the end. That last yellow kind of played into Colton and Scott's favor. Congrats to Scott, by the way. Good to see him back on the P1.

I think it was a fun race. Good, hard battles out there on a good, hard track. Very physical. Very warm. Yeah, no, good fun.

THE MODERATOR: We've been joined by Colton Herta.

You guys had a great battle there at the end. Tell us a little bit about that.

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, I couldn't really see much because my head sock broke. All of my hair went in front of my face (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: You were talented keeping that on the racetrack.

COLTON HERTA: I could see Felix when I went through turn three. I could kind of judge the gap.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: One lap your brake light was 200 feet too early, is that why?

COLTON HERTA: I couldn't see. I was having to look out the sides of my visors instead of in front.

The car was really good for all the race. Andretti brought a really good package here, and it showed. Rossi was running good until I don't know what happened. I was right up there, too.

All the cars in top 12 in qualifying, got a pole, second-place finish. I'm happy with that. It's good to rebound with a result like this after Mid-Ohio.

THE MODERATOR: Your second podium of the season. Last one was at the Indy road course where we'll be in two weeks. Is this the kind of momentum that you were hoping to have?

COLTON HERTA: We really need to start racking up the podiums and wins if we want to have a shot at it. We are pretty far back, I think a hundred points or so. Might need a little bit of luck and a lot of good results, but we can do it.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up to questions.

Q. Felix, the incident with Rossi, could you walk us through setting up the pass.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, I mean, I had a good run. He looked a bit weak in the braking on three. I did kind of a little surprise move. Was fairly far up by the time we turned in. I kind of thought that he had already given up on the corner. I just saw him, like, hang around the outside. I was like, Okay. I mean, fair play if you want to try to go around outside. At some point you run out of road.

I think he probably bumped his wheel or something. That's kind of what it felt like. He ran into my side pod, probably lost a wheel and hit the wall.



I don't know if it was fair play, to be honest. He normally races hard. I've been racing him previously where it's been to his advantage in that situation and I've lost a bunch of spots. Today he lost his race.

Obviously, I don't want to see him in the wall, but it was just a hard pass, hard racing. There wasn't a penalty, so I think that kind of explains everything.

Q. Colton, after everything that happened last week, the relief of not having anything dumb like that happening now...

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, I think we just needed a good race, a clean race. That's what we got.

I think Scott was probably the car that deserved to win. He seemed to be just that little bit faster. I was pushing really hard in the middle of the stint, he was able to tick off each lap a 10th better. Usually the guy like that ends up winning, and he did.

Yeah, I'm happy with P2. I think we were probably second best right there with Felix. Happy with how it went.

Q. Colton, we saw you fighting to keep Felix behind in the final stint. Was most of that just a matter of pushing a bit too hard trying to get past Scott earlier?

COLTON HERTA: No. Honestly I think a lot of it was from the balaclava. It sounds like a lame excuse and I try not to make excuses. Yeah, I really couldn't see much.

Regardless, even if I could see, Felix seemed to be really fast kind of just on pace with Scott. Yeah, and we seemed to have a little bit more deg. I was starting to struggle there at the end where it looks like Felix was still able to get out of the corners and able to stay with me. Maybe he wasn't struggling as much.

Yeah, I'm happy with the result. Yeah, good to kind of right the wrongs after Mid-Ohio and try to continue this into Iowa.

Q. Felix, you and Colton pitted on the same lap there. You had all the overtake left in the world. Was that by design knowing he might be struggling a bit closer towards the end?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, I think the nature of the track, it's so hard to pass, even if you're three, four, six times quicker, it's just really hard to get by. So I was trying to just save fuel, save 'push to pass', and then at the end if there was something, that was going to be the time.

The last three laps I was just using 'push to pass' on every straight pretty much. Yeah, I mean, even then it's hard to pass. I was, yeah, kind of bummed when the last yellow came because I thought we had a little bit of a fuel advantage.

It is what's. I think we gave it everything. Colton was just a little bit too quick to pass today.

Q. Felix, on TV you said you hope you gave Zak something to think about. After you walked away, Graham said he would hire you if he had a seat. Are you sort of locked into this with McLaren or there's still room for you to be in INDYCAR next year if it's not with McLaren?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: That's entirely a question for Zak. I've made my point that I'm very happy with the team. I think it shows, a super group. I think we worked hard the last two years to kind of build up a very strong team. We have good strategy, good pit stops. I think I'm able to extract most out of the car most weekends now.

Yeah, I think if you asked me end of last year, obviously it would have been a different answer. But right now I'm just very happy where I'm at. I think I would be crazy if I said I wanted to go somewhere else.

You always have to be thankful for every opportunity you have. Sort of like an (indiscernible) in motorsports if it's here, Europe, Japan, whatever. It's a few drivers in the world that get to do that.

I want to be where I'm at right now. Yeah, I think Arrow McLaren SP has pretty much become a home for me. Yeah, it's up to Zak. He's the man who is making the moves. Probably going to take a couple weeks before we know more. Hopefully today changed something. My ambition is to keep proving it that way.

Q. Personally, how good does it feel to finally get this podium?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: It was massively overdue. We had so many good races. Even last year when we had such a struggle year, we still had times where we were fighting for wins. Just things end up happening.

Mid-Ohio was pretty much a perfect race until we had a technical failure that ended our race. Texas earlier this year. Just so many races. Obviously I don't like to say what could have happened.

I think everyone on the team was ready for at least a



podium, and also a win coming up here soon hopefully. Yeah, really, really good. Really good just for the guys on the car to give them something more than P4 or P5.

Q. Colton, I want to make sure I heard you right. Did you say your hair was in your eyes?

COLTON HERTA: Yeah. I probably shouldn't have said it because now everyone's going to be writing all about it. But, yeah, in my eyes (smiling).

Q. How does the head sock break? How did you get the hair out of your eyes?

COLTON HERTA: This head sock that I have has to hold back a lot of hair so I can understand why it broke. It's the first time I've ever actually seen that or heard of that. Go for the Felix trim next week (smiling).

Yeah, no, I've never actually seen that or heard of anything like that happening. I don't know if I just put that thing to good use or maybe there's signs of wear and tear beforehand that I didn't see.

For sure now I'm just going to be wearing a brand-new one every time I race because I can't leave anything up like that.

Q. Can't get a haircut, I assume.

COLTON HERTA: That would also solve things, but I'm not gonna.

Q. What about hair accessories?

COLTON HERTA: Cut my hair and get a toupee or something, I don't know (laughter).

Q. Felix, wondered if you feel like with all the news happening this week, everything with Alex, that feels like your future is leaning more towards Formula Renault or whether you feel there is room for you to stay here next season?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: By the sound of it, it doesn't sound like Alex has -- I mean, I don't know what's going on there. At the moment it doesn't sound like he's going to race at all. Yeah, it's up to lawyers and stuff.

Honestly it's not my business at all. I think honestly it hasn't really changed anything. This whole deal went down months ago. I didn't know all the details of it that I know now, but nothing has actually changed.

I think if Zak was sure I was going to FE, he would have

already said it. I'm going to take that chance. If there's a chance for me to be here next year, I'm going to try to prove I can do that.

Q. Colton, it was right around the first pit stop that Dixon got past you. Did your pit box hurt you at all? A slower stop?

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, I don't know what happened with Dixon so I can't really say if this is the definitive thing. I had Felix's guy set up when I came in, the box in front of me. I got McLoughlin coming right in front of me coming out. 30-foot box, we're really jammed in here at this track. It's almost too short. It's really hard. What are you going to do, though?

So, yeah, that was the main reason. I felt the in-lap was quite good. The pit stop was fine. It seemed just as fast as we normally do, so we shouldn't have lost any time on it.

That in and out with the cars in front of us, it was really killer.

Q. If you had been able to stay in front of him, do you think you could have held him off?

COLTON HERTA: I think I could have. I think when you're that close in lap time, within a 10th, it's hard to get by, right? Felix was probably a tenth faster than me and couldn't get by me.

I think if I had the lead, I could hold it, as long as I played everything right. Yeah, we kind of got a little bit screwed there with the pit selection, I guess. What are you going to do?

Q. Colton, when did you notice the problem with the head sock, everything going crazy?

COLTON HERTA: My hair fell down in my face (smiling).

Q. What part of the race was it?

COLTON HERTA: Maybe after the last restart.

Q. You're not quite half Dixon's age. Does it give you a lot of hope, this is something you're going to be doing for an awfully long time?

COLTON HERTA: Sure hope so. I think it's different things in different cases for different people. Some guys wouldn't want to do it as long as Dixon has.

If you ask me right now, I'd say of course. I've only been racing in INDYCAR for four years. We'll see what I do in

20 years. Might change the answer.

As of right now, I love what I do. For me, it's the best job in the world. I wouldn't change it for anything. Yeah, I can see why Dixon wants to stay and I can also see why some guys want to leave, have families, spend time with their kids. It is a hectic schedule.

I think it just proves that Dixon still has it, which I don't know if a lot of people were questioning it, but he still has it, which is impressive.

Q. What was it like handling turn three, especially with all the aggression out there?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: It's just a hairpin end of the day.

No, it was a good one for me today. I did most of my passing going into three. Yeah, I don't know what more to say about it. One where Rossi was obviously unfortunate. Hey, racing.

Q. Scott Dixon matched Mario Andretti today for second most wins all time. What can you say about Scott's career as a whole?

COLTON HERTA: It's very rare that you get a guy that fast, that can win all the time, and just be extremely respectful, how he is, mainly on the track. He's a great guy off the track, very respectful, but I really care about how he is on the track.

Yeah, he's amazing to drive against. He never puts you in a crappy situation where you have to make a choice of hit the wall or back out of a pass or something like that. He's always been very fair to me, which I respect, because some guys haven't, especially when you first come into the series, so...

Yeah, it's impressive. 52?

THE MODERATOR: 52.

COLTON HERTA: How many poles?

THE MODERATOR: A lot. I don't have that number handy.

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, it's cool. Cool to see he's still going and still fast as ever.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, I mean, we were teammates back in '19 and 2020. Yeah, no, huge respect. I don't think I know anyone who's has competitive as Scott. If he had lost a bit of speed the last couple of years, it's like he's

just going to find a way to get back. I don't know, I mean, it shows today. He's had a rough, for him, last two years. He's just able to keep coming back and winning every year. I think it's really impressive.

I know how much he wants it. I think he's like the ultimate role model for young drivers out there. I mean, I don't know how old he is now, but just shows if you want something, you can do it. No matter how old or how bad of a season you have, you can always come back if you want it bad.

It's really, really cool to see.

THE MODERATOR: We'll let the gentlemen go. Thank you.

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