

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, August 7, 2022

Linus Lundqvist

Sting Ray Robb

Hunter McElrea

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up the Indy Lights presented by Cooper Tires Indy Lights Music City Grand Prix. Congratulations to the points leader and now champion here on the Streets of Nashville, Linus Lindqvist, driving the No. 26 HMD Motorsports with Dale Coyne Racing. He wins today's event.

Sting Ray Robb and the Sekady machine for Andretti Autosport comes home second.

HUNTER ECELREA: At least someone has a fan club.

THE MODERATOR: This is already the best press conference ever. (Laughing)

Hunter McElrea in the 27 machine for Andretti Autosport coming home third.

For Linus, fifth win of the season, eighth of his career now. Linus, you extend the points lead now up 95 on the rest of the field. Just your thoughts on a dominating day on the Streets of Nashville.

LINUS LUNDQVIST: A bit of a strange weekend with qualifying being canceled. Obviously, we know around the street courses that qualifying is very important, and very -- or a little bit sad because I think qualifying around this place would have been mega. The quality laps should have been cool. Again, we started from pole, so obviously, we'll take it.

I think we showed in the race that we had the pace. Obviously, the first couple of laps I was under pressure from Hunter, but after that I think he had a couple of lock-ups. We were able to pull away, and then it was just about managing and trying to keep out of the walls, which is not that easy around this place.

THE MODERATOR: Sting Ray Robb, coming home

second. Sixth podium of the season. Tell us about the pass, which was on, what, lap 34.

STING RAY ROBB: I can't remember. That was a lot of laps.

THE MODERATOR: You tried a couple of times, and the one that was early on lap 18.

STING RAY ROBB: I could see that Hunter was struggling with that right front. This track is really difficult. Especially on those high brake zones where you are laterally loaded. That right front tire just wants to smoke.

So I could see that he was fighting that, and I actually had an issue during the race where my push-to-pass wouldn't work for some amount of laps. So I could him make a mistake. I would push-to-pass, and I wouldn't have anything there. That lap it finally did work when I finally got the move done.

Man, I don't know if anyone has ever been that close to a wall, but I felt like I drove right through it and didn't crash. But Hunter, being fair, he let me have the corner, so I appreciate that, man.

Congrats to Linus. I think that we had a good enough car to maybe fight with him had we gotten around a little bit earlier, but track position is everything here.

I think that he had a little bit easier of a race out front, but still, that was a very physical race. I think that's the hottest I've been in the race car. Unbelievable.

THE MODERATOR: Again, Hunter McElrea coming home third. Fifth strayed podium now for Hunter. Sixth of the season. Maybe not what you wanted, but the continuation of what's been a good string of races for you, Hunter.

HUNTER McELREA: Yeah. I really liked this weekend. I really like the event. It's probably one of my favorite events I've been to.

I love the track. Had an awesome time all weekend. Interesting. This year has been so weird in so many ways with the way races have worked out, qualifying getting canceled, and things like that.



I was honestly really disappointed not to get to qualify. He won the race and deserved to win today, but it was a very big advantage to start pole. I was a bit bummed about that, but he won.

Had a really good car speed all weekend, honestly. In practice we were, I think, third and second. A lot more in the tank. Just not putting it all together. I felt like we had a good car to put it on pole.

Yeah, obviously, still front row. Can't complain. I think there were some guys that put more hard done by than me for sure. The first ten laps I was kind of just biding my time and felt really good. Had the pressure on Linus, and then I had a huge lock-up on my right front.

Then from there it was just terrible. My right front, I kept locking it, and the more I would lock it, the more I would lose grip. I would turn into a left-hander, and it would be like on ice.

Then it was just about holding on. I was actually worried that the tire was going to let go because it started vibrating, so I was a little bit scared there at the end and had some close calls with Sting Ray. Probably a bit closer than it should have been. Probably on my part.

I just kind of gave the position away there at the end and then just brought it home third. Not exactly what I wanted. Obviously, we all want to win, but when you are on the podium, you can't be too upset. I've learned that this year. I'll take the podium one or more, but third is what it was today.

THE MODERATOR: I was going to ask you about the tire conservation.

HUNTER McELREA: The lack of.

THE MODERATOR: How difficult was that?

HUNTER McELREA: It was fine until I smoked it. All weekend I've been struggling at four. Been really strong everywhere, and four, no one feels great there. It's one of those corners where it's such a fine line, and you can be good there and then go a little bit too much, and you just are burning it up.

I went in there one lap and hit the brake, and I was, like, oh, boy. And kind of was along for the ride and just smoked the right front. Then just kept grabbing it, kept grabbing it, kept grabbing it.

Every time I would try slightly to pushing entry. So then I

would brake a bit earlier, but then because I was braking earlier and soft, I would grab it at the end of the stop. It was a lot going on trying to save it whilst trying to keep Sting Ray behind.

I don't know about you, but my dash didn't work. So it was a lot going on. Throw on a street track and some heat and some walls, you have got your hands full. It was a long race.

THE MODERATOR: Open it up for questions.

Q. Linus, obviously, you've got the points lead. Where are you in the process of looking at INDYCAR teams and talking about that?

LINUS LUNDQVIST: In conversation with a few. Obviously, it's still early, and I think going forward the championship is very important, so I think that's, obviously, still my main focus. I think I have to win it to have any chance of being INDYCAR next year.

But, obviously, you want to engage and see what's out there. Obviously, there's a lot of things moving in INDYCAR right now, as you all -- (Laughing)

THE MODERATOR: You noticed that, huh?

LINUS LUNDQVIST: Yeah. So you are trying to stay in there in the mix and see what's out there. But, also, I know that the best I can do for myself is try to win more races.

Q. Sting Ray, your engineer, Ron, got on the radio just before you made the pass saying, time to get your elbows out. Does that kind of talk motivate you, or does it just reinforce what you already are trying to do?

STING RAY ROBB: I think up to that point I was racing Hunter a little bit too fair maybe and having not had the push-to-pass at different times when I really could have used it to make a move. It was frustrating.

But Ron is one of those guys that he is cool and calm under pressure, and he doesn't get too feisty. When I hear him say it's time to get your elbows out, I know it's time. Like, way past time. I was happy to hear him say that actually. It kind of gave me the clear to go at it and don't have to worry too much.

We were fighting hard already. It was just more so. And you saw that out on the race track. I'm excited to see the onboard there. I really think I drove right through the wall. It was crazy. Yeah, it was a good, tough day.

THE MODERATOR: Would you have raced -- if you are battling for second raced that person in front of you differently if it wasn't your teammate?

STING RAY ROBB: Yeah, yeah. I think --

HUNTER McELREA: Good to know. (Laughing)

STING RAY ROBB: The walls might have been a little tighter had I been fighting with Linus.

THE MODERATOR: Anyone else? If not, just some general thoughts. You have an open test coming up on Friday, worldwide Technology Raceway. And then a week later you'll be back on the second oval of the season. Just everyone's thoughts on being back on an oval. Linus, we'll begin with you.

LINUS LUNDQVIST: Yeah, excited to be back. Obviously, Gateway was my first oval ever last year. So it will be good to be back.

I think we had a fast car there last year. Obviously, I don't have great memories from that place with the tire problem, so it's going to be interesting to see if they've sort of come around that issue because we saw that even in Iowa.

It will be interesting to see the test, how it goes, and yeah, we hope for a good weekend.

STING RAY ROBB: I'm excited to be in an Andretti car back on an oval. In Iowa we had really good pace starting P3, and then in the race it just seemed like we lost a little bit on the tire deck, but I think Gateway will be a different story.

I think we learned a lot on the first oval of the year, and going into this one I'm excited. Ovals are fun. Especially around Gateway. It gets pretty speedy around there.

THE MODERATOR: Hunter.

HUNTER McELREA: I'm excited. Oval racing was kind of something very new to me, obviously. It's the same with this guy. Where we come from, we don't do that. But I like to do that stuff, so I came here.

No, it's been a cool experience. Driving a Lights car on the oval is a lot different. You're a lot faster, and Gateway is a track I've been to, where Iowa I hadn't been to, so hopefully that helps. Obviously, completely different car.

Yeah, I'm excited. The Andretti cars seem to be pretty good on ovals, so hopefully we can have the same pace we had at Iowa over one lap, and we'll look after the rears

a little bit more, and we should be all right.

THE MODERATOR: The countdown is on. We'll see you at Worldwide Technology Raceway in a couple of weeks.

Thank you so much. Congratulations Linus Lindqvist, Sting Ray Robb, Hunter McElroy. Thank you for all the supporters back there. Thank you.

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