

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, August 7, 2022

Colton Herta

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. Wrapping up the second Big Machine Music City Grand Prix on the Streets of Nashville. Another thriller. A lot to talk about certainly. We will hear from the podium finishers here momentarily. We do want to hear, though, from the driver of the Gainbridge Honda for Andretti Autosport, Colton Herta. Your overall thoughts on the top five, getting out of here. A good day today. It was a crazy race.

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, it was a crazy one, but some of it was enjoyable for me. Some of it not so much. Really didn't think that we were going to be that good after getting taken out going a lap down, but the damage on the right front wasn't terrible to the wishbones, and so it was still drivable.

We still seemed to have some speed even with that. Once we were able to pass by some people, kind of got me excited. And the guys in the pit did an amazing job getting me probably six spots today on two stops so, they were pretty stellar. Yeah, it was enjoyable for some parts and for some others not so much.

THE MODERATOR: Obviously that incident happened on lap three. Were you ready to pack up and go home, or did you have more left?

COLTON HERTA: I hit the wall pretty hard, and the front wing must have taken the brute force of it because it seemed like the right front should have been knocked off immediately, but we've seen stuff with these INDYCARs. We've seen stuff here how strong they are and stuff. It is a little bit of a surprise that the car was okay to keep going after that.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Colton Herta?

Q. (Indiscernible)?

COLTON HERTA: He broke too late and hit me right into the wall.

Q. I think it was something like eight or nine cautions

this year. I think you had nine last year. An exciting, unpredictable race, I think, in lots of ways. The way that this event has played out these first few years, you feel like it's good for the series? Is this something that you want to see continue? Is there any way to take some of these cautions out? What's kind of your general impression?

COLTON HERTA: Maybe there's a way to shorten some of the cautions without doing the wave-around every time or whatnot. But it's hard to say because that's what saved me today, was the wave-around.

Yeah, I don't know what they can do. I don't think that restarting on the bridge was a good thing. I thought the closing speeds were incredibly unsafe, and I'm sure that they're going to probably change it to something else for next year because it was really dangerous. Especially going over a bridge like that. You don't want to go over the back of somebody.

Other than that, it's not terrible to have a crazy race every now and again. And this might be INDYCAR, some of the races are snoozers and some of them are really amazing, and some of them are amazing for this reason, because there's cars going off all the time, you never know who is going to win.

Q. Kind of following up on the drivers -- you kind of were predicting that the restart would be that way, but most drivers were predicting it would have been smoother this year. Was it the way guys were driving it? Was it new? Was it just --

COLTON HERTA: It's just the field spans out so much. I got every range of restart, right? I got a restart where I was 25th or whatever, and then all the way up until I was fourth or fifth or whatever it was. I got all the ranges of restarts.

Coming from the back, the field through that tight section is so strung out that they're pushing to get back up. And by the time the leader is halfway across the bridge, cars are still going through turn five, six, seven. As they come on to the straight, they're flat out, and it's a bridge, right? You can't see what's over the end of it. So you come over the bridge, and it's, like, oh, all the cars are going 70 miles an

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hour, 80 miles an hour.

So I think it's something that they knew could have been a little bit of a problem, but they wanted to try it out, so we'll see what they do in the future. I think something has to be adjusted.

Q. (Indiscernible) -- back to turn 11, do you think?

COLTON HERTA: Maybe or move it further down. I don't know. They'll have to do an investigation on it and really see what they want to do.

Q. Beyond that, do you still like this course even though it's so wild and so crazy?

COLTON HERTA: It's fun to drive. It's challenging. It's really challenging. It's hard enough on a street course to have straight-line braking for a hairpin or really still corner. When you are coming in 180, and you have braking that's turning away from the corner, like turn four and turn nine are, it is really challenging because you unload that right front tire, so it's really easy to lock and then go into the wall or go into the runoff.

So it is a lot of challenging parts to this track that I do enjoy, yeah.

Q. I don't even know if this makes sense at all, but out of curiosity, would restarting the first time over the bridge be any better or any different? You still have the same problem going into turn four that you have going into turn nine?

COLTON HERTA: You probably would have a similar problem. It depends on where they put it, right? If they put it right where you are going up the bridge, I don't think it would be as big of a problem, but then you're kind of giving an unfair advantage to the guy in second place because it's so early and you are going so slow, they could just draft up and have a really good chance at moves.

I don't really know what the solution to that one is.

Q. Colton, you may have answered this already, but what was the key moment for you to be able to get from the back all the way up to where you were up there towards the front?

COLTON HERTA: There wasn't really a key moment. You know, we didn't catch any yellows. We didn't do anything too special. We got our lap back because we were able to hold two or three more laps of fuel than everybody else and go a little bit longer. A yellow came out, luckily, in those two or three laps that we went longer.

Then once I got my lap back, we were just fast. We were just picking people off. Again, like the guys did a really good job in the pits helping me out with that too.

We were just fast and able to turn up and turn laps on the blacks that guys, at least the guys around me when I was running, they couldn't really do. So it was -- we did have a really good speed advantage.

Q. (Indiscernible) the approach that you took, the mindset, that there was still a lot left in the race.

COLTON HERTA: I was pretty pissed after the accident, but then it kind of -- we got our lap back, and everything calmed down, and then we were able to kind of just pick through people one at a time.

Q. Did you ever have any moment of thinking you might pull off what Ericsson did, change the front wing with the first five laps and go all the way through and win? Did you feel like you could win?

COLTON HERTA: Ericsson never won a lap down. So that's what the difference was. I didn't think I was going to win when I was a lap down, no.

I thought if we could get our lap back, hopefully this race is crazy, we could get a top ten, but I did not think that we could get all the way up there to fifth or even podium or a win, which it looked like it was possible if I nailed some of those restarts, but I just didn't do it.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for coming all the way over. Great job this weekend. See you in a couple of weeks.

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