

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, September 11, 2022

Christian Rasmussen

Sting Ray Robb

Matthew Brabham

Indy Lights Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good morning, everyone. Wrapping up the Indy Lights Grand Prix of Monterrey race No. 2 today, and for that matter the 2022 season in Indy Lights presented by Cooper Tires.

Congratulations to Christian Rasmussen, driver of the No. 28 Road to Indy Stellrecht Andretti Autosport Machine, second win of the season, coming off his first pole of the season, as well. Way to stay out front. Fifth podium of the season, so it's the second and first this weekend for Christian.

Finishing second in race No. 2, Sting Ray Robb, yesterday's winner, third runner-up finish of the season, eighth podium of the season, also wrapped up second place in the Indy Lights presented by Cooper Tires championship. So congratulations to Sting Ray.

Finishing third, rounding out the podium, driver of the No. 83 Machine for Andretti Autosport, Matthew Brabham, seventh podium of the season and 11th podium of his career.

We'll start with Christian. Tell us about the most nerve-racking part of this race for you.

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: The most nerve-racking part was definitely the start. I thought that as soon as I survived the start, I knew that it was going to be pretty smooth sailing from there.

Even though I think Sting Ray probably had the quicker car today like he did yesterday, I knew that it was going to be about not making mistakes, but as soon as I think he got into the aero wash, I think it's so hard to keep up.

I knew with a little bit of Push-to-Pass down the straight and not making mistakes, I knew it was going to be pretty smooth sailing, and that's what it was.

No, I was especially excited about the pole position yesterday because qualifying has kind of been tough for me this year and tough for me to figure out. Being able to finish the season strong like that with a pole position and a second place, I was really happy with that.

Yeah, we all knew it was going to be tough to pass around here, so getting the win today was expected but still awesome.

THE MODERATOR: Can you speak to the strong finish to the season for you as a person, as a driver?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Yeah, for sure. It's all about getting better and better, and I feel like we have developed a lot this year. Even though I was set to win the first race, I think I'm a different driver now than I was then.

That's what this series is all about, about developing, developing your skills, getting ready for the INDYCAR Series.

I'm very happy with my progression this year. Andretti Autosport has done a great job of helping me develop into the driver I am, and being able to win in Indy Lights, such a competitive series, is definitely a pretty cool thing to be able to do.

I'm looking to come back to Indy Lights next year, so hopefully we can continue that momentum with race wins and podiums into next year and compete for the championship then.

THE MODERATOR: Sting Ray Robb, third runner-up finish of the season, eighth podium of the season, doing everything you could to get around your teammate there.

STING RAY ROBB: Yeah. I don't think I did as good of a job today as I did yesterday saving the rears. This track is crazy when it comes to tire deg.

Christian said it; it came down to who was going to make the most mistakes, and once I got into his aero wash, it's hard to stay behind. There's a lot of high-speed, high-aero corners here, and as soon as I got close, it felt like I was on ice. But no, it was a great race. I was pretty happy with



my pass of Linus.

THE MODERATOR: I was going to say, to move up to second was important for you early on.

STING RAY ROBB: Yeah, and I knew that was going to be the case, that we had the pace at the beginning. I don't know if Linus saw me coming there, but it was a pretty clean pass, so I was happy with that.

I thought I was going to have a better run at Christian. I think I made too many mistakes early on, and just saw a gap opened up, and I turned my tires off, so props to him. But I'm happy to walk away with second in the championship.

Matt, congrats to him, third in the championship. It's pretty cool to see another all-Andretti podium sweep in the same weekend, so I'm pretty proud of this team.

THE MODERATOR: Just an incredibly strong finish to the season for you with the win and another podium.

STING RAY ROBB: I think that it's just what he said. We work on getting better and better every race, and we were there. All season we've been knocking on the door. Like you said, eight podiums, so I think that speaks to the consistency. When you're there every day, it comes at some point, that win, and we got it yesterday.

But next year I don't know what my plans are yet, but hopefully if I stay here I'll be checking off even more of those wins.

THE MODERATOR: Matthew, congratulations, wrapping up the season with a seventh podium of the season. Tell us about your race. You had to get around a couple guys to get into the podium position.

MATTHEW BRABHAM: Yeah, I think it was one of the most fun races I've done. I made a couple of passes into the corkscrew. I think I followed you through it because you went down inside Linus and I went down inside of Pedersen, and then a few laps later I did the same thing you did; I went down inside of Linus again in the corkscrew.

I was having a great race, and it was a lot of fun making passes. I was just really good through that fast left-hander and I just caught people by surprise, I think. I had a great time, and it was a great year, and obviously big hats off to Andretti Autosport. We all work together really well as teammates, as well as all the crew guys, all the engineers, and it's been a great year for Andretti.

I think we've stolen points off each other, but we've shown that we've been -- Andretti just does a great job for us in giving us great cars.

Q. The job that this team can do here at certain racetracks throughout the season, how important is that, A, as a program, but B, knowing as a driver that you've got that ability -- you've got a great team, all the support you need to finish up front?

MATTHEW BRABHAM: I think it's what you're looking for really. It's obviously a great chemistry, and I've been with Andretti for a long time, and they're like family to me. It's the same with these guys. Obviously I got off to a good start in St. Pete, but the whole first part of the season for us was terrible. Between all of us I think we had issues going on, but once we ironed those things out, the last half of the year we've been unbeatable.

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Yeah, no, it's been great being a part of this team. I think for me, what has been especially awesome is actually having so competitive teammates. Being part of a program where all of the drivers are championship drivers, championship-winning drivers, and it's just such a high level. We just push each other.

I think for you to get better, I think you need to compete against the best and have the best of the best data available to look at.

We've had that this year, so that's definitely been part of the development that I think has been great.

Q. It's one of those deals where if you finish in front of your teammate you know you're having a good day, right? That's how strong this team is. In general maybe to wrap things up in 2022, your thoughts on the season as a whole? It was incredibly competitive throughout the course of the season, to be able to get on a couple ovals, as well. Christian, how satisfying has the season been for you?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: For me, the season in a whole has been not what I wanted. It's been a tough year. We've had a lot of crashes. We've had a lot of mistakes and stuff happen to me, outside factors.

But at the end of the day, I've learned a lot this year, which is going to be the most important for the rest of my career, and to finish strong this weekend was great. We knew already from the start that I was able to compete for wins and be up there.

We took a dip in the middle of the season, not really being

up there, but being up here again feels great, and we can hopefully continue on with that momentum.

Q. Sting Ray, you said you're not quite sure what's happening yet for next year, but this is a good stepping-stone for whatever that is, isn't it?

STING RAY ROBB: Yeah, and I think the same as Christian; you go down the list of every driver on the grid, and I think they'd all want to say that they want to win the championship. Only one guy gets to do that, so the rest of us are a little disappointed to not walk away with a championship.

But second place is pretty good, and I think that speaks to the competitiveness of the team, and I think like Matt said, we stole points from each other every once in a while, and it just means that your closest competitors are the guys sitting across the table from you. So it just elevates everyone's games, or brings it down, kind of an ebb and flow throughout the season. I think there were some weekends where it kind of catches you off your game and there's other weekends where it can call you out and get you better.

I was happy to be in the field this year. I think it was super competitive.

I was watching the 2015 Laguna race here and just looking at the depth of drivers and where they're at now, I think you're looking at a similar class to what that used to be. Indy Lights had a little bit of a lull there for a few years, but the depth here now I think in talent and success is pretty deep, and if you were to add up the championships on the grid, it's pretty impressive.

I think that I'm pretty happy to finish where I did, and I think that you'll see most of us in INDYCAR in the near future.

Q. Matt, as the veteran of this group, what do you make of this season as a whole?

MATTHEW BRABHAM: Yeah, obviously -- I think Sting Ray put it perfectly. We're all disappointed if we don't win the championship. Obviously I would have liked to have done better personally, and all of us up here would have liked to have done better personally. But I'm proud of my season.

I think there was some people that thought I'd come in and kill everyone, but there was also other people that thought I'd come in and run down the back, as well. I've been in out of an open-wheel car or anything serious, if you don't count Supertrucks being serious full-time for six, seven years.

To come back after that long and compete with guys that have been racing in the Road to Indy for six or seven years, I'm proud of it. I think I did a good job, and it's a really talented field.

I don't know, what's like the most wins for the Road to Indy?

Q. Kirkwood, 28.

MATTHEW BRABHAM: So he's got us by a long way.

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I'm like No. 2 or No. 3 in that.

MATTHEW BRABHAM: But if you take like our field, like you've got guys like me, I'm like an old veteran coming in, but the talent level this year was really great. It was really good.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, and we'll see you down the road.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports