

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Tuesday, January 31, 2023

Felix Rosenqvist

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome, everyone, to Content Day 2023. We're kicking things off today with Felix Rosenqvist, driver of the No. 6 Arrow McLaren Chevrolet.

Great to see you. A new look in the fire suit already.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: You like it?

THE MODERATOR: Not bad. A little more orange.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Papaya.

THE MODERATOR: Papaya, sorry. Talk to us about being back and getting things started in 2023.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Super pumped. Great to be back in the States. I flew in from Sweden yesterday, from Race of Champions. A bit of a trip. Good to finally be back. Nice and early here this morning. Trying to find my voice still.

No, great. I've been ready to go for a couple of months here. It seems like things are finally kicking off, a lot of things to be excited about. New colors, new people in the team, another driver in the team, another car, new partners. Super exciting. New track. That's also fun. Not very normal in this series, go to a completely new place. No one has driven an INDYCAR here before.

Yeah, good vibes.

THE MODERATOR: A lot of changes to look forward to for Arrow McLaren Racing in 2023.

We'll open it up for questions.

Q. How did you earn P1, kicking off content day?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I think maybe because I've been awake since 3 a.m. because of the jet lag. They just figured I should go first.

P1 is P1, right? I'll take it.

Q. (No microphone.)

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, you're right. It's great to have some foundation in the team now at this point. Feeling really at home. Obviously this will be the longest I've been with a team in quite a while, probably since like 2014 when I did Formula 3.

To be with the same team for a third year is huge for me, with consistency, basically the same group as previous years, but some changes here and there. I have a new engineer this year in Chris Lawrence who is a good friend of mine. He's been on the car for many years on what used to be the 7 car, now it's the 6 car crew.

Yeah, I think what you look to improve is all the small details. It's so tight. As I said, we had some standouts last year. I think we had some low points, as well. I think that's what we've been targeting, how can we get rid of the lows and improve the highs a little bit more.

Obviously in INDYCAR now it's very tight, very small differences that make you go from, let's say, P10 to P1. It's all within a couple of hundredths or tenths.

Yeah, good to keep building on that foundation we laid. We ended the season on a very good note last year in Laguna. Yeah, just trying to continue where we left off really.

Q. What benefits came from adding a third car?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I think it always depends on what driver, what's the dynamic of the group, all that. But my feeling is that it's been very good. We had a chance to hang out quite a lot with Alex. I think he's well-integrated at this point. A couple days in the simulator, a couple days at the shop. I think the fit has been good with him, me and Pato.

On a trackside perspective, it's obviously huge to have always a third opinion on things. Every driver is different. Every driver's opinion is valuable in its own way. I think everyone in the team knows how me and Pato operate at this point, our differences from driver to driver.



It will really be interesting to see what Alex thinks about the car, how we work. Especially here at Thermal because that's when we have time to look into operational things, bigger picture things that maybe we can improve as a team. We're very open to listen to him, hear what he has to say. Obviously he comes from a lot of success at Andretti.

Yeah, we're super excited to have him on board.

Q. Talking about the highs and lows, last year you didn't know whether you were going to be back. Now you're back. How would you describe how that went for you emotionally?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I think it went pretty well, to be honest. I think I handled it probably as good as I could. That's probably a reason why I'm here this year.

No, I think it's a massive opportunity for me to be back for a third year. I feel like I have all the tools I need to perform, feeling very good with everyone at the car. As I said, there's so many things happening last year on and off the track. I think as a team, we just really learned a lot from that that we can bring into this season.

I think we'll be tough this year. We have a lot of things in the bag to try early this season. A couple of things here at Thermal we want to try. Going into the season, we have pinpointed some areas where we feel we were lacking a little bit, like the short ovals, for example.

I feel like we've done the best we can to attack all those areas and bring the best possible package we can going into the season.

Q. Gavin taking over for Taylor, what will that dynamic be like with you guys?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I think it's already a lot of influence. He's been very important to us in the transition to three cars, the transition to what we want to become in the future, and the goals we have. We're very much on target I think with that, thanks to him. He's been great.

I think everyone agrees with me in the team that he's been a great leader so far. Obviously it's a new role for him. He's an engineer, engineering background, which I think is good. Also pretty common that people with engineering backgrounds go to leader positions.

No, but he's been great. I think he's a good leader. He's a funny guy to be around. He brings good energy to the team. I think he has that ability to kind of be funny and then switch it on in serious mode when he needs to, which

kind of goes along with the vibe of our team in general.

Yeah, we have high hopes.

Q. What do you know about Cowler?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I actually met him at the simulator that week. Kind of showed him around a little bit. It's going to be a while until he's in our car. But it was fun just showing him around, the steering wheel. He actually got to jump in the car a little bit, and just talking about the race.

He sounded very interested, especially in the road courses actually. I tried to convince him to maybe try to do a road course as well. That would be fun.

He's a great talent. Actually I've heard a lot of people already betting for him to win the race. That's kind of the expectation that he has (smiling). I think people truly believe he can do that.

Again, it's an opportunity to learn from someone that comes from a completely different environment. Already the little chat I had with him, 30 minutes, I felt like I learned something.

No, it will be great to have him around.

THE MODERATOR: You know the team is in a good spot when you're already talking about 2024.

Q. Obviously the last half of last year was full of uncertainty. Now you know there's probably going to be another driver coming in in 2024. How are you looking at that?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I mean, first of all, I don't know what's going to happen in the future. That's a long time until next year.

As I said, I think it's a great opportunity for me. I'm in a good spot. I'm in a well-performing team, not only in Arrow McLaren but my 6 car I think is going to be strong this year. I feel well with everyone around me. I feel like I have a good support from the team to go and perform.

I don't really think too much about that stuff. I just try to do what I can do, which is go fast forward and try to win races.

Q. Asked about Thermal, what do you understand about why you are going to Thermal or why they're doing it this way?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I mean, honestly, I don't know the reason why we're going here, but I'm happy we do. I think

personally it's always exciting to come to new tracks. It's an amazing facility. We're staying at the Villas inside the track area. I've never been here before. I was really blown away by how neat and tidy everything looks.

I don't know if there's ambitions to race here in the future. That could be an option. I'm just pumped to be in California in January. There's worse places to be (smiling).

Learning the track will be a good kind of lesson who's going to get up to speed the quickest, and are we going to race here in the future maybe, are there going to be other tracks similar to this. I think the closest one we raced at is probably COTA, a smooth F1 style of layout in a way. Maybe this one is a bit smaller. We'll see.

I just think everyone has taken on the challenge. We haven't really done it in the simulator, but I've been practicing on YouTube and stuff just to see which way it goes.

Yeah, fun challenge.

Q. Is there any current track that you'd compare it to?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I think probably Portland would be the closest, I'd say. But I don't really think any one is similar to this one. It's very long, as well. It's a long lap. You don't really know how the surface is. People have said it's kind of slippery, high deg. You never know until you hit the track.

Q. (No microphone.)

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I mean, it's a big team at this point. The difference when you change one person to another, it's obviously less the bigger the team is.

I think Gavin is good at trying to make every individual perform their best. Might be some kind of a culture difference there where instead of trying to change people -- I'm not saying that's what Taylor did, but I think Gavin in general is very interested in the individual performance of each guy or girl to make sure everyone is maximizing their skills. Maybe someone is better at this position, maybe someone's in the wrong position. You can swap them out for different jobs and things like that. I think he's very into that, kind of the lineup of the team is his little hustle that he's trying to improve.

Obviously there's millions of other things that he's in charge of. Honestly, I don't really know about that. He's been very good with me. We've had quite a lot of chats. He's trying to help out if there's anything you need. I think that goes for the same with everyone else in the team.

Q. (On the growth of the team.)

FELIX ROSENQVIST: It's interesting because when you're in it, you don't really notice. One person coming in every other day. You're like, Hey. Then it becomes just normality. All of a sudden you're like 30 more people than you were a couple years ago.

I haven't actually noticed it. But when you look back, I think obviously marketing and that kind of stuff is becoming pretty huge in our team. It's a big focus for us, to get the McLaren brand out in the world, do good content, which I think we're probably the leading team in that sense now. That's exciting. There's always interesting things on that side.

The engineering is growing I would say more slowly but continuously. There's new people coming in there. I think the general direction of the team, just kind of goal, ambitions, you can feel that everyone's targeting something different than they did two years ago. The championships, wins, at least I think everyone in the team feels that we should perform and we should win instead of, like, it's a luxury to win.

Yeah, it's a mentality shift. I think that's good. People are hungry and people feel like we're out here to do damage, you know?

Q. (No microphone.)

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I've been positively surprised. I think Alex kind of has that bad-guy role a little bit in INDYCAR. He's always been that guy, which is cool. I think we need those guys, as well.

Actually having gotten to know him, it's been super nice, super kind. I think, as I said before, it fits like a glove in the team. I think it fills a role where me and Pato are kind of like, Pato is kind of like the crazy guy, I'm somewhere in the middle, and Alex is the more engineering guy in the team. I think Alex has more experience, as well. He just feels like a guy who knows what he wants.

Yeah, good addition to the team and great guy at the same time.

THE MODERATOR: We'll have to leave it there. Thanks for coming by. Appreciate it. We'll see you at Thermal on Thursday.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Cool, thank you.

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