

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Sunday, July 2, 2023

### Alex Palou

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Now joined by today's winner of the Honda Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio presented by the 2023 Accord Hybrid in Alex Palou, driving, of course, the No. 10, the American Legion Honda for Chip Ganassi Racing.

It's his third straight win in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES. First person to do that since your teammate, Scott Dixon, did it to start the season back in 2020. Fourth win in five races. Third straight podium here at Mid-Ohio. Inched your way up as you went on. A couple of years ago third, second, now first.

Tenth straight top 8 in the INDYCAR SERIES, which is remarkable. Chip Ganassi Racing coming home with their 12th win here at Mid-Ohio, which ties your team with Team Penske.

Alex led 48 of the 80 laps today. How crucial was that first stint? I guess there was some fuel-save going on, and really that set up the rest of the day for you, didn't it?

ALEX PALOU: It did. We knew that we had the pace, but we needed clean air. Obviously it's tough at Mid-Ohio to follow cars -- well, to overtake cars, I would say.

That's why we went for the primaries at the beginning, which we thought it was probably a bit risky, but if we were able to cross the first lap on position, we were going to be good for our strategy.

So, yeah, made it work. We saved a little bit of fuel. Waited until the 27 struggled a little bit on tires. We were able to pass and then just run a bit longer than Colton and Rahal to get the lead.

Yeah, it was fun. The car was really fast obviously. It was great to be able to do everything that we planned, and all the pit stops and everything was fine.

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with questions.

**Q. Alex, I'm not going to ask you about being on the wave again. I think I've done that two or three weeks in**

**a row. It's more like a tsunami now, isn't it?**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I don't know, honestly. It's been great. It's been amazing since the month of May. Well, I would say all year, but we've been able to have really consistent and really fast cars, and we've been able to maximize everything. So, yeah, Tsunami, whatever.

**Q. In particular, I think it was Peterson who you had to trail for quite a while. You set this pass up starting in the keyhole and ended up passing him down in the Ss and stuff. But explain that whole sequence in that race because that kind of sets you free when you finally got past him because you saw your lead shrink from, what, 9 to 4 seconds or something at that point.**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, it's INDYCAR. I know the rules, but at the same time it's very frustrating when you are leading and you try to open the gap, and they don't let you pass, but they are using the overtake, like 20, 30 seconds a lap, to try to stay up front.

On top of that once you are side-by-side that they are so aggressive defending. Obviously it's really frustrating when you are leading.

I knew I had to get past also because you are using more overtake, you are using more fuel, you are using more tires, and you're not able to do the race you want just because of a back marker car that wants to stay on the lead lap.

The issue is that once you pass them, they let everybody pass because they already lost the lap; right?

So, yeah, it's frustrating. I know it's the rules. I would like it to change. It's not going to change. So, yeah, whatever. I'm more relaxed now.

**Q. Do you feel like the target on your back is getting larger and larger, or you're not worried about that at all?**

ALEX PALOU: No, no. I would say it's the same target if you are 10 points or 50 points in front.



So, yeah, obviously everybody is seeing what we're doing. We've got three wins in a row. We can keep it going because I know we have good cars and a great team.

So, yeah, I don't think it's getting larger.

**Q. As you told me at the test at Iowa you got a crazy street race, as you called it, at Toronto and then a double points weekend at Iowa. So in a lot of ways there's still a pretty big obstacle coming up during the month of July. How prepared do you believe you are for those two weekends?**

ALEX PALOU: Well, that's why we started going faster in Road America and Mid-Ohio. Joking aside, we know that Toronto, it's a street course, and everything can happen here there.

Same for Iowa. It's always a crazy race, and it's a double-header. So if you have a bad day, you're probably going to have two bad days.

Yeah, hopefully it's going to be okay. I know Toronto was really good for us last year. If I remember correctly, Scott won, so we have a really good car. Hopefully we can still have a clean race there.

Then Iowa we'll see. But, yeah, it would be nice if we're preparing for another great result there, and we suddenly get the great result.

**Q. Then this is a Mr. Obvious question, but had you ever had any time like this to where everything just seems to be coming up roses for you?**

ALEX PALOU: Not at all. No, absolutely not. Obviously in go-karts I had good couple of races, but I don't think I had three big wins in a row or in the last five and always being up there. So, no, it's the best moment of my career so far.

**Q. Correct me if I'm wrong, this is where you had your first-ever INDYCAR test in 2019.**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah.

**Q. How much more special is a win here given that this is where you had your first sample of one of these cars?**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, very special obviously. When I came here testing, I watched a race. I watched Scott win and fight with Felix at the last couple of laps.

And I was, like, man, I would love to be racing here. I did the test. I fell in love with the way the INDYCAR drives, the

way that you can set up the car and how you can attack, and I got lucky and got a seat that year. All the rest is history.

So, yeah, felt really good. We had good races here in the past, but obviously this has been the best.

**Q. I don't know how to ask this. It looks like you have already taken a shower and cleaned up. You look quite fresh after an almost nonstop race. How do you feel physically? Did you start to feel it out there, or was this a ride in the park, so to speak?**

ALEX PALOU: No, no, it's always tough. INDYCAR races, man, they are very long. It's tough.

Also, we went up too much on the front wing at the end for the last, and I was struggling a little bit.

But, yeah, I prepare myself. Obviously when you are, let's say, leading and having a little bit of a gap, you can take it a bit easier. So yeah, I'm glad that everything looks good on me.

**Q. I know you are having a lot of numbers here at the moment and a lot of stats and things like this. I just wondered what you think is your best area that you -- in terms of your performance this year where you are performing best?**

ALEX PALOU: What do you mean? Like driving-wise, or...

**Q. Yeah, yeah, with your driving or any of the qualifying races, any aspects of your performance at all. Where do you feel like you're kind of really performing well this year, not in terms of the results, but in terms of your performance as a driver?**

ALEX PALOU: Oh, yeah. Sorry, Jack. I would say we got a lot better in qualifying than in the last two years. We've been able to get more speed from the car and get myself more comfortable. That helps getting, I would say, better strategies during the races.

And I would say reading the races. I'm learning a lot. I've been learning a lot from Scott, from the team for what I need for my races.

So far it's working. So hopefully we can keep on learning and keep getting some good results.

**Q. You said earlier this week that your kind of performances and how many races you win for the rest of the season, you know, you don't think that will affect your options for the next season or what will be open**

**to you and what you'll be able to do next year. Does that feel like it's changing? You've had another win this weekend. There's more momentum. There's more noise around that. How does that kind of change your opinion on that?**

ALEX PALOU: No, I don't think it's going to change. I mean, yeah, it's another win. It's another good race, but it's not going to -- it's not like it's completely changing our, I would say, description as a driver.

So whatever comes, it's going to be good. I'm excited for this year and also for next year. So, yeah, we'll see what happens.

**Q. In your mind was there one moment today, that key moment in this race, where you got by somebody or whatever and as you look back on it now, that was what set me free, so to speak?**

ALEX PALOU: I would say it was key to pass the 27 car when we did. He was losing pace. Herta also opened a gap as well as Graham.

I think if I wouldn't have overtaken them, I would not have been able to overcut them on the first stop and then just run on traffic and stop two and three.

So, yeah, I would say that was the biggest moment.

**Q. (Off microphone)**

ALEX PALOU: No idea. What happened? Who?

THE MODERATOR: Herta got a speeding violation.

**Q. (Off microphone)**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I had no idea. No, no. I mean, we're focused on what we are doing and everything that is in front of us, not behind.

**Q. I have heard you in interviews in your native language pronounce your last name "Palou," but I've heard a lot of people say "Palou." Is Palou correct?**

ALEX PALOU: I would say those are both -- I would accept both of them.

**Q. Do you have a preference?**

ALEX PALOU: Palou. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations. Alex Palou, now with the 110 point lead as we head to Honda Indy Toronto

coming up two weeks from today.

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