

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Sunday, September 3, 2023

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

### Alex Palou

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Obviously joined now by the 2023 NTT INDYCAR SERIES Champion in Alex Palou. Tremendous run, obviously, for his second win here at Portland International Raceway, leading 69 of the 110 laps, driving the No. 10, the American Legion Honda for Chip Ganassi Racing.

Second win, as mentioned, here in Portland, fifth of the season. Ninth career win. Ninth podium of this year, 24th of his career. Five wins, nine podiums, 12 top-5s, 16 top-10s. It's been an incredible season. Congratulations.

ALEX PALOU: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Glad to get this out of the way now and not have to worry about it next week?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, absolutely, obviously. As you describe it, it's been an amazing season. We just had fast cars everywhere, and we've been able to maximize our results even on the bad weekends, and to finish here at Portland with a win feels amazing.

We have one race left that we won there last year, so feeling pretty confident. And obviously, yeah, clinching the championship makes you feel a little bit more relaxed obviously.

THE MODERATOR: The secret for this win today? Chip was saying you called this, you said you were going to win this race today.

ALEX PALOU: No, honestly, I thought we had a really, really fast car. I would say fast six, the result we got there wasn't what we could have achieved. I didn't think we extracted 100% from it, so I knew after warmup that we could go for it and win the race.

So we didn't really go on safe mode of just staying with the 9 because we thought we could win the race today, and we did. So happy that everything worked out.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Can you talk about your second stint on red tires? Did you plan how many laps you wanted to go, something like that?**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, we knew we wanted to do at least 18 laps, and it was right about the time that the 9 and the 6 caught us where we didn't want to lose the lead.

We could have been a little more aggressive and just be, like, from P-3 from three laps after to just have a bit more space, but we didn't. We just wanted to be a bit conservative on that call. I think it was the right call, but we had traffic at the same time.

So, yeah, it was, I would say, the stint that I suffered the most on reds.

**Q. (Off microphone.)**

ALEX PALOU: I was struggling on tires, so I just wanted to compensate the time that I was losing on tires with the push-to-pass. I knew we were a bit ahead of the 9, the 3, and the 15 at that time, so that's why I was pressing a little bit more than I wanted.

**Q. Now with the second title, INDYCAR title, do you think you have already overtaken Alonso and Sainz in popularity?**

ALEX PALOU: No (laughing). No, for sure not. Yeah, I mean, it's a different level, but it's okay. I mean, I prefer two INDYCAR Championships than popularity and Instagram followers, so yeah.

**Q. (Off microphone.)**

ALEX PALOU: I haven't checked. I haven't had time yet, but yeah, I'm sure they will.

**Q. (Off microphone.)**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, that's true.

**Q. By extending with Ganassi, as Chip confirmed,**

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**does that mean you're focused on a long INDYCAR SERIES career, or do you harbor any thoughts of switching to F1 at some point down the road?**

ALEX PALOU: No, I said it many times that it was not my fully focus. Then when an opportunity came, I had to go for it, I felt.

At the same time I know I'm not 21 or 19. I'm already 26, which is good. I'm not saying I'm old, but I mean, it's not that I'm super young.

So next year I'll be 27. If an opportunity comes in the future, which is like really, really small chances, I'll think about it for sure, 100%.

But I'm happy honestly. As long as I keep on winning championships and races or battling for championships I think I'll have a great career.

**Q. Team chemistry is always paramount when it comes to INDYCAR racing. Just the dynamic you and Barry have built over the years that's cultivated to the two championships. Of course, Barry is not here. How special is it to have somebody like him to be a part of this journey you're continuing to do so far?**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, honestly he's the director of the 10 car. Not only he does -- he is managing the whole team across the four cars and even other series, but he's the director, and he calls pretty much everything on the 10 car.

So he's a very big piece on our stand, but unfortunately, he couldn't be here. Everybody is really sad that he's not here, but I think he's even more sad.

He's recovering well. We know that. He's a strong guy, and hopefully he'll be back with us very soon.

**Q. I know Chip told us that you said post-race you wanted to win this going away and clinch the championship with a victory. Can you take us through a little bit how different winning and clinching this championship has felt this afternoon compared to when you did it two years ago?**

ALEX PALOU: Honestly I knew we had a really, really fast car, especially after warmup. I knew throughout all weekend, but especially after warmup I felt really, really good.

Then Chip, before the race we did a meeting, and he was very aggressive on telling us that we had to win. So I was, like, all right, let's win then.

So before jumping into the car he was with me. He said, All right, let's have a good and a clean race, just manage your position.

I was, like, No, Chip, you told us to win, so I'll go ahead, and I think we can win it.

It was honestly one of those races where I knew we had everything we needed to win the race, that we had something else that could separate us from our competitors. It was true, and we were able to maximize it.

**Q. How important was it for you to seal this championship and not let it get to that finale and not let Dixon just continue to hang around?**

ALEX PALOU: Can you repeat that?

**Q. How important for you was it to get this championship sealed and not let Scott continue to hang around and for things to get any closer than they already had?**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I mean, I always say that he's my obviously biggest fear. I think he's one of the best INDYCAR drivers, if not the best, that we ever had.

Not only that, but he also has the best team around, which is the same as I have. So it's tough because we couldn't really hide anything or we couldn't really -- I mean, like in the 10 car we couldn't really have an advantage on him because we were sharing everything. He knew what was going on.

So obviously he pushed a lot the last couple of weeks, couple of months; but I'm glad that we were able to seal it and especially with a win.

**Q. I know you'd been telling us for several weeks now that you would announce your future after the end of the season. Chip seemed to have done that for you.**

ALEX PALOU: Can you repeat?

**Q. I know you've been telling us that you would be announcing your future at the end of the season, and Chip kind of did that on the TV broadcast for us saying you would be back in a CGR car. To have that out there and public, I'm sure you're happy to be coming back here. What's that all like for you to know you've got several years seemingly ahead of you at Chip Ganassi Racing?**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I said I will -- obviously after Laguna I will try and speak a little bit more, but yeah, I'm going to

enjoy as much as possible the win from today, the win from the championship, and then we'll see.

I started actually my first page on the book, so that thing is going well. I mean, I don't really have anything else to say now. There's no news. There's nothing else I could tell you now that is exciting or anything, but I will.

**Q. Next week at same time the INDYCAR season is over relatively early. Can we see you in another category in a race car for the rest of the year, maybe in Chip's team?**

ALEX PALOU: After the season?

**Q. No, after Laguna Seca.**

ALEX PALOU: Oh, no, no. We actually have a ton of work with HPD and also Chevy and INDYCAR on just making all the tests for the 2024 car, the engine. We have a ton of tests.

I think Wednesday after Laguna I have already some testing, so I'll be busier than a normal year, which is super exciting. I love it.

Apart from that, I'm also having a baby, so it will be an extra busy offseason.

**Q. So no race in Indianapolis after Laguna Seca?**

ALEX PALOU: No, no. Hopefully, no. Yeah, maybe next year. I'll push for next year.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations on the little one on the way.

ALEX PALOU: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Two trophies and a baby.

ALEX PALOU: Two trophies and a baby.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, Alex Palou, 2023 NTT INDYCAR SERIES Champion.

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