

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Marcus Armstrong

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, Marcus Armstrong, Chip Ganassi Racing, winning the 2023 Rookie of the Year championship. 20th in points, finished eighth today, five top 10s now here in 2023. Of course, beating out Canapino by 34 points. It's been quite a weekend. Extension, full-time, Rookie of the Year. Not bad? Not a bad week. Just your thoughts?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: It has certainly been an eventful week. Today has been a long day with all the cars and chaos.

You're right, it's been a really nice week. I've had my announcement I think on Thursday, was it? Seems like a year ago.

THE MODERATOR: Technically, yes.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Seems like a year ago at this point. It was nice to finally talk about what I have in store for the future with Chip Ganassi Racing. As well, to win the Rookie of the Year championship, I'm extremely pleased to finally lock that down. Obviously we didn't do five races, so it was going to be a tough ask, for sure.

But nevertheless, I think we finished every race. We were consistent. We had some good results. Sometimes I think we could have done a lot better. Yeah, we were consistent and fast enough to win it without the ovals.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for our Rookie of the Year, Marcus Armstrong.

Q. When you look at it now, you talked about how America is a lifestyle, as opposed to how Europe was. Have you enjoyed that year as a lifestyle, part of the series?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Yes, I have. It's quite different to racing in Europe. There is certainly a family culture that is embedded inside the team, which is not common in high-performing racing teams. There's always a mix between professionalism and a social environment within

this team, which I think I like a lot more than what I've experienced previously.

I feel like they have brought me into their family and really taught me everything. Everyone's been open. I've asked Scott a million and one questions, so I'm very annoying. Everyone else, as well. They've all answered truthfully, as far as I know (smiling). It's been great.

Q. Looking at the season, was there a particular venue or circuit that stood out to you as the best and maybe a worst?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: My favorite circuits? My favorite race this year was Detroit, which was just chaos, survival mode at one point, much like today. That was actually a really fun and enjoyable track for whatever reason. The layout and the bumps made it quite a nice circuit.

I would say the toughest race of the year was probably Toronto, which was actually I think my best result. Weirdly enough, I didn't really feel at home at that track. Learning it was quite difficult, probably the most difficult circuit this season. With the tarmac changes, bumps, it was like driving around a carpark at one point. That was difficult. As I said, we had our best result there, so maybe I'm at my best when I'm uncomfortable.

Q. Marcus, can you try to detail all the different contact you may have had today? It seemed quite messy. At least the start.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Yeah, it was messy, for sure. Lap one, turn one, I was driving at a snail's pace, just trying to get through the first corner. I think I made contact with one of the Rahal cars, which went spinning. Someone else hit me from behind. I was sort of pushed into the Rahal-Lundgaard catastrophe.

I don't remember what happened, but I remember taking it easy but still getting caught up in the accident.

Then I can't remember the other ones early in the race. I do remember I think it was Pedersen at turn 11 on the restarts, which was a real pain really because we were in quite a good spot. I just had so much grip from the new



reds. Everyone else was on blacks. I didn't even mean to go there. I just had so much grip that I just accelerated, overtook about three people, put myself in a risky position. Then obviously I got tagged by I think it was Pedersen.

Then I also remember a pink car flying across the track sideways into Herta. I actually made contact with them. I nipped my front wing. Got away with that. My car looks like it's been through the wars, for sure.

Q. Given the extreme lack of testing for INDYCAR rookies this year, has that been one of the toughest changes to make from one series to the next?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: I would say I get more track time than in other series that I've done, like in F2 last year I think we were really, really tight on push laps. That's for another reason. That's because the tire just can't do so many push laps.

Here I actually think I've done quite a decent amount of laps in the race weekends. This track in particular, I feel like I haven't done -- past qualifying, I don't think I did six proper push laps because there were so many red flags and everything. That's another story.

I feel like the track time has been adequate for having a good season.

Q. Obviously a lot more testing with the new motors coming in. You have your first oval test coming up. How much training and preparation will be done for that?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: My preparation has gone as far as asking the guy in the PNC suit over there a couple of questions. To be fair, I did a couple laps on the simulator the other day.

Yeah, I'm going to be going there with my eyes wide open and just seeing what I find, making the best of it. I feel like it's going to be a brand-new experience for me. So it's exciting. It's the start of a new journey, I guess.

Q. You mentioned Formula 2, then coming to INDYCAR. Is there anything you compare as an advantage from Formula 2 to INDYCAR? What was the biggest challenge coming into INDYCAR racing?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Well, F2 is obviously a high-downforce car, high-horsepower. I'm used to sort of having that downforce at high-speed corners. I guess when you compare to others who come from maybe Indy Lights or something, they may not be used to that amount of load. Certainly in F2 I get that. The tire in F2 is quite

difficult to master. I feel like a lot of our work is put into understanding tires over there, which can work as an advantage over here, seeing that the Firestone is becoming more heat sensitive and degradation sensitive.

I think that's an advantage, just knowing I've driven a tire that is extremely difficult to maximize, and I can bring that over here to a certain extent.

But I feel well-prepared really. I feel like it was a good learning class for an INDYCAR season. There is obviously nuances to INDYCAR, like this car is very intense, the steering kickback is a lot, for whatever reason. The racing is pretty ruthless. There's still some learning to be done.

Q. Now that you're full-time for next year, with teammates like Scott Dixon and Alex Palou, what are your chances of getting the million dollars at the Thermal challenge test?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: The what?

Q. Thermal is going to have a special challenge.

THE MODERATOR: Our open test at Thermal next year is in March. We're pairing it up with a \$1 million challenge.

Q. What are your chances of getting that with teammates like Dixon and Palou?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: I don't know. Could be a deal to be done maybe (smiling). Maybe one of us could sacrifice our race and just take everyone out, get a piece of the pie. I don't know.

No points.

THE MODERATOR: But the money ain't bad.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: I fancy my chances as much as any race. I'd like to think that the other two don't need it as much as I do. Maybe they might give it to me.

THE MODERATOR: The gap was just 34 points. Congratulations.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Thank you.

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