

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Alexander Rossi

Press Conference



Q. Before the big day, you were able to get in testing. How cool is that to have a project to work on in October?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: It's great. It's exciting to obviously have new technology in the series. Any time you get to come to the Speedway, as I've said many times, it's a great day.

We were blessed with beautiful weather in October, so it's going to be a great day for evaluating what we have with the hybrid and understanding kind of the pros and cons of how it works.

Q. The most important thing you're trying to take away from this?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Just getting laps, man, getting mileage under our belt, understanding the limitations of the system, areas where we got to adjust what we know is normal based on what it's doing.

But so far the morning was very smooth. I think we're getting a clear understanding of how things are developing once we get into running this afternoon.

Q. Is this the first day running?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yes.

Q. How busy are you? How active?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, you are, but it's pretty straightforward for the most part. So, I mean, you have a lot of time around here. Really driven on a road course, street course yet, which adds a lot more kind of workload in the manual system. There's more variables with that. But around the Speedway, you got enough time to do what you need to do.

Q. Here you have to use the paddle or button, whichever device you decide to use. That is one more thing you've got to be aware of that you have to pull it

or hit it?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, certainly you're understanding kind of what your charge is. But at this point, we're still not really sure what the best optimization of the system is. So right now it's a lot of experimenting, playing around with different kind of theories. There's a lot of (indiscernible) to go through in the next several months before we come back to the Speedway.

Like I said, I think it will have more of an impact in group running. When you're just running around flat out by myself with all the downforce on, like, it's not doing a whole lot.

Q. You had more horsepower but more weight. Are you getting more speed?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: No, it's certainly not faster.

Q. It's not often that something this new has come around. To be on the front end of this, is there extra excitement?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: There is. Sustainability has been a thing for the series, partners, manufacturers, teams. I think we'll have had some amazing initiatives from renewable fuel from Shell, the new tire from Firestone. This is the next step in that progression, which is very needed in today's kind of market, if you will.

It's exciting for the series to kind of be on the forefront of that and also for us as a team to kind of have access to the system this far in advance. It's a good thing.

It's still only the second outing, third day, that Arrow McLaren has run the hybrid, but still evaluating a lot of very critical information that will help us next year.

Q. It's not faster, you say. Does it have a potential to be as you continue to work through this or...

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I don't think anything's really optimized yet. 30 laps, so it's hard to say.

Q. How about this new teammate? Have you had a

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chance to talk to him yet?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I missed him yesterday. But, I mean, I talked to him when he was here during the month of May. I've actually known him since we were kids. I know he's very excited obviously about the opportunity. It's very cool for us to have him on the team, to be a part of him attempting to do the double. It's pretty special.

He's the right guy for the job. I think he'll add a lot of different input and insight that maybe open-wheel INDYCAR drivers don't necessarily think of.

Q. Were you a Jeff Gordon fan as a kid? What's it like to have him as part of Arrow McLaren?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I don't know that I was really -- I didn't watch much Cup. I obviously knew who Jeff Gordon was. He was the rainbow car, right?

He's obviously an icon the sport, someone I've actually gotten to know really through my time in Europe, believe it or not, because he was an advocate for having an American in F1.

Amazing guy. Amazing what he's accomplished in his career. Now he's the guy in charge of Hendrick Motorsports. Pretty amazing thing.

Q. What is it like to get to know Rick Hendrick?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I look forward to meeting him. I haven't gotten there yet. I got the opportunity at the end of last year through NAPA to actually go see Mr. Hendricks private car collection, which is one of the coolest field trips I've ever done in my life.

That was awesome, but obviously looking forward to having the whole Hendrick family and team involved with us through the month of May.

Q. How are the dance lessons coming?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: They're fine.

Q. Are you ready?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: We'll see in 48 hours (smiling).

Q. Is that the most fun thing you've done in the off-season?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: No. I went to Colombia. That was arguably much more fun than dance lessons. But, yes, it will be good.

Q. (Indiscernible.)

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, I mean, it's great. I think that there's always going to be an opinion that people have. No one ever seems to be happy. It's like we have 17 races, shut up, it's a good thing.

Q. All-Star (indiscernible), do you race a little bit different?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I don't know. I think we're still trying to figure out what, like, the format is actually finalized and going to be. I think there's been a couple ideas.

I talked about it for a long time. These golf tournaments, these big values, that always drives a little bit of extra interest. People are going to see are you going to race differently because it's for money, not a championship. I'm curious, as well.

It's going to add a new dynamic. Obviously everyone at Thermal was incredibly welcoming when we went there for the open test. It will be good to get back.

Q. You're going to have a new engineer next year. Do you know who that is?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I don't know.

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