

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Wednesday, January 10, 2024

### David Malukas

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Continuing on with the afternoon session here at the NTT IndyCar Series Content Days with David Malukas, now driving the No. 6 Arrow McLaren Chevrolet, beginning his third season in the NTT IndyCar Series, with the podium of six top tens in 2023. Getting used to the new look for you?

DAVID MALUKAS: I like it. I'm glowing. Anywhere I go, it's just papaya. You can see it in your peripheral vision. It actually changes the way you see things.

Like you know when you were a kid and everything seemed a little bit brighter, I feel like putting the papaya on, I have that same brightness back.

**Q. Does it change the way you view people at all?**

DAVID MALUKAS: I don't know. But I see everybody a lot brighter now, so life is good.

**Q. Looking ahead to 2024, what are the expectations? What's the hope?**

DAVID MALUKAS: Oh, expectations, hope, I mean, now with Arrow McLaren, we are going for the top: podiums, wins. They are very competitive, and it's the team to do it. That is going to be -- my goals will coincide with that.

**Q. Your transition has been what? How would you describe it?**

DAVID MALUKAS: Whatever the word for as smooth as possible would be. That would be how well it's been. It's been great.

As soon as we came in, met everybody. Everybody is treating me like family. Actually a lot of the people there too, I have known since go-karting, so I have a lot of history with them too.

It's been very cool, learning a lot. They have a lot of resources that I'm trying to use to the most of my capabilities.

T.K. is there to help me and assist on that, and we've also done a little bit of testing. I'm already getting to know everybody.

**Q. So it's going well despite Tony Canaan, is that what you're saying?**

DAVID MALUKAS: No comment. He's got some beef over there.

**Q. You're a lot of fun on social media. Arrow McLaren does awesome stuff on social media. Talk about how that's going to help grow your brand, grow yourself as well. And secondly, when do these conversations kind of start? I go back to like when Palou started talking to Ganassi, he was like, oh. Like when you started talking to McLaren, when this became a realization, how excited were you? You probably couldn't tell a lot of people at the time. Talk about the relationship and how social media is going to be great for you guys and how it all came about, what your first initial thoughts were.**

DAVID MALUKAS: It kind of all happened quickly after Nashville is when everything got done. So for those months until Laguna I had to kind of keep it in.

I actually enjoyed it. I had a good time because keeping it in wasn't too hard. I'd go online and see all these like, oh, this person is going over here, because I'd also know where the other drivers were going, and I'm giggling in the back like, hoo-hoo, you don't know.

But going into Arrow McLaren, one of the big deals has been from their socials. They do a fantastic job with promotion and promoting the drivers. Going into it, of course, that was one of the big factors. For my brand and for me personally, it's going to help exponentially.

**Q. I don't know if you follow college football, but Jim Harbaugh likes to say who's got it better than us? Nobody. Could that same phrase be used for you?**

DAVID MALUKAS: Hey, I mean, I guess you could, yeah. That's a good phrase. I like it.



**Q. Just as far as to be so early in your career to be on a team like this, just the opportunities that it presents for you.**

DAVID MALUKAS: It is a great opportunity. Like I said, they have a lot of resources; also have really good teammates of Pato and Rossi. Being 22, I still have some time to learn, and it is the perfect place to make sure that for my skills and to get the maximum out of my potential, this is the place to be.

**Q. Going into this year one, I know this in the past has sometimes been a team for other drivers that have come on, a tough car to really get a chance to master year one in. What is your -- like what are you aiming for this year? Do you feel like year one and such a big opportunity, is this something that you feel like you have to hit on right away, or do you feel like there's some leeway for you to be able to get adjusted to this team and how it operates and the setup of the car?**

DAVID MALUKAS: I think it's a bit similar in between that line. Going from Arrow McLaren's side, they're competitive. They want to be up front, they want to get wins, they want to get podiums, and they want to compete with the best and be the best.

Going into this season those will also be my goals. Going into it, yes, of course, I will be new, and it will take time to adjust. We have had a lot of testing, and I think by the time this season starts, we should be where we want to be.

**Q. David, nice exciting move for you going to Arrow McLaren. Obviously it's a team with a few more resources than you're used to. What's sort of the biggest change you've seen moving up to Arrow McLaren so far?**

DAVID MALUKAS: The biggest change is there's a lot of people and a lot of people I need to meet, a lot of names that I still need to get down. But that's been the biggest change, is trying to get used to the different environment, something that I'm not used to.

But all in all, it's been a good change, and I'm very excited to get comfortable with it.

**Q. I've got two questions, the first one being you go to dale coin, Chicago-based team, Chicago native, you're able to kind of hang out there, learn the nuances that you needed to to become an IndyCar driver. I guess I'm just curious moving to Indy, getting closer to Arrow McLaren, what are maybe some new habits in your approach that you're taking that maybe you didn't have**

**that have been built over this off-season?**

DAVID MALUKAS: There's been a lot of new changes coming here with the move and just being all around just a different team.

Habits-wise, it's just trying to get into the shop as much as possible. I want to be there for the guys. I want to already start building relationships, building that chemistry before the season starts, and just trying to get in and help and be with the content crew, get to know everybody from my side looking at onboards and different -- anything that I can just to make sure that, by the time the season starts, I will be as ready as I can be so we can get those performances going as soon as possible.

**Q. I get the not-so-fun question to ask, is it's been pretty well broadcast originally where Alex Palou was supposed to go in the seat you ultimately landed in. I guess I'm just kind of curious, just kind of knowing that, do you have any extra motivation to maybe prove something as it relates to him in particular, knowing that that was maybe the original plan before everything kind of pivoted?**

DAVID MALUKAS: I don't really see it that way. I just more look at it as I have signed a deal with Arrow McLaren, and they are confident in me, and I am confident in myself to get the results.

Yeah, we'll just focus on getting the results that we need.

**Q. You spoke about victories. You spoke about podium. But I need to know about the internal cues or the internal fight on qualifications between Alex, Pato, and you. This year will be very interesting, you know.**

DAVID MALUKAS: I mean, for sure we're going to be very competitive, but at the same time, we are teammates, and we're going to help each other. At the end of the day, we want to see Arrow McLaren as a whole succeed.

Of course we're going to have our own little competition, but that is a part of racing and very important to have those type of teammates to where you can all better each other.

**Q. This is my last question. You will have new personal, new stuff to your car. How was the first contact, the first conversations?**

DAVID MALUKAS: Can you elaborate?

**Q. About the stuff on your car. The strategy, engineers, all the personal stuff on your car.**

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DAVID MALUKAS: Like I said, I've been trying my best to get to know everybody. With all these different tests, we've been swapping out everybody, different engineers, different mechanics, which has been good from my side because I've been able to get to know everybody and work on that chemistry and build on those relationships.

Overall, everybody that I've met -- the engineers, mechanics, whoever it may be -- everybody's been incredible and awesome, and I very much love this team.

**Q. I want to ask you about something that has been announced a few weeks ago. It's the introduction of the hybrid power unit will be delayed after Indy 500. How much can this change affect your season in two different aspects? Firstly, in the performance that you made, you will make, in these first races with the old car and the performance that you've made in the -- when this new change is applied. Also to prepare the season in specific for you, as it's your first season with McLaren, you start with a different car than you will finish the season.**

DAVID MALUKAS: With the whole hybrid deal, I think, when it does come along, yeah, maybe it could be a little bit of a performance boost from my side just because I've had some of that testing involved. But from my side, it's more just getting laps under my belt and helping me overall.

It will be a little bit different going into the start of the season now not having the hybrid, and I think from my side that's what I'm most intrigued about, seeing the differences between what a hybrid car feels like and what one doesn't.

I will also be able to get already kind of a feedback of how the Arrow McLaren car and the setup is going to react between the two, so when the hybrid does come in later in the season, it will be something that I'll have kind of that extra step to get to know it.

**Q. Speaking of another thing that it has commented in the last weeks, it's that Honda can leave IndyCar in 2025. What's your thoughts about it? If you had the opportunity to speak with new customers that are interested in IndyCar, in doing a promo, a program with IndyCar, what do you say? What would you say to convince them?**

DAVID MALUKAS: Sorry, to convince who?

**Q. To convince some new manufacturers to enter into IndyCar, some new brands.**

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, IndyCar, it's a special sport. I

think we have something very special, and I think we should do the best that we possibly can to let it be known and to show everybody.

I don't think it would be very hard to convince another manufacturer to come in and to add more competition. I think overall it would help.

But from my side, I'm very happy with Chevy, and I'm excited to get the season going.

**Q. Now you're at Arrow McLaren, so what does that mean for your very special relationship with the HMD Bar & Grill?**

DAVID MALUKAS: I don't think I can do as many promos as I was, but I will be taking the McLaren crew. I'll take the McLaren crew to HMD Bar & Grill. We'll have a nice dinner to get to know each other.

**Q. A little bit off of that, you've obviously raced with HMD on your car with every race you've done. Is that going to be a little odd not to have that?**

DAVID MALUKAS: I would be lying if I said it wouldn't. It's definitely going to be a little bit odd, but I'm very excited for the new opportunities and the way things are going to be going.

Yeah, like I said, now wearing the papaya, everything is glowing. I have a lot more saturation in my life, and it's good.

**Q. Have you had a chance to sit down with your dad and your mom? You've made this long journey, and here you are now as an IndyCar driver that's being paid to drive for one of the top teams.**

DAVID MALUKAS: Of course. I had a conversation with my parents and they were very happy, but at the same time, it was interesting. It was a bit weird because it was almost like I was also doing another meeting. They were just like, well, if you stay with us, we could do this, this, this.

It was kind of weird because it's my parents, but at the same time, we're having a conversation about business. So it was weird, but it was interesting.

No, of course, from the whole side, everybody is very happy and excited. Yeah, it's cool. My dad can achieve his dream of having HMD in the Ladder Series, and I get to achieve my dream of being an IndyCar driver.

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