

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Felix Rosenqvist

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Continuing this afternoon with our afternoon session here at day two, NTT INDYCAR Series content day with driver of the No. 60 Meyer Shank Racing Honda, Felix Rosenqvist, starting his sixth season in the NTT INDYCAR Series; two NTT P1 awards, two podiums, eight top 10s last season. That's all in the rearview mirror, full speed ahead to 2024, new team. Your thoughts on looking ahead to what could be a very exciting 2024 for you.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, a lot of things to be excited for. I'm really enjoying my time so far with Meyer Shank. Spent a lot of time with Mike and Jim, especially because he lives here in Indy, and their welcome into this team has been phenomenal. I feel like a family member already.

They're very relaxed, very family oriented, friendly team. Obviously a few trips to Ohio, as well, at the shop. It's probably the cleanest shop I've ever seen, by the way, and I've been to a lot of shops.

This is my sixth year in INDYCAR, so getting more acquainted as a veteran now, you might say. That's a clean place. If you ever get the chance to go there, it's pretty impressive.

I think are expectations always a big topic this time of the year, and everyone is a world champion here sitting in the off-season.

I think for us, step one is to kind of get back on track, where as a team, I think it wasn't a great season last year, and kind of want to get back into top 10 territory and become efficient again as an organization and make the most of our package together with Andretti.

I'm sure we'll have some strong highlights this year. I think the street courses can be really, really strong, being probably the strongest package for the team historically and also for me personally. I think the ovals might be a little tough.

But there's a lot of stuff in the pipeline, obviously, and the

team has done everything they can to come more prepared this year, and also Andretti, our partner.

Yeah, I'm cautiously excited and ready.

Q. What are some takeaways from last year that you're going to take into this year?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I think maximizing myself, the car, the team, the whole package over a season is something I want to accomplish. I think I didn't do that last year, and there's always obviously things -- reasons and things to blame and all that stuff.

I think finishing races has always kind of been a topic for me. I think I'm probably one of the highest DNF scorers in the field, if you look back to the last two, three years, and that's something I want to change. I think it's probably both down to driver and reliability.

But that's something I want to see this year. If you can take a P12, you take a P12. You don't have to risk everything to get one more spot. And there will be times where you have chances for big results, and I think you always have to go for it.

But it's more about not improving the peaks but improving the valleys, so to speak. That's my plan.

Q. How refreshing have things been knowing you're part of an experienced pool of full-time veterans for a race team?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: You mean Helio? I haven't known him very well personally in the past. I think his excitement is just really impressive. He's like -- doesn't matter what you do, as long as it has four wheels, he's there, and he wants a bite of it.

He's a great character to have in our team, a great leader. I think his energy, it spreads in the team, and in a good way. I think for him to step back a little bit into that role but still -- I mean, I want to lean on him for the 500. He's one of the all-time best at the 500, and I'm going to pick his brain at that place for sure.



I think it's kind of the best of two worlds having him there as a team leader and then that huge help at the 500 where he's going to be a contender like he always is.

I can't wait -- actually I haven't spent that much time with him yet, still haven't done a lap actually with Meyer Shank. So still many things to be excited about, but getting to know Helio is one of those for sure.

Q. You talk about excitement, what about Michael Shank? He seems to be a fairly inspirational guy, too.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah. I mean, Michael, he's one of those guys -- I always say, if he found a million dollars under a tree, he wouldn't put it in his bank account, he would probably put it into his race team. That's the feeling I get from him every day.

Like we just talked about now walking here, stories about him vacuuming the trailers and making sure the shop is spotless before going home. He just lives and breathes that team. He's a very honest guy, very simple to work with, straight to the point. And our journey to being here today has been very easy, and his goals with me and his expectations have been very clear, and obviously they match what my expectations are.

They say he can get a bit feisty during the races, that he gets very emotional. I have yet to see that, but that's cool. He's a very involved guy in the team, and, yeah, looking forward to seeing more of it.

Q. When you were at Ganassi, you were a newer driver in a collection of very proven veterans, especially one of the all-time greats, with Scott Dixon. When you went to Arrow McLaren you were kind of in the shadows with some of the bigger personalities on the team. But here I would say you're the veteran leader. Is that a position that you can thrive in?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah. I absolutely think so. I look forward to being in that role. It's a role I haven't really been in for six years since I drove Formula E, where you can kind of call the shots a little bit more. Maybe get your engineering team to build a car more around you, like the foundation of the car setup, kind of getting -- if we need -- hiring people and that kind of stuff.

Obviously I've been to a lot of good teams at this point in my career, not only in INDYCAR but outside, as well, and I think I have a good eye for what a team needs, both when it comes to resources, personalities, team leadership and stuff like that.

It's always complex, but I feel like I can really provide in

that sense, and I look forward to being in that role. Having Tom with me, he's a rookie this year. He kind of dipped his toes a little bit into the INDYCAR world last year, and we go way back. We raced with each other in 2009 in Formula Renault in Sweden. I've known Tom for a long time. He's probably one of the drivers I've raced out there most in the world. I'm going to be an open book with him and try to get him up to speed as quickly as he can and as I can.

It's going to be really fun working with him.

Q. You were saying about Tom, having raced with him in Sweden. Do you think you'll have a similar race style in terms of setting up the car?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I think it's a bit too early to know that. I think both of us kind of come from similar backgrounds.

I think the way Tom entered INDYCAR is very similar to what I did. I came from a car that didn't have power steering. I raced Super GT at the time and Formula E and that's something he's done, as well. But the junior ladders we kind of did the same stuff, and we're about the same age.

I think we probably have a pretty similar style, but it's something you can't -- it's so detailed at this point. I think when you get to any kind of end game racing series that everyone is so similar that, like, a style is a bit of a wrong word to use because it's going to be fractions of everyone being in the same ballpark.

Q. You mentioned at Laguna last year about a lot of drivers don't like to admit when they're under pressure or feeling it. Is the weight off your shoulders coming into 2024? Do you have the new team jitters at all?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, you're always going to be under pressure in professional sports. Don't get me wrong. But as I said before, I feel like what's expected out of me is pretty clear from Mike. My own expectations are pretty clear.

I feel like it was a weight off my shoulders once we decided to partner. I know that my kind of short/long-term future is clear. I also bought a house here in Indy. I'm becoming married this year. It's a different point in my life where I feel like I've settled in a little bit in Indy, which feels great, because before I was kind of like one foot in Europe, one foot here, not really committed or -- kind of half committed everywhere. And now I'm like all in on being here in the States. That's a great feeling.



It's great to do that beginning this journey, as well.

Q. Scott McLaughlin was in here yesterday; got the Visa under way, bought a house. Is that a real thing for an athlete in the mindset of you're settled now, got a future in place? Is that a real thing that you feel that can help you?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Absolutely. I think most of us, we're roadies, man. We just kind of go from one place to another. We don't really focus a lot on our personal lives. We put ourselves in second place because our careers are such big parts of our lives.

But I'm very sure that when you look at good athletes, let's say Dixon, you don't become that good if you don't have a good life, if you don't have a good life at home, you're happy; you wake up, you're happy with your life. I think that's a very important thing to perform, and that's what I feel more than anything that I am.

I kind of prioritize myself a little bit for once and take a couple of deep breaths and settle myself into my private life, as well, which I think is going to reflect on track.

Q. I talked with Simon about this when he went to Meyer Shank and he was talking about chemistry and how it's essential to build that early on, but was hard for him to do living in Charlotte and then the team being in Ohio. How important is chemistry to you and how do you intend to build that here? And how important are the track days you're going to have over the next couple months testing-wise to build that up?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, it's very important. As I say, there's some distance, but it's only three hours away from here. I've already been there three times this winter, and my engineers are actually currently in Indiana because they're with Andretti. So it makes it quite a lot easier because normally if you go to the shop, it's mainly to meet your engineers. But as I said, the whole vibe and your part in the team is very important. You have to see the guys and interact and be there.

I think that makes those test days that you have even more important because they're very few. There's one or two days and then you're in St. Pete, and then you're pretty much spending half the year with each other. So you're going to get to know each other.

But I don't think the distance is really a challenge, and there hasn't been any pressure from the team to move there or anything, because it's still driving distance.

I feel like we're in a pretty -- you kind of don't want to be

too close either. I think you can actually be too close to the team. I think it's a perfect distance.

Q. Your teammate Tom mentioned yesterday that you -- well, that he says you have some advantage in switching to the hybrid power when it eventually comes after Indy. What's your opinion on that since you also drove a Formula E a while back?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, good question. We talked about it. As one of the smaller teams, I think we probably have many advantages. We have obviously our partner Honda, who are deeply involved in hybrid tech in F1. We have Meyer Shank Racing, who competed very competitively in IMSA with a hybrid. We have Tom, who's been in Formula E, and obviously probably the strongest driver in recent times in IMSA with a hybrid. And then you have myself, who drove in Formula E for two and a half years.

I think we all have some experience, and that makes a big difference.

For some people working in INDYCAR, this is all brand-new stuff, and for us it's not.

I think if you look at the direct competition, we definitely have an advantage.

Q. Obviously good times at Ganassi, good times at McLaren, but for you personally, why is this fit with this team the right fit in better ways right now?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Well, I think, A, it's -- when I looked at the options I had, I think this was probably the most underrated team in the field last year. And I think Linus proved that when he jumped in for Nashville, St. Louis and Indy GP. He did really well. He was straight up in the top 10 on speed in qualifying.

I thought that was an opportunity. Also looking at Meyer Shank Racing and their commitment to the future, the partners' commitment, I think that's something you want to be part of. Like they're not here to just participate.

Speaking about Mike before, he's not a guy who just does this because it's fun. He wants to be there. He wants to be up there with Roger Penske, Chip Ganassi, and all those guys. He wants to put his name there. I think actually we have -- it's going to take some time, but we have the opportunity to be there eventually and to be part -- to start building that up from the point we are now. It's a very interesting thing. It's something I think I'm capable of helping with, and I want to be part of that journey.

I think it was the right fit for me and the right timing to be in that position for me in my career.

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