

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, March 10, 2024

Nolan Siegel

Jacob Abel

Louis Foster

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up today's INDY NXT by Firestone Grand Prix. Louis Foster finishes third. Jacob Abel, third runner-up of his career, fifth career podium. Winning here on the streets of St. Petersburg after a second place last year, Nolan Siegel. Led all 45 laps, third career win, sixth career podium.

Nolan, congratulations. You made it look easy out there. Tell us about some restarts and just keeping everybody behind you in this race.

NOLAN SIEGEL: Yeah, it wasn't easy. When I saw that first yellow come out, I was not super pleased (smiling).

No, the car was super fast. The pace was there. Got good restarts, got good launches, was able to pull a little bit of a gap over Jacob, just enough to be somewhat comfortable.

Yeah, huge thanks to HMD, they put an amazing program together for 2024 and the car was fantastic. They made it easy on me.

THE MODERATOR: Pole and win to start 2024. How big is that for you and this team?

NOLAN SIEGEL: It's huge. There's no better way to start the new year. We've worked hard through the off-season. We knew it wasn't going to be easy. It's one of the most competitive fields in INDY NXT for a long, long time. There's a lot of strong competition. To start the year with a win is a good way to set off. Hoping for more.

THE MODERATOR: Jacob, congratulations, another podium finish, fifth career podium, third runner-up finish of your career. Your thoughts on the today?

JACOB ABEL: Yeah, it was really good. First of all, the new qualify was something we had to wrap our heads around. It was interesting. I personally enjoyed it. Big

props to the series listening to us drivers and changing something, because we have a lot more cars now, more than we ever had.

Unfortunately Louis and I's group got a little unlucky. A couple flags there. Still able to put it on the front row, which was good. Nolan just had a lot today, was super strong, hard to catch him. Big props to him and HMD.

To start the year with a podium is really good. I'm really happy with that. Obviously it seems like it's a bit of a monkey on our back getting that first win someday. I honestly don't feel any pressure on myself. The team isn't really too worried about it. I think the win is going to come when the win's going to come. I think we've been very competitive some places. Not too worried about that.

THE MODERATOR: Louis Foster started fourth. Seventh career podium for Louis. Your thoughts on the day? First and foremost, getting around Myles to get to that podium position, how important was that?

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah, I mean, I knew it was his first race. He probably wouldn't have been as practiced with the push to pass in certain places. Yeah, my idea going into the race was to try to get past him in a sneaky place as soon as possible, which we managed to do.

From there on, it's a qualifying track really, isn't it, is for us INDY NXT boys. We don't have pit stops or anything. We can't do any undercuts or overcuts.

I was behind Jacob most of the race. Jacob had good pace. He was pretty practical on the push to pass. I was trying to save mine hoping for a few more safety cars. Yeah, props to the field this year. It wasn't a catastrophe like last year's race.

To start the year with a podium, strong, we know we got the pace, we're not too concerned.

THE MODERATOR: The couple restarts towards the end, what was the thought process to get around Jacob?

LOUIS FOSTER: Well, I mean, I got alongside him twice into turn one on the inside. It just wasn't really worth



risking. It's just so treacherous, that (indiscernible) on the inside.

Even though, yeah, he didn't defend, I had an over lap, I probably could have lunged a little bit on the inside. Yeah, I think for us to just take home third today, get some points, start the season strong, much better. There is only a five-point difference between second and third.

Yeah, for me it was finish, start strong here. We had an unlucky qualifying, but we know we'll get a pole eventually next round, go from there. Get our wins when we are starting up front. It's a little easier.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Nolan, looking on the entry list, I'm personally extremely surprised and impressed, you're running for a team entering 10 cars in this championship. Is this maybe a challenge when you go with all your nine other driver colleagues through briefings, sharing technical information? Jacob, you're running with your own team. Is there maybe double pressure that you driver but at the same time also are owner? Do you approach it in a different way?

NOLAN SIEGEL: Yeah, well, HMD is running 10 cars. It's not a common thing. I think everyone was surprised to see the entry list.

But they've done an amazing job. You can tell it's not an easy thing to run that many cars and to organize that big an operation. But the fact that I'm sitting here right now shows how good a job they've done with it.

I think at the end of the day having that much information, that much data shared between all 10 cars, yes, I'm competing against them, but at the end of the day it elevates all of our programs. We're all I think better off with all that information than we would be without it.

Q. How many team managers?

NOLAN SIEGEL: Well, two. But they have different roles (smiling).

JACOB ABEL: Then, yeah, on your second question there, it's really rewarding driving for a family team. It's been really cool. But there's been enough of a divide between me and my father, the Abel Motorsports name and Jacob Abel as a driver. It's not necessarily any more pressure to succeed, it's I'd say a little bit more rewarding when I do.

I spend a lot more time with these guys than the usual

driver and team. It's people that I've been working with. There's members of this team who have been on this team since 2017. It's really been people there since day one, people I've grown up with.

I don't think it's a lot more pressure. I think it's a lot more rewarding. It's a really cool experience.

Q. Nolan, you will be racing four races for Dale Coyne was announced. How ready do you feel for this opportunity after the recent test? How valuable do you feel it will be to gain some race experience in INDYCAR ahead of hopefully stepping up full-time next year?

NOLAN SIEGEL: Yeah, it's exciting. It's going to be a challenge, for sure. I have one day in the car going to Thermal for the first race weekend. It's not going to be easy. INDYCAR is one of the most competitive race series in the world. It's going to be a challenge, for sure.

I think I'm ready for it. I think INDY NXT prepares you really, really well for INDYCAR. I'm more excited than nervous, for sure. I think it will prepare me well for hopefully 2025 and also for the rest of 2024 in INDY NXT. I think it will be a great experience. I'm going to learn a lot and grow as a driver.

Q. Louis, what sort of improvements have you targeted for this year, essentially to try to mount a title challenge? Do you feel you could have been more consistent possibly last year?

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah, I mean, obviously last year we had the most poles. We knew that the pace wasn't an issue. We were just trying to continue on that pace, which we have been. Like I said, got unlucky in quallie yesterday.

I think the main thing for us this year is just consistency. There was a switch that happened last year halfway through the season in my mind where I went from winning a championship to just winning races. There were moves I made during the year that I wouldn't have made if I was going for the championship. Like IMS, when I was running second against my teammate, that kind of move put me out of the race as an example.

Yeah, I think just focusing on the points. I think today was a good example of that. There was twice where I could have gone for a move on Jacob. It could have worked or it could have taken us both out, so I decided not to.

JACOB ABEL: Thank you.

LOUIS FOSTER: You're welcome.



Q. Jacob, do you see an INDYCAR opportunity coming up in 2025? Any chance that would be with Abel?

JACOB ABEL: Yeah, it's hard to say. Obviously right now Abel Motorsports is an Indy 500-only INDYCAR team. My goal is to race in INDYCAR full-time, contend for championships.

Yeah, I think all options are open. Obviously I have the same name as the team, so that does change the dynamic just a little bit. But it's something that I think I'm still going to have to earn regardless.

INDYCAR racing isn't necessarily cheap, so it takes sponsors, partners, all of that. That's all going to have to come together regardless of what team I'm driving for.

Hopefully, but nothing's for sure.

THE MODERATOR: Great start to 2024, guys. Thanks for coming in. We'll see you in a couple weeks.

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