

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Friday, April 19, 2024

**Pato O'Ward**

**Felix Rosenqvist**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up day one, practice today. Joined by Pato O'Ward, P1 at practice session, and fourth quick in the practice, Felix Rosenqvist.

Pato, your thoughts on day one today.

PATO O'WARD: Really solid start for us in the 5 car. I wouldn't say it's quite different to last year. We were really, really strong. Just every other INDYCAR weekend, you have to execute every single session. Every opportunity you have, you have to really see what way you want to go. There's quite a bit of track evolution, I'd say. Although the times were quicker than I thought.

We'll see tomorrow in P2 and in qualifying.

THE MODERATOR: Felix, nice start to the weekend. You've had a lot of nice starts. A good season so far. This continues some of that momentum.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, solid start. Actually we had some small issues, but I think we worked through most of them. Got a clean run on the reds. That was important.

No, I think we've been confi, especially on the street courses. Still kind of learning how to work with each other every run out there. Yeah, happy so far. Solid.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.

**Q. Pato has said he's very happy to see the start of the season that you've gotten off to, Felix. Now you're competing against each other, but you always had that bond. How important is that, to be able to share that relationship?**

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I think it's pretty simple. We're always competing against each other. I think still, like if he does a good lap, I can kind of read into it. Like, I know his strengths and weaknesses in a way.

Yeah, like he did his lap today. It's kind of a good benchmark, when I'm in another team, how you want to set the car up, those kind of things.

Yeah, it's pretty straightforward: you go out there, you try to beat them.

PATO O'WARD: No, I mean, what he said. I think it's important to have competitors that have mutual respect for each other. I wish I could say the same for everybody, but it's clearly not (smiling).

Yeah, he's one of the good ones.

**Q. Why do you always tease us and throw these things out and not name names?**

PATO O'WARD: Because the first thing you do is you put it on Twitter.

**Q. Felix, earlier today Pato was talking about how proud he is of you, the start of the season you've had. One of the things he said was that the move for you has been so good because Meyer Shank is now your baby, that you can really have a leadership role there, have say. Do you feel that? Have they given you that role?**

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Sure, I feel like they're really behind me, which is huge. I mean, I think honestly everywhere I've been in INDYCAR, I've felt good support. Maybe this year it's a bit different 'cause I have to step into that role.

I have to trust that my direction is going to be good both for me and Tom. He's getting up to speed still. He's a rookie. A lot of these places are new tracks and new experiences for him, where I'm kind of feeding out of what I did in the past more.

It's been working good so far. I feel like we get it right more times than we don't. We're not perfect obviously. We want to do better, obviously.

Yeah, it's been gelling well between us. It's a rewarding experience, as well, because it's tough. Pato probably knows what it's like when you're the leading driver in the



team. It's also pressure that you want to take the right decision and lead the team in the right direction.

Yeah, it's going really well so far. Happy for them to put that trust behind me, you know.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

PATO O'WARD: Did you blossom, come out from your cocoon (laughter)?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, for sure it didn't hurt. I think honestly, coming to the U.S., I mean, you can ask probably Theo or all the European guys, I think it's a bit different back home. It's a bit more like you're not really expected to give much emotion. When it comes to media and stuff, it's like, Yeah, I had a bit of understeer.

I feel in the U.S., people are more interested in your personality, which obviously I think all of us have. It's hard to (indiscernible) that when you're behind a camera.

For sure it helps. Being with Pato, we had a lot of fun. That's a grate lesson, you've got to have fun because you spend so much time with all your teammates throughout the year, the season, more than you do with your family essentially. It's a good way to have a good laugh at the end of the day.

**Q. Felix, your teammate had sounded like a throttle sensor issue. Kirkwood had a shifting issue. Could you shed light on yours? Is this an Andretti technology type of issue?**

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I honestly don't know. Like, I haven't seen what others have been doing.

Ours was kind of like a tuning thing with the brakes. It wasn't really a problem. It was just kind of we were not really in the right window, if that makes sense.

I don't know what happened with Colton and Tom yet.

**Q. Even though they're both street circuits, a lot of people have talked about how St. Pete and Long Beach are dramatically different. There's something that's carried over from St. Pete. Talk about what you found to come out and look strong like you did in speed.**

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I think they're both kind of in the same family of track. They're fairly smooth for being street courses, if you compare to Toronto and Detroit. They're the more aggressive ones we go to. Also Nashville, which we're not going to anymore.

I think a lot of it applicates [sic] here. We took our package and polished it a little bit for what we need here. It's essentially more or less the same car.

**Q. Pato, you were quickest first session last year, this year as well. Is there any particular style of track where you have found you can make time over your teammates? Is there a spot to attack?**

PATO O'WARD: Honestly...

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Turn eight. That's the corner.

PATO O'WARD: Did you like turn eight? You've been watching telemetry.

There used to be a bump there last year. You have to wait after the hump, then come into power. Now that the hump is gone, it's a lot quicker. That is definitely somewhere where I found quite a bit of lap time compared to last year.

I don't know, man. I feel like I approach every corner the same. I'm always just kind of flirting with the limit of the car. I mean, I went over it significant amount of times in practice. You have to explore. If you never get there, you leave it to qualifying, there's more chances for you to screw your lap. You don't want to be doing that in qualifying.

**Q. Turn eight and turn five, the lap was better with this modification this year?**

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, turn eight was quite a big difference. I didn't actually know it was different. I know they did some modifications, but I didn't think it was, like, in the worst place.

It's really nice now. You can carry a ton of speed. I think there's going to be some interesting onboard footage in qualifying for you to watch, for sure.

Yeah, I think they've done a good job. I think even in five they did a curve modification that seemed to work well for us. So yeah, all good.

THE MODERATOR: Felix, inquiring minds want to know if you'll consider changing the wedding date so Pato can attend?

PATO O'WARD: I'm going to try to make it. I already told him, You just let me win the race so I can talk to Zak.

THE MODERATOR: Is that the deal breaker?

PATO O'WARD: I haven't talked to him. Every time I do a deal, I mean, I've won a couple, but some others I haven't.

I'm not going to do any deals. After I do it, then I'll try to sway myself into a deal.

I'm going to make sure I have a great year so I have more possibilities to go. I'm going to be in Indy hopefully for a celebration. If that is the case, I'll go straight to Sweden. I am the best man, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for coming in, guys.

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