

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Friday, May 10, 2024

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

**Jacob Abel**

**Nolan Siegel**

**Jamie Chadwick**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up a very busy day at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway in the INDY NXT by Firestone Grand Prix race No. 1, Jacob Abel will join us as the champion today in race 1. Joined now by Nolan Siegel, who drives the No. 39 HMD Sports Machine. Third podium of the season, eighth of his career, and congratulations, as well, to Jamie Chadwick, driver of the No. 28 Vext machine for Andretti Global, her first career podium in INDY NXT, first podium by a female in the series since Pippa Mann did that on the Kentucky oval back in 2010, first on a non-oval since Ana Beatriz back in 2008.

Nolan, you had a couple chances maybe at some restarts but just couldn't reel in Jacob.

NOLAN SIEGEL: Yeah, it was a bit of a funky race, to be honest. Started fifth, kind of hung out for a bit, and then a few people had some mishaps, found myself in second. But Jacob already had a quite a big lead at that point. I spent most of the race behind a few cars.

I reeled him in a little bit, but his pace was good, and I don't know if I would have caught him by the end. I thought the restarts were going to help me, but it was a lot harder to follow than I had expected.

It was interesting, people say that Barber is really hard to pass at, and I felt like I had way more opportunities at Barber than I had today. It was an interesting one, but we'll look into it and see if we can find some speed to make some passes tomorrow.

**Q. Jamie, congratulations. Obviously as a three-time W Series champion, podiums, you're used to that, but to have one your first one in INDY NXT, what does this mean?**

JAMIE CHADWICK: A lot more for sure. I think especially

coming off the back of last year, which was a tough year and tough transition into the series, to then find what I felt was good form and pace this year but struggling to kind of convert that into a result, to then get our first podium here definitely means a lot.

I think it did fall into our hands nicely, but like I say, we've had good pace all year, and it just felt like we were knocking on the door for a good result. Very happy with the result. I think we had a really, really good car underneath us today, and I think that was probably shadowed a bit by the fact my teammates weren't up there, as well. But I think tomorrow we should be in a good place.

**Q. Nolan, you kind of talked about yesterday, reflecting back on last year, that this was kind of your worst performance was at IMS road course. What were you able to find? What were you able to figure out in order to get this runner-up?**

NOLAN SIEGEL: Yeah, I think it's just execution, to be honest. This is always a place where everyone has been here a lot and everyone is really good here. Ultimately I think it comes down to who executes the weekend the best and who puts in a perfect lap.

Obviously Jacob executed really well in qualifying and that benefitted him, and he executed well in the race, as well. I think compared to last year, I didn't make any major mistakes today. It was a nice smooth race, and yeah, looking back from last year, I can say, oh, yeah, I want to win, whatever, but looking back from last year where I finished 18th or wherever I finished to now finishing second, I think we have to take big positives from that, and ultimately it was a good day for the championship, as well.

Happy with the day and happy that I was able to kind of redeem myself here and now maybe this won't be considered one of my worst tracks.

**Q. Obviously it's early days in the championship, and you and Jacob are going to continue to give each other respectful room and things like that, but as this ratchets down, is there a point where you feel like maybe the passing gets tighter, the car gets wider as**

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## things progress with you two?

NOLAN SIEGEL: Honestly, Jacob is someone that I have a lot of respect for. I feel like we've raced each other really cleanly, and I think we've raced each other hard but with a lot of respect for the past year and a bit.

I'm always going to race Jacob hard, but it's nice to have people that you can trust racing with and that show you respect.

I've really enjoyed battling with Jacob, and I'm looking forward to the rest of the year. It's definitely going to get aggressive, but I think aggression and respect can go together, and I hope that we can continue to have good battles.

**Q. Jamie, the payoff for this, I know you've worked your tail off and we've talked about it starting last year at the Chris Griffith test, can you kind of just put into words the validation that you feel with the effort because you really don't know what kind of work you really put in until you see the results.**

JAMIE CHADWICK: It's true, and it's also I put in effort but everyone else does, as well. It's actually very hard to make such a big step. Honestly, I'm so happy with the step that we've made.

I think actually at the end of last year we started to make the improvements and then it just took the off-season to really make the progress that we needed to.

Yeah, I'm very happy in that sense. I think there's still improvement to make. I want to be ultimately where Jacob is at some point, and there's still a step to that, but at the same time I'm very happy with the progress and just the validation that you say, that it's all starting to pay off.

**Q. On that late restart, is there anything that maybe you could have done differently to hang on Nolan a little bit and maybe press going into 1?**

JAMIE CHADWICK: Maybe, yeah. I mean, I think looking back at it, I'm sure I'll review the footage and our coach or my engineer will tell me I had an opportunity. But the thing is I haven't had a result at all this year, and I needed to keep my nose clean in that race, and we did, and we were rewarded for that.

Yeah, I think now going into the rest of the season I want to be sort of, like I say, fighting at the front, and I think we've made a solid foundation, a solid step today to allow me to do that.

THE MODERATOR: I don't know if you know Pippa at all, but she just tweeted out: "About time to get another female racer on the podium. Hopefully this is just the beginning for Jamie." Nice little tip of the hat from Pippa Mann tonight.

Joined also by Jacob Abel now, who led all 35 laps this evening. Driver of the No. 51 Abel Construction machine for Abel Motorsports, second win of the season and career seventh podium of your career, as well. Just talk us through trying to keep these guys behind you on these restarts.

JACOB ABEL: Yeah, we had a great start. Well, first of all, we had a really good qualifying. We made a ton of progress from practice this morning. We really didn't roll off the trailer 100 percent, and I wasn't driving super well in practice. We really just put our heads down and worked on everything that we needed to work on. Yeah, we kind of just hit the jackpot a little bit in qualifying and was able to get the pole for both races. That kind of set us up for it. Pole isn't as important here as it is someplace like Barber, so I knew it was going to be a little bit of a fight this one for sure. Just this track lends itself to a little bit more overtaking and all of that.

Yeah, it was great. Had a good start and just put my head down and was able to open up a little bit of a gap there in the first few laps and just kind of managed things from there, preparing for a late-race restart, which we ended up getting two of. So yeah, was able to still have plenty of tire left, plenty of Push-to-Pass left for those two restarts, and yeah, just keep my head down and focus forward for the last couple of laps there.

**Q. Nolan, is there something you could have done -- Nathan was on the radio with you pushing pretty hard. Does that help you when an engineer driver coach pushes you hard?**

NOLAN SIEGEL: Yeah, for sure, and it's nice to know those guys want it almost as much as I do, I think, and it's fun to work with people that are so passionate and invested in these races and what I'm doing and what they're doing.

I definitely want to bring results back for Nathan and CR and the whole HMD Motorsports team. Having them on the radio pushing me is definitely helpful, and we've worked together for long enough now that they know what I need to hear.

I did what I could. There's always something that you can do better. Definitely going to look into it, and we'll see what we can do tomorrow. I feel like today was pretty well

executed, to be honest, so I'm happy. But not going to get complacent.

**Q. Jamie, what did you work on in the off-season to get yourself better? You said everyone else works on themselves. What did you do to get yourself that little bit step ahead of what everyone else did?**

JAMIE CHADWICK: The physicality of it was a big one, to be honest. These are physical cars, and coming from something like W Series, which is probably closer to an F4 car, I knew it was going to be a challenge, but until you're really in the thick of it and in the season you don't really know, and for that reason I was underprepared last year.

Yeah, I beefed up quite a bit over the off-season, which has definitely helped and paid off this year. Also just knowing what's coming. Last year going to tracks for the first time, being -- spending a lot of energy on learning so much, it makes me take my hat off to the rookies that come in and do an incredible job because it isn't as easy as it looks, especially maybe the perception of coming from Europe over here thinking it will be maybe not as tough, but it definitely is.

I think just knowing what was coming, and yeah, working hard towards that.

**Q. Jacob, this has sort of become your adopted hometown, went to school here, live here, shop is here. What does it mean to win here at Indianapolis?**

JACOB ABEL: Yeah, it's super, super special. We haven't really been the best here in the past, so that's pretty unfortunate because this is a track that we go to all the time, and like you said, it's the one that all my friends usually come out to, too, so I want to do well in front of them. Definitely did that today, and it was super exciting.

**Q. We asked this of Nolan and Jacob yesterday, so great to ask you. You're in a position, third place, where first and second is right in front of you. You can easily just try something on the outside, on the inside**

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JAMIE CHADWICK: Yeah, easily.

**Q. But you also know if you tried and something was wrong, you're falling back. How difficult is it to balance the aggression of wanting to go for it but knowing that you're in a great place right now?**

JAMIE CHADWICK: I think that's racing. That's it in a nutshell. It's definitely not -- you can review things and you can think, oh, there might have been an opportunity here or

there, but in the moment you've got to make the right decision. I think we all act instinctively. You want to move forward. You don't want to make mistakes.

I would say if there was an opportunity to have passed, I would have taken it. I don't think I quite had the pace on those restarts to really make a meaningful challenge without it probably being a bit haphazard. I think we executed the race as best as we could have done there. But at the same time, I've approached this year differently. I've approached this year just wanting to get results, and not seeing results I've not looked so much for consistency over the championship, and I managed to not finish the first two races.

Yeah, now I just do want results, and yeah, third today was great.

**Q. Jacob, is it tough staying patient? You're 23 now. Is it tough staying patient and taking the steps toward the Indianapolis 500, especially when you're here this month?**

JACOB ABEL: Yeah, absolutely. I'm working as hard as I can to get there. One of my biggest things is if I'm there, I want to belong there. I want to have earned my spot. The easiest way to do that is to win races at the INDY NXT level and win championships at the INDY NXT level. That's really been my goal looking into this season. Year three in the series is kind of a make-or-break year. If you see a driver do a third year in a series and they aren't winning races, you've really got to take a hard look at them. That's kind of what this year has been. I'm really putting everything, every ounce of effort I can into this, and it seems to be paying off so far.

But yeah, we're only three races through now. Long year ahead and really just looking forward to it.

But I understand what it takes to get to that next level, and if I'm not having those results or anything like that, I'm not going to deserve to be there, and I'm not going to be there.

However long it takes, I'm going to do whatever I can to make it to that level.

**Q. But is there a sense right now after two straight wins that, man, you've hit it? You understand what I'm saying? You've gotten over that edge, so to speak.**

JACOB ABEL: Yeah, trying not to rest on it for sure. Every single race weekend is a fresh start. Every session is a fresh start. Just have to really keep our heads down and keep the past in the past and not focus on these wins too much. Just focus on the next round.



Unfortunately this one is going to be pretty short. We are on track again in like 14 hours or something like that. Yeah, we're going to go back to the trailer and look at what we can do differently and just put our head down and push forward, and yeah, come like September or something, then we can look back at the results and see what we've done.

**Q. Jacob, let me ask you a local question. Where did you go to high school?**

JACOB ABEL: I went to Trinity High School.

**Q. How did you get involved in open wheel racing? Probably none of your classmates were remotely interested.**

JACOB ABEL: No, absolutely not. I grew up playing lacrosse my whole entire young career. I got super made fun of when I quit the lacrosse team to go drive go-karts as fast as I could. Trinity being an all guys' school, very competitive atmosphere. Yeah, that's just kind of the nature of it. When I said I'm going to race go-karts, they were like, oh, nerd, whatever.

But I got into it through my father mainly. He grew up racing motocross at a super high level, winning some national championships and all of that. Yeah, I've always kind of had it in my blood, and just going to our local go-kart track, Bluegrass Indoor Karting, you'll be familiar with that, just kind of had the knack for it, and the rest is kind of history.

**Q. Has your approach going into each week changed slightly at all? You're now in your second year; weekend by weekend, has that approach changed for you?**

JAMIE CHADWICK: I think there's a lot of ease in just knowing how the season goes coming into a second year. I kind of feel like the approach is already kind of two, three steps ahead of what it maybe was before. But yeah, honestly my approach this year is to try and go for big results, just maximum attack. If I make mistakes I make mistakes. I didn't really have the opportunity last year to really fight at the front or be in the thick of it as much. I was a bit too off the pace to have the opportunity.

This year I just want to go for it as much as I can. Even if I make mistakes, go with it. But obviously a day like today where you can make the most of the situation and get a podium, that's where I feel it's starting to pay off.

**Q. Obviously in the last couple years, a bit of a**

**trailblazer for females in motorsports. Sort of the younger crop coming through F1 academy, how would you present this as an option to them if they were looking at it in future years?**

JAMIE CHADWICK: A huge option. I think the kind of whole Indy ladder is a really good opportunity with the way it works with the seat time, everything, and Europe is also a great opportunity, but it is super tough and super saturated, but there's a great opportunity over here. Being over in Miami with the F1 Academy cars, it's incredible to see the growth of women's motorsport, and I'm proud to play a small role in that. I think anything we can now do to just encourage as many young girls through the ladder as possible, I want to see more girls in USF Juniors, USF Pro ultimately and INDY NXT, so yeah, there's still work to do, but it's very cool to see the progress.

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