

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Friday, May 17, 2024

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Colton Herta

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up Fast Friday news conferences, joined by Colton Herta, who had the top lap today at 234.974 miles an hour, his 11th quickest four-lap average run that we all kept -- I mentioned the top lap today. Driver of the No. 26 Gainbridge Honda, set to qualify for his sixth Indy 500 this weekend. Your thoughts on the day today.

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, crazy day. Do you get anything for being quickest on Fast Friday anymore?

Q. You get the congratulations of your peers.

COLTON HERTA: And I think you get the first pick of the draw, correct?

Q. Yeah.

COLTON HERTA: I'll take it.

No, happy with what the program we were able to get through with. Seemed to be lacking a little bit of speed I think on our own. Obviously the fast lap was a tow lap. Nice to be quickest, but doesn't really mean much for qualifying.

But yeah, I think we have a little bit of speed to find, unfortunately, but I think there's a chance if we do everything right, we should be able to make the Fast 12.

Q. With the car being lighter this year compared to previous years, how different did it feel this Fast Friday compared to the last Fast Friday?

COLTON HERTA: It's very similar, very similar. The only thing that feels different is the tire deg is a lot less. Obviously kind of a different compound for the left sides that Firestone brought this year. So a little bit of a difference.

They are supposed to last longer, but I wasn't expecting kind of this level of deg to happen, or lack of deg to

happen. So that's interesting. But that's the only difference. The weight feels very similar.

Q. Marcus appeared to be really struggling to kind of get up to speed after the crash. Do you worry about that at all, about how it impacts the team and maybe impacts you the next two days if the team has to bring one car up when the others are trying to get to the Fast 12?

COLTON HERTA: I don't think it affects us too much. Or it affects what I'm doing or what Kyle is doing or Marco is doing. Obviously it would be nice to have those datapoints from him. But they've got to do their thing. They've got to get up to speed and make sure they're safely in the race.

Q. Will Power has been talking about it all year, the amount of focus Penske put on qualifying this year, was it a surprise to see them after they struggled so much the last few years, or did everybody think they were going to come full force?

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, I mean, what a cheap way to hire a cannon, right, get a deal with Foyt and get all your speedway secrets for free? No, I don't know. It probably helped a little bit, but I don't know.

You can't -- you expect them to be very good here, right, so they've been very good 2019, 2018, and it just seemed like they got into a little bit of a hurtful spot once the aeroscreen came back.

But they were always fast in the race. So it was just kind of like outright speed that they were missing, which was strange. But it seems like they came back with some good cars. Josef looks very fast. Seems to be the fastest in the team. But Will is right there and Scott is up there, too.

Q. Obviously Chevrolet looked pretty strong today, so does that sort of concern you from a Honda standpoint? The Ganassis weren't as strong as they usually are, for example.

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, the Ganassis were a weird thing. Not too sure what happened there. They obviously got the pole last year, last two years -- last three years? Yeah, last

ASAP sports . . . when all is said, we're done.®

three years, Dixon has two, Palou has one? Three. We're just dragging this out.

But it does seem like the Chevys are a little bit stronger but not too much stronger. I think Kyle had some good laps today. He ran a 233.7 without a tow, which I think Josef's fastest was a 234.2. So half mile-an-hour, we can work with that, we can fight with that. Chevy definitely seems stronger than they have in the past for qualifying, but I think it's something that we can fight with stuff.

Q. Who's drawing for you here shortly?

COLTON HERTA: I don't know. Who is drawing?
Hannah, one of the PR girls.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports