

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Alexander Rossi

Will Power

Marcus Ericsson

Colton Herta

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Great to be joined by the driver fourth quick in qualifying today, driver of the No. 7 Arrow McLaren Chevrolet, qualifying for his ninth Indianapolis 500. The question now is where will he start for the 108th running a week from tomorrow. Alexander Rossi. Your thoughts on the day and getting into the top 12? Also joined by the driver of the No. 12 Verizon business Team Penske Chevrolet, Will Power, who's qualified for his 17th Indy 500, a four-lap average of 233.758 miles an hour. Also on the far right, the 2022 winner of the Indianapolis 500, driver of the No. 28 Delaware live Honda for Andretti Global, it is Marcus Ericsson.

Alex, your thoughts on getting in the top 12 for tomorrow?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, it was a pretty wild day for us. It started with the draw last night, thanks to 34th. It was pretty tough. Obviously it was a little chaotic for the whole organization in the beginning.

But we knew we had fast cars, and it was a lot of just teamwork to kind of stay calm with the unpredictable stuff that started to happen.

I think Arrow McLaren did a great job so far this month. We've had good cars in really all conditions. Chevy has done an unbelievable job in making our lives pretty easy.

It's the job we needed to do today, and now we focus on tomorrow.

Q. Three of the four advance to the top 12, so a lot to hang your hat on for the team, right?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, 100 percent. I think this place always presents new variables and new challenges,

but you have to be able to be adaptable, and we knew that despite the performance in qualifying we had last year that we still had to make a step, and I still don't think we're all the way there yet. Obviously there's three good cars in front of us still.

But we're chipping away at it, we're getting there, and I have all the confidence in everyone that overnight we'll be able to bring three cars and put our best foot forward.

Q. Will Power leads the way again, 233.7 four-lap average, Will qualifying for your 17th Indy 500. Your thoughts on P1 today and can you do it tomorrow?

WILL POWER: Yeah, it was a good smooth run. Obviously got an early draw, which helps. Would like to have run in the heat, but Roger didn't want us to go out. We'll do the practice tomorrow.

I think Rossi is the one that could break up an all-Penske front row, but I think one of us will get the pole, I hope. We put a lot of work in. All the cars are about the same speed, and it'll be about the run.

Q. Marcus, your thoughts on kind of a difficult couple of days you guys have been going through?

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, it's been very tough, obviously. But yeah, I can only blame myself. I crashed our primary car on Thursday and put us in a difficult spot. I think the team has done a really good job at building up the backup car and really putting in a lot of work yesterday to try and dial it in.

Again today they were out there pushing all day to try and find speed and get me out there for new runs. Very thankful of that. But of course it's very frustrating, very disappointing. Yeah, tough couple of days.

Q. Marcus, you talked earlier after your first round, you were frustrated but you knew that you had some more chances to go back out. What was that like when you had to just constantly go back and forth and try as hard as you could to qualify?

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, I mean, it's tough for sure.

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You're obviously out there driving everything you've got, and our car for some reason has not really got the speed or the grip at the moment, so you sort of feel like you're doing 234s but you're doing 230s, and yeah, it's quite tricky.

Like I said, we just kept trying things, and I thought we made some progress in the end there, but not enough. So we need to try and understand -- we have quick teammates. Our primary car was really fast before I crashed it. We'll see if we can learn something from the data tonight and try to put it better together tomorrow. Yeah, it's tough for sure.

Q. When Will and Rossi were talking, you kind of just were looking down at the podium. I'm sure you're frustrated, obviously, but you've kind of just said multiple times that you're kind of putting the blame on yourself as far as crashing the car or the primary car. Where is your mindset heading into tomorrow where you know that you have to be in that top 3 of the 4?

MARCUS ERICSSON: Mindset is to go out and fight and do my best. That's what we always do. I'm hungry to do that, and we'll look at data, look at videos tonight, see if I can do something better, and then work with the engineering staff and try and optimize the car.

That's how it goes. This place is tough. I think everyone can say that. We've been through ups and downs here. At the moment it's tough for us, but we need to keep fighting.

We still have some potential. Can we put the car together and put ourselves in the race. We have not a lot, but we have a bit of time to try and tune on that for the race, and then anything can happen. We'll sort of dig deep and go out and fight tomorrow.

Q. In a high-pressure situation like that, is it hard not to let frustration take over when you have to prepare for something like that?

MARCUS ERICSSON: I mean, yeah, it's hard, but if it would be easy, everyone would do it. I think it's part of our job, and it's going to be high pressure tomorrow, but I've done this long enough to know how to deal with that.

THE MODERATOR: Colton Herta has joined us, driver of the No. 26 Gainbridge Honda for Andretti Global. Take us through your emotions the last 15 minutes. I assume you thought you were safe and all of a sudden you're not.

COLTON HERTA: Sucks. No, I mean, it sucks to -- going to have to come out here tomorrow and drive INDYCARs and not be able to do it. It's annoying to miss it by that

much.

But overall it was pretty amazing comeback for their group, and I know that's not easy to get back in the car after hitting the wall here. Props to him for getting back in the car and trimming and not lifting. It was impressive for him.

Q. Will, you're the all-time INDYCAR pole winner, yet the Indy 500 pole is one you haven't been able to get yet. How impressive would that be to add to your list of accomplishments, and how important do you think it would be for you to get it to get a second Indy 500 win?

WILL POWER: I don't think it really matters where you start. I think you win this race from anywhere. It would just be a nice box to tick. I haven't had many shots at getting a pole here, so to be in the game is really nice. We'll see tomorrow.

I'll do everything I can.

Q. The last couple of weeks have been some dark times for Team Penske, but it's like, you guys are certainly putting that behind you. How important is that? Not only are you up on the front row right now but the rest of your team.

WILL POWER: Yeah, we've got good people, a very well-run team, and we just -- that was a mistake that happened, and we moved forward pretty quickly. We just focus on performance, and we're definitely all in the game right now for a pole here and for a race win.

Q. In 1988, Team Penske swept the front row. How important would that be to duplicate that achievement this year?

WILL POWER: I think I would be extremely happy for the engineers and the guys who have done all this work because it's been pretty painful the last five years.

Yeah, I think I'd be most happy for them. We're the lucky ones that get to drive the cars. I really hope that happens.

Q. For Alex and Will, there were at least six plenum fires for Chevys today. It affected two of your teammates. Did you guys get any explanation or is there any sense of what's going on there?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: 20 minutes. We have our meeting in 20 minutes. Not yet, but yeah, it's certainly an area for concern. But I don't have an answer.

WILL POWER: Yeah, that will ruin your run. That's a very

important meeting in 20 minutes for you and probably quite a few other teams.

Q. Is it something that can happen from pushing the envelope with the engine? It feels like the last time this happened was Pato at St. Pete in the season opener last year and it doesn't seem like it's happened since then as much.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I'm not equipped enough from an engineering standpoint to answer it, but I know it's a fairly random event. There's no rhyme or reason why it happens, and when it happens, yeah, it runs over. It's kind of something we need to figure out for sure.

Q. Alex, Gavin Ward said today that he thinks Kyle Larson is without a doubt one of the best drivers he's ever worked with. What's it been like working with Kyle Larson this week?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: It's been great, man. I've known Kyle for a lot of years now, both being from northern California, and I expected exactly this, quite honestly. Coming in as a rookie is a lot easier when you have really good equipment and good people around you. I had that benefit in 2016, so it makes that transition a lot easier.

With his pedigree and everything he's done across various disciplines, it's not a surprise at all. In terms of working with him, it's pretty straightforward because everything for him is just good. It's like -- it's kind of weird. It's like, is anything ever bad? He's like, not yet. It's like, okay, sweet. But it's awesome for Arrow McLaren to be a part of him attempting to do the double and everything that goes along with that, and just the association has been a very cool thing for all of us, and it's an honor and a privilege to be his teammate.

Q. Alex, I believe your team did not push you out to the qualifying line originally. Were you trying to avoid the heat or were there other adjustments you were trying to make to the car to go a little bit faster?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Well, when you draw last, the only advantage you have is you can pick whenever you want. We were just waiting for a window that we liked.

Q. Colton, Alex and Will, y'all saw the last 15 minutes play out from outside the car. What was it like for y'all to be spectators and see everything take place the way it did?

COLTON HERTA: It's a lot more fun than being in that position. It's pretty stressful, and obviously it's stressful if you're not in the race or secured for tomorrow, but also if

you're right on that limit like Palou was where he's first in line for 40 minutes and they just flood lane 1, I would imagine that could be very frustrating, as well. So it was nice to be able to get our run in and watch everything.

Obviously not the ideal conditions to do it earlier, but also you confirm that you will get a run.

WILL POWER: Yeah, I was anxious obviously all day. I wish I could have run again. But yeah, watching that, I'll tell you, VeeKay's run was very impressive because he had a moment that was just unexpected. Like that's very tough to get back in the car. Very good, man. Very good.

Yeah, it's an intense place this.

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