

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Pato O'Ward

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Pato O'Ward has joined us, fifth quick on the speed chart today, 225.7 in the 70 laps turned by the No. 5 Arrow McLaren Chevrolet. He'll start eighth, middle of row 3 coming up on Sunday in his fifth Indianapolis 500. Are you good to go or do you need a little more practice time on Friday? What's the thought process right now?

PATO O'WARD: Definitely hasn't been the best of the days of the month. We're just -- we've had some annoying issue that we just can't seem to perfect. I just hope we can fix it. If not, we're going to be in handicapped mode for the race.

But in terms of balance, I think we're pretty sporty if we fix that.

Q. Now you've got us curious. What's the issue?

PATO O'WARD: Too many variables.

Q. Was it speed? Was it balance?

PATO O'WARD: Yeah. We're slow. We know what it is, but it's a lot easier said than done to fix it or not have the issue.

It just sucks when you're not fast enough around here. You feel helpless.

Q. How much does this elevate the importance of the two-hour Carb Day practice?

PATO O'WARD: I would love to get another run in. Just a few laps would be great, just to see if we're able to at least minimize it. But it's all good. Still enjoying the process. (Smiling).

Q. When you're going through your practice programs and you're seeing thing after thing that doesn't quite work, how much does that exacerbate everything that's going on?

PATO O'WARD: I mean, all you can do is kind of just ignore it and try to make all the other things work and just put a lot of emphasis on that to make sure it doesn't happen on race day. Obviously there's still a possibility that it could. I think it's just part of what you have to kind of battle with around this place. There's a fine line with everything. If you want the car to stop well, you're going to give up in other areas. If you want more speed, you're going to give up in other performance areas where you kind of need them all in the race.

It's just part of it. It's part of it. I mean, I'm confident my guys are going to fix it and truly kind of dig into just see how can we not have that issue and/or just get rid of it completely.

Q. How good is it to not have -- maybe you do want practice between now and Friday, that by not having any track activity, they can go through everything, try and take everything apart and iron everything out?

PATO O'WARD: The problem is a lot of the times you take everything apart and it's fine as soon as you go out, but then as runs go on, they start building, building, building. It's just you've got to pepper it in is probably the best way I can express it.

I don't want to worry about it. Obviously it's just -- it's annoying whenever you're not aware of it until -- obviously until you are aware of it. Then it's like, oh, that explains this, this and this. But up until then, it was kind of like, dang, where are we.

Q. How easy is it to go into race trim after spending the last couple days in qualifying trim? Is that an adaptation you have to make yourself?

PATO O'WARD: Definitely a lot slower. Qualifying is a different dimension I would say in terms of just how much lighter the car is by yourself. But in race mode, you can scare yourself for sure.

Today the track in 3 and 4 and 1 and 2 for me was a bit of a -- a bit different than what I had felt in the past couple days of race running. In race day maybe it comes, and it's

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the absolute opposite, or maybe both ends of the track feel the same. I think that's why you've got the tools inside of the car. But ultimately it's just all about staying on top of it and then just having enough things that you can kind of pepper in throughout the race in order to have it comfortable enough.

The worst thing that can happen is just the front wing or rear wing or the bars that you've got and the weight jacker, if you can't really alter the balance to a somewhat comfortable liking, then it really is a miserable three hours.

Q. The last few weeks how has it been working with Kyle Larson? Have you learned anything from him? Have you been talking to him much in the entire process?

PATO O'WARD: Honestly, he's had a very intense schedule, so I haven't really seen him much. We've talked to each other a couple of times, but yeah, in a lot of the debriefs he's not there because -- like yesterday he had a race. He's got a packed schedule, so we actually don't get to see him a lot.

Q. I know you're working on your own program, but was there anybody else out there who looked particularly sporty?

PATO O'WARD: I think a lot of cars looked very sporty, more than I can count with my fingers I would say. I think there's a lot of cars with a shot. Maybe it's just because I felt a little slow. We speed up, we'll be fine.

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