

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Sunday, June 2, 2024

**Marcus Ericsson**

**Marcus Armstrong**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Marcus Ericsson, finishing second. Big comeback after a weird month of May, Indianapolis 500.

MARCUS ERICSSON: It wasn't weird, it was terrible (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: You have a smile on your face, though. Nice comeback.

MARCUS ERICSSON: Thank you. It was a really tough month of May, like you said. We had habit of a tough start. St. Pete and Long Beach, we showed we were fast. Should have been top five, top six in both those races.

Yeah, going into this weekend after the month of May we had, it was really tough mentally. That month of May was draining because we had to work so hard and we got so little.

I think the whole 28 group has come together well going into this weekend. We all talked together and said let's reset, press that big red button, reset, get our 2024 2.0 going. That was the mindset coming into this weekend.

We had some issues in practice, but the car felt great all sessions really. Qualifying was decent. Today we showed in the race that we had the pace to fight up front all day.

Really, really proud of the team. It was not an easy race. Everyone did good decisions. Well-deserved to be on the podium.

THE MODERATOR: Also joined by the other Marcus on the podium, Marcus Armstrong, finishing third. Best finish of the season and first career podium.

How proud are you to get the first podium of your career, Marcus?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Yes, I'm very pleased. I mean,

in my opinion, it's been a long time coming, even though this is my second season.

Yeah, it was a difficult one. Obviously it was pretty chaotic. I think being a strategist today was more stressful than being a driver. I have to give a big shout-out to my strategist, ^ Taylor Kiel. He always places me perfectly to maximize the situation we found.

Ultimately on the last stint, I was having to achieve quite a big fuel number, as was Scott. But Scott does what Scott does. I actually ran out of fuel as I came across the line. So we timed it perfectly. Otherwise I would have fought Marcus a little bit harder in the end. It was necessary just to sort of coast in and take the podium.

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

**Q. Marcus, you've been part of a handful of these weird, caution-filled races. What do you make of these types of races? What do you feel leads to them oftentimes?**

MARCUS ERICSSON: I think people are driving reckless on the restarts. Obviously opportunities on restarts. I don't know if we need to look at how we steward these kind of races. I think today more than 50% on yellow. I'm sure it was dramatic and fun to watch. At some point also we need to have a bit of a better standard. We're one of the best racing series in the world. We shouldn't be driving on top of each other every single restart.

Obviously I haven't seen the race, I was just driving it. I saw in my mirrors every time on the restart, four, five-wide. I was just praying not to get hit pretty much every restart.

Yeah, I need to watch it before I comment more on that.

THE MODERATOR: Just under 50%. 47%.

**Q. Does it come down to more extreme penalties for avoidable contact?**

MARCUS ERICSSON: I don't know. Maybe. I did watch the Indy 500, unfortunately. That was pretty crazy, as well. I think we were lucky there wasn't more incidents there

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because some of the driving there was also on the limit. Let's put it that way.

Yeah, I don't know. Again, we're some of the best drivers in the world here racing. We shouldn't be having incidents like today.

I think I've done my fair share, as well. I do mistakes as well. I'm not going to put the finger on everyone else. I don't stop myself, as well.

I think as a series, we can definitely improve.

**Q. What was your view of what seemed to us to be a very chaotic race?**

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: I have a question actually. Did Lundgaard get a penalty for the last crash that he caused with myself and everyone?

THE MODERATOR: He did. Avoidable contact. He got rear of the field.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: As well, it's very slippery. For whatever reasons the tires this season have been very let's say robust. You can't really generate temperature. Even towards the end of the stint it's not like they're in the right window. I think a lot of the mistakes are also caused by the fact that the tire is not working early in the run, especially when they're cold.

I know I've taken some margin. If you brake where you think you should brake, occasionally you just drive straight through someone. I'm sure that's happened, as well.

I'm sure mistakes today also were not by the intention of the driver trying to lunge everyone, but because he didn't have the grip to stop. I'd say that is one thing.

Marcus is right, a lot of the moves today were very ambitious. Honestly, the braking distances are quite long. I think that's quite inviting. Yeah, perhaps it's needs a bit of a rethink.

THE MODERATOR: Stop and go, by the way. I'll correct that.

**Q. You had early exits from the 500. What was the process of trying to reset ahead of this race, to come back with podiums for both of you?**

MARCUS ERICSSON: I think for us, we went through, like I said, an extremely tough month of May. Yeah, I think we went through everything that month of May. Felt like I aged probably five years during that month (smiling).

Like I said, for us, we just had to do a reset. We had to believe in what we're doing. You can either lie down and feel sorry for yourself or you get up and you work hard and you prepare yourself and you try and dig deep and go and deliver. I think that's what we decided on the 28 group, we were going to go to Detroit, do a good weekend, get our season back on track.

Yeah, that was the chat. We had a lot of work put in this week leading up to this race. I'm happy it paid off.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: I think Marcus nailed it on the head there. Very similar with us.

For the 500, obviously it was completely new to me. I haven't done any oval racing before. We, I, had to do a massive amount of prep, let's say, 'study' for lack of a better word, to be ready for that race.

We sort of concluded if we can work a bit harder for the 500, we can work that hard for every race. In qualifying, we didn't show half of our potential unfortunately. I'm happy that we did so today and we can take some momentum to the next weekend.

**Q. There's always pressure to win every race. This weekend y'all were part of a Honda 1-2-3-4, sitting in General Motors' headquarters. From the engine manufacturer perspective, how good is it for y'all to have that kind of performance this weekend?**

MARCUS ERICSSON: It felt good to spoil the party, for sure.

No, I think Honda did a great job this weekend. We obviously had a tougher month of May than we would have liked as a manufacturer. I know how hard they work over at HRC.

Like you said, 1-2-3-4, couldn't be better for us.

THE MODERATOR: I think Honda also takes over the manufacturer championship.

MARCUS ERICSSON: Perfect.

**Q. Did you think you had anything for Scott once you got around Marcus?**

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, I think we sort of 15 laps to go when I felt the car was really good. I had no fuel concerns. I could push hard. Then I could see Scott and Marcus up the road.

I don't know. I mean, the tough thing is with Scott Dixon, he's the best ever in doing what he did today, like saving the fuel, then having enough pace. If there is someone that's hard to beat, it's him. It was tough.

Also Marcus here put on a really good fight. Yeah, one more lap, who knows what would have happened. I think he did a really good job. We'll have to take a P2 today. We tried. We gave it everything.

**Q. Is it still too early to get a gauge of whether this is a decent track or not? Last year was a cleaner race than this year.**

MARCUS ERICSSON: I mean, the track, I don't know what word to use, but it's challenging. Let's put it that way. That's a nice way to put it. It's challenging.

It has some great characteristics with the bumps, the walls are close. That is good. But it is very short and twisty for being INDYCAR. That's for sure. It's on the limit of what we can do.

I wish we could have a couple more corners and a little bit longer lap. Seems to create good drama, like we saw last year and this year.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: I like the circuit, honestly. I liked it last year, as well. I don't know why it's so low grip. I mean, turn two is sort of repaved. Also turn three I'm sure was repaved. The grip is considerably better.

In an ideal world, they would do that to the entire circuit. It probably would create a lot cleaner racing. The low grip creates such a long braking distance.

The actual layout, I like it. It's fun over one lap. Over a race distance, it's pretty touch-and-go with yellows. But I enjoy it.

MARCUS ERICSSON: They say the bumps and concrete and everything is the full Michigan experience, so that's good.

**Q. When the weather gets iffy, could you override over the wet tires?**

MARCUS ERICSSON: It was tough. If this race didn't have everything, we got the rain, as well. It was definitely touch-and-go there. We were debating on the radio what to do. I said at one point it's 50/50. I said I think we should stay out. That's communication between the team and driver.

The team was really good there and did the right decisions.

But, yeah, I felt like we should stay out because I was hoping it would blow over.

It was tough the first restarts with the slicks. It was good. More cautions then. There was a few laps to let the track dry for us on slicks.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations on a podium finish here in Detroit.

MARCUS ERICSSON: Thank you.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Thank you.

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