

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Saturday, June 8, 2024

**Linus Lundqvist**

**Colton Herta**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up qualifying, joined now by Colton Herta, from fourth place to second in the front row right before the red flag came out this afternoon.

Crazy conditions today, but fascinating to watch. What did you make of qualifying, Colton?

COLTON HERTA: Very difficult. Probably one of the, if not the, most difficult qualifying session for me in INDYCAR so far. Just a lot of unknowns. Unknowns of what to do with the tires, where to brake, what the line is, how many laps. So very difficult.

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

**Q. How brave was it to put on the alternates at the end?**

COLTON HERTA: I don't know. It was dry enough. I don't think it was too crazy. The grip was there. I mean, you saw we went like 16, 17 seconds faster than on the wets.

No, I don't think it's too... Everyone did it too, so...

**Q. A lot of guys off in the dry yesterday. Rain in practice. A little bit of everything in qualifying. What do we get tomorrow?**

COLTON HERTA: I have no clue. I haven't seen the weather yet. But I know either way, we've been pretty fast in both. So I'm not too worried about whatever direction it takes us.

**Q. Colton, Graham said with the alternate reds, they have a tendency to delaminate after about a lap. Is that kind of your sensation with them?**

COLTON HERTA: No. But also it's tough to say exactly because our biggest problem isn't tire deg in a session like this, it's overall tire grip, getting them up to temperature. It's very difficult to do that. That's kind of the biggest

problem we were having.

But I didn't have any sort of delaminating problems.

**Q. Previously in the series you've had strong success in difficult conditions. Is it something that comes naturally to you, the European style of racing?**

COLTON HERTA: I mean, I don't know. It definitely helped being in England for those years, driving a lot of wet-weather days. That definitely helps.

Yeah, I think driving style helps. I tend to drive a little bit more aggressive than a lot of people. I'm comfortable sliding the car. It helps in those slippery conditions to find the limit a little bit more comfortably.

The cars were great today wet or dry. I think that's the biggest thing to dial it down to, is when you're not fighting a car in the wet, it makes such a big difference.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, Colton. We'll see you on the front row tomorrow.

COLTON HERTA: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Linus Lundqvist joins us. His first NTT INDYCAR SERIES P1 award of his budding young career. Talk us through that qualifying session. Probably one of the more interesting ones we're ever going to see.

LINUS LUNDQVIST: Yeah, where do you want me to start (smiling)?

Yeah, it was hectic. It was crazy. I say one of the craziest qualifying sessions I've had. This feels like an average British F3 qualifying back in the day type of style where started off torrential rain, then the last part it dried up, we threw on the slicks.

It was kind of fun going back to that, a little bit back to my roots. Even growing up back in Sweden, half the races we did was in the rain. I'm pretty comfortable there.

Obviously towards the end it was staying online, not touching the wet. That's basically what I had in my mind.

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It happened to be good enough for pole.

THE MODERATOR: How big is this, first pole position?

LINUS LUNDQVIST: I mean, it's huge. What makes it even bigger is to do it together with Chip Ganassi Racing and the American Legion, as well. Especially with their message, to be the one. It feels special to be able to say that proudly now. It feels you're representing something bigger than racing and bigger than life.

To be able to bring that to the forefront, to the front of the row, front of the field I should say, is something I'm incredibly proud of. Hopefully not the last time.

THE MODERATOR: Make this a thing.

LINUS LUNDQVIST: 100%.

**Q. Clutch performance out there, you in the top 12 and Fast Six. To get into the Fast Six, you had to knock out your teammate, Alex. Were you aware whenever you crossed the line he was the guy you bumped?**

LINUS LUNDQVIST: No. No idea. The team just tells me position, not anything more than that. When you're in the car, you're going as fast as you can, right? Not really on the top of your mind who you're going to bump off or knock out.

I think we got all five Ganassi cars into the Fast 12 I think. That was pretty awesome.

**Q. Yesterday was dry. Everybody was sliding off anyway. Today rain. What should we expect tomorrow?**

LINUS LUNDQVIST: I don't think I've been off track yet. So I can't really speak for the other ones. I'm going to try to keep it that way tomorrow.

Like you said, you've seen people go off. I think obviously in the wet it's super tricky to stay on track, especially now towards the end where you just have one dry line.

But even yesterday in the dry, people were going off. I think around this place, you usually don't run that much downforce, which makes it a little bit tricky in the high-speed braking zones. I think it's so easy to snatch a front right or front left, off you go. That's going to be something we don't want to do tomorrow.

**Q. What was the closest call you did have?**

LINUS LUNDQVIST: I had many. There were plenty of

times I thought I was going off.

In the wet it feels like every other corner you might be going off. Even now towards the end, because you went in a little bit blind, if it's completely dry, how should I approach the corner. There were a couple times I approached it as a fully dry corner. Came to the apex, realized there was a little bit of moisture still. I had a couple moments mid corner on that final lap. I did well enough to keep it out of the really wet parts.

**Q. Tell me about the precision it takes. Will Power crashed getting a foot offline too early.**

LINUS LUNDQVIST: Yeah, I mean, it's so difficult because you still have to be committed. Personally to even get temps into the tires, when it's these dry/wet conditions, you have to push super hard to get the tires up to temperature. To be fast as well, you're going to have to approach it almost like a dry lap or a dry session.

If you're just one foot or even half a foot with your outside wheels, you're going to go off. That's also what makes these conditions so exciting, because it's very rewarding when you do put it together, but it's so easy to be a foot off or half a foot off, and obviously have the opposite.

**Q. Back at Barber you got your first podium. Are we right on schedule?**

LINUS LUNDQVIST: I don't know. I mean, if you ask me after Barber, I would be a little bit more hopeful. Over the last couple races, the month of May was kind of rough for us. I kind of came in wanting to rebuild my confidence. Detroit was not a confidence builder. It was a rough place. Coming in here was a bit of a reset. I mean, this is one way of doing it, I suppose. Dare I say, this was surprising even to me.

**Q. What went into your tire strategy in the Fast Six? How tricky was it?**

LINUS LUNDQVIST: The strategy was my stand telling me you need to go on slicks and me say no, I'm not going on slicks. I just didn't feel confident enough to do it. Then I saw everybody else doing it. I think I was the only one on rain tires on the out lap. I realized there's a dry line coming down here. I told the guys a little bit shamefully that you were right, let me come in for the reds.

We came in, and it was just about building the temperature because we knew it was going to be maybe the last lap that's going to be the fastest. It was just about staying on track until then, try to build as much temperature as you can, then hopefully it will be good enough for whatever.



I was happy firstly just transferring to the Fast 12, then the Fast Six. I was happy with that. I actually told my guys as well, All right, let's try to go for pole here, see what we got. So I'm happy it worked out.

**Q. Can you take us through where the mentality shifts from approaching wet-weather running to getting the softer alternates?**

LINUS LUNDQVIST: Those two approaches are I think pretty similar. I'd say the big difference is when it's completely dry, because then you can afford to be a foot, two feet wide, whatever it might be. In the rain it's kind of similar, especially here because it's very slippery offline. You can see where the cars have been running, and that's where the most grip is. There's a little bit of standing water outside of it.

As soon as you push a little bit too hard in the corner, miss that drier line, and you went into a loss of grip. That was similar as on the wets, but to its extreme. It doesn't go from a loss of a little grip, you lose all grip.

Yeah, it's just tricky. Like I said, when you try to go fast at the same time, it's very much a risk versus reward where the risk is very high but the reward can be pretty high, too.

**Q. How did your confidence change from group running advance, top 12 advance, then the Fast Six?**

LINUS LUNDQVIST: Yeah, I mean, I felt pretty good in the first qualifying segment. My last lap there wasn't perfect. I had a little bit of time to improve. I was happy honestly just to transfer from that.

In the Fast 12 I felt pretty confident that we could do a pretty good job.

In the Fast Six, that was a big thing for me, just transferring to the Fast Six for the first time. I said, All right, let's try to go for it, see what we got here.

I think the red flag helped me a little bit because it kind of put me on sequence with the other guys that went out firstly on dry tires. I knew as well it was going to come down to the last lap. Yeah, it was good enough.

**Q. What do you think this does for your confidence in terms of your fledgling INDYCAR career?**

LINUS LUNDQVIST: I mean, it definitely helps. It definitely helps. We'll see. I did mention as well earlier that Saturdays and qualifying has been the focus of mine. I know that's where we struggled kind of in the first five or

six races here. It feels good to do this.

I know it wasn't a very conventional qualifying session, but either way I'm going to take it as a step forward. Hopefully we can just build on this confidence. Again, points are being handed out tomorrow. Firstly, it's going to be the focus on that. Either way, it's a good step forwards for us on Saturdays.

THE MODERATOR: We'll cut you loose. Congratulations.

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