

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Saturday, June 22, 2024

Louis Foster

Jacob Abel

Caio Collett

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up race one of the INDY NXT by Firestone Grand Prix of Monterey. Celebrating the podium finish today, Louis Foster, driver of the No. 26 Copart/Novara Technologies machine for Andretti Global. His third win of the season. Fourth straight podium. He's on a roll right now. Five career wins now for him. His 11th career podium as well. He led all 35 laps today.

Caio Collett, driver of the No. 18 HMD Motorsports machine. Second runner-up finish of the season, third podium of 2024.

Jacob Abel also joining us to round out the podium. Driver of the No. 51 Abel Construction car for Abel Motorsports. Sixth podium of the season. 10th career podium.

Louis, your thoughts on a dominating day? You touched two seconds of push-to-pass. That's all you needed this afternoon.

LOUIS FOSTER: Obviously in the series when there are pit stop, most of the time anyone just stays in until the end of the race. Since we were never challenged really, we didn't need to use it. So just saving it just in case there was a late safety car so we could use loads.

The car was really, really good. Andretti has done an amazing job. I think our car has been historically quite strong here. We were able to push the entire race with a little bit of time management. Just stay on the rails, and I had no problems really.

So, yeah, super happy with it. Obviously a lot of hard work over the last few months to get us to this position. Yeah, we're going to keep pushing forward and hopefully get another win tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: The momentum you're on right now, what's this like? What's it feel like?

LOUIS FOSTER: It's great. Take it one race at a time. You now what I mean? We're not even halfway through the season. Are we halfway?

THE MODERATOR: Barely. Not even, yeah.

LOUIS FOSTER: More or less. Obviously it's great, but there's another race to do tomorrow, and there's a race two weeks after that. So we're just focusing on putting one foot in front of the other and continuing to get the results.

THE MODERATOR: Louis and Jacob now tied atop the points standings for INDY NXT by Firestone.

Caio Collett, again, another driver that's on a roll right now. The second runnerup finish of the season. Tell us about your afternoon.

CAIO COLLETT: I think from my side it was pretty good, but then you look ahead, and you are eight seconds off the lead. So I think we have a bit of work to do for tomorrow, and hopefully we can challenge for the win.

But hats off to Louis. He was quick this morning and also in the race. We couldn't really challenge today. But, no, quite happy overall, but still I think close but yet a bit too far. Hopefully tomorrow we can -- we will work a little bit today and challenge him a bit more.

THE MODERATOR: Caio is now third in points, 71 behind Louis and Jacob. Jacob, for you another podium finish. It was a crazy last couple of laps, though, for you. Talk maybe through Yuven's pass and what you saw in the last corner.

JACOB ABEL: We struggled today a little bit for sure just with overall pace, especially with the tire management. We kind of fell off the cliff with 15 to go. Before that I was at least keeping these two in sight.

So fell off a bit, and Yuven was just super strong today. Big props to him. He's been working super hard. Maybe we can learn a thing or two from him in the data overnight and, yeah, move forward.



You know, he had a good pass on me. It was aggressive. It was more aggressive than I thought he was going to be. Kind of got into the side of me, but I think it was clean nonetheless.

Unfortunately, he just made a mistake on the last corner, and that cost him that. Yeah, we'll take it however we can get it, and we will look forward to tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Yuven, by the way, seen and released from the INDYCAR medical unit. We'll open it up for questions, please.

Q. Louis, starting with you, it looked awfully easy for you out there. I mean, is this the easiest win you've had in your career so far?

LOUIS FOSTER: No, that's not fair. It's never easy. We've worked really hard to get here. So, no, it's not easy. It never is.

We've just done the best we can, and fortunately today that meant that we had a good amount of margin to the guys. These two are really, really good drivers. It's not easy against them. I'm breaking a sweat in the car. I'm getting out tired. We worked hard.

So, no, it wasn't easy. Obviously tomorrow the plan is to do it again, but is it the biggest margin I've won by? No, it's not. We can still keep pushing, and we can still keep trying to build more and more of a gap to these guys.

It's always going to be tough because they're going to work hard tonight, and I am sure they're going to be in the fight tomorrow a lot more, and we're going to have to work hard, harder tonight to try to make sure that we can keep this margin that we have.

Q. Then, Jacob, coming to you. Obviously Yuven being a teammate and you being in the thick of a championship battle, is that one of those situations just kind of knowing what's on the line that maybe I'll have a talk tonight about how that plays out differently at the tail end of a race if it's like that, or maybe not worried about team orders in that situation?

JACOB ABEL: No, not at all. I don't think he did anything wrong at all. I'm not upset with him. Even if he ended up finishing ahead of me, I think he just made a good, aggressive pass. Yeah, we were way slower than them for the past 10, 15 laps, and yeah, they were just stronger than us.

Yeah, if he's faster than me, and he can get around me cleanly, no dramas at all.

Q. Then, I guess the last one out of me to follow that up is, I mean, you've talked about this the whole year. (Indiscernible.) As you see now being tied in the championship at 291 a piece, what do you need to do differently and need to do to get a bounce back and get on a run of your own and to that form you had early in the season?

JACOB ABEL: I think if you would have told me we would be tied at the halfway point going into all of the ovals that we're super strong at as well as a couple of other tracks that we're really strong at, I would have taken that any day of the week.

So, yeah, I feel really confident headed into the rest of the season. Yeah, I know both these two beside me will keep me really honest, and I think it will be a really good fight all the way to the last race. Looking forward to it. That's why we do it.

Q. First of all for Louis, it's great to have the British success. I think it's four wins in a row for the Brits. Well done between you and Jamie. How rewarding is it to get a dominating victory like this after maybe the start of the season you struggled with consistency and getting the results over the line?

LOUIS FOSTER: As I've said a million times already, we've had loads of issues at the start of the year that some our fault, some not.

Yeah, I think once you've got a lead in the championship, like Jacob had from the first three rounds, it's so hard to back off into it. It's been -- I don't know how many times it's been us two on the podium, but I feel like it's every weekend.

The worst he's going to get realistically is third or fourth, and the worst I'm going to get is the same at the moment with our pace. It makes it really hard to close the gap up because it's not like there's a weekend where Jacob is 10th or 11th. You know what I mean? It's always just slowly biting away at that gap, which makes it a lot harder.

Yeah, I mean, our consistency recently has been really good. Andretti has done an amazing job recently. We've just been hitting our marks. Yeah, hopefully we can keep doing the same.

Obviously we have another race tomorrow with starting pole and then the next one is Mid-Ohio. We won that last year, so obviously that's the plan to go and do it again.

Q. Nolan is no longer in the championship for the rest



of the year. Does this change anything for you? Does it change your approach maybe with another championship contender not in the mix anymore?

JACOB ABEL: To be honest, I've kind of said it from the start. My eyes have always sort of been on Louis. He was super strong last year.

Yeah, I think it never changes anything, regardless even if Nolan was still here. He's obviously a really good driver, and he's gotten an awesome opportunity to go INDYCAR racing. Yeah, even before that I think Louis was ahead of him in the championship.

That is always where my eyes have been. It's all been just to focus on maximizing every single result and every single race and trying to compete for wins and podiums week in, week out regardless of who you are fighting against.

Q. Just for Caio, is there anything you feel like you can do to sort of improve? Obviously you have a year less in the series. Is there anything you think you need to personally do to make the difference?

CAIO COLLETT: Well, I think obviously every race weekend I think I start a little bit behind in the back foot comparing to Louis. Then I play catch-up the whole weekend.

Maybe I think we can work a little bit more to try and adapt quicker, but it's just learning curve for me. I think towards the end of the season I'm trying to just reduce the gap. It's what we did here. We are still a little bit far from him, so hopefully we can get some work tonight and be challenge again tomorrow.

Also, I think next week in Mid-Ohio is a track that we did a couple of tests there. Hopefully we can start quite close to him and see what we can do.

Q. Do you think you could potentially get your name in the championship mix with a few good weekends, especially with all the ovals coming up for you?

CAIO COLLETT: You never know. We just have to keep pushing, but right now all I can think of is just to get a race win. My next goal -- I think my main goal for the season is just towards the end of the season to get a race win, and hopefully we can challenge for the championship, but I'm not thinking about that.

I'm thinking these two guys, they are quite quick. They've been strong from the start of the year, so right now all I want is just to get a race win.

Q. Question to all three, but don't worry if you do not feel like you are able to answer this. INDYCAR recently announced that they're ending the broadcast on NBC after 16 years and switching both INDYCAR and INDY NXT races to being on Fox. I spoke to some team bosses recently, and they said they think it can give a lot of commercial opportunity to INDY NXT, the drivers and the teams to find more sponsors. I imagine all three of you want to go up to INDYCAR next year. Do you think this deal could impact the ability for you to raise budgets? I know it's a U.S. broadcast, and you have your home markets as well as racing in America, but I understand that one of the motivations behind this deal was to actually help drivers like you raise more money being in front of more people who are watching you race. So do you have any thoughts on that?

THE MODERATOR: Look forward to the races next year on FS1.

LOUIS FOSTER: The more eyes that are on the sport, the better in my view. The more people we have watching, the more ability there is to watch, the less of a wall there is for viewers to watch, the better.

Yeah, I don't really know a massive different. Fox and NBC, I don't understand the American broadcasting stuff, but maybe you're more qualified to answer that than I am.

JACOB ABEL: I think Peacock and NBC have been fantastic. They do a really, really good job with the broadcasts. It's on par or above every other junior open world series in the world.

I think the one good thing about Fox taking over is going to be we're on TV, so if I was racing INDY NXT next year, I could tell my friends to watch me on TV instead of having to pay for Peacock.

But, yeah, you know, my goal is to be in the INDYCAR Series. So, yeah, I think not a huge difference in the coverage there.

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