

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, June 23, 2024

Louis Foster

Caio Collet

Bryce Aron

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up today's race 2 at INDY NXT by Firestone Grand Prix of Monterey. Won again by Louis Foster, driver of the No. 26 Copart/Novara Technologies car for Andretti Global. Led all 35 laps once again. In fact, led all sessions this weekend. Kind of a grand slam for Louis here at WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca.

Fourth win of the season. Sixth of his career. Takes a 35-point championship lead heading into Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course in a couple weeks. Andretti Global, by the way, has now won five consecutive INDY NXT races by Firestone.

Caio Collet coming home second once again in the 18 HMD Motorsports car. Third runner-up finish of the season, fourth podium of the season as well. Congratulations. Welcome to the podium.

Bryce Aron, driving the No. 27 Jaguar Land Rover Chesterfield car for Andretti Global. First podium of the season and career for Bryce.

Louis, we'll start with you. Welcome back. You made it look easy. I know it wasn't.

LOUIS FOSTER: No, definitely not. I mean, you can see from yesterday obviously the difference between me and Caio. HMD did a really good job overnight. They made a good step on their car and they closed the gap to us.

Obviously, it's not about pole position here. It's all about track position. So we were able to put away, and we kept running laps. Had the ability to have clean air, which helps quite a lot here as well.

Definitely not easy. We used a lot of push-to-pass today to keep Caio at bay and give myself enough of a margin for if there's any small mistakes I might make.

THE MODERATOR: How nervous were you about the restart, keeping everybody behind you there?

LOUIS FOSTER: A little bit. I got a good restart yesterday. Got a good restart again today, did the same thing, and it worked well.

So I was a little bit nervous. I did defend into turn 1. I don't think I needed to, but I didn't want to give him an opportunity.

THE MODERATOR: Obviously an advantage in the points standings as well, which is good past the halfway point now of the season.

LOUIS FOSTER: Obviously, we're only halfway, like you said, and there's a lot of ovals to come. We've been strong on oval. We've led the only oval test so far in Milwaukee.

So we'll see how Iowa goes next week for our Series test. No, I'm super comfortable going into the ovals. We made a big step this year in our pace on ovals. Hopefully we can continue this pace.

THE MODERATOR: INDY NXT by Firestone, by the way, with an open test at Iowa Speedway coming up on Friday.

Caio, another podium for you. Tell us about your day.

CAIO COLLET: A little better than yesterday. We made him use push-to-pass. Reduced the gap a little bit. Yesterday was eight seconds, today was four. Also, I think he pushed a little bit more today.

Big thanks to HMD. We worked hard overnight to try to reduce the gap, and we did it. Overall, I think he did a really good job. Since the start of the weekend, he's been a step ahead. Fair play, and we will keep pushing to see what we can do two weeks from now in Mid-Ohio.

THE MODERATOR: Another road course coming up. Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course.

Bryce, again congratulations. First podium of the season for you. First of all, how excited are you about checking



that box, getting a podium here this year?

BRYCE ARON: Thank you very much. Super excited to be in this room with these guys. We had a lot of pace at the beginning of the season, and I haven't quite been able to put it together. I made a few mistakes, but the team kept delivering and giving me such a good car.

I'm really happy to get the result that the team deserves. It's great to have an Andretti win too, and congrats to Louis on a stellar drive.

THE MODERATOR: Maybe talk through what you saw up at the corkscrew. You were able to make up a couple spots between the contact between Jacob and Reece. What did you see in that?

BRYCE ARON: Most of the race we were running in fifth position, and I felt like we had a quite good pace. I saw they were using, from Andrew, what was telling me, he was using a lot of push-to-pass, both of them were. I could tell they were getting a little bit desperate. I stayed there, kept calm, kept on them, and conserving my push-to-pass.

I saw that Jacob went for a move. They got a little bit of contact, and I was able to just get by the both of them and use my push-to-pass and increase to the finish.

THE MODERATOR: It's a fine line between being too aggressive, not aggressive, seeing how it plays out in front of you, which you can always take advantage of, which you did today.

BRYCE ARON: Definitely. It's about managing the risk. I felt like we were in a really good position today, and it's just about playing our cars right. I'm really happy with the guidance of the team. They were helping out a lot. Big kudos to them, and able to bring home a P3, which made me super happy.

Q. A couple for Louis, first of all. As Dave mentioned, kind of midpoint of your second season now. When you maybe look back at this time last year or the back end of your first season, how different or how further developed do you now feel you are as an INDY NXT driver?

LOUIS FOSTER: I think the consistency is there for sure. We were able to win races last year, but wasn't able to be consistently up in the top three, where we should be. I think just the experience of a year, the confidence of an extra year.

I wanted to try and move up, and in the last year I felt like I had the pace to, but I think it was the right decision to stay

for another year. This is why I definitely feel like I'm much more competent and just an able driver to be able to go out there and win races and for the pressure of leading this series.

Q. Kind of a more general one. You've been overseas here and racing in the UK, but we've seen the INDY NXT group kind of expand, we've seen a lot of drivers coming over from abroad. You've been here a few years now in the states. What was it that appealed to you about coming over here at the time, and is it something after a few years that you would recommend to others to come over here to the States?

LOUIS FOSTER: I say it to a lot of guys I know in Europe or the UK who are looking at the Formula 1 ladder and going up to F3, F2. I've never competed in them. Caio has.

For me, there's just the Junior come through series and the scholarship money allowing drivers who don't have all the funding in the world to be able to move up into the next step. No where else in the world has that really, at all. And when they do, there's nowhere near the sum of money that presents here in America.

For me, if I didn't come to America, I probably wouldn't be racing.

Q. A similar one to Caio. When you decided to make the move over here ahead of the season, what was it that appealed to you about making this move to the U.S. and to INDY NXT?

CAIO COLLET: I think that Louis answered that question really well. The series attracts quite a lot with scholarships and everything else. As he said, if you don't have a lot of funding, you still can do a good job, and if you perform, you are rewarded. So I think this is one of the main points I came here.

Q. For Bryce, you've kind of had the experience of racing in F3 Euroformula. How does this compare to INDY NXT, and what sort of things have you learned that you've been able to translate to INDY NXT?

BRYCE ARON: For sure. I raced overseas for a long time as well. It was definitely a good experience. The ladder system here is awesome, and that's why I'm here.

For me the end goal was always INDYCAR, and I'm really happy to be here with Andretti. It's a dream come true. I remember being about 15 years old when I first stepped in the cars and actually meeting Rob and J-F that help run Andretti. I remember being like I really want to race for you

guys at INDY NXT.

And I went overseas and got some experience and came home and now racing here. Super happy to be here, loving the championship. It's great. I was literally saying to have this opportunity where, if you win, you really get the opportunity to move up to INDYCAR.

Q. Question to the two Andretti drivers. The team is really on a roll now. I think it's five or six wins in a row. Obviously the INDY NXT is a huge mix of circuits. What have you been working on specifically to make the team the benchmark in INDY NXT over this recent period of races?

LOUIS FOSTER: I think probably just mainly hitting our marks more. From my side of things, obviously had four of those last five wins were me and one was Jamie at Road America. From my side of things, it was just not having any issues during the weekends, not make any mistakes.

As soon as -- I said this a million times. As soon as I got the start of the season gremlins out of the way, we were able to bring in the race wins.

And Jamie at Road America, she was amazing, as we've all seen. Then this weekend, she was short a little bit in qualifying, and if you don't get qualifying here, you're basically stuffed. Road America, she did an amazing job.

The team are really gelling together. We work really close together, especially with the Cape car with Salvador and d'Orlando. So just being super open with information and really pushing each other to go faster.

I don't know if you have anything to add?

BRYCE ARON: For sure, the team and the guys, everyone has been working super hard. The cars have been super reliable. I go into the shop between races, and you see every day everyone is putting in a lot of work, making sure everything is perfect on the race weekends, outside of the race weekends.

All the hard work is adding up, and it's great to see it paying off.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, guys. Again, Louis Foster, Caio Collet, Bryce Aron, the podium at INDY NXT for Firestone. Thanks, everyone.

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