

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Kyle Kirkwood

Theo Pourchaire

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Kyle Kirkwood joins us with his second front row starting position of 2024. Good showing for Andretti Global. Your thoughts on qualifying today.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Yeah, I mean, I'm super happy with our performance this weekend. From the start of the weekend we've been really, really strong. We've not had to make many adjustments to the car, which is usually a trait of having a good weekend, right? Usually when you roll off quick, you don't do much to the car, typically it translates into pretty good things.

Yeah, it's been fluid, it's been really good. Glad that we got the front row. Lockout is huge for Andretti Global. Of course, I want the pole. If I'm not to get it, then obviously a teammate is the next best thing for it to happen.

Yeah, really good day.

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

Q. There's something uniquely different about the confidence that you and Colton in particular carry coming into street circuits. Can you describe that. Am I seeing that right?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Yeah, I mean, no doubt about it, right? The last one was Detroit. Did Colton get the pole there, too? I don't know what he did, but he was leading some of the race and we were leading some of the race. I think all the street courses we've gone to this year we've been extremely strong.

Of course, when you're strong at previous street courses and you roll into a weekend like this where last year this was potentially our strongest street course up until qualifying when it rained, it comes with a lot of confidence and more ease and less tension from a normal weekend.

THE MODERATOR: Pole positions at Detroit and Iowa one, as well.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Yes.

THE MODERATOR: Also joined by Theo Pourchaire. Welcome back.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: How was your flight?

THEO POURCHAIRE: That was crazy. I want one thing right now, a bed with air conditioner and sleep (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: Obviously preparing for his sixth career start in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES. Nine total laps in the qualifying session. Tell us about the last 24 hours you've been through.

THEO POURCHAIRE: Sure, I would say the last 15 or 18 hours maybe is crazy. It was about midnight in France when Tony Kanaan called me. Of course, I saw practice one. I'm watching INDYCAR every session. I saw the crash of Alex. I didn't know he was injured. I was like, yeah, he was getting out of the car. I was at the restaurant. I told my girlfriend, Maybe McLaren is going to call me if he's injured. Half an hour later, Tony is calling me. This is strange.

Theo, can you come as quick as possible? We need you right now in Toronto.

It's midnight in France, Tony. I'm not sure I can find a flight and come quick.

But yeah, I'm here. Nine laps in quallie. I wish Alex a speedy recovery. I know he broke a thumb. It's not easy to come here straight in quallie, but it's fine. I'm happy.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take a couple more questions.

Q. Theo, can you take us through your flight over here. Were you watching video, onboard cameras? First time at this track.

THEO POURCHAIRE: It's a very difficult track, very bumpy. Tony called me and I told him, I'm fine, I want to race, of course. I told him, If the race engineers can send me as quick as possible onboards, datas, that would be



good. That's what they did.

In the plane -- actually not in the plane. I just didn't sleep in France. I went at 5 in the morning at the airport, was watching all night the onboard datas. In the plane I decided to sleep a little bit. That was not easy. Still, I could sleep maybe like four hours, five hours.

Yeah, I mean, that's crazy because I was still in Indianapolis three days ago. Decided to come back to France because it's summer in France and I was not racing in Indy any more.

But then, yeah, it's unfortunate what happened to Alex. As I said, I wish him a speedy recovery. I think his broken thumb is painful, but it's not a big, big injury. Maybe he will be back soon, so it's good.

Q. Your feeling when you left pit lane, what's going through your mind at that moment?

THEO POURCHAIRE: I mean, I just tried to learn again a bit everything. I know there's now the hybrid system, which I could try in Milwaukee, but it's an oval. The steering wheel layout is a bit different on the No. 7 car from Alex. I had to learn a bit the new steering wheel.

It was fine. I think I adapted pretty quickly. Tomorrow the warm-up will be very important for me to do again as much laps as possible, and in the race try to learn, try to come back and gain some positions.

I don't expect much. I just want to race and bring the car home.

Q. I'm not expecting damper settings, but what makes the Andretti Global car so good? The bumpier the track, the better you guys are.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I think it's just the drivers (smiling).

No, our cars are good at street courses. Obviously dampers is the biggest thing that teams are working on. Potentially it's that. Honestly, I don't know much. They just say, Drive it. It's usually fast at street courses. That's all the information I have for you.

Q. Is it braking, getting into the corner, all of that hooked together?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Honestly, I have no idea. I couldn't tell you. I'm guessing overall grip.

Q. Looking ahead, you had a test on an oval. Would you welcome the idea if it was needed to replace Rossi

at the Gateway race?

THEO POURCHAIRE: Of course, of course. I mean, I'm here for the team. They gave me the opportunity to show myself in INDYCAR. Of course, I was disappointed when I learned that they were replacing me. But it's part of the game, part of the sport.

I know them very well. When I came back today, everybody was happy. It was good also to see all the people in the team, the mechanics, the engineers, everybody. So it's a bit like my family in INDYCAR. I know them very well.

In case Alex is not ready, will be still here waiting. If the team calls me, of course. I'm not going to refuse racing. I love INDYCAR. It's a great championship. I was home waiting for more than probably four, five weeks. So right now I'm just super happy to drive. It feels like a dream.

Q. Did you get any chance to use the hybrid at all in the nine laps you did?

THEO POURCHAIRE: Sure, sure, I used it. I mean, it gives more power, for sure. It can change a little bit the balance of the car. I had so much to learn from the track, especially the track is very tough. It's quite warm. Physically it's not going to be easy for me tomorrow. I will give my best.

The hybrid system, it's fun. It's fun to play with. I think in the race it's going to be important to be smart with it, with the push to pass as well. Yeah, let's see. Really can't wait to be tomorrow starting the race. I just love INDYCAR, I love racing.

Q. (Question about AUTOhebd0 article.)

THEO POURCHAIRE: It's a bit unfortunate. As I said, I'm thankful to Arrow McLaren for the opportunity they gave me in Long Beach, I think it was in April if I'm right, back in April, giving me the chance to drive in INDYCAR.

We decided to finish the season. Unfortunately, they replaced me. I was disappointed, of course. That's the reality.

But the rest... I don't know anything about the rest. For me, what I said is just I'm happy for the opportunity. I was just a little bit disappointed, of course.

But I'm still here with the team. They called me. I said, Yes, of course I want to race. As I said, it's like a family now because I know them very well, everybody in the team.

As I said, when I came back, I arrived one hour before quallie, 45 minutes before quallie. I don't know exactly. But everybody was really happy to see me and I was really happy to see them again.

It's good people here.

Q. You've only had the hybrid assist in testing a very limited time. Now you're expected to go out there tomorrow and use it in a race. How big a challenge is that? There's still a lot of veteran drivers that haven't figured out the right way to use it yet.

THEO POURCHAIRE: Yeah, it's going to be tough to be able to use it properly, yeah, to be consistent during the race. But I think Arrow McLaren did a great job on that side. We have a pretty strong procedure. I think the team will help me a lot on that side.

I will just have to follow what they are telling me to do. I think the most important from my side is also the driving, to drive well, do a good strategy and it will be fine.

Q. What was the most challenging part of the all-night trip?

THEO POURCHAIRE: The most challenging part is the stress first. It's very stressful. I didn't drive a race car since before Laguna Seca. I knew it was going to be tight to drive in quallie. It's quallie. Quallie, you have 10 minutes and you have to do the job. You have to be really quick, learn the track. I knew there was a hybrid system in the car I had to manage.

It was very stressful. The jet lag. I just came back from Indy to France, and now France to Toronto. I don't really know where I am actually. I mean, it's part of the life of a racing driver. I enjoy it. I'm super happy to be here. Even if I'm tired, I'm super happy.

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