

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Saturday, August 17, 2024

Louis Foster

Jacob Abel

Yuven Sundaramoorthy

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up today's race with INDY NXT by Firestone, joined by the podium finishers today:

Louis Foster, who led all 75 laps for Andretti Global. His first win here at World Wide Technology Raceway, sixth of the season, second straight on an oval, eighth of his career in INDY NXT.

Jacob Abel also joins us for Abel Motorsports. Third runner-up finish of 2024, bouncing back from 15th at Iowa roughly a month or so ago, eighth podium of the season, 12th of his career.

Great to have Yuven Sundaramoorthy with Abel Motorsports, first career podium.

Louis, we'll start with you. Tell us about your afternoon. Obviously the restarts are always a little hairy, but you kept everybody behind you.

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah, I think unfortunately we weren't able to see Jamie's pace in the race. I think she would have had a good race as well. Yeah, unfortunate for her.

But Andretti gave us a really, really good car today. I was just able to go out there, turn laps, look after the tires, just manage the gap behind me. So massive thank you to them.

THE MODERATOR: Jacob, you're also thinking about championship. Tell us about your afternoon today.

JACOB ABEL: Yeah, it was good. I did what I wanted to on the start, kind of sent it basically around the outside, then ended up having to do it again. Yeah, it was a good. We were strong.

I think our car was really good. I think it was a little bit on the side of oversteer, that's kind of 'cause we were

expecting to be in traffic all day. Turned out we pretty much spent none of the day in traffic. What can you do there?

Yeah, I think regardless it's a great day for us, a really good day for the team. Having Yuven up here is pretty spectacular. Jordan also had a really good race, too. I think we delivered some good race cars, for sure. Just got to start a little bit higher next time.

THE MODERATOR: Yuven, podium finish. How does this feel?

YUVEN SUNDARAMOORTHY: Feels pretty good finally to get this podium. It's been a long time coming. Hopefully it's the first of many.

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

Q. Louis, you just turned 21. Is there champagne or apple cider at the celebration?

LOUIS FOSTER: It was champagne for the first time ever, yes.

Q. Get in your eyes a little bit?

LOUIS FOSTER: It did. Stings a lot more than apple juice. Not good.

Q. Yuven, your home track is coming up in two weeks. More confidence continue to be gained. You have that podium under your belt now. The confidence built today...

YUVEN SUNDARAMOORTHY: Yeah, I mean, my confidence has been building this whole season race by race. It always feels like we figure it out right after qualifying. I was happy to get a semi-decent qualifying here, although it's definitely harder starting earlier in the qualifying run.

Abel Motorsports gave me an amazing car. I just tried to do everything I could early and really burnt the rear right off a little early. Hung in there. Salvador was on fire at the end. I had to do everything I could to hold him off.

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Managed to do that by a couple car lengths at the end.

Q. Jacob, how did you feel on the outside? Wasn't a lot of opportunities to get up there. It was getting crazy behind you. I don't know if you saw. What was that second lane feeling like for you?

JACOB ABEL: Yeah, it was great at the start. Everybody always talks a big game about, I'm going to go send it on the high side. I wanted to make sure I didn't do that, then not do it.

Yeah, we definitely did it. Yeah, got a few guys there on the start. Fortunately they all got taken back and had to go do it again on the restart. Yeah, felt good about it. It's good up there. I hope it makes the INDYCAR race more interesting.

Q. Louis, what is it about ovals you do so well, you seem to have a knack with getting up to speed quickly, winning on?

LOUIS FOSTER: I think it's a lot to do with the teamwork you have with your team. It's very much a team game, the ovals. Much more than it is on road courses.

Both is important, but this one is definitely more. I think just the team chemistry really has a massive effect on ovals.

Like I said before, Andretti is a great group of guys. We work really hard together. We figure it out. Like I said, Jamie was P2. We've been working really, really hard at it.

For me, I've been learning as much as possible, being compared to some of the American drivers who come up through the ladder, not a lot of experience on ovals. I feel like I'm on the stage now where I'm no longer a rookie, I kind of have my foot in the door as to say. I'm just getting more and more comfortable on them.

Q. The race distance, tires, the grip between the high and low line are the big topics. We were expecting a single-file race. Coming into today's race, what were your expectations of how much side-by-side action there would be, how much the track would grip up? At the end of the day, were you pleased with the race distance that had been set for today?

JACOB ABEL: Yeah, honestly going into the last few rounds, this was probably the biggest known quantity. Iowa got repaved. We haven't been to Nashville, we haven't been to Milwaukee. Fortunately we had a really good race here last year. I think there was a lot of battling all throughout. Obviously it was at night, this was at day.

We didn't really know how much that was going to affect it.

Yeah, expectations were pretty high for the overall product of racing. I think it definitely delivered.

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah, I mean, I didn't really do much apart from run the low line all day. I don't really have much intel on that one. I'll pass it over to Yuven.

YUVEN SUNDARAMOORTHY: Compared to Iowa, there were more laps. With the longer race distance, that's what we were expecting anyway.

I think it came down to we were kind of expecting traffic, so we ran a really loose car. At the end of the day there wasn't much traffic. As soon as I dropped farther back behind Jacob, it was clean air. Just tried to hold onto it.

The high line worked really well early, which we were expecting from previous years. Obviously Firestone put a really good tire in that allows us to run that high line. It made it a great race. That is something that's really good, especially for the spectators and everyone here.

Q. Yuven, after what happened at Laguna Seca on the final lap, did you feel pressure to get this podium? Almost feel like a relief you have gotten over the line?

YUVEN SUNDARAMOORTHY: Yeah, I mean, the whole time there I was in my mirrors looking at fourth place, remembering Laguna Seca. It was definitely something that I just needed to do for myself.

Got incredibly lucky with that yellow when that came out. Gave me some time to kind of regroup, focus and figure out what I needed to do with my tools in the car, what I was doing wrong.

Once I did that, we went out and put some good laps together, managed to hold them off and get a third place, which I think is a well-overdue place.

Q. Jacob, where do you think things may have gone a bit wrong for you in the championship battle?

JACOB ABEL: Yeah, it's a super competitive series that we're racing in. Obviously Louis is at the front. Top to bottom, the field is super strong. I think anyone will tell you that if you're not 100% on it, you're not going to win races and you're not going to extend the championship lead or keep a championship lead.

We made a couple mistakes, had a little bit of bad luck. It just snowballs, especially in the center part of season when it's back to back to back to back.

It's been really nice to have time to regroup and come back stronger for these last four races. Really just focusing on trying to win races and do the best result we can now for the rest of the year.

Q. Louis, obviously the championship, you could wrap it up in Portland. Looking at next year, does that make discussions easier, you have the scholarship in the grasp of your fingers?

LOUIS FOSTER: No. INDYCAR is a very difficult championship to get into it. There's obviously a lot of drivers and not as many seats as drivers.

Yeah, it's lovely to be able to not rest, but we have a very, very comfortable gap now. We'll see what happens in Portland, the coming weeks.

Obviously my goal is to be in INDYCAR next year. That's what we've been working to the past five years or so. We'll see what happens. It's such a competitive series to get into.

Whatever opportunity I might get will be greatly appreciated.

Q. Louis, obviously you have this big lead. Do you change your approach for the last three races or do you keep going for the jugular?

LOUIS FOSTER: I think for Portland we won it last year, so there's no reason why we can't win again. We have a good idea of what we want to do car-wise for next weekend. We've already had discussions about it. I'm quite comfortable showing up there with a strong car.

Again, aim will be to put it on pole at Portland and win that one. If we do that, I think we mathematically might be near a closing. I'd love for us to do that.

At the end of the day, as any driver will tell you, it's about driving for points. If the best we can get out of the next few rounds is third or fourth, we take it, we move on. Yeah, the aim is still to go out and win.

Q. Jacob, the pace of Abel Motorsports showed up really well today. What's the difference with you right now? When you see Louis stretching out leads like what he did today, but you are as quick as HMD or quicker, is it mechanical group or simply down to clean air?

JACOB ABEL: Yeah, it's a number of things. I mean, racing is super, super tight. It's a game of millimeters.

Yeah, it's hard to nail it. It's really hard.

Both as a driver and as an engineer, as mechanics, as everything, today in particular, I think we weren't really expecting to be in second place on, like, lap four. We were kind of expecting to run behind cars and have to work really hard to move forward all day.

As a team, we kind of decided to go in a little bit more of a direction where it's a little bit more aggressive with balance and with setup to really focus on passing and being able to run different lines.

Yeah, we didn't really have to do that, and that made it a little bit hard on tires, especially the rear tires. Once you're loose on an oval, it gets pretty dodgy. Yeah, it's a really close game.

Louis and Andretti have been super strong lately. Yeah, we got to do what we can to go out there and do the best we can and win races down the stretch.

Q. From Iowa where tire management was tricky, with coming here, was that something that was in the back of your mind with how to play with that over 75 laps?

JACOB ABEL: Yeah, I didn't really get to do Iowa. I had a puncture on, like, lap 20, whatever. I didn't really get to run. Wasn't able to feel out the grip, learn how these guys race on ovals and all that.

Today was really kind of my first oval race of the season. I was just kind of pulling from what I knew last year. There's a little bit of tire management. Firestone did a great job bringing us a tire that's super strong and could run the whole entire race. Yeah, it made battles all the way up to the end. Props to them for that.

THE MODERATOR: We'll wrap it up. Congratulations, guys.

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