

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Friday, August 23, 2024

### Pato O'Ward

#### Press Conference



PATO O'WARD: -- we basically got to where we needed at least in terms of where our teammate was. There's still some work to do, but I think we've definitely cut it down at least a 50% gap to what we started the session with.

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with questions.

#### **Q. Sporadic weather here today.**

PATO O'WARD: Yeah. That was unexpected. I kept seeing it on the radar, hoping we would get our group two run in, which we did. Perfect timing.

#### **Q. It may not hold up tomorrow.**

PATO O'WARD: Tomorrow similar to this?

#### **Q. It's possible.**

PATO O'WARD: I mean, I guess we're in a position where if it rains, it rains. If it doesn't rain, well, it doesn't rain. I don't really care. I'll enjoy it whatever it is.

#### **Q. What are you looking for here that might be different? Is it getting off of corners? What are you trying to do to make time here?**

PATO O'WARD: Was just plowing like a pig. It was important to just get a decent amount of rotation in the car for me today.

#### **Q. Pato, we've seen this split practice format kind of trialed over street courses this year. Obviously now in Portland as well. What is your take on this idea from INDYCAR? Is it something you'd like to continue with next year in the practice sessions?**

PATO O'WARD: Yeah, I think it's fantastic, this idea of two groups in practice one. Obviously the first part of it is all together, but it's good to have a chance with the reds, at least get a few laps together where you know that you'll get the track distance or track respect that you would want.

The reality is 27 cars just don't fit around a 58-second lap. Everybody wants a two- or three-second gap. The math just doesn't do it. The grid is way too big for the track lengths we race at during the calendar.

This is a necessity I would say for 80% of the tracks. Obviously at Road America we don't need it. But in places like this, all the street courses, it's 100% must.

#### **Q. Do you still have any remaining thoughts of the championship in these closing few rounds or a priority to get some race wins?**

PATO O'WARD: I would love to get back on the podium and win before the end of the season. It would be I feel like a very strong close.

In terms of championship, if we're scoring that in the next four races, I think we'll be looking good. Obviously probably out of reach for first. The mishap in Toronto and then in Gateway, that just kind of put us out of the fight, if we want to be realistic.

It definitely is a possibility to fight at the front and win races and be on the podium. That's what we want to push for 'cause I really don't care if I'm fourth, sixth, seventh, eighth in the championship. For me it makes no difference. We want to be in the top three. If we can't do that, we'll do our best to position ourselves to win the race.

#### **Q. Five races into the hybrid integration, are you where it's second nature and you are adapted to it?**

PATO O'WARD: I would say even in Mid-Ohio, it's a simple system. You can push to past. Instead of using the boost from the engine, it's using it from the battery pack.

I would say it hasn't been a massive change in terms of what we need to do in the car. Obviously there's more times we need to click this button.

I think it's been more of a factor for the racing. I think the racing has taken a big step down just looking in Mid-Ohio, Toronto. People don't need to use their push to pass anymore to defend sometimes. That's ultimately just opened doors to less fights on track. At least that's what I



feel.

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