

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, September 15, 2024

Yuven Sundaramoorthy

Caio Collet

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good morning, everyone. Wrapping up the INDY NXT by Firestone Music City Grand Prix. Joined finishing second Yuven Sundaramoorthy, starting 11th to finishing second this morning. Best finish of his career. Second podium of 2024.

Also joining us Caio Collet. His best oval finish, sixth podium in this his rookie year. Caio the INDY NXT by Firestone Rookie of the Year.

Yuven, you saw the early problems that Jacob had, but still 11th to second. You had your hands full out there.

YUVEN SUNDARAMOORTHY: Yeah, no, I was happy with it. We had the best car in the field. Abel Motorsports gave me a great car. Did everything that I could, made as many passes on the start.

I told Christian Rasmussen before the race I was sending it on the high line no matter what. That is what I did.

Had a really fast car. Managed to get Caio. He went a little more aggressive on downforce, was struggling at the end of the race. That was good.

I think we should have had Louis there at the end, but made the pass in the wrong corner. That is just how ovals go. You have to set it up 10 laps in advance and I didn't have those 10 laps to do it.

THE MODERATOR: On the restart, did you have any chance?

YUVEN SUNDARAMOORTHY: Yeah, I definitely think I did. I didn't warm my tires enough initially on the restart. First couple laps, it was a bit sketchy. Once I finally got rolling, I caught him. He was doing a really good job breaking the draft. Just tried in the wrong corner.

THE MODERATOR: Caio, your thoughts on coming home third today.

CAIO COLLET: Yeah, I think we struggled a bit as a team in the ovals so far. Overall I'm quite happy to finish on the podium. For sure we weren't quite strong today. I think I was just surviving a little bit out there.

No, in the end I'm quite happy to finish on the podium. As I said, I think there's a lot of work to do ahead in '25.

THE MODERATOR: Both you guys are locked up for 2025. Talk about the opportunities you'll have.

CAIO COLLET: For sure I'm very grateful to be with HMD again. I think this year they've been incredibly supportive and incredibly good with me. I think to continue the partnership, it's really important. Hopefully we can do a strong season together.

THE MODERATOR: You're back, as well?

YUVEN SUNDARAMOORTHY: Two-year contract with the team. We knew from the start of the year this was a learning year. That's exactly what I did. Learned a lot. Definitely improved from the start of the year. I'm excited for next year.

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

Q. A couple years ago this series didn't really even run ovals. This year you got to do plenty of 'em. How cool was that? How much do you think that helps prepare you for the next step?

YUVEN SUNDARAMOORTHY: Yeah, I think it's massive. Previously our only real oval was Lucas Oil in the Road to Indy. Iowa Speedway in this car. I think the actual ovals really help.

I'm really happy with how well Firestone made a tire that races here. All of us after the test weren't expecting a lot of passes, but it turned out really well as I was able to demonstrate. I was happy with that.

CAIO COLLET: Yeah, I feel the same way. It's a whole different game, the ovals. I learned that the hard way at the beginning of the season. I'm happy to finish off quite in



a strong way.

Obviously helps you to prepare for what comes next. That's really important. I think as you said, we put on a great show in all of the four ovals that we did. Hopefully next year we can do the same.

Q. Caio, obviously for next year, are you going to be pulling double duty again and be part of the Nissan Formula E team?

CAIO COLLET: I don't know yet. Full priority is for sure INDY NXT, try to fight for the championship. We are still seeing about other stuff.

Q. Yuven, it feels like this year this has been kind of an ascending year. Where did it really start to click for you?

YUVEN SUNDARAMOORTHY: Yeah, I mean, I was looking at my Wikipedia page. The first 10 results were 24, 22, 23, 21. I was like, This is terrible.

After Detroit is where it all clicked. It's a slow track where you really have to feel the road. That's where it was for me. I figured out what the car is. I figured out how the car mechanically drives. Besides that, you're just driving to the downforce.

From there, it was all on the up and up. I think Laguna, that was a great result, should have been a podium. On the up and up from there.

Again, with the ovals kind of was the same trajectory, learning, learning, learning. I think this is a pretty good result.

Q. Jacob being in the championship fight for most of the year, being the senior member of the team, how influential has his mentorship been?

YUVEN SUNDARAMOORTHY: It's been massive. I mean, I was joking around before the race. I don't think there was one time session that I finished in front of him. That just means I always have good data. That's the positive thing.

Every time I go out on the track, I knew there was a car in the top three I could look at, learn from. My goal for next year is to be that car for Abel, have data for the rest of the guys.

THE MODERATOR: Yuven, how often do you check out your Wikipedia page?

YUVEN SUNDARAMOORTHY: Shoot, I didn't think about that one. I might be getting into my side business a little bit. I totally do not have a Wikipedia account. I'm not editing, I promise (laughter).

Q. Yuven, can you compare where you are now in your progress compared to the expectations you had coming into the year. How do those expectations now translate into the second season?

YUVEN SUNDARAMOORTHY: Yeah, I mean, really I tried my best to not set any expectations for myself. I really tried to go in with just a completely open mind 'cause obviously these cars are two times the amount of downforce I've ever driven before, two times the amount of horsepower. Open book there. My expectations were a little higher after the first couple races which didn't go my way.

Overall after those first four races, I'm super happy with how it ended up now. I think I've had a chance to podium at all of the last four or five races. I made mistakes that didn't quite go my way.

I think next year that means that we have a chance to get some wins. I really feel like I've always figured out the tracks after qualifying. I've been racing well, fast laps in racing, just qualifying in the back. Hopefully next year that means I can qualify a little farther forward.

Q. Caio, how do you evaluate your rookie season? What are your expectations going into the second year?

CAIO COLLET: Yeah, I think there was a lot of mistakes from my side at the beginning of the year. I think at the street and road courses we showed a strong package, especially the second half of the season. I think that is for sure little things I need to clean up ahead of 2025.

Obviously the ovals for me was a big learning curve. I'm happy to finish off in a strong way. For sure there's a lot of work to do. We need to improve I think as a team ahead of '25.

But just looking forward to put my head down and start working on the championship hunt.

Q. Any particular challenges in particular that you've had with the ovals?

CAIO COLLET: Yeah, I think the first two were quite tough. I learned that the hard way. Yeah, facing the wall was not really pretty. I think it ended up quite strong as we did today shows that we learned and are on the right track.

Hopefully for next year we can continue.

To answer the question, is a whole different game. I think the racing, everything that involves the oval, how you qualify, I think there's a lot of details. I think you have to treat it separate comparing to a road course.

For sure there's a lot of things that I still need to learn. Hopefully we're on the right path for next year.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations on a strong finish to 2024.

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