

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, September 15, 2024

Colton Herta

Pato O'Ward

Josef Newgarden

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon. Wrapping up not only the 2024 NTT INDYCAR SERIES season, but today's race.

Currently joined by Pato O'Ward. The second podium in the last three races, sixth podium of the season, 26th of his career.

Colton Herta joins us, as well, the champion of this year's race. Finishes second in the championship.

Josef Newgarden also joins us. Sixth podium of the season, 58th career podium.

Colton, congratulations. Oval win number one. Your thoughts?

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, got a lot to do to catch up to these guys, though.

No, it was a good race for us today. The car was fantastic. I was able to do a lot with it. I think that's kind of what put us over the edge to win.

THE MODERATOR: Pato, obviously crazy finish at the end. What did you see out of your rearview mirror trying to hold off Colton?

PATO O'WARD: Yeah, I wish I could have done it a little bit harder on him. Sting Ray facilitated that. A bit of a stinger to lose it that way. I would have liked to have at least fight him for a little bit more.

No, it was a pretty hectic race for our 5 car, to be honest. I had no idea where I was the whole race till the end. Guys are starting to pit and you are leading. That's great. I just tried to continue pushing.

Oh, my God, those reds at the end, I couldn't see straight

with so much vibrations. Could barely talk to the team with just how much was going on in the car. Yeah, pretty gnarly in the end.

Congrats, Colton. I think one more lap, Josef would have gotten me for sure. I was dying.

THE MODERATOR: Josef, another podium for you to wrap up the season. Your thoughts on being back in Nashville and a chance to win today...

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Yeah, good to be back. I don't know what we made up there in the last 25 laps, maybe 12 seconds or something. We'll digest that next week. Going to be a tough pill to swallow, but one we're going to have to swallow.

Yeah, great to be here. I thought the race was incredible as far as ease-ability. It's what we wanted, to put on a good show. I think it was very possible to do that today.

Thankful to Nashville and the surrounding areas, Scott Borchetta, everybody that put this on. A big event. Congrats to Colton on a good win.

Yeah, hard to not be pissed. Really got that wrong.

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with questions.

Q. Colton, how cool is the guitar trophy considering your musical background?

COLTON HERTA: No, that's awesome. I didn't know that was a thing, so that's super cool. It's going to look good in the trophy case.

Q. To be able to win on an oval, a long time coming for you. What's it like to finally get that?

COLTON HERTA: It's about time. I think there's been multiple times where I thought we could have won or should have won, and numerous of things would have happened to stop us from doing that.

Luckily today we got it all all right. We needed a little bit of help. I think that was in the form of a little bit of traffic to



catch back up to Pato. I think it was, from my perspective, a really exciting race for it to close out like that right in the last few laps, have me battle Pato, then Josef close to battling Pato.

No, it was a great race.

Q. Finishing second in the points and getting that first oval win, do you feel this was a little bit of a statement? Do you feel like you're sending a message you're going to be there next year?

COLTON HERTA: I hope so. There's a whole bunch of things we could have done to win the championship this year. I think we'll reflect on that, look at it going into the off-season.

It does hurt a little bit when you think about winning the last race, and he didn't have a particularly strong one, so we could have made up a lot of points today if we needed to in that championship fight.

That's something that we'll look into in the off-season, how to shallow out the (indiscernible), make them a little bit better.

Q. Colton, what prompted your move from California to Nashville? Where did you come from in those final laps?

COLTON HERTA: Just great people out here (smiling).

No, to be honest, numerous scenarios that made it enjoyable to live out here. I think the main thing was getting out into the midwest or the top of the south, being closer to a lot of the races. It's a lot nicer. Definitely do a lot of traveling in our year of racing. I don't have a plane like Pato. Anything to limit that down makes it easier (laughter).

PATO O'WARD: You should look into one. They're nice (smiling).

Q. (No microphone.)

COLTON HERTA: I think we were fast. It was more so just Pato was getting slower, he was struggling, like he said, vibrations of the tires, getting looser from my perspective. It looked like he had his hands full. That's kind of what prompted me to be able to make that move.

Q. Colton, you should get a Super License with a result like this.

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, I mean, would have been useful

a few years ago. It's nice to have one, I guess. I think it's disrespectful for INDYCAR how underrepresented it is. But these are all things we know and we've talked about in the last three years, so yeah.

Q. Josef, you're another hometown driver. To have finished on the podium, considering the way the season went, how does it feel to get another podium finish?

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: It seems fitting for this year, I would say, the way this one shaped up for us. I'm going to be happy to leave all this in 2024. We're going to reset. Team did a great job today. They put a good car on the track, a great car. We're going to come back next year and hopefully have a little different cadence would be nice.

It's great to be here at this facility. I just want to say again everything that Scott has done with Big Machine to make sure we maintain this event on the calendar I think was really, really important. We had an incredible crowd for making the shift year over year. Everybody's efforts should be applauded. We should be super thankful for what everyone has done. It should be on the calendar.

So happy we were here. If nothing else, great to end the finale in the Nashville area.

Q. In 2018, last race of the year, you guys step up to INDYCAR the next year. Six years later, you guys have lived up to the Stars of the Future potential. What is it like to be here together?

PATO O'WARD: I think it's really cool. At one point I actually thought we were going to be together in Formula 1. That didn't work out (smiling).

We're here. Well, we've got some work to do to catch up to the 10 car with Ganassi. I think they've really set the bar where they've been leaders in that in terms of consistency. Us as a team, we have a lot of work to do to be in the conversation, to be fairly honest.

We're going to work for that and try and just truly be there to fight until the end 'cause I think this year we fell a little bit short like we have the last couple years. I'd love to see that take a different place next year and really give them that fight.

I'm sure Colton, Josef, you can never count out all the Penskes, Ganassis, hopefully a couple McLarens. Obviously Andrettis are going to be in the fight. Like 10 cars for the championship.

Q. Colton?



COLTON HERTA: Yeah, I mean, it's cool. You never really think about it when you're racing go-karts, who you're going to be racing with in the future, who might make it into professional motorsports.

It was cool. I've been racing Pato since eight, nine years old. We've been together a lot of our lives. We're still trying to beat up on each other till this day. I hope it continues for quite a long time.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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