

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

Marcus Ericsson

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Marcus Ericsson, back driving the No. 28 Andretti Global Honda beginning his seventh season in the NTT INDYCAR Series, of course a podium at Detroit last year, four-time race winner in the series and of course the 2022 winner of the Indianapolis 500 presented by Gainbridge.

A lot of changes, new faces, new places this year, but for Andretti Global, you know the teammates, you know what you've got, work well together. How much are you looking forward to 2025 here?

MARCUS ERICSSON: A lot. Last year was definitely a disappointing year results-wise for me, but I felt like I was laying a good foundation for this year, so I'm really excited to be back at Andretti for a second year with the same core group on my car.

Just to start off every weekend knowing what we did last year is going to be a big thing for us, and I feel like the potential is really high. Working with Colton and Kyle was great last year, two really good guys and good drivers, so to continue that and sort of keep that group together I think is going to be really important for us.

As a team, there's a lot of good things happening in the background. I know how much effort has been put into the off-season to make us better on every aspect, so I can't wait to get to St. Pete and get going.

Q. A lot of talk about the oval program, how it's improved in the off-season, as well. Do you feel that way, as well?

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, definitely. I think last year we were fast on pretty much every type of track, but the ovals we were definitely competitive. For me unfortunately I didn't really manage to finish many of them, so didn't really show any results, but we were in the mix on most of them.

Obviously for Colton to end the year with a win in Nashville was huge for us and gave us great momentum going into

the off-season. We just want to build on that for sure.

Q. We know about last year, roller coaster ride I would say. Marshall had a good article about your motivation this off-season. Have you changed anything? Have you kept everything the same? You're obviously more motivated after the results from last year I think it's safe to say, but what's this off-season been like to get ready for a better year your second go-around with Andretti?

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, I've changed up quite a few things. I always see the off-season as an opportunity to be better, so I always try and look at ways to sort of improve myself as a driver.

I think with last year's results, it gave me even more motivation to work even harder. I don't really -- I'm not a believer in bad luck. A lot of people would say to me, sorry for last year, bad luck. I don't really believe in that. I think you make your own luck.

I just didn't do a good enough job last year, so I want to make sure I'm better this year. I put in a lot of work, work with my mental trainer. We have weekly sessions. I put on 10 pounds of muscle on my physical status. I'm stronger than I've ever been before and I've started working doing simulator work on my own, so I'm driving simulators almost daily just to practice that since we don't have much driving in the off-season, trying to finesse my craft in the simulators.

You see all these kids these days, they come up in the series and they're pretty much born and raised in a simulator of some kind, and they seem to all be pretty good.

I'm trying to take that up and been working quite hard on that over the off-season, as well.

Again, just taking the opportunity to try and be better, try and work harder and prepare myself better. Like I said, I'm a big believer in preparation is key and you sort of make your own luck, and I want to make sure that when I get to St. Pete and all the other races that I've put in the work and give myself the best chance to succeed.



Q. You talked about working with a mental trainer once a week. Maybe explain about what kind of things they can work on you with. Is it similar to a physical trainer where it's muscle memory but brain memory?

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, it's just like -- it can be all kind of things. That's the cool thing with mental training. Depending on how your week is looking, what you've been up to, it's a lot about not only sports specific but also well-being and where your mind is at and why your mind is there, just to help coach you in that.

We call it mental coach sessions that I'm doing with my trainer. It's just to get perspective and help me, guide me in everything I do, really. I think it's still a very underappreciated thing in sports. Everyone goes to the gym pretty much every day or work on your physical training, but very few do the same thing with the mental side, and I think it's as important if not more important, the mental side, especially the higher up you get in any sport.

You get to a point where everyone is extremely talented and skilled, and then you need to find an edge on other things, and I believe a lot in finding the edge on the mental side.

Q. After spending one year in your new home in Andretti Global, I think we asked you some comparison questions a year ago about Ganassi versus Andretti. Do you feel like from what you've learned about this team, from what you've experienced, the people you've worked with? Is this a team that can go out and seriously contend for a championship this year against your former teammates?

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, no doubt. I think all the tools are there, and I think if you look at last year, Colton was second in the championship, and he had a couple races where he was super fast and sort of something happened and he scored zero or close to zero points. The competition is tougher than ever in INDYCAR. I think that's what makes it so cool.

But seeing where we were last year, I think as a team, we had the best season. Andretti had their best season for a long time last year, so that was a good sign that all the work that's been put in is giving us results.

Like I said, you're seeing firsthand all the work that's been put in this off-season to be even better. Gives me a lot of confidence that we should be right up there fighting with the Penskes and Ganassis and McLarens. We should be right there in the mix every given weekend.

I think what we need to do is to be consistent. I think that's what makes Alex Palou so great, is that he never have any bad weekends and that's how he can win so many championships. He doesn't have to dominate every weekend, but if you're up there in the top 5, top 3 every weekend, you're going to collect a lot of points.

That's going to be the key for us. I don't have any doubt we're going to be fast on every type of track because we did that last year, but also we need to execute on race day to make sure we bring those points. And if we can do that, we definitely have all the opportunity to fight up front and win races and championships.

Q. After a year there, there's always a lot made about drivers moving to a new team and some of the difficulties that come with that, just learning new people, learning a new car, trying to replicate some of the things that you did well or had great experiences with at your old team. Reflecting on that, how was that first year at Andretti Global compared to maybe what your expectations were going in?

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, like I said, results-wise I was very disappointed, but I felt the way I sort of gelled in the team and felt at home in the team was, to be fair, almost better than expected, just how quickly I became feeling at home there and then sort of -- I really liked the people I worked with. My teammates are great and we're working well together, so I think that went better than expected.

Like I said, I think the potential is sky high there with the group we're with. That makes me really excited about this season.

It does remind me a lot of my first year in Ganassi. I came from Schmidt Peterson at the time and I joined the first year and was a bit scrappy year but a lot of potential there but not so many results. And then in year two I won races, finished on the podium multiple times, and finished sixth in the championship.

I see a lot of similarities there, and I think me as a person throughout my career, I've always been that kind of guy that needs a sort of year to get to know things and get to know people.

I get the most out of myself when I feel comfortable with the people I'm working with and sort of know things that's going on. Some drivers can just jump in anything and just be fast from the get-go, and that's for sure a strength, but for me, throughout my career, that's always been a thing for me that sort of I need a year to get used to things and then I can deliver.

Q. I know it's been written about and talked about a little bit, as much as you can tell us, I know you've been doing some simulator testing for the Cadillac F1 group given your experience in the Formula 1 world. What exactly have you been up to with that, and how is that team from a big picture standpoint doing in its preparation to join that series next year?

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, I think that was a bit of a misunderstanding that came out of Sweden, but yeah, I was asked by Andretti Global to help out with some evaluation of simulators for the organization. I didn't have anything to do with the Cadillac thing really. It was more Andretti Global that wanted me to try some simulators for future ideas on simulators basically.

Then I think some people in Sweden connected that with Cadillac F1 and it became a thing. It was simply working for Andretti and trying to help on that side of things.

Q. You talked about changes made with yourself and the team in the off-season. Sometimes an athlete learns a lot coming from a season like that. I'm curious, what did you learn about yourself personally coming from a season like that, and do you feel like because of what maybe you've learned and these changes, the 2025 version of Marcus Ericsson could be the best race car driver version that Marcus Ericsson has had coming into a season?

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, I think the biggest lesson I learned from last year was that, like I said, I don't think bad luck is a thing. I think it comes from preparation and giving yourself your best possible chance to succeed.

I don't think I didn't work hard last year, I didn't prepare myself last year; I always try and do that the best I can. But you always live and learn, and I've tried to be very honest with myself in the off-season when I've been analyzing the year and what I could have done better and try and adjust those things and make sure mentally when I stand there on the grid for the first race or for any race that I've put in every single percent of work I can to be as good as I can be.

I think that was the biggest lesson from last year that I feel like I could do things a little bit better on the personal side, and I need to do that, and that's what I've tried to do in the off-season and really during the year.

Yeah, being honest to yourself and being honest on yourself what you need to improve and work on that, I think that's the key for me.

Q. Do you feel like coming into this season after what you've learned, you've had a good past, but this is the best version of yourself coming into this season?

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, I think if you work hard and always look what you can do better, I believe you always get better. Like if you put in that work and sort of take that with your experience from the previous years, you should always become better. That's how I always see myself, that I'm 34 this year, and I feel like every year I get better and better. That's my mindset to things.

With the experience last year, you could say it was a bit of a character-building year. There was a lot of things going on, and that month of May probably aged me five or ten years.

Things like that, when things goes against you, it's the biggest opportunity to learn and become better, as well. I really think that that season we had last year, it made us come together more as a group and gave me a lot of strength. That's why I'm so excited about this year and see what we can do.

Q. Just to clarify, the simulator is at home and you hadn't had one before?

MARCUS ERICSSON: I had one that was gathering dust since COVID, and that one is not gathering dust anymore. It's not a high-tech simulator that you use like that's moving around or whatever. It's just a home simulator that's pretty advanced.

But like I said, I'm just trying to think of ways to become better. We can't drive INDYCARs all winter. I would love to drive INDYCARs and test a couple times a week, but that's not the case. We had one or two test days in six months of off-season. So then you need to look at things, how you can become better. You can go to the gym, you can do your mental trainer, but you can also drive simulators.

I think there's some benefit into that, or at least I'm going to try and see if it is. Again, just trying to explore and put the work in and see what makes me better.

Q. Marcus, on that simulator work, did you find anything that gave you a fresh perspective, or was it just the same ol', same ol' simulator stuff?

MARCUS ERICSSON: The work I did with Andretti?

Q. Right.

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, I mean, it's impressive to

see the way that simulators are improving every year when there comes out new models. It's just impressive to see how close they're starting to become to reality. That's why -- that's the way the sport is moving.

Again, with so limited testing, I think simulators is becoming more and more important. For me, when I was going through junior series that wasn't really the case. Simulators wasn't a thing back then. It's just impressive to see now every time I drive a simulator, a new simulator, just how close they're starting to become to reality.

Yeah, it's cool, and I think as a driver you need to be open to drive those and master those because I think it translates to real life more and more.

Q. When you worked with the trainer about the mental aspect of the sport, was there any surprise or something new, a nugget of information where a lightbulb went on for you?

MARCUS ERICSSON: No, I think on the mental side, I've been working with a mental coach throughout my career pretty much, so that's been a part of my routine. Sometimes I worked more or less together with mental coaches. I think this off-season I tried to be ramping it up a little bit more to just focus on getting better, getting mentally stronger.

I think after kind of a tougher year, again, at least for me, I analyze more. I think more what can I do better. That's one of the things I wanted to work even more on.

There's no specific things. It's just, like, general things to become stronger in your mind. That, I think, translates to when you're in a race car.

Q. Marcus, obviously you started in the Formula ranks and were part of that growing trend of drivers to make the move to the States and race in INDYCAR. When you see a team like Prema come on to the grid, do you think we could see that evolution continue where we see more teams from the European side get involved in INDYCAR?

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, I do. I do think there could be more teams looking at it. I think INDYCAR is moving in a very positive direction at the moment. There's a lot of cool things happening. The field right now is stacked with talented drivers and teams.

I think Prema coming over here is a sign of that, as well. It's one of the most successful teams in Europe in all motorsports. They are winners in everything they do. Being from Europe, I know how well-respected and how

good they are in Europe.

It's very exciting for us to have them come over, and it's going to be cool to see them race here and then follow on their season. I'm sure they're going to be mixing it up soon, early in the season already, and they have two good drivers, as well.

Definitely when I'm back in Europe and speaking to people in Europe, compared to say 10 years ago before I went over, I feel like there's a lot more interest around INDYCAR. There's a lot more people following INDYCAR over in Europe and seeing it as a very strong option for your career.

I definitely think that we're going to see more of that both on drivers and teams in the next few years.

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