

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

### Alex Palou

#### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon. Kicking off the afternoon session here, day one at the NTT INDYCAR Series content days. Graham Rahal, Nolan Siegel, Christian Lundgaard, Jacob Abel, Kyffin Simpson, Santino Ferucci, Devlin DeFrancesco, David Malukas, Alexander Rossi will all be here momentarily.

Leading us off, the three-time and reigning NTT INDYCAR Series champion in Alex Palou, back driving the No. 10 DHL Chip Ganassi Racing Honda, attempting to become the fourth driver to win at least three straight NTT INDYCAR Series championships coming up in 2025 to join Dario, Sebastien Bourdais, Ted Horn. Looking forward to getting back on track.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, honestly, it's been a long break, so cannot wait to get back on track and see what we have.

**Q. What else have you been doing the last few months?**

ALEX PALOU: I've been resting. I've been on vacation. I've been following my daughter around the house because she never stops moving. I've been trying to rest, which I've not been able to, and then -- I'm joking.

Honestly, spending so much family time, having good food in Spain that I normally cannot have here during the year, like specific types of food, and then seeing the family, Christmas, and then back here.

**Q. What do you think it's going to take this year to make it three in a row.**

ALEX PALOU: Same thing as every year. I think everybody starts from scratch. Everybody starts with really high energies and probably really motivated to try and improve what we've done in the past.

I'm in the same position, as well. I just want to go out on track and try and improve what we did last year. It's going to take a lot of effort. The competition has been really, really tough. It's not one team that you're fighting with,

you're fighting against multiple teams. We've seen Andretti this past year, how quick and how tough they were on track. Penske, as well. And yeah, it'll be fun.

I'm looking forward, we've been having a lot of work, as well, trying to be a bit better on short ovals on both driver side, so it's me personally but then the team, as well, trying to get a little bit more speed. But yeah, it's going to be fun.

The competition will be tough. We won the last championship with only two wins, so that shows how competitive it is. And the goal is to try and repeat that, improve it a bit, and hopefully get the 500.

**Q. Read any children's books lately?**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah. Not Josef's one, but yeah.

**Q. Obviously champion the last two years; won three of the last four; everybody is chasing you. It's hard to change an approach when it's worked, but as you said, this competition is tight. Do you change anything of your approach trying to go for three in a row or do you leave it as is and keep doing what you've been doing?**

ALEX PALOU: No, 100 percent you need to change it, otherwise you'll fall very quick here in INDYCAR. I would say every sport, if you don't change just because it's been successful, they'll catch up really, really quick.

I'm not saying we're going crazy. Like obviously I'm not going to go crazy and change all my stuff. But yeah, I'm trying to change some stuff, both physically, mentally and the way I drive, hopefully. Hopefully I can push myself in areas that I've been struggling the past season.

We're going to change a little bit, see if it works, and see if we can continue to be up front, but as you said, the competition, we know it's going to be tough.

Everybody, again, we start from zero. You guys and me included, we're not going to care about 2024 once we're in St. Pete. Maybe they'll care in 15, 20 years maybe when I retire, hopefully, but not now. I think now it's all about 2025.



**Q. On this stretch that you've been on these last couple years, you go from a really unique season where you won I think five races in 2023 if I remember right and then go and continue the consistency but only win twice; I don't think won at all in the back half of the year, and yet you still come away with the championship. Two very different seasons, but what would you say is kind of the through-line between those two years that allowed you to win so differently and yet still come away with the championship the last two years?**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, 2023 was magical. Our worst finish was eighth, and we got five wins, which five wins, it's incredible. It felt amazing.

Then 2024, it was I would say not the opposite, but we had a lot of up and downs. We had some races, like I crashed in Iowa, got into an accident at Nashville. We had a lot more up and downs, and we were not as consistent, and we only won two races. It was for sure, in terms of results, a bit lower, but still, was still okay, borderline of making it.

I would say the consistency helped in both years. That's what I would say that it's been not the same but pretty similar in both years. And it's been because also I have a great team behind that even when I struggle and we start, I don't know, P16, P17 in the race, they get me to the front, and those weekends count a lot, instead of having a P-bananas on the race you get a top 10 that counts at the end of the year.

**Q. Dave mentioned you would join a really small class of drivers in the series history that have won three straight championships if you were to win again this year. I know you also are still waiting for your first Indy 500 and you've come close a couple times now. If you only had the opportunity to win one of those, I'm curious where your mindset is, would you rather join that three-straight class of championship winners or win your first 500 in 2025?**

ALEX PALOU: I don't know. It's tough. I want to win the Indy 500 so bad. I know what it is, but I don't think anybody knows exactly how big it is until you win it. At least that's what I heard from the drivers, as well, and you can see it from outside.

But winning three INDYCAR championships in a row is pretty sweet, as well. Probably I would say the three championships in a row and then win the Indy 500 in 2026, which that's -- to your equation, that works. I would do that.

If it's only one, then that's it then I need to retire, I would

obviously do the Indy 500. But as I'm not going to retire now, I'll get the three championships and then the Indy 500 in the future.

**Q. On Sunday we all got a glimpse of FOX's promotional plans for INDYCAR with the new ad promo that featured Josef for 44 seconds and you for one. I know you got a chance to shoot some cool content with the FOX folks late last year. Have you seen the commercial with Josef? And if you have, knowing what you did with them, what are your thoughts on the anticipation of seeing what they come up with to introduce you to FOX's sports fans?**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, we shot that I think it was in December in LA. I was really impressed, and I said to INDYCAR and to FOX but also to Josef, I was like, man, what is this, like it's crazy. It was something that we've never experienced, and we experience a lot of cool stuff. But that was another level.

Like I got there, the set was huge, only for us. I got 20 kinds of smoothies and everything I wanted, it was there in one second.

The level of the production was huge. Seeing that first commercial from Josef was actually -- it's really fun. I think they nailed it. It's fast. It's funny. It shows Josef instead of showing the 500, which that's normally the target that we've been hitting, and I think the 500 is great, but it's already -- it's huge already. We don't even need to sell more tickets.

We need to make the series big in general. We need to allow people to know what our product is, and they nailed it.

I was impressed during the production, which I didn't go one day there for only one second. We will get one fully of me, hopefully, and then I cannot wait to see what during the season is. I think it will be impressive. I hope everybody liked it. For all the comments I saw, everybody was impressed as much as we were.

I think this is what the series needed, and it's great to have FOX.

**Q. Elaborating more on that, they've also been active in promotion and marketing and just getting the news out there, whether it be on NFL telecasts or college football telecasts or all the way across the board. How important is that to really attract people to discover INDYCAR?**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I mean, that's what I mean. I think



the fan base we have, it's amazing. They will follow us everywhere. We go to Mars, they will follow us. They love INDYCAR. They love the sport so much.

We know we have a great product, so it's about showing people that doesn't know about racing, doesn't know what INDYCAR is, doesn't care about the INDYCAR. It's about showing them, hey, there's this sport, some crazy people that go around the U.S. doing laps in circles, and it's pretty fun.

I think the target that they are hitting is amazing, and hopefully we get these new people that is centered on NFL or other sports that are like, oh, during the NFL off-season I'll watch INDYCAR now.

**Q. As far as your wave of success, I know you said you're not looking back, you're looking forward. How difficult does it get to be to continue something when you're on a wave of success?**

ALEX PALOU: It's tough. I mean, it's tough because you need to -- you cannot slow down at any point. But at the same time, I think it's easier in a way. It's easier because I know what it feels like and I just want to do it again, so I work a little bit harder than I did last year. I'm extra motivated, and I'm super hungry.

I would say you have both sides of the good and bad. But yeah, I wouldn't be in another position for sure.

**Q. By the way, Kyle Kirkwood said you were the star of Josef's commercial.**

ALEX PALOU: Thank you. I appreciate that. I agree. Actually Josef didn't say anything, right? It was only me that I said something during the commercial, so yeah. I agree.

**Q. This crash at Iowa that you referenced, that ended a long, long streak of races without you having some kind of impact. If I'm to sum up how you've won these two championships, it's that you and your team, you don't beat yourselves. Is that kind of your mantra, kind of the way you approach things? We know how the race is going to go but we're not going to beat ourselves?**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, it was not my mantra, but every race meeting we have with Chip, that's what he tells us. He tells us to win, and then he repeats that we don't need to beat ourselves many, many times.

I think you can see that in the team. Obviously we all make mistakes, and it is what it is. It's a tough sport. But

we know a 17th is better than a 23rd. If that day it's only good for 17th, it's better than what I did in Iowa, where I stole -- it was into the back and just trying to make moves fast, I ended up crashing, which ended up being worse than just finishing 12th.

I think it's a great mantra that the team has, and hopefully we can continue to use it properly.

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