

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Sunday, March 2, 2025

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

**Dennis Hauger**

**Lochie Hughes**

**Kyle Collet**

Press Conference



So, yeah, it felt nice and it felt smooth, and Andretti gave me a good car to be up there comfortably. So happy with that.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations on the start. Lochie, stopping start to you for the first podium in your first race in INDY NXT. Your thoughts on today's race?

LOCHIE HUGHES: Yeah, it was good. It's the longest race I've ever done in my life coming from the USF Series. I don't think I've ever -- well, especially around here -- done more than 25 laps. Yeah, to just be racing for that long was just a big learning curve, feeling what the tire does for that long.

These big cars are very different, the way you drive them. Honestly learning a lot of things. Felt pretty good in the beginning for the first, you know -- for most of the race really up until ten laps to go. I couldn't really do anything, so just tried to bring it home.

THE MODERATOR: To that point, on those restarts, were you thinking, Okay, if I do this here or that there or whatever, just running through all the scenarios?

LOCHIE HUGHES: Yeah. I think around here it's almost impossible in these cars unless Dennis makes a mistake at the start to overtake because as soon as you're -- well, on the restart the tires have no grip. Then offline there's no grip around here. So, yeah, it would be a pretty ballsy move if I was going to pull it off.

THE MODERATOR: Kyle, year two for you in INDY NXT. Another podium finish as well. Just your thoughts on the start of 2025 for you?

KYLE COLLET: Yeah, for sure it's good to start on the podium. We aim to be in the top three all year and want to fight for the championship. So in a way one of our goals we achieved, but for sure we were a step behind the whole weekend, especially behind Andretti as a team. So we just need to keep working hard to match them next race.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions. You may just have to yell it.

THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up today's INDY NXT by Firestone Grand Prix of St. Pete, the first race of the 2025 INDY NXT by Firestone Championship.

Joined by today's podium finishers, Kyle Collet, driver of the No. 76 HMD Motorsports machine with his seventh career podium in INDY NXT. Coming home second, Lochie Hughes, driver of the No. 27 McGinley Clinic, USF Pro Championship machine for Andretti Global, who of course, starts the 2025 with a runner-up finish, a podium. Strong start for 2025 for Lochie.

Dennis Hauger from Norway, driver of the No. 28 Rental Group machine for Andretti Global. He led all 44 laps. A great start for the former F3 champ and F2 race winner. Dennis, we'll start with you. Congratulations. You came here with a purpose, to win some races, move on to the NTT INDYCAR Series. Nice start for you, right?

DENNIS HAUGER: Yeah, definitely. Didn't expect to be straight up there like that, but we definitely had a good weekend as a team as well. I think the pace was strong for the most of us.

Yeah, just had a clean run. Tried to keep it clean up front and not do anything crazy. We had a few safety cars and a few restarts, but managed it well and super happy to, yeah, end the weekend on top.

THE MODERATOR: I was going to say, those restarts can sometimes be a little anxious, but you were able to keep everyone behind you. How were you able to do that?

DENNIS HAUGER: Yeah, there's a lot of new things this weekend for me... restarts itself, cold tires, not really sure how the Firestone tires are reacting, but it went really well. Took about half a lap, a lap, and we were good to go again.



**Q. (Off microphone).**

DENNIS HAUGER: I mean, I generally love street courses, just being close to the limit with the walls and really bumpiness. You got so many different factors on a street course, and you really just have to feel your way through it at some point. Yeah, I just enjoy it. I don't know why, but somehow I managed to be up there on every street course I've been to.

Definitely a good way to start the season, and overall I hope we can keep it up from there.

**Q. (Off microphone).**

KYLE COLLET: Yeah, very hard. Yeah, I had to burn a bit of push-to-pass, to be honest. The whole race we had together with my engineer to do a good strategy and when push-to-pass to be able to hold him off and be in a fight if one of these guys made a mistake.

So, yeah, I think we did a really good job there, but as you said, as a team we struggled a little bit this weekend. For sure we need to come back home and to workshop and manage to improve. Barber I think will be a little bit different, but for sure we were a step behind this weekend.

**Q. (Off microphone).**

DENNIS HAUGER: Yeah, that's super cool. Just seeing the interest back home in Norway and the support I get all around is such a big thing for me. It's so cool to see. Hopefully we can get a few more this season.

**Q. (Off microphone).**

LOCHIE HUGHES: I think the fact maybe just go balls to the wall. I like this place. I like street circuits. Maybe not as much as Dennis with the list that you listed off before, so lacking a little experience there. But, yeah, so far over here in the U.S. I've loved these street courses.

It's fun. You can't test here, and it's just nice here. You get a nice dinner, and it's just a nice atmosphere, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Dennis, by the way, the first driver in INDY NXT to win in his debut since Linus Lundqvist won at Barber Motorsports Park back in 2021.

**Q. (Off microphone).**

DENNIS HAUGER: I guess that's hard. No, I mean, overall we keep working in the shop as a team and simulator and data, just go through everything. Everyone

has tested at Barber once earlier at the end of last year. So everyone goes in with a bit of experience, probably more than here, and knows what to expect.

We just need to keep working, as we have so far. Seems to be working well. Yeah, just do the job there as well.

**Q. (Off microphone).**

THE MODERATOR: The start of the race you're talking about? The first lap. There was an accident behind you.

LOCHIE HUGHES: I didn't see anything. I was trying to get around turn one, but yeah.

DENNIS HAUGER: I think same for all of us.

**Q. Just wanted to start off with Dennis. Obviously coming over from Formula 2, what's the key differences you felt in the car... some maybe similar, some maybe different? What have you felt in the car so far?**

DENNIS HAUGER: Compared to?

**Q. Formula 2.**

DENNIS HAUGER: I think it's all different. You know, the environment, the atmosphere, and the driving style, the car, the tracks. Everything is different.

I mean, I go in with some experience overall, but it's all complete new for me. It was just about getting up to speed. The car is a lot lighter, and that changes your driving style a lot. I think that's the main thing.

Also, the Firestone tires are a bit different. You can push a lot harder through a race and do a few more laps in qualifying, which is something different for me as well.

So it's all been about gaining experience and taking it step by step. Definitely had a good run, but I think we are just building on from here.

**Q. Just similarly for Lochie, how have you found the car in comparison to USF Pro 2000?**

LOCHIE HUGHES: It's just completely different. It's just so much faster, heavier, different tire. You know, racing for a team like Andretti, so there's a little bit of added pressure there.

But, yeah, I mean, it's so different. Just trying to get used to it. You don't get as much testing in these cars as well, so taking it one step at a time.



Pretty reasonably happy with this weekend. I think it's been a while since the scholarship car has had a podium on debut, so yeah.

**Q. My question is for Dennis. I know your first experience in INDY NXT. Do you realize how difficult is this track and how difficult it is to be in the lead a lot of laps, and what did you do at home, and what is your experience here?**

THE MODERATOR: Can you repeat the question, please?

**Q. Yes. What is your experience, or what do you take home after this win in Florida?**

DENNIS HAUGER: What I think about this weekend?

THE MODERATOR: Your opening weekend here.

DENNIS HAUGER: Yeah, it was a good weekend definitely. We won. You know, it's a really cool track, a bit different compared to I think any other track that I raced on. I think the closest one I would say is Monaco in terms of bumpiness and tightness around the track, but it's still different with this car. You really have to push with the limits, be a bit sideways.

I find it really, really funny and enjoyable out there. Yeah, having a good time. It's been going good so far.

**Q. In terms of feedback, what do you think is different on the American racing compared to Euro?**

DENNIS HAUGER: I was thinking about that earlier as well, and I got the question before. I think the easiest word to describe it is that it's just pure racing. I think that's a really cool thing.

You go out there, and you are really pushing the limits. With these tires you can. Overall just the racing itself, it's a bit different in terms of some rules here and there. But overall it's just, you know, you're fighting to win, and that's a cool thing out there I think we don't really have anywhere else.

THE MODERATOR: We'll go down the line, Kyle, maybe beginning with you. It will be a few weeks before we have another race. However, there are some tests coming up. What do you hope to accomplish in the two tests?

KYLE COLLET: I think to be able to do a step to match them. Of course, I think it will be different the next few rounds in Barber and Indy Road Course. They are road courses, so it's a little bit different from here, but we need

to keep our heads down and working all the time.

I think last year also in the ovals we struggled a little bit, so we definitely have some work to do, but apart from that, it was nice to start off the season doing a solid weekend in the top three.

Yeah, just wanted to thank everyone, all my sponsors and HMD for all their work. We'll see you in a couple of months.

THE MODERATOR: Lochie, for you, just your thoughts on getting some all-important track time for some tests coming up?

LOCHIE HUGHES: Yeah, I mean, just gaining more experience in this car, getting a little bit more comfortable. You know, that was the longest run I've done in this car. I could feel a little bit of pain and stuff here and there. Just fix a couple of things with the seat and everything. Yeah, just hopefully try to improve on this guy, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Be a little sore tomorrow maybe?

LOCHIE HUGHES: I think so. I think so. Maybe a little headache as well.

THE MODERATOR: Understood. Dennis, you talked about it earlier. Track time is important for you right now in the series, so a couple of good opportunities coming up for you, right?

DENNIS HAUGER: Yeah, definitely. I think we will probably have an oval test as well, which is going to be my first outing there. That's going to be an experience for me.

Yeah, try to gain some experience there and just keep on building from where we are now.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks. Congratulations on a great start to 2025.

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