

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Alex Palou

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Joined by Alex Palou, P1 in the last session. Alex has won two races so far this season, leads the overall championship by 34 points.

How would you describe your Open Test here at Indianapolis?

ALEX PALOU: It was good, fun. Lots of laps, lots of learning. Today, this morning, was really fun. A bit frustrating with traffic and stuff. It's like having a crazy Fast Friday without nobody policing and everybody wanting to get clear laps.

Yeah, it was fun. Let's learn. The cars are fast. So happy.

THE MODERATOR: Did you get everything done on the checklist?

ALEX PALOU: No. But I think nobody is. Like yeah, the engineers come up with these extra sheets with tons of things to try.

No, we got good stuff, but not all we wanted.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. I know the broadcast was talking about how great your car looks in traffic. Does it feel as good as it looks on the time sheets?

ALEX PALOU: I don't know how it looks compared to others. I'll need to review all the footage, as well.

I felt good. I didn't feel, like, amazing. I think it was quite tough to pass. It depends always. During testing, it always depends on your fuel, your tires. Sometimes you go out on tires that are 10 laps old, you cannot move. Suddenly you go out on new tires and you're like King Kong out there.

I think it's tough to take a lot of conclusions. But yeah, I felt really good on traffic.

Q. As you were running in packs, what cars stood out

to you as looking especially strong?

ALEX PALOU: I only ran a couple of laps with Pato, with Dixon quite a lot. He looked really strong. A couple of Penskes. They looked strong. They were going in and out of the pit, so you never know.

I don't think I run with many other cars when I was running up front on good tires, like race trim.

Q. What do you feel like you understand about how the hybrid can or will work on race day and qualifying that you didn't know coming into this week?

ALEX PALOU: I think qualifying, it's going to be very interesting. I think we've seen a lot of people doing very different stuff. We still don't know what's best. I think we need to analyze and see what the drivers from our team have done differently one to the other and see what's fastest.

You can do many different stuff. There's crazy ways to do in qualifying. I think it's going to depend a lot on the conditions, like if it's very windy or not.

Then for the race, it's actually a big boost. It just gives you enough that you're in the lead, maybe you can keep it on the lead for one lap, then obviously you need to recharge. Probably you get passed then.

It's good enough that you can pass. You can pass when you're fourth to third or fifth to fourth, when the tires are good. Then when you have no tires, it's pretty tough.

Q. When you're midway in a pretty large pack, does the power of the hybrid counterbalance the added weight? Do you feel you have to wait for someone to make a mistake or could the boost be enough to make the pass?

ALEX PALOU: It's tough. I would say that the weight makes it tougher to drive, which then I think it's not easier to pass with the weight that we have. But it's tougher to drive, it's a lot easier to see people doing mistakes.

I think in the past two or three years, it was super easy that

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if you were comfortable with your car, you just stay there, don't go 100%, wait for the car in front to do a mistake, then you go.

Now, even if you are comfortable and you have a really good car, it's very easy to do a mistake, which then creates a gap for the guy behind to get a chance.

I don't think the weight helps, but I think the weight helps because it's so difficult, that creates opportunities.

We will have to see again when everybody is on the same tires. I think we will see more mistakes than now. Now when you don't have tires, you just get passed and you cannot really do anything. It's a test, so you really don't want to defend crazy either.

Yeah, I think it will be interesting. It will be fun.

Q. The reason for the morning session was to see what the boost would do with the hybrid. Were you comfortable with the speeds? Do you think it should have been faster, slower? How is the balance?

ALEX PALOU: I expected to have slower speeds honestly. We saw many 232s, right? I think that's pretty good. Yeah, I mean, it's a test, so I think if it was qualifying day, we would have seen even better speeds.

I don't think it changes. Like doing 233 or 231, it doesn't change at all. It's better for the record and all that stuff, talking about speeds. Driver feel-wise, it doesn't really change.

I think it's just tougher now to make a good, clean four laps, while in the past we've seen it's been pretty easy to just be consistent. Now, at least today, there was many more people struggling to make a good, consistent four-lap run.

Q. Compared to this test a year ago, are the changes you're making to the car, are you able to predict what they're going to do? Are they doing the same thing despite the hybrid and the difference in weight?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah.

Q. Or are you learning changes done last year won't work this year?

ALEX PALOU: No. Normally let's say when you go, I don't know, stiffer or softer, it's doing the same, it's behaving the same way. I would say when we started yesterday and also this morning with our last year car, let's say it wasn't behaving as it was last year, so we had to make couple of adjustments. But the changes we were making, they were

behaving the same, in a consistent way.

Q. The setup that you ran this morning with the additional boost, do you think that setup is going to be pretty close to what you run next month for qualifying or do you have to redo the entire thing and throw the whole kitchen sink at it?

ALEX PALOU: No, we were pretty happy. You're not always 100% happy, especially if you're not P1. But I don't think we are very far off to what we're going to run, yeah.

I think we need a couple of adjustments to make it more comfortable to drive, so we're allowed to take more downforce out so we can go a bit faster. But we don't need to completely change our car.

I think we're more comfortable than we were last year around this time.

Q. With everything that you learned in yesterday's running, how much of your setup changed from yesterday's running to this afternoon's running?

ALEX PALOU: Actually yesterday I was just focused on qualifying. If you look, I did not many laps. I was always running by my own just try to get more info for today, which once we added 10 miles an hour, everything changed (smiling).

Still was good info. I just follow what Scott and Kiffin were doing yesterday, that they were on race trim. It worked really well. I still had to make couple of adjustments. Still you're never 100% comfortable in traffic because the car pushes, car is a bit loose, it's tough to follow. You always want to follow closer and closer.

I think we are in a good spot.

Q. How much fun was it getting out there and turning laps with weather like this?

ALEX PALOU: It's great. I mean, us drivers, you always want to go fast, like really, really fast. I think when we're testing on race trim, we're going fast, but not as much with high boost. High boost is pretty awesome.

We normally get to do three to four full days of race trim before we go to the high boost, so the jump is not as much as what we had. Yesterday we just had one day and straight to the high boost this morning.

It was pretty fun.

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