

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Saturday, May 3, 2025

Alex Palou

Scott McLaughlin

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon. Wrapping up things, qualifying, ahead of tomorrow's Indy Grand Prix. Joined by the front row for tomorrow's race.

Scott McLaughlin will start second, driver of the No. 3 Good Ranchers Chevrolet. Second front row start at Barber.

On pole, Alex Palou, driver of the No. 10 HRC Chip Ganassi Honda. This week we're calling it the Honda Honda.

Congratulations, Alex. First NTT P1 award of the season, seventh of your career. Alex was the 2021 Barber winner. Never finished outside of the top five here.

Your thoughts on another P1 award here at Barber?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, it was great. It was really close. We didn't know if it was going to be wet or dry, so we were all I think panicking a little bit. You didn't want to get caught at the worst moment.

Yeah, car has been really good all weekend honestly. Especially at the Fast Six, I got the balance I wanted, the balance we're looking for.

Yeah, really happy with the lap, as well. Got a pole that we don't really get many, many poles. Feels good to start up front.

THE MODERATOR: Scott, a lot of attention as you sat and waited for obviously the Firestone Fast Six session to play out before you went out. What was the reasoning behind that?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Keeping laps off our red tires. Didn't want a false read off blacks. I said to the guys, I'd rather go out and do it one time.

We were prepping a lap anyway. I could feel the track on

that lap. Then it was just a matter of putting it down.

First lap wasn't great. Sounds like Alex had the same thing. Second lap was where it was.

We definitely left a little bit up on the table. A lap around there is a lot of fun. Alex did a great job. From our team, done a really good job just coming back because I feel like we had a bad test here, we sort of went the wrong way a little bit. Fixed it yesterday, massaged it today and got it going.

THE MODERATOR: Do you feel good about the race car for tomorrow?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I do now.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Alex and Scott, with this weather here very unpredictable, are your teams working on two strategies, wet and dry race? Will you both do significant changes to your car for tomorrow's race?**

ALEX PALOU: We were. We were planning on two different strategies and setups for qualifying. We're not thinking that it's going to rain tomorrow, but I could be wrong.

THE MODERATOR: Weather looks good tomorrow, but we'll see.

ALEX PALOU: Looks good. We will see. Yeah, we'll go back and see.

But the setup for the wet is ready anyway. Yeah, anyway I think it's going to be tough for the race, even if it's dry. Got to see how the car behaves on long runs. I think with the rain this morning, we couldn't really feel how the car was behaving on, like, more than, I don't know, 10 or 15 lap tires. It will be interesting.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, no, very similar answer to Alex. I think you got to be prepared for anything. As a driver, if it's going to rain or be dry, you just got to try to do the best you can in those conditions.

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I try to keep a pretty neutral thought process before an unpredictable session. Like practice two or even qualifying. Turned out qualifying was pretty dry.

Yeah, you just got to be as prepared as you can be, but fluid at the same time.

**Q. Why are you two so good here?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: He's good everywhere (smiling).

ALEX PALOU: I haven't won on an oval like you.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: True. We like the track.

ALEX PALOU: I love the track. It's so much fun. Every lap you do is so much fun. We were speaking on the van coming here it's amazing how the car feels and how the track feels. Ton of grip. Lots of ups and downs. High braking zones, high speeds. Has a little bit of everything. Yeah, I like it.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, very similar. Reminds me of a track back home, Phillip Island. Just a high-speed motorcycle track as well. I just enjoy these fast, flowing, smooth tracks.

**Q. Scott, your girl is hanging from the bridge again this year.**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I'm a girl dad now. My girl hanging from the bridge? I was like, Shit.

No, we're good. Yes, she is. She's tied up, ready to go. You know what I mean? I got a daughter now.

**Q. Alex, you mentioned that you don't necessarily get a lot of poles. But four of the previous six you've won from pole. How important do you feel like track position is here at Barber considering the last time you won here you had to work for it?**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I mean, it's true. We don't get many, many poles. We start up front quite a lot, but we don't get many poles like this guy. How many did you get?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I'll swap wins and championships (smiling).

ALEX PALOU: No, it's fine (laughter).

Yeah, it's important. I think every track is important to have track position. It's getting tough nowadays to keep your position, especially with the difference on tires, the different

strategies that you can have on the race.

It helps to start up front, for sure. I'll take it every day. But it doesn't mean we're going to finish there.

**Q. Scott, they showed the phone booth. Are you going to have to lock him in the phone booth to win tomorrow?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: No. I tried a lot of things before Nashville last year.

Look, I'm looking forward to the race. We always have some really good battles every race that we've had. Very hard, fair, aggressive racing. So that's fun. I'm excited for it.

**Q. How much of a strategy race is this if we continue the trend? If it were to go caution free, how much of a strategy race is this?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I guess we'll see. I mean, I think personally it's going to be very similar to what we've seen in the past. But yeah, we'll see how it plays tomorrow. You can never really sort of predict INDYCAR. You just got to be ready for all sorts of situations at the same time.

**Q. Alex, the commercial, the FOX commercial, how did finding out you got the commercial compare to winning the pole today? What was it like to film it? How has it affected your season?**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, it was amazing to film it. It was in December in L.A. It was my first time filming something that big. It was a day of full on. They had a huge, huge set ready for us, only for myself. I had a blast. It was a great experience.

It hasn't affected my season or anything else. I think we can see that there's more fans and new fans coming to racetracks. But in general I wouldn't say just on myself. But it's been awesome to see our faces up there on TV.

**Q. This is the first time INDYCAR has come to Barber with the hybrid unit. Has it shown difficulty this weekend? If so, what areas?**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I mean, it changes. It changes the car balance quite a lot. Obviously it makes it a little bit lazier on the high-speed corners. Low-speed corners as well. I think it's a little bit easier to make mistakes and to not just (indiscernible) the corners.

Yeah, I think it's adding a little bit more of difficulty, but at the same time it's a lot of fun. Like, you need to regen and



deploy numerous times per lap. Hopefully that plays a role on overtaking during the race.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I agree with Alex. I think the fun thing now, we've been used to the last year or so, has been deploying and doing different strategies, how you use the battery, then regen that battery, how that affects your car balance, trying to figure out what works for you. Not every driver is the same. But you know there's a quick way of doing it. I've really enjoyed studying that and understanding that.

Barber, yeah, it's been technical. It's technical already. Adding that, it's been tough.

**Q. Scott, I know you're drawing the comparisons to Phillip Island. These are really high-commitment corners, aren't they, sequences of corners? Can you explain to people that don't know Phillip Island?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I think it's high commitment, but also high load, long duration corners, big Gs. At the same time these corners are leading to slow corners. You're trying to keep a constant flow around the track. It's all about momentum. A track like this, as soon as you miss one corner, it affects the next. That's what makes it really fun.

Phillip Island for me is very much the same that it was in a Super Car. Yeah, like it's obviously a different animal, different beast to drive the INDYCAR compared to the Super Car, nuances how the track attacks itself between the two cars is very similar.

**Q. With this weather, potentially maybe more coming, are we going to see drastic change in the track surface, the grass more slippery now? Is that going to affect track grip or tire strategy?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I don't know what Alex thinks, but I sort of thought the track got better. It's a pretty nice surface. Once we got out there and it was fully dry, we could attack it, lay our rubber down. It didn't take long for the track to hit its stride.

We'll have a lot of rain tonight. There's a weather advisory coming. Ultimately I think tomorrow with the sun, we'll have warm-up in the morning, then the Indy Lights race as well. There will be a lot of rubber on the track before we head out.

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