

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, May 4, 2025

Alex Palou

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are joined Alex Palou, driving the Honda Honda. Third win in four races here in 2025. 14th career win, second at Barber. Over a thousand laps led now in your six seasons in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES. You go on and on and on with the accolades.

To get another win here in 2025, your thoughts?

ALEX PALOU: Amazing. Amazing weekend. It was a perfect day today for me, for the 10 car, and for the Honda Honda 10 car.

Yeah, I mean, everything worked really well for us since yesterday. Getting the pole was a huge milestone for us, to start up front, try to make profit of the good performance that we had this weekend.

Then we were a bit worried about the strategy, right? We've always seen here that it could go either way, two stop or three stop, depending on yellows or normal tire mileage and fuel mileage.

We tried to open the gap early on. When I saw that we had a really good car balance, yeah, I was just getting happier and happier towards the end of the race.

THE MODERATOR: Your dominance is impressive. A 60-point lead now heading into IMS. How proud are you of that?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, it's amazing. It means nothing and means a ton at the same time. Means nothing for the championship yet. For sure I prefer to be in the position we are now than on anybody else's position.

Yeah, best start of my career, like not in INDYCAR, I would say everything I've done in my life, never been as good as here. Not even go-karts.

Yeah, couldn't be happier. Hopefully we can keep it going.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Did you think you'd be at the thousand laps led point at this point in your career?

ALEX PALOU: No, absolutely not. My goal was to be an INDYCAR driver, then was just to be an INDYCAR race winner or a person that could fight for wins and sometimes for championships.

Yeah, I don't think that I'm in a normal position. I'm aware that I'm very lucky to be in the position I am today, to be surrounded by a great team, being able to fight for wins every single weekend.

Yeah, I don't know how long is that going to continue, but hopefully it's going to be for a long time.

Q. How much does this win help with your momentum going into the month of May, Indianapolis?

ALEX PALOU: Huge. It's May already. It's huge. It's huge not only for myself like personally-wise to feel like wanting to go on track, but for all the team getting a small reward before the month of May.

We know it's going to be a lot of days. We know there are going to be a lot of days that are not as good on track during the month of May. To get this win early on in the month of May, it's going to push everybody.

Q. Barry Wanser said that you really adapted to the hybrid pretty quickly. When you're on the top of your game, that's worth about 2/10ths of a second per lap. Over 90 laps, that's about 18 seconds faster than everyone. You won by 16 seconds. What made you so good at adapting to the hybrid so quickly?

ALEX PALOU: I don't know. Yeah, honestly I love studying how to extract the max performance from the hybrid. It's just another tool that we have as drivers to re-gen in different areas or deploy in different areas or just to change the balance. Maybe not gain on overlap time, but to change the balance a little bit for the car.

I would say we started really well last year with the hybrid getting a pole at Mid-Ohio. Actually last year we didn't get any win with the hybrid. We struggle a little bit. I

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personally struggle a little bit during last year when the hybrid came.

Now it's like we're getting back to form and I'm feeling really happy with hybrid and the overall car balance.

Q. Coming into the Indianapolis 500, the first oval of the season, how do you expect the hybrid to perform?

ALEX PALOU: Well, it was interesting when we did the open test. I think some people thought that it was making it tougher to overtake, and some other people thought that it was allowing more passes than we used to have, especially when you're fourth or fifth in the pack.

I think we need to wait to see what the conditions are going to be on race day. I expect it's going to allow us to pass when you are more in the pack.

It's tougher to drive just because you have more weight and it's not helping the car balance or tire deg. At the same time it's allowing or creating more mistakes from drivers, not big mistakes, but just small mistakes where you miss a little bit on the apex, suddenly somebody behind uses the hybrid and overtakes you or he can try to put you in different areas on the track.

Yeah, I think it's going to be interesting. Hopefully it's going to be a great show for everybody.

Q. You started on used reds, black and reds. Was it original plan you followed or you saw other guys chose some kind of tires and decided to go different or the same?

ALEX PALOU: We thought for this weekend what worked best for our car was the red tires, the soft tires. We wanted to start on used reds, try and get as many laps as possible without losing too much from tire deg.

Then we went to primaries because we saw that Colton was quite good. He maintained a quite good pace. McLaughlin at that time went to primaries as well. We wanted to be on the same page, as well, just in case there was a yellow and then suddenly at the end we had to restart on a different tire. We wanted to be on the same page as them.

Yeah, our plan was always to run two sets of reds, one new and one primary.

Q. Led 81 of 90 laps. How difficult was it for you to get concentrated with such a dominant drive? When you made your service stops, did you have any trouble in traffic?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, it was physical more than anything. Like, we always know that Barber is probably one of the more physical places that we have. Probably, yeah, I would say it's the toughest on physical for the drivers. Especially today that we had no cautions, we had to run as fast as possible. We didn't really have a huge tire deg, so you had to push.

Physically it was tough. But then also concentration always, it's difficult, right? It's a long race. It's tough. Yeah, you're pushing as hard as possible, but the car doesn't like it towards the end of the tire life.

Yeah, it's good. I mean, that's our job, so that's what we do. But then in traffic, yeah, we had quite a lot of traffic throughout the race. Had to do quite a lot of passes, more than any other race I would say this year.

It's tough. It's a tough place to pass. At the same time it's a place where if the car in front of you tries to block you or defend a little bit in, like, turn five, let's say, you can probably push him into turn six and get the position there. It's a track that generates quite a lot of passing opportunities.

Q. You beat up on everybody like that. That was ridiculous.

ALEX PALOU: (Smiling).

Q. We haven't seen a driver do that in a while. In a spec era with cars that are nearly identical, where does this victory rate? Where does that lap by lap performance sit with you?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I actually said to Will when we did the cool-down lap with the Honda Civic, I actually said it's probably my best race or my best weekend in INDYCAR, not only in INDYCAR. When I say INDYCAR, it would be like my career.

Getting the pole when it was everything so tight, getting it at the last moment, and then today the fact that we had to run used tires that are used from qualifying, they are not in good condition. They are better than primaries, but I think everybody that was on the Fast Six was in a small disadvantage than everybody else.

To still be able to keep a good performance, then also to do it on the blacks, on the primaries, was great. Yeah, honestly I felt it was probably one of my best races.

Q. Were you surprised that after the first stop you started the race on the faster alternates, Herta was on



the slower primaries, you swapped, in theory he should have chased you down, you put four seconds on him? Did that surprise you at all, the fact that tire-wise the opposite should have happened?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, yeah, I saw what we did to Colton and to other drivers on different tires on the first stint, so I expected to suffer a lot on the second stint.

Already on lap two when my tires were into temperature, I felt like the balance was actually really good, and I was able to do 70.0, 70.1. It was great. The car was not as good as it was on reds. Allowed me to push. I was able to keep a really consistent lap time.

Yeah, I was a bit surprised that it went that well on primaries.

Q. Tell me about what's coming in Indy? Please don't win the rest of the races. It's not a good story. Give me your feeling confidence-wise what you can do for the rest of the month?

ALEX PALOU: It's a great story if we win a lot of races. It's a great story.

Q. That's bullshit and you know it.

ALEX PALOU: No, it's not bullshit (laughter).

Q. I don't like you. Stop winning races. You're screwing up the season.

ALEX PALOU: You guys don't understand media. You can say, Alex Palou won the third race. Everybody likes it.

Q. I don't see a lot of smiles in here, pal. Kidding aside...

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, honestly Indy road course we've been really, really strong there in the past. Hopefully we can maintain our performance there. It's always tough there. I would say it's the toughest place because for some reason everybody has a good car there. To get to the Fast 12, you need to work so hard. The margins are almost nothing, like half a 1th, 1/10th. The same to get the pole or stay up front. It's a tough one.

Hopefully we can continue with the form that we had so far this year.

Then the 500, it's a big one. Yeah, everybody knows here I've never won on an oval. I plan on changing that this year so you can write a great story (smiling).

I'm excited. It's May. I think everybody's excited. I feel like every year that I've been in INDYCAR I get more excited. I would say at the beginning I was getting excited, but I was just not over the moon. Now I'm getting like, Man, can we go to the racetrack right now.

Q. Last pit stop you went for the undercut. Why was that?

ALEX PALOU: I just follow whatever Barry and my team tell me. I don't really know. I guess it's just to be safe if there's any yellows or if there's any issues. We were I believe good on the guy behind with Lundgaard and McLaughlin. I assumed that it was easy to make it on fuel, so yeah that's why we did it. Just I think to prevent anything happening and throwing out a win.

Q. In 2021 you claimed your first-ever victory here. Since then you have 14 career wins, three championships, a thousand laps led. If you were going to go back and tell yourself in 2021 all you would have accomplished over a short time, would you have believed it back then?

ALEX PALOU: No, absolutely not. Yeah, I think I'm really lucky, as I said, to be in this position, to have a great team around that allows me to fight for wins every single weekend and for championships.

Yeah, absolutely not. I would have said you were crazy.

Q. You told the TV folks it was getting a little lonely out there leading the race without any fight. What does a race like that when you have no challenges?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I didn't say it on a bad way. It's actually fun for a driver when you can just focus on your laps, on your car. You don't need to really worry about gaps. You can just focus and blend into one, right?

You know you have 22 laps in front of you. You need to pass some traffic, which was actually quite easy to do today. There's races where you just suddenly get stuck. Today I was able to drive by.

It's actually fun. You get into that zone of, like, just getting lap times, and you focus on the lap time, the next corner, just trying to get as much fuel mileage but at the same time taking care of the tires and opening the gap a little bit more.

For a driver, it's actually super fun. I was more, like, saying it for the fans, not for me. Like for me, if every race is like this, I would love it.

Q. The two goals at Chip Ganassi Racing every season are to win the Indianapolis 500 and win the championship. When you look on these final 13 races of the year, to motivate yourself are you wanting to set records on the number of wins you get this season? What are you focusing on to challenge and motivate yourself?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, so I never start a season or go to a race thinking about the championship, like never. My goal and what I enjoy doing is working for that race weekend. For me, the next race weekend is the most important one. That's all I think about.

It's what I enjoy. I enjoy working with the team to try to get a little bit more and to try and be a little bit better than what we were the past couple of years, try and do the best we can that day. Then we turn the page and go to the next one.

I never actually think about the championship. Like, when I tell you guys that I don't think until the last three or four races, when everything starts to be compressed and you know if you finish in the top five the next couple of races, you can win, or you lose it. That's when it gets interesting.

Now, yeah, I look at the standings and I'll be happy about it, I'll smile, but it's not going to change my motivation.

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