

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Thursday, May 8, 2025

Alex Palou

Christian Lundgaard

Kyle Kirkwood

Pato O'Ward

Felix Rosenqvist

Scott McLaughlin

Press Conference



2025, three wins in his four races, two-time winner on the IMS road course as well.

Let's start with you, Alex, the points leader, a torrid start. How would you describe 2025 thus far for you?

ALEX PALOU: It's been amazing. Best start I've had in my racing career so far. Even better than go-karting days.

THE MODERATOR: Really? Better than the go-karting days?

ALEX PALOU: I mean, it's tough to top it. Super happy with the speed we had in the cars, the little bit of flag here and there that we had in different weekends and how we've been able to execute on track with pit stops, different strategies as well. Yeah, couldn't be happier.

Q. Christian, for you, certainly no stranger to IMS road course. You certainly love racing on this course. How do you keep the momentum going with how many podiums you've had so far?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Yeah, it's not going to be as easy as we want it to be. It's been a good start. We didn't really expect to be in this position, but we hoped to be in this position.

Going into Barber, which is also one of my stronger tracks, we knew that we had a good chance. Again, coming in here to the road course, we know we have a good chance from my past results. I think the optimism is very high.

THE MODERATOR: Kyle, for you, obviously Andretti Global has got a couple wins here on the road course. You've got a win at Long Beach. How do you add to that here for the team in 2025?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: That's a great question. I would say we've had an okay start. Of course the Long Beach is a huge highlight for us, and that kind of catapulted us pretty far forward in the championship.

If I'm being honest, I'd say Thermal, Barber, and here in recent years have not been our best track. It's nice to get those ones out of the way because I think, as you look

THE MODERATOR: Fun to kick off another month of May here at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, doing so with the Sonsio Grand Prix coming up Saturday. The 11th time the road course has helped ring in the month of May here at the IMS road course.

Joining us today, the top five in the NTT INDYCAR points standings. Felix Rosenqvist and Scott McLaughlin, both tied for fifth. Felix drives the No. 60 SiriusXM Honda for Meyer Shank Racing with Curb-Agajanian. Felix has three top 10s and two top 5s to start the season. First he won the NTT P1 Award on the road course in July of 2022.

Scott McLaughlin, also fifth in points. He drives the No. 3 Sonsio Vehicle Protection Team Penske Chevrolet. Coming off a podium at Barber Motorsports Park, the 20th of his career.

Pato O'Ward also joins us, currently fourth in the standings, drives the No. 5 Arrow McLaren Chevrolet. Pato has two top 10s this season, including a podium at the Thermal Club, also a pole and two podiums on the IMS road course.

Kyle Kirkwood to his right is third in points, drives the No. 37 PreFab Honda for Andretti Global. Kyle has a win at Long Beach, one of his two top 5s this season.

Christian Lundgaard, Arrow McLaren, second in points, drives the No. 7 car. Three podiums in his four races this season, including a runner-up finish at Barber last Sunday. Also a pole and two podiums on the IMS road course.

Last but certainly not least, Alex Palou, after a torrid start to



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forward in the season, we've got a lot of really good tracks ahead for us.

THE MODERATOR: Pato, for you, obviously success on the road course, success on the oval. Could this be a big month for you, Pato?

PATO O'WARD: Yeah, always super happy to be back. Month of May always starts here with the road course. It's been a good place for me in the past with the team. We're looking forward to continuing on this month.

Obviously Barber was last weekend, and we had a good solid points day. Plenty of racing to go. It's just 4 races out of 17. Yeah, we're excited to see what's in store for us.

THE MODERATOR: Felix, a pole here in 2022. I know you love this place, the road course and the oval as well for that matter. How do you keep it going here in 2025?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Good question. It seems like every weekend is a completely new challenge this year. I think the package seems very different as well. It seems like some teams and drivers struggle a lot on certain tracks, and it's just been amplified this year, I think.

You just have to reset and start fresh almost every weekend, it feels like. It's super tough. Right now it's super tough even to be in the top 10 now. You need a pretty damn good weekend.

So keep it rolling. We've been off to a good start. This track I normally like, so I think we're looking pretty good.

THE MODERATOR: It seems like it gets tougher every year.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: It does.

THE MODERATOR: Scott, a big boost in momentum for you on the podium at Barber. How can Saturday help set the stage for what could be a big month?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: It's been an okay year. We've been near thereabouts, just not quite fast enough but working on that. Yeah, the weekend was great, and obviously we want to get started to a really nice result here. We all do. It's nice momentum.

Momentum is a big thing here. Obviously look at Alex's run. It's a real thing in INDYCAR. You want to get on that run yourself, and what a place to start.

Yeah, we'll be working hard, but yeah, a long month ahead.

THE MODERATOR: Good luck to all six of you guys.

Q. For Alex and Christian, kind of following up on what he asked Scott, just what do the next few days mean for the 500, if anything?

ALEX PALOU: It depends. If it goes well, you want it to mean a lot, and if it goes bad, you don't want it to mean anything. It depends also how the race goes. Having a lot of speed tomorrow doesn't mean anything for the 500, or not having enough speed I don't think it's going to translate much.

But it's true that momentum and having good results is going to impact, not only the driver, but also the overall mindset of the team. Not winning here doesn't mean -- or not having a good result doesn't mean that it's going to be a tough month, but for sure you don't have that extra boost from the Indy road course.

Q. Heading into turn 1 at the start of the race, it's a giant funnel. In years past, not everybody's been able to get through it cleanly. Just how challenging is it to make it through that course without any contact? In all.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Just hope you don't have contact. You just go in there -- you've got to trust your instincts. I think we all do.

Yeah, it funnels there, but it funnels everywhere. I think we know that we need to make passes early to move forward in the race. I think you see that in exchanges and whatnot.

Yeah, just try and get through there unscathed. I didn't last year. I spun out Felix, I think, so it wasn't a good thing.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: You got hit by someone.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, it was his fault, not mine.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: It was a chain reaction.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I think you then hit me, so we all three were in that.

ALEX PALOU: The key is to start far forward.

Q. Is that the most speed you guys carry into the first turn on a road course anywhere on the schedule?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I don't know if we were faster at Road America?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: The speed is probably the highest, it's



close to the highest. Maybe Long Beach is up there as well.

Q. And how much of a challenge does that create for the contact part?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I haven't really thought about that. You don't really think about it. I don't.

Q. Hey, guys, question for everyone that isn't Alex. Obviously the run that he's going on, the level of perfection that he and the 10 crew are showing this season is difficult to beat. For you guys, what do you focus on, and what are your teams focusing on coming into every race? Is the focus on him, or is the focus very much on yourselves? And then how do you, each of you and each of your teams, not focus so much on not making those mistakes? If that makes sense. Is there a way that you can overthink it and overwork it and stress yourselves beyond the point at which it just comes naturally?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I think ultimately every single weekend we're trying to do the best that we can, like the 10 car, Alex's. They don't show up each weekend thinking, hey, we need to focus on this guy. It's we need to get the best result and execute with the performance that we have.

I feel like, in my situation, we've had good results, but we're still being outperformed, in a sense. We've had a better start than I think we hoped -- well, than we expected, but we hoped for. He's still doing a better job, so we need to up our game.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I think he put that very nicely. I don't have anything else to say.

Q. I'm guessing the same for everyone. And then the reverse for Alex, when you are on this kind of a run, do you come into a weekend with the expectation that everything will just be as normal, or do you ever have the fear of, well, it's got to end at some point. There has to be a mistake coming at some point.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I know it's going to end. You know it's a wave, and you don't know how long that's going to be. Is it going to be this is the end, or is it going to be like 5 more races? You hope to be 5 more, 15 more, but you know the chances of that happening are pretty low.

Yeah, I think, at least in the 10 car and myself, we've been focusing on just trying to be the best we can every single weekend.

I would say a part of Barber that from the beginning we had

a ton of speed, we got pole, we started up front, and we led quite a lot of the race. The other weekends, we didn't feel like we were as strong, right?

Yeah, we're starting here Indy road course with the mindset to, first of all, see what kind of speed do we have in the car, and then see if we can continue with the good results. Yeah, we know it's going to end at some point.

Q. For everybody, new tire regs this weekend, an extra pit stop at least. What do you see -- do you see maybe short filling cars, running with a light tank, and will that help on, say, new reds to potentially make moves that you wouldn't have been able to at, say, Barber or any of the other races this season?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: It's always brave to short fill, I think. I think it's a race where everyone will do the same thing, hopefully yellow in the beginning. If it's a red race, ultimately just remove one black stint. I think actually this weekend, more than any weekend, there's a risk that everyone does exactly the same thing.

Q. Then a follow-up question for everybody, do you think that these changes kind of take the emphasis off the driver and maybe put it more on the pit crews and the timing stance? Is that fair to assess, or is it the opposite of that?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: No, I think there's a lot of cars out there that are on the black tire that are not as good as they are on the red tire, or vice versa. I think that's going to be probably really interesting for everyone to follow is just how people look after their tires and how they play that into their own strategy.

Yes, it puts some emphasis back into the team and what they call, but ultimately the red/black tire thing, I guess you're trying to see a bit more disparity rather than just running the worse tire for six laps of the yellow to pulling it off and then putting reds or blacks on or whatever the best tires are for the rest of the race.

I'm excited. We did discuss this earlier in the season, and we all said no to it. So it's kind of nice to be able to -- I guess they've said stuff that we'll try it, and that's a good thing.

Q. Why was the no given? Was it from the drivers?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, from the drivers.

Wasn't it that one? Am I correct?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Yeah, we opted against it.



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SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, we did. So yeah, it's something they told us get effed.

THE MODERATOR: Maybe it's the fear of the unknown.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Right. I'm good for it, but still.

Q. A quick one for Alex. Next time you get lonely in the car, should we get you a teddy bear or something to keep you company?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I think looking back it sounded a lot worse than I wanted it to sound. But at the same time, it's true that like I was looking at TV, and I think I appeared only like once or twice at the beginning, and at the end, the last couple laps of the race.

Yeah, probably not the best of my comments, probably not the worst, but something that I probably wouldn't say again now that I look back.

Q. Alex, we'll stick with you. We've seen no yellows since that first week, that first lap in St. Pete. I want to go to end of races, and anybody else can pick up on this too if they want. What's it like lap traffic-wise? Obviously Hondas seem to be working together, but what do you think should be the level of, I guess, respect maybe would be the word or courtesy from other drivers, especially those other drivers that may not be driving the same manufacturer as you are?

ALEX PALOU: I don't know. I think we've seen different kinds of weekends, like at Thermal I was not able to pass traffic cars. At Long Beach, both Kyle and I struggled, and actually Kyle got very affected by some traffic cars, which I think it was -- like we were both Honda, so they were not trying to benefit him or me. Then at Barber, I didn't have any issues with traffic cars.

So I think it depends on the racetrack and how much difference you have on pace to the traffic cars.

We've, at least in my car, we've felt that in the past, the other manufacturers have been working more together, but it's true the other manufacturer is saying that we work more together.

So I think, whenever you're in the situation of being in front and you get hauled out by some traffic cars, you start to obviously argue and complain, which I think it's normal. Like we all feel frustrated by losing half a second, that it costs us maybe like five or six laps to open to be 2, and you lose it in one braking zone because of the traffic cars.

At the end of the day, it's the same for everybody. I think, when you lose and you have a bad day, you don't want to let -- the first car to let go because it could save your day, right? So it is what it is.

Q. Christian, one for you real quick. First race was here. You've been so good at this road course. Now you're in a championship caliber car. How excited are you for this race weekend? I've been told, maybe I'm wrong, it's kind of a European feel. How has this track really benefited your racing style?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I would say I'm as excited as I would be or have been. I think we have good momentum right now, and I think we've had good momentum leaving Barber in the prior years. I don't think anything's really changed from my perspective from a mindset.

We've got to go out and do the best that we can and execute. I was vocal in the off-season about I just wanted to be competitive at every single event, and we have been so far, and it's just continuing that.

Q. Alex, I have a media question for you. It's only a great success here in American INDYCAR racing. What's the media situation in your home country Spain? Did you have overtaken, although hundred miles away, your countryman Alonso in popularity?

ALEX PALOU: No, I think it's getting -- yeah, I don't think I'm getting much more media time in Spain. I think they have the people that they've been following from the beginning, and maybe it's growing a little bit, but I wouldn't say they're taking much attention to it, except for the media that we always have, like your best friend Enrique.

Yeah, let's say the normal media, I don't think they're following too much, which that's fine. I don't care. I race in the U.S. for a U.S. Team and for U.S. sponsors.

Q. Do you have conversations about that?

ALEX PALOU: With Fernando, no. No, I don't have conversations with him. I had in the past.

Q. Alex, I guess we should have put money on the yellow flags at Barber that you said we might have?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I thought we were going to have for sure.

Q. How do the drivers feel about not having the yellow laps, the yellow flag laps? Is it harder to race? Is it more fun to race?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: It makes it more physical. I don't know if that's a benefit or a negative, but it's something to know.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: In a way it's pure. Like the quickest guy wins. There's no way around it. I think Alex winning those races is a pretty clear -- there's no luck. There's no ingredient that makes it easier. It's just pure racing, which I think is cool.

There is definitely less action, less overtaking. I find myself in Barber kind of like waking up in a dream, like it feels like you're just going around forever on your own. So it gets kind of lonely, I guess.

I think there's definitely one cool aspect about it.

THE MODERATOR: By the way, to pull that off at a place that's as demanding as Barber was, that's pretty impressive. Just my two cents.

Q. Alex and Pato, I'd like you both to answer. What is it feeling like finally getting to the track, starting the month of May with the road course first, and then ultimately building up that momentum to the Grand Prix, or to the 500 rather?

ALEX PALOU: Feels great. It's always special to enter this track, even if it's just for testing. We're finally racing. It's finally May.

I don't want to get too excited too early either. It's going to be a long month, and we have like a small peak now this weekend, and we kind of have a couple of days of just testing and trying to get the car as fast as possible and ourselves comfortable before qualifying.

Yeah, it's the best time of the year, and it's super exciting to be here.

PATO O'WARD: I'll just add to what Alex said. It's fantastic to come back every single year even, like you said, testing. You definitely feel that this place means a lot to, not just us as drivers, but everybody that's involved here. It's a long month ahead. It's a lot of time.

You try and make what you have the best you can, and then when you get on race day, that's when it really matters.

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