

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Saturday, May 10, 2025

Barry Wanser

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We wrapped up the Sonsio Grand Prix and the IMS Road Course. Alex Palou, Pato O'Ward, Will Power, once they wrap up with their photos and celebration on victory podium, will be joining us.

Joined now, though, by the team manager for the No. 10 car, the DHL Chip Ganassi Racing Honda. It is Barry Wanser, as Barry and CGR celebrate their 140th win in the INDYCAR Series. Barry, this is kind of becoming a habit now for you to join us after these races and race wins, which I'm sure is fine for you, right?

BARRY WANSER: Yeah, we're certainly riding a wave. We're not sure how far it will go, but we're taking it race by race, and it's been absolutely obviously an amazing season so far.

THE MODERATOR: What was it about this drive for Alex that impressed you guys?

BARRY WANSER: Well, we started on the used softer tires, the alternates. Graham started on the stickers, so we had a big advantage on us over the start, which he got us. Then we had to settle in and try to get as far as we could on the used.

We were fortunate enough to be really strong on the primary tires. Get 23, 24 laps out of them. That reduced the amount of laps we had to do on our sticker alternates for the end. That gave us a huge advantage.

Alex's ability certainly to go fast, take care of the tires, and get the fuel number, you know, it's second to none.

THE MODERATOR: Certainly you've been a part of some drivers that get on rolls. I'm thinking Montoyas and all these guys that could have done something like this. What impresses you about Alex and this run he's on right now?

BARRY WANSER: He stays focused. You saw it in qualifying yesterday. We had the advantage with the sticker reds. We used the sticker reds to go for the pole. We felt if we had any chance of winning the race today, we

wanted to be on the front row, so we used an additional set of sticker reds for the pole run.

In the Firestone Fast Six I think everyone saw on his best lap he locked up going into one, big lockup. His recovery to be able to run I think it was a 69.4 after that on those tires was pretty impressive, that he backed up his braking points and was still able to get the speed out of the car and the time out of the car to get the pole. I mean, that's hard to do.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.

Q. You just mentioned the tire situation, but I had the impression when Alex passed Rahal, he just walked away or drove away so easily. Did you find anything particular, some secret in the setup of the car compared to your rival teams?

BARRY WANSER: No, not really. I mean, the engineers kind of track that. Obviously our engineering group has done an amazing job with the cars, certainly unloading fast for all the events. Then Alex's race engineer, Julian Robertson, making those final tweaks to get the car even better for Alex so the car will do what he wants, to be able to save those tires, and to get the fuel number.

We were able to get Graham on the third stint on our second set of the primary tires, but we knew we were going to be strong even on the reds. I think our biggest concern during the race happened with the yellow. We haven't had a yellow in quite a while. We obviously hadn't made our last stop, so there was no concern coming in when the pits are open. I haven't had to say, Stay out, since last year because of St. Pete during the yellow we came in to get off the alternates.

It's just trying to remember what to do when you haven't done it in a while. On everyone at that point -- O'Ward behind us, he was on used at alternates as well at that point. He started on the stickers. We were well into the run with the restart, so you just never know.

THE MODERATOR: 408 straight green flag laps this season.



BARRY WANSEER: Wow, that's unbelievable. It just goes to show the class of the field, the talent.

Q. Barry, as a strategist, can you kind of describe the impact that the rule changes with the tires had on you and calling strategy? It seemed like a lot of people expected this to be straightforward, and it seemed like a lot of guys tried different things, and it didn't really work out. Just talk from that perspective.

BARRY WANSEER: As far as the strategy with the tires and choosing those, you just really don't know how far the tires will go. There's nothing you can do in practice qualifying and then rerunning tires in the warmup. You just don't get enough time on the tires to understand how far they're really going to go in the race.

Reflect back to Barber last week. We were strong on the primary tires when we thought we weren't going to be. A lot of all the other cars were as well. With those cool temperatures, it certainly helped. Here was quite a bit hotter. Certainly a different tire.

As far as the strategy by running two sets of alternates, two sets of blacks, the only thing that changed is we had to actually follow that, but so did everybody else. What didn't change is it was a three-stop race. It's been a three-stop race even when it was an 82-lap race. The winner has done three stops.

I think the range shortened 75-lap race that Power won it on two stops. It was a good event for INDYCAR to try something different. I think it certainly created some excitement with the tires. You couldn't do full stints on the used alternates. That really made it difficult for everybody.

Q. Barry, we saw Alex run down Lundgaard and then Pato O'Ward at Thermal, and I think it was his last stint of the race after his final pit stop he went on to new reds. He saved those alternates. So in this race when Graham was still leading Palou, his pit box was way down at the end, and yours was way down at this end. So was anybody paying attention to what tires Graham was going to put on because they put on blacks, and Alex I think was able to put on reds, and that made a difference is the way I saw it. Is that right?

BARRY WANSEER: Yeah, you know, you reflect back to Thermal. As far as outright speed, we were battling O'Ward. He started on the sticker reds, and we saved them for the end. That ended up being an advantage for us.

Here we did the same. Graham ended up having to go to blacks. Again, it's part of the tire rules for this race, right?

Everyone has to choose.

When we started the race, we just knew we were going to start on alternate reds -- sorry -- the used reds. Our goal was to run black-black and then finish on the sticker reds, but if we were battling somebody closer, we could have easily -- it was on the table to run our sticker reds in the second stint or the third stint, not saving for the fourth.

That's always on the table. Especially if we're battling for the lead, we could end up always going to that. We weren't sure how good the reds would be for a late race restart. Fortunately, we were matched with the car behind us. We didn't necessarily have an advantage, but we didn't have a disadvantage either.

Q. Pato stayed behind Graham Rahal kind of long time. Did you start worrying about the position? I mean, you had a tough time passing him.

BARRY WANSEER: Yeah, at that point you can work really hard in that first stint to try to pass somebody that would be very difficult to pass. If you're going to do that, you're going to burn too much fuel, and you're going to abuse your tires.

If you do that, then you end up hitting sooner than you want to. If you do that on the first stint, then you're stuck doing a lot more laps on the remaining three sets that you didn't do on the first set. So you have to recognize it's a long race, let's settle in here, and at least stay in touch with them.

Q. On third stint, Graham chose reds, used reds, and you stayed with black. What was the reason for it?

BARRY WANSEER: Because we had to run a second set of blacks, and we didn't want to run -- at that point we didn't feel we wanted to run our one set of sticker reds in the third stint. We wanted to save them for the last stint. That's worked well this year.

THE MODERATOR: Barry, congratulations. 140 and counting for you this year. Could be a sign of a big month for you maybe? We'll see?

BARRY WANSEER: Everything we do is about building momentum for the 500. The Indy 500, it's our goal. It's one of our two goals. It's to win the Indy 500, win the championship. Everything we do at the beginning of the year is to build momentum for that.

I would say we got a lot of momentum. It doesn't guarantee anything other than it builds a lot of confidence, and that's what you need. Hopefully it's our day a couple



of weeks from tomorrow.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports