

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Saturday, May 10, 2025

Alex Palou

Pato O'Ward

Will Power

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Second and third place drivers joining us. Pato O'Ward driver of the No. 5 Arrow McLaren Chevrolet, with his second runnerup finish this season. Ties his best finish in the Sonsio Grand Prix as well. 28th podium of his career.

Will Power, driver of the No. 12 Verizon Team Penske Chevrolet with his first podium of the season. 106th of his career. Still fourth all-time in INDYCAR SERIES history. Sixth podium as well at the Sonsio Grand Prix. What did I miss?

WILL POWER: You said 106 podiums. Oh, my God.

THE MODERATOR: That's a lot.

WILL POWER: I wish I could have converted a few more.

THE MODERATOR: Pato, we'll start with you. Tell us about your day.

PATO O'WARD: We fought hard today. Started eighth, and I was pretty happy with the balance of my car. Just missed it there in qualifying with the issues that we had in a straight line, but Ian fixed it. It was good to have good pace.

In terms of strategy it was nice to be in a boring fuel save, 'follow the leader' type situation. It was nice to be able to push and undercut, overcut.

I think the tire rule, at least from our side, that was pretty eventful, I would say. I would be keen to seeing that in Detroit because the green tire --

WILL POWER: Oh, yeah, that would be cool.

PATO O'WARD: It would be great if we would have done that at St. Pete and Long Beach, to be honest. No, I think

hopefully today was a bit more eventful than the ones in the past, but got to do something to stop that 10 car. They're really, really just on it. They don't make a mistake. It's pretty impressive.

THE MODERATOR: So the lobbying continues for a three-stopper in Detroit, is that what we're saying?

WILL POWER: That would be way more interesting than this, no joke. If you had to run two sets each of alternates --

PATO O'WARD: Yeah.

WILL POWER: That would be something.

THE MODERATOR: Will, tell us about your day.

WILL POWER: It was just a solid day. Didn't pass anyone on track. It was the same as Barber. Didn't pass a single car. Just spent the whole day sort of like in a good pit stop strategy and speed and sort of overcut there at the end. Got us a couple of positions.

Yeah, it was an very uneventful day. It was eventful in the car catching and driving hard the whole day, but as far as chopping through the field or anything. I mean, when you start seventh, obviously it's not like you're able to pass a lot of people.

But, yeah, it's a very stout field. People don't make mistakes. Even the person who finishes last -- I don't know who finished last, but I know when I lapped Abel, he stuck behind me at the same pace, exactly the same space. Hardly dropped off.

It's just a stout field with great teams and drivers. Maybe we need to try a lock-out push-to-pass system where you get within a second and it locks the guy out in front and create passing like that, but it's cool to see. I'm not sure what it looks like on TV, but yeah, I think this was the first step, try something with tires, but I think you need to do something more.

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



Q. I was talking to Dario in Gasoline Alley, he said this race is like a regular season game, a regular season race. In two weeks it will be the Super Bowl. In a lot of ways you look at that Indy 500 as just being, like, everything that's happened up to this point doesn't really matter because that's a race, first oval race of the year, and all the momentum that everybody has built up, it's going to change between now and May 25th.

PATO O'WARD: Yeah, it's the greatest race, but I've finished in the wall before, and I've also finished almost winning. He's won it. He can tell you what it feels like. I don't know what it feels like yet, but I mean, yeah, I don't know where you wanted me to go with that question.

Q. All the success that Alex has had up to this point may not matter in the Indy 500.

PATO O'WARD: Oh, yeah, Indy 500 is its own beast, yeah. Yeah.

WILL POWER: I think if you won it, you would feel -- you wouldn't be feeling so bad about the one guy winning all the races, but there's also a championship. But, yeah, the 500, man. Winning that thing is such a big deal. It just is. It's extremely hard to win, extremely hard to put yourself -- you really have no clue how it's going to play out for you until like 20 to go or something. It's always that way, which makes it a very exciting race.

Yeah, it will be interesting. I think it will be a very competitive year, which doesn't really matter. It comes down to -- Pato knows. The last few races, he's battled for the win. He's been very close.

You know, it's all about decision. He doesn't pass on that straight, does he win it? It's hard to say. That's what's tough about that race.

Q. Will, you've had a longer career than Pato. You've raced against some of the greats of the great. How do you put Alex's streak this year into historical context?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I said it to him. I said, Man, I've been around a long time, and in this field in this time, it is amazing to see something like that. It really is. It is incredibly tough just to win a race in INDYCAR now.

So to go is it five, four wins and one second in five races, that is stout. It's very impressive. It's something we'll look back on. As much as we want to beat him, but I have appreciation for people that are very good at their craft, and he is extremely well-rounded and good at his craft. He's one of the best.

Q. First for Pato, and I guess Will can weigh in on this too, it sounds like you were positive about the rule change with the tires. Just kind of expand on that.

PATO O'WARD: I mean, I think we went into it with a lot of unknowns. I think a lot of people are, like, Ah, it's going to be a red race. Some guy said, Oh, no, they're going to deg. I think the black was a lot better than what we thought, or at least from our camp.

I think here it obviously puts some uncertainty in people's decisions, so to kind of see how aggressive you wanted to be with it. I really think in our street course compounds, if this race would have been in effect in St. Pete and Long Beach, everything would have looked completely different. I think that would have made even better racing, more passes because now you're forced to do the greens. You don't get lucky with the first yellow falling down and you're, like, Oh, let me get off of them and just run a full black race. No, you still have to run another set. You're going to be miserable at least another 20 laps.

I think we need to push INDYCAR and force them to enforce this rule for Detroit. I really think that rule is going to be the -- it's going to switch things in the racing, and I think it's going to produce a race that is so much more entertaining.

WILL POWER: Yeah, I agree. If you would enforce that at Long Beach and St. Pete, it would have been a very different race. Man, because they just don't -- yeah, they degrade so quickly. Honestly, if you started in the 20s and everyone in front of you were on greens, you would drive to the front. You actually would drive to the front.

I know you're going to have to take your medicine at some point, you know, your poison. Yeah, that would be a very interesting scenario. Then you could couple it with no-reply push-to-pass and be passing everywhere. It's too much passing. We have to stop it.

THE MODERATOR: First time I've heard that one, Will.

Q. Will, you mentioned you didn't really pass a lot of cars on track. When you maybe came up in traffic, did you feel like it was hard to pass, or was it just pure circumstance of how the race played out?

WILL POWER: It is difficult because it's such a heavy car. I would say coming onto the straight, it used to be quite easy just wide open. You couldn't be wide open behind someone. You're lifting. It was very difficult to get close. I think the weight is affecting the racing a bit.

Yeah, it's funny because I'm not sure I felt that at the end of last year when we were doing it. There were some reasonable races.

PATO O'WARD: I felt there was very little road course. I think there were a lot more ovals. Oval-dense.

WILL POWER: Yeah, it's hard to say. Corners, straights -- that flat-out corner now becomes a corner, and it gets hard to follow because it's very aerodynamic. It's a fast corner.

We have a system that INDY NXT used to have, that no-reply system. Maybe we just have to try that with what we got right now.

Q. You must hate seeing Alex winning so many races so far. On one way it must be frustrating for you and for your driver colleagues, but also, I think it's increasing your motivation to beat him one race. There's also something positive in this winning streak, I would say.

WILL POWER: Yeah, you're definitely taking a very close look at what he's doing, what the team is doing. I would say the last four races have been absolutely solid for me, if he hadn't been winning. Like, they're all top 5s basically. One fifth, sixth, and fourth or a third. All finishes that make up for a great championship. I'm yet to finish ahead of Palou.

But, yes, it makes everyone work harder. It really does. It's just when you struggle, everyone has a really close look at what the other guy is doing. It's just clicking so well for him right now. Maybe it's a bit of the tire we're running this year with a heavy car just suits his style. Sometimes it's funny. I've seen that over the years different tires and different sort of -- as we've changed the car, just suits different drivers. They have a very specific driving style that suits a certain way, but yeah, it's absolutely phenomenal what he's doing.

Q. (Off microphone)

WILL POWER: The 500, yeah. That will be a very different story. I would be shocked if he dominates that one. I think he'll be up there, but so will a lot of other people.

That would be something if he went on and won that. That would be one of the greatest motorsport moments I've seen in my career I think.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations on the podium finish.

We now have Alex Palou. I don't know where to begin.

Maybe the pass on Graham Rahal. Tell us about that.

ALEX PALOU: We could begin with the start. I didn't even get to lead one corner.

THE MODERATOR: What happened there?

ALEX PALOU: He got a great start, and then he was really side-by-side to me. The only way I had to keep position was to force him like off-off. I thought he was already up front.

So, yeah, from there I was, like, okay, let's be patient and hopefully we can have good pace to follow him and maybe overtake him on pit strategy, but he had the great pace the first couple of runs. We were battling on our second stint, but I couldn't really overtake him.

Yeah, it was great at the end when I got to pass him. I think he was struggling a little bit with the used soft tires. We were on good primaries, so yeah, it was great.

THE MODERATOR: You could tell the rears were going away on him a little bit.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, it's easy for us to spot, especially here. You can see in 14 whenever you leave a mark, and that means the car is sliding. Also, out of four, and he was doing it for two or three laps. Yeah, I knew we were in a good spot. But then, I mean, we had the second yellow of the year, which that was exciting.

THE MODERATOR: It was exciting. Fans went crazy.

ALEX PALOU: I'm sure, yes. I didn't like that part. Obviously we lost some that we had. Yeah, my car was amazing today once again, and I was able to lead to the end.

THE MODERATOR: How do you describe the start? Four wins, five races. You're up 97 points in the championship. This is crazy stuff.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I mean, it's crazy. I'm sad that it's going to end at some point, and it's going to be tough in my career to feel as good as I feel now. I know that, and that makes me sad, but happy at the same time.

It's amazing. It's amazing. I know I'm with the best team out here, and they give me the best tools they have, the best people to fight for races every single weekend, and it feels sweet.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations. We'll open it up to questions.



Q. You said it's going to be sad when it ends. Would it be crushing if it ends in the Indianapolis 500?

ALEX PALOU: I mean, there's high chances of that, but hopefully you can change it. What if it doesn't end, and suddenly we win the Indy 500? That would be pretty sweet. The normal thing would be not to win it. So if we can make it happen, it would be super special.

Yeah, for sure. I think we've done everything that we could in terms of results and the team as well working with our speedway car. I'm actually thinking to put this car with a road course wins to see if it's going to be as fast at the speedway because these cars is really, really fast.

Yeah, hopefully we can battle. I think the Indy 500 is a different game. I don't think we're the favorites, but we're going to try everything we have.

Q. Alex, looking at your career, it's just phenomenal what you've done. Out of the five seasons you've been here you've only lost the championship twice. You talk about the historic facts of this season. Out of the first four races, you've only lost once. When you look at all the success, these winnings become normal to you. How do you absorb these wins, but also don't get lost in the moment and appreciate it knowing that, like you said, someday this is going to stop, and these wins aren't going to be as easy anymore?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, so I enjoy -- I would say the past two years have been more like that. Yeah, the past two years I enjoy it a lot more than I used to. I think 2022 was a hard year that we didn't win until the last race of the season. I struggle a little bit also off track. That made me realize how amazing it is to have cool moments. Then being a dad also made everything so much better.

I've been able to enjoy and I force myself to enjoy every single win. I take it as if it's my first and my last one. You can see with the celebrations and also with the team and how we enjoy them. By no means I think that this is just a win for me. It's really special to be here.

Q. You said yesterday that you were pretty confident there would be a caution at Barber, and there wasn't. Were you surprised at all by the caution at the end of today's race, or can anything surprise you after how this season has started?

ALEX PALOU: No, I thought there was going to be a caution in lap one today. Turn one is tough, but especially turn seven we've normally seen a lot of accidents. So when that didn't happen, I was, like, Oh, man, there's a

chance that with everybody running the same strategy because we're forced into doing that, there might be no yellows at all.

I don't know what happened. I don't know if it was a mechanical issue or just a contact, but yeah, I didn't like that to see the caution. Whenever there was a caution, I was, like, No, come on, I just got the lead, let me go.

Yeah, I'm happy that even with the restart we were able to hold.

Q. You've been winning these races to start this year, not only winning them as much as you have, but in pretty dominant fashion. Before today when you had to deal with Graham Rahal, when a caution does come out like that, when you're in the car, in control of the race, how do you reset? Do you feel any kind of pressure when the green flag flies again, or do you feel really comfortable with how the team is performing?

ALEX PALOU: You are always ready for that to happen. Maybe at the beginning of my career I would just like get suddenly super pissed and I would be, like, Oh, no, suddenly I lost the race.

Yeah, for me even when it was last lap, I was, like, Please make everything run okay, make me do the good braking points. Until you cross the finish line, the race is not over. Same goes with the full course yellow. In a way that's why we were not pushing 100%. We were trying to save our tires there just in case there was going to be a late restart, and also our overtake, we wanted to keep some. I'm glad we did because otherwise I would have been struggling a lot more at the end.

Q. So much talk about tires, but it seems like once you lost the first corner, you were content to just sit there until the last quarter of the race and then just take control of it. Was that an over-simplification, or could that be what actually happened?

ALEX PALOU: I was trying. I was trying my best. I would say the first stint we had used tires, while Graham had new tires. So that's why he was pulling a lot more, and I was struggling a lot there. I really struggled.

Then we did a great job in the pit stop. Then we kind of, like, chase Graham back. When I was behind him, I wanted to overtake him, but I think the issue was that we also had traffic. Yes, he couldn't move faster, but at the same time I got their tier from two cars. So I couldn't really move there. I was stuck. I started hurting my tires.

Then that's it. We both pitted at the same lap. We both

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

pitted and went out together, and suddenly I caught him back when he started struggling with the tires.

But, yeah, I was trying. I was not trying to be patient. I was patient, but I was trying my best to try and overtake him.

Q. Obviously the upcoming Indy 500 is its own beast, but in general, is it time for Alex Palou to get an oval win as well?

ALEX PALOU: Yes, it's perfect timing to do that on the same week as the Indy 500. Yes, I would love that. If that happens, I'll get crazy. Like, very crazy. If that doesn't happen, we will see, but if that happens, I don't know. Yeah, things are going to fly, flames here, flames there. It's going to be amazing.

THE MODERATOR: How crazy?

ALEX PALOU: Like, yeah, you know I'm not a crazy person, but very, very crazy.

THE MODERATOR: It's going to get crazy.

ALEX PALOU: Everybody in Indiana will know that I'm an Indy 500 champion if that happens. Hopefully one day.

Q. Following up on that, has there been any part of you that wishes there was an oval race or kind of yearning for an oval race just to try to show what you can do on an oval this year and potentially get that win?

ALEX PALOU: What's the beginning of the -- sorry.

Q. Has there been any part of you that's been yearning for an oval race like, Gosh, I wish there was an oval race just to potentially get a win on an oval and to show what you can do on an oval this year?

ALEX PALOU: Oh, I got it. Yeah, honestly, yes, I cannot wait. Yeah, there's people that think that I don't want to go to ovals, but it's the opposite. I want to get there so I have chances to win.

I think last year we were close. Iowa we finished second, and we were leading for a good part of the race, but couldn't really get it. Will got it. Yeah, I can't wait to get back on ovals, especially this one, and try and win our first one.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, win number four. Perhaps win number five in a couple of weeks. We'll see.

ALEX PALOU: Would love that. Thanks.

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