

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Saturday, May 17, 2025

Marcus Armstrong

Alex Palou

Robert Schwartzman

Conor Daly

Colton Herta

Marco Andretti

Press Conference



wouldn't be surprised if I'm a bit sore in the morning. To me it felt like a bigger hit than what it looked on the TV honestly. But the AMR safety crew was on top of me in record time. I think that truck they have was going quicker than Alex Palou today. I'm pretty lucky they were there.

I'm good as gold, mate, ready to crack on tomorrow.

Q. There was an enormous effort to make the transition to the road course car, your Detroit car. Unbelievable control out of those guys.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Yes, I don't think anyone expects a crash like that to destroy a tub. We didn't have the car built up at all. They pretty much put it together. I mean, as they were rolling me out they were still putting together the headrest. I was questioning whether or not the seat was still intact after the crash. They hadn't tested that. Just the real basic things they had forgotten about because they were in a rush to get it done.

They got it done and the car was definitely in a decent window where we can work on for tomorrow.

Q. While that's happening, you're removed from the garage. What's the biggest thing that goes through your mind? Is it about getting back out there straightaway?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Initially I just hoped the car wasn't completely written off, which was the case. Secondly, it was whether or not they would let me drive again because I had to do a bunch of tests, concussion tests and all of that. There were two things that we got around ultimately.

The third one was just the conditions, hoping that the wind wouldn't get any worse, perhaps the track temp would come down and give me a bit of a hand. Yeah, tough conditions today, for sure.

Q. Marcus, you mentioned the first run you didn't have telemetry. Talk through that run.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Yeah, just like this morning, my references were based off of yesterday with a different

THE MODERATOR: Marcus Armstrong joins us. Marcus, to say the least, you had an adventurous day. Your thoughts about where you are right now in the field of 33?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Yeah, it's obviously hugely disappointing what happened this morning. We had a very fast car. I think Felix demonstrated that. I think he got the quickest lap of the day. He is P7 or something now. I think him and I were pretty much the same.

It was very disappointing when, yeah, I don't know why honestly I lost the car so suddenly. You could argue a bunch of things. Ultimately we put a setup on the car that we thought was going to be reasonably conservative for the conditions, but ultimately that wasn't the case.

Then massive credit to them, to Meyer Shank Racing, for putting our road course car together so quickly. I think we circulated at 229. We didn't even have telemetry on the first runs, we don't know whether COP or ride heights are or anything. That second run was a bit like, yeah, we'll see.

Massive credit to them for putting the car together.

THE MODERATOR: Open it up for questions.

Q. Are you okay?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: I am okay.

Q. Physically?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Yes, physically I'm okay. I



... when all is said, we're done.®

wind. This morning when I went out, typically you have a different balance to what you have when you put the Q mix, you have a whole lot more horsepower.

This morning's balance caught me by surprise massively. I was kind of a little bit lost on that warm-up lap when I just drove now. Cognisant of how difficult it is to get these cars into the right window. Even a bit of tape on the uprights can affect the air balance significantly.

With all these things not being as the other car, we don't know where we are in terms of a balance window. You don't find out about it until you're midway through the corner.

My plan was to just take it easy only the first lap just to see where the balance was, adjust from there with my tools. My weight jacker wasn't actually working so I only had my bars. Then hopefully for the second run we would have been able to modify the ride heights and all of that, but we didn't have any data. We just sent it with the same car.

Q. You made that improvement from 26 to 29 based on feel? Describe the difference between the first and second run, your confidence level going into tomorrow.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: For sure, my mindset was if the car is good enough to do it, I'm not going to be the reason we're not going to get through today. I threw caution to the wind if that's the right expression, just went flat. Hopefully the balance was there. It was. Ultimately wasn't quick enough. We'll come back tomorrow.

Q. Before the accident, did the car give you any warning signal? The accident itself, do you think the wind was responsible for that?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: I think obviously the wind was strong. This morning it was a lot colder. History normally says from years past that you can afford to take a decent step down on downforce. However, this morning wasn't really the case.

I do believe that with these hybrids now the window is considerably smaller, the balance window. I think where we were mentally was we have a strong car, we can be inside the top 12 if not the top five. We want to finish that small little morning warm-up where we want to start quallie. Ultimately that was probably a bit ambitious, as well.

THE MODERATOR: We'll see you back on the track tomorrow. Thanks, Marcus.

Joined now by drivers that have qualified. Alex Palou,

provisional pole right now, eyeing his second pole in his runs here at Indy.

Also joining us Robert Schwartzman, provisional sixth.

Then starting 13th in next Sunday's race, Conor Daly.

Also joining us Colton Herta, who is going to start 29th in next Sunday's Indy 500.

Alex, P1 for you. How satisfied are you with what happened today?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, amazing day for us. Struggled a little bit in practice. We were not able to finish a full qualifying run. I mean, like everybody, it was tough conditions today.

Yeah, glad that we got our balance right. We had a ton of speed in the car. It's been great the comeback we did from last year I think. Yeah, from both sides, I think HRC and the team. Yeah, really fast cars. Looking forward to tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Robert Schwartzman, top 12 tomorrow. How pleased are you with obviously the effort and I'm sure the team is ecstatic about today's results?

ROBERT SCHWARTZMAN: Yeah, really good day. I honestly did not expect it to go that well. We were gradually improving the car step by step. To have such a good run this morning, I was like, Okay, this car is really fast.

Obviously was really tricky, as I said already before. It's the toughest I think qualifying of my career. Four laps consecutive, focus, one slight mistake and you're done. Yeah, definitely it was a big challenge for me.

I'm happy that I managed to complete all four laps. We're going to top 12. I think it's also a good thing it's the first one of the team. We finally got a top 12, it's here in Indy. Quite a legendary moment for us. Pretty happy.

The team did a really good job with engineering and mechanics. Everything was step by step without rushing things, making sure everything is right. I think that's where it paid off.

THE MODERATOR: Conor, a bit of heartbreak certainly. What happened on the last qualifying run?

CONOR DALY: Yeah, I mean, honestly, we had a wild day. Honestly our first run the whole front wing being wrong was crazy because we obviously have to go to tech

before we run, too. It was kind of a shame there.

Yeah, we had to come back. In the middle of the day, didn't quite have exactly what we needed. We trimmed out for the last run just to try to stay above where we needed to be.

Yeah, I mean, I did not get the weight jacker back to the right position before turn one in the last lap. It was definitely my fault. The team deserved to be in the 12. You just got to be perfect here.

I was trying a few different things to be as consistent as possible. Just happened to not get the weight jacker back in time. Yeah, that cost us the 12. But a good bounceback, for sure, for our group, definitely.

THE MODERATOR: Colton Herta, an interesting day. How are you feeling? Are you okay?

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, I'm fine.

THE MODERATOR: Your thoughts about getting in the show, first of all?

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, it sucks. I think from our standpoint of where we want to be, what we want to contend with, we're not happy just making the show. We want to fight for the pole, we want to be in the Fast 12. When we don't get the chance to do that, it's pretty disappointing.

What a heroic effort by the guys. I don't think I've ever seen anything like that on any car. Bare chassis, bare tub in four and a half hours to a complete car. The only thing that we transferred over was the engine. Everything else was destroyed.

To have a car that not only runs but is safe, the balance is right, in that amount of time, I don't even know what to say. It was their day.

Me and Nathan tried our hardest to take us out of the show. They kept us in it, so...

THE MODERATOR: Joined by Marco Andretti. It's not the result you wanted. How do you make the car quicker tomorrow?

MARCO ANDRETTI: I think we were about to there. Conor just took up too much time. Sorry, brother (smiling).

I think we would have been just in there. But the trim level that we're at at the end is kind of demoralizing for the speed. I don't know what else to do.

I think tomorrow is ours to lose. We need to just not be dumb tomorrow and do four solid ones and we should be okay.

Yeah, just the fact that we're running tomorrow is a bummer.

THE MODERATOR: Open it up for questions.

Q. Robert, when you found out your speed after your run, what was the initial reaction? Were you surprised it was that fast?

ROBERT SCHWARTZMAN: Yeah, honestly this morning I came to my engineer, I was like, What do you think? How fast are we going to go with cooler temps?

I guess two miles an hour.

Damn, I was optimistic.

Yesterday we showed 231. Okay, well...

The first lap I do, I was like, I floor it. Whatever happens happens. I see 233. I was like, He was actually right. The car actually is fast, okay.

Yeah, I managed to hold it for two laps. We were a bit too aggressive with balance. I started to lose a bit the rear. It was sketchy in the third and fourth lap. I just need to survive, just finish it.

At the end I think overall it just gave me the boost and understanding that the car is really fast. Honestly, going into the corner, the car is just holding on. I was feeling it a bit yesterday, from the free practice. The car seems to be good. We can actually put it.

Yeah, today it just showed the car is really there. Obviously we still need to do some work to catch the top guys. I want to believe that we can battle for the top six tomorrow.

Q. How much confidence does the run today give you ahead of tomorrow?

ROBERT SCHWARTZMAN: For me, honestly it's just we need to fix a little bit the balance just so I can hold on more safely for the third and fourth lap going flat. I believe that's going to be a good step forward.

Q. Compared to all the other places you qualified, how does this compare?



ROBERT SCHWARTZMAN: It's not comparable. Honestly like with Alex, he also comes from Europe, it's pretty clear that this is very special qualifying. You never feel the same emotion.

I was actually never really worried about qualifying in my entire life. Even when I drove F1 car practicing, I was calm. Sometimes you can have this worry in races whenever you're starting from pole, normal worry. Here yesterday night, We have a decent car, it's my first quallie, four laps, I have to stick to it.

Honestly, when you go out, it's full focus. Not even a slight second you have to relax. Normally in European tracks or quallie, you have a moment of just breathe. Here it was one single breath, go, that's it.

Q. Colton, when did you know you had a car that you felt like you could put in the race?

COLTON HERTA: Sorry, what was the question?

Q. I think everybody thought at some point maybe there would be a time there wouldn't be anybody in line and you could go out. You didn't get that chance. When during your four laps did you feel like the car was good enough to get you in?

COLTON HERTA: I think it's really just a guess, to be honest, when you're put in that position. You have to be flat. It's just kind of a hope that everybody did their job.

I got a lot of trust in my guys, got a lot of trust in Nathan my engineer to set the car up properly and do the right things so I'm safe in the cockpit. I think that was a lot of that showing.

I think for me, this place doesn't scare me. I don't have a problem hitting the wall here and having big ones like today. It doesn't feel good and it sucks, but it doesn't scare me when I get back in the race car.

When you have that kind of mentality, but you also have a team like we did today, trust in the guys and in Nathan and everybody putting the car together to do the right thing, put the right stuff in the car the right way, it's really not too much of a worry.

Q. Colton, a lot of comparisons have been made to the 2022 situation. That chassis in 2022 was a road course car. This one a speedway car. Can you get this thing up to speed over the next two practice days to get it back in the window of the primary car?

COLTON HERTA: I hope so. I'm less worried about that

just because the window for margin in qualifying is so small because you're so on top of the track. Any little problem or change makes a huge difference. Whereas the race car, you can mess up a little bit more on balance and still make a good day of it.

The problem in '22 is we had the floor that it was stalling. We were only running like 205 in the race. Eventually INDYCAR pulled the plug on us. I don't think that we'll have that issue again. I think we've learned a lot from that situation. That was a terrible few days for us.

Yeah, I think there is a lot put in place to be able to understand a little bit more a lot of the under wings and front rear wings we bring to the race in case we have problems like this, which we've had every year basically at Andretti.

Q. Robert, you said it was the most stressful qualifying compared to all your other race experience in Europe. What was your realistic expectation before you went out?

ROBERT SCHWARTZMAN: Well, again, as I said, I didn't expect to be that fast. My target was focus, improve, gradually improve the car, the team, get few things and also learn at the same time.

I'm a rookie. Team is a rookie. We try to just find some pieces and if it works just to fix them, learn that's how it worked.

Coming in qualifying today, the expectation was I want to complete four laps. That was the only thing. I just need to finish four laps. Whatever I'm going to be, I'm going to be. I really wasn't looking at it. I was just trying to get the confidence that I can drive this car fast and have it under control. That's it.

Q. Alex, you said earlier you got the balance right. In case we have windy conditions the race weekend, the car has to be re-trimmed for windy conditions?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, when it's windy, it's not nice I think for anybody. It just makes the car be a little bit sketchy and the balance shifts, like, corner to corner or even throughout the corner it just changes. You can have a really sharp entry and then suddenly understeer is crazy on exit.

If that happens in the race, I think we're just going to see a lot more movement, a lot more mistakes, tiny mistakes, allowing for a little bit more passes.

Yeah, I think whenever you have mixed conditions, it just makes the race a little bit more challenging.



Q. Conor, to come that close to getting into the Fast 12, how could you describe? Is it excruciating? At least you have the solace to know you're safely in the field?

CONOR DALY: Honestly it's the best I've started in a long time. I'm obviously very frustrated and I'm super honest with everyone when it comes down to me making a mistake. I have to take responsibility for that one, you know what I mean?

The car, I would say I definitely got creative on that last run and used some gearing strategies that were not suggested to me. I just took a gamble and they worked, so that's good. But then I cost myself on the last lap, too.

It's part of the game here. It's so close, so crazy. This day was a range of emotions. I wanted to ram my head through a drywall earlier. Now I still want to do the same but I'm slightly happier while doing so.

Thankful for the team. They gave me a shot today. That is all you can ask for, is a proper shot at it. And we know after all week of practice, we have a great race car. That's what I'm happy about.

THE MODERATOR: Conor, to your point, this is your best starting position since you started 11th in 2019. There you go.

CONOR DALY: I was teammates with Marco back then (smiling).

Q. (No microphone.)

MARCO ANDRETTI: I feel like I've seen it all here in 20 years. I guess the underwhelming part about it is if I execute it perfectly at a downforce that crashed earlier, I would have been 29th. 30th is not a big deal unless we screw up tomorrow obviously. I don't want to be in that position.

We have bigger problems. Just had speed problems... I don't know. I've seen it across the garage with big teams. There's always like that one that they change every bolt on the car, and that's how fast it's going to go. I drew that straw this year.

Q. Marco, you said you have been through a lot in 20 years. One of those things is having a great rookie here. Robert had a stellar performance here as a rookie. What advice would you give Robert as a rookie?

MARCO ANDRETTI: Man, that's a good question.

I think trust yourself at this place. Respect the speed. If something doesn't feel right, it's probably not. Yeah, trust yourself at these speeds is always a good one.

But yeah, I mean, this place is something else, man. I've been on pole here, and I'm about to get a 33 cent check in a couple days. That's just this place. It's crazy.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for coming up, guys. We appreciate it.

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