

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Thursday, May 22, 2025

**Nolan Siegel**

**Kyle Kirkwood**

**Helio Castroneves**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Continuing on with row eight for the 109th running of the Indianapolis 500. Starting 24th in Indy 500 rookie driver of the No. 6 Arrow McLaren Chevrolet, it's Nolan Siegel. Starting 23rd, making his fourth start in the 500, the winner of the Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach this season, currently second in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES points standings, driver of the No. 27 Siemens Honda for Andretti Global, it's Kyle Kirkwood. And starting 22nd, the four-time Indy champ from Brazil, making his 25th Indy 500 start, driving the No. 06 Cliffs Honda for Meyer Shank Racing with Curb Agajanian, it's Helio Castroneves.

You want to tighten it up, Kyle? You want to go --

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I've been a little sick, so I'm going to stay here.

THE MODERATOR: That's thoughtful. That's fine. I like this. Let's start. Heli, you want to start things off? 25, that's significant, right?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: That's my age. I love it. Wow, 25. 25th edition, let's put this way, which is amazing. Well, if I wouldn't be much love with this place, I wouldn't be coming back for sure. But this place has been good to me. This place is amazing. I want to try to get what a lot of people and especially the rewrite history.

We're going to have hard work to go up there, but a great row here. I feel like we're going to be up front very soon.

THE MODERATOR: Kyle, for you, it's a different week, right? Every NTT INDYCAR SERIES weekend it's go, go, go, practice, qualifying race. Now you've done the qualifying part. You're out of the car for a couple of days. Back in it tomorrow. How much are you looking forward to getting back in the car?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I think, yeah, very much so. It's not

been an easy couple of days. I've been sick and still doing media events. I feel like I haven't had much of a rest, if I'm being honest.

Yeah, I mean, I'm excited to get into the car. That's what we all look forward to. We don't necessarily look so much forward to all the media stuff. We want to just get in the car and drive.

Monday was a good taste of what the race is going to be like. There's a massive difference this year from qualifying to race and how the car feels and how much on edge you have to be in qualifying in comparison to the race car.

It was a really nice feeling going from quallie to race on Monday. We expect Friday to be somewhat of the same. The weather is going to be really nice for racing, so should be solid.

THE MODERATOR: The weather looks good. Nolan, for you, same story? The difference of the balance, the feel in the car between qualifying and the race?

NOLAN SIEGEL: I definitely feel the same as Kyle where qualifying was, I think, tough for everyone. It was a bit weird, I would say, how strong we felt on Monday relative to kind of the opposite on Saturday, which I guess is a good thing, but it's been a bit confusing for us.

We've, I feel like, been really strong at some points and then weaker at other points. And qualifying day we weren't as good as we thought we were going to be, and Monday we came back, and the car is fast and we're really competitive in traffic.

Hopefully that stays that way, but it's been very up and down. It's been interesting. It's been interesting.

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

**Q. Kirk, since the Long Beach Grand Prix, have you seen other instances of your name being spelled incorrectly or incorrect name being used? Have you checked with Fox to make sure they got you covered for Sunday?**

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KYLE KIRKWOOD: You know, it's an interesting one. I'm from Valencia, California, now, as I'm sure a bunch of people saw. He still calls me Kirk. I don't know if that was from the beginning, but he still doesn't know my first name, and I don't know if it's a joke or not.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: I know his name.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I'm going to start making hats, that golf font that they always put "Brickyard" on the front, it's just going to be "Kirk." I'm hoping to get some sales with that. I'm just accepting it now.

THE MODERATOR: You could go with "Not Kirk."

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I don't know. Everywhere it's been Kirk. Label has been that, and now it's from Valencia.

**Q. Your middle name is Kirk too. So Kirk Kirkwood, Kirkwood, Kirk -- I don't know. On a serious note, between yourself and Helio, Colton, Power, Josef, Nolan as well with that speedy car on Monday, we have a raging pack of wickedly fast drivers and cars at the back of the field. Normally it's front-loaded. In theory, this should be amazing watching you all hopefully charge through the field. That should be a gift to fans. Give me your thoughts there, and you as well, Helio.**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I'm excited for it. It's actually pretty cool. You're going to see some people from the back charging through. I hope it's us sitting here. You can expect the Penskes to come through, obviously.

Yeah, it's going to be an exciting one to watch for the fans. I'm excited for it. I'm excited to turn it back on Monday and watch it back through because you can expect a lot of people to be charging through.

I think that back ten is just as strong if not stronger than the front ten of the group. Yeah, it's going to be an interesting race because of that. There's going to be a lot of passing going on. It actually shakes it up, right? It's going to make it exciting for people.

The cars are passing just as well as they have in the past years, and I think there was some people that were a little bit worried that potentially the racing is not going to be as good with the added weight in the rear of the car, but I have not seen it to be that case at all.

I'm excited for it. It's thrilling. It's nice to know I'm in good company back there. Yeah, it should be an exciting day.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: It's important to have people with experience in this situation. Of course, when you are

talking about fast guys, but also with experience, and that's what we want. We know to win a race, you don't win in the first lap here. Even though those cars are difficult to pass these days, but you also have the new system, which is the hybrid. This could be an interesting sauce into this recipe, I would call, for this race.

Yeah, super excited. Are you kidding me? The car feels great, as I talked about on Monday. Indianapolis creates those mysteries sometimes. Sometimes it's not good. Sometimes the next day is great.

Looking forward to the race for sure.

**Q. Nolan, for you as well, and we'll just call you Kirk too. Your thoughts? First 500. As we mentioned, there's a bunch of veterans in and around you. Is your mindset, great, I'm going to go in front of them right away? Or is it do I play it safe, learn from them, and then attack? What's the mindset?**

NOLAN SIEGEL: It depends how it plays out. No, I feel -- starting where I am, I feel a lot better that I'm starting around great people that are also going to be moving their way forward. Yeah, I couldn't ask for better people to be around.

If I can slot in behind Helio and follow him through the pack, then that's going to be a great learning experience for me. Obviously he knows how to get around here.

Yeah, it's definitely -- starting where I am, it's not where I would want to be starting, but it's kind of the best-case scenario being where I am. So we'll see. I'm going to do what I can. I'm going to try to be smart for the first part, but I think you can't just sit around in INDYCAR. There's no INDYCAR race where you sit around and wait, things just come to you. You kind of have to go get it.

I'll try to move my way forward and be smart about it at the same time.

**Q. Kyle, were you as confident after qualifying as you were in your car before? Did you feel qualifying was just a hiccup?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Yeah. I was just talking with them. Nolan mentioned pretty much the exact same thing that we felt across the race weekend. I looked at Helio. Same for you? He's like, Yep.

It was a little bit of a head-scratcher this past weekend because we came out of the first few days, no-tow speeds were amazing, race pace was amazing. It felt like I was one of the only cars that could pass deep in the pack.

Then we roll into Friday and then Saturday, and we just constantly got slower every run that we did, and we couldn't really figure out why. It was a major head-scratcher for us.

Then we go back out on Monday, and everything is perfect. We're back up there, no-tow speed, at least seemingly, and then our race pace was phenomenal. It's just like, what did we do? We didn't really change much.

We did find a very small issue with the floor, but I don't know if we can completely point at that. It's one of those things where one day you're amazing, the next day you're not. It just happened to be on the qualifying day that we were not.

**Q. For Helio, you know all the three guys who were dismissed from Penske. How did those dismissals impact that organization?**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: To be honest, I already said what I had to say about that. Things already changed. I don't think the team is going to be affected at all, to be honest. Those cars still are really darn fast, I have to say. We just have to keep -- in my case, we just have to keep ourselves straightforward.

Yeah, it's a different, interesting scenario for these guys. It's a one-off season and race. All details matter in this place. That's why we need to be focused on those. At this point I feel great with my car.

Similar scenario with him. We found something in the car that the nose was a little bit damaged, but when you look to the COP numbers, wow, there was no difference. I was like, well, but visually you can see that there is.

Yeah, other than that, we just have to continue working very, very -- looking for details to make sure that we don't have any issues during the race.

**Q. Helio, I hear you say you already said what you had to say about it, but I already had the microphone in my hand. Knowing Roger as well as you have over the years, what impact do you think this has had on him personally? It has to obviously weigh on him, I would expect.**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Well, certainly Roger is a guy that -- is a person that actually always play fair. With me it's always been like that.

At this point, yes, it's hard, but one of the qualities that I have seen in him, especially with the championships that we used to see in the past where you are super close to

win something, and then all of a sudden we didn't win. He has the ability to move on, turn the page, and then keep going. I feel this is going to be the same.

**Q. This is for you, Kyle. Obviously over the years you've gotten better and better in each of your starts here. Do you feel that this is one that you feel more confident about? What are you kind of looking at out of yourself this weekend?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: That's a good question, and I appreciate the positive question. You know, it's interesting. The past couple of years here we've gone forward. We've had really, really good shots at winning the race. Two years ago I was second pretty much just hanging back, not going for the lead, going into the last stop and ended up flipping on my head.

Then last year we were running in that fourth position. Not really able to do anything from there, but we were in a really, really good spot after going to the back of the field. It's not an unusual situation for us starting in the back and kind of working our way through.

Fortunately I have a wizard on the stand, Bryan Herta, who has helped me, guided me to the lead or at least close to the lead in the past couple of years. I'm excited for it. This is the best race car I've ever had around this place. I don't want to see it go to waste.

**Q. Helio, a question for you as well. Kind of leaning on your veteran status, but we haven't really heard any one driver, one specific team that comes into this race as the favorite this year. Is that just indicative of how these races have been recently, or do you feel like this year it really is a lot more wide open than perhaps it's been in the past?**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: It definitely changed a lot with the new system, with the hybrid. We all heard, unfortunately, we had a lot more crashes than I remember in terms of when you come with something -- car very similar to the years before, but very different on driving style.

So, yes, I feel that with the extra weight that we have and the cars becoming a little harder. However, you do have the hybrid to use it. Even though it's not like a push-to-pass, but it feels a little bit.

I believe this could be very, very interesting this race. There is a lot going on, and people don't realize when you are actually use the regen, it feels a little bit like a brake. You've got to be on top of this scenario, deploy and regen at the same time, at the right time, because if something

goes ordinary, you're going to get passed by a lot of people.

It will be entertaining, I feel, the race. It definitely will be entertaining. Yeah, it will be exciting. Hopefully we don't race until 8 o'clock like last year. It was a little different for me, but yeah, I can't wait to get to the race for sure.

THE MODERATOR: It's past your bedtime, right, Helio?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Yeah (laughing).

**Q. Nolan, take me back to Sunday. You were watching Jacob Abel and trying to make the field, and it was the situation that you were in a year before. I'm sure you were relieved you weren't in the cockpit at that time. Did it bring back some emotions? Did you have any opportunity to talk to Jabel and discuss, hey, I know the exact feeling, and maybe you and him might be the only two in the last two years that have felt that?**

NOLAN SIEGEL: I have spoken to Jacob, and I stood out on pit lane with Jack Harvey, who was there with me through it all last year. It's just hard. Someone has to go home, but no matter what, there's no one in the field that you want to see go home. It's just hard.

I know exactly what Jacob was going through. I have a lot of respect for Jacob. We've raced against each other for a long time, known each other for a long time, all through the Road to Indy.

Yeah, it definitely brought back some memories from last year. While I was happy to not be doing that on Sunday, it was hard not to feel for him and feel for the whole team. Like everyone there has put in so much work to be here in the first place, and to see a group of people go home with nothing, it's hard.

**Q. Kyle, the hybrid, how important it's going to be, but are people going to use this to defend? Are they going to use this to cover up a mistake on a lap? Is it just -- how do you feel like it's best used for you?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Yes to both of those. I think you're going to use it to your advantage in any way you possibly can.

**Q. Helio, you've been rivals with Scott Dixon for a long time. I guess you're still rivals with him for this race, but you've been working with him in the build-up. Can you talk about how that experience has been, and have you learned anything about seeing him from the other side? You're seeing more of the inside, behind the scenes of Scott Dixon. How has that been?**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: It's been definitely different. We've been competing against each other for so many years. It's great.

Obviously Ganassi, it's not winning so many races because they just lucky. You know, they have a great group of people there. I have been enjoying working with all of them.

Yeah, particularly with Scott, now that I'm in the same room, you can see that he definitely dyes his hair. Definitely dyeing his hair for sure. And I see Dario as well using the eyeglasses. I'm like, hey, here we go, I'm not the only one getting old here.

All jokes aside, it's great to be with all of them. It shows for MSR Group, not only Felix, but also Marcos, they're really doing well. Yeah, super excited to be working with them.

**Q. For Helio, it's probably better to ask this tomorrow, but what's your comfort level driving with more people than you've never raced against and some people haven't raced on an oval? As a follow-up, do you have your AARP card now?**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: No, I do not have my AARP (laughing).

As a driver, you want to compete with people. You want to get better with some of the people that you don't know because that makes you learn more, learn different style, let's put this way. I'll be seeing that.

Some of them are a little too aggressive in my point. Some of them are aggressive enough to make a movement. I like it. I enjoy it. I just hope they understand how this race is not just a sprint race. It's more than that. They have to be patient, more patient than actually just taking unnecessary risks. That's not me to teach them. Hopefully they learn themselves about that.

I'm just going to go and do my thing.

**Q. Nolan, your famous quote last year was "I wasn't going to go home because I lifted." Is there a part of you that is amazed at the path your life has taken over the past 12 and 13 months since that day?**

NOLAN SIEGEL: Yeah, definitely. I feel very, very lucky to be here. While I feel settled and obviously I've been in the same spot for long enough now for it to kind of feel normal, it is cool being here and looking back one year and thinking about all that's happened.

I feel very grateful to be in the position that I'm in, and a lot of great things have happened in the past year. I just want to make the most of all the opportunities that I've been given. That's my goal here.

Yeah, grateful to have another shot at this race obviously, and it's been my goal for a long time to be full-time in INDYCAR, and to do it with a team like Arrow McLaren is really special. Yeah, I just want to make the most of that amazing opportunity.

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