

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Thursday, May 22, 2025

Ed Carpenter

Kyffin Simpson

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon. We are onto row 5 this afternoon. Starting 14th, making his 22nd start in the Indy 500, six top 10s, runner-up finish back in 2016, Ed Carpenter. Starting 13th, back for his second start, Kyffin Simpson.

You guys are on the same row last year with Marcus Armstrong, right?

ED CARPENTER: We were talking about that. We need to do better this year. We're going to keep together and do better.

THE MODERATOR: Ed, your thoughts about tomorrow? Two-hour practice, then Sunday.

ED CARPENTER: Yeah, really excited. I thought our last regular day on track Monday went really, really well. It's always a nice, nice way to finish off that week feeling prepared, kind of take some of the pressure off of Carb Day. It can be such a weird practice session.

Yeah, so not super stressed about tomorrow. Just go make sure everything is back where we want it and everything's working, get some pit stop practice in, be prepared for Sunday.

THE MODERATOR: Kyffin, for you tomorrow, what's the plan?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, I mean, I'm looking forward to it. I think we've got some work to do on the car after having the crash kind of reset us a little bit on our race prep.

Trying to just get the car as prepared as possible, make sure that we've got a good car for the race.

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

Q. Ed, I just heard a lot of drivers say that the hybrid is

not that much different to the car of last year. Also, it's always said that we need to focus on all the details. Can you describe for you with your experience, with the speed that you had in past years, how do you explain what can be these little details and difference that you have to focus on?

ED CARPENTER: Yeah, I mean, I think in a lot of ways the cars can feel very, very similar to the past without the hybrid. For me, I feel like it made the window, the operating window, maybe a little smaller just with the extra weight.

As far as the details go, it's just a whole 'nother system to manage and use. It's much more useful in a race setting than what it was in qualifying. Just being consistent with the usage and maximizing it, whether you're on the move or defending.

It does play a pretty big role in helping manage keeping people behind you or getting past cars. It's just another layer of detail that didn't exist prior. So just a little more to think about and manage in the midst of the race.

Q. Kyffin, everybody sees the trend you have improving every race. I feel like, for us, maybe it's frustrating for you. What can you tell us about what is the feeling versus the process?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: What do you mean 'frustrating'?

Q. Don't accomplish the results that you seems like --

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Oh. Yeah, I mean, just kind of unfortunate I think. Like, obviously Indy GP we were very fast. We just had a mechanical failure. That's just how it went. That's just racing. You kind of just got to deal with it. Take them where you got 'em.

I think the whole No. 8 team was very happy with how we were performing up until that point. I think we're feeling that momentum and feeling that we're a very strong team this year.

We're trying to just keep that momentum rolling into the 500, try to put us in the best place we can.

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Q. Obviously as a team owner, INDYCAR has talked about having more independence in the wake of everything that's happened this week with Penske. Is that something you called for in the past? What was your reaction to that whole thing?

ED CARPENTER: All that I'll really say about that, just because there's a lot to really be discussed still, I think the start of the conversations that have happened this week have been positive and productive. Look forward to hopefully being part of that as it develops.

I think this week kind of set the stage for what should be some productive work into the future.

Q. Were you good with the way the Penske situation was handled overall this week?

ED CARPENTER: I think so, yeah. I mean, it's obviously a tough situation for everyone, whether you're talking the Penske drivers, especially the personnel that's no longer with the team, but also the rest of the teams and drivers, our partners. That's probably the most disappointing thing to me, is that we're at a point in our sport where we have so many good things going on, so much momentum around this month, that it's changed the storylines a little bit.

I think the Indy 500 is going to deliver a great show, and hopefully we'll be talking about that come Sunday and not what happened last weekend.

Q. Ed, Rossi has brought quite a bit to the program for all the different races so far this season. Speaking to Indianapolis, what's maybe he added to the program that maybe you didn't have last year?

ED CARPENTER: I mean, first and foremost, he's won the race. That's always a big plus, to have a past champion on your team.

But beyond that, Alex is really a professional, detail-oriented guy. The driver he replaced in Rinus was fantastic here, very quick. But in general, we hadn't had a driver come into our team that had been at other high-level teams before they got to us, with the exception of Ryan Hunter-Reay doing a couple races for us a couple years ago.

To have a driver like that join us full-time, we're in a really exciting time at ECR where we have a new ownership partner and new partners, new sponsorship. We're really trying to raise our standards and aim higher than where we had the past couple years. He's a big part of that.

Q. Kyffin, interesting, Ganassi-Meyer Shank Racing technical alliance, you don't just get to have debriefs with Alex Palou and Scott Dixon anymore, but you also get Helio Castroneves. What has he been able to give you or what have you been able to pick up from him that you didn't have a year ago?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, I mean, I think Scott and Alex and Dario have been great helping me having their point of view. It's interesting to have another point of view from Helio's side, having won it as many times as he has.

I know it's four, but I'm just like he's won it a lot is my point (smiling). The fact that he's been able to win it so many times, he's always been strong here, he knows how to drive this place obviously. It's just interesting to see his point of view, kind of how he approaches the weekend.

Q. Can you elaborate, like what is different with his approach?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: I wouldn't say it's all that different. It's just kind of what he likes in a car and how he approaches driving the track is just a little bit different than everyone else. Like, for instance, he tends to stay above the white line a little bit more, which is just a different way of going about it. We all see that quite often when you see him drive. Just interesting to see his approach.

Q. Have you applied anything from his tutelage or have you applied anything you learned from him to your race craft?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: I've tried a couple things, tested a couple things out, seen how they worked. It's more helpful from like a setup point of view where you're able to try other things that he's tried, things that he's liked, what he thinks works well on the car.

Q. Ed, obviously during the off-season, the team made all those changes. How would you assess how the team has progressed so far into this year?

ED CARPENTER: I think we're heading in a good direction. We probably haven't had all the results that we would have hoped on the 21 car. Alex has been quite consistent. We've been qualifying better with that car on average than we had been a year ago, and having some solid races.

It feels like we're on an upward trajectory and really want to capitalize on that on Sunday.

Q. Kyffin, obviously your crash last Friday, what was



the feeling of that? After you have a crash like that, how do you reset going straight into qualifying the next day?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, it was tough. I think it was just a tough situation with the crash. I could kind of feel it coming going through turn three. It was a little bit sketchy, but I didn't think it was all that bad. Did some stuff with my tools, thought I could get through turn four and then bail out of the run. It got a lot more sketchy in turn four, so that was a tough situation.

Yeah, then the team did a great job putting the car back together, getting the spare car ready. I trust those guys with my life, so I just decided to make sure that I got up to speed as quick as I could and did my job.

We were able to put it in 13th. I'm pretty happy with that in a spare car.

Q. Ed, I talked to Christian Rasmussen earlier, talking about his second start, said there's always nerves at the Indy 500. Do you still get the nerves, those butterflies? Do you feel your mindset is that much different compared to when you were here for your earlier starts?

ED CARPENTER: Yeah, I mean, you still deal with nerves and anxiety. There's always a lot to worry about here, whether it's the pace of the car or making the right decisions or all the number of things that are outside of our control that you hope and pray will fall your way on race day.

At the same time really enjoy the process and look forward to all the emotions that come with race day, try to go out and do the job to the best of my abilities and put together a solid 500 miles and see where it lands us.

THE MODERATOR: Ed, obviously not your first 500, but aside from the racing, what do you look most forward to on race day?

ED CARPENTER: I think my favorite part about race morning is probably walking out to the pits with my family, is always a memorable thing. Photos that I appreciate having afterwards. Also driver intros before we get serious and get in the car is a really special moment to appreciate how lucky we are as the 33 drivers that get to go out and race in the greatest race in the world.

THE MODERATOR: Family photos changed over the years?

ED CARPENTER: They're getting quite large. They still

come up with me for driver intros. Two of the three are full-grown now. It's getting tight.

THE MODERATOR: Kyffin, coming back this year, what do you look forward to the most?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, I mean, I'm just looking forward to getting into turn one. I think this race, just driving the race, is a lot of fun. It's really an entertaining race to drive. Especially when you have a good car. When you have a bad car, I'm sure it's not as much fun. Last year I was lucky enough to have a pretty good car. I'm sure I will this year, as well.

It's a fun race to drive. I'm just looking forward to it.

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