

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, May 25, 2025

Alex Palou

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Now joined by the champion of the 109th running of the Indianapolis 500 in Alex Palou, driver of the No. 10 DHL Chip Ganassi Racing Honda who led 14 laps this afternoon, fourth top-5 finish in the Indianapolis 500, fifth NTT INDYCAR Series win of the series, sixth of his career, first on an oval. If you've got to get your first oval win somewhere, this is the place to do it, right.

ALEX PALOU: Absolutely, this is the best place ever, best win ever.

Q. What have you been doing for the last hour?

ALEX PALOU: Nothing, I was just chilling at my bus. Celebrating. I was celebrating with the fans, the amazing fans that we had today. They were incredible. There were so many people that stuck around for that victory lap celebration. It was amazing.

Then just with the team, my family. I have a ton of family here today, so it's an amazing day.

Q. I believe it was last week you said that your career wouldn't be deemed successful unless you won the Indy 500. So what does this mean?

ALEX PALOU: It means that we checked that box and we need another one now.

Q. This is literally an hour old and you're already looking for another one?

ALEX PALOU: No. I mean, yes. It's amazing. It's amazing to win this race. This race means so much for me, for my family, for the INDYCAR community, our fans, and I would say motorsports in general. To be an Indy 500 championship, it's amazing.

Q. Tell us about the pass; what did you see?

ALEX PALOU: Well, we were not in the best position on strategy. We had the worst tires and less fuel than Marcus and a little bit less than Malukas.

I knew that it was going to be tough at the end just because with less grip on the tires and with some traffic, I was just not going to have any chance to overtake him. I saw that I had a small gap, and I wanted to take it. It was a bit too early to go for it, but I thought it was my best strategy to try and go with the traffic and try and get the win.

Q. Alex, it could be said Marcus should have been able to avoid you passing him there. I'm curious, when you're following him, are you just kind of waiting for him to make a mistake or a hiccup, and is that any harder on an oval versus a road course?

ALEX PALOU: When I was behind him, I was just saving fuel. We didn't have enough fuel to go for it, so those first five, six laps or maybe a bit more that I was behind him, I was just trying to save some fuel so we could go hard at the end trying to stay in the lead.

Yeah, I knew that was getting towards, like, late to pass him for the amount of laps that I had on the tires, but yeah, glad we made it work.

Q. Is there any part of you that's glad you didn't win on an oval before so that your first oval win could be here?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, absolutely. It just makes it extra special.

I think I would have been as happy as I am right now, but to say that I've only won one oval race and it's been at the speedway, that's always going to be like that.

Q. We keep asking you these history questions and trying to put this season and this run that you and the 10 crew are on into perspective. The only two drivers to win five of the first six races of a season in modern INDYCAR history are Al Unser, Sr., and AJ Foyt. This latest win for you, biggest race win in the world, can you try to put into perspective what this team has accomplished to start off this year?

ALEX PALOU: It's incredible. Honestly, I think I get a lot

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of credit because you see that I'm the only one driving the car. But there's a huge team behind that is making me look very good on track. We have fast cars every single weekend, and that's really tough to do here in INDYCAR, especially nowadays.

I was just taking the chances that we've had so far this season. Whenever we've had the chance to win, we've been able to execute. And that's taking into account not only the setup, but the strategies, the pit stops that they did today as well.

It's incredible. And I know, I've been telling you guys that I know that this is not normal. But I'm glad that it didn't end today and that we got the wave until the 500 at least.

Q. Out there at the end of the race, did you feel like you had the best car out there? Did you make the best decision out there? What do you make of -- what do you feel like ultimately won you this race here today?

ALEX PALOU: I think it was a little bit of everything. My car was very capable. But I didn't really have the best balance, especially towards the end of the tire life. I would say from lap 20 onwards, I was struggling very much to follow very closely. So that's why I tried to overtake Marcus as quick as they told me that the fuel was more or less okay to go to the end.

There was a lot of fast cars out there. Mine was one of them, but I didn't feel like we had tons of speed. I think I was able to get advantage of the traffic cars, as well, to help me tow up very good and not consume too much fuel, and thanks to Helio, I was able to read the traffic good. Like when I overtook Malukas, it was because I saw that there was people leaving on the pits when I was coming to Turn 1 on the TV, and then with Marcus, it was the same. I knew that was going to be probably my only chance.

Q. I know we made references earlier in this month about the pass that Helio made on you a couple years ago and the way in which he was able to read the traffic, that your eyes were just on what you were doing in that moment and not able to look too far down the road. Did you feel like in that moment, were you looking at the traffic and thinking that might be the way that could help you win this race?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, absolutely. I knew that because of how the strategies were shaking up at the end that we were going to have traffic. So traffic, even though you were P2, you were actually P5 or P4. So you had to take that into account.

So I was just trying my best to try and read it and get on

top of it. I think I got lucky, as well, on timing. I got the opportunity to pass Marcus already towards the end of my tire life because after that, I was struggling a lot, especially the last six or seven laps.

But yeah, I think I'm here because of 2021 for sure.

Q. Alex, first Spanish winner of the Indy 500. Spain has got some good drivers. What do you think this will mean back home and what it'll do for you in your native country?

ALEX PALOU: I don't know.

Q. Well, Chip said it's going to change your life.

ALEX PALOU: I'm sure. I don't know what it's going to be for Spain. Hopefully they are celebrating as much as I am here. It makes it extra special that I'm the first Spanish driver to win it, but honestly, if I was the 50th Spanish driver to win it, I would be as happy as I am now and as proud as I am now.

But hopefully that gets more fans, more people. There was a lot of Spanish flags here today, which I did never see, already on the parade laps that we had before the start of the race, that we were saying hello to the fans. I got to see the crowds, and there was a lot of Spanish flags. It's pretty cool.

Q. Why didn't you dump the milk over yourself?

ALEX PALOU: There's been a lot of people that had told me not to do that, and then I was like, okay, maybe I get too excited and I do it. I was close, but then I thought, oh, man, I'm going to be with the milk all over me for like the next five, six hours. But there's been a lot of die-hard fans that have told me that, and I respect that. Ricky, my crew chief, told me that once, and I was like, all right, I'll try not to do it.

I have to tell you, it was the best milk I've ever had. It was super sweet. I don't know if they put anything in it. But it tastes so well, and I didn't pour it into my head. I hope it's okay with you, as well.

Q. Alex, to know that you're going into a head-to-head battle at the end with Marcus Ericsson, you know that you two were teammates, used to be teammates, and he's very clean. Was there a confidence level that it was going to be a good fight to the finish?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, honestly, I was happy to fight against Marcus. He's very talented. He's an amazing driver. I knew that he was going to be fair, like me. Like



he's going to go for it. He's going to go to the limit, but he's not going to go crazy.

I knew it was going to be a good fight against him, and yeah, I just wanted to finish first because he already has one, so he can wait a couple of years to get another one.

But yeah, it was cool to play against Marcus.

Q. To go back to the traffic and 2021 when Helio was able to do that, do you feel that he was a great teacher because you pretty much did the same thing today?

ALEX PALOU: For sure, yeah. He was an amazing teacher. It was an expensive class, honestly. Yes. I would have liked to still win 2021.

But yeah, I would say there's part of luck, as well. Like you need to have the traffic at the right time, and yes, you need to be able to read it, but everything was falling to my way and then I had to overtake Marcus, but I don't know if he thought he was safe or if he was not thinking that traffic was playing a big role on the race or not, but yeah, glad that the 2021 class paid off.

Q. After you won the SONSIO Grand Prix, you said everybody in the state of Indiana is going to know you won the Indianapolis 500. What are you going to do? You said there's going to be flames --

ALEX PALOU: There was some fireworks in Victory Lane. Yeah, I don't know. Hopefully they let me go to the Pacers game. That's going to help some people in Indiana to know me --

Q. Tip-off is in 90 minutes.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I wouldn't play --

Q. Maybe you should at this point.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I won't do it.

Q. The first half of the race there were a lot of interruptions, yellows here and there, moisture, whatever. Second half of the race was relatively clean except for the very last lap of the race. Did that surprise you at all, for the last half?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I was expecting another yellow for sure, so I was like close to telling me team, just let me go with the fuel, don't even worry, because there's going to be another yellow. I'm glad that I listened to them and that we had enough fuel.

But yeah, that's how it goes sometimes. You suddenly have a lot of back-to-back yellows or suddenly you have a really clean race. I think it's because the pace was actually really fast at the end. Like the speeds that we were having with the traffic was quite high. So that played into the role of not having too much yellows at the end.

Q. And all the comparisons being made to you with Foyt and Unser, is it difficult to put that into perspective given they're near the top of all the wins list, every record you'd ever want, and you're in your sixth season in INDYCAR racing right now?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, it's amazing to hear that stuff. I never thought that I would have my name -- that somebody would say my name around those names. They are not, like, legends of INDYCAR, they are legends of motorsport worldwide.

Yeah, I don't think that we're with them yet. They have a lot more work done than us. But it's for sure very encouraging to hear my name around them.

Q. We talked in Barber about Barry Wanser, talked about how you were so proficient using the hybrid. We talked a little bit of math in there. How did you deploy the hybrid? Did it come into play on the last pass that you made? Just talk a little bit about that, using it here for the first time.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, it was playing a role on passes and on defending. I would say that it played a bigger role defending from Marcus than the pass -- the pass I would say that I deployed, but I think he did the same, so we were kind of on the same boat.

But then it was all about trying to keep my hybrid without use until the exit of the corners so he couldn't get around me. Yeah, he was close, I would say last lap he was very close into 3. But yeah, glad the hybrid worked for us.

Q. Alex, I want to go back to the question about what it means for you, the first Spanish driver winning the Indy 500. Maybe you don't know it, but in your country it's traditional that very successful sports personalities get invited to the Royal Palace. When you go back to Spain, are you expecting the same, to be invited by the Spanish king to the Royal Palace in Madrid?

ALEX PALOU: I don't think so. I don't think that's going to happen. It would be fun, though. If that happens, I'll take a couple of pictures for sure and it'll be awesome to go there. But I don't think that's going to happen, unfortunately.

Q. Where are you going to go to have chicken

tonight?

ALEX PALOU: No chicken. I stopped that. It was just making me unhealthy.

Q. Where does this rank in terms of what you've achieved in your career so far?

ALEX PALOU: It's tough to compare. It's tough to compare. Where I rank emotionally, I would say the best I've ever been and the best I've ever felt, and I'm comparing, like, all days of my entire life.

Where does this rank compared to championships and stuff? I think it's tough. It's very tough to compare. But I'm glad that I got one. It just feels amazing.

I think the support from the media that we have here, the amount of time that we spend, what it means for all my mechanics and my team and seeing all the fans, it just makes it super special. Like there's nothing like this.

Q. I spoke to Chip earlier and he said that you're on a roll and that he considers you one of the greats now within the team. How does that make you feel, given that you're now amongst the likes of Dario and Scott with Indy 500 victories?

ALEX PALOU: It's amazing. I have an amazing opportunity to be in this team, to be surrounded by champions and legends like Dario, Jimmie when he was with us, that he was here today, Scott. Like I wouldn't be here without those. So it's cool that we're catching up a little bit. I think that we still have a lot of work to do, but it's amazing, too.

Q. So much for the long stretches of no races without a caution flag. We had an awful lot at the beginning of this race. Were you surprised by that?

ALEX PALOU: No. I mean, it's the 500. The conditions were tricky. You had to be very aggressive to make passes, and I guess on the restarts and starts, people were just going very aggressive. I think the level of the field, as well, is super close. In order to pass, you need to risk a lot.

I was expecting cautions. Maybe we had some back-to-back that were obviously -- didn't allow you to get into a rhythm. But yeah, you're always ready for that.

Q. But was it a stunner when the first one was Scott McLaughlin because he was considered a favorite?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, for sure. I didn't really see what happened, but obviously that was one of the favorite cars,

one of the fastest cars that I knew was going to be up front at the end. Obviously you want to be fighting with one of the best drivers out there, but yeah, it's sad that it wasn't his day.

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