

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Saturday, May 31, 2025

David Malukas

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. Wrapping up qualifying ahead of tomorrow's Chevrolet Detroit Grand Prix. Currently joined by David Malukas, driving the No. 4 Clariance Technologies Chevrolet for AJ Foyt Enterprises. It's David's third front row start of his career, the last one coming at Milwaukee, that was race 1 last year, the first time that AJ Foyt Enterprises has been on the front row since pole position last year when they started from pole that race with none other than Santino Ferrucci.

We brought you up here yesterday. You guys felt pretty good about it and continued that today.

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, I felt really good. We were actually ChatGPTing on the way here: Is that my best qualifying? Maybe on an oval, but I think for a street and road course, I think that's the best qualifying.

Yeah, I mean, everything just clicked. Like I said after practice, we were very comfortable with the car, very happy, and yeah, it's kind of chaos with the practice sessions figuring out who's fast, who isn't, where we are, because you're getting one lap after every 20, 30 minutes of a clean lap, so it's all kind of just a guessing game.

We kept our heads down and just committed. I thought we had a good car, and clearly it went out and showed that.

THE MODERATOR: It's interesting, as chaotic as this place can be, 13, 14 cars out there at a time, it seemed pretty clean all told.

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, for sure, when you get the groups, then you're in a much better scenario. Yeah, very clean. I think everybody just from previous years being here and obviously coming here this year, I think everybody started spacing out. They were doing some pretty big -- parking, pulling clutch, waiting, waiting, just so everybody had a good gap for qualifying.

THE MODERATOR: Also worth noting this is an all-INDY NXT graduate front row.

Q. Good stuff for Chevy today?

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, really good. Obviously it was mentioned pre-briefing and before the weekend from last year, seemed like Honda had a little bit of an advantage, and it seems like Chevy has done an incredible job this year on the drivability side of things and the tools, and me and Derek from Chevy have been working on a lot of different items, and the driver options are extent. It feels good, and I feel like we've found a really good mix of what I like and really showed the true power of Chevy today.

Q. You made a comment in the post-practice conference yesterday about how dirty the track was at the time. Now that you've made it through qualifying and everything, how are you feeling about the track, the state of evolution it goes through, and heading into the race tomorrow?

DAVID MALUKAS: Feeling better. I could say it was really good, no dust going through my eyes. Yeah, very big on the track evolution.

The thing that really caught us off guard was from practice to qualifying. Just from this morning it was crazy how much faster the times came in. We were group 2 to start, and seeing the group 1 times we were astonished by how much quicker everybody was. It was really good for us to go into group it and go, okay, I really need to start pushing these corners because that lap time is there.

Q. The drivers I talked to, even including the IMSA drivers, say that the track has been improved. Nevertheless, it's still bumpy. Is there any secret you set up your car that you had a quick time, and did you do any changes from practice to the qualification?

DAVID MALUKAS: No secret, it's just the AJ Foyt car is a very good car going over those bumps. I'm seeing other cars flying off of them, and our car takes them like a champ. Just a very good car underneath me, and I just drove to the absolute limit of the car.

Q. How will be personally your opinion the traffic situation in the race tomorrow?

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DAVID MALUKAS: Well, thankfully we're farther up, so hopefully it won't be as much of an issue, but yeah, I mean, it's going to be -- through that whole infield section, going from 4 all the way through Turn 8 is going to be definitely pretty packed up and jumped up. But for me, I missed last year. I remember watching on the TV, so we'll see how this year goes. Obviously with the progress of this year that it's been, the yellows have been a lot less, so we'll see if that continues.

Q. David, we all talk about the lack of yellows until now. Do you see drivers getting more frustrated this weekend than in the past, races this year?

DAVID MALUKAS: I don't know. I don't know if it's maybe from frustration. Could be. Obviously maybe some drivers get more frustrated. But I don't know if that has any effect towards the season or towards last year, but I think it's more just dependent on had you this track is. It's very inviting. We have a lot of open corners that just narrow out on the exit, so it seems inviting on initial and then you turn the corner and then there's no more space. I still feel like that's the reasoning why there's more yellows on this track. But we'll see.

All of this year, like I said before, our data says 100 percent there's going to be a yellow. I swear one of the datapoints they said 107, so I was like, wow, 107 percent, that's a lot. It's even above 100; I don't know how that makes sense, but it's above 100 percent so we've got to go this strategy, and then there wasn't a single yellow, not for that race but for like four races after that. So I was like, all right, I'm not looking at the data. So I don't know.

Q. What do you think has happened with AJ Foyt this season? You did really well in Indy. I know you've done really well in Detroit. Two completely different tracks. Is that something you've just been working on?

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, I mean, we've had a slower start to the season, but for me it's just coming in with a new team, new guys, and we're trying to understand each other and understand the car and the setup. I think for all the meetings and things, I was just saying in the interviews before, I was waiting for the month of May to kick off because you're with the guys every single day and can really build on something, and of course obviously the 500, oval setup, it's a very different car, and I think the Foyt car has also been stronger than previous years, but that doesn't go away from all the work we've been doing in the beginning of the season.

We were able to hone down, have a lot of time to look

through it and really put things forward and start kind of getting a connection with everybody, and now coming into Detroit, I was very happy post-May that I knew our results would come. We just kept our heads down, and I think all that hard work that we've put in is really showing.

Q. You've spoken a lot about your kind of journey over the last, I guess, 16 months or so. But I'd like to ask, how is the risk now and what are you having to do to maintain that and maybe where it was compared to pre-accident?

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, I mean, that was another thing beginning of the season first few races, kind of having a little bit of a struggle bus there. I had another surgery at the end of last season to clean up some scar tissue and get more movement out of it, so obviously going back into the car, no matter what PT or training I can do, nothing is like the real deal, and the hand kind of got a little bit beat up on those first few races. But it's at a good state now where there's no more pain, and it's pretty much at the maximum it will be. I obviously have a little bit of movement that's never really going to come back. It's kind of, it is what it is. But we've done a good job with moving things around in the car and kind of getting things to what I like, and I had to change my driving a little bit, and things are good now.

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