

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Sunday, June 1, 2025

## Kyle Kirkwood

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Kyle Kirkwood also joins us, who led 48 laps this afternoon, driver of the No. 27 Siemens AWS Honda for Andretti Global, first win in Detroit, second win of the season, fourth career win in the NTT INDYCAR Series. How big was this for you?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Massive. I mean, huge day in general for Andretti Global and the 27 car. We've had a hell of a couple weeks, I'm not going to lie, and this is an exclamation point on everything that we've done. Andretti is phenomenal at street courses and it's so good to capitalize on it. I felt pretty robbed of a couple wins here the past couple years where I felt like we definitely should have won and we had pace on everyone, and finally this year we were able to get it done, not from lack of challenge, either. I had to pass some cars out there. I found myself in the fourth, fifth position, I think, a couple times and had to claw my way back, so fortunately we had pace to do so, and fortunately I made it stick. It was some low-percentage moves, I'm not going to lie, that I made. But you have to at street courses.

Any move you make is low percentage, so fortunately they stuck, and we were able to come home with the win.

**Q. Talk us through the next-to-last restart when you got around the 14 to take the lead.**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I mean, we were really good on restarts for some reason. I couldn't tell you why. But our pace on restarts was phenomenal. I knew that because of that I had to get by everyone that was in front of me within the first five laps, which I did on the initial start after I got passed by a guy or two, and once again on that restart, and yeah, fortunately it paid off.

The thought process around it was just take these guys off when opportunities arise, but opportunities came much quicker than I anticipated, and we were able to get them pretty quickly and then get ourselves back into the lead. It worked out really well.

**Q. You said yesterday you don't get too animated, but**

**what have the last nine or ten days been like as far as highs and lows?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I've gotten every emotion that I've ever had in motorsports across the past 10 days, no doubt about it. We had a phenomenal 500, and I got every emotion in the 500 alone. Where we went to the back, we had bad stops at some times. We cycled through, got ourselves back into a good position, had a great car and had a car that was capable of winning but just didn't get close enough there at the end.

Yeah, obviously drama through the week and then coming into this weekend where we knew we'd be fast. We were extremely fast, kind of threw it away a little bit in qualifying but then get some of that positivity back, or all of it I should say, back here today and put an exclamation point on everything that has happened. That's motor racing for you. You get all the emotions. You get the highs; you get the lows. That's what we live for. We live for the highs but we also enjoy the lows when you look back at it because it makes the highs even that much sweeter.

**Q. It's the first podium since Mid-Ohio 2020 where all three drivers are U.S. born. Does that matter?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Yeah. I mean, we have one of the most diverse series in the world, I think, and it's good to have the U.S. back on top. I'm not going to lie; that's pretty cool, actually. I'm stoked with that.

Hats off to Santino. That was crazy. They played their cards right. They got up front. They ultimately didn't have the pace, but they were able to keep themselves -- I respect him a lot for what they did.

But yeah, all three young guys and Americans; pretty cool stuff.

**Q. Alex Palou crashes out in 25th and yet we still don't have a new winner on the season. You still are the only driver that's been able to win --**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Fine with that.

**Q. I imagine you'd probably be happy to keep that**

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**trend going. How important in your title pursuits was it to capitalize in the way that you did today on a day when he has a pretty terrible one?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Super important, but we've got to keep doing it. Still, we saw it, he can skip out on still a handful more races and be absolutely fine.

This race sometimes brings out the best and worst in some people, and unfortunately he -- I don't know exactly what happened to him, but unfortunately for him he ended up in the wall, but it actually helps us a lot in the championship, puts us -- we're not really still in the hunt, I wouldn't say. I could imagine. I don't know what the points actually are, but it at least gives you a taste of, ooh, maybe we can claw back at this, which is pretty cool.

I don't know where we end up in the championship now. I know we were, I think, fifth coming into this weekend and now we're second.

**Q. You're 102 points back right now.**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: 102? That's still a mile away, but it puts you back in a position where you feel like you might be able to get that back. But I'm sure we're going to go to road courses and Palou is going to do his thing. So we'll see what happens.

**Q. In that same vein, Bob mentioned it a little bit, losing in this championship battle, not only did you lose a solid Indy 500 finish, dropping 24 points I think is what it was when you dropped from sixth to 32nd for the 500 --**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Yeah.

**Q. How have you dealt internally with the team, just the frustrations of that? Clearly the team and you both capitalized this weekend and put it behind you.**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Fortunately for me, I just drive the car. We immediately -- even after the 500, immediately that night we focus on what is ahead and how do we do things like we did today. I think that pays off.

That's one of our strong suits that we're able to put things behind us very, very quickly and focus on what's in front of us, and I'm thankful for the team for that mindset. It paid off here this weekend.

**Q. You referenced it, you feel like these road courses that are coming up, Road America, Mid-Ohio in particular, I think Alex has won on in recent years, the last couple years. Those are maybe places that you**

**feel like you guys are going to have to come and bring something to him to keep him from running away with this more than he already has?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: A little bit. Not as much as, like, Barber, Indy GP, Thermal, because that's where he's been dominant in previous years, so fortunately we're through some of those races with him. But yeah, Mid-Ohio, Road America, Laguna, places like that, we know he's strong, but we also know that we're strong, too, and we've had a lot of success there in previous years. We've just got to get back to our winning ways there because we can't let him win any more races.

**Q. Colton said when he was here the track was very difficult, bumpy with 26 cars. Are you sharing his opinion? And watching the race on television at the media center, your front wing was wobbling. Did it affect your handling, or you were not feeling that anything was strange with the car behavior, driving behavior?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Two questions there. First, yes, the track is very hard to drive. That's the nature of street courses. I'll get back to what I was saying. The track is very difficult to drive. It's obviously very bumpy. Like I said earlier to them over here, I said, it brings out the worst in you, and it brought out the worst in me yesterday in qualifying. It's pretty rare for me to make mistakes and hit the wall anywhere else other than street courses.

Yeah, that was a tough one, and it's because the track is so hard to drive. But I actually appreciate it in that sense. It brings out -- it allows you to capitalize when you take more risk or it is a tougher track to drive, and there is a lot more reward for the risk that you take.

Then your question about the front wing, yeah, the front wing, I clipped the back of Kyffin. I don't know if it was the bumps that made him slightly move over. I was too close to him, though, to be honest. I was just popping a little bit too tight to him, and either the bumps pushed me into him or him into me. I'm not sure exactly what happened. It wasn't his fault at all. But yeah, broke the front main plane or the left front main plane. It really didn't affect the car at all, though. I think our performance was still really good. I might have picked up a little bit of understeer from it and probably lost some downforce, but it wasn't really enough to affect the car.

**Q. But it was looking very --**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I'm sure, but it didn't really affect the actual performance.

**Q. Could you see it from the cockpit?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Barely. Ever so slightly.

**Q. What about street course racing fits your style? Obviously having a good car is a lot to do with it, but your driving style and the way you've been able to win here and other street courses, as well.**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I don't know. I wish I knew. I wish I could take whatever that was and bring it to other places. Obviously the cars are really good here. I've got to put a lot back on Andretti because they've always been really good at all the street courses that we go to. That's where we tend to be dominant, and those are the places where we've got to make sure Alex doesn't win at, even though he won at St. Pete earlier this year at a street course.

You know, I wish I knew why or how it -- or if it does translate to other places because weekends like this is what we need to win a championship.

**Q. It's kind of a new car, a couple new sponsors came on since Indy. That's got to be big, as well, and having eyes on Andretti, and then if you can also recap the start of the race. Colton said he bunched everybody up to make sure they were a little bit slower going into that initial first turn.**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I don't know what you're talking about --

**Q. On the very first start.**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I'll answer your first question. Yeah, we obviously brought Siemens and AWS on for this weekend, and most of their personnel in the U.S. are based here in Detroit, although their headquarters are not here, they're out of actually Plano, Texas. But most of the executives and a lot of people are here, so actually the top portion of that garage right across from pit lane was primarily Siemens people, so this is a big win for them, big win for them being a semi-home to them, and obviously a big win considering that they just came on board for the 500.

They've been with the team forever. They've been on our mirrors for 28 years I think it was. Right, Michelle? Does that sound about right? Yeah, so they're one of the longest running sponsors on our team. It was great to have them in this capacity as a primary sponsor and get a win with them, of course.

Then your question about the start. Yeah, Colton broke slightly early and Lundgaard broke very, very late, and it

kind of worked out for him a little bit. But I got kind of boxed out on the outside. Fortunately I didn't push it too hard because I actually would have collided with Lundgaard. It was a hectic start by every point of view. But we got through it unscathed barely.

**Q. You had over 40 seconds of Push-to-Pass left at the end of the race. Everybody behind you had nothing. Number one, what was Bryan telling you, and what does he have to tell his son tonight?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I'll be honest, I think Colton was somewhat robbed of a win here today. He's done everything right this weekend. He got the pole. He led the beginning portion of that race and then he just got caught out on cold tires. Siegel actually kind of dive-bombed him into Turn 4 and almost put him into the wall and put him in a really bad spot, and I was able to sneak by him in that situation. But if it wasn't for that, he probably would have won the race, and that was unfortunate for him.

He's not doing anything wrong. He's doing everything right. I still look up to him. He's still the guy that I'm always trying to catch up to, if I'm being honest.

Of course we have had a couple of wins here, but he's doing everything right. Some stars just need to align for him a little bit better.

And of course that was strategy within the team. They wanted Bryan to come on. It was funny, Bryan actually wants to beat his son a lot of times, and Colton is very solidified in the series. Of course Bryan wants to see his son win, but he also wants to see the car that he's on win, and there's no conflict of interest whatsoever.

**Q. When you were around lap 66, 67, you were in first place but then you lost first place for a couple of laps. Did you ever lose doubt that you weren't going to get back in first place?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Yes, in simple ways, of course. You never want to see yourself lose positions because somebody got lucky on something, and that's exactly what happened for the three guys that were in front of me. Was it three or four drivers? Three, I think. It was Santino, Kyffin and Armstrong that were right there in front of me.

Of course I was like, man, this probably just ruined our race here. Fortunately it didn't. Fortunately we were able to get back by them, but we had to pass cars, which is a hard thing to do in INDYCAR. We haven't seen a lot of that on street courses and road courses, and today we saw the most passing that we've seen all season.

I'm sure that was big for us as a series, big for FOX. We're coming off the 500 with over 8 million at its peak, 7 million viewers at one time, and then this weekend is usually a big weekend for FOX coming off the 500, and we had one of the best races of the year, I thought.

Fortunate for that -- sorry, I'm side tracking. But yes, I did lose doubt at some point. It went away when I started passing cars and we were able to get ourselves back in the lead.

**Q. With 22 to go, with a damaged wing, you overtake Santino Ferrucci for the lead. In a moment that SportsCenter top 10 moments are made of, what was your thought process through the whole thing?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: We had pace on him, so I just played my cards right. I had to overtake kind of everyone in different manners. It was all in the same place, but it all felt a little bit different in a way.

Yeah, the Armstrong pass I actually popped early on him to kind of put him in a spot that he couldn't defend, and it worked out really well. I went around the outside of David. We were one of the most trimmed cars out there, which did happen in that situation here today. I think David was max downforce and we were trimmed a little bit, and it made it a little bit easier for us to pass. I don't know where Santino was on downforce, but he was also easy to get around in the straight and then kind of get back in front of him and defend going down into Turn 3.

Pretty simple passes, if I'm being honest, in street course form. Not much of a lunge. I had a lot of big lunges early on in the race because I was pretty upset that I lost positions in the start. But they all worked out.

**Q. I don't know if you had a chance to look at your car after the race, but how bad ultimately was the damage?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: It wasn't bad. Wolfgang asked that a couple minutes ago. It wasn't bad at all. It broke the front wing, but fortunately at a place like this, downforce isn't everything because you're going so slow. So a front wing damage isn't that big of a deal.

**Q. Kyle, you were talking about some of those big sends and low percentage moves, but you had the pace all weekend. You qualified third with a broken toe link. Talk about how much confidence you drove with this weekend?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: A lot, yeah. That's a good question. A lot of confidence. Anything less than a win would have

been a disappointment for me this weekend. I was doing everything in my power to make sure we got that win. I was disappointed with qualifying, with the pace. You never want -- it's rare that you get weekends like this in INDYCAR, where you feel like you have a car that is 100 percent capable of winning in every situation that you have, and you don't want them to go to waste. I made sure that that was not the case here today.

**Q. A little bit of a procedural follow-up question, so when we have a crash like Alex Palou had, on your radio is Bryan telling you who crashed, so did you know at the time that Palou had crashed out or were you not aware of it until the end of the race?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: No, he didn't tell me but I knew it. I shouldn't be smiling thinking that, but I knew that he crashed, and I knew that we needed to capitalize on some points today given the outcome for him.

I don't know what happened with him, and I feel bad for him, but this also does help us a lot with the points.

**Q. He was tapped from behind by Malukas --**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Was he? Ooh.

**Q. 4 was penalized.**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I'm not going to comment. It's so easy to do here, especially if you're on throttle and you're just shoving the guy through the corner like Will did to me. I'm sure it wasn't like that. I'm sure it wasn't like that.

**Q. I guess you touched on it there. That registers in your mind when you're in the race, okay, Palou is out, I'm up toward the front, I need to -- even more than you already are, make sure that we don't lose the chance that we have ahead of us right no?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I completely blanked on what you just asked.

**Q. I was clarifying, you said that you hinted that registered in your mind that Alex had crashed out of the race and that was something that crossed your mind that you needed to focus in that much more to make sure this was the result --**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: It didn't change the focus whatsoever. I was still like I need to win this race. But at the same time, I knew that we were also anywhere that we ended up kind of up front that we were going to have a good points day, and it was going to help us out a lot. Also the guys I was racing against aren't as close to the championship, like

Lundgaard, Pato, Felix, they weren't up there, and I hope that they're okay. I don't know what actually happened there.

Yeah, so I knew we were going to have a good points day, which I wanted to keep it clean because of that but also, I was like, I've got to win this race.

**Q. Just curious, would you think drivers or yourself might entertain if there was a playoffs in INDYCAR or --**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: No way, don't even ask. Yes, 100 percent don't. Please don't ask that.

**Q. You went from -- everybody went from Barber to Indy GP, Indy 500 qualifying, 500, now here. How are you going to spend your off week?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I'm going to go home. Going to go back to Florida. Be a little bit warmer than here. Go see my house, make sure it's still there. I think there's like a storm coming next week, so probably hunker down and watch a hurricane hit us or something. Maybe get on my boat for a little bit. We'll see what happens.

I just want to get home. It's been a long month. It's been a long month for everyone probably here in this room, and thank you for what you guys all do and obviously thank you to the team.

But like you said, now we've got an off week, and I hope everyone can go out there and enjoy it as much as possible. I know I will.

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