

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, June 15, 2025

Pato O'Ward

Christian Rasmussen

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up what was a thrilling Bommarito Automotive Group 500 presented by Axalta and Valvoline.

It is great to be joined by Pato O'Ward, who led eight laps tonight, driver of the No. 5 Arrow McLaren Chevrolet with his third runner-up finish of the season, fourth here at Worldwide Technology Raceway.

Pato, congratulations. Congratulations. Kind of a crazy night, to be sure. Just your thoughts about another podium for you here in 2025.

PATO O'WARD: Yeah, I think it was a fantastic race. Hopefully everybody that was watching was well entertained. I was very happy with my car. We were just going through the motions and happy with what our strategy looked like, and I think we positioned ourselves well to have that shot to win.

Happy with this podium, and yeah, another great points day for us.

Q. Off an oval, then you go to a big rolling road course. What kind of momentum do you guys have? Obviously the championship looks a little bit different, perhaps. Talk about the championship a little bit as it's tightened up a tad?

PATO O'WARD: Yeah, I think Road America is halfway for the championship. There's plenty of racing to go. So much has happened already, so I expect the same for the next half of the championship.

All we need to do is just keep on our wagon and keep pushing forward, and yeah, we'll see if we're sitting pretty in Nashville.

Q. Christian, driver of the No. 21 ECR Splenda Chevrolet, first-ever podium, from 25th to third. I love the smile you have on your face. I'm not sure you

would have thought about a podium. Did you think you had a podium car?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: No, not really. Not really.

Just way to turn this weekend around. I think we really, really struggled in practice 1 as well as qualifying, but knew what we needed out of the car, and obviously hit some good changes for the race.

Yeah, as soon as I kind of found out how well my car worked on the high side, it was just game on. I was able to pass cars -- we even got hosed one time with having to take emergency service because we were out of fuel, so I had to restart at the tail end, and that was kind of right at the point where I had kind of driven through most of the field and was up front but had to go to the back, drove through again, and man, we were just coming.

It was awesome. I haven't done one of these in a while, so it's good.

Q. Pato, you had a moment up here where you were coming out of 2 where you kind of swerved a little bit. It seemed a lot of drivers had trouble with marbles tonight. How bad were they?

PATO O'WARD: I don't think they were so bad. The high line was working. I just think that was me getting greedy on the pedal and just trying to get by McLaughlin. Felt quite stronger than him so I just wanted to do that, but it seemed like he just gave it to us in the pits.

Q. Christian, a lot of people saw how good you were in the Indianapolis 500. To be able to back it up this soon two races later, how important is that for your career?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: It's definitely important, but I think it's been coming. I've been good around ovals most of my career, or really all my career since I've started doing ovals. It just comes very natural to me.

For a first podium, I'm not surprised it's on an oval.

Q. Christian, you had to go to the back countless times and make your way through the field. How did

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you not get frustrated with yourself and just keep yourself in the race throughout the whole night?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I wouldn't say I got frustrated with myself. I definitely got a little frustrated with just having to do it all over again.

But on the flipside of that, I knew that I could do it. I knew that I had been moving forward and I was the car probably in the field that was moving the most forward.

I just kept my head down and kept passing cars. There was no other way around it.

Q. Pato, with a performance like this and Alex Palou having, for lack of a better word, non-factor night, what confidence does this give you for what once looked like a foregone conclusion?

PATO O'WARD: The guy has been on a run. He has five wins or something. I've got zero wins. I've just got a handful of podiums. We need to start racking up some wins, and that'll make that points count come down a lot faster than what you're seeing now.

I feel like we're just sitting at bay right there just waiting for our run to come, so hopefully that does come to life, and yeah, I think it's going to be a tight end to the championship.

Q. Christian, were you aware that you were literally on fire at one point during this race?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I wasn't, but they kind of were yelling in my ear, you're on fire, you're on fire, but I was looking at the fuel probe, I didn't see anything, so I don't know how bad it was. But I guess I'll have to rewatch it.

Q. Christian, they said you passed something like 70-some people out there tonight, and the next closest was 30-some. Did you know you were passing that many people, and just exactly how does that feel?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Yeah, I had a good feeling. Obviously I was around a lot of other cars and I could see how they were moving around. There was a couple cars that were making passes, but I don't think there was anyone that was passing as much as I did. Not as I could see on the track. And obviously that supports it.

But yeah, my car worked better on the high side than it did on the low side, so I was just going to use it. Then just full commitment and definitely passed a lot of cars tonight, so that was pretty cool.

Q. For both of you, with it being on primetime on FOX, a nationwide network, the opportunity that exists for INDYCAR with a race like this -- earlier today we had a NASCAR race in Mexico City where the guy won by 16 seconds. Tonight we had a race where we didn't know who the winner was going to be until checkered flag. If you're a TV viewer tuning into INDYCAR for the first time, do you think you won some new fans tonight?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I would hope so. I would hope so. I think it's awesome. I think it's an awesome opportunity for INDYCAR to showcase ourselves in primetime Sunday night.

So yeah, I think it's a great opportunity for all of us drivers as well as us as a series to showcase ourselves.

PATO O'WARD: Yeah, I think it was a great opportunity to do it in a place like this because I think it's produced some of the best INDYCAR races on the schedule, and I think it's important for that first opportunity to be somewhere where it is nail biting, I would say.

We were definitely -- didn't really know how things were shaping out in the car, so it was very entertaining for us, as well.

Q. Christian, you sort of have this very distinctive, aggressive style of racing on ovals. Is that something which you've had your entire career, and do you ever feel slightly on the edge when you are racing so aggressively all the time?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Yeah, I would say so. I would say it's calculated aggression, but I think on an oval, decisive moves definitely propel you forward, and I think that was a good showcase of that for me tonight, having to be aggressive to move forward.

Q. For Pato, how much of the NASCAR did you see in México this weekend, and do you think INDYCAR could replicate an event and go to Mexico City?

PATO O'WARD: I saw none of it. I saw a tweet that Daniel won in Xfinity, which I was super happy for him. I grew up with him in the same hometown, at the same track I think is where we started both.

I think it's fantastic for him, and yeah, we would love to go there. I think it would be fantastic to have INDYCAR there, and yeah, we're sure as hell going to try and pack the whole place up.

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