

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, July 13, 2025

Alex Palou

Barry Wanser

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up today's Farm to Finish 275 presented by Sukup, now joined by first time winner here at Iowa Speedway, Alex Palou, who led 194 of the 275 laps, driver of the No. 10 DHL Chip Ganassi Racing Honda, the seventh win of the season, as mentioned, first here at Iowa.

Alex now joins AJ Foyt, Zanardi, Montoya, da Matta, Paul Tracy, Sebastien Bourdais, all with seven wins in one season. The record is 10, by the way, set by AJ Foyt back in 1964 and the late great Al Unser back in 1970. 18th career win and climbing for Alex Palou, and also longtime team manager for the 10 car, Barry Wanser, also joins us, another chapter of the Alex and Barry show in the NTT INDYCAR Series.

Alex, congratulations. You're now official, street courses, road courses --

ALEX PALOU: I'm an INDYCAR driver now finally.

THE MODERATOR: According to Scott McLaughlin, now you're officially a driver.

ALEX PALOU: He told me as well as soon as I jumped out of the car. It feels amazing.

BARRY WANSEER: He's young. You've got to tell him what's going on.

ALEX PALOU: Honestly, it's tough. It's tough. That's why it's so fun to race in INDYCAR with these teams, with these different tracks. It's different challenges that you have. You go to a street course and you need different techniques than on a road course, and then you go to an oval and you have superspeedways, and then you come here and it's completely different to IMS.

It's super fun, keeps you awake, keeps you having to push every single weekend, and honestly, I was already super happy yesterday with our first pole here. But to be able to

get our first win here and fighting on track, it's been a good day. It's been super fun.

Q. Barry, obviously another winner for the team, but that championship increases to 129 points as you head to Toronto in a couple weeks. Been an okay season for you guys?

BARRY WANSEER: Yeah, it's been an amazing year so far for sure. It's hard to describe really.

Q. How difficult was today?

BARRY WANSEER: Today was really difficult. I can tell you that all the teams and drivers yesterday were trying to do their best and not crash, but race 2 is always more aggressive, and we saw that today. The pace was stronger, faster, but it was hard. It's hard to win a short oval, especially at Iowa.

I think we saw better racing today from keeping momentum up, a lot more passes, side-by-side racing.

Q. 382 on-track passes in that race, 229 were for position. Alex, you had 28 on-track passes this afternoon.

ALEX PALOU: Nice. Yeah, I think that's my max. I was passing so many cars I felt like I was Lightning McQueen or something. It's the first time that I'm not getting overtaken every single lap on a short oval. It was fun. It was very fun.

There was a lot of traffic, which it was good. It was fun getting to see different people struggling in different areas, then you would get to another car and he would be running the line that you liked, and then you would struggle for five, ten laps. But it was fun.

Q. Alex, Josef kept pitting one lap before the yellow came out, and I know that's really bad timing but it happens in racing. When you and him were both up there fighting together, how fierce was it?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, it was hard. It was hard racing. I think we got small contact heading into 1 when he passed

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

me. It wasn't bad. It was good enough to be in the marbles.

But yeah, you had to fight hard. I think he knew that, without that, that I would have been able to be side by side in Turn 1 and kind of hold the position. But it was tough.

Then in strategy, sometimes it goes like that. Honestly, we knew that we're not going to gain much by pitting early, especially the first pit stop. He kind of had a super big lead into us, and I did not expect him to pit that lap. It worked for us, and it worked for us as well on the last one.

Q. Would you also say that Honda has had better fuel mileage today which really helped?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, great. I think although we had an amazing start of the season for Honda with 10 wins, it's actually the first time, I believe, that we get one, two, three for Honda. Pretty cool at a place that we've struggled in the past, and to get a pole and one, two, three in the race, too, it's pretty amazing, and hopefully it gives a big boost of confidence to everybody.

Q. As Bruce alluded to there, this race just kind of had lots of ups and downs for so many in the field, including you. Josef overtakes you for the lead and then pits right before a caution. He has to work his way right back up, takes the lead. Same thing happens again. What was this race like for you, just kind of the way in which it yo-yo'd and momentum and chances to change for lots of folks in the field, including yourself?

ALEX PALOU: I felt we learned from yesterday, and we knew that we didn't want a race that was going to be slow and fuel saving and just waiting for something to happen. We wanted to go fast. We wanted to show the speed that we had.

I think we're really, really good the first 70 percent of the stint, and kind of at the end I was always struggling a little bit on balance and not knowing how to drive properly, like one lane, one and a half, two lanes. It was tough for me to judge. Josef was a lot better there, and yeah, he was driving excellent towards the end of the stints.

Yeah, I think it just happens in racing like that. Sometimes you get lucky, sometimes you don't. I'm proud that we're always up there like one, two, three, and we're just trying to, I guess, get more tickets for getting a yellow. For that, you need to stay out, and you need to get beaten when you start and everybody is pushing on new tires.

Q. I've asked you this before. You now have win No. 7. 10 is the record. At what point does 10 feel like it's

at all in play for you this year if you were to continue winning?

ALEX PALOU: It would have been a little bit closer without my excursion in Mid-Ohio.

Q. Sightseeing?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, sightseeing. It was lovely. But that's the way it is. Honestly, it's crazy. It's been an amazing season. When I say I don't really have words, it's tough to describe. It's magical. I think everybody in CGR and the 10 car especially is feeling that, and we don't really know how to describe how happy and how hard they're working to be here.

It's not that it comes easy, as we saw last weekend at Ohio. I never looked at the end result, honestly. Although it would be amazing to look back and be like, wow, we won 10. If it stops here and we look back and it's like, we won seven, it's going to be quite impressive.

Yeah, I'm going to work towards getting 10, obviously, but I'm not waking up and thinking about getting 10. I think it's a pretty realistic goal, and it's far, like it's three wins. It seems like it's only three, but it's very far. That's the amount of wins I got in 2023, and that's one more win than I got in 2024.

Q. Barry, at what point do you try to fire up the team and set that 10-win mark as a goal for the No. 10 team this year?

BARRY WANSER: We're not going to look at that goal. We're going to look at the next race. We take it race by race, session by session.

Alex brought up Mid-Ohio. I know he's still beating himself up, but like I explained to him, he's helped us have a season to make what we're doing look really easy, and he proved how hard it was at Mid-Ohio, so just to have the slightest misstep.

Today was probably his hardest race. This was hard. We asked him to continue to push. He disagreed with us again.

ALEX PALOU: I didn't disagree. I just asked. I double-checked.

BARRY WANSER: I think I know --

ALEX PALOU: I double-checked. I was like, are you sure?



BARRY WANSEER: Are you sure? And then, really? It's just the actual number, but we're not going to change our plan.

ALEX PALOU: That's not disagreeing, that's making sure that everything was on you, like I was going to blame you.

BARRY WANSEER: You see how calm he is. That's his version of, like, blaming. Yes, correct.

Q. You were in a big fight with David Malukas, it seemed like, all race. How tough was it to keep him behind you? Because a couple times you went a little offline trying to fend him off during the race.

ALEX PALOU: It was tough. It was really tough. I think we got side by side for, I don't know, like laps. But like three times, just three different times throughout the race, and I was like, man, I cannot let him go because he was really, really fast and I wanted to stay in the lead, I wanted to stay up front. I'm glad that it worked out, but it was really tough.

We had to risk it all the time. He was super fair, honestly. We never had any contact. He always gave me enough room for me to not be in the marbles. It was a lot of fun. Hopefully he thinks the same.

Q. Now you've won on pretty much every track type in INDYCAR. How important is that to you to notch that off your belt there, a short oval win?

ALEX PALOU: Oh, yeah, getting a short oval win, it's huge. It's huge. Already getting the 500 and getting my first oval win was like, man, it's great. I can already say that we've won on an oval. But short ovals, it's different. It's like a different animal. For me it's like the same difference as road course and street course. It's that different. Getting a win here, it's huge. It's going to give me the confidence to know that I'm able to do it.

I know that there's still a lot of work ahead to try and be as good as some of the guys, like Josef was getting through traffic, but at least we know we can do it.

Q. Alex, on a semi-serious note, 48 hours we were huddled together in this room riding out a tornado. What was your first tornado in Iowa like?

ALEX PALOU: It was not fun. It's never fun, especially having my daughter and my wife here and being at the bus, like our bus -- well, it's all the buses. That's not very safe for a tornado. Being here was actually seeing so many people actually makes it feel safer and seeing like 90 percent of the paddock taking pictures and videos, at least

it makes it seem like you're not being irresponsible.

BARRY WANSEER: I think there was a complete lack of intelligence there. We were enjoying the view.

ALEX PALOU: You were part of it, right?

BARRY WANSEER: Yeah, I was. But it's not the first tornado he experienced. A few years ago in Indianapolis he did, and I got the call, what do I do? I'm like, go to this parking garage.

ALEX PALOU: Yes, that's true.

Q. Earlier this week I wrote a story about Scott McLaughlin told me that his win here last year actually inspired him to seek American citizenship. I know that you have an Indy 500 under your belt, but what could this win do for you at least in the moments right afterwards when you think about it?

ALEX PALOU: Well, yeah, that's deep for Scott. I'm working on it. I'm working on it because this is my home now, and I've been here for like five, six years, and I feel like it's my home.

But yeah, this is going to inspire me to go faster and try and get more wins at tracks like this. But the other thing, I'm working on it already.

Q. Do you think people followed you in here for the tornado because they figure you're invincible and if they're around you that there won't be any issue?

ALEX PALOU: Probably yes. Yes.

Q. With the 129-point lead in the points, do you even -- have you hit the point now where you can just race and not even worry about points because it would take a disaster to lose --

ALEX PALOU: Honestly, that's how we've been racing since Race 1 in St. Pete. We started racing not thinking about the points because it was the first race of the season, and I raced hard today, as hard as I could, risking everything because I wanted to get the win and I wanted to fight hard.

I don't think we've ever raced for points. The only places I remember was probably Nashville last year and Long Beach in 2021, where you know that if you finish in that position, you can be the champion. That's when you race for points.

I think all the other races it makes no sense. Like if we

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

change the way they call the strategies or the way I drive just for thinking about points, I think we're going to start dropping towards the back. Yeah, I think we're doing the right thing.

Q. Alex, can you explain what did you change in your car to run better today from yesterday?

ALEX PALOU: I changed front wing, front springs, rear springs. We changed quite a lot. Ride height. I'm not going to tell you exactly.

BARRY WANSER: And then we changed the strategy.

ALEX PALOU: We changed the strategy. We changed a lot, yeah. We learned. We evaluated what happened yesterday. We thought we had an idea of how to win this race and how it was going to be better for us and the car. Honestly, that's all Julian. I just give him feedback, and Julian, our engineer, just makes the calls on what to change, and he changed a lot on the car. I asked him if that was safe to do, he goes yes, so yeah, it worked out.

Q. For Lightning McQueen, you described the difference between a short oval and a superspeedway as the same difference between a road course and a street course. Could you put that in plainer terms or explain why it's such a big difference from a superspeedway to a short oval and what you have to change as a driver and how difficult is it to win at a short oval?

ALEX PALOU: Well, starting from how the car feels at a superspeedway, especially at Indy, the car just feels like you're on a road course and you're doing the fastest high-speed corner that you have four times every lap, and every corner feels kind of different. The way that you need to drive it, it's super smooth and you don't want to over saturate the tires or the car.

Then here it's the completely opposite animal. You need to tell the car -- it's like driving a crazy bull. You need to tell the car that that's how you need to do it. With all the bumps, the different tarmacs that you have here, and you need to drive it super hard. It's a completely different way.

That's why I say it's close, the difference from a road course to a street course, in the way you drive it. The first lap you do on a street course or the first lap you do in Iowa, you're like, this is not right. We shouldn't be here. But then you realize that everybody is doing the same, so you need to go and do it a bit better.

Q. You're probably biased because you just won, but do you want to see us race here next year?

ALEX PALOU: I always want to go to places that we won, but I've already heard that we don't go to one place I've won twice. So let's see. But honestly, it's good that we keep on winning at different places. Honestly, whatever happens, it's good. Wherever we go, I'll be happy.

Q. Barry, without giving us too much detail that you don't want to tell us, just talk about the success Alex has had in such a short amount of time and what he brings to the table. We talk about the history of Ganassi with Dario, with Montoya, with Zanardi. What does Alex bring to the table that separates him from a lot of the drivers in today's field and all the success you guys have had together in such a short amount of time?

BARRY WANSER: Alex basically brings to us the same thing Dario did to the 10 car. He gave us all the options. So when you look at strategy and options during the race, whether it's before the race or the tire choice, the starting tire, the setup of the car, and then what he has to do for us in the race to perform against everybody, he gives us all of those options. We're never at a point where it's like, we can't do this part of the strategy or we can't do that part. We have it all, even sometimes when he doesn't agree.

Q. Alex, inside the cockpit, this is probably one of the most hectic races because you have lap traffic. How much chatter is between you and the spotter? Are you wanting to know who's behind you, who's in front of you? Tell me about that communication. You're ticking these laps off at 18 seconds a lap, and you've got cars in front of you, cars behind you. Just talk about that communication, how important that is at such a short track.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, it's huge. I think everybody's head after a short oval, especially after a race like today, it's super big because it's a lot of information, but you need all of that, especially if you're fighting. If you're going through traffic, you want to know what's that person in front of you been doing the last couple of laps to see if you can go up or if you need to go down on the line, and then also you want to know who's behind you, how close is he or she, and just be ready in case they attack.

I actually got kind of -- got trapped yesterday when Pato and Daly overtook me, and it's because I was just like focused on Josef and not on them, and Lee told me on the spotter side, but I was like, it's okay, it'll be fine, and then suddenly they just passed me through.

It's tough. As soon as you lose momentum here because you don't have all the information, it's huge, so it's super



important to be listening to the spotter and be trusting everything he says.

Q. Physically all good after two 275-lap races?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, it's not easy. Heart rate is up all the time, especially when you're fighting so much. Yesterday I think it was a bit easier. But today it was like heart racing all the time, every single lap. I don't remember any lap that I was saving fuel.

But I would say it's more mentally that you need to be aware of what's going on. You need to be reading the car in front. You need to be mindful of your car, listening to Barry telling you strategies or gaps, and then Lee, as well, my spotter. It's a lot. I think mentally it's tougher than physically.

Q. Did your cool shirt work today?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, it worked. Yesterday it didn't work.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports