

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

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### Kyle Kirkwood

#### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Really a sign of just how quickly the season is passing. The final street course of 2025, the annual Ontario Indy Toronto, a ton the great history on the streets of Toronto.

Kyle Kirkwood has excelled on the streets this season, two wins in 2025. Kyle just happens to be the runner-up in this race a year ago to his teammate Colton Herta.

Kyle, thanks for doing this. Silver Gold Bull, a Canadian company, you're in Toronto. Cool to rep a Canadian company?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: It's a cool alliance. They've now been affiliated with the team for over a year now, I believe. Yeah, a great partnership with them. Love to have them on board.

This clearly makes a ton of sense for them given that it is in Canada. It will be exciting to try to go for another win with them. Like I said, we've been really good at the street courses. Colton won there last year. It was one of our most dominant performances in quite some time given that Colton was fastest in every single session all the way up to the race. Then in the race we went 1-2.

We had a lot of control at this place, so glad to have them on board. Glad to be back in the streets of Toronto. It's a place I love so much. Hopefully we can start to close out the season with another win.

THE MODERATOR: Certainly confidence is everything in racing. Team is good. You've been good. How much confidence do you have going into a weekend like this?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Yeah, very high. When we sit and look at all the best events that we have in a season, this one has to be at the top of our list.

Obviously street courses are our forté. We're really good at Long Beach, St. Pete, Detroit, Toronto, all those street courses. But Toronto for some reason has that little bit more for us.

Right now, fingers crossed, the weather's looking good. That's what we need. We need good weather, good conditions. Hopefully we'll have a nice, clean weekend.

Last weekend we could say was our worst event. No shame in saying that. We're going to come into this weekend now with our heads held high and hopefully have the best event of the year, if we already haven't had some good events this season.

Like I said, looking to close out the season with another win here and roll out into the other four.

THE MODERATOR: The countdown emphasis on this coming Sunday. Let's open it up for questions.

**Q. Is it hard to have your head held high coming in here after last weekend?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Yeah, good question (smiling).

You know what, last weekend was an anomaly for us. That's not a normal thing. A lot of negatives to look at.

But it's actually nice when you get out of a weekend, you don't have time to dwell on it. You focus on what went wrong, how do we fix it for the next time, but then you forget about it. You're like, Okay, Toronto is coming up, this is our best weekend of the year, this is where we switch the motive.

In some ways yes, some ways no. It's tough because last weekend was a killer for our championship. Putting us now, what is it, 180 points back from Palou. That seems unattainable from this point. As long as it's mathematically possible to beat him, we're going to keep trying to get wins. At the same time, we put ourselves in a pretty big hole.

You know what, we're just going to go out and try and get some wins here, show we are a championship-capable winning team, which I believe we are. Showing progress and showing that we can go out and win will help with that.

**Q. You fell to fourth in points. You talk about catching Palou is unattainable. Does it matter whether you're**

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**second, third, fourth or fifth, or is it all pretty much about wins from here on out?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I mean, it is all about wins, right, because winning races does win championships. Palou is proving that this season. That is the number one focus.

Of course, it would be nice to claw back some and give ourselves an opportunity to be in the second position because in a lot of cases, getting a second this year is like getting a win in the championship. Palou has done some things this year. That is the goal.

Of course, if the seas part, stars align, Palou has a horrendous last five races, which I don't think it's going to happen, but if it does, we want to be there. With that comes winning races. That's what we have to do to get second or create opportunity for something later on.

**Q. When you look at Toronto, is a little bit like INDYCAR's version of a hockey game? The course is slick, you have boards surrounding you. Physical race. If you slip up, the track sometimes, even though it's a hot place, can be pretty slick like a rink.**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I like that analogy. It is in some ways. Toronto is so interesting because of how many different pavements you go across. Your car has to be good across all of those pavements. Every corner gives you a different balance.

I guess I like the adaptability you have to have for the circuit. It is slick. It does not make a lot of grip. They've made a couple changes over the years, but it really hasn't done much to the geometry or the dynamics of the corners.

I mean, it's a fun place to drive, right? It's a street course. It seems impossible to pass, but you get on the front or back straight and it creates really good passing opportunities. Some really high, long portions of the track, or slow speeds going into turn three. We're obviously fast there. So maybe I'm a little bit biased.

It is like a hockey rink, but we love it for that reason.

**Q. You have favorite races, racetracks. As far as favorite trip to favorite places, is Toronto pretty tough to beat or would you side a little bit with Monterey, California?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: These next two are pretty sweet. I love going to Toronto. I also love going to Monterey. You go from one of the best cities in the world in Toronto to one of the most gorgeous places in America, being Monterey.

They're so different in themselves. Monterey is a high-speed, gorgeous permanent road course that has a ton of history. Toronto also has a ton of history, but it's like smack dab pretty much in the heart of the city in some ways.

I love going to Toronto. I think the culture is amazing. The weather has always been great there. The city is great. The food is phenomenal. It's definitely high on the bucket list.

I wish we split 'em up a little bit more because it's like the two best races of the year, at least the venues that we go to, right against each other. But it's just going to make for a really enjoyable two weeks.

**Q. It's two great restaurant cities. Do you have your reservations already in order for Toronto and Monterey?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Yeah, the team's got me doing some dinners this weekend at some pretty nice places. I'm looking forward to that in Toronto.

Then Monterey, I'm not going to tell you my spots. I don't want you guys to blow 'em up, (smiling) so...

**Q. Bigger view question here. You were talking about when you joined Andretti in 2023 about how much that transition year with Foyt helped you own your craft and helped you transition. Now that you're almost through four years, how much do you think looking back on that helped? Did that help you become a better driver where you are today? Still in the conversation of the championship. The dynamic of that and that path to get to this point.**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I learned a lot of things at Foyt that I might have not learned at Andretti, given that it is a different engine manufacturer, a different team, they run completely different setups, you get different feels from different things.

I mean, there's a massive learning curve to that. It was crucial for my longevity in the sport, right? I think if I would have jumped into Andretti and had the year that I did at Foyt, I might not be still in the series. I mean, it was definitely crucial to what we're doing now.

You look back at maybe the past few years that we've driven at Toronto, and my first year with Foyt, we were a back marker. We literally couldn't do anything to get ourselves forward from like 26th place. How it's evolved, obviously a lot to do with the development that Andretti's done on street courses and just their overall pace on street

courses is what's propelled me to go forward.

The amount that I've learned across both organizations has been crucial. Maybe having some information and some dynamics from that organization, carrying it into a new organization, just accelerates that learning curve.

In many ways it was very positive.

**Q. As you've said, this is a pretty good track for you. What do you anticipate the biggest challenge of this weekend is going to be as far as getting a good result?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: That's a good question, something we're digging into now.

The street course tire, they've extended this race, right, which in some ways they're trying to fill a TV window, but it might change up the strategy than what we've seen in the past.

Given the street course tire that we've had, the alternate has just not lived past a certain amount of laps. It makes a ton of grip, great for qualifying, great for putting down fast laps, but it doesn't last very long.

Given that the race has extended some laps, that means you need to do a longer period on those tires. Getting nailed down, trying to run the best strategy with that, hoping it's not a lottery, you don't get yellows in the wrong time or obviously crucial things.

We're going to do our best to try to overcome those adversities and differences, work our way through the weekend. We're going to try to turn what might be a challenge hopefully into a positive for us.

**Q. All the success that you've had on street courses, this year and in the past, you almost feel like there's a target on your back when you go to these races and you're seen as the favorite?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I mean, no doubt. I mean, just like whoever wins at certain races, there's going to be a target on their back. They're going to be looking to them for information and trying to catch up with them from the start of the weekend. That will likely be us, Colton and Marcus, for this weekend because we just have been so good on street courses.

We will be a focal point of a lot of teams, but not in a bad way, right? That's a good thing that you are a focal point for people. It means they're trying to catch up.

I mean, yes, there's a target, but it's not a negative in any

way.

**Q. Everybody has talked this year about how dominant Alex has been. Is there any disappointment or resentment that you're putting together what could be a championship-caliber season in any other year, then you have Alex over here? Any disappointment this is the year you're putting together such a good campaign and you have him?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I'm just proud that this team has had a lot of progression over the years I've been with the team, right? First year we got our first two wins, but ultimately it wasn't that great of a championship run. Second year in, didn't get any wins, but a much better championship run. We were very consistent. Colton finished second in the championship last year. This year it was looking a lot, a lot better. We've fallen back some points now, but I wouldn't say that those were races that we should have fallen that far back.

With that something said, as long as we have progression, we keep moving forward, winning races, fighting for a championship, we're still in a conversation for things this late in a season I think is a huge positive.

Hopefully if we don't come up with a great result in the championship this season, hopefully we'll take this momentum that we've had through the first, what, 10 or 11 or 12 races and carry that into next season and hopefully just keep progressing like we have the past couple years.

**Q. Can you talk to me a little bit about Dan Towriss and the group have brought to the organization? When you talk about the progress of team, he's involved in so many things, seems to have taken INDYCAR in his stride. How does that make you feel?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Dan and everyone around him has kind of taken the bull by the horns, no doubt. That is the reason why we've been good at so many races this season. It's the reason why we were better at Gateway, street courses, the reason why we were better at Indianapolis.

Dan is a wonderful team owner. He's extremely involved. For instance, he was in meetings with us all day on Tuesday trying to help the team and figure out what we need to do to build up the team and keep going after championships like we have for most of the season.

What he's done is wonderful. He's pushed the team to new limits that almost seem impossible for the rate that we're building. Like I think we're a force to be reckoned with here in a very short period with his leadership.



**Q. In terms of this weekend, is there anything you can take from your performance here last year into this weekend? There's been issues with the tires in Iowa. Different circuit in terms of the layout, asphalt.**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I mean, you can't take anything from Iowa into a street course, right?

For sure from last year, what we did last year was extremely good, right? We were insanely fast. You don't really see that stuff in INDYCAR where you see a team that is half a second fast or multiple 10ths faster. That just doesn't happen in INDYCAR.

If I'm being honest, I don't think we need to do much from last year to this year. We have progressed, made improvements on our street courses. That will show when we roll into this weekend, which I think is very possible.

We know we're going to be good. There is no way we will not be good based on the performances we've had at street courses, the progression we know we've had.

In many ways we're making some improvements. Yes, we're focusing on last year, where the positives were and how we can improve from that.

To your point, talking about Iowa, you can't talk about that at all because it is a completely different setup, different car, different downforce. Everything is completely different. We're not worried about anything happening at Iowa to translate into Toronto.

**Q. A suggestion. Go up to the top of the CNN Tower.**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I went there when I was in USF2000. Went up there and had dinner.

THE MODERATOR: Did you say Dan has taken the bull by the horns? The Silver Gold Bull by the horns?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Silver Gold Bull by the horns. That's going to be the statement of the week (smiling).

**Q. I know this seems to be like flogging a talking point. This is now the second year that the hybrid will be at Toronto. I wanted to get your reflection on the nuances of working the hybrid system and the re-gen and how that works out at Toronto. Do you feel it gives you any advantages?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Certainly it's a new aspect for drivers and teams to get right. It's created in no doubts some headaches for us trying to figure it out. The good team

does it well, right? I think we did it really well last year. We clearly got a handle on it.

This year I haven't seen numbers, but I'm sure they increase the energy limit that you can have for a given lap. That means we will need to change up the strategy a little bit so you can utilize it the best way.

It's still a work in progress, we're still building, figuring out as much as we can about the system.

Honestly, I love it. I think it's a good thing that there's something new in the series and we're building on it and we have to focus on it. It is worth quite a bit of lap time to get it right.

It is very driver-involved. Yes, the team can get it right, they can tell me what to do, but if I don't get it right in the car, if I do something wrong, that means I'm hurting everybody in general, right?

It's created a fun dynamic that the team has to figure it out, then the driver still has to apply it and learn how to use it themselves.

Now we're, what, a year and a bit in since we first had it. I'd say we've gotten a really good handle on it and it will be interesting to see how it plays out this weekend with the added energy.

**Q. You seem to do really well with street courses, hybrid and everything. Seems like you have it all melded in. Good drivers love to watch other good drivers do well. You want to applaud them, recognizing how a season like Alex Palou is having, you have to applaud it because it is so tremendous. How much super glue will it take to keep him out about two races that this becomes a points race again?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: He's really strong. I don't know. You might have to weld him to something. I'm not sure if super glue is going to stop him.

I'm sure we can get a bunch of drivers together to lock him in a room or something for a weekend. I don't think that's going to do much in this championship race.

**Q. It's going to take some violence.**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Again, to your point, as racing drivers, we like to see each other succeed. Of course, we don't want to see failures within ourselves. In some ways when somebody's doing something like Palou has done, it's an incredible thing. I think maybe the viewers don't recognize as much as they should of what somebody like that is





doing in this series.

In most case scenarios, what we've done this season prior to Iowa would be an amazing championship run. We'd be leading the championship in most seasons. This season he's just done something incredible, right?

I think people shouldn't look at it as a negative, like it's making it boring. That's not the case. What you're witnessing is greatness in action. We're doing everything we can to try and come back to him, which we've done a good job to do, but it still hasn't been enough.

Yeah, it's incredible. So in many ways, yeah, it would be nice if he took a couple weekends off and we can come back to him. You know what, I love racing. I think he's a wonderful person. I hope we have a lot of good races in the future with each other.

**Q. Tell me how did you deal with the frustration after the crash in Iowa.**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: You know what, in racing, you have those moments. You have big negatives. You have failures. Those are the moments that you have to claw back and just do what you know is possible.

For me, that was, Okay, we have another race tomorrow, we know we have been good at this racetrack, we were really good at the test, we can do something here to try and claw back.

We were actually in a really good position on Sunday to claw back, get maybe a top-five finish, maybe at worst seventh or eighth. We got caught out by a caution. That was unfortunate.

It's important that in this series, not everybody has a perfect season, it's impossible, right? Even with how perfect Alex has been, he still had an incident at Detroit. You still have to bounce back. There's always going to be those moments of negativity that you got to overcome.

It's important that you just focus on the next thing. That's what we've done after this weekend. We recognize that there were failures, there was issues, but at the same time we have to focus on Toronto, which we know we're so good at.

There's always light and some darkness when you're racing like this because it is a multiple-race championship.

**Q. Can you tell me what is the work dynamic within the Andretti team?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: The work dynamic? Yeah, the work dynamic is great. We have a great organization going. We have a massive influx of engineers, a lot of people, a lot of working parts.

Truly what I love most about it is the team dynamic between the drivers: me, Colton, Marcus. We love to see each other succeed. I'd say in most motorsports, your number one objective is to beat your teammate in most scenarios. That's not really how Andretti looks at it. I think we do a really good job with that in creating a good team atmosphere between the drivers and wanting to see each other succeed and doing things that we can help each other out with.

Yeah, it is a great dynamic. I appreciate this team for what they do to build that dynamic.

**Q. You had a season with ups and downs. What has been the turning point of your season so far, a specific race that gave you more confidence for the rest of the season?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Detroit, without a doubt. We had a good season leading up to there. We had a lot of good races. Then we roll into Detroit. From some setbacks after the previous weekend, we went out and won. That just creates momentum, right? That momentum carried through Gateway, carried through a lot of the races.

But we've had to take a setback now this weekend. Not a setback, but a reset. Now we realize we're going back to a street course. We won two of the three now. Hopefully we can make it three of the four. That's the goal right now.

You always have turning points in the season, right? It's not only just one. That was the big one to propel us forward, the Detroit win rolling into Gateway. A huge moment for us.

Now it's a new turning point, a turning point hopefully for the better, finish the season strong.

**Q. You discussed your confidence coming into the weekend at Toronto. With how well the team did last year, what is the confidence for Andretti coming into this weekend?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I mean, it's the same as I've answered quite a few people. It's extremely high. We were so good there last year, we've been so good on the street courses. Without a doubt this is maybe our most confident weekend. I should say without a doubt it is our most confident weekend rolling into.

Yeah, I mean, we'll see how this weekend goes. I expect big things.

**Q. With how well and you Colton raced at this circuit last year, how much information do you share going into the weekend? Has there been any trash talk between you guys?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: No. I think last year's race showed that. We knew we needed a win last year. That was a big push. There's a great team dynamic there that we made sure we got a 1-2 finish there, however that looked. Whether it's him or me, that was the ultimate goal.

We work together extremely well. There's no trash talk. We don't keep information from each other. We share it all. That's what propels us forward.

**Q. Toronto is the only international race on the INDYCAR calendar. Any other tracks you would like to see outside the U.S.?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I'm not paid enough to do that job. That's a Dave Furst question. I'm not sure exactly where.

I love the races that we go to now. They're awesome. I love every track that we go to. But you know what, I don't understand the dynamics or anything that goes into racing at a new venue out of the country. That's not for me to decide.

THE MODERATOR: I will say there are a ton of great racetracks out there.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I mean, there's a million good tracks. But I also don't know what goes into traveling to those tracks for teams and whatnot. It would be selfish for me to say, I want to go race at Suzuka.

**Q. You've been asked about the track being very different to last week. Can you walk us through the postmortem of what happened in Iowa with the team, and has it impacted how you prepared for the most confident weekend you're preparing for?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: It was obviously a conversation that we had. We focused on it. We are trying to understand exactly what happened. It's still a bit of a question mark because we don't think anything should have pointed towards what we had happen.

There's a group within Andretti, obviously I'm not an engineer so I don't understand these things, but there's a group within Andretti that is trying to understand it. We're going to try to put the pieces together to understand

exactly what happened.

We had that conversation, we understood it. We had a conversation about this weekend, about how strong we're going to be, the importance of being good at this racetrack, because it is potentially our best track of the year.

We accept the tragedy, but yet we need to focus on the positives that are going to come this weekend.

**Q. Is a P1 the main target?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Yes.

**Q. How are you preparing in a room?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Like a simulator?

**Q. How are you preparing?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: For this weekend?

I mean, typically any race that we're leading up to, it's important that you look at the data, you understand exactly. If it's a track you're going back to, you are always focusing on the previous year or a test you've run there. If it's a new track, it's pretty much all simulator based. We're running sims, the driver and the loop, doing everything we can gather to make the weekend as smooth as possible.

Within myself, it's obviously training, getting good rest, staying hydrated, eating well because it is an athletic sport. It's important that you feed yourself like an athlete because you want to perform like an athlete because it is truly a physical sport.

Kind of two things that you have to balance between: focusing, data driven, looking at computers, and trying to keep yourself fit and focused like an athlete.

THE MODERATOR: Kyle, thanks for doing this. We'll leave it here for now. We'll see you up in Toronto.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Thanks, Dave. Thank you, everyone.

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