

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Friday, July 18, 2025

**Kyle Kirkwood**

**Will Power**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. Wrapping up practice today and joined by a couple of the fastest in practice.

Will Power, quickest in group one this afternoon. Three-time winner here on the streets of Toronto. And Kyle Kirkwood also joins us. Three-time winner this season. Second on the streets of Toronto here last year. Quickest of the day.

Kyle, let's start with you. Interesting first practice grip-wise and whatnot, tire-wise? What did you make of your practice today?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Yeah, I mean, certainly a tough one because that's probably the lowest amount of grip I've driven in INDYCAR in a very long time. That's just due to the fact that we don't have a bunch of support series here. We don't have Indy lights that are usually running on Firestone, helping build up the grip. We were sweeping in a sense for the rest of the session and for the rest of the weekend.

But overall pretty solid. I think everybody saw that alternate tires looked like they grained really, really bad. That's why you saw a lot of people going faster on greens. Interesting how that shakes out for the rest of the weekend.

THE MODERATOR: Will, you've won three times here at Toronto. Good to be atop the leaderboard so far this weekend?

WILL POWER: Yeah, it's a very difficult track. Like Kyle said, it was surprisingly low grip. Really hard to really change anything on the car. Yeah, the greens, you literally had that one prep lap and one lap to go. Yeah, it will be interesting.

Massive new bump at the end of the straight into three. It actually hurts. Right in the braking zone, boom.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Hit the brakes.

WILL POWER: Yeah (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: I've heard winters are tough here in Toronto.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: They repaved something. The bridge used to go there. For some reason they put a strip of pavement just in that section.

THE MODERATOR: Exit of three?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Entry.

WILL POWER: I think they honestly need to grind it tonight. It will hurt racing. Very apprehensive to go up the inside. They should grind it.

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with questions.

**Q. How great is it to return to an event where it's bustling with fans, you're in a big city, there's a great vibe? We came off what was two really good races, but nobody really saw 'em.**

WILL POWER: Yeah, man. I was going to say, I was sitting there, I looked at the grandstands, they were full. I was really impressed.

Yeah, and the autograph session. How many people were there when we left? The line was massive. Yeah, good attendance so far. Very good.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: It's always nice coming back to Toronto. Of course, it helps that today is free and they ask for just a donation to get people out here, right? Nonetheless, we still have fans in Canada clearly because this weekend is always booming.

Just like you said, I looked up at the stands. Man, those stands are full. People go everywhere on a day like today. Excited for the weekend. Like you said, different than last weekend.

**Q. As a professional athlete, does it get the adrenaline**

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**going when you know there's a lot of people out there that love to see what you do?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Just proves we're in a high-performance, high-stakes sport that people like watching, right? Re-proves that to you. Nonetheless, exciting to have people out here.

**Q. Canada is the only race we come to internationally. With the crowd turnout that we've seen here and kind of the talks that we've had for the last couple weeks, does this race really showcase that INDYCAR can go into other international markets to race?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, absolutely. I think we'd be very well-received in Europe. Japan, we always get a massive crowd. Went to Australia. Yes, could totally do it.

Got to make sense financially. But yeah, I think they'd be surprised. When we raced in Europe in Champ Car in '07... People were very interested in open-wheel cars over there.

I think it would be very good markets for us, I believe. Obviously they're trying to nail it over here, North America. I've just seen the series grow and improve. I've been in it 19, 20 years. Only got better every year.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I kind of second that, right? You look at the culture of sports across different countries. The U.S. has so many that it draws attention away from motorsports because you have football, you have baseball, literally every sport under the sun in the U.S., right? That's not the same for a lot of other countries that we could go to.

It's really cool to see the cultures and how they rally around certain sports. I'm not saying that's really the case here in Canada, but more so for other countries that we do have a market in.

There's things that come with that. Ultimately we're just drivers. We just get told where to go. There's a lot of other moving factors wanting to go out of the country. Finding venues, making it applicable. I know there's a lot more to it than I can comprehend. I leave it to the series to manage that.

**Q. For the rest of this weekend, it should cool down a little bit. Do you expect the graining of the tires for the rest of the weekend?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I'm not sure. That's a great question. Not sure why it was like that. We clearly had a very soft street course tire. Given the nature of that session where it was pretty low grip, maybe that just has something to do

with it.

Nonetheless, it's on our minds for the rest of the weekend and obviously for the race.

WILL POWER: Yeah, no, obviously the track grips up and temperature matters. At the end of the day, they're just too soft. I think incredibly soft. Sure it will be a three-stop race unless something strange happens.

Yeah, it will actually be interesting in qualifying, to be honest, what compound you use.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: You only went a 10th quicker later in the session when you assume you could go faster on primes.

WILL POWER: I would have said, yeah. Threw on new primes, you'd be right there.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Faster.

WILL POWER: I think so.

**Q. Tomorrow do you maximize track position in qualifying or do you save tires that you want for the race?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, I mean, at the end of the day, like, no one's going to use more than one set of the greens. You just don't have enough tires.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: In the race, what do you do for qualifying? Do you use primes for qualifying, is that what you're saying?

WILL POWER: You have to save three sets of new tires for the race. I mean, I can't see anyone else coming to any other conclusion. You're saying take a risk and use them in qualifying.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: If they were faster, that would be very interesting. Some people use new all the way through qualifying.

WILL POWER: You could do it, but they went off pretty bad. Mine degraded a lot.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I did a second run on them and they definitely fell off.

**Q. Did you learn a lot today for Sunday, but you'll see tomorrow?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I don't think we learned anything for



Sunday, if I'm being honest. It's so low grip, you're just killing the tire out there.

Actually we did learn that the greens were soft, they grained really bad. That will likely be the case in the race.

**Q. Will, you got a lot of experience here at this track. Is this the slickest this track has been on a Friday?**

WILL POWER: It's hard to say. Definitely on the track walk yesterday it looked really dusty.

I don't know. Like, I can't remember to be honest. It's been so many times I've been here. It's always this way first session. I guess if you had a couple more support series, it would help.

Yeah, it will progress. Lap time isn't that bad, 61s. Got to 59s last year.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: About the same lap time in practice one as what it was last year in practice one. Not much of a difference. It just felt very low grip for some reason.

**Q. Will, I understand you're in a contract year. How important is it for you to get a result here this weekend?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, man, every race, every session. It just matters, you know? Can you believe the year I'm having, in a contract year? Two engine failures in two race weekends. Just one of those things. Not bad luck. It just happens at times.

Yeah, we'll see. Just keep pushing. Still got five races to have great results. I've had great cars everywhere. We're quick. Can only smile about it because I've been in the sport a long time.

I just know these sort of things come round. It's very typical of life that a bad year would play out when you're trying to get a contract.

Yeah, man, but I love it here. I do. I really hope I'm back next year.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: You'll be back.

**Q. Kyle, we saw you and Colton have a strong year last year for Andretti Global. With some of these unknowns or changes to the tires, the surface, do you still feel like you come in with the same level of confidence, you can have that same type of luck and performance as last year?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I'd say there's more uncertainty, for sure, which in some ways might be able to pull away a little bit of our confidence due to uncertainty. It's important that things change up.

If you see some difference, you can only try and look at that as a positive and hope that your team as a whole can overcome these obstacles better, right? In some ways yes, in some ways no. It definitely is different than last year.

**Q. You in particular have won two of the three street courses we've been to so far this year. Is this street course notably any different for you guys from a setup or performance standpoint from any others you have run on the calendar?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: It's bumps, man. For whatever reason our car makes really good grip over the bumps. The more bumpy the better. Detroit, here. Most bumpy street courses. In the past, these have been our best. Not to say that's going to be the case this weekend. So far looking decent.

Yeah, that's the only thing that I can attribute it to.

**Q. Will, you mentioned the bump in the braking zone going into three, the need to grind that. What would that discussion look like with the series to make that happen?**

WILL POWER: Actually, I don't know. I think to Joe Hodge. Used to be able to go to Jay Frye and ask him, but I'm not sure now who it is.

Man, it's nasty. Gave me a headache. It was that hard. I don't know. Was it that hard for you?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: It wasn't extremely harsh. The bottom is hard.

WILL POWER: That's what I mean.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Just depends where you hit the brakes right? Everyone is going to be hitting it there.

WILL POWER: I think it will hurt passing.

**Q. Over 90 laps, it hurts you physically but potentially hurts the race?**

WILL POWER: I think so. It would be tough to throw it up inside.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Depends what it's like at the bottom.



Just grind the right side.

WILL POWER: Wouldn't that be funny. Everyone in quallie... That would be good, just the right side of it for the race (smiling).

**Q. Will, in his recent wins here, Scott Dixon always jokes this feels like his hometown course because Canada is part of the Commonwealth. Does that carry over for you, as well?**

WILL POWER: Didn't even register. I did think the other day, I wonder with your passport and so on, if you got denied, Well, I'm in the Commonwealth. You could let me in.

Yeah, I don't know what the immigration rule is here. Yeah, didn't really register. If I win, I'll mention it.

**Q. Might be just a small thing, but what do you think about the change of the alternate start/finish line this year?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: They changed it last year. Same as it was last year. We all came together in the off-season, the year before, and said this is the change we need.

Plus, it's not really fair to make it right on the exit of a corner. People bomb through the corner. Somebody could bomb it in there, get a good time and then pit. Doesn't seem right.

We came together actually two years ago and we made that happen.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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