

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Saturday, July 19, 2025

Colton Herta

Alex Palou

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon. Wrapping up qualifying ahead of tomorrow's race. Currently joined by the pole winner, Colton Herta. It's his third pole in the last four races on the street of Toronto. Second NTT P1 award.

Something about Andretti cars, the work you do around here, pretty spectacular. How do you do it again?

COLTON HERTA: I don't know. They keep impressing me every time we come here. The car's still that much faster than everybody else.

I didn't know that was my third pole here.

THE MODERATOR: Third in the last four years.

COLTON HERTA: Cool. Didn't know that.

I think it's kind of just what this team is capable of around here for the street courses. Continue to be I feel like a dominant force in the league for that kind of style of racing.

THE MODERATOR: Feel pretty good about tomorrow? I'm assuming you do.

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, there's no reason not to be. I think we were extremely competitive on blacks. I felt like if we put on blacks, I could have been close to my red tire time. We're fast on reds, but I feel we're even more competitive on blacks.

It was a stressful one, though. Really close to being knocked out in the first round. We had to make some adjustments on pit lane that worked beautifully and got us back into contention.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.

Q. Did you notice anything different with the repave of that patch there going into turn three?

COLTON HERTA: It's much better. Yeah, it was pretty brutal yesterday. I think for us, like, I didn't really mind it because I think it adds character and whatnot. But it was on a limit. It was very aggressive. I think you saw quite a few guys have mistakes because of it. It's a very difficult part of the track to be standing on the brakes like that and have the bump there.

No, I thought INDYCAR did a good job. I think there's no problems at all with it.

Q. With it looking like a primary race tomorrow, is that any different than your win here last year?

COLTON HERTA: No. I think depending how long you can run the softs for. That's a big question mark. Is it going to be four laps? Is it going to be 20 laps? It's really not sure yet. It will be more of an answer after warm-up to what the race is really going to look like tomorrow.

I think we have the ability to be fast on both. But I'm glad it's the harder compound tire race because I think we're really strong on those.

Q. You've had a lot of success here in the past. What is it about this track that suits what you do?

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, I don't know what it is. I think, like, I'm normally really good at that nine, 10, 11 section. Everything else is like a tradeoff. Sometimes I'm fast in some corners, sometimes fast in others. I'm consistently fast in that last section.

That's just to Kyle. Compared to the other guys, we had four-and-a-half 10ths on the field. Yeah, I think that's more due to what this car is able to do over the bumps and how it's able to grip. Especially land and keep producing grip without stepping and hopping three or four times after you hit a bump. Its ability over the bumps, it's pretty incredible.

Fortunately, unfortunately, that's all I know. I've always been at Andretti. We've always been extremely fast at street courses while I've been here. I'm not sure what it really feels like to have a really bad car over the bumps, and I don't want to know (smiling).



Q. The bump on Lakeshore, do you think there will be much passing?

COLTON HERTA: I don't think it will really make a difference. I think how they patched it and everything, it will be very similar to before. I think the patchwork they did was really spot on.

It wasn't inviting before because it's so easy to lock. When you're going to be on the dirty part of the track and you have to go through that huge bump, possibility of locking is really high. If anything, it should be more inviting.

Q. Can you talk a bit more about what you didn't like about the first part of the qualifying.

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, it was really, really strange. It felt like what I was feeling in the car yesterday on the red tires, we were very uncompetitive then. I think we had a lot of understeer. The front was sliding a lot. It wasn't reacting well to the bumps.

I think once we were able to make some of the changes we did, it just brought the car to life. They were really minor things. It was a really big offset on balance. For what we did, I was really surprised how reactive the car was to it.

Q. The lap you won the pole was a perfect one for you?

COLTON HERTA: Close. It was close. It was a really good lap. Turn three wasn't great, but everything else I was really happy with. I think there's just a little bit more time.

THE MODERATOR: Ever such a thing as a perfect lap?

COLTON HERTA: Probably not (smiling).

Q. Kyle talked about how confident you guys are as a team when you come to street courses. Is that something when you come to street courses, do you see yourselves with a target on your back or keep a chip on your shoulder and try not to become too complacent?

COLTON HERTA: You definitely feel confident. You know in the back of your mind the progression in INDYCAR and the engineering in INDYCAR is so strong, so it could flip year to year. Could be due to car, engine manufacturer, whatnot. There's so many different roles in play in INDYCAR.

You definitely feel confident, but you never know what's

going to happen 100% until you hit the track and you get an idea of how the car is feeling.

But glad nothing has changed.

Q. It felt like last season you made a huge development after a couple difficult seasons. That form hasn't translated into this season. Have you been able to diagnose why that is the case?

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, I mean, I've got some ideas. It's never the same thing. I think we struggled this year on a lot of things. Unfortunately it's showing up on Sundays. We haven't been able to perform well.

For everybody, it's super frustrating. We want to do well. We're striving to do better every weekend. It's a tough sport, so... Any little thing that we drop the ball on, it creates a big impact.

Just need to be heads up on Sunday and not give this (expletive) a win. (Referring to Alex Palou joining the podium).

THE MODERATOR: Colton, we'll let you go.

Now joined by Alex Palou, with a career-best start at Toronto, sixth front-row start of 2025.

How pleased are you, Alex, with the outcome today?

ALEX PALOU: Super. Super happy. It was a very good day for us. As you said, it's the first time I think we're in the top 10 here. Starting tomorrow, hopefully it's going to be a little bit easier, a little bit less chaotic, especially the first stint.

Yeah, I mean, Colton and Kyle, they've been like on another league this weekend. To be second and to be a bit closer than what we started this morning or in P1 or anything, it's really good.

THE MODERATOR: How is the race car tomorrow?

ALEX PALOU: I'll let you know tomorrow (smiling). We don't really know honestly. We've been making the qualifying car trying to be a bit better, just doing short stints.

Honestly, I have no idea how our race car is going to be. I would say normally when you go to race, everything compacts a little bit more, you don't see big differences. Hopefully that's true.

THE MODERATOR: Warm-up is important tomorrow



morning?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, huge.

Q. What did you think of the patch they put down before turn three?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, it didn't really make any difference for us. I guess they tried hard. The good thing is we brake past that, so it's just uncomfortable when you drive through there. But it was not any smoother. You were still hitting very, very hard.

Q. Did you feel more comfortable here than in past or just faster than in past? Did other people I don't want to say get worse, you felt the same but maybe others weren't as strong?

ALEX PALOU: No, I think we improved quite a bit from the past, what we had here in the past. We still need a little bit more speed, compared to Colton. When you see the lap times they were able to do every single session, it's pretty impressive.

But yeah, I'm a lot more comfortable. As everybody, we're on the limit. Whenever you're on the bumps, it's never comfortable. It's the best car I had here so far, also the highest confidence I had.

Q. On Thursday the last two champions, Colton Herta and Christian Lundgaard both spoke about the importance of holding pole and how hard it was on this course to sit second. Do you think it's going to be a challenge to catch Colton and to also hold off the rest of the grid?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, it's never easy. I think it's never easy to start second either. If the person in third is (indiscernible), usually able to pass the person on the outside.

Yeah, I guess we'll see. We'll see what we can do. I think it's not easy to be around the outside in turn one. Honestly, it's still great. As long as we're in the top four or five by lap one, it's where we want to be. Like, we can race from there.

Q. Do you have a preference on the tires for tomorrow?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I mean, the alternates are a bit faster. Well, we will see, but I think it's going to be tough to make them last for a full stint. They are faster and you feel like a super hero for those five to maybe 10 laps. They kind of like give up. I think for tomorrow, obviously it's

going to be tough.

I think on primaries, they last for a full stint. It's about 30, 35 laps. The only issue is that the last 10 or the last eight, they are not easy.

I think it's going to be interesting tomorrow on strategy, if somebody can make it on one stop less or they can make the tires last a bit longer than anyone else.

I think it's going to be more of a tire race than a fuel race. Obviously fuel always comes into play. I think the biggest difference will be the tires.

Q. Yesterday you said the car is only a little different from last year. You almost won the pole today. What is the difference between last year and this year?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, actually it's a lot more different than yesterday. Like from yesterday to practice to this morning we changed a lot more stuff, just trying to find a bit more confidence in the car, a little bit more grip.

It's not super hard to get a fast car for one lap. But I think to be comfortable and to be able to be consistent, especially like from turn eight to turn 11, over those bumps, it's important.

Yeah, we made huge changes. I think they were a lot better. After practice, we made some changes, as well, yeah. I mean, that's why we have engineers, just so they can try to make the car better.

Q. Supposed to get some rain overnight. Talk today about tires. Will that have an effect on tire strategy tomorrow?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, it's going to make it a little bit worse for tire deg. It's going to have more tire deg. At the same time it's kind of going to clean a little bit the track. There's a lot of dust. As soon as you go a little bit offline, it's very tricky just because there's dust from constructing the track, the construction around, especially on the back straight heading into turn three.

I think actually it's going to be okay, it's going to be good, better for the race, at least the start of the race. We can use that outside line a little bit more when we're fighting without crashing. I think it's going to be okay. If we have more tire deg, it's going to be the same for everybody.

Q. You haven't won here at Toronto. One of the few checkmarks you have left to cross here. How much would it mean to get a win here, international race?



ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I mean, it would be very sweet. Never won here, as you said. We've been close. I think in '24 or '23 we finished second, it's the closest we've been.

If we can pull another win this season, with the amazing season we had so far, would be very, very sweet.

Q. With all the stuff talked about with rumors looking at other international markets, how much does this race show other candidates that we can put on a great show here in INDYCAR?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, you just had to look at the fans yesterday on autograph session or during practice or even today on the stands.

Yeah, I think it's really cool. I think it's super cool that we're going to different cities. I think the street courses is something that, like, a lot of people, like new people to racing, love just because it's super close, convenient. It's easy access.

Yeah, I'm loving it. I love it. I think we're going to see more of this in the future. Hopefully, yeah, it's good racing.

Q. Turn three, the bump was repaved. How is it compared to yesterday?

ALEX PALOU: It was the same in a different way. It was as big, yeah. I mean, honestly, it's tough because we're going, like, really fast there, probably 180, 190 miles an hour. Even a small bump, you feel it a lot. The car is as low as you're ever going to be, then suddenly there's that small bump, which today was just like in a different direction. Yesterday was a dip, today it's like you're going over.

It's okay. I mean, they're trying. We understand it's a street. There's nothing you can do. I honestly prefer this than to pave street courses for us. I don't think we need that. I think you can see with how bumpy these streets are the amazing racing that we can get from it. I think it's good. They tried. Didn't work. It's fine.

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