

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, July 20, 2025

Rinus VeeKay

Kyffin Simpson

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome, everyone. We are currently joined by Kyffin Simpson with his first career podium in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES. Second top five of the season.

Congratulations. When you started 13th heading into this thing, did you think you had a podium car or just one of those races that comes to you?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, I mean, it was definitely kind of a race that came to us. I at no point thought we were one of the quickest cars. I think we had pace. We weren't one of the slowest cars.

Yeah, I mean, early on it was looking like it wasn't going to be a very good race for us. Got that turned around real quick. We ended up with a really good spot after that. I guess it was third safety car, third or fourth safety car. From there on I just tried not to mess it up really.

THE MODERATOR: You have worked so hard in your brief career with the NTT INDYCAR SERIES to finally get a podium. What does this mean to you?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: It was incredible. At Mid-Ohio, I felt like we very realistically had a chance at a win there. Not even coming away with a podium, I was really upset.

But yeah, the team's worked so hard, Chip Ganassi Racing, helping me out, teaching me how to race INDYCARs. I've learnt so much from Scott and Alex. They've just helped me develop so much over the last two years, year and a half. I owe a lot of thanks to them.

THE MODERATOR: Rinus VeeKay joins us. Best finish since the second race at Detroit back in 2021. Fifth career podium and the first since Barber Motorsports Park in 2022.

A lot going on in this race. How do you feel?

RINUS VEEKAY: Yeah, that was an awesome race. We really had the feeling that he could do this today. We've been moving forward every race in the last six races. But we've been starting in the back. It was important for us to qualify good, and we qualified ninth. Did a bit of a different strategy to others. In a crazy race it was today, it was the right thing.

Great team effort to go with that strategy. Yeah, we saved a lot of fuel. Unfortunately with Pato, he had a lot shorter fill with fuel. I was really, really in the collector coming through the pits. Fuel doesn't flow quicker than it does. Unfortunately we lost some time there.

Tried my best, but in the end the tires were gone. Pato's tires were gone. We were all slipping around. Second is the best we could do for us, but second was a good day for us.

THE MODERATOR: You were still catching him there.

RINUS VEEKAY: Yeah, really tried. Tires came in surprisingly quick. I had really good grip. Went hard. Yeah, just missed out on him probably by half a second until his tires warmed up.

Tried my best, really did. So did the whole team. Everybody did a great job. I mean, to do that two-stop, had to thank Honda for the great fuel economy.

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

Q. When you do a two-stopper with the green tires being as soft as they were, how were you able to manage them to keep them under you for such a long stint?

RINUS VEEKAY: The yellows helped with that definitely. That was kind of our strategy. There was a really high probability in the last eight years with turn one, lap one yellows. Right now I think it was a lap four yellow. It was a pretty long one. That was good for us.

Yeah, I really tried to baby them from the start, really be soft on them, try to stop wheel spin and everything. I expected the front tires to be going off a lot. In the end we

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struggled with the rears going off on traction. In the end it felt like I was driving on the axles only on the rears. It was hard, but I don't think we could have stretched it another lap.

Q. Dale Coyne Racing, seems like he has some magic when he finds a good driver that he can get them in a position to win races?

RINUS VEEKAY: Definitely. There's a number of places this year where I've had the best car I've had in my INDYCAR career. I think for me, it was a crazy off-season, with everything that happened. I think it was a jump in my career.

I've had a great year so far with Dale Coyne Racing. Of course with Michael Cannon joining, his experience, I think we have a really strong team. Matt Nelson and Michael Cannon, Dale Coyne, that whole strategy team, them together on the stand, they make it happen every time. Through whatever is going to happen, we make the right decisions.

It makes the race a lot more fun.

Q. Kyffin, as each race goes by, INDYCAR is realizing you can drive very well. How much is your confidence level increasing?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, I mean, it's very high right now. As a stand from me to Taylor to Luke, my engineer, to all the pit guys, we've all been making big strides all year. Pit stops have gotten better and better with each race. Strategy has been on point all season. I feel like I've learnt a lot this year, just gotten more and more comfortable. Qualifying has been a big step up this year.

Yeah, just everything's kind of coming together for us. We're in a good spot. We got some work to do on the ovals. As far as road and street courses go, I think we're looking pretty good.

Q. Kyffin, post Indy it seems like you've been stacking the results. What has changed with you personally?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, I don't even know (smiling). It's been kind of a crazy year. I think we started off a little bit slower than we wanted to. We had that top 10 in Long Beach, which was great. That was more off strategy than anything else. Then at Indy GP, I felt super fast there. Ever since then, it's like something's just kind of clicked and kind of figured it out.

Since then I felt super comfortable with the car everywhere we've been just about. Yeah, it's been a big thanks to

Luke. Luke has been doing a great job on giving me a car I want every single race. We've been working really well together recently.

Q. Rinus, you brought the trophy.

RINUS VEEKAY: Yes. I'm not going to let go of it for the next week, I think. It's going to see every corner of Toronto tonight (smiling).

Q. You talked about Michael Cannon, Dale Coyne. You have to make the fuel work. Talk about what you do in the cockpit to make the numbers work.

RINUS VEEKAY: You've got to be confident. You have to commit sometimes. I think this year we've had a lot of good fuel-save races. Indiana wasn't a fuel-save race anymore. Final stint racing Pato, we were fuel rich, good on fuel. With all the yellows, we stretched it that far that we could just go hard.

Yeah, I mean, you got to have some pace to save fuel. Also I just had a really good car under me that allows me to attack corners even though we're saving fuel and keep lap times up.

Q. You just mentioned it's been the best car at times. What has made the difference this year?

RINUS VEEKAY: I think the less pressure we have as a team, every weekend comes at its own. We work really hard to get that car. Last weekend in Iowa, we struggled a lot. I mean, we had a really good car in Detroit. Took a lot of that stuff here. We had our best result of the year.

Laguna is coming up. I think the setup we had in Barber is going to work well. We're at that point in the season where we've figured out what we need to do. I think we're going to have some really strong races coming up.

Q. Rinus, 10 months ago you didn't know what your INDYCAR career was going to look like. To have the chance to finish on the podium, put into word the emotions and satisfaction.

RINUS VEEKAY: Yeah, feels awesome. I mean, for the team, their last podium was my last win, my only win, which was also a second place. Wish we could have topped that.

Especially with the uncertainty in the off-season, the lack of preparation we've had as a team, showing up to races like this, even Barber earlier in the season, we'd really show pace. After the engineering overhaul, we really started figuring out what we needed to do. Michael Cannon

brought a lot of experience to the timing stand and the engineering truck. It's paying off.

As a driver, you're so much in control. You can do so much more with a car that handles well.

Q. What does a day like this, the experience of those 90 minutes or so of doing what you do best fighting at the front, what was that like for you?

RINUS VEEKAY: It was great. It was very fun. Definitely the final part looking forward, really trying to close the gap to Pato, I mean, it was really hard to close. I think the track didn't really allow many overtakes.

Yeah, pace was good I think. All three of us were kind of hovering around the same pace, closing in, making the gap bigger at times.

It wasn't very exciting at the end, but it was a lot of work in the car.

Q. Were you happy then to see the caution at the end because everybody was kind of slipping and sliding? Did you want two more laps to have a shot at it?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: I was for sure happy. Herta was looking very quick. At that point I was really struggling with my tires. Then I had Stingray in front of me, as well, which would have been really tough for me to get by him because I was really struggling just in all the brake zones for the most part.

Yeah, when I saw that yellow come out, I was just super happy 'cause otherwise it was going to be a really tough fight to the end. I had quite a bit of push to pass, if you can't brake late, you're not in a good position.

RINUS VEEKAY: For me, I would love another shot to fight Pato for the win. Also my tires were gone. When those guys were stopped on track, it was really a blind corner. Almost clipped them. We got out of it okay.

Yeah, I mean, would have been a cool battle on old tires with Pato. In the end a P2 is really a satisfying result.

Q. Rinus, we talked a lot yesterday about how you exceeded expectations this year, signing your contract two weeks before the start of the year. How do you feel with all that's going for the first 13 races of the year?

RINUS VEEKAY: Yeah, I'm really happy. I think we exceeded expectations to start the season with a P9 at the first race. This is our seventh top 10 of the season. Four

more races to go. I'm tied for my personal top 10s in a season. That's really, really good. It's been three years since I've been on the podium, three and a half years. It just feels great.

It's been a while since I've been up here. It's great to celebrate again. Really feel like this whole team is coming alive right now.

Q. Kyffin, the maple leaf on your helmet, Journie, how does it feel to get it at the home sponsor of your?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: It's funny you mentioned that. Before the weekend started when everyone was seeing the helmet for the first time, a couple of my crew guys were saying if you get a podium this weekend, there's no way you'd never wear that helmet again.

I mean, the plan was for me to wear it just this weekend, then I was going to, I don't know yet. Yeah, it's something to think about, for sure. Great to get the first podium at Journie's home race. It was great. They had a bunch of people here, a bunch of people that work at the company. It was great to meet all of them. Having them here supporting me was great. Super happy to be able to get it done for Journie today.

Q. Kyffin, since you finished fifth at Detroit, you've recorded a top 10 in every single road or street race since. What does each run do in terms of building momentum and having it snowball into days like today?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, I think really ever since Indy GP this year we've been really strong on all the road courses and street courses. Yeah, I think just having a lot of races back to back is always helpful for me personally, just to have the consistency of being in the car.

I'm still fairly new to the series, still learning every weekend. Just extra laps is always helpful for me. So getting lots of laps close together is super helpful. We've got, what is it, four more races to go now. Two more road courses and hopefully we can get two more solid results. On the ovals we're going to have to do some work because that's definitely a point where I feel weaker. I'm sure we can figure it out.

Q. Rinus, in the battle last third of the race with Pato, do you feel like you did everything you could? Anything you wish you could have done different? Did you feel like you ran the perfect race given the circumstances?

RINUS VEEKAY: Yeah, I think I and the team did



everything we could. Like I said, Pato did I think only 20 laps on that set of tires before the final pit stop. He had a lot shorter pit on fuel. At the end we were waiting for a full tank to fill up. That's where we lost some time. Coming out of the pits, I think he was two seconds ahead. Closed the gap up. His tires were getting up to temp. In the end it's hard to stay close and get a really good run.

I really tried my best. I tried to save some tires to hope get to get close to him at the end with some back markers. In the end, this is all I think I could do. I maximized, the whole team maximized. I think everyone is very happy. I think everybody on the team should be really proud.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations on the podium finish.

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