

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Sunday, July 27, 2025

Alex Palou

Barry Wanser

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Eighth win, 19th career win, which ties him for 24th all-time, and the accolades go on and on and on. Alex, your thoughts on another win here at Laguna Seca.

ALEX PALOU: Amazing. It was another magical day for us, the 10 car and CGR. I think this was probably one of our best weekends ever.

THE MODERATOR: Match points the whole weekend, right?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah. I mean, we started very good in practice, but we had to make a couple big changes for qualifying, and they worked really well. Got the pole there.

Then today we had a lot of pace. I was super comfortable with the car. Car balance was amazing. Strategy, pit stops. And we were fast on both soft or hard tires. It was one of those days where it felt like we had a big pace advantage, and we were able to -- I'm happy that we were able to capitalize and get that win.

Yeah, could not be happier.

THE MODERATOR: This means it's another round of the Alex and Barry show. Barry, welcome back to the post-race news conference. Congratulations. Win number 145 for Chip Ganassi Racing. Your thoughts on another victory by your driver.

BARRY WANSEER: I obviously just want to echo what Alex said, but certainly it's a true team effort. Last week at Toronto our strategy didn't work so well, but Alex wants to try to claim the responsibility. Myself and the race engineer were like, no, no, you can't claim all the responsibility for what went wrong. Part of it's on us. But that's just the type of guy he is.

Performance today was amazing by the team, in the pits, certainly by Alex. I think that the biggest turning point in

the race for us was the pace we had on the primary harder tires against the cars behind us on the alternate soft tires. That was really important.

Then we got through that. We really weren't sure which tires were going to be the best. If anybody thinks we know exactly what to do when the race starts with the tires beyond what we chose to start on, you have a lot to learn. There's so much to it, and you have to adapt. I don't think we really knew until halfway through the race.

THE MODERATOR: Alex, now two away from the all-time record of 10 set by A.J. Foyt and Al Unser. Questions, please.

**Q. Alex, which questions do you not want to hear more, can you hit ten or is the championship over?**

ALEX PALOU: The one that it's over, it's never over until it's over. I think I proved that at Mid-Ohio, and we've seen that in the past as well.

Honestly, I would not trade our points for anybody. I would not trade our position, and I would not ask for anything more or anything less. But, yeah, it's not done until it's done. We still need to win it. We still need to keep our heads down and try and win more races.

So, yeah, I don't mind hearing the ten races one. It seems that it's a lot of work to make it, but I don't mind hearing that. Whenever you hear that you are in a chance of making something that it's so historical and so tough to do, it motivates us.

**Q. How many wins -- before a season, how many wins would you consider, during the season, a good season?**

ALEX PALOU: Three, four. Four I would say it's like a season that you are, like, on fire. Three is a good season. We won the championship last year with two wins, and another one at Thermal that was not inside the championship.

I felt that last year was a really good year for us. But yeah, I think three wins. Whenever you are able to win three

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races, it's a pretty good year.

**Q. You have a win here by 30.3 seconds over someone. You had to do multiple starts, restarts today, pulled out big advantages. Drivers tend to have a couple of tracks that just make sense to them. Would you share some insights about what it is about this place that seems to bring out your best?**

ALEX PALOU: I don't know, honestly. I have no idea. I love it so much, every single lap. Even the in-laps, the out-laps, I love every single lap I do around here with any car. I normally tend to love other tracks that we go to, but this is the most fun I have.

There's been different track conditions, as we know. Like in 2021 and '22 I think we had the old pavement, and it was completely -- although it was the same track, it was a completely different technique that you needed.

Then with the high grip that we had after the repave was another one. Today was a different one as well. It was changing a lot. The lines that you had to do were a little bit different in some areas, like 2, 3, 11 a little bit.

Yeah, I don't know. Probably the amount of laps I did on the simulator here when I was a kid helps. It was my favorite track when I was a kid. I think it's one of the most iconic, if not the most iconic, road course that we have.

BARRY WANSER: This was one of my favorite tracks when I was a kid. That was many more years before he was a kid.

ALEX PALOU: A little bit, yeah.

**Q. Alex, can you talk about what I think was the largest crowd we've had here since INDYCAR came back? It felt like it was a lot people here.**

ALEX PALOU: It was awesome.

**Q. Early days coming back here wasn't necessarily that way.**

ALEX PALOU: It was amazing. You can see that they've done an amazing job on promoting the race. I think Mel is doing a great job as well on keeping this track in the best shape as it's ever been. You could feel it. You could feel it on Friday, but you never know if Friday is just because -- I don't know -- everybody is on vacation and then suddenly they pop up to the track or not. Friday was huge.

Driver autograph was a lot of people, but today was amazing. It was insane. Yeah, it makes it even more

special. It makes it -- it makes you love the event even more. I hope everybody had this much fun as we did.

BARRY WANSER: I would like to add to that. Obviously this is an incredible facility to race at. You could see there was many more fans in the paddock, many more in the grandstands. It was just awesome.

He beat me to it, but I would like to congratulate our former teammate, Mel Harder, who is now the president and general manager here. And I know some of the things that are happening are because of his leadership. Thanks, Mel.

**Q. Barry, I told you I was going to reveal this before the race if you won. I don't know if Alex even knows this. Can you explain to folks how bacon is your superpower when it comes to strategy?**

BARRY WANSER: Well, Chuck Schifsky from Honda Acura and I have a long friendship. I keep reminding him from the beginning of the year that as long as Honda hospitality, whatever they do for breakfast, as long as they have bacon available, then it's going to be a good day for the 10 car.

It's like I don't even have to eat the bacon. I ate the bacon yesterday, and that worked out, but I didn't eat the bacon today because I was too busy.

ALEX PALOU: Toronto they did not have --

BARRY WANSER: They did not have bacon in Toronto. I'm just going to throw it out there.

ALEX PALOU: It all makes sense now, yeah.

BARRY WANSER: We're superstitious people, right? We hang on to things that kind of stand out that maybe give us good luck. That's mine right now.

**Q. Reflecting back to 2023 when you clinched at Portland, how did you celebrate it that night? If by chance you clinch it at Portland, are you going to go back to where you celebrated it in 2023?**

ALEX PALOU: I actually had some friends that came over from Spain. Look, I'm not the big celebration guy. I love to enjoy it with the team. I like to celebrate with the team and have fun and have a great dinner. We had an awesome dinner together, but I remember that I actually had a redeye flight back to Indy for simulator because we had another race the next weekend.

I'm pretty sure that that would be the same case, but to get

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there, we need to win it first. Yeah, honestly, I hope we're in that scenario and that we need to find ways to celebrate it at Portland.

BARRY WANSER: I wasn't there in '23.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, Barry was not there in 2023. We had to celebrate with your head. Yeah, we need to win it first and then see, but whatever -- if we're able to make it, we'll have fun.

**Q. Why does this track seem to favor the pole winner so much, but yet there's fierce racing in the positions from behind?**

ALEX PALOU: It favors, but not crazy. Like if you look at last year, even though I started on pole, I lost the lead in, like, first corner. So from there my pole didn't really count much.

In '22 when we won, I think we started, like, 11th or something. It favors, as any other racetrack, but it's not like -- they don't give it to you if you start on pole. I think there's some street courses that are maybe a little bit more important to start front, and you are able to finish up front.

Yeah, probably just because whenever you have a good qualifying with a good car, that means probably going to have a good race result as well.

BARRY WANSER: I think the race distance itself leads to that where it's a three-stop race for everybody, so the two-stoppers are really never in play for an alternate strategy.

**Q. Alex, you spent the pit push-to-pass much more than usual for you. What made you so pleased this time?**

ALEX PALOU: Normally, I like to keep track of our competitors. So I knew that we still had, like, 40 or 60 seconds more than Colton and Lundgaard. I just wanted to make sure I had the big gap -- a bigger gap, especially in the last couple of laps, because I had a little bit of fear that Colton might have better tires than us. He actually had a brand-new set. I had always that fear in my mind that suddenly I would have no more rear tire.

I just wanted to open that gap a little bit more. You never know if those three, four chance or half a second is going to allow you to stay up front and not allow him to have a chance.

**Q. How difficult was it driving used red tires this time?**

ALEX PALOU: It was tough. It felt amazing for the first ten laps, so it was very -- it was allowing the driver to push a lot and to feel like you had superpowers for ten laps, but then suddenly the rears or the fronts, they would start giving up. You were losing like a second, second and a half of pace.

Yeah, we learned that from the first set of tires, and we kind of were able to hold them on the second stint.

**Q. Alex, you mentioned the big pace advantage that you had. I think you might have just answered that there, but were you pushing the entire time, or were you kind of managing the gap?**

ALEX PALOU: There were some different phases. We were pushing a lot on the first stint because we knew we were on our best tire, and I wanted to open the gap as much as possible. I knew that the 26 was going to be probably one of our closest competitors towards the end, but those yellows didn't allow us to, like, open the gap a bit more.

Then on the used alternates, I was managing them. I was going as fast as I could, but without going crazy. We knew that those tires were better, but you didn't want to kill them.

Yeah, I think everybody was on the same boat. It was about pushing, but managing those tires.

**Q. You called yourself Lightning McQueen at Iowa because of the passes that you made. Talk about the pass for the lead on Nolan Siegel around the outside.**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, that was good. I tried it yesterday in the warmup. I felt that it was a good passing point. I knew that it was aggressive, especially the team you're fighting with, but I thought that was my best chance to try and win the race.

You don't want to lose time behind cars that you think they are slower than you. Ultimately he pitted that lap, and I was like, really? I took that much risk, and I had to prepare my pass so much and then you pitted?

It's true that Barry told me there's two or four laps, and he's going to pit. But I was like, if it's four laps, it could be four to five seconds, and I just want to have those seconds in our pocket.

**Q. For Barry real quick, you've been in this sport for a very long time. To win eight races in one season and still have four races to go, I mean, can you even put into perspective how special this is for you and your team?**



BARRY WANSER: It's really hard. It's just a pretty amazing season for everybody on the team. Like we said before, if you win four races in a season, it's a pretty amazing season. To have this much success, to have some luck to go along with it, I mean, it's pretty special for everybody.

**Q. Barry, you said earlier the tires, it's a little bit uncertain what is good and not so good. Going back to each racetrack, racing again Laguna or any other racetrack, can you, in principle, not look into the dot and see what tire will be good and what tire will be not so good? Alex, after the last restart in lap 87 when Ferrucci spun, Christian Lundgaard was only 0.3 seconds behind you. You did not feel there was a risk he could attack you?**

BARRY WANSER: We certainly look at a lot of historical data, but there's nothing that we have found that's going to tell you from a previous race or even a previous race in the same year with the same tires what tires are going to work well at the next track.

An example of that is the street course tire. The hard and the soft is used at all of the street courses. It's the same tire at St. Pete, Long Beach, Detroit, Toronto. They all performed similar, but still completely different.

Here, you know, with the track repaving that happened in 2003, it was high grip. Last year lost a little bit of grip. Then this year lost some, but we also -- it's easy to forget, the car was a lot heavier this year. This is the first race with the hybrid, so this race was much earlier in the season last year. It was a non-hybrid race. So that was a big change for us.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, for me that last caution, he was quite close. Yeah, you're always worried, but I thought it was more in our hands of making a good restart and breaking late enough but not too late in turn two, right? That's what you're always looking for.

Yeah, I was comfortable, but obviously worried that they were that close.

BARRY WANSER: I think it certainly helped us. The last on the used reds with the first set, we did 21, and we told him he had to do 23. We knew it was a stretch to get to the end of the stint.

You never want to have late-race cautious to have those close restarts, but it may have actually helped us a little bit to reduce the amount of hard laps we ran on those tires.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations. Eight wins earns you a weekend off next weekend. So congratulations. After a crazy month of July. Champions here at WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca.

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