

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Monday, August 4, 2025

Alex Palou

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: You look up and the calendar suddenly says August; just three races remain in the 2025 NTT INDYCAR Series championship, and it begins this coming Sunday at historic Portland International Raceway in the Bitnile.com Grand Prix of Portland presented by askROI.

Coverage begins at 3:00 p.m. eastern on FOX. Alex Palou is a two-time winner at Portland, three podiums and a pole position actually, and he heads back eyeing a third straight NTT INDYCAR Series championship. Currently up 121 points. If he finishes Sunday's race up 108 or more, he will clinch another championship.

The driver of the No. 10 DHL Chip Ganassi Racing Honda has found time in his very busy schedule to preview the weekend.

Alex, thank you.

ALEX PALOU: Of course, my pleasure.

Q. You've certainly been in this position before. How do you approach a weekend like this?

ALEX PALOU: I'm excited. I'm very excited. I mean, I think there's loads of reasons to be excited, but first of all, it's a place that I love, that we've done really well in the past, as you just mentioned. It just feels like with such a magical season, we can still finish even better.

I'm excited to go there and see how our car feels. It's been feeling amazing this year everywhere we've been, especially road courses. Yeah, I'm excited to go there.

Q. Refresh our memory; do you like to be updated during the race about where things stand in the points or do you just go out, compete, perform and follow up towards the end of the race?

ALEX PALOU: I think it depends a little bit. I've been in different scenarios where in 2021 we were battling against Josef and Pato, and we were still on the best scenario

where I think if we finished in the top 8 or something we were going to win the championship no matter what. But I wanted to be a little bit updated just to know where everybody was standing.

Then, for example, last year at Nashville with Will, because he had that issue with the belt, I kind of already knew that we were looking good, although it was not done, especially at an oval that you can gain two laps in two yellows.

But yeah, I normally don't like it. I think if you need to be thinking about that, you're probably not in the best position. If you are out front, you don't really care because you probably need to win and that's it, and that's the best you can do.

If you are at the back, it's like, well, maybe it's not your day to win it. Yeah, hopefully we are not in this position this year. Hopefully we can focus on ourselves and just trying to win the race. Obviously we know if we win the race at Portland we can seal the championship there.

Let's say that we are not going to be just going for a top 10 right behind Pato just to clinch the championship there.

Q. Is there anything about Portland that would make it special to win the title there?

ALEX PALOU: I mean, no. There's nothing that stands out that I'm like, oh, no, that's the reason. We won the championship there in 2023, which having two championships at the same place would be amazing. But no, there's nothing. I don't have a memory of saying that was my first ever race in an INDYCAR or whatever. No.

Q. When you look back at last year there, was that a good memory or a frustrating memory when I think you were on the hards and Will is running away on the softs there at the end?

ALEX PALOU: It was kind of both. Like he just destroyed us. I think he gave us like 12 seconds or something like that, 11 seconds. The pace that he had was crazy. I was right behind him at some point, and I could not do anything to stop him. It was frustrating, but at the same time, we still finished second, and our car was really, really good there.

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I was still kind of happy.

But yeah, the pace that he had last year there was amazing, was quite unbelievable.

Q. Was that paella that I saw earlier?

ALEX PALOU: Yes. I did not cook that one, but yes.

Q. Did you eat the whole thing?

ALEX PALOU: Well, it was four people for that paella, but yes, not me alone. I could not smash that alone. It was like a kilo of rice, so that's a lot. Maybe a bit less. It was a bit less.

Q. You have won eight times this year; you know that. You came into the season sitting, I believe, 40th on the all-time INDYCAR victory list, ranked 40th. I believe you're up to 25th now. Of the folks that you've surpassed, 19 victories now. This season alone you've moved ahead of folks like Gil de Ferran, Simon Pagenaud, Juan Pablo Montoya, a few others, as well. With your win the weekend before last at Laguna Seca, you surpassed Captain America, Ryan Hunter-Reay, who was at 18 victories, so you being at 19, that impresses me. Knowing some of the names that are coming up, Emerson Fittipaldi, 22 wins; Bobby Rahal, 24 wins; Rick Mears at 29; there's some pretty big names on the horizon. It's not going to happen immediately, but love to get some thoughts about you race for your team, for yourself, for your sponsors. There's a lot of things that you race for, but you're also starting to mingle with some pretty big names in INDYCAR history. You've been asked this before, but with this latest move, you've jumped ahead of a lot of folks that we would consider legends and all-timers. Can you share some thoughts about that? You're a young man to be flirting with some names that are pretty legendary.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I mean, I don't really know how to answer that or how to explain how I feel about that. For me, I feel like somebody has took me from my place and then just put me here, and it's like, what is going on. I don't know if that makes sense, but I just don't feel or I cannot really comprehend everything that's happening, not only this year, but if I look back at ever since I started in INDYCAR, my dream was just to be a professional race car driver, and I never thought about records or anything like that.

It's not that I think about it, but whenever I get asked these questions, it's amazing. Like to be in the position I am today, it's amazing.

I never thought that I would be around those names, and I think obviously this season in particular has been a little bit crazy. Yeah, I almost matched the wins that I had in three years, or in four years actually.

It's amazing to be there. I cannot really comprehend. I owe everything to my team and everybody that is behind me, like my personal team and my racing team, but it's amazing. I'm enjoying a lot. I'm enjoying every single moment.

It's not that I'm not conscious about what's going on. It's just that I cannot really believe it, and I'm just riding the wave and enjoying every single second of it and having fun.

Q. So that question was about history, mostly those who have gone before you, some who you've raced with. In addition to this is today, have you seen, felt, recognized or been suspicious of any changes in how you're treated by your fellow drivers this season as you've gone along and won so many races? I ask because it's cool to where at where you are on the all-time history list. You've won eight races this year; that's one more race than Scott McLaughlin has won in INDYCAR in his entire career. You've beaten the man's total career total in one year. Alexander Rossi, his 10th season in INDYCAR; you've matched the number of wins he has for the entirety of his career. You're one away, if you can win one more this year and Pato and Colton don't, you will have as many victories as those two fellow young stars have since they arrived in 2019. I know if I was one of them, I'd be looking at you a little different, a little mean. Have you recognized anything different with how your fellow drivers look at you, talk to you or treat you during this year where you're being very selfish?

ALEX PALOU: No. I mean, joking-wise, yes. Everybody like on the driver autographs and all that stuff or on messages. But I think I have not seen that they treat me different or they don't talk to me or that they are grumpy or anything.

Obviously I know they don't like it. I know that nobody is happy about it, only us, only the 10 car and CGR. But yeah, it is what it is. It's competition. We are just trying to do the best we can.

Yeah, it's amazing to hear that as well at the same time. I think it's really crazy. Again, I think before heading into this year we had 11 wins which I thought was a ton, and it was a lot, but yeah, to have eight in one year, it's crazy. It's one of those years that helps you so much on stats. It's

awesome.

Q. Talk continuity; a lot of the teams you're going up against, drivers that you've been fighting against have had some changes. Might have been a race engineer, a strategist, a crew chief. Not all of them, but often as is the case every few years, there is a change to one of those pillars of the folks behind a race car drivers like yourself. It's been the opposite for you; it's you, it's Barry, it's Ricky, it's Julian. Not saying there's been no changes on the crew, but if we're just talking the head coach, offensive, defensive coordinators, all the ones you look to, you've had this absolute brutal consistency. Can't be a coincidence that you've been having all this success since you got to Ganassi. Can you talk to that, that this is one of the keys?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, for sure, one of the most important keys. I think that just helps on how the car works and how the car executes. When I say car, I mean it's the group in general whenever it comes to strategies or the pace that we have, sometimes that's because of all the experience as well that there is behind.

There's the same big people, I'd say, in the car. It's a lot of work. Ricky got a big knee surgery and he has I don't know how many metals in the knee, so he's trying hard. Everybody knows that Barry had an issue like two years ago in the throat and we tried to do something to try and have him. So we're trying hard to keep everybody the same, the same people at the 10 car because it's working really well and we have great people with Julian as well and everybody that's around there. It's awesome.

I would say, yeah, 25, 30 percent of the reasons why we've been so good, it's probably the consistency on the team side.

Q. I had a question about the FOX deal. Obviously last week INDYCAR announced that FOX had acquired this minority stake in the series. For you as a driver, how impactful, if at all, is that, and what's your perspective on how this affects the visibility and stability of the series long-term?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, unfortunately, I don't know exactly what this is going to do for our sport, my personal opinion, and I don't really know much about what's going to change, if it's going to change anything.

But I think somebody as big as FOX and with the small time that they've been with INDYCAR and how much love they've showed us and how much work and investment that they've put in the series, like even before we started the season, it was crazy. It was unbelievable.

I think having a partner like this that they don't need to look for the media -- not the media. They don't need to look for how to reach more people. They can reach more people. So having somebody in your team that already is capable of doing that and it needs only to find ways to do it appropriately and make sense for the business on the INDYCAR side and their side, I think it's going to be huge.

I think this is all we need. It's going to take, obviously, some time, but I think everybody will agree that everything that FOX has done for us with all the remoting -- I'm sure you've seen it. You go to any fuel station and it's not hard to see one of the INDYCAR ads from FOX there pop up. Also being on all major sports on TV, like almost every weekend, it's great.

Yeah, I cannot wait to see what they're going to do. I'm really happy to see that, and I have full trust and full confidence that they are going to do good for our sport.

Q. We know qualifying is extremely important. A Turn 1 calamity is going to happen; there's no real way to avoid it. Where do you feel like you have to be in that qualifying session once it ends? Are you wanting to be on pole? Are you wanting to be toward the back of the field? Where do you need to be to avoid what's going to happen on Sunday?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I had a little bit of everything. I started up front, I think, all the races that we've had in Portland, and I've been lucky at all of them except the one that I started on pole that I went from pole to like 20 something in only one turn.

I think it just depends how it goes. You always want to start as up front as possible. If you can start on pole, you need to start on pole and so on and so on. I think it just gives you more chances.

Although they are never 100 percent, but they give you more chances to kind of be able to survive lap 1 and especially Turn 1.

I think it's never easy for anybody, but yeah, hopefully it's going to be a good qualifying for us and hopefully we get more chances of surviving.

Q. You mentioned 2023; talk to me, are you looking at the same approach as you guys did two years ago? Do you want to clinch the championship now, or are you okay with maybe driving out the last two races? What's your mindset going into this weekend?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, mindset is always to obviously win,



win the championship, win races. If we have the chance to win it, yeah, we're going to try and do everything we can.

But at the same time, the goal is to win the championship this year, like not to go crazy and be like, oh, we need to do it at Portland. I'll be super happy if we get it at the end of the year in Nashville. I'll be so happy. But obviously if it comes earlier because we've done a great job and we can still do a good job at Portland and otherwise Milwaukee, I would be super excited.

Q. If you clinch it early, you get to have more celebrations.

ALEX PALOU: Of course, and everybody here is saying we've already won. But although we have a lot of points, we still need to win it. If somebody else is mathematically alive, it's still alive, so we don't want anybody to be mathematically alive for the points.

I was going to say we don't want anybody to be alive, and that was going to sound very bad. (Smiling).

Q. There's a possibility that you could break the record of most wins in a single season. Is that something that you're thinking about at all coming into this weekend and the final races?

ALEX PALOU: No. I mean, obviously I'm aware, and I know that the chance is still there, although it's very low, just because we would need to win three or at least two to match it, and that's a lot. Although it's been a really good year, I think it's pretty tough to do that.

I know that the best way to try and get there is to win Portland and get one more and then just be one closer. That's what I'm going to try and do, try and win Portland and then see if we can win another race.

I don't really think about it. I think, although I would love it, I cannot really change it. The only way I can change it is by just focusing on Portland and taking it step by step like we've been doing all year.

Q. Portland is a pretty good track for you historically; two wins here and you finished second last year. What do you think the biggest challenge of the weekend is going to be in terms of securing your ninth win?

ALEX PALOU: I think a little bit of everything. As we mentioned earlier, I don't think that we had the ultimate speed that the other cars had and especially Will. I know that there could be some other cars that are as fast as him or faster. So we need to do some work on speed.

Hopefully we can get some stuff from other tracks like Laguna that's been working for us this year and try and put it there and see if it works.

Yeah, I think speed, obviously it's a big point. Without speed at Portland, there's really low chances of winning. But then I am a little bit concerned, in a good way concerned about tire deg, in a way that it's going to make a big impact during the race and it's going to be key to make sure you treat the tires right and that you choose the right strategy to start with the tire that you want and end with the tire that gives you more chances to fight for the win.

I think there's different stuff to try and win as always, but it's going to be interesting. I think it's going to be one of those tracks where you need speed but you can also do quite a lot of stuff with strategy.

Q. I'm wondering, as a kid, did you have any heroes, I guess, in auto racing? Were there any drivers that you really looked up to as a kid and said, that's what I want to be one day?

ALEX PALOU: A little bit. I've always had my dad because he was my mechanic, and when I was a kid, I thought that he was the best driver in the world because he was able to teach me so well. He was not driving, but he would tell me, hey, you need to brake here and I would do it and it would be better. So in my mind, he was the best.

And the amount that I spent with him also made him more of a hero.

But the only driver that I had when I was a kid and that I looked up and I was like, wow, this driver is amazing, was Michael Schumacher when he was in the Ferrari era where he was winning so much. Just seeing that red car and himself being able to win so much and dominate and the way that he was bringing the team, yeah, I just really liked it as a kid.

Q. What does it mean to you now that there's a generation of race fans, INDYCAR fans, that they're looking up to you now, they're looking at you as a guy that has the potential to break these records as a three-time, possibly four-time champion by this time next weekend? What does it mean that there's a little kid out there that might be looking at you and sitting in your position in 20 years going, Alex Palou was the guy that I looked up to as a hero figure?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, that's crazy. That sounds crazy. But if I can help a young kid be a bit more motivated to enter motorsport and to fight and try to be a little bit more motivated to work for it and try and have a living about it,

that would be amazing. That would make my day -- not my day. It would make my life. Just to see that you can inspire some people would be amazing. Yeah, hopefully I can inspire somebody.

Q. You've kind of put together a Hall-of-Fame career on two-time speed. In six years you're a three-time champion, maybe looking at a fourth. If you could tell yourself in your rookie year something, if you could give your 2020 self a piece of advice, what would you tell your younger self as a three-time champion, possibly a four-time champion next week? What would you tell a younger Alex Palou now that you've been through the bumps in the road and you've reached the pinnacle of the sport?

ALEX PALOU: It's tough. I think it's all about experience, and it's all about small bits. There's not one thing that one day you wake up or you go to bed and you're like, wow, I'm so glad I learned that. That doesn't exist. At least I've never experienced anything like that.

It's all about small bits, like learning something small every day and being able to understand how the car works or what you need yourself from the car to be a little bit better or how you prepare your races a little bit.

I think it's just a lot of small steps that I would not have tried, so the only thing, obviously I would try and avoid having any bumps with the team with contracts, but I think that's part of me. That's part of who I am today as well probably mentally.

So I would just tell him to enjoy and work hard because it's hard. Like you go through some times that are really good like this one and I know that there's going to be some bad and tough moments in the future. You just need to continue working hard and never giving up.

Q. As mentioned before, you won in Portland twice and sealing the title in 2023. What is behind your success at this particular track?

ALEX PALOU: I don't know. It's tough. I think it just -- every time I've been there, I've just felt really comfortable. I've felt like the car has been responding the way I needed and also the way it flows. It just really matches my style, I guess.

It's really narrow, and although it's a road course, it just bites you like a street course. As soon as you go off, unless it's Turn 1, you normally end up in the wall.

It's one of those tracks that you need to drive it 99 percent. You cannot drive it 100 percent all the time because

otherwise you go off pretty easily, and I think obviously having good cars there helps. It helps you feel better. It helps you perform better. Yeah, a combination of both just makes us perform really well.

Q. Motorsports never stands still; are you thinking about 2026? And if you are, how are the preparations going given your and Chip Ganassi Racing's dominance this season?

ALEX PALOU: No, honestly, no. I think we have such a long off-season, unfortunately, that we have a huge amount of time just to think and to go over. We normally sit down after the season, we review all the season and we try and improve small stuff, like from the car, from the team, from my side, and we just try and rebuild a little bit.

I think this year everything that we thought about it worked, and it's one of those perfect years. Normally you say 100 stuff and three of them work, which is good, and then suddenly you keep on improving a little bit.

I don't put too much into it. I've been more focused on relaxing because it's been such a hectic back-to-back races that I just took this week off, like really off, and preparing the last couple of races with a lot of -- I'm hungry. I'm hungry, obviously, to try and finish this season off strong.

Q. Given you've had so much time to relax, it's an American football tradition to go to Disney World or Disneyland after the big game. If you clinched the championship this year, where would you go after winning such a big championship and the historic season that you've had?

ALEX PALOU: I don't know. I never plan stuff. I'm really bad at planning, and think it's a good thing in a way. I probably used to plan a lot more stuff before, but yeah, things don't always go to plan. Imagine you plan all this stuff to do, and as I said, we still need to win the championship, right? It would be a bit crazy to have this plan once you win and then not win it, which could happen, still could happen.

I never plan stuff. My wife doesn't like it, but it's just the way I work and my brain works. Once we get through that point, I guess we'll figure it out.

I know there's plenty of stuff planned for the 500. We just have a lot of events for that. Hopefully we can add more for the championship. But yeah, I don't know. I'll let you know.

Q. You race in all sorts of places with deep racing ties

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and deep history. Portland may not be a place that's talked about as much, but they've been racing there for 64 years and they've been racing INDYCAR there since 1984, and that has produced a lot of passionate fans here in Portland. What kind of energy do you notice from the Portland crowds in years past, and how does it feel to race under the Portland crowd, and what are you excited for for this year's race in Portland?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I love it. I think the atmosphere there, it's been amazing all the years that I've been there. It just seems like we have really hard-core fans, which are amazing that they've been following the series for a long time, and although a lot of them are locals, they also come to some of the races, and it's super exciting to see.

Yeah, I'm excited to go there. I think we normally have a really big crowd, and hopefully this year it's even better and we can bring even more new people to enjoy the series. Yeah, it's always exciting.

Q. Obviously even if you clinch this week in Portland, you still have two more ovals before the season concludes. One of the talking points coming into the year was how you have yet to win on an oval. Now you've won twice. How rewarding would it be to finish the season on top of the oval standings? You're one point behind Pato right now.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I saw that the other day. I think somebody from the team told me and I was like, wow, that's pretty cool. Normally in the past we would see that those stats, the road course and street course and the oval and we would have a huge gap on the oval, like 60, 70 points, and I would be like, oh, my goodness, that's crazy, that's like two races.

It feels amazing, and I feel more comfortable. Obviously in Iowa I felt a little more comfortable and we were able to get a win and get a pole there.

I'm excited for Milwaukee, although last year wasn't amazing for us. We had that issue in race 2.

In Nashville we were not super competitive. I look forward to that.

We will also test at Nashville before the race there, so I'm excited to just have a day of testing there and see how we can just improve a little bit or how I can feel a little bit more comfortable, like in Iowa. I think Iowa has been helping us a lot when we've been able to go there and test with other people as well and just get more laps.

Hopefully we get to do the same, and we can hopefully be

up top on the oval standings.

Q. There's obviously been a lot of talk with the news of FOX taking partial ownership in the series and stuff. Would you like to see INDYCAR go outside of the United States and Canada to maybe race in Europe or Spain or anywhere like that?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, obviously. I don't know if that's the highest priority that I would put to them. I don't know how good it would go like in Spain. Although I would love it, I don't know how big it would be in Spain. Hopefully it would help having me, but I think there's markets that are a little bit closer and it would be huge and we all know that, and that could be amazing for the series.

Yeah, I'm all out for trying to expand a little bit and see if we can race in different markets that bring a lot of people. But I think what we need to try and do is try and find those people that would be willing to sacrifice so much and would be willing to give so much for INDYCAR, and we need to try and go there and kind of bring INDYCAR to them instead of just trying to open new markets.

I think from what I've heard, they're already working hard on it, and I cannot wait to see that happening.

Q. Turning to this weekend, is there anything in particular that you can pinpoint in relation to the track layout in Portland that makes you so successful there?

ALEX PALOU: Not really, honestly. I have no idea. Like whenever we look at tracks that we've been really good, we never see -- we're never looking at, like, oh, there's three big braking zones and this is going to be a good track for us. It's more how you feel when you go there, how you can kind of, like, play with the car and place the car where you want, understand what the car needs and how you can put your driving style into it and just match everything. That is when you are fast.

I think it's just been myself being comfortable with the cars that we've been having there, and not that the track has three high-speed corners or anything like that. I think it's just a road course that we've been really good at, that I feel really confident, and hopefully it continues to be that way.

I know if I had a car that was not capable of doing all these things, I wouldn't be able to be as good on some road courses, so yeah.

Q. I think you maybe could teach us Norwegians something with your mindset. Everyone here is still hyped about Formula 1, but now we have Dennis Hauger in a good position to join INDYCAR. Many still

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think that INDYCAR is just a steppingstone before Formula 1 instead of aiming for INDYCAR as a highlight or peak of your career. Based on your perspective of that and what we know about your mindset, why couldn't we just be happy that INDYCAR can be a peak or a pinnacle of a career instead of just a steppingstone towards an F1 career?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I mean, I think probably all those people that think that have never been to an INDYCAR race probably. That's probably why. That's the only reason why.

They would probably change their minds pretty quick if they attended one of the races and they see how many different teams we have, how many different drivers we have. Like nowadays we have drivers from all over the world, and how many races we have, how many different tracks.

We are the only single-seater series that has refueling inside the race, like during the race, that we have multiple disciplines like street course, road course, ovals. And the places that we go, the fans that we get, they're amazing.

I would just recommend that person to go and look at an INDYCAR race. That doesn't mean that I'm downplaying F1, obviously. I think everybody knows that F1 is the pinnacle of motorsport because it goes worldwide, it's big, it has big manufacturers.

Yeah, INDYCAR is not easy. It's really fucking good. I think I would just invite all of them to one of our races, the one that they choose. It's not only that we have one good event. And they would suddenly realize that it's not a steppingstone.

Q. I'm not sure how much you've noticed Dennis Hauger's performance in INDY NXT this season, but if you've spotted him based on your experience and all the stuff in his career, what do you think of his chances to reach INDYCAR and then perform in INDYCAR?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, obviously I haven't paid, like, crazy attention. I've not been looking at every single result. But obviously it's not been hard to know that he's been winning a lot and he's been doing amazingly.

I think it's amazing. What are his chances? I think it always depends on a little bit of luck, on timing, on support. I am not aware of, like, what the different seats that are going to be available for next year, but obviously he deserves one if there's one, and the chances of being good or not in INDYCAR, I think we've seen that with many

drivers who have done well in INDYCAR. Like Kyle is the first one that comes to mind, and like Rasmussen, as well, he's been so good this year and last year as well. So yeah, I think whenever somebody is good in INDY NXT it's been quite easy to see that they've done very good in INDYCAR as well.

Q. Curious since becoming a dad, how has that made this championship sweeter and has this made the whole year a lot more special for you?

ALEX PALOU: It's made my life just a lot more special, but especially racing. Just being able to go to a race and then go back to the bus and seeing her, like whenever it's a good day, you can celebrate even better because you are happy not only about your success but what it's bringing to the family as well and how cool it is for her to be alive when we're having so much success.

Whenever you have one of those really shitty days, it's also good to go there and just see that she doesn't care, she's still playing, and she just wants to see you and she wants to hug you, and you're like, all right, it was just a race, let's just move on.

Whatever has been happening in my life, it's always been so much better with her, and it's been making this year a lot better, obviously, having her and having so many pictures of her with us in Victory Lane. It's been cool.

THE MODERATOR: Alex, thanks for your time. Safe travels, and we'll see you soon for Portland.

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