

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Kyle Kirkwood

David Malukas

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: A tremendous start to your weekend so far. Does it go back to the test? You guys were here two weeks ago for the test?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: We were here last week, I think. All these weeks are coming together.

THE MODERATOR: Good start. Tell us about it a little bit.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Decent. I think we were, what, fourth in that group. Yeah, not sure why you guys want to talk to me about fourth (smiling).

We were good here last year. We were in the Fast Six. We qualified fifth. Got an engine penalty. Yeah, I mean, this has tended to be a pretty solid track for the Andretti name. We expected things out of this weekend considering that we did test here last weekend.

THE MODERATOR: You've had a good, tremendous season in 2025. I know you want to get back into some momentum. It all starts right here?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Yes.

THE MODERATOR: Open it up for questions.

Q. You brought up a good point about how the weather was similar to this when you tested. How important was that for today, but how dissimilar is it going to be to get when it gets to be 95 on Sunday?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Fortunately at our test when we were here last week, we got a bit of all of that. Early in the morning it was in the 60s, 70, but by the end of the afternoon it was in the 90s, which is similar to what we're going to have throughout this weekend. It as very good from that sense.

You're right. It going to change a lot of things. It's going to change car balance, performance of the car in general, tire

life. There's a lot of factors that will come into play as the temperature rises. We got to be fast on our toes with that.

Q. Do you feel like anybody will have either a false sense of security or insecurity after today and tomorrow with the change in the heat for Sunday?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Probably. I hope that's not us. I hope it's everyone else but us.

I mean, we got a good understanding of where the balance will go based on temperature, which is good for us. That's one of our strong suits based on our test. Hopefully that plays in our favor. Only time will tell if it catches other people out or not.

Q. Rinus said you chatted after Laguna Seca. You seemed to be pretty mad or your social people were mad. Curious, what was...

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I wasn't necessarily mad. I thought it was a little strange that he posted it. It was a broadcast, but it was onboard video from me. I've just never seen another driver do that. I wasn't going to let it fly.

We talked about it. I wasn't upset. He wasn't upset. All things are fine between us.

Q. You've had this week and a half, two weeks, since the crazy run through July. Have you or the folks on the 27 car had a chance to review July, what that month turned into for you guys, how to turn things around for the last stretch of the season?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Yeah, July was not that good to us, if I'm being honest, right? Iowa was not great for us by any means. Mid-Ohio, yeah. That's kind of how I've been at Mid-Ohio if I'm being honest in INDYCAR. I was so good at Mid-Ohio in every other series but INDYCAR.

What other races did we go to after that? We had last weekend. Toronto was unfortunate the way the race panned out. If it did pan out that way, we would probably have been 1-2-3 Andrettis, which would have been phenomenal. Can't always get the luck on our side.



Then Laguna, yeah, disaster for me.

Yeah, glad July is over. Now we'll have three races to somewhat redeem ourselves and hopefully come away with some points. Hopefully a top three in the championship would be very nice.

Q. You started on pole at Nashville last year. You won a short oval earlier this year. How would you characterize how you and the whole team feel going into the final two races?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Not sure about Milwaukee, if I'm being completely honest. I think Colton was fairly solid there. We were fairly solid in the second race last year there. But Nashville for sure was one of the strongest oval events I've had in my career. We're really looking forward to that one, so... Yeah, excited for that one.

But we got two more between then. We need to have good results here and at Milwaukee to really piece together a decent championship.

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by David Malukas for AJ Foyt Enterprises. P2 in group two this afternoon.

How would you describe your start to the weekend?

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, it was a little bit chaotic to start the session. It was just a lot of red flags there. Couldn't really get a lap in. It took a while. Once we did, tires were kind of past their life. It was a little bit of a guessing game going into the group running.

Thankfully everybody got spaced out, we got in a lot of laps on the primaries and the alternates. Got a lot of answers we needed. I think we know the direction we need to go and close that gap up to the front.

THE MODERATOR: Pole position last year for the team good start. This is turning into a Foyt track?

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, we'll see. We'll see when qualifying comes. So far things are trajectoring [sic] in the correct direction, things are looking good. Close that gap and we'll see what tomorrow brings.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for David.

Q. Is your hand okay? It's been wrapped for a few weeks now.

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, no, I mean, obviously in the beginning or when I started driving back again in 2024, last season, I had to get it wrapped. Just give it that extra

support in the car. Now I kind of just do it as habit. I feel a little bit lost without it.

It's more kind of there from a mental aspect than a physical standpoint. The hand has been fine ever since the start of the season.

Q. Is it not weird, but with all the rumors and chatter, to have Penske Gallagher colors on your car, does that make things awkward at all for you?

DAVID MALUKAS: No. I mean, it's same old, same old. When it comes to the sponsorship, there's an alliance between Foyt and Penske. Obviously that transcends through sponsorship, as well.

Q. What do you think the temperatures are going to do throughout the weekend in terms of the tire performance?

DAVID MALUKAS: What are the tires going to be doing? It's a bit tough to say. These are the tires from I think INDYCAR road course. It's going to be a little bit of a guessing game. We know a little bit going into it after Indy road course, Mid-Ohio, some answers from the primaries, alternates. We will see what the data brings.

Obviously I think after practice, try to get more information. We won't really know much until warm-up for the race. Obviously qualifying alternates are going to be a lot quicker. But for the race we'll have to wait and see.

Q. David, I know this is a track where Santino started on pole last year, had a fairly solid run. I know things change from year to year. Temperature will have a big role on Sunday. Where do you feel like your guys' package is coming into this weekend? What did you learn from practice?

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, I mean, obviously the team was dominant last year so we're kind of building off of that car, that setup.

Things have changed. Different tire compound of course. Temperatures are going to be different. So there's some little finite things that we need to fix.

I think we're in the window, which is good for us. I think road courses this year has been something we've had a little bit of a decline with. I think our street course car and oval car has been a little bit more up there. Trying to be a little bit more competitive.

I think Portland is higher up as of right now for practice. But things can change and drastically change come



qualifying for tomorrow. But I have a good team behind me, so I think we'll get this Gallagher car up there.

Q. Will Power told us he's going to have to wait till the finale to figure out what his future holds. Do you have any sense of what you might be doing next year or have an idea when you might know those plans?

DAVID MALUKAS: No, from my side it's same old, same old. As of right now I signed a multi-year deal with Foyt. That's kind of where the trajectory goes right now.

Q. You're currently top 10 in points. Where does that weigh up against your pre-season targets? Is top 10 in points something that really matters to you?

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, of course it matters. We always want to be performing and performing consistently. I think as of right now top 10 in the points, I think it's somewhat on trajectory of what I expected.

Beginning half of the season, thought it was going to be a bit more of a struggle bus ride trying to figure out the crew, what I want with the car. Month of May was a good turnaround for us. From that point on we've had a much better second half of the season.

Yeah, I think we're going to keep continuing that. We have three more to go. Try to maintain that top 10 in the points.

Q. How is your Football Manager save going?

DAVID MALUKAS: I finally got him to the championship not that long ago. Took me a bit longer than I wanted to (smiling). I'm in the championship now. Got one more to go.

Q. The race on Sunday, the all-important run down to turn one, is it better to be on the inside of this course or the outside of this course leading into that complex of corners?

DAVID MALUKAS: Can you repeat?

Q. The run down to turn one on race day, how important is it to be either on the inside or outside rows leading into that complex of corners?

DAVID MALUKAS: Tough to say. Depending on what row you're going to be starting in.

I think outside would be preferred. If you can hold around the outside of one, then you're on the inside of two. I also see people still hold that line going on the inside for three and four.

It's kind of 50/50. I don't know. We'll see how it plays out.

Q. With the expected temperatures and the other classes running this event, is that going to help with tire grip?

DAVID MALUKAS: What was the question?

THE MODERATOR: The tire grip over the course of the weekend, will it change at all?

DAVID MALUKAS: Oh, of course. It will change drastically with all the cars going on. Especially INDY NXT. Anytime they're right before us, the track has a big turnaround. I think grip-wise it will be increasing and it will only help us.

Q. When the engine alliance between AJ Foyt Racing and Team Penske was created, it was really to help AJ Foyt pick up its game. You have done that to the point where you're out-pointing Team Penske. In some ways are you satisfied by that? Is that kind of a cool stat to know this engineering alliance, we're getting it done better than the team that is supposed to be the top team?

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, I mean, from our side, we focus on what's going on in our team. Yeah, there's not much of a feeling or play into that perspective. It's just how good can we get the AJ Foyt team. We want to be in the top 10 points, finish on a strong note. That's what we're focused on.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for coming up.

DAVID MALUKAS: Thank you very much.

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