

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Saturday, August 9, 2025

Pato O'Ward

Christian Lundgaard

Alex Palou

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Pato O'Ward qualified second, which means after the grid penalties he will lead the field in tomorrow's race here at Portland International Raceway.

Pato, your thoughts on what's turning out to be a really good weekend for Arrow McLaren?

PATO O'WARD: Super proud of the team. A massive turnaround to where we were here last year. Super proud of everybody and all the work that's gone into specifically this weekend to turn things around.

I must say it's a bit of a surprise on my side. Practice, we weren't quite getting there. The car randomly turned alive, not really changing anything from P2 to qualifying. Just a little bit here and there. But yeah, I was super pleased with that Q1.

As soon as I felt where the car was, I knew we had a shot for pole. Just missed it there with Palou getting onto the wall in our optimal kind of temp window.

Happy for Christian getting the fastest lap there and doing a 1-2. Yeah, we'll be leading the field into a great (indiscernible) into turn one.

THE MODERATOR: Juices up the championship a little bit more?

PATO O'WARD: It juices it up for all you fans, also for ourselves.

The guy's pretty much won it already. I know they're making a big deal out of this, Championship 5. We are 130 points back. He has got to have the worst luck he's ever had in his career, just like the best luck he's had in his career this year, in order for us to keep this alive.

We're focusing on our car, on our end of the grid and see

where we can capitalize, hopefully just keep on scoring points.

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

Q. Should you have asked Christian before the session started to maybe slow down a tick or two to give you that extra bonus point there?

PATO O'WARD: No. I mean, honestly I think we obviously knew we had a shot for it in Q3. I missed it there by being behind Palou and having to back off a little bit.

I'm super pumped to see both cars 1-2. I think that's our second 1-2. But yeah, I just missed it there in Q3 a little bit.

Q. You mentioned you're a little surprised with this result. Was this something coming into this weekend before you got on track that you thought was possible or has it even surprised you?

PATO O'WARD: No, I definitely knew that it was possible coming into the weekend. But in practice I wasn't feeling super confident just because I was really struggling with the car. I was struggling to get a lap together.

When you're operating at over capacity sometimes, when you nail the perfect lap, you know that car shouldn't truly be there. I couldn't get it right.

Very random in qualifying. As soon as in Q1, as soon as we went out there, it felt like a completely different car without changing anything. So sometimes that's a nice surprise that Firestone gives us weekend after weekend, just having thankfully consistent tires at least through qualifying. That's been a joy.

Q. This is maybe the most treacherous turn one we have on the circuit. You have the most optimal position. Do you go and talk to Felix who you'll be starting next to?

PATO O'WARD: I've been having dinner with him the last two nights. I think it's going to be the same this night. I will tell him, Let's not screw each other up (smiling).



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THE MODERATOR: Christian Lundgaard joins us with his first NTT P1 award of the season, second career. Your thoughts?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Third.

THE MODERATOR: So sorry. Obviously turning out to be a nice weekend for Arrow McLaren.

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Yeah, I did not expect that. After yesterday having the pace, obviously being P1 on both tires in practice one, obviously you're optimistic going into qualifying day.

In a sense I just caught up on a little bit of what Pato said there. He gained some pace from practice two going into qualifying. I almost felt like it was the opposite way for me from yesterday to today. I felt really good yesterday and struggled a little more today with basically no changes in the car overnight. It feels like a big surprise in a sense.

Obviously happy that we got it for the team and it's another 1-2 from a qualifying position standpoint. Obviously not the start. We found an issue on the engine yesterday so we had to change it. Thanks to Chevy for finding that.

THE MODERATOR: More questions.

Q. Pato, yesterday you were talking about balance and pace. Did you have more balance this year than a year ago or more pace?

PATO O'WARD: I think a little bit of both. Definitely a better balance. Even you might have a good balance, but when the pace is not there, you can kiss a chance at pole good-bye.

It's been good to have both pace and balance coming into qualifying. We're done with it. But yeah, it was a bit of a surprise. I'm not going to lie. I definitely was not expecting the car to take such a step forward in both pace and balance without changing really anything.

So either the track just started coming to us, the temperature... I mean, this track is quite sensitive to the temperature as well. It was 15, 20 degrees hotter than what it was in practice two. That changes a lot.

Q. Pato, can you give us a bit of a historical look back on the team's rise in qualifying performance even through last year. Don't know what to expect coming into a weekend. Might be great. Might not. Seems like the team has found real consistency. You're also resetting a lot of things at tracks, Toronto, Laguna.

Talk about the team's development. Seems like you're rewriting things quite a bit.

PATO O'WARD: We're breaking curses, as I like to call them. Zak was finally at a race win in the flesh. We're finally breaking curses at certain circuits that have always been a very tough challenge for not just my side but sometimes all three cars. This is a perfect example of this track in the past being a big struggle.

I'm glad that we've pushed forward. The guys have brought me new things, new upgrades, to try on the cars. That just speaks to, like, how hungry we are to kind of close that gap and just bring the fight to pretty much the 10 car, which is the only car that's up there all the time.

I think his success this year has overshadowed a little bit of how strong the team has kind of stepped up and given us the tools to perform every weekend, even though maybe the year prior to that it was a bit of a challenge.

Q. Pato, because you are in essence starting on the pole, I don't know if you're allowed to make a choice. I think at one time the polesitter could make a choice to start on the outside or inside. What would be your preference?

PATO O'WARD: Inside. Always inside.

Q. Because the barrier is there, there's a curb, looks like the car goes into a dip, looks really violent. What is that like from inside the cockpit?

PATO O'WARD: It's definitely quite violent. I'd say it's gotten better for us. I have a lot of experience with this car for a few years. It's been nicer going over through that.

Yeah, I mean, it is definitely not the most violent place that we go to. Like Detroit and stuff, you're like the bubble head inside of the car. You can barely see straight.

Yeah, this one is not a problem stall.

THE MODERATOR: Pole is driver's right. Choices are no longer an option in INDYCAR.

Q. Feel bad nobody is asking you questions, Christian.

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I was about to ask why am I here.

Q. Appeared to be a quick bonding between you and your race engineer. Seems like you have been really effective almost all season.

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CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Yeah, at the end of the day I think it's quite simple. It's wanting the same thing, and that's to win. You want to be competitive. I think we've done well at that.

I think we identified some differences and things that I like on the car compared to Pato and Nolan. Very early in the season, I think most of our big finds was always in Sebring, the first test we did. We kind of just carried on from there.

The road course results this year have been pretty good, with exception of Road America where I kind of screwed that one up for myself. The performance was there. We were kind of easily on the podium without that in terms of where we were on strategy.

It's frustrating, but overall I think we've lived up to the expectations that we put on ourselves pre-season.

THE MODERATOR: Joined also by Alex Palou who will start fifth in tomorrow's race. Furthest back starting position since the ninth at World Wide Technology Raceway.

Alex, your thoughts? What do you have race-wise tomorrow?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, happy. Happy that we had pace. Obviously not happy that I went looking for mushrooms there in Fast Six (smiling). I tried a little bit too hard. Just lost the car. I don't know if I impeded anybody. I'm sorry if I did.

But yeah, it was good. We wanted to fight for pole. It's good that we're starting in the top six tomorrow. Good.

THE MODERATOR: We'll continue with questions.

Q. Christian, did you use red in Q3?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: No. I think all of us used the new set. I think all of us did. I think everybody in the Fast Six used the third set.

Q. Christian, when you came around and saw Alex in the tire barrier, did you almost do a double take? That's not something we see very often.

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Well, I did see the yellow flag when I was going into turn 10. I wasn't really paying attention to who it was. Just making sure it wasn't going to be a red flag.

When I came around, I saw he was reversing. The only

thing I was really thinking about was make sure I keep these tires clean for the next lap.

Q. Alex, when you were about to lose it, did you get an indication before that turn that it was starting to get squirrely?

ALEX PALOU: No. I just locked a little bit. It was not much, just enough that you kind of are off the rubber, and the car felt like it accelerated instead of braking.

I mean, yeah, it was a small mistake.

Q. Had you been able to complete the lap, would you have had anything for either of these two?

ALEX PALOU: I think we were all very close. It was about putting the lap together. I think we saw that in Q1 and Q2, that everybody's like super close.

That's why I just tried to push a little bit more. I saw that in Q2 they had a little bit more pace than me. Just wanted to give everything we had.

Q. Alex, do you feel you have a car capable of winning tomorrow or do you not know because of the temperature changes expected?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I think so. I think nobody knows what the track and the tires are going to do tomorrow. Not yet. Hopefully today in the warm-up we're going to kind of get a small idea of what the preferred tire is. It's going to change tomorrow, as well.

As of today, yeah, I think we have a great car. Yeah, I can't wait.

Q. Alex, once you get past that first row, things can get squirrely going into turn one here. Knowing you have this championship cushion to protect, how do you envision going into turn one tomorrow?

ALEX PALOU: It's tough. I mean, I think everybody plays it by how we get the start, the position you're in. I think mostly everybody in the Fast Six is okay by having the first lap like that. But there's always gaps and people go for it.

Yeah, I don't know how I'm going to take it. Depends on if there's a gap or not.

Q. Christian, knowing you're starting behind this guy, teammate trying to fight for a championship, I'm not saying you should run him extra hard, but how do you balance trying to play your own race out and racing Alex hard to try to help Pato out?



CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Yeah, ultimately I'm fighting for my own championship. That's really where my priorities lie. If I have a chance of passing Alex, I will. But it's not to help Pato. At the end of the day it's not how we race.

Q. Could be celebrating a championship points-wise, or could be going to Milwaukee. Are you going to be thinking points or free, go drive, have fun, see where you end up?

PATO O'WARD: I'll be thinking winning the race. The points will take care of themselves, yeah.

Q. Alex?

ALEX PALOU: I think it depends. I know that by winning the race I can win both things. That's obviously the goal. I think everybody's going to try and win the race tomorrow.

I think we need to see. I'm not going to drive differently just because we have a chance. As long as we finish the year with the championship at home, that's the goal, right?

If we can get it tomorrow, great. If we can't, it's okay. But I think knowing that by winning the race we can clinch it here, that's what we're shooting for.

Q. Christian, you've had five podiums this year, now a pole position, before the penalties. How pleased are you with your progress through the season?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Yeah, it's been awesome, right? I think we've had almost some better results than expected. For sure also some worse. But I think ultimately if you look at it, we've had a great season. We've been pretty much competitive at every event. We're just trying to continue doing that.

Obviously we need a little more for next year to fight these two guys. But I think we have a long off-season. We have a lot to study, a lot to learn for next year. See if we can end the season on a high.

Q. Christian has been competitive on road and street courses this year. How important is it to have a teammate who pushes you, knowing you'll start the race tomorrow on pole?

PATO O'WARD: It's been great. To be honest, sometimes the solution to making sure that you improve maybe in places where you haven't been as strong is getting your ass kicked. That's the number one priority. The purpose of pushing somebody is you learn from somebody where they're stronger than you.

I feel like I knew as soon as Christian coming into the team, that was only going to make me better. I think vice versa for him. He's also got someone in me that is going to be pushing him every single week.

I think that is ultimately bringing the team to new heights. The engineers are obviously motivated to give us everything that we can in order to keep on fighting and pushing us forward.

But that's all you can ask for. Whenever you have options to teammates, you want somebody to push you. It might make your life a little bit more stressful, but at the end of the day it's only going to make you better. That's why we're here.

THE MODERATOR: Guys, congratulations.

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