

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Tuesday, August 19, 2025

Christian Lundgaard

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good morning, everyone. Thanks for joining us. Two races remain in the 2025 NTT INDYCAR SERIES season. They play out on two exciting bad, fast ovals beginning at Milwaukee Mile. Christian Lundgaard heads there really on a roll, back-to-back runner-up finishes, sitting fourth in the driver standings. Christian is coming off his best finish on an oval, sixth at Iowa Speedway.

Christian Lundgaard joins us this morning. Thanks for getting up early. What time do you usually get up? Is this early for you or not?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: It's 11. I wouldn't call it early.

THE MODERATOR: Young people. I don't know how it works.

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I was up relatively early this morning, then I fell asleep again, unfortunately. I have to go somewhere with some of my friends. I had them call me to wake me up 'cause otherwise I would have been late.

THE MODERATOR: We are certainly glad you're here. How much are you looking forward to the Mile this coming Sunday?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I'm actually looking a lot more forward than I thought I would. Going to Milwaukee last year, I think there was a lot of questions raised from everybody. It's been a while since we had been there. It produced such great racing that I think all of us left last year wanting to do another race straightaway. Just excited to be back.

THE MODERATOR: You talk about the roll that you're on. 14 points out of moving up to third place. How important is something like that before the season wraps up in two weeks?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Obviously we're behind Scott Dixon. We know he's going to be tough to catch. Even

though it's just 14 points, you can have one good weekend. I need one good weekend, he needs one bad weekend, and we're there straightaway. Ultimately for me, it's just keep knocking on the door, right?

We have two ovals to finish on. I think the more we can just continue our momentum, I think that's why Laguna and Portland has been so good for us, because we're going into the last two races now with a complete, clean sheet, just wanting to get the best out of the performance versus trying to do something special. I think that's going to help us in terms of a mentality and just getting performance out of the car, get the results that we need.

THE MODERATOR: Open it up for questions here for Christian Lundgaard.

Q. I think I'm right in saying you've got more podiums this year than the two drivers that came before you at the team in five years combined. When you zoom out and look at the season, how do you feel you have adapted and performed compared to what your expectations were coming into the year?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I would honestly say that there wasn't really any expectations in that regard, right? I think for me it was just show up, be competitive at every single event and get the most out of what we have.

I think it's been a great demonstration of what the performance of the car really has been. I think legitimately the car has been better this year than it has in some of the previous years. It is a little unfair to compare.

We know the 5 car and Pato has been really strong the past couple years. The only thing I really wanted to do coming in this year is give him a challenge in a sense, go out and show what I can do. If I finish fourth in all the races, I wouldn't necessarily care. I'll be happy that I was competitive and knocking on the door.

Q. Can you talk about that dynamic with Pato. The team has two drivers in the top five in points. What has that relationship been like between you? How beneficial can that competition be?



CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: It can be a good and a bad thing, right? I would say between me and Pato, we're good friends. We're trying to help each other as much as possible. I think we've helped each other much, much, much more than there's been any kind of battle between us.

I feel like if I've had a strong weekend from the get-go, he's been able to pick up the pieces throughout the weekend, where vice versa, if he's been strong I've been able to pick up. I think that just pushes us much more as drivers but also for the team.

I think that's helped the team tremendously this year. Even if he's been strong and I've had a tough weekend, he's picked up the pieces and vice versa. I think that's why there's two cars in the top five. Ultimately that's what we want to improve for next year.

Q. Looking at your skill set, hard to tell where you are in terms of a level on ovals, how do you feel you stand as an oval driver? What elements of oval racing do you feel you need to improve?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Yeah, I mean, the month of May was an interesting one because I feel like it was the first oval of the year. I definitely felt like I was somewhat at a disadvantage to both Nolan and Pato because I feel like I had to relearn everything.

I would honestly say St. Louis was probably the best overall race weekend we had on oval. Despite what happened in the pit lane, I think that result was much worse than I think what we deserved. I think Iowa we just struggled on the 7 car. We weren't really necessarily comfortable all weekend.

Milwaukee is one of the races I'm looking the most forward to. Coming out here fourth in the standings at the moment, trying to hunt for third, I couldn't see a better place to go to of any of the ovals so I'm pretty excited.

There's a foundation this year that's being built for next year 'cause, as you said, I feel like I'm relearning it all.

Q. Do you know where some of the struggles have been for you on ovals?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: In what regard?

Q. You mentioned, say, some of the weekends like Iowa have been tougher than others. Do you know where those issues have been?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Yeah, I mean, we know Pato

is extremely strong at Iowa specifically, right? He was an outlier there between the three of us.

I think Iowa is also one of the tracks where I've had the worst experiences in the past. I think I'm not going to call it trauma, but there might be something deep in there that is withholding yourself from doing what the car's capable of doing.

We know the car was fast in Milwaukee last year. I'm just kind of going into it knowing what I've learned this year is already more beneficial than what I've learned in the past three years.

Q. You mentioned fighting up to third in the championship. Also have the ovals coming up. What's the approach? Do you fight or focus on third or are you focusing more ovals, adapting, carrying that over into next year?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Both, honestly. There's a fine line because you want to learn as much as possible. I think you learn the most by attacking and being aggressive, right? You're not really going to learn much by laying back and running completely off strategy to everybody else trying to learn something different.

One thing I learned this year in May was you have got to run with the people you want to run the race with. Obviously that's the fast cars. The mentality isn't really let's try to build more for next year. I think we will build more by trying to go for it, as well.

Q. Coming into this weekend, two straight second-place finishes I got to think a couple years ago would be great. Now here you are another second place. Does it start becoming not mad per se to finish second, but is there a different feeling finishing second multiple times in one season?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I mean, I'm always happy to be disappointed with a second, right? I think that's the mentality you need to have.

Personally, I think everybody on the 7 car kind of left Portland with a feeling of we won that race. We won that weekend. Even though we finished second on Sunday, I feel like we won that weekend. We were the fastest car all weekend long. We had an engine penalty, sat at seventh, drove our way back to second. Had to hold off Alex Palou which we know has won eight races this season, is the guy to beat.

I think pressing Power throughout the entire weekend, being up behind him, obviously putting pressure on him. If

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we had the track position from the get-go without the engine penalty, I'm not really in doubt we would have had a better result.

Having three second-place finishes and three third-place finishes, it feels like something is missing, for sure. As I said from the get-go this season, obviously my goal is to win races, but my goal also for this year is to be competitive. We have been.

When I look back at the end of the year, I'm pretty sure everything that my heart's telling me is it's been a successful season.

Q. How does it feel, if it just stays status quo, the only guys in front of you...

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I think there's been so many strong cars this year, even apart from the 10 car. We've still been the second best on road courses. I think we've had races on street courses where we've struggled and still got good results.

If we can complete the circle of ovals for next year and have much better consistent results there, we are in a title hunt. I think that's what the 10 car's done this year.

Alex had never won an oval before, then he wins the 500, then he wins Iowa. For him, this season has been very complete. Scott Dixon is just always there. Obviously I've seen everything firsthand from Pato's performance. There's very, very little between us.

I think for next year I'm pretty sure they're not going to be ahead, they're probably going to be behind (smiling).

Q. Step by step, two races to finish, two and three for Arrow McLaren, or two and four, 13 points to Scott Dixon, but 77 points with Pato. You need to be with more specific actions in the two final races of the season, ovals specifically?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I mean, I don't think we're going to catch Pato. At the end of the day I think it's going to be mathematically easy to pass Scott Dixon. At the end of the day, if you finish fourth and fifth in every race, it's not going to be tough to make the difference if he's around us.

We need a little bit of luck. We need a good result. We need for him to have a worst result obviously. By us winning two races, obviously that's going to make life very easy for us from a standings standpoint.

All we got to do is we got to learn, we got to be aggressive and we got to be consistent, be in the fight, in the hunt at

the end of the race.

I'm not going to sit and dwell the entire off-season if we miss out on third in the championship, if we had two good last races but if he was better.

I want to catch him, but if he goes out and wins the last two races, we're fourth or fifth or sixth, we're in the hunt, I'll still see it as a successful season.

Q. You spoke about the consistency. Last year before Milwaukee, you were 11 on the championship. Now you are inside the top five. This is a very important jump with another team with more resources. About the strategies with more experience?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Yeah, I think everything has just come together really. I can sit here and I can pinpoint all the differences, but I don't think that's fair to either of the teams.

I've learned a lot more. I'm a much more complete experienced but also mature driver - person as well. I think everything is just kind of coming together.

The team's done an incredible job giving me all the resources I need. Obviously we all want the same thing. We're working hard behind the scenes to try to figure out, one, how to speed up certain processes. Obviously coming into a new team, you're learning new people, you're learning a new team, you're trying to figure out how everybody operates. They're trying to figure out how I operate.

Obviously, the only thing we want to do is to speed up that process so the results come faster. I think we succeeded at that in the beginning of the season. We had a little bit of a tough middle part of the season. I think we're kind of gaining that traction again.

Going into Milwaukee and Nashville, we're very excited.

Q. You mentioned in the beginning maybe some apprehension, uncertainty about what to expect in Milwaukee, what your feelings ultimately might be. Can you describe what specifically it was that made you go from I'm not sure about this to I like this?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Yeah, I think a lot of it has to do with, one, the hybrid system in the car, right? The hybrid has kind of changed, one, the way we race, the way we drive. The cars are heavier. It's a lot harder to follow closer. I think we saw that at Indy this year. I think we've seen it at pretty much all the ovals. We've seen Iowa change with the asphalt after they repaved it. The racing

was very different.

Going into Milwaukee, I don't remember exactly how long it was before we came back for last year. I would assume around a decade or more since we were at the Mile. Not having raced at a track, you don't know what the race or the track is going to produce. I think all of us were kind of worried that it was going to look like an Iowa. It didn't. It was great racing.

All of us, when we finally got there, we got to race, I think we all kind of appreciated how it raced. It excited us all. We did race one, then we did race two. We're all excited to come back the next year.

Q. As you look back a year, the test as well, sim time, where do you feel you are? What have you learned in that time?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Yeah, the question is how much damage has the flooding done, right? We all kind of saw the flooding of the track a few weeks ago. There was obviously a lot of questions raised if any of the surface of the track has been damaged, whatsoever.

At the end of the day it's going to be the same for everybody. I think for us, it's all about being competitive from the get-go. We are the first cars on track as INDYCAR, INDY NXT have practiced right after us, then we're going straight into qualifying.

Not having been there for a year, the track is going to be very green. There were a couple of teams that tested earlier in the year. I've spoken to those guys, they said the track was very green, similar to last year.

Just having already that information, regardless of what we've done from a sim perspective, from an analyst perspective, all I have to do is go out there with an open mind, use the same references from last year. The car was faster last year.

I've learned a lot just having been there, having analyzed it by myself from past experiences.

THE MODERATOR: The track, no damage. Full speed ahead for the INDYCAR SERIES there next weekend.

Q. It's been a career year for you. You mentioned you're never going to be mad about finishing second. Going into the year, if somebody told you with two races left you would be fourth in the standings in your first year with a new team, would you be happy about that, especially if you were given the context of who is ahead of you? Are you happy with being fourth or do

you feel there have been points in the year where you let points slip away and you could be higher?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I definitely would be happy, of course. I'd also definitely think we've left some stuff on the table, especially in the middle part of the season. Road America, for one. Indy road course. Gateway. If I just look at it realistically, we've probably thrown between 20 and 35 points away. But everybody has had those weekends where either they've been taken out off their own control or made a mistake or whatever. That's just how it goes.

If you would have told me a year ago that we would have been fourth with two races to go, looking at finishing in the top five, one, I'd be happy, but I also would not not believe you. I would very much believe that because I believe in my abilities. I've always known I've had the speed. With the right people, we can always get it to work during the race weekends.

Q. We've seen how good Alex has been this year. Seeing him dominate like this, do you think there's a little extra fire that's been lit in the belly of everybody in the paddock this year? Do you think there's more of a target on his back next year?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Yeah, the thing is, they are so good at everything, right, and they're so good at executing. Even if they make a mistake, it just seems like they have a little more pace they can use to make up for it. I think everybody else doesn't really have that. It just kind of demonstrates how strong that 10 car has been this year.

For sure they've set a new benchmark for everybody. There's a new baseline. Everybody needs to give more. I think that's the beauty of the sport, right? I think we've seen it so many times in other racing series at such a high level. There's going to be cars and teams and drivers that are dominating. 10 years down the road, they're suddenly not the ones dominating because everything evolves. I think that's the beauty of it.

I'm more than proud to be a part of a series and a generation where someone is so good, performing at such high level, because it only raises the bar for the future. Once you kind of beat that guy, you feel even better about yourself.

In the next couple of years, I'm sure they will have a tougher time. People will catch up. I think that's just the nature of the sport.

Q. In your opinion, how does the Milwaukee Mile compare to the other oval tracks you go to? Are they

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kind of the same?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I would say it's probably the biggest outlier, in all honesty. I'd say most of them are very similar. The Mile is very flat. There's hardly any banking.

For European drivers, it kind of tends to favor them more because it essentially is just a very high-speed corner, right, from a road course? It feels a lot more familiar to the Europeans.

Q. You've had six podiums so far in INDYCAR. How has that felt for you coming into a new team, having the success you've had? Has it matched up to your expectations?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Yeah, I mean, I wouldn't necessarily say it's been far away from expectations. I didn't really have any. Going in, I was going in with the hope we were going to be competitive at every event. I feel like we have in most of them.

It's been a very successful season so far. Obviously we have two more to go. We need those two to kind of complete the year. But so far it's been very good.

Q. What do you expect from the final two races? Can you put everything you've learned from the other this year and previous years to make them even better and hopefully get a win?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: For sure. I think if I look at it with realistic eyes, last year was probably... Milwaukee and Nashville were the two worst racetracks we went to for me, from the car that I was in. We just did not have pace. We did not have balance. Those were just the two weekends we struggled the most at.

I know I'm going into these two tracks with one of the fastest cars from last year. At the end of the day there's not really an excuse. You need to go out there and deliver what the car is capable of doing.

I'm going out there wanting to have fun, get the best out of the material, see what we can get.

Q. Relating to your overall career, you've mentioned you're a more experienced driver right now. How much do you think you've grown in this series and what do you think you've improved since your debut?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: A lot. I feel about four years older (smiling).

But no, I think I've learned so much from a race craft

perspective. I don't necessarily think one lap pace, qualifying performance is much different. I think that's something you learn at a very young age. I mean, either you have it or you don't. Obviously you can improve slightly, but I think just from understanding how the series works, the different types of circuits we go to, how do really view a race and kind of understand how it might unfold, right? Kind of put myself in a strategist's shoes, you learn a lot.

I think it's also a part of the success this year, just having that common knowledge, being smarter, being more mature. Also getting your feet to the ground in the States. I've been here for four years now. Getting to know everybody around me, spending more time with friends here.

So yeah...

Q. Zak Brown is known to have bets with his drivers. Do you have anything lined up for your first win with Arrow McLaren?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I do not, unfortunately. I guess I need to speak to him about that.

Q. Supposed to be a high of 69 on Sunday. You've been racing in hot temperature as lot. What difference do you expect that will make in performance and drivability?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: From us, INDYCAR, I don't think it's going to make much of a difference. Obviously we prefer the cooler races. It's more pleasant, right? From a performance perspective, I don't think it's going to make much of a difference.

The only thing I will say is I think the tires will last longer luckily. I think the strategies might play out a little different. At the end of the day it kind of all depends if the car's in the window. But I think we'll all kind of enjoy a nice little cooler race weekend, especially the mechanics. They've definitely had a tough July.

Q. Are there any highlights or things that you remember from last year in Milwaukee, whether in the race or being in Milwaukee, that come to mind?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Well, I caught a very nice yellow that helped me out on strategy. That was a nice highlight of my race last year.

It's tough because being so performance-driven as a driver, you want the results. If you're going to a track where you don't feel competitive, sometimes it's not really



the most fun thing to do, right? It's not really where you want to go. That was one of those last year. It's tough.

Really to pinpoint something that I really enjoyed, I enjoyed the racing there. Even though we weren't really that competitive, we got a much better result than I think we deserved. I think the way, seeing everybody else being able to race each other, kind of doing a little bit of a two-lane race, was kind of nice to watch. I'm just excited for that this year.

I'm hoping I can create some more memories this year.

THE MODERATOR: Did you check out the fan zone last year?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I think that's where we did the autograph session. That was kind of cool, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: It's back again this year. Same state fair food, attractions.

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: There you go. I'll be staying at the track this year, so that will make life a little easier for me.

Q. You've spoken about being happy with your debut season for Arrow McLaren. What would you say your key takeaways are for this year?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Honestly, I think how well we've glued on the 7 car. It's not really something you see from a paper standpoint. It's not something that's kind of documented.

I think coming into a new team, getting to learn new people, to work with new people, you're not always guaranteed that those people are going to work together very well.

I think how well we work together has gone a little under the radar. I know some of the results kind of show it. But I think with how well we've performed outside of the track and how well we've worked, I think it's been my biggest highlight in all honesty.

Sure there's a bunch on track. There's a bunch of passes that I'm proud and happy of from this year. Made some good results happen from some very important kind of passes. At the end of the day I'm just proud of the work we've done behind the scenes.

Q. How is the preparation for next season going?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I would say they kind of

started when we were in Sebring earlier this year, right? We kind of saw this year as a let's get together, let's understand how to work with each other and learn each other as much as possible. Obviously we still had a season that we needed to do this year.

I think we're kind of laying the foundation of 2026. We've done a good job so far. I think the momentum we have will make this off-season a lot more efficient. So I would say in a sense we've started, but we haven't necessarily started specifically for '26. We still have two races to go.

Q. Coming from the single-seater formula background, not so much experience on the ovals, is it more of a process for you to start getting the results on the ovals or have you identified what you need to work on?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I think we've definitely identified where some of the issues lie. Most of them are easier said than done. I think it's also having driven a car for three years, if I put myself in any of the other drivers' shoes that's been in the series in a very competitive car, it is a lot easier to progress than if you were in a car that's already a back barker. It is kind of difficult to make a difference because you're chasing your own tail as opposed to moving forward.

I think in a sense that's a situation that I've been in. I've had a lot of conversations with Tony about this, how do we speed up this process of having to relearn it all and unlearn some of the things, bad habits, that have been created, these kind of things.

Q. You've mentioned this year you have to readapt in some aspects. You don't have any great expectations, just only to be competitive. In what aspects of this first year in Arrow McLaren are you most surprised about?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I would say I'm probably more surprised having had the amount of good results that we've had. I think INDYCAR is such a competitive and tough series that getting multiple podiums is very tough.

I think if I would look at it realistically, earlier this year I probably would have expected to finish fourth, fifth 10, 15 times versus finishing inside the top three six times. I think that's really been the bigger surprise.

At the end of the day with the work that we've done behind the scenes, it doesn't necessarily surprise me. When I look at it with a very wide perspective, I think that's the biggest difference.



Q. You mentioned your great results, six podiums. Do you feel desperate to score your first victory in Arrow McLaren, since Toronto in 2023? It would be your first victory on an oval.

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Yeah, obviously that's the hope, right? I don't really put the expectations on myself. I put a lot of pressure on myself regardless, but I don't think the right way to look at it is you need to get a win, otherwise it's not successful, it's not a successful season, that's what you need to complete the season. I don't see it like that.

I race to win. I don't race to finish second. But I also know that's not realistic. You can't win all of the races, apart from if you're Alex Palou kind of deal. He can. That's what makes it great. It forces me to work harder. It forces me to wake up earlier, go to bed later, try to figure out stuff. I like that challenge of it. I think that's what makes the series so great.

Q. There is a driver in INDY NXT Dennis Hauger who also made his debut in Formula 3 and Formula 2. From your perspective, how special is it for you to see drivers like Dennis, other drivers who made the jump from European race series to American race series, and what do you say to the drivers who consider to make the chance from Europe to United States?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I think ultimately the lifestyle, the type of racing in America, is much more raw. It's much more exciting. I think we have the best racing product in the world.

We know how limited seats are in Europe. We might think they're limited in the States, but they're way more limited in Europe and much harder to come around.

For Dennis specifically, to make a career over here, I'm not surprised. I'm only happy for him. I raced him against him since we were in go-karts. I know him very well. It's nice to see. I grew up with Caio Collet as well. Seeing them fight for it is awesome to see.

THE MODERATOR: Ton of great information. I know Christian, everyone on this call appreciates your time. Safe travels. We'll see you in Milwaukee.

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Thank you.

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