

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Saturday, August 23, 2025

### Alex Palou

#### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Now joined by Alex Palou, driver of the No. 10 DHL Chip Ganassi Racing Honda with his sixth NTT P1 award of 2025, obviously first here at the Milwaukee Mile, his third in a short oval here this season as well, 12th career pole.

David Malukas was really hoping to have his first career pole today, and you kind of ruined that. But congratulations.

ALEX PALOU: Thank you. I guess I didn't expect it. I wanted it, and I felt really good after practice, but there's been so many times that after practice I feel like we found something or that I have confidence in, and it's just because you had a clean lap or whatever.

I knew my lap this morning was on a completely clear lap, so I was like, I don't know if I have much more speed than that. We made a couple of small changes to try and get a little bit faster, and yeah, worked out.

**Q. Your teammate Scott Dixon said he's never been in the position you're in now to where the championship is already wrapped up, but he says, hey, it's got to be a great position because what do you got to lose, you can just go out there and try whatever you want, win poles, win the race. Did you discover that mindset today?**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, for sure. I think I personally took it more than all other times that I've been on ovals in qualifying. I knew that, as I said yesterday, for me starting P8 today or P3 didn't really change much. But getting the pole or not getting the pole, it was everything.

I for sure carried a bit more speed than my brain thought I could do it. So it's probably always there, so I might need to do it more often.

**Q. Because you don't have to worry about points tomorrow, does that mean you might take a few more chances to win the race that you might not normally take?**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, for sure. That doesn't mean that I'll go crazy. Yeah, I would never do that. I wouldn't drive crazy. But for sure, if I'm on the fence of should I try and get that pass or not, I'll for sure go for it.

**Q. You told us yesterday that a lot of times short oval qualifying you've found yourself comfortable with the car, you just didn't have the speed or the lap times to quite get on pole pretty often. Did you feel uncomfortable or did you make yourself uncomfortable today going and getting that pole?**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I think I knew that the car, at least after practice, that it was towards the direction I wanted. I still needed a little bit more help from the car, and Julian, my engineer, did small changes on the springs and found a way to get me a bit more comfortable.

I put that in my brain and I was like, just go for it. Worst-case scenario you're just going to lose a little bit, apex, and that's it, you're going to do a bad lap. I was a bit more uncomfortable, but after lap 1, I was like, I kind of like this.

Yes, I think I discovered something here at Milwaukee at least for qualifying. That doesn't mean that it's the same for tomorrow.

**Q. We have one more practice to go in the race car. How did you come out of that practice feeling earlier today, and what more are you looking to learn here?**

ALEX PALOU: It was tough because the tire deg is really high, which I think it's super good for everybody, like for fans, for media, for drivers, because it's going to be a very interesting race. I think the tires are really good for like 20 laps. The grip is amazing, and then suddenly you start losing some grip.

That's going to create a lot of passing opportunities, so what I was looking at was just to try and get some traffic running. But it's really tough. I think this afternoon we're going to see more because you had people on new tires and people on like 30-lap tires. I didn't really get many conclusions of race trim.



I think the low line session is going to help a ton. Already now it was feeling like you could put those two wheels, and it was quite grippy, so yeah, I'm excited.

**Q. You mentioned your comfort level. Thinking back to last year at Milwaukee, talk about how much you've developed as a driver on a short oval in a year.**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, a lot, honestly, just the way I feel comfortable with the car. It's not that the car changed a lot, but it's more of like understanding what do I need from the car and how to utilize whenever I have understeer or oversteer, how to manage it.

I think I've been a lot more comfortable on street and road courses.

This year I'm trying to find those ways, and I think I'm discovering a little bit, bit by bit. I think qualifying is a different animal than when you go to a race. Although we won in Iowa, I think that yellow helped us a ton. We were dropping back like a stone.

That's the kind of stuff that we really need to work, try and get better in race and try and get better in traffic. I think there's a couple of cars and drivers around that were in Iowa a ton better than me going through traffic. That's what I need to work towards for tomorrow.

**Q. One of your strengths as a driver is tire management, and obviously it's going to be a high tire deg race tomorrow. Does it help to open up those windows if you can manage the tires, or do you want to undercut?**

ALEX PALOU: I don't know, it depends. I think race 1 we saw last year that there was not many people doing undercuts, but then suddenly everybody went crazy with undercutting and putting new tires on race 2. I don't know what kind of race it's going to be tomorrow.

I think I've been pretty good on managing the tires everywhere except ovals, so yeah, I still need to find that trick to try and make it happen.

But I'll work towards that.

**Q. We talked yesterday, so now you're tied with Pato O'Ward on oval points, I believe, with this one point for pole; talk about that.**

ALEX PALOU: Yes, important.

**Q. Only driver to win from the pole on an oval since**

**the beginning of 2024, so how do you control the chaos and everything that's going to on leading the field? You're going to find traffic, there's going to be degradation. Basically how do you stay patient throughout all this tomorrow?**

ALEX PALOU: I won't stay patient. That's an issue that you cannot really stay patient. You need to go for it.

I think whenever you get to traffic, it's actually nice because you start -- that's when the race really starts, and when you hopefully can, as a driver with your car, try and get an advantage with other people. Like we've seen what Josef does on short ovals. He doesn't make a big difference on qualifying or whenever he has clean air. It's whenever he goes through traffic super quick.

Yeah, it's tough to stay patient, but it's a long race, so better try and stay as calm as possible.

**Q. Last year obviously you were out of the race early, but you got in a lot of laps. What did you learn running through traffic that's going to help you tomorrow?**

ALEX PALOU: I think I got some ideas. After last year, especially also race 2 because I didn't really have much to lose. I was just there trying to learn from different people always on good tires because we were trying not to crash the car, obviously.

Yeah, I have some ideas, some notes. I don't know if it's going to translate into tomorrow, but more than anything it's lane usage and how to go in traffic. I think that's the big deal on short ovals.

**Q. You said you feel more comfortable than in practice. Is it even in your mind to improve the car much for tomorrow so that you feel more comfortable? And then since you were the last qualifier, did you study before your competitors what kind of mistakes they do?**

ALEX PALOU: Can you rephrase the second one?

**Q. You went out last; did you study your competitors? Did you see what kind of mistakes they made?**

ALEX PALOU: A little bit, but I think the track normally evolves a little bit to where it's a little bit better at the end, so it's always better to start towards the back. I think if we would have seen David or some of those Penske cars more at the end, we would have seen a lot tighter qualifying or maybe a different order. So that for sure helped.

Studying, it's tough, because everybody drives -- not everybody, but everybody drives differently, and you don't know if using that first lane is good for your car or for your driving style or not. I got some ideas but mostly from my teammates because I know exactly how their car is set up and the difference to mine.

I think it's more after the final practice today. The car setup changes quite a lot from practice to race, and today, although we could see a little bit of what the balance is and what we need for the race, we didn't really get a full 15-lap stint. I think my longest stint was like eight or ten laps. We need full-on stints to see what the car does.

**Q. It was a little windy today; how difficult was it for you?**

ALEX PALOU: I was a bit concerned, but when I went on track, it was actually quite good. I think it was a bit gusty, so maybe when I did it, it was actually quite calm, but the car balance was honestly really good. It was not moving around. I think here also we have so much downforce compared to other ovals that it doesn't really affect much. I think this kind of wind maybe at IMS would be a little bit more noticeable.

**Q. You went .7 seconds faster than last year's fastest lap. Did you feel much faster?**

ALEX PALOU: Oh, yeah, a bunch faster. The corner was a lot tighter and the walls were coming faster. Honestly I felt it this morning. I think last year in practice 1 I did 23.3 something or 23.4, and on my first real push lap I did a 22.8, and I was like, oh, wow, this feels a lot different.

Yeah, it was a bigger step from last year to practice 1 than from practice 1 to qualifying.

**Q. 10 wins is still in play for you. Is that meaningful in terms of catching that record?**

ALEX PALOU: I don't know, but that's what I'm working towards, obviously. I think that's our biggest goal. It's a goal that probably I'm not going to have the chance to try and get it again in my career, so having that chance, I need to go for it.

I know the best way is to obviously start up front and to try and win tomorrow, so yeah, I don't know what it would mean. I guess it would just make this year even more magical.

**Q. This track has a lot of different lines you can race on. Where are you most comfortable right now?**

ALEX PALOU: It's tough to say. In qualifying it was more like 1 and 2 I was very comfortable. 3 and 4 I was fighting with the car a lot. I think everybody was kind of with the bumps and how early you can go on par, but I think in the race Turn 1 and 2 become super, super tricky, especially with the amount of marbles we see and how people is able to utilize the first -- the black part.

Yeah, I don't know yet. I don't know where I'm more comfortable.

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