

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, August 24, 2025

Alex Palou

Scott McLaughlin

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Currently joined by the second- and third-place finishing drivers, Alex Palou who led 195 laps today, also great to see Scott McLaughlin, last year's winner here, back on the podium.

Alex, how do you try to sum up what you thought was a win, and all of a sudden the conditions came in, changed things up a little bit, you come home second?

ALEX PALOU: Obviously, I didn't think it was a win. I thought it was a really good (indiscernible). You never know until the last lap, man, until you cross that finish line.

Yeah, was amazing day for us. Anyway, I thought it was my best race on an oval, even though we didn't win. I think we've got some (indiscernible). The 500, I think it was just different how everything played out.

Today was amazing, a bunch of fun. Good on Christian. I think he was really fast. It's great to see him win.

THE MODERATOR: Scott, another podium here at the Milwaukee Mile. Your thoughts on coming home third today?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, a second-place that turned into a third-place car. We didn't quite have the speed for Alex. Right behind him, I felt okay, could keep his pace. Once we had traffic, he was a little stronger than I was in getting through.

I mean, that was probably Alex's race. (Indiscernible) let that happen. Massive congrats to Christian. As Alex said, he's been super quick on ovals, super brave. He's doing an awesome job with that car.

He has a great teammate in Alex. Yeah, just cool to see someone get their first race win. I know how that feels. Alex knows how that feels. It's a special moment.

Yeah, proud for my team. Nice to get some momentum

back. A couple of top 10s, now a podium. Not exactly what we want, but it's a start.

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

Q. Alex, a year ago, leading the championship, two good races, but bleeding some points. I don't know if I saw the same confident guy that we're seeing now. Talk about the year-to-year evolution of you as an oval driver.

ALEX PALOU: Honestly, it's a bit slower than I wanted or that I thought, at least at the beginning, to try and have that confidence and get those qualifying and trying to get through that traffic.

Honestly, I think was the best. Iowa was 50% there. This was much, much better, at least from my point of view. I have to rewatch the race.

Yeah, felt great. I'm feeling more confident. I don't know if I'm feeling more confident everywhere or just here in Milwaukee. I'm excited for Nashville next week so we can see if we can do better.

For sure I'm feeling much better. That's the most important thing.

Q. Go through the decision not to pit when the rain hit. Then Alex, there was a section when actually you did lap three or four cars, pass three or four lap cars. Talk about that sequence at lap 180. That really opened up the lead for you.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: He's asking you.

ALEX PALOU: Both for the first part.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: It's tough when you're at the front. Classic sort of NASCAR as well, you have, like, the bottom eight, sorry, everyone eighth back pit, they've got new tires. It's a tough decision for anyone to give up that track position. Ultimately that's what we both did. For me, it was a net loss of one. Same as Alex.

It's just how the cards fell. I mean, we both probably finish

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first and second today, but it's the gods, the INDYCAR gods, so...

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I agree. I think it actually only worked for some. It wasn't that black and white. I think it was 50/50. It's really tough when you're leading, as Scott said. Everybody stayed out, suddenly you pit from first and you go to eighth. There's no way with lap cars in between we would end up winning.

I would still do the same. Obviously now if you look at the result, you would say, Why you didn't pit? I think it was a tough decision.

I just started getting really confident out of two and out of four. I was able to pass quite a lot of cars. At the end it was not as easy. I think everybody kind of got to a rhythm, kind of looked or found what was best for their driving style.

Yeah, that moment, that period of the race, I was feeling really confident.

Q. Alex, when Christian passed you, were you caught by surprise or you expected it?

ALEX PALOU: They were updating me on the radio. I knew that he was fourth. Next corner he was third. Then he was second. He was only a second and a half. Then I started pushing 100%. I wanted to get at least one more second or try and extend a little bit more the laps. I couldn't make it. I knew that he was coming and he didn't caught me by surprise.

Obviously I didn't want him to overtake me. He was very good on the outside in one, two, getting great exits. Also three and four. Yeah, couldn't do very much.

Q. Scott, the reason for the last caution, there was some very light drops on the camera lens. Did you feel it on the track?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Saw it on my windshield. I called it. That's a bad situation for anyone on an oval, very dangerous. Regardless if it was going to be good or bad for myself, whatever, you just want it to be safe for everyone. There's a lot of people talking about it, so...

ALEX PALOU: I agree. Even though it was not good for me, I agree with the decision. Like, we could see quite a lot of drops. Maybe in turn one or turn three, suddenly you spin because they didn't call the yellow, so...

If you feel it, that's it, gone.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Exactly.

ALEX PALOU: You feel it too late.

Q. Both of you have raced against Christian. A very fast, aggressive young driver. What are your thoughts on what it's like racing with him?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I mean, I knew he was going to race hard. He always races hard. He was going to pass me or go to the wall.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: That's how he races. You got to respect it. I think he's very fast. He's very brave. He makes some really nice split-second decisions.

As we've seen, it's bit him in the backside a couple of times as well. He's learning. He's getting better. I don't know. I've said for a long time, he's going to win a race at some point. He's been really strong. He's not scared of taking the chance.

Q. Even though he's not that old, Ed Carpenter is a bit of an old warrior. He brought in a partner, looks like ECR has elevated its game to a high level. To see Ed Carpenter win a race again, that's got to be a pretty good day?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, (indiscernible) last time they won, were in Victory Lane (indiscernible).

I think one thing that's really cool about Ed, we both appreciate this, is his want to give people a shot. He gave Christian a shot. He's being rewarded. I think Christian is being rewarded, too. That's a lot to do with his confidence in the talent, his confidence in wanting to make the series bigger and brighter in the future.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I agree. It's great to see a smaller team that it's not as small now, like with a partner. I think they've grown up a lot. They've been really fast at many, many places. I'm sure it's not going to be their last. We're going to see more wins.

Q. Certainly the last 30 laps were pretty nuts. Maybe overall this race, not quite as much activity as last year. Was that year of experience for guys? Was it Alex being Alex? What was the difference year one to two?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I don't know. I think as everyone gets an understanding of the race car, they get better, and the field gets closer, the way the races play out sometimes. Last year we had two different strategies going on. Basically half the fields with Rasmussen's, being able to pass on newer tires.

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I don't know. I thought it was a fun race. To be honest, I thought it was a fun race. It's just the field's very competitive.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I agree. Last year I think I didn't overtake anybody, so...

Q. Alex, when you saw that Christian was coming forward, I assume you knew he was moving up, did you have any sense of where to put your car in terms of to take away maybe his best place on the track, or his car was just so good it didn't matter?

ALEX PALOU: There's that difference on tires. Like, at least from my experience, I didn't know what to do. The issue is tires. With new tires, you can open the arc of the corner, you can (indiscernible) more speed, balance it. With used tires, you cannot open up the corner as much. As soon as you slide a little bit, you end up (indiscernible), leaving him more room to go.

I couldn't do much. Tried to block the outside. He had so much grip that he could have taken the inside. Yeah, I tried. I didn't want to make it easy on him obviously. Yeah, I think even if he didn't overtake me, he would pass me on another occasion.

Q. Alex, in the beginning of the race when you got passed by Malukas, what was your thought process then?

ALEX PALOU: I think I got two starts, right? I got the start and two restarts. In the third one he got me. Yeah, he did a great job, as well, on the outside. I could have been more aggressive. At the same time I knew that the race was super long. It was like it's okay. If the car was good, I'm good. If the car is bad, it doesn't matter if we lose that position, yeah.

Q. Big crowd today. We were hoping it was going to be strong. Reactions of what it looked like, the turnout here.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I think Wisconsin is always massive supporters of the sport, as we see at Road America.

For me, personally I had a bunch of my family here, in the stands, hanging out. Not far from the city. The fairgrounds at the back (indiscernible).

Massive credit goes out to Wisconsin State Field Park. I think this is their first time doing it, which it's pretty cool. I think Roger and Penske did it last year. I was really happy

to have a big crowd today seeing them in the grandstands. It was awesome.

ALEX PALOU: I loved it. It was amazing. The atmosphere, I think we had more people (indiscernible). It was amazing. The crowd, the atmosphere... In the car, I could hear them. It was amazing, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Wisconsin State Fair Park took over.

Q. When you saw how many drivers came down to get fresh tires, do you feel like you were a sitting duck? Did you feel somebody on fresh tires is going to end up winning the race? It looked spectacular watching Christian do what he did. Did you think it was going to take a spectacular run to beat you once you saw how fresh tires were working?

ALEX PALOU: Honestly, I think Pato was the first one on that strategy. I thought if he's not (indiscernible) cars that were, it's going to be okay for me. Then I started hearing what Christian was doing, so...

Yeah, I didn't think the car was bad. You don't know if everybody is going to pit, if only half of the grid is going to pit. Yeah, I thought it was 50/50.

For me, I still had the mentality that I could win, that we could stay up front, but I was wrong.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Personally, I agree. My whole objective was to put as many cars as I could between me and the 5 car. I got between eight on the restart, which was all I could do at that point. I was kind of stuck behind the 83. Until Christian came, he was the only person.

Really it's full credit to him because he really made that happen. The strategy was the strategy. I think anyone else driving that car... He had the confidence to rip around the corner, rip around the outside of people, do his stuff. Yeah, full credit goes to him.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, guys, on another podium. See you in a couple days at Nashville Superspeedway.

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