

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

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### Alexander Rossi

#### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Alexander, ready to go here in 2026?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I think so, yeah (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: What do you look forward to the most in 2026?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I think, a huge amount of momentum the last third of the season. Obviously Christian's win in Milwaukee was huge for the team. It had been five years since they had a car in Victory Lane. Just a good reminder from everyone, top to bottom, that you can do this. The effort is not in vain, that sort of thing.

I think the change the team had going into 2025 came pretty late in that off-season, so you're not going to see all of the effects, the positive effects, of that immediately. This stuff takes a lot of time.

The back end of last year was trending in the right direction. I think this off-season we've been able to deploy a lot of the resources and capital that the team now has and hired quite a few people, changed the structure a little bit.

Everything is moving in a really great direction, which is all great and fine, but you need to prove that out on track. There's only so much you can do at the shop without driving.

That being said, we're really excited about the opportunity that we have. We feel that 2026 can be a really great year for ECR.

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

**Q. When you had your post-season debrief meeting with the team, what was the general feeling? Did y'all feel like you accomplished what y'all set out to do?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yes and no. I think we were pleasantly surprised with some aspects of the year, and felt we came up short in some others, which is probably the

same for every team, right?

I think what was generally quite good was qualifying performances, and then - at least on the 20 car side. And then a little bit of a disappointment on race day, just not quite turning the decent starting spots into big results.

There's been a lot of focus on that and our approach to how you manage a race. There's been a lot of investment and time put into what we're doing from a pit crew standpoint and the training that goes into that.

The whole organization is just really looking at all of the boxes and making sure we're ticking as many of them as humanly possible. Ted has given a very clear direction and expectation of what he wants from the whole team, drivers included.

He wants a certain standard upheld, and that's cool to be a part of 'cause there's an expectation. There's some pressure that goes along with that, but in the best kind of way.

We're all excited for the opportunity. Like I said, it's hard to really talk about it too much because this is all just in conference rooms and meetings you've had. It's not until you get to the track where you can really all put it into action.

**Q. The team had a big change last year with you coming in, Ted coming in. With everything remaining the same going into 2026, how much does that help having continuity?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, 100%. I think it's an often underrated thing in motorsports to have the same groups of people working together from one year to the next.

We certainly feel like we can hit the ground running in a much stronger fashion than we did at this point last year. It was still a lot of newness trying to come together. So yeah, we're cautiously very optimistic about next year.

**Q. On the lighter side, how is your training for the Indy mini marathon going?**

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ALEXANDER ROSSI: Well, I'm not doing that, but I am running a half marathon despite my better judgment because of a stupid bet. But that also means James has to ride a hundred miles on a bike which is going to be hilarious.

I don't know who started it. I think I was giving him a hard time for running a half marathon because why would you ever want to do half of something. He was like, Well, you've never done even 100% of half of something, referring to a half marathon.

He was talking aggressively thinking I would never say yes to this. He was like, if you run a half marathon, I will ride a hundred miles on a bike. He hasn't ridden a bike in like the better part of a decade, so I jumped on that opportunity.

**Q. Do you feel like ECR is close to the breakout?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I mean, I think so. If you look at of your available options, yes. Again, let's talk in April to see how that's going. But yes, I'm very confident and very excited with where I'm at right now.

**Q. Felix said they're going to have a baby mid-May. Sound familiar?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Sure does.

**Q. Any advice for trying to do track activity and baby?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Good luck. Good luck. It's funny because he moved in down the street. I was like, Well, she's got a husband potential right there, so... Go after that Rosenqvist fortune, we'll see.

**Q. Are you still a Patriots fan or did that leave when Brady left?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I left when Brady left.

**Q. Phoenix, we're going back. Know you raced there a couple times; different car. What are your expectations of going there?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I'm excited to get back there. Like, I was bummed when we left after '18 I think. I think I had one of the best oval races of my life that year, then we never went back again. I'm excited to get back there.

It's a cool track. It's a great part of the world. Having a doubleheader with Cup is awesome. Having done the Firestone test out there in I don't even remember, October or November, I think they found a pretty great tire which will make it an amazing show.

So I'm certainly excited for it.

**Q. There is a lot of employees that have been at ECR a long time. Matt Barnes takes a different role this year; Robert is in. What are your expectations with some of the changes that have occurred with the team?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, big. I mean, I think that ultimately the team, in my mind, one of the biggest challenges of the organization was there were so many people that had multiple job responsibilities, right? There were engineers that were covering three, four different departments, which is hard. It's impossible, right?

So being able to elevate Matt and all of his knowledge and experience to have an oversight role over the entire engineering group and both cars. Obviously the addition of Robert, Derek. We've brought on some great people in the off-season.

We're establishing that foundation and getting the structure in place to where we need to be to compete with the best teams.

**Q. The new independent officiating board, what do you know about it? What are your thoughts on it?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I don't want to comment too much on it because I don't know a whole lot about it. I obviously know how we got to this point. I think it's a great thing for the series.

It just shows the priorities of the series. The series wants to be held to the highest level of accountability across the entire arc of its reach. I think it's a great thing for the sport and excited to see how it plays out.

**Q. You described at the end of last season there being some low-hanging fruit to attack this off-season. What have those main points been? What has the process been across this first real full off-season?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, I mean, I don't want to get into the details of what those are just 'cause it doesn't matter.

What I will say is when Ted came in in 2024, that was fairly late October, November-ish time. It doesn't really matter what you deploy from a resource standpoint, you're not going to be able to hire everyone you want to hire; you're not going to be able to start all the projects you want before you're on track March 1st. Some of the lead time on this stuff is a year, a year plus.

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What you started to see at the end of last year was some of these things kind of trickle down the pipeline and get applied to either the cars or the pre-event work going into race weekends. So all of that was in small pieces starting to come together.

Now you add six months of an off-season where it's so hard in the year, especially with the calendar that we have, it being so condensed, it's hard to develop when you're going from race to race to race to race, right? At some point you're just trying to keep your head above water, get to the next event, do the best you can.

You take all of those lessons, you take all of the new toys, if you will, the new tools and software and everything, you start applying that piece by piece through an off-season and start building your tool chest, if you will, going into a new year.

You're all of a sudden way further ahead than you ever were at any point in 2025. That's the things that we're looking forward to. It will certainly lead to performance on track.

**Q. How do you contrast the position the team was in at the start of last season to the position the team is in now?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Expectations are much higher. I kind of talked about that before in terms of Ted has made it very clear that he's involved in this, yes, because he loves the sport and yes, because he uses it as a good marketing arm for his products, but also because he's a competitor and he's here to win.

I think the atmosphere within the organization, everyone is excited. Everyone believes that after a long time that we are now starting to get the pieces together to go out and compete with the best.

Now, does that happen overnight? Absolutely not. Are we all of a sudden going to be a CGR? No. Are we going to take a big step forward over where we have been? Yes.

**Q. It feels weird having a Media Day and we don't have Colton Herta here. We're rooting for him on the other side of the pond. Having gone through that system, F2, also being an INDYCAR driver, talk about the weight that he's carrying going over there?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Well, Colton doesn't carry any weight because whether it goes well or not, I can promise you, he won't lose any sleep over it.

But I think he's very excited about the opportunity to go and

experience something new and something that ultimately was a dream of his as a child. Yes, he watched his father race in INDYCAR, was a huge part of this paddock as a kid growing up. His goal as a young race car driver was to race in Formula 1. He's been afforded the opportunity to have the first step in accomplishing that dream this year.

So I think from the little kid inside of him, as much as he's not really an adult in my mind yet, the little kid inside of him is just thrilled for the chance and excited to take on new tracks and race new people in a new way, obviously be very involved in Cadillac F1. It's partially a dream come true for him. I know he's going to grab the opportunity with both hands.

**Q. With the spotlight being on him, what do you think the impact for the sport over here is based on his success or results?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I've already told him if he sucks, I'm deleting his phone number and I'll never talk to him again. Kidding (smiling).

There is pressure. We all know what Colton is capable of. I don't think anyone is worried about it.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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