

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Christian Lundgaard

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Christian, how is content day so far?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Long.

THE MODERATOR: Anything crazy so far?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: No. The real issue for me is my eyes keep watering whatever room I go into so it looks like I'm crying all the time, which I'm not. I'm happy. I'm in a good mood. That's what I would say.

THE MODERATOR: 2026, what are you looking forward to?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Being better. I think ultimately for me, not necessarily trying to take a swing at it, but continue the progression, keep learning, keep getting better. I think we gained a good momentum on ovals throughout the year last year. Obviously the 500 was the first race for me in the Arrow McLaren on the oval.

A lot to learn. We gained a lot of traction throughout the year. I don't think we need to do much on road courses other than master the basics and just continue moving forward.

THE MODERATOR: Open it up for questions.

Q. Last year Arrow McLaren was the top Chevy team. We expect that Penske is going to be back on form. How do you stay at the top of that heap and overall in the series?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Yeah, I mean, thinking about Penske's '25 season, there was a lot of bad luck, a lot of unfortunate results. I think ultimately we were still faster all year round. I don't see that changing.

I think what they are doing and what we're doing, we're all pushing to move forwards. I think we have to just stick to it and keep doing what we're doing and I think we'll be in the same position.

Q. You talked about what you can improve upon. What are the things you want to improve upon to have an even better year?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Yeah, I mean, I ended the season and left Nashville feeling like at least we were a top-three car in the championship. We didn't get to finish Nashville, which was very unfortunate.

But just thinking about the progression we made throughout the year, how we got better as a group -- obviously Graham just mentioned we lost Brian, who was on my car. I don't see that really affecting us because the rest of the group is the exact same. I think just carrying that momentum going into 2026, continue the work that we are doing.

Q. How has your comfortability grown going into your second year with the team?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I mean, I would say I was very comfortable from the first day in St. Pete. We started the season a lot better than I think we expected, but it was the hope. I think we started exactly where we hoped to start.

I remember being vocal about it last year, that I wasn't going to spend a year in the team trying to figure out how to get fast. We want to be fast from the get-go. I think we were. We had two podiums within the first three races. We were right there.

The '26 kind of goal is obviously to finish in the same area as a bare minimum of where we finished 2025. It leads back to we have to continue the momentum we gained throughout '25 and start where we left off in '26. I think we have a lot of good to come in '26.

Q. You're clearly a momentum guy. We have four races in the month of March. How important is it to get off to a good start?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Yeah, I mean, I think we're going to St. Pete, which we had a good weekend at last year. Obviously we were on the strong strategy to win the race. We led half the race. For a first timer in the team, we weren't really expecting that. We carried that

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momentum into the next two races. Obviously we were on the podium. As Arrow McLaren, we were extremely fast in Thermal. There is still this one guy we got beaten by every time.

For us this year, it's kind of minimizing his wins, right? I don't think he's going to have the same season this year as he had last year. I think everybody has spent the entire off-season trying to catch up. I think we've worked harder than everybody else. Therefore, I think we'll see some good results.

Momentum is good. I think it's going to be good for most drivers to have an oval before the 500. I think we were missing that last year. I think the last couple of years in INDYCAR we've raced harder and harder on ovals, which I think is good for us now to have Phoenix coming in before the 500.

Q. First year with a team there's a lot that you can learn over a weekend. Is there a place you're ready to go back to for the second time?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Every race we go to. I think every race we went to, we basically started from scratch. We didn't have a benchmark from me. Obviously we were going off either Nolan or Pato, from their prior experiences. Now me and Chris, my engineer, we have a little bit of an idea which directions we need to go on the 7 car. Obviously he knows me a lot better and vice versa.

I think we're only going to be stronger as a 7 car independently. But I think that's also what drives the team forward. I think that's why we saw the results we did last year.

Q. How much stronger of a team going into the month of May with a winner in Ryan Hunter-Reay?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: You said it yourself, he's a winner.

Q. What have you done differently this off-season than what you have seen compared to off-seasons in the past?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I haven't necessarily done much different. I did spend some time with family, a little more time with family, than I have prior. I feel like they come over and support me. Typically when I go home, I spend time with my friends versus family. This year was the complete opposite way around.

I didn't see many of my friends. I spent all my time with my family. My brother and I went together on a training camp,

just the two of us, to get away, which was very nice. I hadn't done that for quite a while since I was in one of the F1 programs.

Q. What is involved in the training camp?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I mean, everything. Everything you can think of. We went to Spain. We did some cycling, running, training. Everything you can really imagine.

Q. Golf game?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Did not play any golf, nope. The weather doesn't really like it right now, does it?

Q. You got a new cat this off-season.

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I did get a cat. Funnily enough, me and my girlfriend and her dad had a bet that if anyone really makes a hole-in-one we have to get a cat. Then the whole topic came around this cat. Whatever we were doing became a bet about this cat. I did something that won me the cat. Three days ago my girlfriend goes and makes a hole-in-one. Now we need to get another cat. Who is left with the cat? I am.

Q. What kind of driver is Rahal Letterman Lanigan getting in Mick Schumacher? What is Mick Schumacher getting with your former team?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I think from what I just heard Graham say, obviously they're making a lot of changes to the team that wasn't made when I was there. Obviously it's a different team now. I think they're moving forward. I think they're going to be better.

Obviously Mick coming in is going to bring a huge amount of experience to the team. I think it also drives a lot of personnel into the team wanting to build the whole infrastructure of the team.

Ultimately from a driver perspective, I think everybody that's in INDYCAR is relatively on the same level. I think Mick will fit in perfectly fine. Obviously he's got to pick up on ovals, which is an experience we all have had to go through, which is not easy. I saw, was it yesterday, that Rahal hired Ryan Briscoe, which is going to help them significantly and help Mick significantly. I guess, I mean, we'll see.

Q. With yourself, obviously the goal is to get better across the board. Your oval game picked up significantly this past season. When you're looking at eyeing wins, a championship push, where are the

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incremental places you feel you have to get better?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: There is not specific areas where I feel I personally need to take a big step. I think where we ended the '25 season on ovals I think is really where we want to carry on from. I've done a lot of work at home in the simulator just doing laps because at the end of the day it's the only thing we really can do.

Had a lot of meetings within the team what do we need, what do I need, as a group, which direction do we need to take, setup, for it to help more. Again, it's really just a progression. You can't jump from A to F from one year. You really have to take it in small increments. I think that's what the '25 season was really for.

As I said before, the 500 was the first race last year and it's the one that counts the most. This year we have Phoenix before. I think looking at where we are in Phoenix will really determine where I am, where the team is, in May.

Q. You raced against Colton Herta. You raced in F2. How do you think his acclimation will be?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I think he'll do fine. I think he'll struggle at first with tire management. The Pirelli tires are very different from the Firestones.

But again, it's a different car. It's a different series. I don't know how his testing has been going. I haven't spoken to him in a little bit.

I'm sure I will be checking in with him just to hear what his thoughts are. I was following the post-season tests they had in Abu Dhabi. He seemed to be getting on fine.

It's just a different world. It's not an INDYCAR world. It's a little bit more of a fine-tuned piece of machinery that you have to drive very smooth versus the INDYCAR which you can hustle a lot more.

Q. When you debrief on the year, is there anything you can account inconsistencies to?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: The inconsistencies were I guess Road America. We had St. Louis, Iowa. Other than that, it was relatively consistent in sort of the same area of results.

We got to eliminate those weekends ultimately. That's why you see the cars that are fighting for the championship, they have multiple wins that carries them and evens those weekends out or they're consistently better. That's where we need to be.

Q. What does the transition to the new place do for you?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: This is now my second time going through this situation. I think ultimately it can cause a lot of problems. It can shift attention, which is why it's just so difficult to time and do the right way, et cetera.

When I showed up at Arrow McLaren for the first time, I already knew this was in the works. There's other teams doing it. We know Carpenter is building a new shop. The sport and the series is evolving. In the next couple of years, we're going to see many more teams do it. But as an organization with Arrow McLaren, we absolutely needed it in terms of space.

I've been at the shop the last couple of days. Seeing everybody's smiles on their faces makes it worth it. For them to now show up at a place where they're excited to come to work makes a massive difference. Logistically it's going to be a lot easier for us throughout the season.

Q. We always hear about how the teams are developing things. How much more can you extract from this current car over where it's been for the last couple of seasons?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: It's a great question because I think it's really the question that we're asking ourselves, right? Where can we find performance? It comes down to is that really the question. Do we need to find more performance or do we need to find consistency. I think it's a little bit of both.

We see the 10 car being fast and consistent every weekend. We need to improve both areas. I think that's where the key really lies, is you're at a point where you can barely find any performance in the car, so it comes down to just getting all the basics right, every piece of the puzzle in the right place from mechanics to personnel to strategy to engineers, et cetera.

It's really more on the organization side.

Q. With the hybrid package continuing to evolve, what differences are you noticing so far?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I wouldn't really say I've noticed a massive difference. The cars are heavier. I think from the hybrid deployment that we have, it kind of changes from weekend to weekend, track to track, how much we can use it.

I think it's made the racing a little more difficult just due to the weight. I think the way the series is moving is in a

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good direction. I still think we have a long way to really finalize it and getting it into the right zone, I would say.

Q. What part of your driving best suits Arrow McLaren as a team?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: My driving suits best Arrow McLaren? Where you mean?

Q. Your driving style...

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I think it depends. I think we all have strengths and weaknesses. I think the way Pato drives on ovals might not make so much sense to me.

Again, we are still in a little bit of a separate direction on types of tracks. We can have the same setup at Barber, but a different setup at Indy GP or vice versa. We're always trying to maximize for the setup and the feeling and handling of the car to each driver.

Q. What do you think is the best part of the feeder series in F1 from overseas?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I think the interest in INDYCAR is growing. Where Formula 1 has been with Drive to Survive has increased the popularity significantly. I think we're sort of seeing the same direction with a hundred days to Indy with INDYCAR. Personally I think we're doing many great things. I think we need to do more of 'em. Ultimately in five years' time we might sit here and clap because we've gotten to that point.

It depends on which direction we're all going in and how well we're doing it. I think it all shifts from one to the other.

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