

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Felix Rosenqvist

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone.

Wrapping up what was a really good two-day test here, open test at Phoenix Raceway, the Unser Open Test here at Phoenix Raceway. Joining us, Felix Rosenqvist driving the No. 60 Meyer Shank Racing with Curb Agajanian Honda, who finished P7.

All told, I think it was a pretty good couple of days, but I don't want to analyze it before you do. Your thoughts on the couple days here at Phoenix?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, certainly a lot of laps done, so that's good. I think in terms of lap times, it's kind of hard to read into it. I wouldn't say that we feel overconfident or anything. It's pretty tight. I think when it matters, it's probably going to be the whole field in maybe three-, four-tenths. If you can find one-tenth, that's going to be huge around here.

Yeah, I thought the track was really fun, had a good flow to it. Pretty difficult to get the balance right, especially with the wind and weather changing, so I think the weather when we race here, it's going to be a bit hotter, obviously, so probably not going to see this kind of lap times, at least not on the long run.

Yeah, but interesting there in the end, as well. Felt like the weather was playing some games with us. That was fun.

Q. A lot of people compared it to Worldwide Technology Raceway. Did you see that a little bit?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Not really. I feel like Turn 3 and 4 is almost like a 90-degree, so it's not as tight as Gateway, obviously. Kind of low grip, so cars dancing around a lot. I would probably compare it more to a Milwaukee without bumps or something, but it's definitely its own character, so it stands out. Yeah, good fun.

Q. What can you take from here that might be of value when we come back in a few weeks? It could be identical weather, but nobody I know of thinks it will be. Anything you tried with the car that didn't work

that you can rule out? Just curious what you're leaving here with that might be valuable in a few weeks' time.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I think we learned that the weather affects a lot. Even from the morning to the afternoon, which I thought it was seemingly similar wind, similar-ish track conditions, the track really flipped around. Now it seems like everyone was struggling in 3 and 4, not 1 and 2, which had been the case for two days.

I think you're just trying to have a car setup that is consistent and doesn't change so much on you, depending on wind and weather.

I think just the time alone that you get from here to the race, you're probably going to be able to discover a lot of things, looking at data and stuff. It was good to definitely be here and learn some things and come back.

Q. During the autograph session, it looked like there was a mix of fans wearing NASCAR stuff and INDYCAR stuff. I'm curious if you got any sense of whether this race will be any more important as far as expanding the INDYCAR fan base.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I've always been a big fan of being out here in the west. I think it's good that we're continuing to push for presence over here.

I think it's good to combine the two series, as well. I think we've historically had pretty different fans, but if the racing is good, there's no reason why you wouldn't watch both.

I'm a big fan of -- actually funny you said that. I didn't think about that. But there was definitely a lot of NASCAR merch and stuff in the autograph. I thought it was a lot of people that showed up. I was pretty surprised. We had to leave before everyone got through the line, which sucks, but yeah, happy that people came out.

Q. You talk about low grip; obviously we've got the construction of a new right front tire for this race. Are you noticing it's kind of tough with the weather conditions, but any deg? That seems to be the

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consensus of what we can anticipate if we're going to get some passing and some action in the race.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: There is definitely deg. I think probably -- I think in this condition, it's probably like a second, second and a half. But I think it's going to increase when you do laps consecutively instead of just going in and out all the time and cooling down the tires. I wouldn't be surprised if we had like a two-second delta from new tires to old tires.

Yeah, the new tire was interesting. I didn't really think it -- I guess it's wider. It's a bit harder to feel. It feels pretty stiff. I think that one probably won't deg a lot, but the other three will. Yeah, that's kind of our read.

Q. Is that where the delta is, because that one doesn't deg?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Honestly, I haven't really done a long run. I've just done a lot of runs on one tire, like three-lap runs, but I would say it's probably a bit more on the loose side as you go on about your day.

Q. You and Malukas both threw out the word "fun" to describe this racetrack. Take us into the driver's seat. What makes Phoenix Raceway fun compared to the other ovals you've driven?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I think 3 and 4 is a really cool corner. It really changes from qualifying to your average laps. In qualifying you really send it in hard. You're turning in flat. You go through that dip and then you just kind of let the track save you from going in the fence with the banking that's coming up on exit. So I think it's a cool commitment corner, which I wouldn't really compare to any other corner on the calendar.

3 and 4 is more of, yeah, like a Gateway Turn 3 and 4 -- sorry, I mixed up. 1 and 2 is like a Gateway 3 and 4. I'm still confused with the lap being the other way around.

Yeah, that's more like a traditional oval corner where you just kind of need to find a good balance. But yeah, it's one of those where you kind of have a smile on your face when you roll out, and actually I've been here before in Indy Lights 2016, but it seems like a while ago, so it was kind of like a new track again.

Yeah, it's really fun. Hopefully we can pass, which is a big question mark for everyone.

Q. Given the fact that INDYCAR is returning here now in a few weeks, how important was it for you guys to get this test in over the last couple days to feel out the

track?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I mean, it's the same for everyone. If we didn't go here, no one would have running. Now we're all here, so it's just kind of keeping up with everyone. Everyone is improving, and the car is always tight. Got to stay on top of your game.

But yeah, I think it's just nice to have a little extra testing before the year kicks off to get warm in the seat, do some pit stop practice and just do laps with the guys on pit wall and stuff. Yeah, normally we only do Sebring and then straight to St. Pete, so I appreciate always when we can run a little more.

Q. Judging off the last couple days, I know there was a bit more traffic running today compared to yesterday, do you expect maybe multiline racing or do you expect it to be single groove? How do you think the racing is going to be come March?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I don't know, it's a good question. I think probably similar to most short ovals the last two years. After we started running the high line, it seems like it could appear in the middle to the end of the race. I think when everyone starts on new tires, it's going to be hard to make anything work unless people start running it immediately.

But I think as the race goes on and you have people on different strategies, as I said, if there's a two-second delta, you're going to have so much more speed than other guys, so you pretty much have to make the other line work, especially in 1 and 2, I think. 3 and 4, I'm not sure. It's kind of like a 90-degree, so it kind of messes up your radius by going wide. But yeah, I think 1 and 2 we'll probably be able to.

Q. Considering the weather today, do you feel like you've done all the testing that you need to do? Did the rain stop you doing any more work so it's still kind of unknown heading into the race next month?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: You always want to do more. In the end it was kind of messy. We didn't end up doing half of the stuff we wanted to do, but it's probably the same for everybody. We pushed some of our stuff really late and got kind of screwed by it.

But I think we got plenty of running. Two days is kind of rare that we're getting, so yeah, we feel pretty happy about our program.

Q. Even though you didn't really run much at Phoenix before under the old layout, what is it about the new

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layout you find most surprising?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I actually don't know if it's different from when I was here. I was here in '16, so maybe you can enlighten me.

Q. Well, the turns were numbered differently, and the backstretch was the frontstretch at that time.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, that's the hardest challenge actually, just saying the right corner name to your engineer. I've been for two days just saying Turn 1 to Turn 3 and vice versa. So that's a big challenge. The track itself compared to Indy Lights was pretty different. That was my first ever oval race and I was kind of amazed about ovals at that time, in both a good and bad way.

Yeah, it's fun. That's all I can say, really.

Q. When you head into I guess it's Turn 3, does the sun late in the race give you a problem?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: We're running at noon, right?

Q. Yeah, 1:00 mountain time, I believe. It'll be the last day before the time changes except they don't change it in Arizona.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Maybe. It was pretty low yesterday, but that was around like 5:00. I don't think it's going to be an issue, to be honest.

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