

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Tuesday, March 10, 2026

**Alexander Rossi**

**Christian Rasmussen**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: For the third straight week, it is race week for the NTT INDYCAR SERIES. This time it's for the much anticipated Java House Grand Prix of Arlington debut. For the race itself, it's appropriate that we have not just one but two Java House cars on the grid as both Alexander Rossi and Christian Rasmussen will both have Java House livery this weekend.

Christian heads to Arlington after a roller coaster day at Phoenix. Alex heads to Arlington after a sixth-place finish.

Alex, let's start with you. I know the wait is over, Arlington week. How much are you looking forward to this inaugural event?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I'm pumped. This has been one that we've all been looking forward to since it was announced. Obviously the partnership with Mr. Jones and the Cowboys is really exciting.

As we've seen kind of teaser images come out from the track, start to see it all take shape, I can't wait to get down there. I can't think of an event that has been as highly anticipated as this one in quite some time. Obviously DC is exciting for its own reasons.

In terms of been waiting for this one for a couple years, knowing the work that's gone into it from Penske Corp, the series, all involved, it's awesome to get back to Dallas. Can't wait to put on a great show for everyone.

THE MODERATOR: Christian, for you, thinking back to Saturday, you put on an amazing show. After a couple days to digest it, how much are you looking forward to get back in the car, back at a track, move ahead here?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Yeah, obviously looking forward to it. Yeah, it's going to be a big weekend for the team. We haven't quite had the start to the season that we wanted to. Obviously we showed we had a great showing at Phoenix. Just didn't end out getting the result.

Yeah, I said it after St. Pete, I'll say it again: we're ready to bounce back on a big and exciting weekend for the team, yeah, in Java House colors for the first time for me.

THE MODERATOR: A well-caffeinated race, to say the least (smiling).

We'll start with questions.

**Q. Your thoughts on the single-lap qualifying for Fast Six this weekend. Is that something that should continue going forward for the street and road course races?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I'm thrilled about it. I think it's been talked about internally for a while. I think it will add a huge amount of excitement to what is already a pretty awesome and entertaining qualifying format.

I think the big thing that's really cool is if you make it to the Fast Six, it's quite an accomplishment. To be able to reward your partners by getting kind of three minutes of focused TV time on your car 'cause you made it into the Fast Six is a win-win for everyone. It will make the commentators' jobs easier. It will make the broadcast, as I said, even more exciting.

Obviously we don't know what we don't know. I'm sure there's some things that we haven't thought about yet that potentially could change that opinion. Certainly going into this weekend, I know that everyone on the drivers' side is super pumped. Hopefully it will continue after this.

**Q. Christian?**

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Yeah, seconding what Alex was saying. I think it's really cool that INDYCAR takes the initiative to try something different, even though we don't really know how it's going to go. Like Alex said, there's still a lot of unknowns, probably some kinks that need to be sorted out.

For now, it's very exciting, something new, a new format. Yeah, hopefully we can make it in to actually get to try it.



**Q. Christian, you talk about getting over the disappointment. Is there anything you do to get over a disappointment like that, any different workout, music?**

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: No, not really. I mean, at the end of the day, yeah, it stings, especially when you have such a strong package and you're so strong throughout the whole race.

At the end of the day that's racing. That's how it is sometimes. Racing is, you know, 95% losses, then you live for the last 5%.

Yeah, we're looking forward to the next weekend, seeing we were the car to beat, we had the package, we did everything right. The way I'm looking at it, we have been the car to beat in two out of the last three oval races. There's no reason that we can't make that three for four or four for five, et cetera, going forward.

We're looking forward, taking the positives, leaving the negatives, then see what we can do here this next weekend in Arlington.

**Q. Alex, one of the other drivers was saying no matter how much sim you do for Arlington, you don't really know where the walls are going to be. Do you view that kind of the same? When you do go to a new track, you have done sim, how different is the sim from the actual course, per se?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, usually not that different at all because the track scans are very high quality. But for a place like this that's brand-new, you don't have a full surface scan. You only have essentially a GPS scan with walls kind of placed around the perimeter.

Both Honda and Chevy have kind of the same track model, so you don't have any sort of the bumps modeled or grip differential depending on surfaces.

I think it's a great tool to at least know what corner comes next. But in terms of, like, brake points and grip levels, how fast you can actually go, the line, where bumps are, that sort of thing, everyone will be figuring that out together kind of starting from zero.

THE MODERATOR: Alex or Christian, have you spent any more time on a sim because this is a brand-new street circuit or is it about the same?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I think it's a little bit probably less than we usually do just because we don't have that

track scan yet. Without all of the bumps and undulations of the track, it's not really precise enough.

Once you kind of get the layout of the actual track, there's not really much more you can find there before we get a proper scan.

THE MODERATOR: Interesting answer. Didn't know that.

We'll continue with questions.

**Q. Christian, I was going over the post-race transcripts from Saturday. David Malukas had complimentary things to say about you. He said you're just all attack, all or nothing, it's either into the wall or you're making that move. As bad as you felt after the race, you have to appreciate the respect you're earning from your peers, is that right?**

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Yeah, yeah, that is right. Yeah, I don't know. I don't (indiscernible). Some like it, some don't. It's very mixed reviews. At the end of the day we make it work.

Like I said earlier in this interview, we have made it work almost two out of the last three times. So we'll continue what we're doing 'cause I think it's working.

**Q. Alex, after you finished sixth at Phoenix, where do you see ECR stacking up against the Penske and Ganassi powerhouses?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I mean, that's a hard question to answer. I think that ultimately they are the benchmark, and have been for the past decade and a half, maybe two decades.

ECR is certainly taking steps in the right direction. We're only two races in. I think both cars on both weekends had their own dramas to varying degrees that didn't showcase the full potential both in qualifying and the race.

I think the team has taken a step forward from last year, which was already a big structural and organizational change from 2024. But unfortunately so far in 2026, it hasn't really been shown at the end of the day on paper and race results.

The good thing about this sport is, especially the schedule right now, you're back on track in a couple of days. Obviously being the Java House Grand Prix of Arlington, there's a lot of incentive for Christian and I this weekend to put together a complete weekend that can showcase the steps that ECR has taken in the off-season.

**Q. Christian, there was a poll pre-season from the drivers. You were the one they least trust side by side. Does that bother you? Is that fair? Unfair? Does it change anything?**

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: It doesn't change anything, no. At the end of the day, yeah, people can think what they're going to think. I'm not going to change that. What we're doing is working, especially on the oval, so we'll continue down that road.

I noticed a lot this weekend that some of the passes were made easier. If people are going to pull up because of what they think I'm going to do, hey, let them do that. Just makes it an easier job for me.

**Q. Alex, another street track this weekend. Have you been able to identify where the St. Pete struggles were?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I mean, what happened in St. Pete was very individualized to St. Pete. Yeah, no concerns.

**Q. With Arlington being a new track to the grid, what are your expectations and hopes for the race this weekend?**

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: First of all, I think we have an amazing venue out there, racing right in between the Rangers and Cowboys stadium. From the pictures I've seen out there, it seems like it's going to be a really, really cool place. They made a lot out of it, making it look super nice.

Obviously being the Java House Grand Prix of Arlington makes it especially exciting for Alex and I. The layout looks really cool. It's hard to really know what to expect before you've actually hit the track, like we were talking about earlier, without really having 100% scans of what the track's going to feel like with bumps and so on.

I think we have an exciting weekend ahead, for sure.

**Q. With your performance at the last street track, Alexander, what can you do to improve on street tracks going in this week?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: We don't need to do anything. As I kind of mentioned before, it was a pretty isolated incident. It happened in St. Pete. I think that street circuits are certainly a focus of the organization. There is some stuff in the pipeline hopefully that will close the gap a little bit.

But in terms of the performance that we had in qualifying in St. Pete, there was no team failure or issue there. It's been

rectified. Really no concerns about that going into this weekend.

**Q. Christian, it's only your third season in the series, but how proud are you of your progress and the fact that you're pretty much one of the benchmarks on short ovals already?**

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Yeah, it's good, for sure. Like last year, I think we made a lot of strides throughout the season. I think the last half of the year was even better. The same case was for the first year. The second half of the first year was better than the first half.

I'm very happy that we started off the year, especially on the ovals, as well as we did, basically contending for a win on our first oval, which just tells me that we are continuing from where we left off from last year.

I'll continue my development. I'm not done getting better yet. So I think we have, again, an exciting year ahead of us where I'll continue to improve and have hopefully more race wins come my way.

**Q. Kind of a fun question. This is your second season together as a team. What inspires you both from each other?**

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I think for Alex, I think his golf game is very inspiring to me. I think that's where I really look forward and I see a man, the man Alex is (laughter).

ALEXANDER ROSSI: That makes perfect sense. If you want to come to any of my golf seminars, they'll be going live in a couple weeks. You can do some YouTube tutorials (smiling).

It's great to work with Christian. We have a very good relationship and friendship away from the racetrack. That just allows us to keep pushing the team forward. It's important to have that flow of communication when you're on a weekend and you're trying to develop a car and chase a direction to close the gap that we're trying to close.

Last year it was pretty instant that we were able to work well together. That's obviously continued already into this year.

**Q. With a new track in Arlington, do you think it sort of levels the playing field for all the drivers, or do you think that certain qualities are built with experience gives some drivers an upper hand in terms of adaptability and execution?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: That's a good question. I think at

this level of INDYCAR, the drivers, we've all seen new tracks before. It levels the playing field for probably the first 20 minutes, then everyone's up to speed pretty quickly, is getting pretty much all they can out of the car at that point. So by the time you get to qualifying, there's still the teams that are superior on street courses.

It's not like the wet, for example, where a driver can overcome a pace deficit that's inherent between cars or teams.

Like I said, it will be an equalizer in the very beginning, but then everyone will get the most out of their car and it will be back to the normal order of operations, I would assume.

**Q. Christian, what about you?**

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Yeah, I'll second what Alex says. I think where you'll see I think the teams that are usually very strong on street courses will probably be also strong here just because their packages are that good and kind of translates across different tracks.

But like Alex says, I think for the drivers it's level but, again, everyone maximizes fairly early. Yeah, it won't really make a huge difference.

**Q. How much do you consciously refine your driving style when you get to a new track, especially when the mannerisms and the nature of the track is still evolving throughout the course of the weekend?**

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Yeah, it's ever-evolving, especially on a street course. You're always working from practice one, lap one, through practice one, through practice two, and all the way to the end of qualifying, end of the race. It's continuing to evolve and you've got to stay where the track goes, adapt your driving for that.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, I think the big thing is the evolution of the track performance, right? When we show up there, not unlike any other street course we go to, it starts at a very low level in terms of the potential for ultimate lap time. Every lap that gets turned in every session that happens, it just ramps up continually.

Even if what you thought was the limit of the braking zone in turn five five laps ago, that could change by 15 or 20 feet by the time you see it again. It requires you to always be thinking on your feet.

I think that's more of a characteristic of street courses in general. At the end of the session we have tools and software that will show what other drivers are doing from a line standpoint, so there might be a little bit of an

adjustment here and there based on someone experimenting with something and found a quicker way to go through a section of that track.

Again, by the time you get into practice two and qualifying, everyone is going to be doing the same thing.

**Q. Christian, looking back at last weekend, for people that aren't real big short oval people, you're turning those laps every 20 seconds, coming up on cars all the time, how do you maintain concentration throughout a full race like that?**

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I don't know. You just do (smiling).

**Q. On a road course you have time to relax on a long straight or something.**

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I think, like you say, there's stuff happening all the time. There's not really, yeah, any time to let up and relax too much.

I think for me, I think the mind is constantly going, especially when you're navigating traffic. What is the car in front doing line-wise? What should I do to get by? You're always working on something. If you're in clean air, you're thinking about how is the car balance, how can I improve that.

No, you don't have a ton of time to relax. At the end of the day that's also what we're getting paid to do. So yeah, I don't know. I can't really give you a definitive answer of how do I keep my concentration because, yeah, you just do. You're used to doing this from a very young age, so...

**Q. Looking at the track layout for Arlington, where do you think most of the action is going to occur? Where should people expect to see passing?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I mean, I guess the default answer is the right at the end of the long straight. I don't know what corner that is.

THE MODERATOR: That's turn 10.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Turn 10.

I assume there's grandstands there. I honestly don't know. But anytime there's a braking zone after a long straight is usually pretty good.

**Q. I want to ask about the Phoenix weekend. With the crowd that showed up, the show that you guys put on, looking back at it, would you like to see Phoenix**



**become a mainstay on the schedule? What impressed you most out of that weekend?**

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I would love to see Phoenix come back. There was a lot of questioning going into the weekend whether or not the track was going to race well. But that being said, I think it did race super well. I think we put on an amazing show.

I think anytime that happens and the racing is that exciting, I think it's worth coming back.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Just to follow up on that, the doubleheader with Cup I think is such an amazing thing to do. The amount of people that I saw on Saturday morning during the autograph session who were wearing Cup jackets or sweaters or whatever, but were attending their first INDYCAR race, were super excited to be able to see it.

Ultimately they only can do one race a year, they're a NASCAR family, so they're obviously going to come to a NASCAR race. To see two completely different forms of motorsport on one ticket is such a wonderful concept, idea. I think every team and driver enjoyed the experience. I think that the majority of the fans did, as well.

I hope that's a template for the future and something that we can do not only at Phoenix, hopefully we're going back to Phoenix, but other ovals on the calendar, as well.

**Q. Taking a look at last weekend, it's a success. Do you feel this experiment could become a reality, maybe move on to another oval, maybe a road course as well, something like COTA?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Who knows. There was already Trucks at St. Pete. I ever never thought that would happen. I think those opportunities are being explored. As I said just now, I think it was an amazing experience for all involved. I don't know that there was really any downside.

Hopefully it can be a formula for things we do in the future.

**Q. At Phoenix we interviewed a number of NASCAR season ticketholders. This was the first INDYCAR they've seen live. If they're tuning into Arlington, give them some tips. What should they look for when they tune in?**

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: What should they look for? I think where the street racing is very interesting is obviously I think on the tire strategy and fuel strategy that are going into these races. And road course racing, street course racing is just exciting. I think they see it in their own sort of

racing whenever they go around to street courses. It can definitely create a lot of carnage, which usually is exciting for fans.

Yeah, I think that's what I got (smiling).

**Q. This weekend the INDYCAR SERIES heads to Arlington. Both of your cars are sponsored by Java House. Talk about the added pressure heading into this weekend.**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, I mean, it's a race you certainly want to show well at. I think Java House and Splenda and Heartland as groups have set quite a standard. As they came into the championship last year with what they've done with brand activation and commercials, the livery of the cars, just kind of the whole aesthetic of the team really has been elevated to a level that is really not rivaled by any other teams besides McLaren and their orange stuff.

I would say this is going to be a hugely important race for Java House as they look to expand their market share across the nation.

Having two cars carry the brand is a big honor for both of us. Yeah, I mean, there's always pressure obviously to perform on a race weekend, but certainly when you've got the title sponsor on your car, you know that your boss is going to be handing out trophies on the podium, you want to be one of those guys out there.

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I think for me, it's just more added excitement more so than pressure. I think we have an amazing opportunity on our hands. Like Alex says, I think we're just both proud to be representing the brand as the title sponsor for the race.

**Q. We know that oval racing often comes down to strategy and the timing of cautions. How much do you think your result came down to strategy versus pure pace?**

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I think for me, I mean, you're always going to get caught out by a yellow, which is unfortunate. I don't think our race was very much depending on the strategy. I think we had a chance to win pretty much being on any other strategies of the race. We were just really fast, to be honest.

For us, as long as we didn't mess anything crazy up strategy-wise, I think we definitely would have had a shot at winning the race.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, I think we were in a little bit of

a different boat. We went to the back after an issue in pit lane. We knew, based on Milwaukee, that taking tires at the end of the race was a pretty big advantage. Like Milwaukee, we kind of had that conversation before the race. We planned our entire weekend around making sure we had enough sets of tires, new tires, to throw at it in the race if you got into that situation.

For me at one point I was, like, 19th and we had a new set of tires to put on, a caution came out, we jumped on that opportunity. We were able to get back to sixth.

Yeah, strategy and the timing of the yellow flags is unfortunately a part of INDYCAR racing. It's the same for everyone and you know the risks going into it.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for joining us. Thanks to everyone hopping on the call here. We'll leave it there for now.

Fellas, thanks for joining us. We'll see you at Arlington this weekend.

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