

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Friday, March 13, 2026

**Scott McLaughlin**

**Alex Palou**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the brand new Streets of Arlington circuit. I think Scott McLaughlin has already become a big fan. Alex Palou will join us here momentarily. Scott joins us, driver of the No. 3 DEX Team Penske Chevrolet, sitting third in the overall NTT INDYCAR SERIES points standings, the podium at St. Pete, second fastest in the all-car session, and then fastest in the group session that just wrapped up.

First of all, your general thoughts about the Streets of Arlington circuit, Scott?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I'm not just saying this because you probably think I'm getting paid to say it, but it's hands down the best street circuit personally that I've driven on. So far it's got a huge straight, bumpy straight, very hard to test your brake point into turn 10 there. Then there are so many corners that are technical, but then also daring.

It's an absolute blast, and it was honestly a pleasure to learn it and get better and better. Obviously I'm a bit happier because my car is handling really good right now, but a really good start to our weekend. Just wanted a solid session and build on it from here and have a lot of confidence to the point I feel like just polishing the car and just put it in the truck. It feels really good.

THE MODERATOR: I was going to ask you, obviously engineering session coming up. What do you think you want to work on, what needs to be worked on to be even faster tomorrow?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: There are a couple of things I need to look at, and you'll look at data tonight. There will be guys doing a corner a little bit different to you, and is it good or bad, and just trying to dissect that a little bit.

I felt like a strength of mine has been learning new tracks, even since I was a kid. I really enjoy this side of it. I'll do a deep dive into the data tonight and be ready for tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Good start to the weekend. We'll take questions.

**Q. It seems like all of Team Penske is on an upbeat after the sweep at Phoenix, both NASCAR and INDYCAR. Did you kind of feel that boost coming here at Arlington?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, I think just a huge weekend for the Captain, and obviously pretty cool to do it with our NASCAR friends. Obviously I wanted to be the guy that won, but at the end of the day, it was great for the team to get some momentum and then have the NASCAR guys win on Sunday and be there for that and then them being there on Saturday.

It wasn't my ideal weekend personally, but from a team perspective, it was great.

**Q. You called it your favorite street course ever.**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah.

**Q. How excited are you? What is it you love about it?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I just think there's so much -- it's so technical in spots, and then there's spots where it's really tough to brake into. You've got to maximize high-speed corners, high-speed entries. Yeah, it's a blast to drive. I don't know what you think, but --

ALEX PALOU: I love it.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, it's sick. It really is. There's no other word. Gen Zs will get that.

THE MODERATOR: Obviously Alex Palou joins us. Driver of the No. 10 DHL Chip Ganassi Racing Honda. He was ninth in the all-car session and then second overall in the group session through on the alternates. Currently fifth in points after a win at St. Pete two weeks ago, four-time NTT INDYCAR SERIES champion as well, including the last three.

Alex, your thoughts about this place?



ALEX PALOU: Love it. Yeah, it's insane. It's super fun to drive. It's just a lot more fun than I thought just how the car feels. There's so many different corners. Like, there's corners that you can attack so much, and you feel like a superhero. There's other corners where you need to back off because the grip is very different.

Very bumpy. A lot more bumpy than I thought, which makes it super challenging, but super fun. Super fun.

THE MODERATOR: More questions.

**Q. Obviously both of you planned well, because you're quick right off the bat. Are there any corners that surprised you once you actually got out there?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: The how bumpy it was down the back straight surprised me and the team a little bit. We definitely had to raise the right height a little bit. I think everyone had the same issue.

Then I think it was just more like the corners where you didn't think it was going to be difficult or it was going to be a little bit simple. To be honest, turn 10, for instance, across the bricks and stuff is super slippery. I don't know what you thought of that. It made it so much more of a corner, especially if you are committing.

So it's just got so much character. It's a lot of fun. I feel like it's a big Nashville. Just a bit more open, you know?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, super wide, which I think for the race is going to be great. It's going to be awesome. There's so many different passing zones. It's not that there's only a front stretch. I feel like, yeah, you have turn 10, turn 11. Otherwise, you go into turn 13, yeah.

**Q. Were you guys scraping the track at all as far as like --**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Scraping? Like bottoming?

**Q. Yes.**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, you did I think, and I did. Straight away first lap I was, like, Oh, we got to raise this thing. Yeah, I felt like we nailed it.

**Q. Then there's various types of racing surfaces, right? There's old asphalt and new asphalt, concrete, painted concrete. Is that a challenge? If so, how do you manage that challenge?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, I think as we both know, it's

going to just keep gripping up. You've got to build up with the track. That's why it's so important to do as many laps as you possibly can and be happy with your race car.

I'm lucky. I feel very comfortable and confident, so that's a good feeling. Like going into tomorrow where the car is just going to get faster and faster naturally with the track grip as well, and everyone else will as well. You're going to have to take another step again.

ALEX PALOU: Just challenging on the different pavements we have throughout the corners and throughout the track, but it's fun.

It's just tough on, like, how we set up the car, because you don't want to set it up too aggressive wane or the other because it just keeps on changing so much. Like, you need different stuff in different sectors. Yeah, I'm excited.

**Q. Y'all's session was after all the other series that are running here this weekend. Did the track take on as much rubber as you were expecting it to take?**

ALEX PALOU: As all street courses. It always takes a couple laps for everybody, and you can start seeing -- I think because probably we have the biggest field, or at least maybe we lay the biggest rubber. You can see on brake zones that suddenly it's darker and that there's more rubber.

It's not like suddenly the track was a lot faster. I feel like even now my group two, which we had more grip than group one, it was not massively different. I think tomorrow we're going to pick up quite a lot more grip.

**Q. 34.8, 34.9, how much more lap time do you think is in this track once you go back to debrief and make your setup changes for tomorrow morning's practice?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I thought my lap was pretty good, but the track is just going to keep getting better, and you'll find time by the track just getting better, and you'll carry speed differently, and it might change corner profiles a little bit for you and stuff. So, yeah, like I said before, you've just got to go with the track, because it's just going to take a lot of rubber.

**Q. Scott, you talked about the bumpiness of the track. How do you get used to that and make sure it's not giving you any issues?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Oh, like I said, you just got to communicate to the team how bad it is and then explain how much do I think I need to go up or down or whatever. Yeah, I thought Raul, my engineer, did a really good job at

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

toning that in, but it's the same for everyone. I look at it that way. You've just got to try and maximize better than most.

**Q. Tomorrow for the Fast Six it will be the single lap, single car qualifying. What are your guys' thoughts on that?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Got to get there first.

ALEX PALOU: I was going to say, it looks very, very good. It looks fun. I think it's good that we're trying something new, but I'm not even spending one second on thinking about it.

I think it would be huge if we can get there because starting in the Fast Six -- or in the top six would be great here, but yeah, I think it's great. It's great to have that.

**Q. A little bit of a follow-up on that. Some of the drivers today think that the first guy out in the Fast Six single lap, when the car is heated up, will have an advantage. By the time you get to the fastest driver entering, the cars cool off enough, it might take time to get the heat up. How do you feel about it?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I mean, yeah, I could see that. That's kind of why Supercars went away from doing a qualifying shoot-out directly after the qualifying itself to get into the shoot-out. We would qualify two, three hours later. It may not be applicable here, but it's just whatever.

Like Alex said, I think if you get to the Fast Six, it's a great spot regardless, and you will just choose what you can do. Obviously pole would be nice, but I still think if you have a quick car, it's not going to take too long to get up to temp and make it happen.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I agree. I mean, I would prefer if we had an out-lap to kind of give everybody the same chance, but it's fine. It's not a big deal.

**Q. Alex, when I tell you that you led the points for 623 consecutive days, that's a pretty good streak.**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah.

**Q. How do you feel about that streak and the fact that the streak came to an end at least for a week?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Thank God.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I don't feel the same way as you (laughing). No, honestly, it's crazy, crazy numbers, crazy statistics. I think we had in the 10 car in CGR a crazy 623

days. They felt great. Going to try and recover this weekend.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: This four times he's led it at the right time, so that's all that matters, and that's what we want. We don't care about the other stats.

**Q. Any concerns pit in or pit out? It seems like pit out could get really tight coming into the pit. Do you feel any concerns? Alex, I'll start with you.**

ALEX PALOU: Pit in I think a little bit more space would be welcome. I mean, like you're charging in, and you feel like that incinerator is waiting for you there. So hopefully we don't have any issues there.

The exit, I mean, would be ideal if we had more space, but it's not as bad as it looks on paper. On paper it looks quite bad, but I think having that pit out commit line, it kind of makes us go on the outside.

There's enough room for somebody to be on the inside during the race, so I think pit out commit, it's okay. Hopefully we can change a little bit the pit in, but yeah, knowing INDYCAR, that's not going to change until next year, in two or three years.

**Q. For both of you, some tracks, they reward smoothness, finesse. What does this track reward?**

ALEX PALOU: Everything.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, a new track, regardless, I think you've just got to be flexible. You've got to be able to -- I think this track, long back straight, big braking zones, and then you have some real tight, twisty, technical stuff like Nashville. You've just got to be very open to a unique car setup, I imagine.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, just everything.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations. Good luck tomorrow.

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