

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Kyle Kirkwood

Dan Towriss

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Kyle Kirkwood. Big win for Kyle for Andretti Global. First win of 2026. Sixth career. Fifth win on a street course in his career. 12 on-track passes in the race. Everybody is talking about the one on the 10 car going into 14. Your thoughts on getting a win, then what happened in turn 14.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Passed Palou, which is a very rare thing to say in a race. Yeah, it was kind of all or nothing. He was so good in the four, five, six, seven, eight, nine section, the tight, twisty bit. It was hard to get to his gearbox to make a pass on the straight. It put me in a position where we're good on the straight, right now, trimmed more than him, good under braking, and I knew that he was going to brake a little bit later there because his car was bottoming more than ours.

Yeah, just had to do a bit of a late lunge and surprise him a little bit because if he started defending there was probably no chance of us getting by him 'cause that was probably the only place we were going to be able to pass him.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions. Dan Towriss, CEO of TWG Motorsports, will join us shortly.

Q. Did you feel like you had to make that pass on that lap? Sense of urgency, even though there were 15 laps to go.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I was close enough that time. Palou is a smart person, smart driver. And if he knew that I got that close to him on that lap, and then I waited for the next lap to attack him, he would have defended. We were in a dire straits situation. This is probably the only place I can pass him. This is the only time I can surprise him.

There was some urgency, but at the same time we were a lot quicker than him. He's someone that is very trustworthy to race against. If you do some of those late lunges, you can trust he's not going to drive you into the wall, like maybe some other drivers will.

I always love racing against him because we're both very aware of our surroundings and race very, very cleanly together.

Q. Race control, once they threw the caution, 27 needs to slow down, slow down. Were you like, Oh, my gosh, they're going to try to get this green?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I thought we weren't going to do that, quite honestly, after the 500 a few years ago. I mean, I get it. Their first and foremost thing is to get a green-flag finish. Whatever it might take to get that done, I get it.

Of course, when you see a five-and-a-half-second lead that you stretched and worked very hard to stretch go down to zero for one lap, it can get very frustrating inside the car.

Yeah, of course Indy Pro Series disappointed to see it, but I knew we were still fast enough to protect from there.

Q. Last year at Long Beach you held off Palou to win. This one you run him down. What kind of a statement win do you feel like this was?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I mean, it's a statement on how good we are on street courses, right? We're able to do this at a few street courses. It's incredible to see that we're able to do it at another one. We're adding street courses to our calendar.

A lot of it's due to this guy, the engineers, and the group that he's been able to rally together to give us this performance, right? It's not just me out there driving one of these cars. It's all the hard work that goes into one of these street courses is why we have the performance we have. It's the reason why we had the pole, finished 1, 3 and 4. Palou is always there (smiling).

Q. You went on a run after Long Beach. You looked like the biggest threat to Palou. It faded at the tail end of the season. Do you feel like you're the biggest threat to Palou this year?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I would hope so. We're three races in.



I don't want to focus too much on the championship. I want to focus on the next race in front of us, maximizing our performance.

Of course, we're good at street courses. We've figured out short ovals now. We're going to a road course next. That's where we need to thrive.

There's a lot of work to do. We want to be the biggest threat. Every driver does. We're currently the biggest threat to him and the entire rest of the field. But we need to continue that because we got a lot of races to go.

THE MODERATOR: We welcome in Dan Towriss, CEO of TWG Motorsports, as Andretti Global celebrates their 78th all-time win. Dan, your thoughts about the strong weekend and Kyle coming home with the victory.

DAN TOWRISS: I think hats off to the team for all the hard work. As Kyle mentioned, there's so much that goes on in car prep and teamwork over the off-season to get to this point. Obviously Kyle, he was on one today. I think I sent that text multiple times. He was hard on himself for a mistake in qualifying. I sent him a text, Forget all that, you're so fast, just go out and show it on the track tomorrow.

Really all the guys 100% to overcome some adversity. Wasn't our best day in the pit lane. I think it shows the resiliency of this team, the speed of the cars, the talent of the drivers. Today Kyle came out on top.

I couldn't be more proud of Kyle and the effort he put out there today.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Thanks, Dan. Very sweet of you (smiling).

Q. Dan, as a stakeholder in the series, a team owner that pays a lot of money to go racing, this event really has become a centerpiece showcase event for INDYCAR. For a first-year race to go off like it did, I can't recall that ever happening. How important is this event and how rapidly has it become one of the biggest races of the season for INDYCAR?

DAN TOWRISS: Yeah, this is a great event by any stretch, let alone for a first-year event. Thank you to Jerry Jones and the team that put this together. I think everybody knows they do it right. After finishing the weekend, they did it right.

It's absolutely a big race on the circuit. We've known that INDYCAR is some of the best racing in motorsports for a long time. Again, to showcase that, you need big events,

events like this event here in Arlington, Texas.

It was a tremendous success. We need more of these kind of events. This is definitely a showpiece in the series. Very happy with year one.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Second everything he just said, right? It's incredible to race in such a central location, two of the biggest sports team in the world, right? I think the Dallas Cowboys is the biggest sports team in the world? One of 'em.

It's been an incredible event. This event was done right. The track was built properly, with the fencing, the walls, the branding. It looked clean, exactly how a premier motorsports race should look like at a street course.

Just the venue in general. I was talking to Doug before the race. There were some numbers in there that were Indy 500-like numbers for us. I could see this being one of our marquee events outside of the 500 in a very short period of time if we continue coming back here.

Q. Kyle, I know you don't want to talk about the championship. Three different winners first three races. The last couple of years we've seen one guy dominate. Does this year have all the makings of being a bare-knuckle brawl?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Like I said, it's three races, right? We've had a shot at winning all three of them. Of course, based on the last two years, we'd like to beat Palou. Both Josef and I can say that. It's good that we're having different winners in the series. I think for the series as a whole, it's important to shake things up for the viewers.

We have a lot of viewers right now, so we need to continue to have viewers. We don't want to bore them. It's good that we're having different winners. We want to change that here with the 27 car. We want to see us look like making the race a little bit boring (smiling).

Q. Kyle, I don't want to ask you to predict the championship. After these three races, do you feel like you've had the best car so far?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: We've had the best car, just haven't gotten it done in qualifying. We had a hiccup on the car in St. Pete. We knew we really had a fast car there. Thought we had a shot at getting the pole here.

Phoenix was a bit of a head-scratcher for me. Thought I got it right. Maybe I didn't. Yesterday I had a mistake on my one push lap.

Quite honestly I need to sit down and figure out what I need to do differently for qualifying, just do that. It's held us back at St. Pete. Maybe not at Phoenix. Might have held us back here a little bit and made it very hard for us to win the race today. It would have been a bit easier if we were up front earlier in the race.

Something I'm going to sit down and figure out.

Q. Yesterday you said you felt like you were your fastest on the primary tires. How much confidence did you have after the last pit that you were going to be able to make the pass?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I wasn't quite sure because I wasn't catching Palou that much on the previous stint. As soon as we had a little hiccup on the last stop, I came out further behind him than I anticipated. We ran him down in two or three laps. I was like, Man, we have the pace to make it happen right now. I don't know if we're going to have the pace to make it happen in 10 laps. That was part of some of the urgency.

I wasn't quite sure I had the confidence or not. Once I did the first few laps, it was very showing that we had a lot of pace.

Q. Dan, with the personnel changes you made as a team, Will, Ron, how rewarding is a day like today?

DAN TOWRISS: Yeah, I mean, it's really rewarding to see an outcome from the changes. There was a lot of questions about the championship. I think the way we think about it is it's process over outcome. Doing the right things, bringing in the right people, building the cars to a certain spec. If we follow that process with the talent and people that we have, we think the outcome will be there. It was this weekend.

That does feel very rewarding from that standpoint. We're going to continue to build. There were obviously things that could have been done better this weekend. I think it's really focusing on how do we continue to get better. INDYCAR racing is so competitive, the smallest differences have the biggest impact on the outcomes. We're going to continue as a team to out-work everybody, to continue to work on those details and try to control the things that are in our control to put these guys in the best position to win because we know we have some of the best drivers in the series.

Q. Kyle, chasing Palou down today, defending him in Long Beach, which was more difficult and why?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Today was more physical than Long

Beach. Long Beach might have been a little tougher because he had more pace at Long Beach, at least the delta between us two. He undercut us at Long Beach, I was on cold tires. It was an absolute thrash. I was on the limit of destroying the car on the out lap just to keep in front of him because that was the race.

I would stay that was harder, but today we had the pace to get everything done, yeah.

Q. There's always a chance for chaos on a new street circuit. Did it surprise you that the race went green?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: It's preconceived notions. Everybody thinks it's going to be hectic and absolute carnage, then it's not. We had the same thing in Nashville a few years ago. The first race was, I don't know, 60 laps under caution or something like that, went do the dark. The next race is, Remember this race, it's going to be under yellow the whole time. Next thing you know it was one yellow for two laps. Everybody calms down a little bit. It's quite opposite of what the paddock buzz is in a lot of circumstances.

Q. Kyle, what was the car balance like in dirty air versus clean air, the physicality of this new street course?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Well, you're asking proprietary information (smiling).

No, you always lose downforce in dirty air, right? Primarily on the front wing. Had a little bit more understeer in some of the high-speed corners which made it tough to get close.

You did ask the physicality of it. This was one of the most physical races I've ever done. Quite honestly, because we never save fuel, we push as hard as we could on two sets of reds and two sets of primes. That was one of the longer races I've done in INDYCAR pushing that hard.

I felt fine because I was in the lead. As soon as I came to a stop, I took my hands off the wheel. It's the first time I took my hands off the wheel in maybe 40 laps, since the last pit stop, or 25, I pulled my hands off and my fingers instantly just went to my hand. They cramped up. Probably saw it on the broadcast. I had to grab my fingers and pull them back straight to get rid of the cramp. It was physical out there. I know the other drivers said the same.

THE MODERATOR: You had the top trap speed going into 10. You went 192.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: We were in the hard limiter. We could have went faster, but obviously we were looking for a little bit of pace. We don't have the luxury of having a tow on

undertake every single lap.

Q. Talk about pre-race decision downforce levels. Looking at trap speed, you were up as much as five miles per hour at times. Normally that means you're wearing out tires in the slower corners, braking. That didn't happen, which says you had a hell of a car. Can you speak to that decision on downforce levels and tell us how you kept the tires under you.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I'd have to say we didn't really keep the tires under us on the alternate tires. We knew it wasn't an alternate tire race. We knew it was a prime tire race. Once we got to the primes, we knew the level of aggression that we had, you can say, played in our favor.

A little bit of strategy. A little bit of a chess match there with downforce. A lot of guys, some were hole five with the wicker, some guys were all the way down to hole four which is hundreds of pounds of drag. It's a big loss in downforce.

You're right, we definitely have more deg on the alternate tire. But the prime tire just belt bulletproof. We felt that all through practice and through the warm-up, too. I think guys recognized that.

Q. You talk about pit lane, a couple of uncharacteristic issues set you back time-wise. You appeared to keep calm and put your head down. Speak to that.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I made mistakes yesterday, you know? We had the pace to overcome it. I wasn't worried. I wanted to keep them calm, not get them fired up because we still had three stops to do.

Of course we had issues. We need to look back and see exactly what is happening on the rear right. This was an issue with the tire coming off and going on. I don't know if the hub was messed up or what it might have been. I suspect there was an issue on the car.

Of course I'm not going to wear into my team. We've been one of the fastest on pit lane. I think we were one of the fastest in Phoenix. I have a lot of confidence in them. It was not a good day on pit lane. We'll have it fixed in the next weeks.

Q. Dan, everybody has nothing but praise for Arlington. Are there other places in the country that you think this kind of model could be applied to bring INDYCAR to new folks?

DAN TOWRISS: Yeah, I mean, look, I think a big part of what makes this event special here in Arlington is, again,

Jerry Jones' family, the organization, the Dallas Cowboys, the Texas Rangers, all the people involved in supporting this event.

If you take a step back from that and you just look at stadiums in big cities, the opportunity that the offers to set up an amazing racetrack, to make for a big spectacle event in motorsport, certainly that opportunity exists.

I think a number of owners have said they'd love to see this model replicated more and more. It takes a lot to pull off. It takes special people on-site to make it happen. We think this is a model that could be replicated and lead to successful events in INDYCAR.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations on the win here.

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