

NTT INDY NXT SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, March 29, 2026

Alessandro de Tullio

Max Taylor

Nikita Johnson

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up race two, Alessandro de Tullio, his first career win in INDY NXT.

Max Taylor came home second for Andretti Global. Second runner-up finish of 2026, third podium.

Nikita Johnson, first and third for him this weekend. Third podium of the season. Nikita maintains his overall points lead.

Alessandro, congratulations. First win. Hopefully first of many for you. Tell us about staying out in front all morning.

ALESSANDRO de TULLIO: Yeah, it's a great feeling to finally get it done here. We had some racing stuff happen in Arlington, starting on pole. Same thing yesterday. It's part of racing, it happens.

But yeah, we kept our head cool. Kept working hard. We never gave up. Hopefully we keep going like this.

Yeah, the pace has been good. The team has done a phenomenal job, so it's a great feeling to finally get it done.

THE MODERATOR: A lot of history at AJ Foyt Racing. The 14 back in Victory Lane. First time in a long while the team has been part of an INDY NXT win. What does it mean to have a win for AJ?

ALESSANDRO de TULLIO: Yeah, it's great. Larry ways there, Craig, Tony. They've been a big help in this. Obviously representing a name like that is very special. Yeah, they've been there from the start. They've been supporting me, talking to me, being involved as much as they can together with the INDYCAR program.

Yeah, being a part of the team of a name like that, having their support, is very good.

THE MODERATOR: Max, talk us through your day a little bit, trying to catch up with Alessandro.

MAX TAYLOR: Yeah, I think we definitely had a race-winning car out there. Andretti put together a really good package for this weekend. We came up just shy of the win. Didn't get the pole in qualifying just 'cause I think I was in the first group, which is a bit unfortunate.

Yeah, I made probably a mistake in the race yesterday, bit too much of an aggressive move. Bad decision at the end of the day.

Yeah, no, I learned from it. I kept the pressure up all day on Ale. He did a good job not to fold under it. That's all I could do. We had a faster car, but it's difficult to pass around here. So second place, not too bad.

THE MODERATOR: Nikita, a heck of a weekend for you, a first and a third. What was it like this morning?

NIKITA JOHNSON: Yeah, pretty good race. We got to second on the start, but then Max did a good move. A lot of grip on the outside of five. He got back by me. After that I kind of ran my own race for a little bit. Tried to apply some pressure at the end. I was in the aero wash, so used up a lot of my tire the last 10, 15 laps.

I really shifted my focus from pressuring Max to worrying about Enzo behind me. The last lap, two laps, I was defending him, trying to keep third.

It was a little bit of a defense and going on the offense. Other than that, just a good experience here at Barber. My first-ever race weekend racing at Barber. Pretty good result.

Very happy with what the Cape boys have done for me. Can't thank them enough for the package they're providing. If we have maybe a session that shouldn't be what it was, we go back to the engineering room and we think over it and we make some really good decisions.

I can't thank them enough for everything that they do. Looking forward to IMS.



THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.

Q. Alessandro, obviously yesterday was pretty disappointing. What was the process overnight of putting that behind you in order to rebound?

ALESSANDRO de TULLIO: Yeah, yesterday was tough. Like I said before, it's part of racing. It's going to happen. I hope it doesn't happen, but eventually it will happen again. Maybe I'm the one that makes a mistake. It's just part of it.

Yeah, keeping your head down and staying calm, especially when you have another race the next day, is super important. That's what the team helped me with a lot. My engineer, Joe, kept me very calm. My family was here to support.

I didn't see Larry after the race, but he sent me a message. That was nice, as well. It was just about resetting, moving on, focusing on today.

Q. What conversations did you have with Max after the incident, if any?

ALESSANDRO de TULLIO: I mean, yeah, we had a few exchanges of words. He apologized immediately. That shows a lot of sportsmanship from his side. I immediately calmed down when he apologized. I told him it's all right. So that was good. You have to recognize sometimes a mistake.

I also understand. I've been in that position before where I made an ambitious move, whether it be in karting, last year. It's just stuff that happens. I understood. We shook hands and we move on.

Q. Max, what was your view of the incident, the penalty?

MAX TAYLOR: Yeah, I mean, it really started about half a lap earlier when we caught the lap cars. I was able to get around Ale. Just as I got in the lead, it got taken away from me because I got screwed by another lap car. It was just unfortunate.

I think maybe my emotions came through where I was waiting so long for the opportunity, it came, I seized it. I got taken away from me. Maybe that was part of the reason I made quite an ambitious and aggressive move.

But yeah, I think there's a few ways you can look at it. I was there. He did turn in. But it was ultimately my fault. I understand the penalty. I think it was harsh. Of course I am going to think it's harsh.

It is good that the stewards are really after it. They're really on top of it. We can learn our lesson. 'Cause that's why we're here in INDY NXT, is to learn and be prepared for the next step.

I learned my lesson. I won't make the same mistake again. That's what it's for. On the second-to-last and last lap he went low in 16. I was so far back. He still defended (smiling).

ALESSANDRO de TULLIO: You never know.

MAX TAYLOR: I'm in your head, Ale (smiling).

Q. What lessons did you learn? Did you approach today more cautiously?

MAX TAYLOR: I mean, I think at the end of the day it's just about taking the opportunity of what you can control. You can set the sails, but you can't control the wind. I wasn't given the opportunity today to go for the win. The best I can do is just finish second.

I put up a good race. I was applying the pressure, doing everything I could all the race to make Ale mess up and get the win. It is how it is.

That's sort of what I learned, making the decisions, thinking about a long year. It's for the championship. I gave up a lot of points yesterday. Yeah, I mean, we're fast, we're going to be fast the rest of the year. We're going to keep racking up the podiums and more wins.

THE MODERATOR: Very busy month of April, Nashville, Gateway, Mid-Ohio. Nikita, your thoughts on what you hope to learn over the next couple weeks?

NIKITA JOHNSON: Yes, just hope to learn how the INDY NXT car feels on ovals. I've driven ovals before in Legends cars, the USF Pro stuff. This will be my first time in INDY NXT. Looking forward to the oval test. I've heard it's amazing. We'll see what happens.

THE MODERATOR: Alessandro?

ALESSANDRO de TULLIO: Yeah, I'm excited for it. I kind of underestimated ovals when I did it in USF Pro at Lucas Oil, even though it's small. People say you're only turning left. It's a lot more than that. A lot of car feel and precision.

We had a good result there. I'm looking forward to continue that in INDY NXT. Obviously a lot higher speeds, a bigger track for the ovals we're doing this year. It should

be fun. I'm excited for the pre-race test, then go for it for the race.

THE MODERATOR: Max, Nashville coming up in a couple days.

MAX TAYLOR: Yeah, hopefully we'll be able to test at Nashville. Supposed to be pretty wet, rainy.

I've driven ovals last year in the INDY NXT car. Not Nashville or Gateway. It will be fun to see how it is on those tracks. See how the Andretti car is, as well. Then the Mid-Ohio test.

We're just focused on the process. The results will come. That's what we always do. I have no doubt that we'll be fast at the ovals, Mid-Ohio. Just about getting in there and learning.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations today. We'll see you in a couple weeks.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports