

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Felix Rosenqvist

Christian Lundgaard

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Great to be back on the streets of Long Beach for the Grand Prix of Long Beach. We are joined by Felix Rosenqvist. Fourth here last year, second in the all-car session this afternoon, fifth in group one.

Nice start for this weekend. Obviously a track you like. Your thoughts on the start?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, pretty good start. We haven't really had a start of the season we've been hoping. It's nice to come back here, a place we know we're quick, try to do a little reset of the season.

Yeah, we rolled really well off the truck, which is always nice when you can do this, just little adjustments here and there. I would say we are better on the blacks than the reds.

Car is looking well with the Green Day livery and Acura on the rear wing as well.

THE MODERATOR: Why did having a couple weeks off reset things for you?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: That's the hard thing in INDYCAR, right? If you're kind of in a bad rhythm, there's normally a lot of races in a very short time, so you don't really have time to sit down and look and go through everything.

It's been good to kind of breathe a little bit and reset mentally and physically. Yeah, long season, so still loads of races to go.

THE MODERATOR: Open it up for questions.

Q. Felix, both you and Marcus seem to have a lot of quiet confidence, especially for this event. What is the biggest reason for that?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I wouldn't say I'm more confident than any other track. No, I mean, I think we expect to be

up front. We know we're fast. I think Marcus has probably had a bit better momentum than I have. He'll definitely be rolling well.

Yeah, I mean, we're feeding off each other, trying to improve. Yeah, pushing each other hard every weekend. Hopefully soon we'll have a little podium action with Meyer Shank Racing.

Q. Seems like that goes across both cars. When both cars are performing well, how important does that lift the entire team?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: It's huge. As I said many times before, we set a pretty high standard, especially going into this year. We definitely wanted to raise the bar.

It's a mix of probably higher confidence but also higher expectation. Yeah, just try to, as I said, for me it's a little bit more of try to find a pace again, which I think today we looked really strong. Yeah, looking forward to the weekend.

Q. Did you run enough on the softs to get a feel of whether you can do it on two stops on Sunday?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I wouldn't really say I had enough of a read. I mean, historically we had two street courses this year and they've been fine. I would definitely say that's the plan. I have a feeling the winner is going to be on two, for sure.

Q. Where do you feel this program is at the start of this year relative to last year?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: It's definitely better. I mean, we've been improving in every area honestly, except we haven't been fast enough this year. We have better pit stops, strategy. Just everything, all the little details, have been on paper a lot better this year.

Yeah, it's annoying when you feel like you just need a few 10ths to kind of put it together. But yeah, the guys and girls have done a tremendous job. I think we're sitting like P6 or P7 in pit lane so far this year. That was probably our



Achilles' heel last year. Yeah, a huge job from everyone in Ohio.

Q. Is this a matter of execution on your part? Where are you missing that little bit you're talking about?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I think it's been more sort of a flow, momentum thing. Haven't been fast enough qualifying or race.

As I said before, it's a matter of resetting a little bit and trying to find the flow. It always ebbs and flows in this sport. Sometimes it's tough. But you got to dig deep in times where you're not performing, eventually come back and it will feel a lot easier.

Q. On the tires, last year when the tire allotment was different, seemed like everyone was in a hurry to get off the softs. How will it be different this year?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: As I said, I think they hold up better. It's definitely been kind of proven this year. It's the same tire that we had in Arlington and St. Pete where some drivers made them last really, really long. I think that's going to be the case here. This is historically really not a deg-y track, rather the opposite.

Honestly, I like the new rule. I was kind of against it when it came, but I think it's actually made the racing better. It's probably less important to pick the right tire, which I think is good.

Last year, like in St. Pete, we picked to start on the blacks. It just wasn't the right call because nobody knew anything about it. I feel like now anyone in the top five can win the race, which is good.

THE MODERATOR: We'll cut you loose. Good to see you running up front again. We'll see you tomorrow.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Christian Lundgaard joins us. A podium finish here last year on the streets of Long Beach. Third in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES points standings. Sixth this afternoon, third quick on the softs in group two.

Before we get started, we have a bit of a surprise here. Christian had a tremendous start to his time with Arrow McLaren. A strong start to this season as well. Christian, congratulations, you've been named the motorsport Driver of the Year by the Danish Automobile Foundation. With that Jens Hansen has some hardware for you, as well. Very cool. Congratulations.

Not only do you get that piece of hardware, but with this there is a \$20,000 prize, Danish Kroner by the way, it's going to be donated to a karting camp for young talent in your name, the purchasing of equipment for Christian's childhood go-kart team, as well as a donation to the Danish Red Cross in your name. Congratulations. Well done.

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Thank you. I didn't expect to get a trophy before the weekend started (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: Maybe it's a good omen for the rest of the weekend. Your thoughts growing up in Denmark, what something like this can mean?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Yeah, no, I mean, obviously the journey to get here has been so long. At the end of the day you're a child, you're a little kid just dreaming big. I am very convinced that my parents believed I had more talent than I thought I did myself growing up 'cause you don't really know what the references are, who to beat, where you really are in the world 'cause you're just young, naïve. You just want to race, you just want to win. Obviously to be here now, look back on those times, is very fulfilling in many ways.

I have one of these, right? 2017 I think. It took me eight years, nine years to get one again (smiling). I hope I'll get a few more in the next couple of years.

It's very nice. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: To the day today, feel good about the car so far?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Not really. I was actually a little disappointed with where we were on balance just from the get-go. We didn't really seem to find that balance mid session. We were in a little bit of a pickle going onto the alternates, understanding what balance we were going to have.

I said a little disappointed, I would say, compared to last year. I have no doubt that we'll figure it out for at least Sunday. Tomorrow we got some work to do, too, to figure it out for qualifying. Obviously the IMSA race is between practice two and qualifying. That will improve the track quite massively.

We'll see. I'm very optimistic.

THE MODERATOR: Open it up for questions for Christian.

Q. A lot of times they talk about different brands of rubber being laid down. You're thinking the track will improve no matter they're running Michelin?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Ultimately I don't even know how many cars there are in IMSA. Obviously they're running a race which will just improve the track in general. It just cleans it up. I think it opens up a few more lanes, makes the lane wider for us, a little more wiggle room.

I mean, I think we saw a huge kind of improvement on the track even in practice. You'll see it continue throughout the weekend. I think Felix talked a little bit about it as well, the track historically just gets better as the weekend goes on.

Q. This seems to be a track that really favors the pole winner. The leader has a big advantage at this track. In that regard do you start thinking with this new Fast Six format ahead of the game what you would like to do, how you choose the strategy to try to maximize the effort?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I mean, sure. I mean, fast cars win races at the end of the day. If you're the fastest on Saturday, you give yourself the best chance to win on Sunday.

But again, I think this year, knowing that we have to run two alternates, new alternates in the race, I guess they just have to be alternates, seeing how the alternates are performing this year, it should be a two-stopper. I'm just very interested in seeing if anyone is going to struggle to get to lap 30 on whatever stint it might be, making the reds last, 'cause the pit stop penalty is huge.

But again, the winner will definitely be on a two-stopper. I think that makes strategy and starting position a lot more important, for sure.

Q. Tell me about second event now with the single-car Fast Six qualifying, how has that changed your approach on Friday? What are you doing differently to prepare for the single-lap qualifying?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: We actually haven't done anything. It's a quite simple answer: you still have to make it to the Fast Six before that even becomes a topic. You really just have to get through Q1 and Q2. That's pretty standard even just approach from how it's always been.

I don't think anyone specifically this weekend will use any new tires because that means the setup tires they'll run in the race will have a run on them.

Yeah, I mean, I think it definitely makes it a little more interesting that there's strategy in Q2 now. In the Fast 12, I want to be the fastest in the Fast 12 as well, take a little more risk. At the end of the day the worst thing that can

happen in the Fast Six, if you don't nail it, is you start sixth. If you don't nail Q2, you can be 12th. That's a huge deficit.

Q. Obviously when you have a practice session that you come away from maybe not being super happy, what is the process now going into tonight and into tomorrow in terms of trying to turn that around, be happier in the car going into qualifying?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Just trying to figure out what the issues really are. I felt like a very disconnected car. I didn't necessarily think I just had one problem. I had multiple issues just trying to figure out the balance and kind of the slower speed but also the medium speed corners, they seemed to be different, different axles of the car I was struggling with.

I think we'll all sit down, analyze, understand kind of which axle to fix first, which one is going to be the pure lap time finder. From there, see if we need to make any changes going into qualifying or not.

Q. All of your best results have come on road courses. How do you feel the street course practice stacks up?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I think we're a better race car on street courses than we are a qualifying car. But again, we know the Andrettis are strong on street courses. I don't think that comes as a surprise to anybody.

I don't necessarily see all the Ganassis there. We definitely see Palou. Then the Penskes, one race, they're not the next race. I would almost say we're a little bit in that category.

We definitely have some work to do to catch up to the 10 car and then all three Andrettis.

Q. Why do you feel you have been a better race car than a qualifying car on the streets? How do you lessen that gap?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I mean, we're still trying to figure it out (smiling). This is, what, the third street course of this year? We've started 12th and 18th on street courses for different reasons.

Today we weren't strong enough. Obviously Pato was in the Fast Six in Arlington. I think we just need all the pieces to fall our way. We just need to be generally stronger.

THE MODERATOR: Christian, congratulations on the award and the nice start to the weekend. Good luck tomorrow.

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Thank you.

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