

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Sunday, April 19, 2026

**Alex Palou**

**Barry Wanser**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are joined by our champion, Alex Palou. This is his first win here at Long Beach. In his sixth start, his worst finish is fifth. Third win here in 2026. 22nd career win, which ties him with the great Emerson Fittipaldi and Tony Bettenhausen.

Also joining us as Chip Ganassi Racing celebrates their 148th all-time win is the long time team manager of the 10 car in Barry Wanser.

Alex, what does it mean to win at Long Beach?

ALEX PALOU: Incredible. Feel so, so lucky with the opportunity I had to win the 500 last year, the Long Beach GP this year, it just feels like I'm living on this amazing cloud of happiness.

Yeah, incredible work by the team today. I think we were fighting there with the 60, trying to match him on the soft tires. I think we could have fought a little bit, but he was a bit stronger than us today. We were just trying to figure it out, if we were going able to go one lap longer on fuel.

This full-course yellow put everything on that pit stop. The guys did an incredible job once again.

THE MODERATOR: Barry, maybe you can talk a little bit about the pit stop, how good it was to get Alex out front there.

BARRY WANSER: Yeah, the 10 car group has been pretty solid with pit stops the last couple years. Certainly that's contributed to the performance. Today that was the win. You just need to be smooth and consistent. That's what they were. We benefited from it.

THE MODERATOR: Open it up for questions.

**Q. Alex, what was your confidence in potentially being able to make a pass before the caution came out?**

ALEX PALOU: Before, you mean?

**Q. Did you feel like you would be able to get there?**

ALEX PALOU: I don't know. You want to think that. I mean, I was not giving up. I think it would have been very, very tough for us to get him today. I think we were trying everything possible to just overset our pit stop, try and get one lap further.

At the same time he was already three seconds ahead, which is what you lose on an out lap. I think it would have been close. I was happy with my car, but struggling a little bit more on the soft tire than on the hards. On the hards I felt super confident, was able to pull a bigger gap.

I don't know. I think it would have been really, really tough. My confidence was high, but I think my chances were low.

**Q. Once the caution came out, how much were you relishing that opportunity?**

BARRY WANSER: Yeah, I mean, having the pit location and the pit crew we have, it certainly was on the top of our minds coming down pit lane knowing we have a shot at getting the win here. Again, the guys came through.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I mean, the confidence again was super high because I know the crew has been doing an incredible job, especially this year and last year.

But you never know. It only takes one second, like a small mistake, and then suddenly you go from second to seventh. The guys know as well. The pressure that they have to take that moment was pretty high.

Incredible the work they did.

**Q. Your first win here at Long Beach. Where does that rank or sit in your accomplishments?**

ALEX PALOU: Tough to say. I feel like every win is so special. Obviously the 500 is always going to stay up top. This probably ranks top three. It's super, super cool.



But, I mean, we've been so lucky to have so much success, yeah. I don't know.

BARRY WANSER: I mean, everybody on the team is doing just a great job. We're able to capitalize. Yeah, it's a dream.

ALEX PALOU: It is.

**Q. What did you think of the start that kind of seemed a little disjointed, then being able to make the pass for second quickly?**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I knew that it was probably one of our only chances to get the pass on Pato. I actually saw that during warm-up -- not, not during warm-up, during practice, he was the strongest on the used primaries. I wanted to get ahead of him as quick as possible.

Yeah, I got a really good run out of last corner. I didn't know if he was going to block or not. I think he probably wasn't expecting it.

BARRY WANSER: You caught him off guard because he complained on the radio that they never told him you were that close. He didn't use any overtake, never defended.

ALEX PALOU: That's good (smiling).

**Q. Was your race strategy more about patience today, waiting for that right moment, or did you have a more aggressive plan?**

ALEX PALOU: We were going to go try and see if we were going to be able to make the two-stop strategy work. We didn't know if it was going to be doable or not.

I think you needed a little bit of both: you need that aggressivity to try and get to the front, but at the same time as soon as I saw that I couldn't get Felix because he was just very fast and not defending, but he was pulling a bit away, it was all about patience trying to keep the track under control, the fuel, and wait for the right time.

**Q. What ultimately gave you the edge today?**

ALEX PALOU: My team, yeah. My team. The pit stop, that was everything. I was trying to do the best job I could on track to give us our best chances on fuel and on tires. Yeah, as I said, I think without -- well, I know without that pit stop I would probably not be here now.

BARRY WANSER: We completed the warm-up not thinking we would be able to do 30 laps on the reds.

**Q. Alex, when you pulled out of the pits on the last stop, you saw an open track, what was the thought and feeling?**

ALEX PALOU: Feeling is great because you spend, what, 60 laps behind a car. Although it's like two seconds in front of you, it distracts you because you cannot do your exact line. It kind of disturbs a little bit the grip.

So yeah, when I was up front, it was great. But I just wanted to open a gap to first see if we had pace on the hards because it was the first time we were going to put the hards, and then I wanted to open a gap as soon as possible because I didn't know if Scott on alternates was going to be able to go faster than us or not.

Yeah, it's a nice feeling for the first time when you see open, clear air.

**Q. You've been on the podium 50% of races in your career. Comment on that?**

ALEX PALOU: Really?

**Q. That's the stat that FOX ran.**

ALEX PALOU: I mean, it's incredible (smiling). I don't know what to say. Yeah, this team is amazing. Like, it just gives me the opportunity every single weekend to have a car that is capable of fighting for wins or for podiums or for top fives. Whenever I'm not in the zone, they kind of put myself there with pit stop strategy or just with the car.

Yeah, no comment (smiling).

**Q. I don't know how to say this another way, but are you surprised by anything anymore just because of the way the preparation from the team and everything is? Do you get surprised by anything anymore?**

ALEX PALOU: Yes, we are. People think that we are not surprised of being here. We don't take it for...

BARRY WANSER: We put a lot of efforts into this. It doesn't come easy. I know a lot of people are saying that. We know every week we have to show up, the cars have to perform, the team has to perform. We need to make good decisions. It's hard to win in INDYCAR.

**Q. How do you feel maybe the baseline of what y'all show up has changed over the last few years? Y'all show up a lot more prepared than maybe quite a few other teams.**

BARRY WANSER: I don't know. Every year we kind of

just work hard in the off-season. You don't know what you have for each type of track until you get there. Again, it's hard to get it right.

It's nice unloading cars at the track that are pretty quick right in first practice. Then we're just making small changes, not throwing the kitchen sink...

ALEX PALOU: We did a lot of changes after practice. People would be surprised by how many changes we do throughout the weekend.

BARRY WANSER: Yeah. Always trying to improve the performance of the car. Give Alex what he needs to look good.

**Q. Alex, going into the open test, road course, confidence and momentum are very important. Talk about that.**

ALEX PALOU: Huge. Momentum in sport and life in general is huge. The confidence that I can carry myself personally, but then all the team, I think the crew as well. After delivering that pit stop, they're super, like, tense and pressure, high-pressure moments. It's like every single stop at the 500. They're preparing for it. They're ready for it.

Yeah, hopefully we can have a good open test, good road course, then ready for the big one.

**Q. You talked about unloading well. The other teams are well-prepared. You have a spec car. When you're working on your development, improvements, how do you not overstep the line and go backwards?**

BARRY WANSER: That's a hard line to be on. Off-season testing doesn't involve any track time. You can get it wrong. Fortunately our engineering staff has been pretty much on point. We've benefited from that.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, gentlemen.

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