

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, May 24, 2026

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Mike Shank

Jim Meyer

Felix Rosenqvist

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are joined by two members of the ownership group here for Meyer Shank Racing with Curb-Agajanian, Mike Shank, Jim Meyer, congratulations. The team celebrates their second all-time INDYCAR Series win. You only win the big races --

MIKE SHANK: Only the big.

THE MODERATOR: Just your thoughts, guys, on the big win here.

JIM MEYER: Something really unusual for me, I'm kind of speechless. We've got to start out by just congratulating, first of all, how proud we are of our guys. Our guys just worked tirelessly all month. Trust me, we dealt with a lot of things this month, and I'm really proud of the way the team handled themselves and the way they managed it.

Adam Rovazzini, who is our competition director and runs all of our racing operations, just did a great job. He also happens to be the strategist for the 60 car, so that helped having the win, which was great.

I really want to thank Chip Ganassi Racing and the engineering partnership we have with him and his team, which was just great and been a big boost for us.

Honda is just so great. I'm so happy Honda is staying in the series long-term. It's great to see them as committed as they are. How about a little of that Honda power today?

I can't say enough. Then finally Felix. Just what a great job. It couldn't happen to a nicer guy.

I think all of you know Felix and his wife had a new little baby girl about 13 days ago. What a great way to celebrate little baby Stella.

THE MODERATOR: 17th Indy 500 win for Honda. Mike, just your thoughts and range of emotions that you've had in the last couple hours?

MIKE SHANK: They're just all over the place. Obviously it's always about the people, and in this case it's just a group on that car -- actually it's everybody involved. Every single person in our shop, no matter what car you work on or if you work on the IMSA program, has a piece of this today.

It's the attitude we try to spread within the team. I'm overwhelmed, to be honest, because this place for me personally is everything. It's my Augusta. It's my Kentucky Derby. For me personally.

So proud of everybody.

Felix, just -- if you look back on the last month, he's been one of the guys that are harassing Alex a lot, and we're always trying to figure out how are we going to beat Alex because he's simply the best right now. And I think Felix showed it Long Beach. He showed it in qualifying here at the Grand Prix. And then you saw it today at qualify here and also the race today. He's the man for the job. And we're super proud that he got the opportunity. This will change his life and our life, so we're grateful.

Tim Meyer runs all commercial, Jim's son, and a constant pain in my ass and proud of it.

Q. Michael, if the Mick Schumacher brushing the wall yellow doesn't happen, you might still be sitting here with Marcus Armstrong. If you could talk a little bit about that because it seemed like he was pulling away there toward the end and Malukas may not have had time to catch him?

MIKE SHANK: It obviously is hard to say, but I can't say how much pride I have in where Marcus is here at this speedway. Because he started out with not a lot of time. It's his third year, but he's had different things happen to him that didn't go well here.

So for him come out today and drive the race he drove is



just incredible. And if you think about you go back, and I'll look at it tonight on YouTube, but how clean he and Felix raced each other, I wouldn't have given up the bottom for nothing. Right? And he didn't. Felix did it the hard way, which is really impressive.

So Marcus will be a great story and a good person to talk to. Because he's pretty torn up right now, and we haven't talked to him. And I get that, and I want that. I want him to want this race. He was this close is winning it. He could have won it easily. So really proud of that.

Q. Also, if you could just even -- Felix has been a bit of a hard-luck driver. He's always been in contention to win races only to end up not winning them. How much more satisfying does that make the fact that once he broke through it was in the biggest?

MIKE SHANK: This is all we needed. I told these guys literally last night I felt like this group is pushing the door open and it's getting ready to snap, we just need one thing. And I hope this is it. He deserves it. He's had some tough luck in the past in situations like this. And he closed it today, and I couldn't be more happy.

Q. When you won the Indy 500 with Helio, that gave your program a big boost. What do these wins do for an organization?

JIM MEYER: Sure. Number one, it's absolutely fantastic for our sponsors, which, man, oh, man, SiriusXM I have to thank. They've been with us since the first day. And they stayed with us.

Between efforts that my son's organization and SiriusXM have put together, now we found, honestly, a really good formula for promoting music channels, talk channels on the car, connecting it to the artist, and that gives us a much wider berth.

This will explode tonight. Obviously Morgan Wallen is one of the biggest artists in the world right now.

Really proud of that. All of you know Helio is an owner in our group, too, and Helio I think is happier than Mike and I. He's on cloud nine.

It changes everything I think is the only way I can say it. It's an amazing thing.

I will tell you, once you win it, all you want is to win it again.

Q. Has anyone heard from Morgan Wallen?

TIM MEYER: Yeah, we got some love from Morgan on

Instagram. It took a win to get it, but we're super happy he did it.

Q. Michael, how close do you think you have been to winning since the last Indy 500 win, and what do you feel like this program needs to do to win more consistently?

MIKE SHANK: Well, I think we're doing it. My analogy I have is that we're right there on the precipice getting ready to burst the door down. That's how I feel about the organization. We're kind of an upper-mid-pack team is how I look at it now. But we're right there at the top, and this proves that we can do it when it's all step up correctly.

It's just constant improving, constant improving. We want to get to the next level. As Jim said, I can't thank CGR enough. The relationship we have with Chip and his engineering, Chris Simmons in that group, engineers that we have on our project are just phenomenal. And that relationship couldn't be better right now.

Q. What does it say about Felix as a driver to make those three passes in one lap?

MIKE SHANK: Just think about that, hanging on the outside here on last lap of the last turn of the Indianapolis 500, right? It just blows me -- he was pushing every button on that steering wheel to get every bit of Honda power out of that thing, all the hybrid, all the -- everything we have was on the track.

But he was still thinking the whole time. It wasn't just like I'm hanging on to the outside and we'll see what happens. He knew where he was in space. He knew he had a good run on the 12 car, and it worked. And he deserves this win. He really does.

JIM MEYER: I just want to mention, too, we targeted trying to get Felix three years ago. He was the guy we wanted. I think it's been really, really rewarding to watch the chemistry he's built with the team, how the two trust each other, and I think that played a big part in today's win.

Q. Mike, this morning you talked about how this team was operating at the best it had been in its history and you had all this positive momentum but you needed a win. What does it say that through all the chaos that happened in that last stint that you guys were able to pull through?

MIKE SHANK: It was heartbreaking. Felix had it covered. Our strategy was the right strategy today. Really proud of that. We had it coming when that yellow came out. It just -- I didn't know what was going to happen. And when



you're leading this thing, obviously, you get overwhelmed in Turn 1 and Turn 2. But, man, he just kept kicking, just never stopped.

I can't wait to watch it back tonight. He just didn't stop, and I think it says a lot about him. He's got a lot to live for in racing right now and still young enough to be around for a while, and he's showing his true talent.

Q. I wanted to go back to that last restart. If you could take away what happened, did you guys feel like there should have been a flag thrown for Mick's contact with the wall?

MIKE SHANK: He hit the wall pretty hard. I don't know, no? I don't know, maybe yes? It worked out. But this is Marcus up here -- in my opinion, it probably would have been Marcus up here without that. So Marcus will be feeling it.

But that's racing. It gives and takes. Sometimes we get it, sometimes we don't. Marcus will handle this professionally and be ready for Detroit next week. So I promise you he'll be hungry.

Q. Helio's win accelerated a lot for you guys. Now getting a second win, what do you feel like it can do? Dave said you win all the big races. What do you think that can do for you in all the, quote-unquote, little races going forward as well?

MIKE SHANK: Everything about the team, my whole point, everything about our team right now is on a high trajectory. It's heading where we want it. Wouldn't you agree, Jim?

JIM MEYER: Yes. And I think one of the things we realize, and I hope all you realize, is how competitive this INDYCAR racing is, how close they are in terms of skill level. You have to be right to win a race here. I don't care whether it's Portland, St. Louis, Long Beach or the Indianapolis 500. You have to execute.

We have been knocking on the doorstep, as Mike said. And Alex Palou is a heck of a talent, and we've been after him. And today is so rewarding. Obviously we know David Malukas very well. David drove for us a while back. He's a wonderful young man. He's great for this sport. But today was our day.

Q. Mike, you have a lot of folks that have been with you for a long time on the crew, Jason Givens and so on. I want to get your thoughts about Adam Rovazzini. He's been with you for a little while, but really coming to you from Ganassi, you gave him that first big upward managerial opportunity. He's run with it. He's

in tears after this victory as a strategist, as well. Can you talk about Adam? He's a byproduct of y'all.

MIKE SHANK: Yeah, we promoted him all the way to COO of the whole group over both series. He is a guy that had nothing. When we decided to do this, it was just Adam and a couple bolts. We had nothing. So he built the program. Hand built it himself, hand picked most of the people himself.

And it just never stopped. He drives two hours one way every day to the shop and then two hours home every day. We never talk about that, but that's the kind of dedication he has. He runs it like a drill sergeant, which can be good and bad, but I love it. I think it's really, really productive. And now we're just starting to get -- the whole momentum of the team is all around him, honestly.

Q. Can you also talk about Fro's crew chief who might be among the youngest on pit lane, second year in that role. This kid is building Swift Sports 2000s. For what he's just achieved, this is a hell of a story as well.

MIKE SHANK: Kyle was a tire guy for AJ Foyt about six years ago. That's what he did. He came to us as a mechanic, and just kept working his way up. And we gave him a shot, like you said, two years ago now.

It's a big deal. He's a young guy, young wife, young kid, trying to fight his way through this. Really deserves a lot of credit, too. Kyle takes a lot of crap from us when things don't go well. But when they go well, he'll get his share, too.

Q. Waiting to hear what the prize money is for the winner, but get ready if you've got to peel some of that off, that F bomb on live TV --

JIM MEYER: We're ready.

Q. On that last restart, you see Marcus lose the lead there, you see Fro get right next to him. I imagine there's some emotions for those 40 seconds that we're all waiting that they don't take each other out, but you're also wanting one of them to break free from one another to make a charge --

MIKE SHANK: Tangled up.

Q. Take me through that 40 seconds of emotion for you guys.

MIKE SHANK: Jim and I literally said last night at our team party, we just don't want to take each other out. If we give a centimeter, we give a centimeter and a half to our



teammate. But now you're last lap Indy 500. There's no argument you're going to do whatever you have to do to whoever it is to win the race.

They raced really well together for two years basically, almost two years now. They're good teammates. They're friends enough. They're good friends, actually, and they respected each other on that run.

Now, Marcus is going to be pissed off for a while, but if you go back and watch it, I thought for sure we were causing ourselves more damage than good during that lap with slowing them down, but it turned out it didn't, and we're super happy.

Q. For Fro, from an emotional standpoint for him, because he's been so close so many times, so many poles and just kind of always ends up fading for whatever reason, the fact that he overcame that with this? Obviously career-defining drive.

MIKE SHANK: I'm so happy for him. He needed this, we needed this. But I'm so happy for him. I really, really hope this breaks the door open and gets some really good things that he deserves. He's just the coolest cat. He is just cool. I'm really happy for him.

JIM MEYER: Everybody remembered that Felix won the 110th running, but what I want y'all to remember is our team won the 110th, and it was a team effort. We know what happens when the team -- when the team doesn't perform right.

THE MODERATOR: Felix Rosenqvist joins us, the winner of the 110th running of the Indianapolis 500, the No. 60 SiriusXM Honda for Meyer Shank Racing with Curb-Agajanian. Closest Indy 500 finish in the 110-year history. 17th closest in INDYCAR Series history. It's Felix's second career NTT INDYCAR Series win since Road America in 2020. Fro, what a way to get your first podium on an oval, so well done.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Thanks, everyone. I'm still trying to take in becoming a dad. I guess if I was sleep deprived before, it's about to get even worse. I'm not sure if I have to go to Sweden or something. I don't know how you do this stuff. I'm not like Helio who's won four of these.

What an incredible finish, first of all. That's the way I've always pictured it in my head for some reason. It was almost like muscle memory when it happened because I've been dreaming about that last lap move. It's kind of weird, you never really get that last lap move in the Indy 500, and it just played out perfectly.

The car was a rocket. Thank you, Meyer Shank Racing, Honda, SiriusXM, all our partners. It takes an army to create a rocket like that. It was so hooked up all day, from the get-go. We actually didn't change anything all day. It was like, let's save the time in the pits and leave it as it is. And it was so good. It was a little loose in the end, but I think it was just perfect.

To race all those guys, I know them all very well, David, Pato and Marcus, and I know they're probably pretty bummed right now, but I think it's really cool when you race against drivers with that level of respect.

We raced super hard. There was some wheel banging and some tire marks on the side pods, which is cool, but no one ended in the wall. I think that's why it turned out to be such a great finish and such a show for the fans.

That means a lot to me. Even if -- if that was on another track, I still would have been over the moon. And to do it here in Indy in front of 350K people, that's just unreal.

Q. Do you want to talk through the pass, setting up the pass, everything that happened there?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Honestly, it's still kind of a blur. I had that momentum going, and I was kind of like, I'm going to go on the high line, and I'm not going to ruin this momentum. If someone comes in the way, that's it.

But no one did, and I was able to stay on the high lane through the whole thing, and I was getting a side draft at the same time from the other guys.

But I thought I was second, to be honest. I was like, this is -- this sucks, now we're second in the 500. I guess it was a good day; we did what we could.

Then it just kind of pulled, like the big Honda motor just -- yeah, I thought I didn't have it, and then I shifted up, and it was just kind of sucking up to David, and it was just enough to get me over the finish line half a foot ahead of him. You can't even dream up that stuff. It was just so cool. I'll watch it a million times.

Q. This must be amazing for you.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, there's nothing like it. As I said, this month has just been -- I feel like it's been a dream, to be honest, a blur, and I just kind of tried to keep my head above water and tried to be a dad in the evenings and be a pro during the day.

I think after qualifying, I really felt the fans got behind me, which was super cool. I wouldn't say I've been, like, the

most -- the biggest fan favorite ever here, but I feel like today I actually was one of the true favorites, which was super cool for me.

After qualifying, it was like people selecting me in the grandstand, and they're like, this guy needs to win. I don't know if it's because they're tired of Alex winning or if they like me, but I'll take it.

It was a really -- I think that part is super hard to describe, to have so many people cheering for you, and I'm truly thankful for everyone that stuck around in the weather and everything and just made that finish so special.

Q. Mike and Jim, when you guys set out on this journey all those years ago, did you ever think you'd be sitting here in 2026 having won two Indy 500s?

JIM MEYER: Well, I have to say, when I got together with Mike, I said to him, I want to win that race. Number one, even though I've been -- I've attended this race, shoot, at least -- well, I've been to every one since 1980, I think. I've been to every 500.

But I just never realized how hard it is until you're where we are in this and how heartbreaking -- the highs and lows in this sport are tough to manage and really great to get to.

Yes, I did imagine we could win this, though. I talked to Felix this morning. We talked about he's as good as anybody out here or better than anybody out here, and we can win this race if we execute and keep our wits.

I never expected we were going to win by a foot, okay, which is great. So yes.

MIKE SHANK: Yes, I did expect it because I don't come here to not try to win races. I think we set some goals -- our trajectory in INDYCAR from the beginning with Jack Harvey was very, very detailed and scheduled out: What we could afford is all we're going to do. We're not going into debt. We're going to get partners that are going to pay for what we can get done. And I think we've stuck to that for the most part.

Yeah, I think we're really good. I think we're not the little team anymore they used to freaking call me all the time.

Q. Felix, we've seen guys go two wide there or think about doing it and pull out on the last lap, second to last lap. Seems like it's something that very rarely works. What gave you the confidence or stubbornness knowing that could potentially not go the way you wanted it to?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I think it was the momentum that I had. I was like, I can't ruin this momentum because that's been a thing I've been caught doing here in the past. I think it was '22 or -- yeah, '22 when I finished fourth. Pato got low and I basically had to brake on the final lap, and that was it. Like, the run is gone. You're never going to recover. I was like, whatever happens here, I've just got to keep my run, even if it's on the third lane. We've just got to do it.

That's kind of the only option you have. You don't really have an option to go low because there wasn't any room, and it was just stacked down there, and I was just kind of -- I was going wheel to wheel with I think Marcus for the whole back straight, so there wasn't a door open to go in. And I was like, yep, this is going to be it. Like, I'll stay flat and see what happens.

It worked out perfectly that David was -- he was the perfect distance ahead to give me a little tow because, if he was closer, I probably would have just sat on his gearbox over the finish line.

The hybrid, I think I deployed -- everything was just -- if you replay it a million times, it probably wouldn't happen that way. But yeah, I was very determined today. I've been very close -- I wouldn't even say close, but I've been in that position, top 4, towards the end many times here, and I had the car to do it.

And this year we talked a lot, what does it really take to really do it. I felt I had more confidence today. I think that was the difference, and the hunger to do it. I think that's what it takes here to win it. You need to be ready to risk it all on the last lap. If it ended in the fence, I think I would have been proud for my run. That's the way you have to approach it.

Q. Mike and Jim spoke earlier about the highs of this for you winning for the team, the tough part of Marcus coming just short, knowing that had we not had that last caution, things could have gone very differently. Have you had a chance to talk to Marcus, and if you haven't, what can you imagine from your own experiences in the past about what he might be dealing with?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I mean, he had an incredible day. I think he started 16th, and I saw him on the board climb up every stint. So he kind of got two positions every stop, every stint.

To see him at the end there, I was like, it's a pretty cool moment for the team. We joked about that or talked about it yesterday. We want our cars to win, and they said we

don't care which one. Obviously I care which one, but...

No, I was just super happy how everyone raced each other, like Marcus, Dave, Pato. Everyone gave the perfect amount of room to give everyone a show.

Obviously he's gutted. I'm not expecting him to be here or celebrate or anything. He's going to be very disappointed, obviously. I've been in that boat, as well, when I've been leading towards the end and it hasn't worked out, and it breaks you. And I know Pato has been in that boat many times.

Yeah, it's cool, as well, when I know all these guys, but everyone is just racing super hard. It's full ego at that point. Everyone just cares about themselves, and that's what creates good racing.

Q. I know this was a special couple weeks for you. Have you had a chance to talk to the girls back home?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I have. I did when I was running back from the car. Yeah, I got kind of emotional thinking about them not being here. We joked about it, that just because she's not here we're going to win the race, and obviously that happens, right.

But yeah, honestly, when we had our baby, that was the most incredible moment of my life. Everything after that was like, everything else is just a bonus, and not only in May but in life.

Which is actually kind of a nice mindset to have, because you take more pressure off your shoulders, and in a way, you become more focused and thinking about the right stuff instead of -- because we all put enough pressures on our selves anyways.

I think it turned out to be a good thing for me to become a dad. I definitely miss my wife and daughter, but I'll go give them a fat kiss later.

Q. You told us the other day you don't get emotional, and now you got emotional twice in two weeks.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I think I've widened my spectrum of emotions by a million times this month. But that's what's cool. These are the moments that you'll remember forever. I'm just trying to take it all in, to be honest.

I feel so lucky. That's the number one thing I can -- like it's super hard to describe how it feels, but I'm just so lucky. First, having my daughter. She's healthy, my wife is healthy. I get to be part of this incredible team at Meyer Shank Racing that feels like a family. Everybody working

in this team are proud to be in this team, I think you can ask each one of them, and there's just such a cool culture.

Now we've won twice, which is just unreal. Yeah, just super lucky to be in this position, to have the opportunity and the car and all these things. Yeah, it all happened to me for some reason.

Q. Mike, when you got Felix, he'd been through it. What kind of rebuilding and convincing did you have to do to say, hey, we want you, you're our guy, we're going to build around you?

MIKE SHANK: This is a good question. In 2023 we probably had our worst season for a variety of reasons, not one reason. Overall our results were really poor. We lost one car out of the leader's circle, and we needed something. When we looked around at -- if nothing else, I wanted someone that's bad fast. I needed a fast person.

At least we're doing something on Saturday, we're getting Fast Sixes, we're qualifying well. So if you look back in 2024 when he first came, we got -- it was 14 or 15 -- a lot of top sixes. Our Sundays weren't as good, but we were progressing, and then it's just gotten better from there.

We hired him for a very specific reason. I thought -- he got pole at Laguna that year after we had hired him. I watched that in-car lap, and I told Jim we did the right thing here. He was within an inch of his life on that quality lap at Laguna that year. And that's when I knew we had the right guy.

Now, you just never know how relationships goes and how everyone gels or doesn't gel, and we have a technical arrangement with another team, how that comes together. There's so many different personalities in this. But we got everything we asked for. Everything.

Q. Marcus said that he had two options in the last corner, either to crash with you or to lift. I'm curious, do you feel like you put him in that position, and do you trust him that he will lift, or is it I'm going to go for it and what happens happens in that moment?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I don't actually remember. Like I haven't seen a replay or what happened. I think he was probably on the inside and he started understeering and had to lift. Which I had that happen many times today, as well, when you get pinched and you get a wash from the car ahead, and then you just have to -- you just have to lift or your run is kind of done.

I'll have to look at everything closer before I comment on anything.

Q. Could that have been the best lap you've ever driven?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yes. I'll definitely say the balls arrived when they needed to. I've never been flat around the high line for more than one corner, I think. Yeah, to do a whole lap on the outside, that was pretty cool. It's kind of unheard of at Indy.

Yeah, that's just how much you want it -- it's hard to explain that feeling, that you want it so much and you have so much adrenaline that you literally don't care if you're going to crash. You're just going all in.

It was cool that that's what it took to win it, as well.

Q. Good they swept the high line then under caution?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, and there wasn't a lot of marbles, either. It was a very marble-free day, and I think whatever Firestone has done on previous ovals, they probably did the same here. I'm not sure if that's a fact or not. But I couldn't even see any marbles all day.

The high line was probably way more available than it has been in the past, especially on the restarts. But even during the race I did some passes, and it seemed to work pretty well. Yeah, makes for a good race for sure.

Q. Has it really sunk in that you've won probably one of the most historic Indy 500s that's going to be talked about for generations to come?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: No, it hasn't. I'm a pure racer, and all I really care about is -- obviously I was going to be happy if I won it on a yellow. You're always going to be happy winning a race.

But to win it like that is just such a bonus. It makes it three times more special to me because I love when it's -- I would have loved to watch that. I would have paid a lot of money to watch that race. And that's what it's all about, to create a good show, fair racing, hard racing on the final lap like that. And to be the one doing the move, there's nothing like it really.

I've never had a more exciting finish ever, and to have it here is just lucky, I guess.

Q. The caution with Caio Collet, you pretty much had it in the bag there. Were replays of Long Beach with Palou beating you out of pit road, were there replays of that going on with the team, especially leading with the five-to-go restart?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: A little bit. I definitely got a little déjà-vu from that moment. I think we were pretty much controlling it with the fuel game because I was able to suck up to that pack, and I knew Pato had a hard time with the fuel. He wasn't able to stick with the pack, so he was basically in trouble. I just knew if this is going to go green until the end, we got it easy unless something crazy happens.

Then obviously the crazy thing happened.

But I got down to third on the first restart, which was kind of the perfect place because I saw all day, whoever was in third always had a shot at leading the next straight or the next lap. I was like, this is probably as good of a shot as I'm going to get. We had it in the bag before, so now let's just refocus here. Let's look forward.

It's always nice to be the one hunting, as well. I would hate to be in the lead for that last restart. Yeah, it's not a good place to be, unfortunately, for -- it was Marcus, right, on that last restart? Yeah, that sucks for him.

Yeah, we had the best place in the house then, and we took advantage of it with a great run. So super cool.

Q. I'm kind of curious about the emotions you experienced because obviously from lap 130 on, whenever you pitted, knowing one more stop, the whole time you know that it's just you versus Pato more or less, and obviously close friend, best friend, and as you said, you know that you've kind of got him. What were the emotions? Do you allow any of those emotions to build while you're in the car?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Not really. I mean, we know each other well enough that we're both -- when the helmet comes on, we're -- you're a very ego person to win races. You have to be. You're only thinking about yourself. All that stuff goes -- especially here at Indy.

I think you race teammates maybe a little bit differently. You try obviously not to take a teammate out, and you try to be fair because it would be stupid not to. But when you're in that position, you don't care who it is.

But I was happy that it was Pato because he's very fair. He's extremely aggressive, but he always leaves room, and so does David and Marcus. I was happy it was those guys because I think in a lot of instances, that's going to end in the wall for sure.

Q. Just a second ago you talked about how maybe being a new father helped unlock some things.



Elaborate a little bit more on that because from that sense it was almost like, if you were a father five years ago, maybe we'd have this Felix five years ago.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, I don't know. It's interesting. It unlocks something in you for sure that you never had before. I guess it's a lot of parents in this room, and it's a very special feeling.

As I said, we all put so much pressure on yourselves and we also get added pressure from our teams, our media, whatever it is. You always have way more pressure than you need, really, and you've been learning to cope with it all your life.

I think somehow this was the first time I felt less pressure because I already had so much. I come home at night and I'm the happiest man -- when I crashed with Pato at the GP when I started third and he was second, day over, but it was like, I didn't really care. I think that's actually a strength because if you bring the bad results with you home, there's going to be someone else that is as good and he enjoys his life instead of being angry.

Yeah, it was definitely a turning point for me, and I think it's -- I heard many athletes say the same thing. Alex Palou, for example.

Q. Your last win was at Road America in 2020. At some point did the pressure get to you about when is win No. 2 going to happen, and how did you not let that get to you, or did that get to you or not especially after what happened at Long Beach this year?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, Long Beach was -- it was pretty much like today. You're sitting in a very good position and it just doesn't happen. I think I've had like five second places since my win. There's definitely days -- I know that we have the team. We have the driver to be out there and win races every weekend.

But it just takes so much. Six years now. It's an extremely long time, especially -- I think it's not only me but every driver in this series, they come from a background where they've been winning everything. You've been on pole positions all the time, and all of a sudden to have that kind of slump, it definitely gets to you a little bit. And I think it changes how you approach weekends. You kind of try to go for a Hail Mary and just get a win because you want to win.

But yeah, I think after Long Beach, something kind of changed. We felt like we were actually able to be a threat even to Alex and the big dogs at the front, and just riding a good wave right now. So well timed, to be honest, to get it

here.

Q. Al Unser Jr. once said there comes a time in a race where money doesn't matter, living doesn't matter; winning is the only thing that matters in the Indy 500. At what point in today's race was that true for you?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: That was a very good quote. Exactly that. I haven't even -- actually now you said money, that was the first time I thought about it.

Q. \$2 million.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: No, it's just like -- I think it's so cool with these kind of -- this race. This race is so special. I've done will some other special races in my life. This just has something different. Even if it didn't pay points, you don't care. Everyone wants to win this race more than anything else. I think if we didn't have points here, it wouldn't really matter. Everyone is able to take something else out of themselves to just make it happen here.

I think that's a cool -- a big thanks to all the INDYCAR teams because if you were starting a team, you'd probably be like, let's focus on winning all the road courses and not caring about Indy because there's only like 50 points on the line.

But everyone digs so deep for this race and they put the work in over the winter. They spend millions of dollars on this specific car that we're only going to use here in May that if you crash it once, it's gone, like what happened to Alex and Pato in practice. Like, that can happen to any of us. But everyone still does it, and I think it's because the race is so special, and it's not really about the money, it's about the pride and the tradition.

Winning the 500 just beats everything else. I think that's the super cool thing that we somehow have created here over the last century.

Q. At what moment did you realize you'd won the race, and what thoughts happened?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I thought I was second, and then it was like a miraculous pull or draft -- you could even say it was a side draft. I just kind of got this little push, and that's when I was like, okay, it might happen here.

Yeah, I haven't seen a finish like that ever. Initially I was like, okay, I'm second because this never happens. You never have enough time to get past the other car. But it happened, and it's just incredible.

The emotions were -- I was just screaming and crying.

Q. You've got an incredible tour coming up in New York City coming up over the next several days. How are you going to budget your time to where you're not completely wiped out and fatigued by the time you get to Detroit in five days' time?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I'm going to sleep great because I don't have to wake up and change diapers at 4:00 a.m. so it's going to be like vacation for me.

No, I don't think the Detroit race has had great success for Indy 500 winners historically, but honestly, I don't care. I'm not really thinking about Detroit right now. Yeah, whatever happens from here on, as I said, is a bonus, so we'll be there but I might be a little tired.

I think I proved I can drive well tired at the GP, though. So we'll be okay.

Q. It was about this time a week ago when you were on pit road and you were pretty down because you were kind of prohibitive favorite to win the pole and out of nowhere Alex Palou ends up knocking you off and you end up -- not knocking you off, but you ended up qualifying fourth. When you reflect back on the range of emotions from that to today, how do you describe that?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, that's what this place does. I feel like I've kind of experienced everything here. I've had massive ups, massive downs. Actually my first time here I crashed really hard, pretty much like Alex did. That was a big awakening. I was actually kind of afraid to get back in the car, and I didn't have a lot of confidence. Actually took quite a lot of time to get back in it.

But yeah, somehow you just learn to master -- sorry, I forgot what the question was.

Q. Just the range of emotions from losing the pole --

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, the range of emotion, it's just brutal when it doesn't work out here, when you get a taste for it and you start dreaming about it but it doesn't happen, someone passes you. I've had that happen, and obviously now I won it. I never had the pole, but even in qualifying days, more emotional than any race. It's just such a cool -- I just love this place, man. It's incredible. This whole month is so special.

Q. You've had so many near misses, now here you are Indy 500 champion. Having gone through all that, is it all worth it?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: It is. I can tell you it is. I'll be back many times.

I think it's probably -- I think I understand now why so many guys come back like Helio because after you've gone through this, all you can think about is doing another one. I guess it's the same with having a baby. You just want more kids.

Q. Was you winning today good for INDYCAR because it was somebody other than Alex Palou?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I would like to think so. I had such good support from the fans and I had so many people come up to me this month and say, this one is yours. Everyone has been saying that. That's very different from any other year.

I do feel like I was a little bit of a favorite for sure, and again, I don't know if that's because they don't want Palou to win or if they like Fro, but I'll definitely take it, and it made it more special to me.

Q. Do you think you can eliminate the myth that being a father makes you lose two-tenths now?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yes, myth busted, as Adam Savage would say. Have you seen that show?

Q. I've seen it on TikTok and stuff but no --

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Great show.

Q. Speak about how you found a home at Meyer Shank. Obviously your INDYCAR career has been pretty difficult; you've hopped around a few places, but this team has really built around you, made you their lead driver. Speak to the relationship you've had with the team to get you to where you are now.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, it's been an incredible journey together. Mike kind of touched on it before, that when he signed me, he needed someone with speed: That's literally all I require from you is to be fast, and the rest we'll figure out along the road. That's kind of what it's been.

Obviously been a bit of a Saturday man in this series and still am probably, but this year, something definitely changed. We were able to -- like in Long Beach, we had a really good race pace, were able to be up there and fight for wins. We've been working a lot on that, and honestly never, ever have they put pressure on me, which is probably the first time in any team I've been where let's say you have a crash or you have a bad day, you're almost

expecting them to be -- you have a bad call with your team boss or added pressure.

But Mike and Jim, they've never, ever done that. I've had some pretty rough days with them and some really good days, but they never -- every time I talk to them, they're like, you got this, you're great, you're as good as any of these drivers. That's what -- you feel very welcomed and like inside a family when you have that relationship.

Q. Was there a point in the race where you felt your strategy was risky because basically if you don't do what Alex Palou and Ganassi do, generally you finish behind them. So when you dropped back to like ninth and tenth, you and Marcus, didn't that feel -- did you think it might be slipping away?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: It definitely seemed slightly risky at the time. I didn't have full overview of the situation because there was like three strategies going on. I basically just trusted the team. Okay, let's do it.

I don't know what happened with Alex, actually. So he basically got done by not doing the strategy --

Q. He ended up with the group that was running like 16 seconds behind you guys.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah. I mean, you're not going to win this race without luck. I think there was probably less luck than we think because Adam and Ross, who do my strategy, they're normally pretty on the money with the strategy, and that's a really big strength of the 60 car. We rarely have bad strategy calls. I always trust them. But yeah, you have to gamble a little bit here. There's just so many yellows that at some point everyone is kind of on the gamble, on the table.

Q. When did you realize or when did they tell you you were going to have to save some fuel?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Our save wasn't -- we were always kind of one of the best on the fuel because we were always sitting -- I kind of had that in mind all day. I was sitting behind two to three cars and just really working on staying close to the other car and minimizing my throttle time.

So we were always in a better boat than anyone else with the fuel, which at the end was kind of like our game plan, and then it all went out the window anyways.

Yeah, that was -- they told me early enough to save, and I think a lot of people ended up in the oh, s--- boat at the end of the stint and had to lift and stuff. Honestly, the team just nailed the strategy today.

Q. You talked about having to refocus once you got that last restart. How were you able to go through it in the cockpit, what you wanted to do, after having just surrendered the lead a few laps before that?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, honestly I kind of knew I was going to lose it because there's just no way you're going to keep the lead here. It's very hard to do. There's just such a long way to Turn 1.

That yellow, I was like, I hope I don't drop back further than third, and then the yellow got out and I was third, so I was like, okay, this is probably the best case scenario.

I just tried to stay positive because I think that's been something in the past. I let it get to my head, and it's like, you start thinking in your head that, oh, this is bullshit or this is bad luck or whatever, and at that point you just have to be strong and look forward, which is a tough thing to do because you've lost the biggest thing you can lose, really, in the race car.

Q. When you look back to last week and qualifying, it didn't end how you wanted it to, but was there any confidence you could take into that last lap, knowing how fast you were in those single lap or four-lap situations just a week ago?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I definitely thought the car deserved some milk on it after how fast it was all month. Yeah, they just did such an incredible job with this car. It was so fast all month, handled so well.

Actually, I don't know where the handling in the race came from because we weren't super confident on Carb Day. We were okay. But everyone said we had a great car and I was like, mine is not super good.

But my engineer Ross and Rebecca and Ben, they were able to just kind of nail it, really, the final few changes, and yeah, that's what you said, as well.

Q. Felix, we were standing next to your pit in those last couple laps and there was this sigh of frustration when the caution comes out. You talked about being comfortable in third. Walk me through what's that dialogue like with the team when you're trying to strategize and the team up here also talked about you trying to press every single button to just make it happen?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, like it was kind of a déjà-vu from a couple of weeks ago at Long Beach when everything just kind of goes the wrong way. They do a

good job not showing that emotion to me. Even Adam sounded super confident. He's like, it's fine, we'll regroup, we'll get it. Again, I think that was a good way to think of it was you're going to be in third and that's the best place you can be. It looks good to lead on the restart on TV but it's not a good place to be, and Marcus Ericsson, he had that with Josef. There's been countless guys that have got -- basically lost the race because they were leading at the final lap.

I was like, second maybe is better, but this is pretty ideal situation.

Q. How long do you bask in the victory here but then suit up for Detroit?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I'm just along for the ride. I'm just go where the people tell me to go, and I guess we'll be in Detroit very shortly.

Q. I'm wondering if the switch from Andretti to Ganassi is the technical partner for the Shank team was good for you personally given that you had some familiarity with people and setup philosophies and such?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, I mean, they're both great teams, and they've been both great partners of ours, with Meyer Shank Racing. We had the luxury to work with some of the best in the business.

Yeah, I definitely know a lot of people still at Ganassi. Obviously it's changed quite a bit. The cars have changed. Like Ross my engineer didn't work there when I was there. But it's definitely a great group of people that I -- we were able to come back to a little bit. It's always nice when you have familiar faces.

But honestly, both our partnerships have been really, really good, and I really have been lucky to work with both of them.

Q. About 10 years ago I think was when you first tested at INDYCAR. Could I get you to reflect on the journey from those initial tests to get that seat through and now to finally have the biggest prize? When you had that first test, was this always in mind, winning the 500?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Ooh, I'm not sure. Funny you say that because that test day I was testing Dixon's car at -- I was an Indy Lights driver at the time and it was his target No. 9. That was probably the coolest day being a race car driver until now. I'll always remember that day at Mid-Ohio. Definitely a different person back then.

I was kind of seasoned as a driver already. I was probably around 25, 26. So I had done a lot. But yeah, this whole journey here has just been -- I feel like I've grown so much, really, and learned so much. I've been able to toughen up more mentally, and physically, as well. Back then I was like falling out of the seat trying to hold on to that No. 9.

But I don't really think I was -- I was just happy to try the car, and it was like, oh, it's a lot of downforce, a lot of power. But I was never really dreaming, daring to dream about this back then. It's far away.

Q. Now that you have won the Indy 500, what is going to be your preparation for Detroit, and now is there pressure now that you have won to bring it on to Detroit?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I would say the opposite. I honestly couldn't care less. (Laughter.)

I think for me, that's always good because it means I have less pressure, which is go faster. Yeah, I'll just show up, and I think we'll be pretty good.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports