

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Sunday, May 31, 2026

**Alex Palou**

**Barry Wanser**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up with our champion team and driver, Alex Palou in the No. 10 HRC Chip Ganassi Racing Honda. Second win here on the streets of downtown Detroit, third street circuit win of the season. Of course the 23rd career win, which ties him 20th all time with the legendary Tommy Milton. And Barry Wanser, longtime team manager for the 10 car joins us.

Obviously a very dominating performance, 71 of the 100 laps led. Your thoughts on another win here in Detroit.

ALEX PALOU: Tough. Very tough today. It didn't really feel like we were leading that much. I know that we were leading, but man, it was a lot of work with the restarts, and got myself into trouble on the first stint.

We kind of started losing pace on the alternates. Will was struggling a little bit more. Tried to overtake him but made a bad decision and put myself in a bad scenario and lost two or three places instead of gaining one.

That was not great, but the team reacted super quick. We went for the undercut, and not only the undercut was going to work, but on top of that we were better for the yellow when it came out.

It was good. It was not an easy day at all. It was not like a straight -- there's races where it's just straightforward and whatever it looks like it's going to be, it is. But today was plenty of action, struggling a lot on restarts, and didn't know if we were going to make it with Kyle or not because he was on alternates and kind of -- I think he had a small advantage on the first two restarts, but then at the end I think he just didn't have enough grip on the tires.

**Q. Barry, was that one of those races that keeps you on your toes?**

BARRY WANSEER: Yeah, absolutely. Of all the variables that happen in INDYCAR street course racing, I think we had them all. Obviously the tires were a big factor, the

difference between the alternates and the primaries. We kind of figured that the crossover was about 15 green laps before the primaries were better.

Yeah, it was a very challenging race certainly even on the strategy, when to pit. We caught a break being in the pits, but we'd hope more -- we were actually in the pits at the time so the leaders didn't have such an advantage when everyone came in and they kind of followed in behind us. Yeah, it was great.

**Q. Knowing the procedure change and kind of getting an edge on that by pitting a few laps before the contact happened, that allowed you to get back into the lead. What was the conversation like coming into this weekend knowing they were going to call things differently in race control?**

BARRY WANSEER: I would say if I were to reflect back on all the yellows that came today, they had to happen when they did right away. I don't think it was a change of procedure where they would have necessarily waited for everyone for an opportunity to pit, and with the previous procedures, when you look at where some of those yellows happened and stuff, there was still cars behind, so cars come around blind corners.

But we had prepared, and we're always on the lookout for diving in the pits, so we know the yellows will come sooner than they have. Quicker, I should say.

**Q. Did that affect your tire strategy at all, as well, going red, red, and then finishing on blacks?**

BARRY WANSEER: That was independent. We asked Alex, what do you want for next. He just didn't want to finish on the reds, so that made it easy for us. Went red, red, black.

With the change in race control, again, the impact of getting caught out with only 20 seconds lost out of the pits here is minimized, but there will be some tracks where going an extra lap, when we get to Road America, Elkhart Lake it's a four-mile track, a long time around, you'll be nervous if you're the last one to pit and stay out later.



**Q. I know you said you were satisfied with the two races at Indy, but to get back to the podium and as a winner, what does it mean for you to further extend your championship lead?**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I was happy with how we performed at Indy but not happy with the result, obviously. I think there was only -- Felix was happy. The rest, we left with our hearts broken. But this helps. This helps recover a lot our hearts and our feelings.

At Indy, we put so much effort. We put so much work and we focus so much on that that it just breaks your heart if you don't win.

But yeah, it feels great. It feels great to be back here on Victory Lane. I think last year or the past couple years we were not that strong on street courses, and this year we've been able to win at three street courses. Yeah, it just feels incredible.

Also the way we won it, being on pole, but then kind of putting myself in a bad spot and the team recovering, like, it was a great race for us.

**Q. I think toward the end you were down like 11 seconds of Push-to-Pass. I don't know how many Kyle had but it seemed like he was coming and all of a sudden you opened it back up to about 1.3. How were you able to do that with such limited Push-to-Pass?**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, on the last restart I think we had like 25 or 30 and I started burning it on the back straight. We were pretty equal on Push-to-Pass. Then I just saved that 11 -- it doesn't really mean much. It's only one time in case we had to fight or we had to do another restart. I think Kyle at that moment was 15 or 14 on the OT.

Yeah, I think we had more pace than him because of the tires. The alternates kind of helped him getting up to speed for like three laps, and then once my tires were up to temperature on the primaries I was able to control a little bit more the pace and the grip of the car.

Yeah, I was happy that there was not another restart at the end.

**Q. There's still 10 races left but your points lead is already 73 points. Going into June, that's got to be a pretty good edge for you. I know you don't feel comfortable until the last race and it's over, but still, 73-point lead with 10 to go --**

ALEX PALOU: I'll take it, yeah. I don't want to be in

another position.

It's incredible. It's super good, especially knowing that I did a mistake in Phoenix with a race car that was really good and capable.

It's a good start.

BARRY WANSEER: For sure. To add to the discussions on overtake becoming a factor, this race was only 150 seconds versus a lot of other tracks have been with 200 so it's a big difference with how much you use. We were fortunate to maintain more than Kirkwood for most of the race, even late race until it got down to 11, and I think Kirkwood was 15.

THE MODERATOR: To clarify, the lead is 62 points, not 73.

ALEX PALOU: Oh, come on, man. 11 points? It feels so bad now. I just lost 12 points, 11 points in an exchange.

BARRY WANSEER: It doesn't feel so good going into June anymore.

**Q. Barry, you mentioned you're already looking ahead to Road America and the strategy calls there. One of the advantages you've had over the races prior to this change in procedure has been that you've extended stints. Now it seems like that advantage has kind of been taken away. Are you going to plan for future races to pit earlier from now on, knowing that a yellow could come out at any time?**

BARRY WANSEER: Look, we're always going to be looking at it. There's a balance of, hey, there's debris, are we close to the pit entry, and if they're going to call things early, you're probably not going to get in. You might have one or two cars that might be able to make it in.

If we're running up front our goal is to stay up front and if we get caught out it wasn't our day. We can't be an early pitter every race because we're worried about getting caught out by a yellow.

**Q. I wanted to talk about your engine because something the opposition talks about a lot, in fact they talked to us about it after the race, is that they feel like they're lacking compared to you. We hear about drivability all the time. Explain what that means in layman's terms.**

ALEX PALOU: You mean that they're lacking engine compared to me?

**Q. Yes.**

ALEX PALOU: Especially this weekend because I was driving the Honda Honda, so I'm sure we had 50 or 60 horsepower more than anybody else. We had double. We also had a little bit more Push-to-Pass than everybody else.

Apart from that --

**Q. I hear Pato running right now. Pato is on his way.**

BARRY WANSER: He's just joking.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I'm joking.

Whenever the car in front of you is faster, it just feels that it has more speed. I'm sure that's what I was saying about Andretti because they were actually trimmed here, and they were faster on the straight than us, and I couldn't catch them. That's why Will and Kirkwood were so good on the back straight.

But yeah, it's good. I guess it's a good thing if they think or if they know that I have more power. It's good. I'll continue to have more power until I can. I'll take it.

**Q. For both of you, Graham just said that Alex is in a league of his own. Does it feel like that? He was talking about in every sense, pit strategy, everything. Does it feel that way?**

ALEX PALOU: No, honestly, no. I feel very confident. I feel that I'm in a great moment in my career where I feel super comfortable with what I'm capable of doing with the car. The car responds to me, talks to me the way I want.

I have an amazing group around me that whenever I struggle with the car, they can fix it for me, like here at Detroit, we were not super happy last year. We came with a car that was similar to last year and kind of changed it to make it a lot better and we were on pole, so we had the fastest car.

Not only that, I did a couple mistakes on track on the first stint, and the team alone, they put me from fourth to first, and that was just with a strategy call, which that's our first step, but then you need all the crew, as well, to execute and to give you a great pit stop.

For sure we have a great package. I don't know how long that's going to last. Like my feeling or the crew's feeling or the strategy feeling, like you never know when it's going to end. You need so much to go right for you to end. We've seen that at Indy Road Course. We had a super fast car.

At the 500 it's a bit different. There was plenty of fast cars there.

But you can see that it's very tough to win races. Yeah, I wish we were in a league of our own, but I was -- we struggled a lot. Like we have to work so much, and everybody in the team has to work so much to be here.

**Q. Alex, it's two for two now in the Honda Honda like you mentioned. How much does it mean to you to come to Chevrolet's backyard and put the beat-down on them here in Detroit?**

ALEX PALOU: I mean, it's incredible that we had this livery. I think it looks incredible on track. But on top of that, being two for two, it feels great. More in Detroit.

But I think Honda is happy maybe we can run it again.

**Q. Was it a plan to do this scheme this week?**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, of course. It's not like suddenly they wake up and it's like, it's a great idea if we suddenly put --

BARRY WANSER: Put it on this week.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, normally there's a big --

**Q. Is there strategy to it?**

ALEX PALOU: I don't know up there what the strategy was or what the talk was, but yeah, this was planned for a long time.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports