

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Saturday, June 6, 2026

**Alex Palou**

**Kyle Kirkwood**

**David Malukas**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good morning. Welcome to World Wide Technology Raceway as we kick off the 10th annual Bommarito Auto Group 500.

Starting the day with the top three in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES points standings:

The driver third in the championship, David Malukas.

We have the defending winner of the Bommarito Auto Group 500, second in the championship, Kyle Kirkwood.

The driver with four wins in the first eight races of this season, five podiums, six top fives in the Honda Honda, Alex Palou.

Alex, we'll start with you. Certainly hard to argue with the season you've had so far. This place has always been kind of tricky for you. On the other side you've been getting better and better on short ovals. What do you expect to happen this weekend?

ALEX PALOU: The season overall, it's been great for me and for the 10 car. This is probably my worst place. I've always struggled here personally. I think we had good cars, but never been able to run up front. Hopefully we change it this weekend.

THE MODERATOR: Kyle, you always enjoy being back here certainly as the defending champion. Where do you pick up from where you left off?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Obviously we had a really good race here last year. We were the ones that kind of just did everything right and put ourselves in fortunate positions 'cause quite honestly we weren't the fastest car here.

Hopefully we've learned some stuff over the off-season. I still think this is a track we need to get better on even

though we did win here last year. Only time will tell.

THE MODERATOR: David, a lot of good memories at this track. I remember you talking about how you were beating the Penskes at one point when you were a member of a different team. Now you're a member of that team.

DAVID MALUKAS: This place definitely has a special place in my heart from that P2, first podium in INDYCAR, night race as well. We had to wait for the rain, went into the night, really good memories.

I really like this place. We tend to do good here. Looking forward to this weekend.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Do you all expect anything to change tech-wise with Rocket no longer here?**

ALEX PALOU: I don't know. I have no idea. It's sad that he's no longer here. He's been a great character for INDYCAR. I don't know if it's going to change or not.

I think it's just sad, seems like the storyline this year has always been about tech, officiating, instead of what's going on on track. We're all doing probably a bad job on that, on just not talking about going to the best track for David or the track that he won last year or my worst track, and we're only talking about officiating.

**Q. Why is this your worst track? What makes this so much of a struggle?**

ALEX PALOU: Talent. I lack talent here (smiling). I don't know what to say. If I knew, I would fix it right away.

I don't know. Just confidence-wise I struggle here.

**Q. Alex, what is the process like trying to figure out this track this year?**

ALEX PALOU: Well, luckily we tested here I would say like a month and a half ago, two months ago. That was good. Like, we were alone on track. CGR and two other teams



with the rookies. You never know if you're going to show up here and be superheroes or be slow because we're just comparing to ourselves.

I think it's just going to be a matter of time trying to find what I need from the car and myself to be as good or as comfortable as on other tracks.

**Q. David, last week you talked about needing a mental reset after crashing. What has that process been like for you?**

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, Detroit was a stinker (smiling). To be honest, when I look at the whole season, we've been getting pretty lucky with a lot of things.

Yeah, qualifying, just ran out of talent right at the end, put us in the back. Lucky yellow put us back into the game. Again, just an unfortunate situation.

No, I had time, looked back at everything, learned more stuff. Now mental reset and now we get to go to one of my favorite tracks.

**Q. David, if Alex says this is his worst track, would you say historically this is your best track?**

DAVID MALUKAS: Maybe. I don't know if it's my best, but to me it's one of my favorites or probably the favorite. To be honest, looking at the history of it, my P2, my first involvement in INDYCAR, podiums, getting my name out there, this is my favorite race of the whole season.

**Q. You don't worry about the weather till it actually gets here. In your engineering debriefs, are you coming up with two strategies, a full-race strategy and maybe a not-so-full-race strategy?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I think we made a mistake by trying to predict rain at Indy. I suspect we're going to run the race as if it's going to be green. You can't really gamble on rain and yellows unless it's like a 100% sure thing. Even that, you can still dry the track and get going again.

It's all circumstantial.

DAVID MALUKAS: As of this morning, it looks okay.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, you can get more in trouble by trying to predict it. I think, like, nobody knows. Even if you're trying to hit for lap 60 or 90, 100, it just can come 10 minutes before or after, so yeah.

DAVID MALUKAS: Retweet (smiling).

**Q. Do each of you have a guy on the stand who is basically the designated meteorologist for the team?**

DAVID MALUKAS: I do, yeah.

ALEX PALOU: Yes.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Yes.

ALEX PALOU: Everybody does. They're normally wrong, but...

KYLE KIRKWOOD: They were very wrong at Indy.

ALEX PALOU: I think it's the software that they read that it's not great.

THE MODERATOR: Blame the software.

**Q. David and Kyle, since this is supposedly Alex's worst track, is this an opportunity to try to close that points gap for you?**

DAVID MALUKAS: I think any race would be that sort of scenario. Yeah, I mean, hopefully things play in our favor and we can close that gap.

I think no matter what race we go to, that's the goal, right? We want to try to close that gap and be there.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I guess we can't look at it directly like that. I would say yeah, maybe he has struggled here in the past, but he was also very good at Phoenix up until the incident.

We have to assume that the people we're trying to compete against are going to be just as good as us if not better. That's the mentality.

**Q. I believe in life, business, sports, your biggest competition is yourself. When you are out there, do you believe your biggest competition is yourself or the other two people sitting beside you?**

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, it starts with myself. If I do the best job that I have or I can, then you start comparing against others.

But yeah, it starts with yourself. If you cannot extract 100% from yourself or the car, you're competing against yourself. That's what I've been feeling here so far. Yeah, hopefully I'm trying to be at my best game and trying to beat the competition.

**Q. We're running more boost this year. The 1.3.**

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ALEX PALOU: Less.

**Q. They reduced downforce, too.**

ALEX PALOU: Yes. I don't know the exact number, but they've reduced both.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Keep Penske from blowing up right fronts (smiling).

**Q. David?**

DAVID MALUKAS: I don't know anything about that (smiling).

I don't know if that's fully the complete story there. I don't know. We tested here. We tried both tires. I was still pulling away.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Quite honestly, he was actually. He was really good. It was really frustrating (smiling).

Quite honestly the big right front tires brought back a lot of grip that we might have lost with the downforce. I think it's a good package. It raced well at Phoenix.

**Q. All three of you were fast at Phoenix. Do you expect to be fast here with that tire?**

DAVID MALUKAS: Yes. I mean, we tested in October. I thought the racing, obviously only two cars on track, I still think it's good.

Overall in the end it's to protect the tires. You don't want the tires going off. It's a safety issue. Mid race you don't want drivers doing that because it's a pretty unfortunate scenario.

I think the racing is going to be equal or even better.

**Q. David, this is the first time in your career that you're in a battle for the championship lead in the best equipment of your career. How do you manage that pressure?**

DAVID MALUKAS: I would just say it goes to almost the previous question for Palou where I am my worst critic, right? I think that pressure's always been on me. No matter what team, equipment or situation I'm in, I always put that pressure on myself.

Although it's different scenarios, that pressure maintains

equal throughout all my years of racing.

**Q. What about your driving style has made you such a threat at short ovals this season?**

DAVID MALUKAS: I would love to know that so I can actually put that into every other race. I don't really know. Yeah, I wish I knew. Maybe within a few years we'll figure it out.

**Q. This track is what I refer to as an egg-shaped track. If you have a setup on your car, it's not necessarily going to be good at both ends. What kind of choice do you make for your setup for the race?**

DAVID MALUKAS: I mean, you can get into a situation, you can choose between one and two or three and four or find a balance. We have tools in the car, roll bar, weight jacker. You can keep flipping it between the two sides of the track.

ALEX PALOU: What do you normally do?

DAVID MALUKAS: You can actually look at my on board footage.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Didn't have an on board last year.

DAVID MALUKAS: I'm saying this year. You can look.

ALEX PALOU: Good intel.

**Q. Kyle, what do they do at Andretti?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Am I going to tell you the setup stuff (laughter)?

There are two very different corners. One is high vertical, one is lateral. One is way faster than the other. Always trying to find a happy balance between the two.

**Q. David, you obviously said Detroit was one of your worst performances from a mental standpoint. What lessons did you learn from what went wrong last weekend?**

DAVID MALUKAS: I look at myself, 24 years old, I try my best to keep myself in a calm state of mind. I try my best to not let things really get to me because it does affect performance on track I've noticed for myself in previous years.

Detroit, certain moments, certain things didn't really go our way. I really let it get to me, when normally I try my best not to. I feel like I've done a good job of that up until

Detroit.

That's more of the mental reset, not letting little things kind of amplify, start affecting me, and letting that go into the performance.

**Q. David, the last couple weeks, heightened emotions after the 500, what process did you go through after that to process that and move on to what is a busy period of races?**

DAVID MALUKAS: It's pretty much after that, the night right after the 500, I just didn't sleep all night, just stared at a wall running different things of what I could have done differently.

Honestly after that one night, it was pretty much reset. I was already looking forward to Detroit and moving on from it.

It's a rule within the team, I think drivers, everybody in general, you don't want to be dwelling on previous races that much. You want to dwell on it enough to learn from it, but at that point we got to get back to work and get back to the next race.

THE MODERATOR: We'll leave it there for now. Have a great day today, even better day tomorrow.

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