

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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David Malukas

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: David Malukas joins us. It's his fourth front-row start of 2026, second one here at World Wide Technology Raceway. David's best finish here is second in 2022.

Some good mojo heading into tomorrow. Probably a little disappointment on the other side.

DAVID MALUKAS: No, not disappointed. I'm really happy with this crew. It was such a guessing game trying to figure out where this car needed to be. It's just the temperature change, everything was so drastic.

Just seeing my time compared to teammates', Kirkwood going out, it almost seemed the track was getting a lot better. We were very fortunate being the last ones to go out.

I had a strong feeling we weren't going to get it there because Palou was going last. I was saying it earlier, no matter what, if you were to go right now, everyone is going to go quicker and quicker.

I think for the situation to get P2 that was really good for us. A little unfortunate in the positioning, but overall the guys did a good job.

THE MODERATOR: What is it like when you have a great car behind you like that?

DAVID MALUKAS: It's the best feeling ever, right? In practice one, our car was nowhere near the window. New tires, downforce package, all that. Trying to figure out where we want to put it. Up until the last minute we're talking strategy, figuring out what we want to do.

When you go out there and see the past two hours, I'm eating lunch, shoving rice up, trying to figure everything out. Let's try to do this, maybe this, running simulations. Everything so last minute.

It's so cool that after all that hard work with all these guys, how many people it takes involved to get these minute little

details, you go out there and it all works perfectly. It's like, Wow, that wasn't all for nothing. That's awesome.

THE MODERATOR: Open it up for questions.

Q. David, a couple years ago when you were on the podium, you said, Oh, my God, they're Penskes. Now do you realize what they had when you were driving for another team?

DAVID MALUKAS: No, it is very cool. It all goes full circle. I always think back to that interview, thinking back to that moment.

I mean, it's a dream come true to be here. Super happy. We're starting in that P2 spot. We'll see what this race brings. Obviously it's an oval, yellows, all that stuff can happen. A little bit luck of the draw.

As long as we're in the right position, we have an opportunity for it.

Q. How much data from earlier today is useful with the temperature changes and all?

DAVID MALUKAS: For us it's absolutely nothing. That first practice was purely Q sims, trying to figure out where we want to put this car for qualifying. The guys did a fantastic job of putting the car where it needed to be.

This practice this evening is going to be our full race package. We thought there's no point to do any sort of racing in practice one since practice two is going to be at the exact same time for tomorrow.

Q. Of course, it's Alex Palou again that takes the pole over you. This time being much closer into a championship fight, is it at all frustrating that it's Palou that gets the pole again?

DAVID MALUKAS: No, it's not frustrating. Like I said, I think it's also circumstances, what I said earlier, in the order of when all the drivers are going. I actually feel very fortunate we were the third car to go. Obviously reverse order to go at the end. The earlier you went, I mean, it's



going to be a lot harder to go.

For me I feel fortunate. I think it's a really good result. There's a lot you can do from the front row.

Q. Gateway is your best track in your career. With Penske now, is this the most confidence you've ever felt coming into a race?

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, confidence is super high. I think confidence this season in all circuits has been really, really high. I always look back and thought Indy GP was my worst circuit. I end up getting my best result of the season so far there.

Everything is on a real high. Detroit was a bit of a stinker. The rest of the season has been good. We got all the bad luck, the bad juju out of the way. Now we're coming to one of my favorites, and I think we have a really good opportunity.

Q. When we were out there, Scott Dixon said if you polled all the drivers, 100% would want the hybrid out of the cars. Do you echo that sentiment?

DAVID MALUKAS: What did he say?

Q. They would all want the hybrids gone. Do you agree with that?

DAVID MALUKAS: I mean, yeah, I am in agreement to that. It's just it's a lot going on, right? Honestly, for me, in some ways it's fine because I grew up playing XBOX, PlayStation, all that. It's a lot of buttons on the steering wheel. I'm used to pushing a lot.

It does get really busy. For qualifying scenarios it's not that bad, but in racing, you're trying to pass a guy, have you weight jacker, you're doing the deployment. It's a lot. It is really busy. That's my take on it.

Q. Have you over the last few years ever been frustrated with the overall functionality of it?

DAVID MALUKAS: From my side, I've actually been very fortunate. I really haven't had a lot of issues with it. I know there's been drivers especially this season having failures and all that.

From my side, I've been fortunate. And not just this year, but ever since hybrids have been introduced, I never had issues. Early on when it was still learning the quirks of launching and all that stuff. Outside of that, it's been sweet sailing. From my side it's a little bit busy on the wheel.

THE MODERATOR: David, congratulations. See you on the front row tomorrow.

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