

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Alex Palou

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Alex Palou joins us in the No. 10 Honda Honda. First NTT P1 award here. 17th pole of Alex's young career. Alex's best finish here was a fourth in 2024.

Did you think you could to this today?

ALEX PALOU: Not this morning when I was here at the press conference earlier, no.

THE MODERATOR: What was the prediction this morning?

ALEX PALOU: You never know. You always want to think that you can make it. Like, that's always the mindset. Yeah, I was not really confident about it.

Like, we were shooting for always pole, but I think in my head was more like if it's great, we can be like top five, P1 or 5. If it's not, it could be like 12, which I think it happened last year or something.

Yeah, incredible.

THE MODERATOR: Was the track getting better?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I think so. I think that's what helped us as well, getting big lap. Yeah, you could see at the end suddenly I would say the last five or six cars, yeah, started going a lot faster.

THE MODERATOR: Open it up for questions.

Q. How helpful was it for you to see and get some of the data from the MSR cars and Scott as well?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, it's huge. It's always huge when you have the advantage of going last, not only because of track evolution but also just to see what your teammates do, especially Scott, but also the MSR cars.

I knew what they were running and what they said on the radio. Everybody can hear it, but nobody drives let's say

the same car.

I knew we were on a good place knowing how they went and what we were going to do.

Q. When we were out there Scott made a comment saying if you polled all the drivers, 100% of them would want the hybrids out. Do you agree with that?

ALEX PALOU: I mean, I cannot complain too much about how the hybrid has been to me, what it's done to my results. You never know if it's a hybrid or not.

I mean, yeah, would I prefer to have a V12? Yeah, absolutely. It's probably not what the manufacturers want, and it's not what people are buying on the street.

Yeah, I don't mind it. Obviously, as I said, I probably am the happiest driver with a hybrid. I'm not going to say that I want to get rid of it. I like it. I like it how it is.

I would keep the same car, same engine, same sticker, everything, for the next 15 years again. Probably nobody would like that (smiling). Maybe 10 more years I would take it.

Q. Is it fair to say that this pole is one where you actually overachieved?

ALEX PALOU: I think this pole, it actually means a lot more than what people might think. People might think it's just another pole. For me, means a lot.

Yeah, I've been preparing a lot for this race and for this qualifying. I'm very, very happy that it worked out.

Q. In a psychological kind of way, it drives a stake through the heart of your competition a little bit because, as you said, this was your weak track.

ALEX PALOU: Hopefully. I mean, yeah, I would love to. But I think although it's huge and I'm super pumped, it's incredible to be on pole, it's only a pole. Like, I wish it meant more, but it only means I'm going to be super happy going to sleep tonight. I have a fancy hat and another



point. Apart of that, that's it.

This track in particular, I think it's been the last 23 years or something I heard that nobody has won from pole, 20 years. I don't know. Yeah, it doesn't mean much, although I'm super happy and I wouldn't change it.

Q. You mentioned you'd like maybe a V12 in the future. Not realistic. But with F1 going to V8 in 2030, would you like to see INDYCAR make that decision?

ALEX PALOU: I don't really know much. I actually don't know more than you guys about the next car. I believe it's already set, so...

I think whatever I say, it doesn't change anything. In a perfect world I would really love to have an engine that it's super loud, that burns a lot of fuel, that it's tough to drive, with a lot more power, a lot less weight. That's what a dream car is for every racing driver.

So yeah, I mean, at the end of the day we will drive whatever.

Q. Talking about the downforce package with the slower speeds and more downforce, what was your take on that, how it might change the racing?

ALEX PALOU: I'm curious to see in practice on the final practice. I mean, in traffic I think that's when we're really going to see it. Honestly, qualifying was super fun just because you need to commit so much into turn one and two that actually feels that you are going a second faster instead of a second slower. It's actually super fun to drive. I think we need to see how it's going to behave in traffic.

I think it's going to be good, create more passing opportunities. I feel in watching the races that we had in the past two years, especially last year, it was already incredible. I think it's going to be a great show tomorrow.

Q. You mentioned the polesitter typically doesn't have an advantage here at Gateway. Talk about whether or not starting from the pole is an advantage for you.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, for sure it's a huge advantage for me. That doesn't mean anything for the end result of the race. Huge advantage. Normally, in a normal race start, you have an easier start. Even if you get shuffled in a little bit, you can still be in the top three, top five. It kind of makes your start of the race a little bit easier.

But then once the pit cycle goes, once you start getting through traffic, that's it. The pole let's say goes away. As soon as you stay behind traffic one more corner than the

guy that is chasing you, that's it, game over.

Q. Thinking about your career, I don't think you have a lot of night racing experience. What's your comfort level racing on an oval at night?

ALEX PALOU: I like it. I think it's actually been twice here with the delays and everything we've had. It's been probably, yeah, twice. Last year was night. Iowa, was it?

Q. Iowa.

ALEX PALOU: Then I think two or three years ago here, we actually had a rain delay, and it was at night.

I love it. I think it looks much better on TV. Not all the races, but a race like this, it looks incredible. As a driver as well, we're not used to seeing the sparks of the car, used to seeing the cars on the night. I think it's super fun to have it here.

Q. With the practice this morning, did you work on both your race setup and qualifying setup?

ALEX PALOU: Just qualifying.

Q. What do you expect from your car during the race setup you're going to get to practice now?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, we just did qualifying. I think majority of everyone just did qualifying. It's so tight. Now you have 50 minutes, by the time you do the install and stuff. We're the first car doing laps this morning because we wanted to get more chance, more laps, more feedback from the car.

I don't know what to expect honestly. I wish it felt the same way as qualifying. Again, you're going a lot slower. You're trying to make the tires last for 60, 65 laps. You have traffic, which you start having understeer, oversteer, understeer, oversteer. You start struggling with the car.

I don't know what to expect. Hopefully we can work a little bit on the high line on getting myself confident on the final practice.

It's a fast car for sure. Hopefully it's as fast at the race.

Q. What do you do with all the hats?

ALEX PALOU: So I always take it to my wife. She's the boss of the hats. She always keeps the poles and the wins. The rest we normally give it to, like, team or fans or whatever.

Yeah, the cool ones we keep them. They're pretty cool.
Like, you can tell it's from St. Louis, P1. They're pretty
tough to get.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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