

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Monday, June 8, 2026

**Christian Rasmussen**

**Marcus Ericsson**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are joined by the second- and third-place finishing drivers, Marcus Ericsson and Christian Rasmussen.

Marcus, best finish of the season. How badly did you want the top step?

MARCUS ERICSSON: No, it's definitely bittersweet after leading that many laps, having a great car underneath me. We drove all the way to the front, was feeling really good up front.

Josef is good around these tracks. He got track position on us at one of the stops. Yeah, it's just hard to get around him.

Bittersweet, but the Honda was great all night. Thought I drove really well. A good result for us. But yeah, of course you want that win when you're that close to it.

THE MODERATOR: Christian, congratulations. Is this maybe the beginning of a big turnaround?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: We've had a tough year. Feeling like we kind of had a win robbed from us back in Phoenix. Coming right back to an oval and kind of starting up where we finished off was a good feeling.

Yeah, I mean, like I think we had a third-place car today. I couldn't hang with those guys there at the end. I was super strong I would say later in the stints, and we didn't really have a lot of deg, but I just didn't have that ultimate pace.

Whenever we were all on kind of newer-ish tires, I couldn't hang. But again, very happy with a third-place finish here today. I think it's a good way to start building some momentum for the rest of the year.

THE MODERATOR: Open it up for questions.

**Q. Went through this two weeks ago, again rain played a big factor. What is it like for three hours trying to guess the weather?**

MARCUS ERICSSON: I mean, you just deal with what you're dealt. You can't really think about it. I think the tough part is when you drive, you're locked in, pushing out there, then you have to sit and wait in pit lane, go out and drive again, sit and wait in pit lane. The on-and-off sequence I think is the worst part. You want to get on with the race.

I think we got in all the laps. Bit of a late night, but we got it in.

**Q. What makes Josef so great at this track?**

MARCUS ERICSSON: I mean, that's the million dollar question, right? He's been the guy on these tracks the last 10 years.

Actually I did a lot of studying of him this week leading up to this place, studying a lot of video, analyzing together with my spotter Bob. We did a lot of work leading up to this weekend just really trying to see what we could do to improve our performance.

Of course, the 28 crew did a great job giving me a car so I can drive it the way I want. It would have been nice to beat him, but he was a little bit too strong in the end.

**Q. Christian, what does it mean to you to get this podium finish?**

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Yeah, we've had a tough start to the year, a tough month of May, for sure. We've always been very strong on the short ovals. Coming back and doing what we did here today is a good feeling.

**Q. Christian, when you were having that battle with Josef, did it burn up your tires a little bit? Was that pretty much the ultimate thing?**

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: No. I mean, he was faster than me. I tried to hold it as much as I could. I just didn't



have that pace. I don't think it had anything to do with me burning up my tires or anything else. Once he got by, he kind of took off.

Yeah, again, he was right on my ass. Yeah, sorry (smiling). Yeah, he was quicker than me.

**Q. Marcus, big picture, there's been some times where joining Andretti hasn't gone as well as you thought, or as many of us thought, so how important is this?**

MARCUS ERICSSON: Very important. I think this year has been a big turnaround. We've had two DNF's out of our control, Long Beach and Indy GP, when we should have been in the top 10, top six in those two races. I feel like every track we've been to we've been strong. Done a lot of work this winter. I have a new group of people on my car. They've really worked hard to try to get the car a bit more to my liking.

We have a new damper guy in Michael, a fellow Swede, who has worked really hard to get that package more to my liking. That has been paying off. I feel like I have been driving at my best for sure in my Andretti time this year. It's starting to pay off, as well.

I think Indy 500 we were putting ourselves in a position to fight for that as well until the end with the different strategies.

Again, we come to this short oval, which has been tough for me with Andretti cars. Suddenly we're fighting with the best guys on these type of tracks.

It's important. It shows again that hard work pays off. Yeah, it makes me excited for the rest of the year.

**Q. Marcus, your most dominant day. To not get a win, are you happy you...**

MARCUS ERICSSON: It's bittersweet, for sure. We're here to win. It's been a while for me. Yeah, I thought I had it at times there when we had track position. I felt like no one could really overtake me.

Yeah, that one pit sequence Josef got around us. We had a couple of go's at him after that, but he was a bit too strong up front.

Yeah, it's bittersweet, but I'm really proud of the 28 crew and my performance. I think I drove my everything out there. I was really driving well.

Like I said, this whole year feels like we've really been making big progress, I've been making big progress.

Finally I'm feeling confident in the car on all types of tracks, road courses, street courses, superspeedways, and now short ovals. That's been a big step for me and the Andretti team this year, so that makes me excited for the rest of the year.

Back to your question, it's tough to lead 115 laps and miss out.

**Q. Christian, on the last sequence you were a groove above everybody else. Was that by choice or what the car was giving you at the time?**

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: That's what the car was giving me the whole race. I tried to run down low starting the race. Man, the car was just so tight that I couldn't turn. I got chewed up like by everyone out of turn two. I was like, Well, got to try and fix this.

Moved the car up the track a little bit and it worked a lot better. Then the side product of that is you can kind of pass cars up there. That's when we started moving forward. Yeah, that's where the car was happy.

I was kind of forced to do that. Even when Marcus was coming up behind me, I could see that he was running the low line on the exit of two. I wanted to do that as well, to try and take some air off his wing. That would set me up even worse because I was dead slow down there.

I was kind of forced to the high line the whole race. But man, it worked out all right.

**Q. You signed a new contract with ECR this week. How great is it to reward them right off the bat?**

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Yeah, that's what I'm here to do.

**Q. Christian, over the last two years you've been having to come from the back to the front to get these podium results. As a driver, how do you manage to try to get through traffic while trying to gain position?**

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Well, all of those things is kind of what it takes to make it up to the podium positions, right? No matter what you want to be able to move forward on a short oval. I think if you can run and put the car kind of wherever the car in front of you is not driving, you're in a pretty good spot.

Obviously we are not qualifying as well as we want to. We're ever so slightly missing the balance in qualifying. We need to do some work to try and improve that so we don't have to make it that hard on ourselves every single

time.

But it's also good to know that when we are in this position, we do have a tough qualifying, that we can still get away with these results.

**Q. Early on in the race, both of you guys made up the most positions. Talk about how essential it is...**

MARCUS ERICSSON: The start of the race is when you have the biggest opportunity, right? Everyone is bunched up. Everyone is a bit cautious I feel like. That's where I felt my car was great. I felt like the high line was working well. I was rolling that all night really a bit like Christian. Especially in the beginning, I was going through from 12th to the lead in those first 30, 40 laps.

It was fun. A lot of fun.

**Q. Your thoughts on this downforce package that they brought here?**

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I was a little skeptical going into it. I think it raced better than I thought it would. I think last year raced better than this year, is my view on it.

**Q. Marcus?**

MARCUS ERICSSON: I was not great last year, so I think this is better (smiling).

**Q. Marcus, you talked about in the off-season how you've been working with the mental coach. What were your thoughts sitting in the cockpit when the first rain delay came, then the second one?**

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, no, it's tough. Especially when you're in that zone, you're performing well, feeling good in the car, then you get those breaks. You jump out of the car, it's just a bit weird. You just want to get on with it and keep racing. It's a bit of a challenge.

Seems to be every time I'm doing well in INDYCAR, a lot of red flags involved. Seems to be a trend. I might handle that better than some others (smiling).

**Q. How difficult is it to keep that mental edge when you're underneath the red flags for conditions?**

MARCUS ERICSSON: I mean, you just have to deal with it, right? It becomes a long night, for sure. Yeah, I mean, you just stay in your zone and stay focused. It's not much else you can do, right?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Hey, man, a great time to get

some hydration in.

**Q. Christian, the save in turn three, what happened?**

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: That was pretty big. I remember the save, but I think I got a little too close to the car in front. I was kind of wanting to add wing to the car the whole race, but I was very limited by the entries into both turn one and turn three, but still had a decent amount of understeer kind of like mid to exit on both ends.

I wanted to keep adding wing, but I was just so limited. Whenever I was close to cars, that definitely upset the rear a little bit more. I think I just got up a little bit too close to a car, yeah, got loose on entry and lost it.

**Q. Marcus, do you walk away from this weekend frustrated that you could have got the win or happy that you got a great result?**

MARCUS ERICSSON: Both. I think, like I said, when you lead almost half the race, then you drive away from mid pack to the lead on pure pace, you want to win the race of course.

These races are tough to win. There's a lot of good cars and drivers out there. I felt like we maximized today. I felt like we did everything right. One of those things, one pit sequence, he got the jump on us. That's what happens.

I think the 28 crew did a great job. Good stops all night, good strategy. I don't see we could have done much different. You have to be happy and proud with that. It was a great result. We put on a great show. We'll just work a bit harder to beat him next time.

**Q. Qualifying 12th, finding that pace, what was found...**

MARCUS ERICSSON: Qualifying is always a bit different, right? I felt like my race car was pretty good in practice two last night. I felt like we made some big strides on the car in general this year, like I said. It's just starting to pay off more and more. I get more confident in the car on all types of tracks. That's been huge.

That confidence builds with good weekends, good results. It was nice to sort of, yeah, finish off on the podium today, even though we were close to a win.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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