

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Friday, June 19, 2026

## Marcus Armstrong

## Pato O'Ward

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Marcus Armstrong. Sunday will be his fourth start here at Road America. Best finish of fifth. Two top fives this season. Quickest in the session today. It was a Meyer Shank Racing sweep 1-2.

Thanks for coming up. Know you're not feeling well. Nice start to the weekend for you?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Is that because I disclosed it on TV?

THE MODERATOR: Now everyone knows.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: I was only trying to be charming.

But good, yeah, we were fast right out the gate. That's the main thing. I don't think we strung together a perfect lap. I thought the following lap was going to be a little spicier.

Yeah, I feel pretty confident around here. It's good to be back on a road course. It reminds me a bit of Spa in Europe, this circuit. Somewhere that I'm very well familiar with.

I don't know. It's cool. It's nice and smooth. Seems like the tire is a bit better this year, too. It's been fun out there today.

THE MODERATOR: Pato O'Ward joins us. Ninth start here at Road America. My how time flies. Pato has six top fives this season.

A bit off at Canada corner there. Adventurous?

PATO O'WARD: Yeah, had a very good first run today, then everything else from there kind of went downhill. Yeah, need to figure out where we went wrong. We didn't really change much, apart from tires. That seemed to be pretty unhappy for us.

Yeah, maybe we just missed it there with pressures or something.

THE MODERATOR: Still fourth quick, though.

PATO O'WARD: Yeah, yeah. You were better on the reds? I feel like it was very hit or miss for people. Some people were much faster on the black. I was one of those. So yeah...

THE MODERATOR: Open it up for questions.

**Q. Marcus, the fact Felix is right there behind you shows the whole team effort is pretty good. How much does that boost your confidence for tomorrow and the rest of the weekend?**

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Yeah, it's always nice to be good in practice, but obviously it's a worry when you're quick in practice. I don't know, sometimes, like he just said, the reds don't work one day, then they do the next. Sometimes it can be the opposite.

But yeah, I feel happy that Felix is up there, too. Also Alex. I suppose all the Ganassi cars were quick today. I think we have a good, strong package this weekend.

**Q. Pato, a lot of times on street courses we get that tight, confined street course like Detroit. Here it's wide open. How much do you like that aspect of Road America?**

PATO O'WARD: It's a great track. It's a beautiful facility. Also the fans are super, super excited to see us come here every single year. It really is a track that is a joy to drive.

It races well. It obviously is a very rewarding track in qualifying, as well. Always happy to come back.

**Q. Do you think the cooler conditions are kind of making the tire wear a little bit wonky? Do you think that plays into it?**

PATO O'WARD: Weather's beautiful. Obviously the heat will usually make them a little bit unhappier, I would say, on



a long run. It's hard to say because I don't think anyone really got a long run in.

Tough to say for that aspect.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: You say 'wonky'?

**Q. Where the reds are kind of like terrible but it could be a black race come Sunday.**

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Well, when it's cold, clearly the tire will stay at a decent temperature from an ambient point of view. You're also going faster, so you're generating more energy. It could be the opposite sometimes. We see that at Thermal, sometimes the tire wear is better when it's really hot.

We'll see. It seems pretty deggy out there, to be honest. Doesn't seem like it's going to be so straightforward. But that's just my perception.

**Q. The hybrid being turned down a little bit 'cause of reliability issues, do you think that's going to change anything? Is it just a positive or negative for y'all?**

PATO O'WARD: I don't think it's going to change. I tested here a week ago. It was with the other energies. Yeah, I didn't notice the energy. I think in lap time sensitivity it's less than half a 10th. I don't think it really does anything.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: I agree. Tiny, tiny difference.

**Q. Marcus, you have come on really strong here the last few weeks. Is it something that clicked with the team or have you felt this strong all season and now you're starting to get the results?**

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Well, I mean, fundamentally we have a good car, right? I feel like we've had the potential to do some cool things this year. Unfortunately for one reason or another it hasn't always come together. Like even from St. Pete I thought we had a strong car, a good chance for a podium. It's been like that for the majority of the races really.

I feel like the car has been extremely strong on road courses this year. On short ovals we've managed to salvage some results, but it hasn't always been the easiest.

Yeah, hopefully this weekend we can kind of string it together.

**Q. Sunday maybe a chance of rain. What does that do for preparation?**

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Just watch the on board from two years ago. It was raining here in quallies, yeah.

PATO O'WARD: Yeah, I think it would make things interesting (smiling).

**Q. In general, what do you take out of basically a third of race worth of laps that you got in the first practice, knowing you got another practice, qualifying? What do you take out of this?**

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Well, I feel like it is valuable clearly. By the time you get to Sunday, you're so dialed in. Frankly, I feel very dialed it from the very first laps here.

I've always thought it would be quite cool if we sort of went, like, short practice straight into quallie sort of thing because you have less time to adjust as a driver and less time to find a setup as a team. I feel like it would be quite interesting that way.

PATO O'WARD: Like a NASCAR-esque...

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: In Europe in Formula 2, you do, like, four laps before qualifying. You essentially need to be on it. I like that, so...

PATO O'WARD: Pretty cool.

**Q. Pato, what do you take out of this or read out of the results?**

PATO O'WARD: Just guidance of where we want to go for qualifying. Just kind of getting a read on what the alternate's going to do. Yeah, the nature of INDYCAR is you get surprised. You get surprised. What you felt in practice one, practice two, is completely different sometimes. You're like, Why? Sometimes it is just a very smooth weekend.

Yeah, whatever it is going to be we're going to try to maximize it.

**Q. Pato, do you feel like you got a lot out of the testing?**

PATO O'WARD: Yeah. Test days are usually super helpful, especially close to a weekend because you get somewhat similar weather to what you're going to get. That's always a very good opportunity to extend your weekend and make it that much better.

Hopefully we can get all three cars on a really strong program.

**Q. Marcus, you didn't take part in that testing. Do you feel you missed anything?**

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MARCUS ARMSTRONG: No, I don't think that we're on the back foot. Like I said, I was pretty comfy from the first lap. That is also because we have a good car.

Yeah, I don't feel like we missed anything.

**Q. Marcus, throughout this midway point of the season, how would you grade the year you've had?**

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: That's a tough question, isn't it? I don't know. That's not for me to say. Maybe a C. I don't know.

PATO O'WARD: C's get degrees, my boy (smiling).

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: I don't know. Certainly hasn't been an A.

What are you trying to say? What does that mean?

PATO O'WARD: That's all I needed in school.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: You didn't go to school.

PATO O'WARD: I went to school. I didn't finish (laughter).

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Neither did I, bro. It's fine.

**Q. With you being in this contract year, what does it need to go from a C to an A?**

PATO O'WARD: Contract year?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Contract year. What was your question, sir?

PATO O'WARD: He said 'contract year'.

**Q. What does it need for you to get from a C to an A?**

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Win a race. That would be pretty cool. Qualify pole. Lap everyone. I don't know. Do what Palou does every weekend. That would help.

I mean, what do you reckon? What would make me go from a C to an A? Less interviews maybe (smiling).

PATO O'WARD: Yeah, I think a win will get you there.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: There you go.

THE MODERATOR: Guys, thank you.

