

NTT INDY NXT SERIES

News Conference

Saturday, June 20, 2026

Lochie Hughes

Josh Pierson

Alessandro de Tullio

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Josh Pierson started fifth this afternoon. Best finish of the season. Second podium of the year. Of course, that big pass at Canada Corner on the last lap, we'll talk about that in a second.

Alessandro de Tullio, third podium of the season.

Josh, your thoughts on another podium for you and maybe talk us through that pass.

JOSH PIERSON: Yeah, obviously really happy to walk away with another podium, especially for this Andretti Global crew. My 29 guys have worked so hard. I feel like our start of the year was really rocky. We were trying to build momentum and just trying to get that first result, trying to really get things moving. Super happy for the guys, happy with the result.

For the last lap, I was managing push to pass. I was getting updated on what Ale had. I knew I had used quite a bit from the restarts, was just looking to try to get something going. I was better out of the Carrousel. That is where I could get some runs. I'm going to save everything for one final shot, see what I can do.

I didn't initially think the run and the drive-off wasn't super great. I wasn't sure I was going to quite get there. The pull towards the end was incredible. Was able to get alongside, really lay on the brakes, fully locked on the rears.

I know Ale is disappointed, didn't think it was super fair. I tried to leave him space, but I was locked up. The nose is pointed there anyways to the apex. Managed to get it stopped, rolled through. It was an incredible way to finish a race that I think had quite a bit of action.

THE MODERATOR: Ale, started from pole, led eight laps. The beauty of a weekend like this, you have another

chance at it tomorrow. What did you learn today that you can apply to race two?

ALESSANDRO de TULLIO: I learned there's a lot of safety cars around here. It was rough. The track was so dirty. It was really dirty everywhere from all the stuff that was going on behind.

I just didn't have the grip on that last restart that I was in the lead. Just got on the gas, was sideways. Lochie had the run into one. They were really fast today. I think they were in this race on another level compared to us. They were able to follow.

Josh was able to follow in the Carrousel, actually catch me quite a lot in there. I was losing three, four car lengths around the Carrousel. Struggled with the fronts.

Like Josh said, always get a run out there. Lost position at the end, which is really frustrating.

THE MODERATOR: Can you make any changes to the car that might help in that regard?

ALESSANDRO de TULLIO: Yeah, I think we have to see, like, how the track develops, INDYCAR going on track. It also depends on how the race goes. If it goes like today, there's going to be a big a big lack of grip because there's grass everywhere.

We need to analyze and see what we do for tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.

Q. Alessandro, the restart where you're leading and lost it, what more could you have done in that moment? Is Road America the most technical road course you've driven in your career?

ALESSANDRO de TULLIO: I wouldn't say the most technical, no. I think there's more technical places. There's definitely a lot to gain and a lot to lose because it's such a long lap.

That restart, I just didn't have grip. Got on the gas and just



broke the traction, struggled through 14. Lochie had a big run, did a good move in turn one. I couldn't really do much.

So yeah, that's pretty much it.

Q. So many poles in your rookie year. How frustrating is it that those aren't translating into victories on race day?

ALESSANDRO de TULLIO: Also we haven't had much of an opportunity to test the race car. We've always not made the first lap.

I think today was just a day that we weren't as strong as these boys in the race. They seemed to have a better balance, especially when following.

Yeah, it's frustrating to not convert this one. At least we finished the race, got good points. We have to take that as the positive.

THE MODERATOR: Lochie, congratulations. Congratulations to Andretti Global, 100 wins all time now for INDY NXT. First win of the season for Lochie. Third career win. Seventh different winner in 2026 for INDY NXT by Firestone.

Talk us through the win, maybe more importantly the pass for the lead on the restart.

LOCHIE HUGHES: Yeah, I mean, about time (smiling). Yeah, no, honestly it was pretty frustrating with quallie this morning. I don't know what it is lately, the quallies are so short, we can never get it right over the 10 minutes that we have. I knew we were going to be quick in the race.

Kind of got a bit sendy there in turn one at the start. Yeah, on Ale, as well. I didn't really expect the run I had. Yeah, I was kind of more thinking about defending from Nannani behind me. I started getting this big run, thought why not go for it. I kind of came out of turn one, I was like, Oh. I can't say the word, but yeah, I'm in the lead (smiling).

Yeah, from then on was a bit tricky. The restarts have been difficult. The track felt very slippery. The restart was hard.

Like the first restart you did, you missed the corner completely.

ALESSANDRO de TULLIO: The one you got me, as well.

LOCHIE HUGHES: The track was definitely a lot trickier out there than it was in qualifying. Yeah, I guess I'm just relieved.

THE MODERATOR: More questions.

Q. You had a great battle here at Road America last year. Were you able to take any lessons from managing that race last year?

LOCHIE HUGHES: No, I don't think so. This year, like, the car, the tire, a lot of stuff just feels different than it was last year. But Josh and I were joking around about it before the race, saying like I stole his podium last year (smiling).

Yeah, no, honestly it's so different year to year. The track feels so different than it did last year, as well. It's nowhere near as hot.

Yeah, I mean, I learned a couple things following him first 17 laps which I think may have helped me following Ale. Yeah...

JOSH PIERSON: From my side, I feel like I kind of echo Lochie's comments. With a new gearbox, this place with colder temperatures, it can really come alive.

The track also for this race, Ale touched on it, it was really hard to drive. It was really greasy off line. There's one groove, if you could get slotted in the right position, you could get a run. It was a fine line, fine margin.

Hard to take away a lot from that race. What I got more out of that is race craft. I really had to defend that race. With myself defending, with Lochie constantly on attack, I learned a lot about managing the race in general here, especially when it can get really hectic.

Hard to take a lot away in terms of the actual driving style of the car or big racing side from push to pass management, stuff like that.

Q. After your results last year, some people thought 2026 was a must-win championship for each of you. How do you think this helps you reach that goal?

LOCHIE HUGHES: I think there's seven different winners this year. Honestly I feel like since Indy, I've been really quick. I should have won Indy race one. Detroit, like, I should have been on pole if I didn't stuff up. Obviously I did stuff up. Then the race was a blank.

Gateway we poled it. We've been really quick in recent races. It's like the first few races of the season we really struggled. It's just been hard. Kind of when you're on the back foot, things seem to get a bit worse.

It's nice starting to get some momentum. But yeah, I think for sure anything's possible the rest of the season.

JOSH PIERSON: Yeah, it's been tough for me. Obviously it's been very, very up and down. I really wanted to get some momentum going, especially in the early parts there when things didn't seem to go our way or I was doing it to myself. A combination of those two things wasn't really helping me.

In terms of the championship, I think this series is so unpredictable, especially this year. It's so competitive. Everybody is so fast. You're going to be fighting for everything. Somebody's going to make a mistake eventually, somebody will go off. It's super competitive. It's really tight. You just don't know until it's over.

Hard to say how easy it is to make a championship comeback, especially with how the start of my year went. For me it's about focusing on good, consistent results. As long as I can keep finishing in the top five, I would like a pole position and race win. More to prove to myself that I can do that.

Rocky start, but momentum is a big thing, especially in a championship like this that is so competitive and close, anything can happen.

Q. Lochie, you said on the broadcast this was the most frustrating year of your career, yet now this win. How much does this win flip the script on this year for you and boost your confidence?

LOCHIE HUGHES: I knew the win was just a matter of, like, putting it together. It was just a matter of it's going to come. We just struggled to kind of put all the pieces together.

But I'd say, yeah, like the worst start of my career since I was in go-karts. Every year I've been in the U.S., every category I've won and finished top three in the championship.

This year has been a bit different. Honestly, some of the stuff I learnt last year didn't really translate to the way the car is this year. So I just kind of had to unlearn some things and then I lost some confidence in myself, kind of went down that spiral.

No, this is good to kind of be back where we belong. All of us really need to be getting good, solid points finishes. I think it was a good day for all three of us, to be honest.

Q. Win 100 for Andretti Global, how much does that mean to you?

LOCHIE HUGHES: Yeah, it's awesome. It shows the success they've had over Indy Lights, then into INDY NXT timeline. It's a pretty amazing accomplishment. I'm sure if they all stick around, there will probably be another hundred.

Q. Ale, I want to ask about qualifying. You said before you've not necessarily always been there in practice, you manage to turn things around for qualifying. What do you tend to find between practice and qualifying that is allowing you to be on this run?

ALESSANDRO de TULLIO: Not sure to be honest. I don't know how to answer to that (smiling).

LOCHIE HUGHES: Answer it.

JOSH PIERSON: We're all ears over here (smiling).

ALESSANDRO de TULLIO: I work on myself and I push hard in quallie (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: Guys, congratulations.

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