

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Tuesday, July 14, 2026

Marcus Armstrong

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We're here ready to go with Marcus Armstrong. It's going to be, as you know, a big weekend as the NTT INDYCAR Series returns to Nashville Superspeedway for the Borchetta Bourbon Music City Grand Prix presented by Only Bulls. Pre-race coverage begins at 4:30 p.m. eastern on FS1 with coverage of the 300-lap race beginning on FOX as soon as their coverage of the World Cup final concludes on FOX.

Our guest today has become a big factor on ovals here in 2026, finishing fifth at Phoenix Raceway and also at Indianapolis Motor Speedway and the Indianapolis 500 presented by Gainbridge. Overall, he has the sixth most points on ovals this season.

This weekend he returns to the Nashville oval, where he finished seventh back in 2024. He drives the No. 60 Meyer Shank Racing with Curb-Agajanian Honda, just inked a new contract extension a couple weeks ago, we welcome in Marcus Armstrong. Thank you for doing this.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Thank you for having me. It's quite the introduction, Dave.

THE MODERATOR: Did you like that?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Yeah, you nailed it. Quite a mouthful.

THE MODERATOR: You ought to be walking through some curtains now.

Hey, anyway, to your point, a lot of success on ovals this season. A couple years ago, I wonder how that would have gone. Obviously you would have been pleased with that. How has that evolved over the last couple years, your impression of ovals and your mastery, as you continue to be a master of it, but just your transition over the ovals the last couple years?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Yes, I mean, this place is pretty cool. Initially I was a little disappointed we were going away from downtown Nashville, but I would say that this

has been one of my favorite tracks. It's fast and quite a tricky place to master. We've had strong cars there, so naturally you enjoy it a lot when you have a quick car there.

The racing itself is very, I would say fun, for lack of a better word. It's cool, side by side. This year we're actually, for whatever reason, removing some downforce. It's obviously a series mandate, which I don't agree with, but I feel like the racing there is always good side-by-side action, especially after a high-line session.

So I feel like this place in particular has been one of my favorites, but ovals in general, I don't know how many ovals I've done, not many, but every single oval I feel like I'm getting better. Maybe I've done as many ovals as Dixon has done 500s perhaps; I'm not sure.

Yeah, it's a cool dynamic because we're certainly fighting at the pointy end, and this weekend we could do some magic.

THE MODERATOR: As if that wasn't enough, as you mentioned, a lot of action always at Nashville, alternate tires come into it, some strategy as well. So it really should be a good race on Sunday, right?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: It should be a good race. Whenever we have 130 KPA on a speedway, it's kind of like 130 burst, let's say, it's always close and about momentum. We're always very close to each other.

I hope that the less downforce that we have this year isn't going to affect the racing negatively because just like Gateway we actually took off downforce, and we took away power, and I felt like that -- the race was still good, but the year before was clearly better. So I feel like the more downforce, the better on ovals like this.

But in saying that, the conditions being hot and as sort of a high line sort of day, I feel like it could be very entertaining.

Q. Obviously as Dave mentioned, you signed a new contract with Meyer Shank Racing the past couple of weeks. Wanted to get your thoughts as to why you signed a new deal with the team, especially

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considering there are so many seats up for grabs next season.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Why I signed it? Well, it's a fantastic team, and that's obviously where I've been the last two years, and I'm very happy with where I am and the situation that I've found myself in.

And of course I'm very grateful for the opportunity; there's no doubt about it. We have all the ingredients to go out there and win. We have shown that. And even if you look at the statistics this year, I feel like we've had a strong car in every single circuit really, maybe apart from Mid-Ohio frankly.

But the 500, Felix won it and I was fifth. So I feel like, as a unit, as a team, we're in a strong position, and like I said, we're only getting better. We've got a young engineering corps. My engineers, frankly, are not much older than I am, so we're all getting better together, and it's going to be fun.

Q. Just given the fact you have the alliance with Ganassi Racing, once Scott was announced to leave that you were maybe considered to be given that seat. Was that a seat you were interested in moving to, or was there an opportunity or Chip was looking for you as one of the drivers for that seat?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Obviously I've driven for Chip, so obviously there was a line of communication, but ultimately Chip calls the shots. But ultimately, very, very happy where I am. That's the point.

Q. Marcus, I'm curious with this floating starting time, do you believe track conditions would change much whether you start at around 4:30 local versus maybe 5:30 local?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: It makes a big difference. We were talking about that about one hour ago because I hope it doesn't go to overtime. I hope England wins and we can all have a beer and chill.

At Gateway it was hot, obviously, in FP1 qually and the high-line session, and then the sun went down about a quarter of the way into free practice 2. I think it negatively impacted our car. But it changed the standings quite a lot with that just difference in ambient and track temperature. I mean, it's so generic, but you'd be amazed by how much these cars change with a spot of different ambient temps.

We'll see what we find. I don't know what time the sun goes down there, but I think it's going to be very hot. So hopefully it's just stable and doesn't have too much of an

impact.

Q. It goes down around 8:00 p.m. local, so I think the race would be over no matter what. I'm curious, I don't know exactly everything you can change in the minutes leading up before the race, but would you -- are you going to be able to change anything, like if it is a later start, or do you just have to guess when the game's going to finish and make your setup by that?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: I don't think we're going to be changing things really late in the day. We're going to hopefully have a strong car throughout -- well, actually, we have warmup that is quite late. We have free practice 2 very late. So we will have a good idea what the ambient temps are going to do, but we're just going to make our best call. We're not going to try and be too tricky with it because that's when things start to go wrong.

We'll just nail the basics and do those right.

THE MODERATOR: Marcus, we did some research. 16 starts on ovals, 10 top 10s in those 16 starts. Unfortunately, that's still really shy of what your pal Scott Dixon has done on the Indianapolis 500 oval. So you've got a long way to go, young man, before that happens.

Q. I spoke with Helio after the 500, directly after that, and he had so much praise for you and how you conducted yourself and everything. I wondered, that relationship with Helio within the MSR team on a day-to-day basis, is he in a mentor role with you, like say Dario was at CGR? How does that play itself out?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Helio is very much a good friend now. He is obviously a mentor, and we talk about racing stuff, but oftentimes we don't talk about racing stuff, and that's just the nature of our relationship. He's just a good friend, good guy. He's like a 20-year-old in a -- I don't know how old he is, 50-, 52-, whatever-year-old body.

During the month of May, we obviously talk a lot about the car, and he has a lot of experience. He certainly doesn't overcomplicate it, which is a different dynamic because for whatever reason certainly my side of the engineering office are fantastic at over-intellectualizing the thing, and he's very simple and drive-it-fast sort of guy. So he is very helpful in that sense. But I would consider him mostly a friend.

Q. And then just quickly too, I heard Mike Shank the other day talking about various things and how important personally car No. 60 is for him, and that's a number he had for many, many years, and you're moving from the 66 to 60 next year. Is that a

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fundamentally special thing, knowing how important that number is to Mike and what it means to him?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Yes, it is obviously -- you know, the perception is that it's, I suppose, the team car, but if I'm honest, it's business as usual. Like I'm going to win with the 66 or the 60; that's my mindset.

I've actually -- you know, obviously we're changing the numbers, but I've specifically requested to keep the guys that I work with now, the guys and girls, because they're just such a great group of people, and crew chief Jimmy Looper is a big component of that. Everybody, they're just a good bunch of guys, so I've asked to keep them all together.

We'll obviously see what the situation brings. Obviously Mike and MSR aren't doing IMSA next year, so there's going to be a lot of great people about inside the team. So we'll see how the team is stacked. But I'm very happy with how it is at the moment.

Q. Very quickly, the race this year at Nashville, longer than it's been in the past. I think it's 300 or nearly 400 miles this year. Is that going to make a difference overall in how this race plays itself out?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: It's going to be a long one. It's going to be a long race. It's like 400 miles, 399.5 miles of racing actually. So it is a long day in the office, and it's also going to be warm. The team have asked me if I want my cold suit. The answer is no, and we're just going to crack on and be there at the end because it's easy to get carried away on a short oval and be silly.

So we're going to be there at the end and hopefully fight for a win.

THE MODERATOR: By the way, Marcus, Helio is 51. Don't age him any more than he already is.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: I said he seems like a 20-year-old in a 50-something-year-old body.

THE MODERATOR: Both things can be true. That's right.

Q. Talk about the challenges of driving nearly 400 miles on a high-speed short oval.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Besides the obvious heat factor, there's a lot of load being put on your body that's not being put on your body at a place like Indy Motor Speedway, just because of the angle of the track. I think it's 14 degrees of angle. You're just generating a lot of force through your body. So it is quite physically demanding in that sense.

Even if you're just driving around and you don't even realize it, your heart rate is quite elevated.

Obviously the longer the race, the more energy you're burning. So by the end of it, depending on how high your heart rate is for the whole race, it could be a good 2,000-calorie workout, which is nothing to Scott Dixon. He does that just before breakfast. But for the rest of us, it's a big day in the office. So it's going to be fun.

Q. Speaking of that with the heat, how do you plan to hydrate and make sure you can make it through that entire race without suffering?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Well, ultimately I don't think I'm going to suffer. We train for this sort of thing. We train for this distance.

Yeah, I mean, hydration will be a big thing considering the day before it's a long day because we start at 9:00 essentially with practice, and we finish at I think it's 7:00 p.m. It's a long day prior, which means we're going to be sweating and whatnot. I mean, it's not rocket science. Just drink water and use electrolytes as I feel.

Q. You are sixth in the standings, just kind of overall on points scored on ovals, and you've had pretty good results thus far on oval tracks we visited this year. What do you think it is that just kind of speaks to you and your strengths when it comes to oval tracks?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Well, it's funny you say that because I remember two years ago the big thing was how am I going to adapt to an oval. I think Dave would have asked me that no less than 85 times at my first media day.

Number one, strong car. That is the fundamental piece of the puzzle that we have. I have strong teammates as well. So we're all kind of pushing towards the same goal. But I also enjoy it; that's the thing. I mean, I enjoy street courses and road courses too. It's like I grew up doing that. Certainly on an oval, it's a lot about momentum. It's almost like going back to karting because you're playing with momentum, and you're being very intuitive.

I feel like -- I actually joked at the start of the year that my first win would be on an oval, but I'm sort of contradicting myself because I also thought my first win was going to be at Road America. Either way, I feel very confident for this weekend.

Q. Kind of speaking on that first win, you've come pretty agonizingly close a couple of times, including leading some laps at the 500 this year before we had that absolutely wild last lap shootout. With the kind of

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momentum we've had with those positive results, do you think this weekend would possibly be that first win and you wouldn't contradict yourself with having your first win on an oval?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Somehow I would be pissed off if I was leading on lap 225 because that's the distance of the race last year. So we need to be leading on lap 300. Now, we're going to do our very best to do that. We always have a game plan leading into the weekend, but as I said, ovals, we've had a strong package so far this year.

We need to nail everything. We need to be on top of the little things.

Like at Gateway we let a very strong weekend slip away, just with a few things that weren't ideal on strategy and whatnot, but this weekend we just need to be patient as well because it's such a long race. It's going to be -- the order on lap 1 will be completely different by lap 150 and totally different again by 300. That's just the nature of short oval racing.

Q. Just kind of in general, where do you feel like you are right now in the series in 2026 as compared to your debut back in 2023?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Where do I think I am? In what sense?

Q. Just kind of how do you think you've grown so far? What have you gotten better at? What do you think you still need to work on?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: That's a good question. 2023 I was just fresh out of Europe, where the whole thing is about tires, tires, tires, tire saving, blah, blah. This is certainly more -- I think I've grown a lot technically in terms of understanding the car and from an engineering point of view.

INDYCAR, it exposes every single weakness you have as a driver, whether that be over one lap in qualifying, racing, fuel saving, technically with the engineers, you name it. It exposes that weakness and makes it very blatant. When there's a torch being shone on it, you certainly become aware and work on it.

I'm lucky to have such a good team around me where we give each other the appropriate amount of shite and help each other learn.

THE MODERATOR: That is the beauty of the championship, right? Ovals, street circuits, road courses -- you've got to be good to win the championship.

By the way, Marcus, I only asked you about it 76 times, not 82, just so you know.

Q. You've been pretty close to getting that maiden win this year, and it's evaded you in quite a heartbreaking fashion, especially back at Road America. When things don't go how you hope they do on track, how do you balance looking back, reflecting, and learning from what happened with compartmentalizing, looking forward, and focusing on the next race?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: To be fair, after Road America I moved on fairly quickly because it was just completely out of my control and also my team's control. It wasn't -- frankly, it was a lot easier to move on from that than the 500.

Ultimately, we just want to maximize every single weekend. It is sometimes tricky with the resource we have available just because of a scheduling point of view where we're just going from one race to the next to the next. It is tricky to really comprehend every single aspect of the previous weekend and put forward a plan of attack because ultimately we're just humans. We're trying to do our best every week, but it's also difficult to be that productive. We do our very best.

I feel like every weekend we just try and do our best, and soon enough it's going to come around, but we need to be doing it more consistently because that Alex Palou guy seems to do it every weekend.

Q. You just mentioned the schedule. After this weekend there's six races in five weekends. How do you and the team mentally and physically prepare for such a tough long run for the end of the season? And is there one that's more important than the other, the mental versus physical?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Physically, no. I mean, you kind of make sure that you're in form, but when we're going from one weekend to the next, it's actually very -- it's nice because you find a rhythm and a routine and you just go from one weekend to the next.

Obviously, like I said, it's difficult to maximize the whole preparation point because you finish a Sunday, I feel like I need Monday not to think about racing. So you already kind of lose a day. Then you have to do a good day of simulator with the team, which is a lot of time and also time for the engineers to prepare that. It's not just arrive and drive sort of thing. It demands a lot of preparation.

Then obviously at the weekend, it's just a lot of stuff

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technically, strategy, you name it. So it's more tricky for the engineers, honestly, just to be organized. I'm very lucky that they are workaholics in the best way possible. It makes my life easier.

Q. With the new contract at Meyer Shank, do you still have any relationship with Chip Ganassi Racing?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Say that again?

Q. When do you sign the contract with Meyer Shank, will you still have a relationship with Chip Ganassi Racing?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Yes. Well, obviously the team is in a technical collaboration with them, so it will be business as usual from that point of view. I have obviously my engineers from when I was in Ganassi a couple of years ago, but yeah, it's basically as it has been, yeah. There's no real difference.

Q. You're going to have a new teammate next year. You'll be basically the leader of Meyer Shank Racing. How do you think it's going to be?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: How do I think it's going to be? No, it's great, but it's also been cool to have Felix. Felix has been a great teammate and a great source of wisdom. He's eight years older than me, but you could easily -- I think he's eight years older than me. Maybe he's even more or less, but he's also an 80-year-old man. He's like the opposite to Helio.

He's been just a really good friend. We've had a good time together. Whoever is in the 66 car next year is going to be somebody who's very deserving of being in a top seat. I don't know who it's going to be, but I'm looking forward to finding out like the rest of you, but no doubt it's going to be somebody who thoroughly deserves it and is going to be hopefully somebody who's technically -- has technical knowledge and experience at the Indy Motor Speedway too, which would be great for me, so we can work together and win races.

Q. I have two questions. The first question is what does Meyer Shank Racing need to become a consistent race-winning team?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: What does the team need to be doing to be consistently at the front? Is that what you're saying?

Q. Okay, yeah. With your team, consistent race winning.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: That's a tricky question because, if we knew, we would be doing that. I like to preach the five Ps, which is preparation prevents poor performance possibilities maybe? I need to figure that one out.

No, we need to be good on our preparation. I feel like we always perform well on race day, we just need to be starting up the front. So I feel like we need to be -- I feel like I need to be doing a better job to put us in that position.

The team itself, I feel like they're doing a great job in pit lane and everything else. We need to get the basics right on the technical aspect, you know, on the engineering side.

Fundamentally it's down to me to improve on Saturdays and for all of us to execute on Sundays as we've been doing.

Q. The next question is what's been your biggest lessons since joining in the INDYCAR Series?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Biggest lessons --

Q. In the season.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Yeah. This season, you mean? This season has been, I think quite unsatisfying because we have had a lot of performance and we've had a lot of things not go our way. On paper it hasn't been the season that we want clearly, but I think our performance has been better than what we've shown.

Again, I feel like we don't seem to make the same mistake twice. So every single weekend we are getting better. Yeah, and I feel like we're heading into a very important part of the season where momentum will be important too. So we're going to fight to have that.

Q. The first question is what surprised you the most about yourself this season?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: What surprised me about myself? In a good way or a bad way?

Q. In a good way obviously.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: I'm not exactly sure. I think the month of May was strong, but it wasn't exactly a surprise. We performed well on race day. I feel like perhaps I was surprised by our ability to improve from the previous year because Indy, there's so many parts about that race that you can't really prepare for. You need to just sort of do it year after year to figure out the nuances.

I feel like as a team we gelled well strategically on race day. Also, I understood the strategy without having to be told it, which I feel like a year ago would have been quite a different story.

Q. Every driver dreams about winning races, but when you look back at your career years from now, what do you hope people remember about Marcus Armstrong beyond the results?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: That's a good one. It's kind of like if you look at guys like Scott and Dario and Will, they're a little older, Helio as well, the one thing that sort of sticks out as the major component of their personalities is they're very cheerful and they're always fun to talk to, I suppose. They have no BS as well. All of them, they're all very real people.

So I hope that I would follow in that regard. I think Will is a great example, actually, where he's won plenty. He's obviously won championships. He's won a 500, and he's constantly on pole, at least back in the day he was. But you always remember him as just him being him, very unique personality. So I would hope that people would think the same of me.

Q. Fans usually see what happens on track, but what's one part of your job that you really wish people understood better?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: What's one part of my job that I wish people understood better? It's not -- do I want to say that -- well, firstly, I'm very lucky. Not many people get to drive racing cars for a living, so I'm not at all being ungrateful, but I suppose it's not a very certain career. You never know exactly how the weekend is going to go. You don't know how next season will go. There's never a guarantee in the sport, which is cool.

Also the danger aspect to it, you don't think about it as a driver, but there is that part of it that's just uncertain. For example, it's a Tuesday. Everybody's very optimistic about the weekend, but it's not as clear-cut. For somebody like me who's a control freak, you want to know exactly what the whole weekend is going to look like, and that's just something that nobody can provide you.

I suppose it's the uncertainty that is maybe overlooked.

Q. What's something you're currently working on as a driver that fans probably wouldn't notice until it starts paying off?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Well, it's the little bits and pieces. When you're driving a race car, you have so many

things that you can obviously control just in your technique. It's not just like you turn left and that's it. There's a whole range of things that you need to be aware of. So just from a technical aspect, it's good to understand every single part of what you're doing.

I certainly like to just understand the theory behind it, and that makes it easier to do when you're sort of under pressure or tired or whatever, if you understand the theory as well as possible. These little things, they make a big difference on the stop watch. So I suppose it's the little tiny details.

THE MODERATOR: Marcus, thank you for hopping on here this afternoon. A lot of deep questions for you there, a lot of things for you to consider as you go into your evening.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: What do you think was the deepest question, mate?

THE MODERATOR: There's so many options there, I don't know. You handled it very well. You handled it like a pro.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: I think the deepest question was how have I changed from 2023? It's not even a question for me. I think it's more of a question for somebody else.

THE MODERATOR: Years from now, that will be part of the book. That will be a chapter on how you've changed since 2023. Just throwing that out there.

Again, thanks for hopping on. Best of luck in Nashville Superspeedway, getting on an oval once again, and we'll see you in a couple of days down there.

By the way, if England wins tomorrow, they're going to play Spain, spoiler alert.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Has the game happened already?

THE MODERATOR: It's already happened, yes. That's how concentrated you are on your craft right now. You're not even paying attention to the rest of the world.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Spain-France already happened?

THE MODERATOR: It just happened. Just wrapped up.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Spain won?

THE MODERATOR: Spain won, yes. 2-0. Harry Kane and the boys will be playing them as the lead-in to the race



on Sunday. We'll see.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Harry Kane, he's going to bring it home.

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