

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Monday, July 20, 2026

Alex Palou

Barry Wanser

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are joined by the champion this year, Alex Palou. First win at Nashville, third oval of his career win, fifth of the season, and first of course since the streets of Detroit. 24th career win, 50th career podium. Picks up 27 points on the championship as Chip Ganassi Racing celebrates their 150th all-time win in INDYCAR SERIES history.

Barry Wanser, the manager of the team joins us.

Alex, it's not Nashville unless you're celebrating something here, championship or race win. Congratulations.

ALEX PALOU: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: How does this one feel?

ALEX PALOU: Incredible honestly. Just, yeah, I'm so happy. I knew we had the great car. It's one of those tracks that we've been struggling in the past. I know last year we were second, but we kind of got very lucky with a yellow there.

Today it helped us. I'm not going to say that the yellow didn't help us. We were already P3, P2. We were right there. The 10 car, I was struggling a little bit at the beginning, but at the end I was so comfortable, especially once we got into the lead.

I was a bit nervous to get into traffic because I know that's when Josef kind of shines. He's been the best the last seasons. I was like, Please, Alex, you need to do it.

I was committed. I wanted to try and give my best. Yeah, I'm just so happy that everything worked.

THE MODERATOR: Barry, 150 for the team. What kind of landmark is that?

BARRY WANSE: It's incredible. An amazing achievement for the team. To reach 150 INDYCAR wins,

it's pretty special. I missed the races in '96. I started in '97. It's been a pleasure being a part of such a great organization.

I want to thank the race car today for not crashing because Alex tried to crash the car (smiling). Fortunately the car didn't want to crash today.

As always, superior drive. We got lucky on the yellow. Everyone keeps saying we came in to catch a yellow, but we came in because we caught traffic and we got the most out of the tires on the car. We came in, took a chance, and we lucked out.

THE MODERATOR: How edgy was the car?

ALEX PALOU: It's always tough, man. Once you get into traffic, you're fighting with the car a lot. I think everybody's on the same page. That's why you see biggest differences once you get through traffic.

At the beginning I couldn't really go up high. That's when I think I got passed by Josef and Santino before we pitted. Yeah, at the end I was very comfortable with it. It was a pleasure to drive it.

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

Q. You look fresh as a daisy. The other two drivers looked pretty whipped from the heat. How much did the heat affect you?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I mean, I'm tired. Like I can feel the heat. Yeah, I think also David probably is driving injured, and Josef as well, right? That doesn't help.

But yeah, I'm feeling good. I mean, I'm tired. The heat was very high. Especially once I got out of the car, I kind of felt everything. While I was driving, I think with the adrenaline and everything you just continue to go and you don't really feel much.

Yeah, I can't imagine driving injured like they did.

Q. After yesterday seeing your homeland win the

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

World Cup, how much does that add to today's victory for you?

ALEX PALOU: Very cool. I mean, I was following it obviously. I wanted them to score a little bit earlier so we could go racing. It's just very cool for the country to get another World Cup. I'm sure that everybody in Spain is going crazy and they're going to celebrate for the next probably six months or so.

It's great for us to top it off with a race win today.

Q. After Mid-Ohio, we talked about how the championship would come close.

ALEX PALOU: I mean, it's very close this year. You can see the time charts after 10 minutes in practice the 27, the 12, the 7, they're normally up there. They're not making it easy.

I know it's going to be a tough fight till the end, especially being so back-to-back races. But yeah, we're ready for it. I think we've done obviously the best we could this weekend. I'm very happy we got a win here at a place that probably we didn't expect coming into it.

Yeah, it's great. But although we have a good cushion, we need to keep making it bigger and keep it to the end.

Q. What about today did not allow for it to really be a complete two-lane race?

ALEX PALOU: It was tough. Yeah, I don't know if people were able to move or not. It was just very tough because it was quite easy to be flat out when you were in the lead. Then once you lose a little bit of downforce, you have nowhere to go, right?

There was quite a lot of marbles. I think INDYCAR did an amazing job on the track to clean those marbles. You could see on the restarts we were able to run side by side.

Yeah, tough day.

Q. Looking ahead, you got a test at Portland next week, a track where you could easily win at. How important is it to get that test under your belt?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, you never know with testing. Like, we've seen some teams testing at Road America while we didn't. I think we had the best car there to win. But it's going to be great. We haven't had a test in a road course since I don't know when. Probably we haven't had any this year.

BARRY WANSER: Yeah, I don't think so. Sebring in February, but...

ALEX PALOU: It's going to be huge for us to try and get a test there.

Q. How much important is that for you to get that guitar? Last year you were a little disappointed.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I was. I thought we were going to get one. Actually Scott gave me one the day after. I went to his studio, which was very nice of him. But this one is cooler. It's not cooler, but it means more than the other one.

So cool to get the guitar as a race win.

Q. You earned this one.

ALEX PALOU: Yes, I did. The other one, yeah, kind of not. He was just very nice with us.

Q. Looking at the championship, you're now well ahead in the championship, over a race ahead. Looking at the races remaining, was this really kind of the race that you needed to get through to control this championship from here on out?

ALEX PALOU: I wish. I don't think so. Like, Milwaukee is a doubleheader. Although we were really good last year, we didn't do very good at the test last week or two weeks ago.

But anyway, even Portland, yeah, we were good, but I don't know about this year. We were very good last year on road courses. Now suddenly we're good on street courses out of nowhere. That's the kind of stuff you cannot really predict much.

But yeah, having that said, I like the races that we're going to. Markham is a new track. What's going to happen? Are we going to struggle, dominate? Nobody knows. Same for DC.

There's a lot of unknowns still. It's still very early. I wouldn't trade, like, my points with anyone. But still a long stretch ahead.

Q. Barry, you mentioned in some ways getting the lead towards the end was pure luck. What did you do throughout the race to put yourselves in that position to take advantage of that yellow?

BARRY WANSER: Looking back, I think we had the right strategy with the use of the tires. I think he was a little

nervous at the end that all the cars behind him were on sticker reds, he was on the harder primaries. We felt we had the car to do that. We all said we wanted to finish on the primaries. It worked out.

Q. Restart with 31 to go. You're on hards, Josef on softs. With this being a track position race, are you thinking you don't need to make a mistake and you're good or are you thinking you're going to have to do 30 incredible laps to beat Josef?

ALEX PALOU: No, I knew it was going to be very tough just because I saw how he was racing at the beginning of the race with Kyle. They were both flat out. I was flat out, as well. I could see that being behind for the first five, six laps, you could have an advantage. It was like this close to just making it.

Yeah, I was not confident at all. He was right there, man. I was flat out. I really couldn't do anything. There was no more I could do. I'm sure he was the same. But just kind of with the draft, it was helping him a lot to kind of get closer to us.

I think once he started degrading the tires and we got through traffic, that's when I got a gap. But no, I was not confident at all.

Q. The rest of the top eight had soft tires at the end. How late did that decision come? Were you worried when you put on the tires?

BARRY WANSEER: At that point we had no choice. We had two sets of sticker blacks and a used set of softs, the alternates. It made it pretty easy. We wanted to finish on the primaries. That was the goal and it worked out. But generally we were all nervous about the restart. The Honda horsepower came through.

Q. Alex, I've talked to Barry in the past about what is your big weakness. What is something you would like to improve on in this reign of perfection?

ALEX PALOU: A lot of stuff. I think that's the beauty of this sport or every sport or life in general, you can always be a little bit better.

Yeah, man, I've done mistakes this year that I don't want to do. I can always be a little faster. I think today the race how I did it, I really like. I'm proud because I normally have been struggling. We were on the lead with 30 laps to go, or even 20 laps to go as well last year here, and I lost it because I couldn't move through traffic. Getting that today kind of makes me feel very, very happy.

But you can always keep on improving on everything.

BARRY WANSEER: Everybody on the team is always trying to improve. Alex admitted he made some mistakes. I made some mistakes this year. It's very difficult to win in INDYCAR. You got to get it all right.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports