

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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David Malukas

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We're joined by David Malukas, from last to third today. Led 59 laps. Best finish here at Nashville. First podium of 2026.

Great finish. Your thoughts on the afternoon.

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, that was, wow. Man, this whole week, what an incredible weekend. This is definitely not going to be one I'm going to forget for a very long time. Just super, super happy. Obviously exhausted. But just so happy.

That was the best race that I think I've ever performed in. I was trying so hard with everything going on. Just kept asking for one more. My body kept giving it to me till the end.

THE MODERATOR: Crazy how the yellows came out. Didn't help you at all. How disappointing from that aspect?

DAVID MALUKAS: We had to go through the field twice. Thankfully the team gave me an incredible car, so we were passing in a track that's very tough to pass. It was a good one for us.

THE MODERATOR: Just a couple questions.

Q. The very first caution was a very key moment for you to get your hat in the ring. Take me through how that changed everything.

DAVID MALUKAS: We just wanted to go on a different strategy to the rest of the field since we were all the way in the back. Big kudos to Travis Law. Absolute genius, madman. Always seems like he knows what's going to happen. Put us in the right call.

Honestly, the one concern was are these tires going to hold. Thankfully we went through the different pit cycles, Power was behind. They said they're on a different strategy. If you lose position, you lose position. We ended up maintaining and going forward.

Incredible car, good strategy. Yeah, we went forward.

Q. You've had emotional close calls before. How much positivity are you taking out of that race?

DAVID MALUKAS: I mean, it was massive. This race, like I said, I'm not going to forget this race from everybody involved. It's cool to see when you have so many people all on a collective opportunity. Like, I would not be in this car, I would not be racing without all the support and people that were behind me, from the team, to the medical team, the local hospital here. Everybody just worked so hard, managed to get me back into an operating form, getting the car into an operating form. Here we are. Last to third. It was an incredible thing. Incredible story just to think about when humans come together what we can accomplish.

Super happy. So much to remember. A lot of good memories.

Q. Did you have to go to the care center for fluids or for your knee?

DAVID MALUKAS: For fluids. Almost no time the past few days to get fluids. We weren't even getting fluids yesterday.

After that race we knew it was probably going to be a thing. Felt really good. The adrenaline started to wear off, things started to get a little spinny there. Got fluids, picked me up on a little bit of sugar. I'm good now.

Q. You're now second in the points, 83 behind Alex. Can you catch him?

DAVID MALUKAS: Well, I don't know. That was the one thing at the end of the race I'm saying this is such a good race, but I see he was in front.

Look, he's at the peak right now. He's doing so good year by year. Again, people thought he was going to run away earlier on in the season. Had a few unlucky ones. See how it plays out. You never know how things are going to happen. Thankfully I was able to recover a mistake from

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this one, all the support I had.

We have to keep trying, keep pushing hard. Maybe it will come down to the end. If not, I'm so happy with this race, this season. Life is good.

Q. With the nature of the injury, do you feel like it was worse for you to race or was it better by the fact we raced a day later?

DAVID MALUKAS: Oh, it was better we raced a day later. Look, going from yesterday, my quote was: If we race yesterday, it was survival, today was game on. That was the situation I was in.

Getting the extra nature of sleep. I am not going to lie, I heard the rain on my bus. I thought that's really nice. I was already lights out at 8 p.m. I just thought if I go to bed, we're not going to race today. It is going to be committed. I woke back up a couple minutes later, they told me that they canceled it. I said, I knew it. This is good.

It was awesome, really good.

Q. You said you kept telling yourself one more. Do you think you could have gotten through 300 laps today or yesterday?

DAVID MALUKAS: Well, I think with the power of adrenaline, I think we maybe could have gotten there. To be honest, on track, I mean, my face was covered in salt, salt crystals, snot coming out of my nose. I didn't feel any of that till the end, or any yellow flag to be honest. I was just running on pure adrenaline, focused on what's in front. I just kept asking give me one more, give me one more.

I'm not going to lie, halfway through that race I thought I'm done. We kept going, kept going. The body kept pushing. Adrenaline is a beautiful drug.

Q. There's so much history in Team Penske. Has anyone mentioned to you the story of Rick Mears in 1991 crashing, going to the hospital, then going fastest?

DAVID MALUKAS: Yes, I did get that mentioned, which somebody was trying to make that comparison. I'm not going to lie, I think Rick Mears has that one by far from a cool standpoint.

It's cool I get to be related to that in any way. I definitely took it like it's kind of cool, but not that cool.

Q. A question by my mom. She was watching the broadcast. She wanted to know what was in your

pocket, something in your pocket.

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, I met a U.S. Marine a long time ago. He gave me a U.S. Marine coin. On top of it, I have a baby Jesus. You never know (smiling). Look, I didn't have any of that when the crash happened. I said, We need everything with me today.

It was a fantastic race. I had baby Jesus, I had a U.S. Marine coin and a little pink ducky that a fan gave me. I had the Trifecta, P3.

Q. Where did Jesus come from?

DAVID MALUKAS: Baby Jesus came from a fan. They said they got this blessed and I needed it. I said, Okay, here we go. Yeah, I got baby Jesus. It's funny, but at the same time we have baby Jesus in the pocket.

THE MODERATOR: Technically came from Mary.

DAVID MALUKAS: The baby Jesus from Talladega Nights. I think it's a new tradition. I have the big three in my pocket. We're cooking up with the big three.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations.

DAVID MALUKAS: Thank you, everybody.

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