

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Felix Rosenqvist

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome, everyone. Massive stretch of six races in five weekends. Our guest today has had a big season but would love to add to that before the championship finale. Two podiums at Portland, in addition to his five top 10s.

Earlier today it was announced he'll be driving in a return to the Grateful Dead car. A fan favorite. Maybe for you, too?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I think so. I would say it was our most popular one last year. 2025 is when we started doing more of those with Sirius XM. The Grateful Dead one, I didn't know that much about the band before they joined us with that. It was so well-received, especially at Laguna Seca. We had a lot of people come up and ask for die casts and merch and gear. We've been trying to work on that and this is a follow-up on that.

THE MODERATOR: I think there's some of that available now.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yes.

THE MODERATOR: Pretty cool.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: It is.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for doing this ahead of a busy week, busy month of August. In many ways I guess it seems the entire season leads to these six races, five weekends. You certainly have had a little bit of success. How much are you looking forward to this busy stretch?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I'm looking forward to it a lot. It's actually been really nice to have a break I think for all of us. My phone has been pretty quiet these last two weeks, which probably means everyone needed it.

Especially the way everything has been going on after the 500, it's been nice to get some family time and recharge and set into this last stint here with good energy.

Yeah, look forward to it. A lot of cool tracks coming up.

Two more oval races and some road courses, street courses. I think it will be a good final stretch here.

THE MODERATOR: Talked about the success you've had at Portland, really good runs there. What is it about that track that suits you so well?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I mean, I think in general I've always qualified pretty well in INDYCAR, and Portland is probably one of the tracks with pace to start up front. Strategy has been pretty straightforward. It's also been a track I like. Maybe it's more similar to tracks that I grew up racing. I'm not sure if that's the case still or not.

Yeah, it's always been a good one for me. I enjoy being out there. A bit nicer weather this time of the year. Maybe that helps, too.

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

Q. Felix, as you're trucking through these last six races, is there anything you have to do differently because it is six races over five weeks?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Not really. I think mentally you prep yourself for it. It was kind of the same thing when we went into the month of May followed by Detroit followed by St. Louis. You approach it in a way that it's going to be tough. I think if you do it that way, you're going to get through it fine.

If someone called me after the 500 and told me, Hey, you have two more races coming up, then it would be a completely different story, right?

Just mental prep, physical prep. Obviously a lot of these places are going to be hot. Hydration. Got some good training back in the last couple weeks. That's kind of all you can do.

Obviously I think for engineers and crew guys it's actually tougher for them just with never really getting a chance to catch up from weekend to weekend.

Yeah, everyone's pros in this sport. We've done this many



times. I think actually the season fell nicer this way than it did last year. I think most people I've talked to agree. I think we're all already for it.

Q. Since you told the team you weren't going to be back, have you noticed anything different the last few weekends?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: No. Actually not. It's been kind of back to normal. Obviously when you had to make these calls in the middle of the year, which is the way it works in INDYCAR SERIES, unfortunately. Even with the long off-season we have, seems like most of the deals are made in May, June, July.

Obviously when the decision was made, it's never a good thing, right? But I think everyone's done a really good job looking forward. We still have a third of a season to go here. Everyone's in good spirits. Everyone's hungry to win. Same goes for me. Nothing really changes from my standpoint here going into the last bit.

I think we have a lot to be proud of and also a lot more to accomplish together. Just going to keep rolling.

Q. You talked about the mental and physical prep. What specifically have you done over the last couple of weeks and weekends to prepare for this moment?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I think first of all getting good rest, getting good sleep. It's always that mix, right? You need to keep working out, keep being physically and mentally sharp, but also giving yourself a bit of a break, just having some time with your family.

I know a lot of drivers have been taking trips. We've just been staying home. I think resting is a big part of it when you go through such a hectic season.

But yeah, nice to be back in a gym on a more - how do you say - back-to-back basis than the previous months. It's been a lot of in and out, single days, relying on the fitness that you built up in the winter. I feel like I'm actually taking a step back into sort of my peak race fitness. Yeah, it's all good.

Q. One of the things we've learned in the last couple weeks since the new car was unveiled, there might be the addition of power steering. What are your thoughts on that? Do you think it might be necessary going forward?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, it's always an interesting topic. Obviously these cars are very tough to drive. I think when I first came into the series, it was probably a limiting

factor in my first race, which I just wasn't prepared for it.

It's hard to prepare for it. I think that's the hard thing for rookies and stuff to show up in St. Pete, it's always a tough transition if you come from a smaller single-seater. But it's also the DNA of the sport. It's always been a physical car to drive and probably the most physical ones you can drive.

I think the power steering would be nice in terms of safety. If you have a lot of people breaking hands, fingers, wrists. I've been one of those. Probably had two or three hand injuries in my career, which some of them are still there with me today. If you can avoid that, I think it would be nice.

If you can have sort of a progressive power steering that you can set up to be from basically none to increasing it in stages, like some of the other series have, that could be a good thing.

But yeah, I mean, I think there's a lot of drivers probably arguing that they want it to be heavy. But I think it's also a fact that how can you market that so the fans understand how heavy it is. You can say it's the heaviest thing in the world. I don't think anybody watching on the TV would agree with you. They probably think they could go right in and turn the wheel themselves.

How much is it worth having that physicality for how much you're paying with it in terms of injuries and also some drivers actually not being able to drive the car physically?

Q. Your decision to join Arrow McLaren. Your previous stint there was a bit mixed at points, I guess. In rejoining the team, what do you believe could be different this time around than maybe what you see in the team now that made you so keen to rejoin the operation next year?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, I mean, when I joined the team 2021, that was probably one of my toughest seasons. But I actually had a good year after that. Finished eighth in points, got going pretty well. Yeah, a little bit up and down. But some great pace, a lot of pole positions, some podiums together.

I mean, I don't want to talk too much about it now because we're still obviously in the middle of the season with Meyer Shank Racing. I think the future outlook, the new car, things like that, it's definitely an area where I expect them to be good. Yeah, just a lot of things. A lot of small things together I think that has made this decision.

It was very hard. It was probably the hardest decision I've



had to make. But yeah, that's where it landed. I'm excited to join them next year.

Q. More broadly on the new car, Rossi and Palou testing that. What are your impressions? What are the big things when you first saw that really stood out to you being major positive steps forward?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I think it's just a lot of things that have been asked for over the years. It's a huge update in terms of quality of live features for the people working on the car every day, for the drivers that are going to drive them in terms of safety, cooling, seating position, if power steering becomes the thing or not.

I think a lot of things that over the years have just kind of become limiting for us has improved a lot. INDYCAR has listened. Then you have the whole fact behind the designs. Designs are always controversial. I think it really looks great. I've seen it in real life and I think it looks cool.

I think the impressive thing with the design is it actually has a purpose, it has a meaning. Every shape of that bodywork has a meaning behind it. It's not just like, Oh, we think this looks cool, someone drawing on a sheet what it should look like. There's actually a thought behind it to be able to follow closer and to make the wake behind the car narrower. A lot of smart people have come up with that design. I think that's exciting.

The racing product in the end is the most important thing for everyone in this series. I think that's been the focus. Also making a quicker car.

Yeah, super exciting for it.

Q. We always hear the drivers love Portland. What makes it tough and why do you love PIR so much?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I think road courses might be my favorite category. Kind of goes up and down for me. I think it's always enjoyable to drive a road course. Portland is one of those classics that I think I've been to every year of my INDYCAR career now.

It's just one of the tracks that you come back to, had good success there. I like the flow of the track, especially the first section, like the triple right-hander. Really quick corner on the back, 10, 11. Probably the quickest corner that we have. I have to look at that. Maybe the kink at Road America is tied with that one.

Yeah, just an enjoyable place. A lot of racing history. I also have a lot of fans that follow the sport long time ago, and they're still coming back. That's definitely a lot of

history for INDYCAR there from being on the west coast. A long way away, but still feels like home. Almost feels like you're in the midwest, but you're on the west coast.

Q. Fans show up in Portland. Talk to me about the fan base. How does that make you feel? What does it inspire you to do?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, I've always had a good following in Portland. I feel like there's a lot of Swedish heritage in Portland. A lot of Volvos I see driving around, old Volvos. There's some Swedish connection. I haven't figured it out. I see a lot of people with Swedish flags. Maybe they have their greatgrandfather or grandmother. They know a new words of Swedish. Always in Portland it seems like I have one of my biggest fan bases. It always means a lot, as well.

Q. This final stretch has six races in five weekends, divided between road courses, street courses and ovals. Which part of the schedule gives you the best opportunity to win again this season?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Well, I think all of them are pretty high opportunity for me. We also have two new tracks, which you never really know.

I think historically street courses have been a good category for me. I think the question mark is probably the doubleheader at Milwaukee. Last year we had our toughest race there. Being a doubleheader this year, it's been by far the biggest focus for us to improve.

We had a test there probably a month ago, which went really well. We felt way more comfortable than last year. Still early days. But I feel like we're at least closing that gap that we missed last year.

Yeah, if we can nail down Milwaukee, I think we have every reason to be very excited for the rest of the year here, for all the tracks.

Q. What goals do you have for the rest of the season? What does success look like for you at the end of the race in Monterey?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I mean, I think extracting the most out of yourself is obviously number one. Showing up and feeling like you laid it all down, both in qualifying and the race. That's always the main focus for me.

I think we were very close to winning Road America before the yellow came out. Long Beach, as well, was a close one for us. We finished P2 there. I think there's a lot of hunger for a win. Obviously we got the 500 in May. But I



think the team really feel like we're a little bit overdue for a win on a non-500, normal race weekend let's say. That would be super cool.

I feel like everyone at the team would be deserving of a victory. If it's me or Marcus, we've been there sniffing at the top step of the podium a lot this year. That would be really cool for the team with the last six races here for me with Meyer Shank Racing. I think it would be a perfect ending.

Yeah, I mean, I think if you aim for wins, the rest will come naturally. We'll see in terms of championship standings where we end up. I think we're sitting seventh right now. If you can sneak into the top five, that would also be pretty cool for everyone.

Q. You are moving on. What advice would you give to the driver who's going to be taking your seat next year?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I mean, I think as I said a million times, it's a fantastic team to work with. I only have good things to say about Meyer Shank Racing these three years that I've been with them.

I think whoever arrives in that seat is going to feel a great atmosphere, a great family spirit in the team. Mike, Jim and Adam, they treat everyone on that team like a family member, very fairly, including the drivers.

Yeah, I mean, I wish that person, whoever it is is going to be my competitor, but I know he's going to have a really good time in that team because I think every driver I know that's been with the team has said the same.

THE MODERATOR: Technically Marcus is actually taking your seat, right?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: That's right (smiling).

Q. You've already touched on your decision to return to McLaren last year. How do you feel like you've changed and developed as a driver in the time you've been away from the team?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: It's ever changing, right, in this sport? I think you have to be very open to yourself and your weaknesses and always strive for more.

I think when I look back to 2023, it seems like a lifetime ago. I think just three years of working on all the little details, becoming a bit wiser, more experienced, hopefully faster. Yeah, I mean, I think it all adds up to when you come back, you probably turn into a little bit of a different

driver.

I mean, I think that speed has always been kind of the same for me in INDYCAR. We've always been pretty good at qualifying. I think my race craft has improved quite a bit, especially this year. Those are the sort of things you look forward to applying coming back there.

Yeah, I mean, you're a more seasoned driver. You know more about how the car works, what you need from the car. You can probably lead the team a bit better than what I could have done three years ago.

Yeah, just a better package in general.

Q. How has your win at the Indy 500 this year changed your mentality in any way? Are you more confident when you go out on the track?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: That's a good question. I think yes and no. I think you have to be realistic enough to understand that nothing really translates to the Indy 500 when it comes to driving the car. I mean, maybe Nashville a little bit. That's probably the closest you're going to get, which was also a good race for me.

Yeah, you have to understand you have to move on from that win, just keep digging as hard as you did before on every other track. I think it's a great relief when you think about your career and your sort of achievements. Just one day when you're going to hang up the helmet, you're going to be very happy you have that win.

That's a major relief. I know a lot of drivers have worked hard for it many, many years, have been close, but never been the one that got to drink the milk.

It is a great relief, and it also boosts your confidence. Yeah, but it's not going to help you when you go to Mid-Ohio, let's put it that way (smiling).

Q. This season is undoubtedly the most successful of your INDYCAR career now. Do you feel something has changed in your approach as a driver or is it simply that everything has finally fallen into place also with Meyer Shank, with all these past years since your arrival?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, it's always hard to nail down why you have success and sometimes you don't have success. In the end there's a lot of people behind every effort that you do on track. It's not just the driver. There's a lot of people that work very hard.

I think this year probably what has been better has been



the understanding of the relationship between me and my engineers, understanding what we need to do in certain situations, direction of car.

We started the year not great, to be honest. We took a different path on setup. We were quick enough to commit to that and realize that. Then we had a lot more success in the remainder of the season following Long Beach. Things like that, you just get a little better all the time.

I think at this point you just really have to magnify everything because everyone is just so good in this series. Everyone is pretty much a bad ass, as I normally say, when you look across the whole field.

You're not going to find major things. But I think if you're a little more confident, and you work well with the people around you, that's when you normally make the difference.

Q. Looking at what you've seen and heard about the new car, what excites you most about this new generation of INDYCAR? Can we expect it to attract new fans?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, I mean, I think it's just an improvement in every area. It's still early days obviously. I need to drive it myself to comment too much.

But I think the will and the effort from INDYCAR to make this into everything we've asked for has definitely been there. There's a lot of work that has gone into following up on all the little things that we've been complaining about through the years (smiling).

INDYCAR already has a great racing product, but the fact that the whole foundation behind the design of this car is to create even better racing. It's super exciting. It goes to show that INDYCAR cares mostly about the fans and the product, and not as much about -- I'm not going to mention any specific areas, but other series might focus on other things.

We just want to give everyone that comes to watch the race and watches on TV a good product from a sporting standpoint.

Yeah, hopefully we'll keep engaging new fans, which we've had a lot of new fans this year already. We are kind of on a climbing slope when it comes to engagement and viewers and fans. Hopefully we can keep riding that.

This is still an INDYCAR. I think some people expect this to be like, Oh, my God, it's going to start flying, or have an automatic pit stop, the wheels are going to change themselves, something like that.

It's still an INDYCAR. The root is still the same, which I think is also very exciting.

Q. In Mexico we have good memories from Portland because Adrian Fernandez won in 2003. Obviously you tried to catch the second victory of the season obviously with Meyer Shank. What do you need to do differently comparing to last year's Portland race?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I mean, last year we had actually a pretty encouraging weekend. I think we started second or third. I don't remember. I was running second behind your friend Pato, your Mexican friend (smiling). Me and him actually pitted on that first yellow. It was a big mistake for both of us. We came out in the back and just never got through clean air. I don't think I even finished in the top 10. I think the pace was there. We just didn't really nail the strategy.

We have every right to think we're going to be okay. Obviously things change. But I think if we can qualify well again, we can probably have another go at it and be a bit better this year, so...

Q. If you have the chance to decide your strategist, who will be the next season? Mr. Kyle Moyer, Billy Vincent or some other, if you had a chance to decide?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Who was the last one?

Q. Kyle Moyer, Billy Vincent or another one?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: That's a tough question. Put me on the spot.

I mean, me and Billy, he's actually with Marcus now. He's great.

I mean, honestly the best strategist I've had is the one I have now, Adam Rosini. It's very difficult because he's a team manager. I don't think he will come with me. He has an open invitation if he wants to (smiling).

Q. The discussion about McLaren, chemistry amongst drivers is a big factor in the success of organizations. Talk about you and Pato's friendship. Focus on one moment that defines your relationship.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, I mean, I think when I joined McLaren in '21, I didn't even know him. Honestly, I'd never even talked to him. I didn't know if we were going to get along or not.

I think it was pretty quickly, like probably the first test day,

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

we already got along really well. He was like, Do you want to join me for dinner? He was very inviting.

Pato is a lot of fun. He kind of brought me a different perspective when you go racing because we just had so much fun. In the end of the day, if you are not having fun, you're going to spend so much time with your teammate through the year. Sometimes you don't get along. That's fine. You can't select your team.

We really got along quickly and well. He was the best man at my wedding. We still hang out. I mean, we live like two minutes from each other, as well. We do hang out a lot. I think we work well together. We're pretty simple guys when it comes to, like, engineering and stuff. You just kind of say it as it is. We don't really try to play any games or keep stuff for ourselves.

The way I remember it is we just kind of tried to give both a chance to go quick. Whoever's the quickest may win.

Yeah, look forward to it. Also with Dixon obviously. He's been my teammate in the past, as well. We had a really good relationship, too. So yeah, I think it will be a lot of fun.

Q. As this chapter closes with Meyer Shank Racing, the last three years, if you could go and circle in on a moment or a lesson that you learned that's going to stick with you?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I mean, I think there's just so much, so many good memories. I mean, I think joining the team, having pole at Long Beach. I think that was a really cool memory for me because we just hit it off straightaway. In the first couple of weekends we were on the front row, we were fighting up front.

This was a very different time for the team and for me, as well. It's easy to sit now and say, Oh, yeah, obviously we need to fight for poles and wins. Back then it wasn't as obvious and it was very exciting for us.

Obviously getting the 500 win together, I mean, that day is obviously the biggest day - at least for me - in my career. Yeah, just so cool to do that with great people. I think everyone was just so deserving of that one. The fact that they got the second 500 win, actually the two only wins, which is kind of crazy to think about. Yeah, it was really, really cool.

The fact that everyone in the team, including the 66 and 06 car seemed as happy as they won themselves. I think that speaks a lot to what a great culture the team has.

Q. How does 22 extra laps at the Freedom 250 affect the race?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, I mean, we haven't really gone into DC too much yet. Just the way it kind of rolls in motorsport. You do one weekend at a time with some small prep for DC in the background. Yeah, obviously I think we're up to 147 laps. Maybe it's going to be 200 by the time we get there (smiling).

Obviously a very long race. Probably by far going to be the longest street course we've had I think. We need a halftime show in the middle just to cool down a little bit (smiling).

I think in terms of strategy, when you have that long of a race, it turns more into an Indy 500. It depends. If it's green, it's going to be like any other or most of the races. If it turns into chaos with a lot of yellows, one second you're going to be leading, then the next second you're going to be last. You just kind of try to nail it for the end.

Yeah, I guess it's just going to be more random the longer the race you have in terms of strategy.

Q. From the McLaren front, can you shed some light whether your stint begins at the end of the 2026 season or January 1, '27, as Will Power?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I'd like to not go into contract details. I appreciate that. Thank you.

Q. Having won the Indy 500 and looking like you had the pace to win at Long Beach and Road America before the cautions, it looks like MSR has made steps forward in race pace. How much of a threat do you think they'll be in 2027?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: No, I think big. Big threat. Obviously going to be competing against this team next year. I mean, I think at this point we definitely kind of established ourselves as contenders at the front on a week-to-week basis.

It's exciting. Again, I talked about it earlier. When you look back three years ago, it wasn't really the case. We were good in qualifying, the races were hit or miss. We had a few top fives, but had a lot of issues here and there. Didn't really go the whole way.

Now it seems like we have the whole package that it takes to be up there in the end of the race, like in Long Beach or Road America, which for different reasons we weren't able -- in terms of luck, we weren't able to get it done. The actual product is there now to do it. That's the big

difference.

So yeah, I think they're going to be a huge threat next year. If they continue in the same trajectory, it's going to be a big contender.

Q. Having had a successful season so far running with the Honda engine, how do you feel about returning back to a Chevy engine next season?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I mean, I've been with both. I've had good success with both manufacturers. I mean, the end, it's so even. These two manufacturers have been pushing each other for years. That's one of the beauty, one of the good things we really have in INDYCAR, where we have that battle going, especially at the Speedway. I think this year again it was very tight.

So yeah, in the end of the day, I don't really have anything to say about either. Yeah, I look forward to work with people that I worked with before. Obviously sad to move on with good people that I work with now.

THE MODERATOR: With that, we're going to leave it there for now. Felix, thanks for hopping on here. Best of luck this coming weekend. We'll see you in Portland.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Thank you, everyone. Have a good one.

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