

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Felix Rosenqvist

Alex Palou

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'll get started with Alex. Two-time winner here in Portland. He'll start on the front row tomorrow. His eighth front-row start of 2026, second front-row start here at PIR.

Your thoughts on the race tomorrow, qualifying effort today? You got a really good car, right?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, very, very good. It was tight. It was tight, man. We knew. But it's always like that. Q1, Q2 lap times, Q2 suddenly everybody was 2/10ths slower. Suddenly we all picked up those 2/10ths.

It felt great when I was driving. Man, this could be the one. I did couple mistakes there. So yeah, not super happy that Felix got it, but very happy that we got the front row.

Yeah, looking forward to tomorrow starting on the front row here is huge. It's going to be a tight race as well. Everybody I feel it's like so close. A 10th and a half to 2/10ths could have been P12 to P1. It's going to be an interesting race pace, one of those races.

THE MODERATOR: Front row for Honda, as well. Open it up for questions.

Q. In turn one, a lot of guys hitting the curbs. Do you expect that tomorrow or do people scale back enough that won't be an issue?

ALEX PALOU: I have no idea, Bob. Like, I don't know. I started on pole here I think in '21 or '22. I cannot remember. Suddenly I went from first to last because I got into an accident being on pole.

I think it's always tough here on that first turn. Then that curb, yeah, I feel like it's a bit different to what we've normally had on the apex in turn one. It sticks out a little bit more. I think that's why it's been getting a lot more attention from some drivers.

Hopefully we don't need to revisit that.

Q. You mentioned how close the pace was in qualifying. Been close all weekend. What will that do to the race? Do you expect big swings on strategy?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, exactly. First of all what happens is that the race pace is really fast because you cannot really try and save tires or fuel because someone else is at the same pace as you and is going to overtake you. Then that creates a lot of strategy shake-up, like lap 20, 30. Everybody just starts going at different paces and it makes for a really entertaining race.

Hopefully we can be up front and have more of a normal race strategy. But yeah, it's going to be fun.

Q. Yellows usually don't play a factor here. Are you worried about those tomorrow?

ALEX PALOU: No, I'll get lucky (smiling). Yeah, so, I'll get lucky.

Q. Felix has a propensity to snatch away things at the very last second, and he did it.

ALEX PALOU: He did it at Long Beach qualifying.

Q. Just to be able to have that patience, how much patience does it take to really wait it out? He did it at Indy, Long Beach and today.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I think Indy was different. Indy was pretty impressive.

Yeah, here it's just so close, just making sure that you nail that lap. I'm sure that he nailed the lap more than me. He got it. Long Beach was the same thing.

Q. How much will the warm-up play a factor tomorrow? How much will the warm-up help you learn which tire will work?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I don't really know. I think a lot of people struggled on reds in practice one. Reds were much



faster today in qualifying than the primaries. I don't know if they're going to make it, if they're going to be better than the primaries or not. We're going to see that in warm-up, although the conditions are going to be better than the race.

Yeah, it's going to be interesting. I don't think it's going to be easy to manage those soft tires, but they could be faster. It could be over a stint a better tire. I think everybody's just asking the same questions.

THE MODERATOR: Felix, your thoughts on the warm-up tomorrow?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Probably retweet Alex (smiling). No one knows, so we'll see.

THE MODERATOR: Alex, we'll cut you loose.

Felix Rosenqvist joins us. Second NTT P1 award of the season. Previously on the streets of Long Beach. Best start here at Portland. Second front-row start in Portland. His eighth career pole.

Congratulations. A couple hundredths and here you are sitting in P1. You're thoughts on qualifying today.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, I have to correct myself because in the interview when I looked at the screen, I thought I had 3/10ths to P2. I thought everyone messed up or something. Yeah, I was shocked when I saw that. Then when I heard it was only 2/100ths, I said that makes more sense.

It was qualifying by execution, that thin line between risking it and not making mistakes. I feel like I kind of experimented in Q1, Q2, was able to do safe but quick laps in Q3. That was just enough.

Yeah, it's a little bit overdue for me. I feel like I've been close here many times, so it's cool to get a pole here.

Great job by all the Meyer Shank Racing team. We tuned on it all day yesterday and all day today. Got better and better and better. We weren't really quick yesterday. Great comeback from us coming from practice. Thanks to Honda, as well.

THE MODERATOR: Open it up for questions.

Q. Felix, big strategy race tomorrow potentially because everybody is on the same pace, a lot of guys on the same engine. Are you at all concerned about guys in the back either getting a lucky yellow or taking big swings on strategy and screwing your race up a

little bit?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Since the whole Rossi-Rasmussen situation in Road America, Indy GP, when they changed the rules, you're more exposed, right? If this was before that, you would probably just try to go along, try to control the race that way, which is historically, at least the last couple seasons, the way to do it, if you look at especially Alex.

But yeah, I think now you have to play it a little bit differently, try to cover yourself more. I think luck is more of a factor in general, which I'm not a fan of. It's been a bit of probably 50/50 in the field what drivers have been thinking about it.

It is what it is. We probably have to cover ourselves more. Hopefully get clean air. That was always a key here in Portland.

Q. Long Beach, is that in the back of your mind a little bit, to get redemption on Mr. Palou from that race?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: It's always nice when you beat him, even if it's only qualifying. You know you're doing a good job when he's P2 and you're P1. Yeah, it makes me happy (smiling). You're not happy when you have him in your mirrors, though.

You have to be pretty perfect. Long Beach was a good example of that. Even if that day maybe we were a little quicker, he just never really has bad days. You just have to bring your A game tomorrow.

But yeah, we'll try. I think we're so far looking pretty good. Also this year I think we just got stronger in the races, as well. Hopefully we can translate that into something big tomorrow.

Q. I know it's all matter of math, but how tough is it to time it so you're out there making the flying lap after the checkered flag drops and not being out there when other cars are trying to do the same thing?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Wait, sorry.

Q. How tough is it to time that to be out there after the checkered flag dropped, but not be out there with another car that could impede your lap?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I think we were mainly focused on just having a clean track. We didn't really think there was much in waiting till the end. Portland is kind of weird like that. Seems to kind of go slower through the day. I think going earlier could be good.



But yeah, we just tried to focus on the traffic. People generally go quite slow on out laps. I don't feel that's been good for me in my tire warm-up. I try to have clean out laps. I think that was part of the key.

Q. You won the Indy 500. Since your announcement you're going to Arrow McLaren, how much do you want to give the team a going away present before you leave?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: A lot. I think everyone's just been super hungry for another one. Even before Indy, after Indy, we feel like we've been sniffing on a non-Indy win, let's put it. Long Beach was close. Road America, both me and Marcus were close in that one.

Yeah, I feel like we all deserve it, to be honest. All the boys and girls at Meyer Shank Racing, they're doing a really good job, being really consistent, prepare really good cars. That's my main goal, to give them exactly that.

Q. When I asked Alex about why so much drama it seems in turn one, cars hitting curbs, he said he thinks maybe the wall is a little bit different in turn one than before. Have you seen that? Do you expect more drama there tomorrow?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I think the corner is the same, but I think the branding is a little different. There's like a red piece of branding, then it just ends. I think visually you could think that's the end of the wall, but then it continues. That's why I think we see more people hit it than before. You're already kind of looking at turn two, then your peripheral you think the wall is not there, but it is.

Yeah, it's always tricky. I've hit it before, launched the curb, top of the car and stuff. Yeah, that one is always tricky. But I don't really think it's going to be anything different tomorrow.

Q. You've got a really strong record at Portland across your entire INDYCAR career. Anything in particular about the track that generally suits you?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, I mean, I think it has a good flow to it. I enjoy it. I think turn four-five section has always been pretty strong for me. Yeah, it's just one of those where you find a good flow, rhythm, you have a good confidence.

I don't really think Portland has any, like, bad corners. For me, they're not annoying. They come quite naturally. Maybe that's why. Maybe more of a traditional road course, which might favor us European drivers a little bit

more.

Yeah, always liked it. As I said before, I feel like it was a little bit overdue for me here, so happy to get it.

Q. How important is it to keep up a strong relationship with the team even though you know that relationship is coming to an end, stay hungry though you're not together for much longer?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I think everyone has been very professional. From my point of view, nothing changes. It's just the way INDYCAR works where you have to do deals in the middle of the season. Even if you have a very long off-season, it's always been the way it works. Makes for an awkward conversation.

Mike and Jim and Adam and everyone in the team, I think obviously it's not easy when you say it, right? Hey, we're not going to continue.

But I think everyone's kind of done a good job in just putting that behind us. You still have so much to do. Just have good cars. I feel like I'm performing probably the best I've done in my career. Let's just go out and try to win races.

Yeah, I've been really impressed on that, on their mentality with that.

THE MODERATOR: Felix, congratulations on P1. We'll see you tomorrow.

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