

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Alex Palou

Barry Wanser

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are joined by the champion, Alex Palou, and Barry Wanser.

Alex, congratulations.

ALEX PALOU: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: It was pretty impressive, the red stint you had.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, it was great.

THE MODERATOR: Your thoughts on that.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I would say the race in general was incredible for us. I think pretty much nobody expected those reds and soft tires to be that fast and to be that good, especially so many laps. That's why we went a bit let's say in that moment as well, also because Barry and Julian said we're going to hit some traffic. It was a time to try and open the gap. It worked incredible.

But that was like, man, those tires are the best. I wanted to have them more towards the end to avoid Felix or Power or whoever we were going to be fighting with.

BARRY WANSEER: To be clear, he asked to have blacks for the second.

ALEX PALOU: I did. They asked me, Do you want reds or blacks?

I said, Blacks.

Then they said, We're going to put reds.

I was like, All right.

BARRY WANSEER: First we said it would be blacks, then gave you another lap and then we are changing it to reds.

ALEX PALOU: It sounds like being at home with Esther. She's the same. What do you want for dinner, pasta or pizza? I say pasta. It's like, Okay, we're going to have pizza.

BARRY WANSEER: I've been married for 33 years, I don't get to make any decisions except against you.

ALEX PALOU: It's all true. Not making anything up.

BARRY WANSEER: I was just missing Laurie, my wife, this weekend because I didn't hear her screaming in victory circle.

ALEX PALOU: She's normally here screaming.

BARRY WANSEER: She was at home screaming.

THE MODERATOR: Barry, 151 INDYCAR wins now for the team, and counting. He made it look easy, but that red decision was big for you.

BARRY WANSEER: Yeah, it's certainly not easy. We've talked about it before, winning in INDYCAR is difficult. You look at how close qualifying was. I mean, we had to do something different than Felix. We had to go longer than him.

It takes a lot of performance by Alex and certainly the Honda engine to give us the fuel mileage to jump in one more and do the overcut. That helped us. We had a pretty smooth pit stop and got the jump there.

It's not easy winning in INDYCAR. When you look at this track, normally with that much green flag running, you probably put all but seven or eight cars a lap down. I think there were 19 cars on the lead lap. Just goes to show how much performance there is here at this track and speed, even throughout the field.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Alex, 25 race wins in 111 starts, 51 podiums. Those are mind-boggling statistics. Are you proud of the numbers or the consistency?



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ALEX PALOU: Yeah, very proud of both. I mean, it's incredible. I feel like you don't really realize when you're just going week in and week out. But when you look back and see those numbers, they're incredible.

But I could not do it without the team, with everybody that is around me, giving me the chance every single weekend. The preparation we have before every weekend, having had the opportunity to test here couple weeks ago, just having always best strategies, it's incredible.

But the end of the day we need to keep it up. We need to keep on winning and keep on fighting for championships and 500s.

Q. You're on the reds. Barry comes on the radio and said we want eight more laps. Your response was, Yeah, easy.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I mean, there's times that that doesn't work. There's times that he goes on the radio and says eight more laps. I'm like, No way. That doesn't happen.

In my mind, when I was driving, I thought that I had to do another 15. So when he said another eight, I was like, Oh, that's good. We're going to make it happen.

I started pushing a bit more and tried to get everything out of the tire. Yeah, I was glad that it was that way. It doesn't usually happen where he goes on the radio and he gives me a better number than what I thought.

Q. Alex, you came in here I want to say 83 points or so up on the championship lead, and you leave 110 up. How much more comfortable do you feel in the quest for the championship now?

ALEX PALOU: I mean, yeah, more comfortable than when we came here. This was one of those weekends where we wanted to do good. I mean, we want to do good every single weekend. But we don't know what's going to happen at Markham. New track for everyone, new track for me. We don't know what's going to happen at DC.

There's still a lot of points to play. It was important to maximize. If we had an opportunity to win, to win, instead of finishing second or anything like that. A win gives you a big, big amount of points. The same way that in the last two weekends we got a huge gap, someone else can do the exact same thing. So we need to keep on pushing.

Q. Did you have any close calls today at all?

ALEX PALOU: Close calls? I mean, no. There was no moments. No, it was good. Even with traffic, it was good.

THE MODERATOR: Barry, any close calls for you?

BARRY WANSER: No, Alex did a really good job today. Didn't make us nervous about everything. Nashville he made us a little nervous. He made up for it. Pretty smooth and consistent (smiling).

Q. Alex, everybody is going to talk about the overcut. It only works if you can close the gap to Felix. Talk about the end of that first stint when you closed the gap. When do you make that decision to turn it on and get the leader to make the overcut work?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I mean, we were I would say like three, three and a half seconds back from Felix. Marcus was in between. The overcut doesn't make anything there. Like, you don't lose three seconds on an out lap. You lose one, one and a half.

You risk it to close the gap. As soon as Marcus pitted, just go on the back of his car and just try and make him either pit or make a mistake, or in case he was going to pit before us, just to make sure that we're going to have one clean lap to go for it.

Once again, it doesn't always work, because I was lucky that there was no traffic. I was lucky that my car was still handling super well.

But as soon as I could see that my car was so good, I started pushing, the lap time started going down, I knew if the pit stop was good, we're going to get him. It was great.

Q. Barry, how important is it to have a driver that can do that for you, make aggressive strategy calls, he's going to be able to put in his side of the deal?

BARRY WANSER: Having Alex and his talent, like there's nothing that replaces that. No matter how good the car is, you need the driver to be able to extract that performance out of the car.

ALEX PALOU: I'm going to get a clip of this. Whenever you get angry, say something bad about me, I'll just replay it (smiling).

BARRY WANSER: He had a pretty easy day. He still had over half of his overtake where most used all of theirs. He had a pretty easy day out there.

Q. Alex, you know what kind of a run you're on now. You've got essentially two races in the lead in the



championship. Do you ever stop and think about how special this run is?

ALEX PALOU: Every day. Every day. Yeah, I just don't give it for granted. I think nobody in the team does. So yeah, it's not like once a year that you think about it. It's like every single day when we talk about it.

Normally I call him after a race, Man, who expected that? After Nashville, Man, we're so lucky to be in this position. Because we are. We're lucky to have the full package. You don't know if it's going to end next weekend, if it's going to end next year, in '28. At some point it's going to end. This cannot go forever.

I think that we're doing a great job of, like, understanding how lucky we are. When I say 'we', I mean the team as well, everybody in the 10 car, CGR. I think that keeps us motivated.

Q. Alex, the challenge of the next two races, new races, back-to-back weekends, what is that challenge like for you?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, it's a challenge for the drivers, but also for the teams. We have no references. Obviously we have nowadays great tools with the simulator. At Honda, they do an incredible job for us. But it's never the same as knowing the track, knowing every bump, knowing how much you can push the car.

It's the same for the team. The team, they can get ideas of how to set up the car, but it's never the same. It's going to be a big challenge for everyone in the paddock.

I think this team has been excelling lately on whenever there's a big challenge like that or new challenge, so I'm excited.

Q. Alex, a few weeks ago you said last year was something magical, something you felt you were never going to be able to replicate almost. What does it mean for you to be able to rebound from the 'rough stretch' you had in the middle of the summer?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I mean, crazy. I don't know what to say. I really meant when I said that, that last year was very magical and it was very tough to repeat. Yeah, maybe we can even improve it. We'll try. We'll give our best.

Q. When Felix was up there, he talked about the lapped car situation, feeling like the series should grow up in the way that's treated. Do you agree with that as far as when those lapped cars need to get out of the way and whatnot?

THE MODERATOR: Talking about blue flags.

BARRY WANSER: I think we've established with INDYCAR that as long as you are battling to stay on the lead lap, even when you come a lap down, if you're not a lap down to the entire field, you're not blue flag eligible. You have the right to be there and fight. A yellow can give you an opportunity to be back on the lead lap, then you'd be fighting for a greater position.

That's just part of INDYCAR. We've been caught behind lapped cars before. I'm sure it will happen again in the future. That's just part of how we race.

ALEX PALOU: I agree. I think as long as we keep it consistent, it's the same for everyone. We had races where the traffic hurt us a lot and kind of allowed everybody to close the gap. We had Portland last year where that slowed down Power and Lundgaard in front of me. I was able to close a 10-second gap.

Yeah, as long as we keep it consistent, I'm happy. Same for everyone.

THE MODERATOR: We'll see everyone in a couple day's time.

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