

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Saturday, August 15, 2026

David Malukas

Marcus Armstrong

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Currently joined by David Malukas, third in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES points standings.

Your thoughts about the circuit for the first time.

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, I love it. I think it's fantastic. Super smooth. I think this probably is taking the lead on smoothest street course that we've had.

No, it's a blast. I think it's very well-designed. A lot of fun. A lot of difficult corners. From the hairpin to the last section, pit lane through turn 10, a lot of technicalities we need to fix up, but love it.

THE MODERATOR: Talk about the difficulty you've had in the group session.

DAVID MALUKAS: We've been dealing with it, especially just me and my car, just trying to build brake time. We get into an issue where tires are ready and brakes aren't. It's something that obviously we got to work on.

I just lost my temper, which I normally don't. Now we don't have a read on the reds and only a few hours to figure it out. Thankfully we got a good read from Scott and Josef.

THE MODERATOR: Open it up for questions.

Q. I assume you did simulator work. How close or different is it, especially the hairpin may be a little bit different?

DAVID MALUKAS: Well, hairpin is definitely different, for multiple reasons. Obviously a track change.

Also simulators, it's tough to picture elevation. On the sim it was flat. In real life you get a good elevation going up into the hairpin.

Other than that, the simulator was pretty spot on. Some corners feel wider and narrower than others. Supposed to

be more of like a big turn. It's going to be fun, a lot of fun.

Q. With the hairpin, do you think you'll be able to go two-wide or just single-file?

DAVID MALUKAS: I mean, you go on restarts or starts. If everybody is close and you have a run, somebody gets a little bit of a snap out of turn five - still trying to figure out the course, before turn five - turn four into five, maybe there's an opportunity to get a move done.

If it is clean air running, I don't think it's big enough of a run. You can maybe do a dive bomb, but you're going to go wide when the other guy does the normal corner, so I don't know.

Q. Did you feel the bump in turn 10?

DAVID MALUKAS: Yes, on entry. There's definitely a big bump on entry. I love it. Bumps just add technicality. You're trying to figure out how to get around it from a braking perspective. It's difficult, but I think it's nice, it's good.

Q. First time here on the track. The transition to going from practice two into qualifying a bit later today, not too much time to debrief, a night to sleep on it, what is the expectation?

DAVID MALUKAS: Well, that's why I speed-walked over here. Normally Dave knows I take my time. I've been kind of hauling my butt everywhere just to make sure we can get time to debrief.

Plans for us still stay the same. On track stays the same. Off track, a little more rushed. By the time qualifying comes, we should have everything close to where we want it to be.

The difficulty is from practice one, you're being a bit more reserved, maybe 90, 80 percent pushing. You don't want to mess something up today because you will lose a lot of track time.

Q. This street course is different than every other one

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on the schedule. Has your approach differed in any way? How have you built up to finding the limits in the first session?

DAVID MALUKAS: I think track progression was massive. When you look at the first few laps, there was still dust coming from my air intake into my eyes. I was blinking a lot to try to clean up my view. I would say by lap four or five, a lot of that got cleaned up, then the track grip started to build. With this new track resurfacing that they did, the grip level is so high, and you could feel it. Once you're kind of building some grip down, it is hooking heavily.

I think when you look at lap times, from practice one, by the time we get to qualifying, I think it's going to be a very big difference.

Q. With conditions much cooler to qualifying, how much more can you really grip through the corners? How much do you think we're going to see the speeds and lap times increase?

DAVID MALUKAS: It's going to be in seconds. Especially if it's cooler tonight, that's even better for us. It's going to be fast.

Q. You said this was going to be the smoothest street course. What was the street course before this that was smoothest?

DAVID MALUKAS: I feel like St. Petersburg is pretty smooth. I feel that is second place. Would have been first, but definitely second.

Q. Anything that surprised you on the track that you weren't expecting or thought would be different?

DAVID MALUKAS: Well, I mean, after the track walk, everything was a little bit more expected. I would just say almost entry of turn 10, how much speed you're actually carrying through that. I thought on the track walk it was going to be easy flat. It's on edge, for sure.

Q. A couple years ago when they went back to the streets of Detroit on Belle Isle, it was Bud's grand idea to have a dual pit lane. Now it seems to be standard operating procedure for any new street race. Do you think that's something we're going to see more of in the future?

DAVID MALUKAS: When it comes to street course designs, it works out perfectly. That's always the difficult area, is trying to build a pit lane to try to find that space. When you create the dual pit lane, you have opportunities to put the pit lane in parking lots. It works.

From a racing perspective, I don't think it causes any implications. It kind of I guess would be the pit lane runtime from which lane you would be would be the only concern.

I think it works out very well and it looks like from the viewing perspective.

THE MODERATOR: Marcus Armstrong joins us. Third quick in group one.

Your thoughts on the start to the weekend here today.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Yeah, no, it was fun. I mean, initially I was surprised actually because our simulator model was actually pretty good. Yeah, kudos to Honda for giving us a good sim model.

Yeah, it was slipperier than I expected. I was expecting a bit more grip. Maybe this afternoon it's going to become a little bit nicer. Initially it was like driving on ice.

Also a bit of a question mark on the tires really because, well, the red is meant to be the grippier tire, but from my view, it's not so. Yeah, we'll see.

THE MODERATOR: Open it up for questions.

Q. What were you expecting out of the hairpin coming in as far as like the shape compared to what it is now? Just how different does it make the course?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: The hairpin... Man, you're really getting my unfiltered thoughts here because I haven't even thought about it.

I feel like it's the opposite to what we expected. I expected it to be like grippy up high to sort of make it to be able to finish the corner, because it's obviously so tight, you need to be full up. Felix and I thought the ideal line was going to be up high - high, wide and handsome, but doesn't seem that way. At least no one's running up there, so there's zero grip.

It's going to be interesting in the race, especially lap one. It's going to be a bit of a traffic jam. Then even when you're following people, like on out laps I was following a couple of guys, Siegel and Newgarden, I saw two very different lines from both of them. Everyone has their own philosophy there.

Q. What kind of goes into figuring out what you feel like is the right line for that? Have you figured that out after this practice or something you still experiment



with?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Yeah, I think I tried everything just to see what works. As the track evolves, it's probably going to change. Just like Long Beach, that really tight hairpin, it builds a lot of rubber. The line that you take at the start of the weekend can vary a lot towards the end of the weekend. I guess we're going to have to keep adapting to that grip.

Yeah, it's a very tricky corner. Zero grip. You're like sliding in, sliding mid corner and sliding out. Yeah, it's a bit all over the show.

Q. How have your preparations changed with both practices and qualifying being today?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: I mean, there was a fairly simple run plan. We didn't test a whole lot. I just wanted to do as many laps as possible. That was the target really, was just to learn this place.

Like I said, the sim model was quite good. That kind of helped. But I thought that the car fired off really well. We basically drove out. I felt comfortable seeing that the tire fired up pretty quickly, on blacks at least. I felt very comfortable.

This afternoon's going to change. Obviously got three sessions today. The grip level this afternoon for qualifying will be, like, totally different I imagine. Hopefully these little cars also lay down some rubber.

Q. What are your expectations for tonight for qualifying? Different time of day, the lighting will be different.

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: I imagine it's going to be a red flag festival. Everyone is going to be pushing like crazy. It's an easy place to make a mistake, especially now with no grip. I expect a whole bunch of people to be doing balls-to-the-walls kind of stuff, crashing. You have to do the lap early, be fast early basically.

Q. What do you feel about this actual track? Are you having fun?

MARCUS ARMSTRONG: Certainly fun. I mean, I liked the track downtown, too. It sort of provided its own challenges. It was like concrete mid corner, every other possible seal in and out. Here it's obviously a bit more predictable.

Frankly, I prefer this because you can drive it a bit harder, know what you're going to have in 25 meters' time. So far I

really enjoy this place.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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