

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Marcus Ericsson

Ron Ruzewski

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Marcus Ericsson joins us. His first win in the Toronto area. First of the season, as well. Fifth career win, fourth on a street course.

Ron Ruzewski also joins us, the team principal for Andretti Global, as the team celebrates their 79th INDYCAR SERIES win.

Marcus, your thoughts on some of the calls that were made. Obviously you had a rocket ship today.

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, no, it was an eventful race, I think as we expected going into the race, seeing how yesterday played out.

It's a really fun track here, but it's really challenging, especially with the pavement being very high grip in the racing line, but off line it's quite slick. Expected to have a lot of things happening. There were a lot of curve balls thrown at us.

I felt all the way through, especially in the race, that I had a really fast car. There were key decisions there where we decided to stay out. I was pushing really hard to stay out. I know it was not ideal because I needed a ton of pace to be able to pull out the gap needed to come out in a decent place. But I really felt like the car was just so fast that I wanted to try and stay out and use that to my advantage.

It was fun, that middle stint when I was doing quallie laps, two, two and a half seconds faster than the rest of the field. That was a good time.

It was still tough to make our way back to the lead coming back in seventh. Had to work for it today.

THE MODERATOR: Ron, Will was up here talking earlier about how the chemistry of the team is coming together. Are you seeing that?

RON RUZEWSKI: Yeah, absolutely. I told the team after

Portland, we had all three cars in the top eight, I said, This is the expectation. It shouldn't be the exception, it should be the expectation of us every week.

I think we stubbed our toe a little bit yesterday in qualifying on a couple of the cars. Certainly showed the pace of what we had today. There was a point today where we were sitting there 1-2-3 trying to figure out at the halfway point how to not mess things up. A lot of curve balls thrown at us.

As a team, Marcus, Kyle and Will are gelling well together. The engineers, really all the staff, everybody is getting a taste of success. I think it's just going to keep building momentum the rest of the year.

THE MODERATOR: Open it up to questions.

Q. Marcus, you were driving well before this, but in what way did getting the mid-season extension take some of the weight off of your back?

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, I mean, it feels great to have the confidence from the team to continue. But I feel like this year, it's been a trend all season that we've been strong. I think I'm the fourth best qualifier in the field on average.

I feel like we've had quite a few big results and podiums taken away from us from I hate saying bad luck, but things not really going our way, where we've been looking to be on our way to a podium for a long time of the race, but few things hasn't gone our way.

All the year, on every type of track, we've been fast. I think that says a lot about the Andretti Global organization, the work that Ron and everybody else has done, stepping it up on all types of tracks.

I feel like my three years at Andretti, the first two years we had our specialty in street courses. Every now and then we could be good on other tracks as well.

This year that's the big thing. I feel like we don't have any real weakness. We're very strong on all tracks. Not saying



we're going to stop. We need to keep pushing. That's been a big difference.

For me, the 28 crew has been working really well together. I have a couple of new people on my car this year. We've been gelling really well.

I don't see this as sort of a surprise that we're sitting here winning. I feel like that's been trending that way. I've been telling my guys the last couple of races, We keep doing what we're doing now, it's going to be a matter of time, not a matter of if or not, because we've really been strong every race here for a long time.

Q. How has the stability within the program helped you?

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, I mean, it comes from hard work, first of all. I had a terrible season last year. I lost a lot of confidence in myself and struggled with the car. It was a big reset over the winter. I worked very hard on myself, but also within the team, with my guys, to sort of try and get the car more to my liking, more in a window where I feel like I can perform and get the most out of myself.

I think Will Power has been a big part of that, as well. Really driving the development on the setups in a certain direction, as well. That's been really, really good.

Also the fact, like Ron touched on, we are Will, Kyle and myself, three really fast drivers that works really well together pushing the team forward. I think that's been paying off a lot, as well.

Makes me really excited to know we're going to continue that into next year with the momentum we have right now.

Q. Ron, what was the communication like figuring out that last stint to get Marcus in the lead?

RON RUZEWSKI: Yeah, I mean, we knew Marcus had pace. Right before there was a little bit of contact, we just talked about, Hey, Marcus has got a lot of pace, tire and fuel advantage, we need to take the fight to Palou. Obviously we're always thinking about the big picture. We need to take points away from Alex to keep Kyle in the conversation at all.

It was coming and we knew both cars had pace. We knew he had to hunt him down. That was of the best way to do it. Even when Will got in front of Marcus, that was kind of key because Will was able to use his tires to close up and get pace on the other guy.

I think the stands are working well together. There's know

egos. Right now it's working really well.

Q. Marcus, we've talked about the extension. For the team to put the faith in you, what does that mean to you?

MARCUS ERICSSON: It means a ton, of course. But I felt ever since being in Andretti really at home in the team. I think it's a great atmosphere within the team. We have a great group on the 28 car.

Like I said, I feel like this has been coming. It's been a matter of time. This race was fun. Especially the second half of the race was fun to get everything out of the car and just push maximum.

When you are in that zone where like you feel at one with the car, it's just not happens that often. Today it really happened. I really felt super confident to just push.

Yeah, it's a good feeling.

Q. You finally have a win without a red flag in the race.

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, I know. It was probably close to a red flag here today with all the cautions. It's a messy street race. My other street course wins I've been fast as well, but it's been some circumstances. I think today we won it on pure pace. We were the best car out there, and we won it because we played the game and we pushed when we needed to and we delivered when we needed to. So that felt really good.

Q. Ron, elaborate on how important it is to keep the team chemistry, re-signing Marcus, having all those drivers and engineers gelling.

RON RUZEWSKI: Yeah, I mean, certainly my experience before Andretti was all about continuity. I learned a lot of lessons from that. Trying to bring that here. Obviously there's a lot of people there that have been together.

Now it's just trying to give everybody a little bit of a bump, a little bit of a nudge to really take everything to the next level. I think we're in a good spot going into the rest of the season. Looking forward to '27.

Q. Marcus, it's been three and a half years since you won. You said you could see this coming. During the last three and a half years, was there ever a point where you thought you may not win again?

MARCUS ERICSSON: Is it three and a half? Two and a half?

Q. St. Pete.

MARCUS ERICSSON: Time goes (smiling).

That's the thing in racing, you have to believe in yourself, right? I went eight years without a win when I went from F2, went in F1, then came to INDYCAR. It's easy to give up and do something else.

I always feel like mental strength and that ability to push myself, even when things doesn't go your way, it's been one of my biggest strengths as a driver.

Even last year with the year we had, I don't think there was any scenario last year where I would have won a race because I just wasn't fast and I wasn't happy with the way the car felt. It was no one's fault. Things didn't work out, we were in a bad spiral.

Again, it comes from working hard, putting the work in. There's nothing like coming for free. You can't after a season like last year sit around and think hopefully next year will be better. You have to put in hours with the team, with the personnel, with yourself. That's where I really did that over the winter and that's been paying off.

So yeah, no, I knew I could do it. I just needed the right sort of, yeah, scenario around me really to get back into that space.

I think now I'm driving better than I've ever been in INDYCAR. I had three years with Ganassi where I finished at the top of the championship and won races. I think the pace we've had this year every weekend, with every track, I think it's better than that.

Q. The contact with Power almost looked like I have the car to win this thing...

MARCUS ERICSSON: Obviously it was very unfortunate that we touched. I saw him coming. We talked about it. Even the next straight he was going to let me go. Yeah, that was not ideal.

But I was really eager to get by and sort of hunt down the leaders because I really felt like I had the pace to win at that point.

It's all good. We talked about it. We touched, but we were all square, we were side by side. There's no hard feelings.

Again, it's one of the strengths of the team that we have that chemistry between the drivers that we're working really well together. Really happy to see him on the podium, as well.

Q. Marcus, the track, new track, are there any parts of it you felt you were able to take advantage of that other people weren't? How does it compare to some of the other tracks in the circuit?

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, I loved the track from the first lap. It's really a challenging track. I think it's a very high-speed track for being a street course. Usually street courses are more slow speed.

This track, like, the first section one, two, three there is very high speed. The end of the lap turn ten is tricky with the bumpy braking there, a very quick turn in. It's one of those tracks where you really need to have confidence in the car, you need to be able to attack.

It's a really fun challenge. We've seen this weekend it's a tricky challenge as well because it's very easy to get a little bit wrong. There's no margin for error. You're in the wall straightaway.

It is a bit like a road course, but with walls around. It's really a big challenge. Obviously it suited me quite well. I enjoyed it.

Q. Marcus, how does today's win compare to your other INDYCAR victories?

MARCUS ERICSSON: There's nothing like winning the 500, so that's always going to be on its own. Changed my life.

But I think apart from that, this was my strongest win where I really showed pure pace all the way through and had to fight my way back. I really had to work for this one. I really felt like yeah, I put in the work to deserve to win today. I felt really good.

But every win is valuable in this series. There's no easy wins. There's always so many good cars and teams out there. I appreciate each one of them. I felt like today was a great way to win the way we did it.

Q. This was Markham's debut on the INDYCAR SERIES. What did you think not just of the track but the facilities, the whole week?

MARCUS ERICSSON: I felt it was great. I think obviously Friday was not ideal, but when we got going yesterday, it's been a fantastic weekend. Great showing from the fans. It's been a great atmosphere. Yeah, everything has been working well.

It's always challenging on the first year for a new track. I'm

sure when we come back in a year's time, everything is going to be run a lot smoothly. Talking with the drivers, everyone loves the layout, thinks it's really fun. I think they've done a really good job.

RON RUZEWSKI: Yeah, I mean, I think the track's unique. Obviously it was pretty smooth, but yet bumpy. I think it's just going to continue to get character. I think it's going to be a staple event as we go forward in the next couple years.

Q. Marcus, you overtook Romain so close to the end. Could you put me in your mindset when you made that pass.

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, when I got by Will, there was Alex and Romain in front of me. I knew they were on a bit of a fuel save. They were doing some lifting, coasting down the straights. When I hunt them down, I could see their weaknesses quite quickly.

With Romain, I know he was lifting quite a bit at the end of the straight. I sort of knew where I wanted to make my move on him.

It's still difficult. Very tight with the walls. You don't know how he's going to defend. With my advantage, I wanted to get by him straightaway because you never know if there's a yellow, the fuel advantage goes away, it's a restart, anything can happen.

As soon as I caught him, I wanted to get by straightaway. Yeah, it was a great way to do it.

Q. What is going through drivers' heads in the car?

MARCUS ERICSSON: You have to always focus on the next challenge, right? Especially on a track like this, you can never really let go of your focus. Even driving in the end there on my own in the lead, you make the tiniest of mistakes, there's no margin for error. You're in the wall, throw away a win.

Until you take that last corner and go on the straight, you can't really let go and think about winning the race. You just need to focus on the next corner, next lap, what the car is doing, all that. It was just one part of winning that race.

Q. You're building up a pretty decent record here on street tracks in INDYCAR. How does the confidence build up for you? Another first-time next weekend. What is that going to be like mentally?

MARCUS ERICSSON: I got to give a lot of credit to the Andretti Global team. Think they did a great job with the

preparation, simulation. Coming to a new track like this, it's really tough because you don't have any previous data or videos or anything to look back at, no setups, nothing. You had to really do a good preparation to roll off strong.

I think we really did that. From the first practice on Saturday morning, the cars felt good. Really we didn't do much changes throughout the weekend. It was just fine-tuning from then on. It gives credit to that preparation work.

I'm of course hoping we can do similar things next week in DC. Like you say, a similar scenario, new track, you don't have any previous experience. Yeah, huge credit to Andretti team there.

Q. Obviously this is the first time here in Markham. Take me through the atmosphere here compared to the exhibition here in Toronto.

MARCUS ERICSSON: It was always a great showing downtown as well. Within the drivers, we always enjoy coming to Toronto, get that atmosphere. All the fans are very knowledgeable and passionate. It's always been a fun stop on the calendar.

It was really cool to see that same energy here in Markham. It's always a bit of an unknown, is people going to come out here. I met a lot of people from here in Markham as well that explored a race for the first time. Hopefully we got some new fans as well that's going to come again.

Been great atmosphere. A lot of fans every day. Been packed. Really thankful for that.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations.

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