

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Alex Palou

Pato O'Ward

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Joined by Alex Palou. Six wins this year. 133-point lead in the standings.

Alex, your initial thoughts about this circuit.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, very cool. I mean, it was a hectic session there with starting on wet, kind of the track just evolving a lot. I think it's going to have the opportunity to evolve a lot in practice two.

First I didn't know if it was going to be fun or not to drive. It's a blast, super fun. Very bumpy, huge bumps heading into turn two and turn six. Massive bumps that are going to spice things up.

I think it's actually going to create good racing just because it's quite tough to go over there and have good braking and also have good traction when the bumps are on exits.

Yeah, really fun. Incredible to see the Capitol Hill, exit of seven, just incredible experience. Yeah, so far super happy. Looking forward to see what we can do in practice two.

THE MODERATOR: Open it up for questions.

Q. Alex, do you now adjust the car for the bumps or can you avoid the bumps?

ALEX PALOU: Tough. I don't know. Like, I normally just let Julian decide that. I think the bumps are so big, there's not much you can do. You need to have a car that it's all right over bumps, that it's not trying to kill you every time.

Once it's manageable, you just need to go over them and try and make the car as fast as possible. Yeah, I'll talk to him, see what our options are.

We cannot really make our, like, suspension (indiscernible) longer, which is what we would need, right? It will be fine. I think we just need to find the best driving lines compared

to Kyffin, Scott, to see if there's a chance to avoid some of them. Other than that we just need to make the car faster for this track.

Q. How would you compare the bumps to what you felt first practice in Arlington? How much of these two practices are trying to figure out where exactly the bumps are?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I think already yesterday we could see there was going to be huge bumps. We kind of prepared a little bit already heading into that, just to kind of avoid what happened at Arlington. I think we went too much through what our ideas on the simulator were.

Honestly, yeah, as I said, going to try to see if we can get a better balance in the corners, not focus so much on the bumps. They're not going to disappear. I think if you move a little bit on lanes, might be a little bit better, but it's not going to completely go away from that.

Yeah, same for everyone.

Q. What's the bumpiest part of the track, in your opinion? Where is the best place to pass, where we'll see the most action?

ALEX PALOU: I would say probably heading into turn two on the straight, it's very bumpy. Even exit of one there's a huge bump that I don't think you can avoid. Heading into six, as well, huge bump.

I think there's quite a lot of passing places. Turn two, I mean, you can brake deep, super deep. That could be a passing opportunity. I think turn three and four, it's too optimistic. Heading to turn five, that's for sure a passing place. Turn six no. Turn one probably.

There's two really good chances with turn two and turn five. There could be an extra one if you go heading to turn one.

I think there's going to be a lot of action. I see that just having a wide track, it's just going to allow us to have more passing than, for example, Detroit. It's so narrow that even if you are so much faster, you can just block so much



easier. Here, if you're not going to have the pace, they're going to overtake you.

Q. What do you think of the sponsorship activation, partners who currently aren't in INDYCAR?

ALEX PALOU: Incredible. It's incredible to see all the sponsors that are in INDYCAR. Incredible to see from my side so involved in this race and INDYCAR. Like, they've been on many other races, as well.

It's great to see new sponsors as well. Just to see big companies involved in INDYCAR through the series, through the tracks, through the teams, through drivers, it's incredible.

That's what we need. That's what we've been asking for. This is what we got. I think it for sure surpassed all my expectations.

THE MODERATOR: Alex, we'll cut you loose. Thanks for hopping on. Good luck the rest of the day.

ALEX PALOU: Thank you. Thanks, guys.

THE MODERATOR: Pato O'Ward joins us, as well.

Pato, your thoughts on this circuit.

PATO O'WARD: It's got a lot of character, man. It's obviously a very short layout. It was exciting out there. I was looking forward to the evolution that we saw going from wets to the dry.

Yeah, so far it's been a good session to learn quite a lot of what this track has to offer.

THE MODERATOR: Open it up for questions for Pato.

Q. Compared to maybe what you came in expecting about the track from sim or whatever, what are some of the different challenges you encountered in this first session?

PATO O'WARD: I'd say the biggest factor that we were considering, but obviously didn't really know how it was going to be, was the bumps.

We got quite a bit of bumps on the exit of turn one, quite a bit of bumps going into two, the straightaway. I would say that's taken over a little bit of what the characteristic of what this track is.

There's certain ones that are right where maybe the car doesn't love it all the time. That's a little bit of probably

what we're going to be working around.

Q. Looking ahead to tomorrow, a particularly long race, do you have a different approach? Do you have survival in mind? How does that change things?

PATO O'WARD: Oh, man, long race, obviously the strategies are going to be all over the place. I think it's going to be quite interesting to see how people strategize their push to pass because we've only got 150 seconds of push to pass, and we basically have 150 laps. If you use it every lap, you only have one second per lap-ish. You definitely don't want to do that.

You also want to attack but also want to save some towards the end. There are quite a lot of straightaways where you will see a lot of passing opportunities.

I think it's going to be a good race.

Q. How are these two practice sessions about figuring out where the bumps are, get the right line?

PATO O'WARD: That's huge for us, just knowing. There's quite a few that really, like, it throws the car into a hard limiter in the shift. That can be very damaging to the speed of the straightaway. You need to be quite aware of where to place the car.

But also ride heights. We were one of the cars, I'm assuming quite a lot of other cars out there, as well, went out, you're like, Oh, my God, the front is way too low. We have to start raising the car. The strikes were extremely aggressive.

It's about getting all the small details right. A lot of us were pretty impressed with how much grip there is out there already.

Q. With the race being as long as it is, do you feel it will be something where qualifying won't actually be indicative of how this race finishes or...

PATO O'WARD: I think qualifying always has its situation of helping you or hurting you. It's hard to say. We have never done a race here. You don't really know what to expect from what the strategy is going to look like. Is traffic going to be easy or difficult to handle? How much time are you going to lose if you get stuck behind a slower car?

I think all those things we're going to start realizing here in practice, seeing if we can place the car to be able to fight through traffic quite easily or not. I feel like all those things will then lead to the strategy decisions that we make.

Q. Do you have any kind of a sense after one practice session what this is going to be like over 147 laps physically?

PATO O'WARD: Physically it's humid out there, man. We're going to lose a lot of water, a lot of water. We need to be well-hydrated. That's a good point. I need to get my drink bottle right now and keep on hydrating. It's the lightest I've weighed in all year right now at the weigh-in.

It's going to be humid, it's going to be physical. Every challenge that a street course usually throws at you. It's bumpy. You got a bunch of sweat inside of the helmet. You're bouncing up and down in there. It gets pretty rough, gets pretty aggressive.

Yeah, I expect it to be a tough race.

Q. Personally how are you feeling physicality-wise? Can you go the distance? Is that going to be an advantage for you over others?

PATO O'WARD: Yeah, I'm ready for the street fight, man. I train really hard when I'm home and I train really hard in the off-season. I feel like these situations are what I try and prepare myself to be able to withstand. Without it, being a situation where it makes you worse.

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