

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, August 30, 2026

Alex Palou

Chip Ganassi

Barry Wanser

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: It's a pleasure to introduce the 2026 NTT INDYCAR SERIES champion, five-time title holder in INDYCAR, Alex Palou.

Also joining us today, celebrating an unprecedented 18th INDYCAR SERIES championship, car owner Chip Ganassi is here.

Wouldn't be a post-race press conference without the 'Alex and Barry Show', Barry Wanser.

Alex, how do you put into words a fifth championship in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES?

ALEX PALOU: I can't. It's very tough, man. It's tough to put into words. Everything that I owe to this team, to these two mens sitting next to me, that they give me the opportunity to be not only a race winner, then a champion, now a five-time champion.

It's been incredible. I just feel like we just started yesterday. It just feels like we started yesterday. We're just getting closer and closer. We're having more fun and more fun each day.

It's been an absolute joy of a year. The last two years have been just magical for us.

THE MODERATOR: Six wins, eight poles, seven podiums, 12 top fives, 14 top 10s. You led 12 races. 673 laps led, all leading once again in the INDYCAR SERIES championship. You're only how old, 29?

ALEX PALOU: I'm going to turn 30, so yeah. It's going to be a big number (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: Chip is rolling his eyes.

Chip, congratulations. I think we added it up, 13th title in

the last 19 years. People who are driven, passionate, you have that in spades with this race team. Specifically what about this run that Palou is on for you?

CHIP GANASSI: Yeah, first of all, I want to thank my team. I want to thank the driver, obviously. I'm just so blessed.

When I look at this guy next to me here, five championships in six years, the team has 18 now, I passed my pal Roger. But the fact of the matter is, I wouldn't be here without him. If it wasn't for Roger setting the bar, there wouldn't be a bar to exceed or to shoot for. I want to thank him for doing what he's done for INDYCAR racing for so many years, making it possible for someone like our team to come along and win 18 championships. So my hat's off to him. I know he's not going to sit idly by being in second place now in championships. We'll have to see because this guy to my right, he's got a lot left in the tank, as Roger likes to say. Roger has a lot left in the tank, too. He's going to be here for a while doing this. Stand by for more fun.

THE MODERATOR: Barry, you've seen firsthand maybe more so than anyone else how the race craft for Alex has changed over the last six years or so. What has made him elite in your mind?

BARRY WANSE: I just think his ability to constantly learn and take advantage of the resources that we have at Chip Ganassi Racing. Alex can't perform as well as he does without such a great team behind him. The engineering department certainly has knocked it out of the park again with some great cars. Certainly in the pits has been amazing this year.

Yeah, I mean, Alex is just impressive. Very awesome. To be able to take advantage of what you've been given, it's hard to do. We've shown this year there have been some hard moments. What we do is not easy across the board. It's great to come out on top again.

THE MODERATOR: You don't have a Taylor Swift dance for you like at Long Beach?



BARRY WANSER: No, that was odd. That's not us.

THE MODERATOR: Open it up for questions for the 2026 champions.

Q. Chip, Barry, you have witnessed so many champions. What about their mentality or personality is similar amongst all of them that Alex has?

CHIP GANASSI: I think you see it in their eyes. I mean, it sounds like a small thing, but it's not. I see it in these drivers' eyes. They have a desire. They have good vision. They have a drive to succeed. You see it in their eyes all the time. You see it in Alex's.

It's a common denominator among all the champions we've had. It's just a certain sparkle, yeah. So I think that's the short answer.

BARRY WANSER: Just to back up what Chip said there. We've had some incredible drivers to come along and win championships, multiple champions. We lost our great friend Alex Zanardi this year. Who knows how many champions he could have won if he stayed in INDYCAR.

It's fun to compare, but it is amazing to see that drive that they have to constantly learn, to constantly work on their craft to be constantly better.

CHIP GANASSI: If I could add one last thing, too.

These have been said before, but we're in the midst of a generational thing here, a generational driver. Four in a row has been done before, but five out of six hasn't been done before. That's something that's kind of unprecedented. We're in the midst of that right now. It's not over.

Q. Could you have ever imagined that it would turn into this?

CHIP GANASSI: Yeah, you know, no, you couldn't. Sure, you dream about those kind of things, you think about it. You would, like I said, I said this many times, you wouldn't dare tell someone you were thinking that. They would think, like our old pal Robin, he would think I'd be gloating or something if I were to say that (smiling).

Q. Chip, to achieve 18 titles in a relatively short amount of time, you've almost had to have an unprecedented string of success about Alex, Juan Pablo, now Alex.

CHIP GANASSI: Dario.

Q. Could you ever have imagined that would be the fate of your team?

CHIP GANASSI: No, not at all. Same answer. You can never think of that. I always just want to have a team, when I was a driver, my MO was, when I started the team, I wanted to have a team that I would want to drive for. That's kind of always the way I looked at it. I always want to give the drivers what they need and what they don't need.

I try to give them the equipment, give them the people, give our people the tools they need, give the drivers what they need. I stay out of their hair. I don't get involved.

You've heard me say many times, I'm not calling these people up every week, What are you doing? I stay out of their hair. They know what we want to do, what we want to accomplish. It's a good thing for all of us.

Q. To achieve this, then go to Laguna Seca, pay tribute to Alex Zanardi, comment on that.

CHIP GANASSI: It's going to be very, very special. Not only we're going to have on Alex's car the bolt, the Zanardi bolt, that is arguably a Z there, but to do it at Laguna Seca... I just saw a video of 1983 when I finished on the podium at Laguna Seca.

I was on the podium in 1983.

ALEX PALOU: I know that (smiling).

CHIP GANASSI: I got to tell you (smiling). Yeah, I just saw a video of that this morning.

It's very special to see that place, what they've done there, how they've improved upon it so much. It's an iconic racetrack. Obviously we've had some iconic happenings there in our team over the years. So it's very, very special.

It's also special to go in with a little cushion here, under no pressure. No pressure next weekend. We can just go have fun.

BARRY WANSER: Yeah, we've been having fun all the way up to this point for sure. To be able to carry on at Laguna is great.

There are a few of us that Chip calls on a weekly basis, regardless of what he just said (laughter). Yeah, obviously Chip gives us everything we can ask for. We have to as a group have to put it together, go out there and execute. That's what the team has done. It's been amazing.



To head out of Laguna, to run the thunderbolts is going to be awesome for the throwback, to remember our great friend Alex Zanardi.

Q. Alex, you talk about the good times so much. This seems to be a peak. Put that into perspective. What are you feeling as a champion now?

ALEX PALOU: I never thought I would be first of all an INDYCAR driver. Never thought I could make it. Never thought that I would have the chance to be a professional race car driver. That was my dream.

When I had the opportunity to be an INDYCAR driver, that was already a huge achievement for me. I was living the dream.

I remember also then Chip giving me that chance to drive for a championship-winning team at that moment. They just won in 2020 with Scott. That was mind-blowing.

Since then I feel like I've been on this incredible cloud where everything has been so good for me. I have Chip and everybody at CGR, they've been giving me all the tools. Julian. I have the people around me, they take so much care of me, and they make me look so good on track. It's just super fun.

I don't know how long this is going to last. One year, 10 years, 15, five years. I don't know how long are we going to be able to be up top. But I'm enjoying every single day with this team, with this car.

Q. Chip, do you let yourself think that he could have eight titles before he's done?

CHIP GANASSI: Absolutely. I mean, you'd be crazy not to believe that, yeah. I wouldn't want to bet against that, I know that. I don't know what the odds are in Vegas of that, but I wouldn't want to bet against it.

Q. Why not?

CHIP GANASSI: 'Cause it's possible, it can happen. It can absolutely happen.

Q. You talked about him winning five in six years. What has allowed him to do that?

CHIP GANASSI: What has allowed him to do that? Like we've been talking about, Bob: the people around him, the team, the partners we've had, the guy over on the far right there. It takes a lot of people to make this stuff happen.

I'm fortunate to have great people around. I'm not even on

the 10 car. I'm on the 9 car. I get to enjoy it from a distance almost, seeing those guys set the pace.

But it's one team. We all work together. We're all trying to win. It's open book with us all the time across the board with all the drivers, all the teams.

The nice thing is, everybody on the team's happy when someone on the team does well. That's a big thing. We have lots of people over the years that have been a part of this team that still have their fingerprints that are still here. That's ex drivers that have contributed to this championship, X sponsors, people that have worked on the team over the years. A lot of people still have fingerprints on this championship today. They're still here. They're still part of this.

BARRY WANSER: If I could add, Chip is for sure with us on the 10 car. He might not be sitting there, but Chip and I did the strategy on the 10 car for 16 years together. He mentored me to be able to be in the position I am now. He's always with us.

THE MODERATOR: Do you hear from Chip at times during the race?

BARRY WANSER: Occasionally. Occasionally. All just good feedback, always.

THE MODERATOR: You're a good employee, Barry.

CHIP GANASSI: Good answer. Good answer.

Q. As a Pittsburgh guy, you grew up at a time of the Steel Curtain, the Super Bowl championships. You know a little bit about what they were as a dynasty. Do you believe what you have here with Alex is a dynasty? How tough is it in sports to have a dynasty?

CHIP GANASSI: Good question, Bruce. I haven't given that much thought. I always try to take it one week at a time here. We'll do some celebrating when the time is right for that. We'll enjoy it.

But I can tell you, the great thing about this team is we're going to have a little bit of fun here at Laguna Seca next weekend, get a little vacation time after that. But they'll be right back at it wanting to do it again next year. Nobody wants to do it more again than the driver. He wants to do it again. First thing he said to me when I congratulated him, Let's do it again.

We just want to keep doing it, yeah.

Q. Alex, you make it look so easy. What is it that you



do behind the scenes that we may not see that gives you that burning passion and desire to not only be good but to almost be flawless?

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ALEX PALOU: Not easy, man. It's hard. You saw last weekend, even today, we were struggling. There's moments where I don't really feel as good as some other weekends.

I don't really know. I think just the position I am where I only need to worry about myself driving. I don't really need to worry about are the pit stops going to be good, are my strategies going to be okay. I don't really need to worry about big stuff from the team or the car. I only need to focus on myself.

Obviously working with the team, but I know they're going to excel at what they are doing. I just can focus on pushing myself and having fun. I just love every single day that I'm on track, whether it's testing, whether it's racing. I just love to be with the team and inside the car.

Q. You've dominated the hybrid era, going back to 2024 when the package was introduced. What work did you all put in to capitalize on it so well? What do you think is giving you an edge now?

BARRY WANSER: I mean, obviously our partner Honda puts a lot of research and development into maximizing the use of the hybrid system. Alex being able to adapt to it, that's been a big factor, for sure.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I mean, tough to say. I don't know if people are struggling with something about the hybrid or not. With our car, it was good whenever we adopted it I think Mid-Ohio in 2024. Actually we struggled a little bit at the beginning. We didn't really get any more wins with hybrid during 2024. It was all in '25 and '26. Kind of took us a little bit long.

As Barry said, I think the biggest work came from Honda throughout the off-season preparing for it, just giving us the guidelines of how to use it, how to use it accordingly. I would say that everybody now is on the same page.

But yeah, still cool be the only ones winning, having won with the hybrid.

BARRY WANSER: I think most teams have kind of figured it out. I think you saw at Indy this year in qualifying, there were so many different qualifying strategies, use of the hybrid, that everyone tried. Some were more successful than others. It was pretty interesting to see how everyone was doing it.