

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Friday, September 4, 2026

Christian Rasmussen

Felix Rosenqvist

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Currently joined by Christian Rasmussen. Sixth quick in the group one session. Best finish of ninth last year last year at Laguna Seca.

You claim this is the first time you've been in on a post-practice news conference.

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: True story (smiling). First time I've been invited. You should invite me (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: What do you make of the start for your weekend?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I think it was all right. Definitely found a lot of pace on the red tires. We were struggling a little bit on the blacks. Man, you only get one chance at it. The tire deg increases year to year here. That is no joke this year. Like, tire deg is very, very big. Once you're past that first run, you're never going to find that same lap time again. Felt decent on the reds. Yeah, I think we got some pace in it.

THE MODERATOR: Might make things kind of spicy on Sunday.

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Usually makes for a good race, right?

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.

Q. Can you tell us something about the traffic situation here. Compared to any other kind of championship, especially in Europe, the INDYCAR season is ending very early. Do you have any other races coming up?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I have nothing scheduled as of right now. I usually do Daytona start of the year, the 24 Hours. Planning to do that. That's about it.

You said the traffic situation?

Q. Yes.

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: In the race?

Q. Yes.

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Well, that's a thing. Hopefully you're not part of it and you're the one going through it (smiling).

No, I think it's similar to other places. I could see that it might be a little bit more this year, if it's super high deg, that some cars are going to fall off more than others. It's a thing to manage.

If you're fast enough, you're on the good side of it.

Q. (No microphone.)

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Well, I think we've all seen the clip, right? I think there's a couple year to year, right? It's definitely a tough, tough passing zone.

Q. There seems to be traffic everywhere except for the leader. A lot of times we see the leader start on the pole, run off into the distance. What can possibly be done to make it a more competitive race in terms of catching the leader?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Get a different leader (smiling).

No, yeah, I don't know. It's a good question. But is it that much different than any other race with traffic? I think it's very much a track length kind of a thing, right?

I feel like anywhere we go, if it's on a shorter track, there's only going to be so many seconds between each car. I feel like it kind of evens out, right?

Q. How valuable has it been for ECR to not have to worry about any driver lineup drama because everybody is known who is going to be back in 2027?



CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Yeah, a lot of stuff is going on out there right now. For me personally, it feels very nice to be locked in and just know that I'm going to stay with this organization for the foreseeable future. It excites me. It excites me where we're going as a team.

Again, this year has been super tough, but not necessarily the team's fault all of it. Again, we're still building. We're still getting better. I think there's a lot of opportunities for us to improve things for 2027, a lot of things in the works.

I'm excited to see what's ahead for us.

Q. Do you put yourself in a decent enough position when it comes to the leaders circle that you can go out and race and not worry about points? If so, is this weekend about next year as much as this year?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I think this weekend is about taking ourselves in the off-season on a good note. I think obviously Milwaukee was super good for us in terms of the leaders circle. I mean, we're not mathematically out of it, but we're pretty safe, which is a good feeling.

We're just going into this weekend trying to get the maximum out of it, like we are every weekend, hopefully finish the year on a good note before we go into the off-season.

Q. Good momentum entering this weekend with what happened in Milwaukee. What does that do heading into the off-season confidence-wise after the unfortunate season you had this year?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Again, it's hard to say, right? There is so many times this year that, like, we've just been caught out being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Like Markham where Dixon got spun right in front of us. Same thing in Detroit where we kind of got taken out from the back. I think both places we were fairly competitive. I think we have been competitive in a lot of places, but just haven't really had the chance to show it.

I think it's just about bringing that into next year. Then again, yeah, hopefully finish the year off strong here. Yeah, hopefully finish off the season strong here so we have something to be proud of going into the off-season.

Q. There's been a lot of talk about the season finale. Where do you feel a season finale in INDYCAR belongs?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I love being out here on the west coast.

Q. You mentioned tire deg and stuff like that. This practice session we just had is roughly about the same time as when the race is going to take place. Potentially look at the same type of heat range. The thing you see here a lot is people dipping a wheel off the edge of the track, gravel coming onto the track. Is that going to play a part in the tire deg scenario?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I don't know. I think it's just this place, like, year to year, you just see it. I was looking at it before the session, kind of was looking at Q2, Fast 12 times from year to year. It's in between a second and second and a half slower from 2023 to 2024, and the same from 2024 to 2025.

Every year I think the tarmac, I don't know what it is. It's really rough around here. It takes a big dip year to year. I think we'll see the same this year.

THE MODERATOR: Christian, thanks for coming in.

Felix Rosenqvist joins us. Second in the all-car session, first in group two today. The 2023 pole winner here. Best finish of fourth a couple years ago. Three podiums this year. Of course, there's that win at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway as well as the defending Indy 500 champion.

Your thoughts on the start to your weekend.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, it was pretty good. Pretty good session for us. Good on both compounds, which is always nice, yeah.

A little bit of an emotional weekend last weekend with the team. Obviously we've known this for a long time, but it's definitely gone quick since I announced I was leaving. Obviously excited for the future. Yeah, always a lot on your mind when you know you're going to leave a good group, a lot of good people, friendships and so on.

We all said the best thing we can do is go out and try to win and have some fun, as well. It's kind of a like a no-pressure weekend in a way. I think we're in no man's land in the championship. We can technically finish seventh, worst case 11th.

Yeah, just go and do everything you can. I'm definitely going to give it everything this weekend to try to get another one.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. It has been said there are two big winners every year: the champion and the winner of the Indy 500. You have to feel like this has been a fantastic year for



you because you won the Indianapolis 500. Does it almost feel as big or maybe even in some ways bigger than if you win a season championship?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, it's its own little thing. People are comparing it --

I think it's definitely incredibly hard to do. The fact that I did it is a bit of the monkey off the back. At the same time I think we all get the perspective once you enter the season again, after Indy.

It's not the happiest I've been with a season overall. I feel like I've done mistakes on my own, which cost me quite a lot in certain tracks and races. Maybe not my most complete year. But definitely the highs have been very high.

Obviously Indy with that was just, yeah, incredible. Super proud to have done that with MSR. We're still celebrating that a little bit every day.

Q. Felix, after this year's win, the Indy 500, there are strong talks in the Formula 1 world about you, what you will do. In case a Formula 1 possibility will turn up, what will be your decision?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Oh, I didn't know that.

THE MODERATOR: I didn't know that either.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I don't really think there's much truth to that. Yeah, I mean, I'm super happy here. Like, I have a home here. I live in Indianapolis. I have a family here. Love the series. Every day I show up to the track, I'm just grateful to be in INDYCAR.

I've done some other series meanwhile I've been in INDYCAR. Every time I've done that I just kind of remind myself that INDYCAR is so much more fun than anything else.

I've never tried F1. I've never even driven a car. It would be obviously amazing to try it, feel the amount of grip and power. But yeah, never happened.

At this point in my career, I don't really think it's going to happen.

Q. (No microphone.)

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Correct. I mean, again, it's nothing I've really talked about, so... It's not really on the radar. If I got the shot, it's probably hard to turn down. But there's no calls yet being made.

THE MODERATOR: Let us know.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I will (smiling).

Q. This track is quite unique where the pit lane is a downward and upward slope. Based on the fact we're going to get quite a bit of tire deg, how difficult is it as a team and a driver to cope with the decline when you do the pit stop?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: It's quite hard. I think especially the uphill is a bit of a tricky one. These cars are pretty hard to launch because you have such a long first gear. The first gear is about 100 miles per hour long. It's the equivalent of starting your road car in fifth or fourth gear. Obviously we have a lot of power to do that, but it is pretty tricky. You have to get it right. It's also very tight, which is probably a bigger deal, bigger part of the challenge.

This track always tests everyone in terms of, as I say, deg, elevation. Probably the most physical track, as well. Yeah a lot of tire deg both compounds.

Track is kind of a weird one with the grip, how it changes every year. Sometimes people start experimenting with different lines. It's one of those where you just kind of go out and improvise a little bit, which is a lot of fun, as well.

Q. You mentioned it's quite an emotional weekend. When you reflect back on the last few years, what emotions does that elicit being the last weekend?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I think it's just been a home, a family to me the last three years. We had a lot of just fun moments really outside of driving the car, which is end of the day you spend so much time together. I've always been a big believer in having fun. Obviously you need to be very focused to do this. Everyone in the team needs to be.

But I think MSR has a great balance with having fun and showing up and being pros at the same time, which makes it feel not like work, but a very enjoyable time together.

Also the partnerships we've had with especially Sirius XM. We in Nickleback, Creed, M&M's, Grateful Dead. It's been probably in the 20s now the amount of partnerships we've had. That's also been such a cool thing.

I've always said that the most important thing in life is family and the second is music I think. It's just something that gives you joy every day. To have a partnership that reflects music is very unique, very enjoyable.

Definitely take those memories with me.

Q. When you joined the team, they had been through a bit of a tough spot in the season beforehand. You helping to lead them out of that spot. What do you feel like you've learnt from a leadership perspective that you can take forward?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, it's just little things setup-wise, communications-wise. In the end of the day you're working with people, and people is the biggest thing. That's the biggest code you have to crack, right? You have to gel with the people on the stand. You have to make it a comfortable environment for everyone.

Maybe one person's ideas will come forward on one pit stand, and it won't on another one, because the dynamics between people are different.

I think that's the probably the biggest thing I've learned as far as the 60 car, I don't know about the 66, but we have a really good dynamic on the pit stand. Everyone's kind of welcome to talk and bring out ideas.

Yeah, I think that's probably the biggest lesson to make it a comfortable environment for everyone.

THE MODERATOR: You forgot to mention Morgan Wallen.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah. The car still has milk on it, apparently. It's not cleaned off yet (smiling).

Q. Even though Arrow McLaren has their own livery, the way they do their liveries, you almost kind of wish you could take Brad Hoffner with you even though he's contracted to Meyer Shank Racing because he has created some pretty incredible liveries for you to drive.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yes, absolutely. I mean, I would definitely have a talk to him if he was interested. I'm pretty sure Zak Brown has his idea how his livery is going to look.

Yeah, I agree with you. I think we have some of the most beautiful race cars. The Grateful Dead one. Also the Morgan Wallen one for Indy was unique. The fact that it won made it look even better.

Just makes the memories a little better when you see each week having a different livery. They'll probably continue to do that, which is super cool.

Q. The little people that are in the background, that work to make these cars fast and look so good that may not get the notoriety, but Brad was doing graphic

design going back to the '80s.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yes, there's many stories like that in the team. As I said before, it's just a very solid operation. Everyone just kind of carries their weight. Yeah, there's not enough good things I can say about everyone in the team.

Yeah, definitely emotional weekend. The future is, yeah, looking good and I'm excited for that, too.

Q. You're turning the car over next season to Mick Schumacher. He and Marcus Armstrong raced with Ferrari in the junior formula days. How do you evaluate that?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: It's funny how this sport works. You end up with people you worked with a long time ago.

Actually I driver coached Mick and Marcus back in the day. That's how old I am. It was back in 2015 when they were just kids then.

Yeah, you end up in the same paddock, work with the same people. If you stay long enough in this series, you probably work with every single driver, engineer, mechanic.

Yeah, I wish obviously Mick and Marcus the best. Marcus, to be honest with you, when he came to the team, I'd known him for a pretty long time, but we weren't best friends or anything. Our relationship has gotten a lot closer this year. Definitely miss working with him. Definitely bring him to the next team if I could.

Yeah, I wish both him and Mick and the whole team best of luck.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for coming in.

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