

IMSA Media Conference

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Alex Palou

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Joined now by two-time champion here at WeatherTech Raceway, Laguna Seca, Alex Palou, driver of the No. 10 DHL Chip Ganassi Honda.

Congratulations. You kind of like this place, huh?

ALEX PALOU: I love it. I love this place. I wish we could race here more often (smiling).

Yeah, it was a really tough race. Lots of up and downs. It went down on the first corner when I did a mistake, played it too nice, lost the lead. Then, as well, on the first pit sequence.

At the beginning of the race, I wasn't really executing. The car was really fast. I couldn't overtake Kyle. That kind of put us in a bad position. Yeah, I was not really happy with myself at the beginning. The team had to do a really risky strategy, too risky in my opinion.

THE MODERATOR: Staying out like you did?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah. It was too risky. But it worked out so I'm really happy that it worked out. Sometimes you need a little bit of luck. It was not luck. Honestly, we just stayed out. We were obviously putting ourselves in danger in case there was a yellow. We're just losing all the gap we're doing against Colton at the time.

Yeah, glad that it worked out. Glad to get the last win of this era. Glad to get this win, DHL last race with the pride livery. Excited for Mid-Ohio.

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

Q. When you were closely following Kirkwood at the start, people are normally talking about how quickly tires wear in dirty air. You were able to cling onto him and run longer. Obviously don't tell us your setup, but was that surprising to you?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I think it was just because we were lucky to have a really big pace advantage this time. Normally it's bad to be so close. In my opinion, we were

running super slow and I was not even pushing too much on the tires.

There's other races where, yeah, you need to leave a gap of 1.5, 1 seconds, to leave your tires to breathe, your downforce to work.

Yeah, my car was superior here, and I could stay close. It wasn't good for the tires. At the end I was struggling, as well. But he was struggling a little bit more.

I was surprised that he was not pushing at the beginning. He was, like, kind of saving a bit of fuel, even before the tire deg was an issue. I knew that the best thing for us was to go as fast as possible. That's why I was trying to overtake him, which I didn't make it happen.

Q. I think you only ran one set of new red tires, which the rule requires, then you ran black. If you had to do this race over again, would you do it the same way?

ALEX PALOU: Yes, with the position we were in. That's only because in Fast Six I had to use both alternates. My used alternates had two runs on. The people that didn't advance to Fast Six, they only had one run. If I had only one run, I would have used alternates for sure because that was the preferred tire.

But yeah, everybody that was in the Fast Six, we were in a bit of a disadvantage, like always. It's part of the game. I wish it was a little bit different for Fast Six that we didn't have to use our best tires. At the same time gave me the advantage to start on P1, try and have a cleaner race.

Q. You have two wins and four podiums at this track in four career starts. What is it about this track that you love so much and suits your style?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, honestly I don't know. I wish I knew. That way hopefully I could try and analyze and see if I could do the same in other tracks where I'm not as fast.

I love this track. When you love a track so much, I think you get an extra that helps everything. The fact that we had really good cars here helps a lot. Like, you can see on tire deg that we're really good. That's not only driving my car has been helping.



I would say it's a proper track. You cannot really do any mistakes. It allows you to push really hard. It's not a fuel-save race. You start by pushing. Having these medium- to high-speed corners, yeah, it's been good for us.

Yeah, honestly to resume what I said, I have no idea, but I just love this place. It's the most beautiful place we go to, for sure.

Q. You mentioned you felt the strategy was too risky. How much faith do you have in Barry that you'll follow what he tells you to do?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, it was risky. I mean, it's motorsport. We knew we had the car for P1. I was P4 at that time. I mean, yeah, finishing P4 today wasn't a good race.

I understand what he did. Beginning obviously I was like, Oh, man, I'm the only one here. Obviously it's not the preferred strategy. I doubted a little bit at the beginning. At the same time I knew they know a lot more the numbers. They had trust in me on going fast.

Yeah, I mean, I have a lot of faith. As a driver, you always doubt everything. Just in case it goes wrong, I can say, I knew it.

When I saw everybody coming in, Are we sure this is a good one? If it didn't go well, I could say, I told you. If it went well, I could say, Yeah, you did a good job.

Q. When you're told to stay out, the rest of the top five pits, what is going through your mind? What is the radio chatter like? Did you have any say or conversation with Barry when you were making that decision?

ALEX PALOU: No. Honestly normally I have no saying because I don't know the numbers of, like, fuel laps left. Honestly, I know the laps left, but I don't know exactly what happens if we pit at this exact moment. I have a little bit of an idea.

If they don't come in, that's what they think is best.

I knew it was risky just in case we did, like, five laps, pull a gap. I know we were going to pull a gap. Imagine we have eight seconds ahead, then there's a caution, we're done. We have to make an extra pit stop to everybody. We're going to be in the back of the queue. We're not going to have any way to overtake 10, 15 cars. That's why it was a bit risky.

For my mind, it was just like, Are we sure this is the right

one? When he said yes, I was like, All right, let's go fast. So that's what we did.

I think as a driver you cannot really doubt all the time what they are doing, especially with the past I had with Barry and everybody calling the strategies. They've been calling 99.9%. Every time it's been amazing.

Q. When that was going on, you said something back to Barry clarifying?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I mean, we were P3, P4 at that time. We had really good pace. I think we actually were on a good strategy because we had primaries. Everybody was on alternates around us. It was like, okay, this full-course yellow allows us to be all in the same page, and I still have the best or the fastest tire to run while nobody else has.

Yes, I doubted just because everybody peeled in and I stayed out. I looked at my mirror and there was nobody until saw I think Pato and Grosjean that were a little bit in the back. Obviously I was like, Oh, are we sure?

As I said, I just had one question. As soon as they said that we had to go fast, I understood what we had to do. It was just game on from there.

Q. It wasn't a call of whatever these guys ahead of you do, do something different, it was worth staying out no matter? If the whole field does something the same great, if they do something different, then great?

ALEX PALOU: Actually, I didn't know if the radio was working or not because everybody peeled in and I didn't hear anything. Like, there was no communication because they didn't even say. Sometimes teams, we agree to say, If everybody in front of you goes to the pit lane, you follow. That's an instruction. There was no instruction, so I stayed out.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations.

ALEX PALOU: Thank you.

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