

# IndyCar Media Conference

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## Helio Castroneves

### Ed Jones

#### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We saw your interview, Helio. As best you can, you've taken it in good spirits.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Well, congrats to Takuma Sato, great job winning the Indianapolis 500. He came close once with Dario, now he finally made it.

What can I say? My race was pretty adventurous. We have a lot of things. We started from the back. I knew I had a good balance. Then we went to the front about lap 50, then were in the top 10. Unfortunately with the accident with Dixon and 77, broke a winglet and broke the front wing because it went off the track. I don't know how to be honest. It was a good save, I have to say that. This place bring the best out of me. It was pretty good.

Then we had to go back to the 23rd position again. Then I had a good start. They call green. I went. But they said I jumped the start. Very disappointed on that one. I would like to see some reviews. Hopefully they can convince me that I did jump the start.

We made the drive through, went back again. Got off sync, about to be a lap down and then finally we got a break with the yellow. Got in sync, be able to make some moves again, pass a lot of people. The car was really strong, even with the winglet broken, the car was really strong. Unfortunately, you know, there was that issue.

When I was seeing each Honda going away, I'm like, Here we go. That's what I said. But they gave the good engine to Alonso, but they gave the meaning engine to Takuma Sato. That was a good one.

I try everything I could with three laps to go, two laps to go. I went outside. Unfortunately my tires were overshot a little bit. I would have end up in the wall. I thought was good timing because I would try to make a move again. Man, he just took off and that's it. That was my last chance.

Really disappointed for the fans, for obviously my team. They gave me a great car. I did everything I could, trust me, everything I could. Unfortunately, second place is the best for us today.

THE MODERATOR: Ed, you keep studying the chart.

Something in there that might have gotten you forward a little bit more?

ED JONES: I was just having a look, watching the TV as well, saying, Why didn't I get up there? I should be up there, so...

HELIO CASTRONEVES: You are up there, man. Are you kidding? Third place.

ED JONES: But, you know, it was a great race for us. Great car I've had the whole month really. We were running through traffic. But the race was so up and down for us. Solid start. We were running in the top 10, 11, for most of the first half.

Then when Dixon had his crash, thankfully those guys are okay, but I ran over some debris. It damaged the floor and also the rear wing. We had to change the rear wing. That sent me to the back of the field. We had to claw our way back up again.

Then we got some luck back. The last yellow, we actually pitted right before it, so it put us near the front. But then I had some bad luck again. I actually damaged my front wing, had a big hole in it. My legs got pretty cold, to be honest. I had wind blowing into them like crazy. Also created a lot of drag.

That meant I was really good in the corners catching up to other cars, but it was difficult in the straights. I couldn't pull up to them. We lacked that straight line speed for, I'd say, the last 40 laps. It was really hard for me to defend or even attack, which was really frustrating because I think we had the car to win today.

Great job to Sato and Helio. But, yeah, so frustrating. I don't know how many opportunities you get to be in that battle.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: I have to say he did a very good job. When we ran side-by-side, he was very smart. I have to say that you drove not like a rookie, to be honest, so congrats. You did a good job.

ED JONES: Thanks.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Helio, what did you see of the flying car? Pretty much you drove right under it.**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Flying? I saw they were

flying. I duck, I close my eyes. When I open, I was in the grass. Hold on, you know.

No, I saw the 77 on the gray. I knew he would bounce back, that for sure, because it happened long time ago, I don't know, 2011, I think, almost caught me. I knew that would be a thing. When I saw Dixon, I say, Okay, he might be in trouble.

So I was already moving to the left. But the car, when they connect, they came in the pace so fast towards me in the air, wow, I really throw the car into the inside. All of a sudden I just saw the grass. I mean, I was in the grass. Actually, there was a hump. I don't know what happened, the car just jumped. I'm kind of like, Hold on, you know.

I thought, Okay, look around. Everything is fine. When we stopped because of the red flag, we noticed that there was the winglet broken and the front wing was broken, too.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: I did not. Like I said, I don't know how it broke the winglet. Some parts touch my car. It was really close. I saw really the car in the air.

**Q. Helio, last five or ten laps, how much did that feel like 2014? And why or why not?**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Man, it was different. It was different. 2014 we had something more. I'm just look, he did a 221.5 his last lap. By myself I was doing 220 .0. They were a mile and a half faster than us.

2014, probably a half mile an hour, maybe 0.7. You could see for me was really, really strong. Especially when you pass, they back off, lift off. When they come back, they come back really strong.

Actually when I went past, I think three laps to go, on the outside, I knew I would make it. As soon as I start turning, the car start pushing. I'm like, Oh, this is going to be a problem.

Then I thought it would create momentum for us, but unfortunately not even that. I wasn't even able to get that. So really a shame, really disappointed for that.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Yes, it's tough to accept. After so many things happen, that's at least give you the perspective that I did my best. I really push it. The guys did a phenomenal job. We drove our heart, no question.

The good news, sounds like we're leading the championship. Hey, there is always a positive note. I think that it is very positive.

Yes, finishing second again sucks. So close to get the fourth. I really am trying. I will not give up this dream.

I know it's going to happen.

**Q. Ed, compare 2016's Freedom 100 to today. How have you taken to this speedway, especially with the battle you had there with Helio?**

ED JONES: Yeah, I've loved ovals since I started racing them. Last year I think we finished on podium in all three of them, Indy Lights.

Coming here, the big part of it is having a good car underneath you. I was fortunate to have that. Like you said, I've had good battles around here in the Lights car, where you can run side-by-side for a lot of it. When I was running next to Helio, it was a bit of déjà vu. It was good.

It's so frustrating, again. I've had five podiums or five top 3s on ovals now and I haven't won one. It's really frustrating not to get one. I'm working my hardest to get it the next time.

**Q. Helio, talk a little bit about the first pass you made. I think you got him in three there late in the race. You came back around, were going after him again. I think that was in one. Talk about the difference, maybe why you didn't wait for three again.**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Man, I made so many passes, now I'm kind of like confusing (laughter).

I passed Takuma Sato outside turn three for the lead? No, was 8, Chilton. I think was Chilton.

The thing is, with Chilton, I was pretty distant. The Andretti guys, they were really strong. If I did made a pass, probably because Chilton was in front, was actually helping me to get a little bit of a draft. That's why I made the pass.

But I could not. Turn two was really good, back straight was really good. Unfortunately, I was not able to do it. Trust me, I was really trying.

**Q. Ed, you made it look pretty easy fighting with these veterans out there. Did it feel as easy as it looked? Also, how does it feel to have the respect of your peers, especially a driver like Helio?**

ED JONES: Yeah, throughout the race, to be honest, the first half, the starts and the restarts, I was struggling quite a bit. But throughout the race, I learnt a lot through them. The last three or four, I was making up positions every restart. So it was a big learning process for me.

Again, I haven't actually done that much running in traffic. I was learning how close you could get, using my tools a lot, more than I have done in the past. Although it looked common or normal for me, I was learning so much every time I was driving, making passes.

Throughout the race, I actually mixed up quite a bit with Helio. He was the one car where I couldn't really defend from him. I realized he was really quick, especially in traffic. It's nice to have that acknowledgment from him. Hopefully we'll be racing for the win next year.

**Q. Helio, you just watched a replay of going under Dixon. What is your reaction now that you've seen yourself?**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Pretty impressive, I have to say. I was like, Wow.

See, he was passing me even before the finish line. There was not even a chance. Anyway, yeah, I'm not sure if his front nose touched the winglet. I was pretty lucky to avoid that. I'm glad he's okay, because it was a pretty nasty accident.

**Q. You had the famous quote on Thursday, If the Honda's go full blast, they will not last. Are you sitting there with fingers crossed?**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: They had 20 engines. I'm like, Man, I hope none of them last. Unfortunately one, mean one, end up winning. Yep, I knew it, at least one would make it. I have to say Takuma Sato prevail.

**Q. Helio, on the last run you had going in, kind of a late run on the outside, it didn't stick. Was there any regret on your part at that point that maybe you didn't wait for a better opportunity? Was that pretty much the only chance there was?**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Well, very good observation. I had the feeling the car would run off. He was behind. Still three laps to go, or that was the third lap. I remember Roger said something.

First, I don't think I would make it. Second, I think I would put myself in a very bad position to fight for the last two laps. So I have to thinking, you know, knowledge, try again on the second one.

Unfortunately, I mean, I couldn't do it. The car just start pushing a little bit. It just didn't suck in. I was very surprised, to be honest, because I thought at least was going to be very similar to what happened to 2014. But didn't even do that. That was a shame.

**Q. Helio, 2003, you came up short; 2014, you came up short. If you looking back, if you can compare these three losses, which was --**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: The first one, 2003. I knew that A.J. Foyt Jr. would back off that much in turn two, I would go for it. That basically made me lose the race. Obviously, I was about three, four seconds ahead, or two seconds ahead of Gil. It was so bad that I have to slow down to third gear so that we don't crash. Obviously, Gil came with the momentum and passed me. That would be the biggest one.

Now, '14 and today, I did everything in my power, in the

Chevy power that we had, to make it happen. Unfortunately, it came short again.

**Q. You said earlier you drove over debris. I was impressed on lap 175, you passed Helio. The yellow flags we had in the race, did it interrupt your rhythm or did it help you?**

ED JONES: Early on, the yellow flags, the restarts interrupted me quite a bit, and I lost quite a lot of ground. I wasn't used to how aggressive the guys went on that first restart lap. I was adjusting to it. By the end, I was getting quite good at it.

That was a point where at the end of the race, the main place I could pass people was just at the restarts where I got double draft, worked it out there.

When I passed Chilton I think a few laps from the end, I only got next to him right into one, so I was fortunate that he backed off, otherwise it would have been much more difficult.

But, yeah, no, the speed got slower. I think it was like lap 160 is when I hit the back of Zach Veach on the back of turn four.

**Q. Ed, last October you were talking about how important it was to have a full season IndyCar ride, not just the Indy 500 that comes with the Indy Lights championship. How much better prepared were you for this race by having that full-season deal with Dale?**

ED JONES: It makes a massive difference, in my opinion. I've learnt so much in the few races I've done so far. Having Seb as my teammate has been a huge help for me. Without having an experienced guy there, it makes it tougher for rookies to get up to speed, the setups and stuff like that. Everywhere we go, he knows exactly what we need. He has experience of it. I'm still kind of guessing a bit.

And having the full season, just being with the team, I've been with them now for quite a few months, so the relationship is really good. If you're running the full season, they're always going to put, in my opinion, more effort into the 500 car, as well, rather than just doing a one-off race.

Yeah, just getting into this weekend, there's nothing new I had to learn, compared to rookies or guys who just do the one-off race, where you're still learning the environment, rusty on a few things. I'm up to speed and gives me the confidence to attack as hard as I want.

**Q. Helio, all the trips we used to make over to Motegi, you would see what a huge following Takuma Sato had in Japan.**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Yeah.

**Q. The guy was known as a crasher a lot of times in**

**this series. When he signed with Andretti, did you say, That might be the final ingredient he needs to start winning a lot of races?**

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Listen, Takuma Sato is a veteran, a great driver. He has a lot of misses. But when he get it, he get it, and not only in qualifying and racing. But today was his day. I didn't pick up anything different about signing with the Honda team.

But he did a great job. Just proved that age is just a number, because he's probably around 40, correct? There we go, see. I'm telling you guys. You guys think, Hey, you old, you old. We get better when we get old.

I'm glad he's over the hump, showing we still can win races and be competitive.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for coming in, gentlemen.