

# IndyCar Media Conference

Sunday March 11, 2018

## Alexander Rossi

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Joined now by our third-place finisher, Alexander Rossi, driving the No. 98 NAPA Auto Parts Honda --

ALEXANDER ROSSI: 27.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for that. No. 27 NAPA Auto Parts Honda for Andretti Autosport. Alex, let's just dive right in. Go ahead and take us through that last lap. We'd be remiss not to start with that.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, sure, of course. Yeah, normally they don't allow Push-to-Pass on restarts. You'd normally have to do a timed lap before you did it, but because of the late call to go green that lap, they allowed it, and I actually got the call when I was in the middle of Turn 13 and 14. So I had a big jump on Rob, and he got to the Push-to-Pass pretty late. The run was perfect for me going into Turn 1, and I knew there wasn't going to be very many other opportunities. Obviously he had a good car all day, and they did a great job.

Yeah, made the pop. He defended the position, which he has the right to do, but in doing so, in moving the reaction, he put me into the marbles pretty late into the corner. It's difficult with these cars and with how much we're sliding around in the first place, even on the racing line. When you're put in the marbles, it's hairy. Super unfortunate. Like you never want to see that happen. I feel bad because I feel like I could have won and he could have gotten second. You never want to see that happen, but nevertheless, it was a great job by the whole team all weekend.

I think that we showed that we had a car definitely to qualify up front yesterday, and we redeemed ourselves a little bit today. So a great work by the whole Andretti Autosport NAPA Honda team.

THE MODERATOR: Several laps before that you were running very close behind Robert in the race and then went a little wide and lost about two seconds there. When you saw that restart, the yellow flag come out a few laps later, what was going through your mind?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, I was thankful for it because I knew it was going to be pretty hard to catch him. I put a lot of pressure on him and he didn't make a mistake. He's a professional at what he does, and he wasn't going to put a wheel wrong. I made a

mistake going around Charlie, a lapped car, I just misjudged it. I was paying more attention to him on the inside than I was really the brake zone, so that was on me, and it cost us, as you said, two seconds, so it was going to be pretty hard to reel him back in had there not been those two yellows.

**Q. Bearing in mind that IndyCar didn't penalize you, do you feel like that vindicates your attempt to pass, and Robert had moved too late for you to avoid it?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, they made it very clear in the drivers' meeting that the rule on blocking was you can't move in reaction. If he defended the inside, initially, yeah, out of Turn 13 or even halfway down the straight, and then I continued to go to the inside down the white line, then yeah, that's my decision and that's putting my car in danger, but there's no reason why I can't pop and stay next to him. I don't have to be all four cars in the part of the track that -- all four wheels on the part of the track nobody goes on.

**Q. Alex, take us again through -- when you're closing there and you thought you had it and you said you saw Charlie, what was your reaction when that happened? What were you thinking? Did you think, that's it, I'm done, I threw it away?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Oh, no, I wasn't going to just drive by Robert. He was obviously going to make the job more difficult. But it's not like I was in the lead and I locked up and Robert drove by me. I mean, I hadn't come close to even making an attempt to pass him yet. It was no harm, no foul, it was just a loss of lap time.

**Q. Have you had a chance to talk to Robert yet?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: No. I will at some point, and obviously express my feelings, and I'm sure he's upset, and he has a right to be.

**Q. But you do anticipate that he's upset?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Oh, probably. If you were in the lead of the race with two to go and you didn't finish, you'd be upset, yeah.

**Q. Do you think that maybe braking a little bit earlier might have stopped any collision from taking place, or did you think your goose was cooked as soon as you hit the brake pedal?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: My goose was totally rare until he continued to move in the braking zone and put me even more into the marbles. I had no problem pulling it up. I wasn't locked up or anything.

THE MODERATOR: Alex, it's been a -- I don't want to say strange weekend for you, but obviously maybe not an ideal weekend. You ended up on the podium, which is great, but with the qualifying penalty yesterday and with a little bit of controversy today, how do you keep that in the back of your mind and focus on the race and moving forward, as well?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Well, we have four weeks, and then we've got a lot of work to do ahead of Phoenix. Phoenix is going to pose a very big challenge for us. This is by far the best start that we've had to the Verizon IndyCar Series season, since I joined the series two years ago. So we'll take the momentum from that. We'll take the momentum from the fact that all four cars were frankly very, very quick this weekend, and continue our development through the test that we have coming up and coming out of the blocks hopefully very strong in Phoenix.