

# IndyCar Media Conference

Friday May 25, 2018

## Colton Herta George Michael Steinbrenner Patricio O'Ward Dalton Kellett

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We have our second- and third-place finishers for the Indy Lights race. We'll start with third place, Dalton Kellett. Third year in a row third place. Obviously polesitter, not what you were looking for, but still at a race like that, to come away third place, not a bad afternoon.

DALTON KELLETT: No. Obviously started up front, first Indy Lights career pole. I was honored to get that here at Indy. The Andretti Autosport guys did a great job all week, team and crew, can't really complain too much. Obviously I have a few of these hats now. That's fun. I was joking earlier that I've become the Carlos Munoz of the Freedom 100.

THE MODERATOR: Multiple passing through the field, lead changes. How do you manage 30 minutes of non-stop action, but everybody wanting to be the guy when it comes down to coming off turn four?

DALTON KELLETT: We were racing really hard at the start, lead changes back and forth. I don't think anybody was really going to pull away because I was up front leading, everyone just kind of sucked up on me. I don't think we really made a tactical error trying to be up front there. It was super exciting, 30 minutes went by quick.

THE MODERATOR: How do you manage the emotions, the third time you've done it, having this many people going through driver introductions, coming out to the car, putting that all behind you when you're ready to take the green flag in front of a decent-sized crowd?

DALTON KELLETT: First of all, thanks for all the fans for being here. This is one of the coolest days for us. It's just focusing on what you're doing, focusing on the task of driving. You can save the happy and being sad till later.

THE MODERATOR: Patricio O'Ward. Take us through



a lot of back and forth between all four Andretti cars today.

PATRICIO O'WARD: Yeah, it definitely was. I was trying to keep it clean with obviously Dalton, Colton, Ryan. I tried to position myself the best I could for the last lap. But I just got the wash coming out of turn four. My car was facing directly towards the wall. I had to lift. Dalton was behind me. I got a nice little tow from Colton. It just wasn't enough to get him at the line. We barely missed it by a wing.

I'm proud of myself. It was my first race in an Indy Lights car in an oval. This year they changed some things in the engine, so no one was going to walk away with the win here. There was going to be passes every single lap, multiple passes. I thought it was a really good race for the fans that came out, I think over a hundred thousand people came to watch. I've never seen such a big crowd at a race that I'm at.

It was a really, really fun race. I think it was important that we all enjoyed it, but Colton did a great job, Dalton did as well. Props to them. We just got to outsmart them next time at the next oval.

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

### Q. (No microphone.)

PATRICIO O'WARD: When you get to the lead, you always want to pull away. The tow here is insane. You saw me, I fell back quite far. I was alongside going by the finish line. They changed some things with the mapping of the car because they wanted the race to be closer because last year someone just ran away with the win. But this year, how many passes per lap was it, like two or three, I don't even know. I was watching it all when I was in six and seven.

It was close, some close calls where cars were next to each other. I thought they were going to put it in the wall. It's nerve-wracking. You're going so fast, times if you react to it, the car doesn't, because there's so much dirty air. It was something to kind of get accustomed to. It was something really different than to what I've done.

But it was a lot of fun. It was a lot of fun. I really enjoyed it.

### Q. (No microphone.)

DALTON KELLETT: I thought everyone raced really

cleanly. There were a couple people squirrely. Red cars cough. For the most part all of us teammates really raced clean together. Colton and I actually had a little bit of contact, but that was more incidental than anything else. I picked up some understeer, he was up on the high side. My right front hit his rear left. We came out clean, so that was all right. A little rough.

For the most part I was really happy with how we all raced together. It was a very fun race.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, guys.

We are joined by the winner and team owner, George Michael Steinbrenner, and Colton Herta.

Colton, just the enormity of the win. You won here at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Two races of course at the Grand Prix. You win on the oval. Your initial thoughts on that victory.

COLTON HERTA: It's so cool. I didn't really realize how cool it was until I got to kiss the bricks. Both my dad's IndyCar wins, I held off here because I didn't deserve it. Now I finally deserved it. Damn, that's so cool.

THE MODERATOR: Let's talk about the race. Obviously it was one of those races, when I talked to your dad, he said that was a Comer kart race, back to you when you first started, drafting, freight training, positioning. Give us your thoughts on what it was all about.

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, I mean, just like you said, it was like a Comer kart race. Took me back to my old days. It was tough. In the beginning, the tires were cold, it was quite easy to follow. I made my moves then. I learned quite early on if you're third to fourth back, it's going to be tough for you to overtake, especially the first two can just go right by each other and block you, give you the dirty air.

Managing that was tough. Getting into a good position right at the end was tough. Just managed to do it. I passed them. I didn't even know it was the white flag till I pulled out, the guy was waving the white flag. Passed them on the last lap and held it.

THE MODERATOR: You mentioned dirty air. Seemed like everybody was trying high line, low line, midline. Were you happy to try to go find air?

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, because we run so much downforce in the race, it's quite easy flat on your own. Once you get into the dirty air, it's tough. Because it's easy on your own, you can run two or three car lengths up and still hold it flat. It's tough. It's just managing the dirty air. That was tough. If you could get half your wing out, you obviously have the guy in front of you watching his mirrors, going where you're going, just to

try to screw you over.

No, it was an awesome race. I'm super happy. I can't even put it into words.

THE MODERATOR: Yourself, as a team owner, I see you down in pit lane kind of pacing back and forth. What were your thoughts as a team owner being able to win here?

GEORGE MICHAEL STEINBRENNER: I'm not sure what to say really. Just look at this place. It's amazing. It's the goal of anyone involved in IndyCar or Indy Lights racing to win here. To be able to do it, it's almost otherworldly. To be sitting here with the trophy right next to us, it's something really special. I'm not sure I'll know for a while how I truly feel about it.

THE MODERATOR: You came into this weekend with lots of momentum, scored victories at the Grand Prix weekend. Was there kind of an expectation that you'd be able to challenge for a race win?

GEORGE MICHAEL STEINBRENNER: I think so. The car was great. All the Andretti cars were top-notch this weekend. We knew we would have a chance, especially in an eight-car field. We knew all the cars in contention would be dodging, weaving, battling for the win. It was all about positioning, being at the right place at the right time. We were the ones who did it. Felt really good.

THE MODERATOR: Colton, we knew the race was going to be that pack race. Everybody knew after the engine map change, you were going to be racing hard. The opening number of laps, I assume you're settling in, you mentioned bringing the tires up to temperature. Was there a time in the middle of the race where you were starting to plot the strategy?

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, for some part. Obviously not plotting exactly what I was going to do, but plotting my strengths against their weaknesses. I think coming here, you have a stable car, which we did, you can win it from anywhere. I think we proved that today.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. George, I know your driver is wearing a Yankees hat. How does a win here compare to seeing the Yankees win a doubleheader?**

GEORGE MICHAEL STEINBRENNER: For me personally, this is unique because it's something that I've never experienced before. I've experienced World Series wins, hundreds and hundreds of Yankee wins. To win at the Speedway, it's something really unique. It's really something special for me. It feels pretty great.

**Q. Colton, does your dad give you advice or does he stay on the side?**

COLTON HERTA: It's more me asking him for advice. I think in karting he gave me a ton of advice. It's actually funny, at that point Ed Carpenter and Vision Racing was paying him to driver coach Ed. I was in karting. I didn't want to hear anything he had to say.

Yeah, how things have changed. He understands the position I'm in. He understands the pressure. I think he deals with me more of that than actually driving at this point.

**Q. Colton, now that you've won, do you feel like a superstar or do you feel like a generic racer still?**

COLTON HERTA: I feel like I just got a little bit of a taste, and now I want to go win the 500 next year.

**Q. That's what's going to happen?**

COLTON HERTA: If I can help it, yes.

**Q. How comfortable were you racing around your teammates, knowing they'd have the respect for you and vice versa?**

COLTON HERTA: Super comfortable in the beginning. At the end it was a little intense. I don't know if everybody saw that me and Dalton made contact in turn four, which was pretty hectic. Yeah, in the beginning, when the tires were cool, it was fine. Then once the track got up to temp, the tires got hot, it was a little bit more hair-raising because you could see the guy in your mirror. You could see him slowly drifting up, slowly drifting up, you're waiting for the contact.

No, I mean, everybody minded their Ps and Qs. It was all good.

**Q. This race is known for a lot of lead changes, side-by-side racing. The way the race played out today, was that more or less than what you expected?**

COLTON HERTA: I've watched a lot of race video coming into this weekend. I expected more right from the beginning of practice. AER changed the torque amounts in our car. We had different torque levels, especially in the upper range, 7000, 7500 rpm. That was making it more of a pack race. I expected there will be a lot of overtakes, and there was.

**Q. I heard you say you kissed the bricks afterwards. What do they taste like? Have you ever had a month of May like this month of May?**

COLTON HERTA: Well, funny enough the bricks taste like brick.

No, it was cool. It was a little brick with rubber. It wasn't a great taste, but it was a nostalgic taste.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

COLTON HERTA: No, no. This is the second time I raced in the Freedom 100. The first time I was taken out, I took myself out of the race. So no. It feels great.

I've been here for my dad's two wins as a team owner. It felt cool to know what was going on, kind of be in the team. When it's your own work that got put into it, your own blood, sweat and tears, it feels so much better.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

COLTON HERTA: Yes, that's cool. Obviously this win is massive. I was so psyched for the two before. Yeah, it's cool. I don't know if we're one of the first ones to do that. It's just cool.

**Q. George, coming from a lifetime of baseball, what got your attention about motorsports?**

GEORGE MICHAEL STEINBRENNER: I grew up around open-wheel racing, around IndyCar racing. My cousin was Tony Renna, IndyCar driver. I grew up watching him race even when he was back in Indy Lights. My uncle Chris Simmons, Indy Lights driver, long time racing engineer, now with Ganassi. I grew up going to races, grew up around I think my first 500 was 2008. I've been here about a half dozen times before I started working in racing.

It's something that's always kind of drawn me in. I've never really been able to escape it. I never really wanted to. Hard to explain, but it's something that really close to me and really important to me.

**Q. Do you want to move up to the IndyCar Series as an owner?**

GEORGE MICHAEL STEINBRENNER: That would be pretty awesome for me. That's the goal we're setting for ourselves. We really want to make sure all the pieces if it together from an operational and financial standpoint. We want to do it the right way so we can be competitive as soon as possible. There are no guarantees of when it will happen, it's just as soon as possible.

COLTON HERTA: He's too nice. If we win the championship, we're going IndyCar racing next year.

GEORGE MICHAEL STEINBRENNER: That definitely simplifies it.