

# IndyCar Media Conference

Friday August 24, 2018

## Alexander Rossi Ryan Hunter-Reay

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Alex, this is a track you finished well at this time last year in the inaugural event. Take us through what are some things that you like about this track and the challenges it presents to drivers.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I think the big thing is just the fans. It was obviously the return of the Verizon IndyCar Series to St. Louis and Gateway last year, and it was an amazing reception and one that really blew us all away, and I think that's really down to the track and the city and the effort that they put into this event. So any time we as drivers get to come and do our thing in front of people that are that passionate, it's very, very special.

We're looking forward to getting things underway, obviously if Mother Nature cooperates, and putting on a great show for everyone tomorrow night where the weather looks awesome.

THE MODERATOR: Ryan, you were also on track for a good finish in this event last year before unfortunately your day ended a little bit early, but you came back here for a test last month. What are some things you learned from that test to prepare for this event?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Just kind of coming to grips with the new car, the new aero kit, and figuring out what this team and these drivers need from it to be more competitive than we were last year here. I think we had a pretty good test. It was across the board, I think all the drivers left somewhat happy. We know some areas that we'd like to improve, but it's always good coming back here, like Alex said. Last year the fan reception was unbelievable, the promotion was first class, everybody did a great job with it, and the results really showed. Hopefully we can go out and put on a good show tomorrow night.

**Q. With the new package, what portion of this track is the more difficult part now because I know last year you could be flat 3, 4. Can you follow into there now or how is that going to run?**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Yeah, you can follow into there. I think that the issue we're going to see today and more tonight when we run in a pack and we run in groups is the challenge is going to be trying to keep similar kind of to what we had at Pocono, I guess. That's what the guys tell me at least. Trying to keep the front end

under you in traffic. It washes out, you lose the front, you lose that run, and then you take the whole lap to get back up under the gearbox of the guy in front here going into 1. I think that will be the limiting factor for us, so hopefully we can find a way around that.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, I mean, I don't really have much to add to that, honestly. When we were here, it was only the four of us, so there wasn't really much group running that we did. But I would imagine it would be kind of similar road blocks that we run into that we have seen this year, and it's just kind of waiting on the front if you do have a run and hopefully you can keep the front end under you.

**Q. Ryan, you said you had a good test here before. I guess maybe the weather conditions were different. Can you use something from the test for these changing weather conditions?**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: I think generally what we found from the test we can apply here today, yeah. The conditions now are cooler than what we had at our test, so we're going to have a little bit more grip potentially, but race conditions tomorrow, it'll be similar to our test. So yeah, I think we can pull forward what we moved and found at the test and apply it. Like we mentioned, though, I think it's just a matter of trying to get the front to work in traffic will be our big hurdle.

**Q. The starts of races the last couple weeks have been pretty sketchy and they were sketchy last year here, as well. Why is that, and is there anything you can do to kind of make sure everybody gets through the start of that race safely and comfortably?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I don't agree with that at all. I think the starts have been okay. I think if you look at Pocono, I think Will proved very clearly that he maintained his speed and guys in the back were trying to get a run. You know, I think Kyle and the race direction has done a very good job with explaining what he wants to do and his parameters for that, and I don't think there's going to be any change.

**Q. Ryan, you're still battling for the championship even though it's a bit of an uphill climb for you right now. At what point do you start playing wing man for Alex to help him win the championship?**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: As he turns his seat to look at my response. We're definitely still in the fight, at least for the top three. If the championship -- I'd have to win from here out and these guys have a really bad few

weeks, no doubt. It's still possible, but it's a far stretch. We're concentrating on just getting race wins. That's what it's been all year, and that's what we're focused on. Obviously Alex and I have worked really well in the past together. We always have. If there's anything that we can do in the final stretch to bring the Andretti Autosport team back to being champions here in the Verizon IndyCar Series, that's our ultimate goal.

We had a pretty good run going this season and the past couple weeks have been tough for us, no doubt, but we still have some good strong races ahead, and hopefully we can both make a run for it.

**Q. Alex, what's it like, if it does get in a position where you have a Ryan Hunter-Reay as your wing man?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I don't know that that's --

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Bump draft and shake and bake and all those things?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: All of those things, yes. I've learned everything -- I would say the majority of what I've learned in this series has come from Ryan, so I attest a lot of things, especially on ovals, to what he's explained to me and taught me and demonstrated. I think we work together, as you said, and we're both fighting for race wins and working together to try and make that happen. I still need to win races. Scott is not -- as I've said many times, he's not going to have a bad weekend, so we're still quite a ways out, and the only way to close that gap is to win races. We're not looking at wing man scenarios right now, we're just both trying to build fast race cars to go win races.

**Q. Alex, what kind of help can you and do you expect from your teammates as the championship fight comes down? What can you reasonably expect?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I don't know. I haven't been in this position before. I mean, I think that Marco and Zach were awesome for me in Pocono. I come up to lap them, and they made my life really easy. Unfortunately Josef was right in front of them, so he made my life difficult to try and help Will. I think that that's really the extent of what you're going to see; if someone is having an off day, they'll try and make your life as painless as possible. But in terms of anything beyond that, I don't really have anything scenarios to answer that question or previous experiences to fall back upon. He's the one that's won a championship, not me.

**Q. With the tires that Firestone has brought, they've brought a softer right tire. I'm wondering with the banking here if you expect the tires to degrade and whether that's going to be an issue, like would it change your pit stop strategy coming in sooner than your fuel is used up?**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: I don't see that scenario

occurring at the moment. Something unforeseen could come up, but the tire was very consistent, very strong through the run. So yeah, the fall-off that we experienced was very little. I don't know. I don't see that coming, but maybe with hotter temps and running in traffic and sliding around a little bit more, we could fall into a scenario where we get some tire deg that could be an issue, but as of now that wouldn't be my guess.