

# IndyCar Media Conference

Tuesday February 12, 2019

## Marcus Ericsson Santino Ferrucci Colton Herta Felix Rosenqvist Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Thank you, everybody, for coming and spending some time with us. We are pleased to be joined by four of the NTT IndyCar Series's rookie drivers that are competing here at the open test and will also be joining us for the 2019 NTT IndyCar Series season.

Going ahead and starting closest to me, we have Santino Ferrucci who competed in a few races in the series, but you have the consistency of a full season behind you this year. How much does that mean to you heading into 2019?

SANTINO FERRUCCI: It's definitely better than doing Detroit, Portland and Sonoma. Much looking forward to it. I very much enjoy working with my veteran driver Seb, working with the team. With Dale, seems more of a family operation. It's a lot of fun. Nice to be back in America for a full season.

THE MODERATOR: Right next to you, joined by Marcus Ericsson, second fastest in this morning's session.

Marcus, welcome to the series. Tell us your impressions of not only this track, but the team and the organization so far.

MARCUS ERICSSON: So far it's been really good. It's a fun series. Very open, like a big family is the feeling. A lot more open than Formula 1, from my experience there, between teams and drivers.

Also I've been looking back at some of the races from last year. The racing looks very much fun to be part of, really close racing. I've done a few days now in the Indy car. It's a really fun car to drive.

It's difficult. It's very different to a Formula 1 car. Definitely a big challenge. Yeah, I'm really looking forward to the season.

THE MODERATOR: We have Colton Herta, as well.

Colton, a super fast start for you for this morning's session. What was the team able to put together that led to such a great start for you?

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, car was good right out of the box. I think that's kind of what put us there. Obviously a new track to the NTT IndyCar Series, a new track to every team really. Yeah, everybody is just getting situated, trying to get the cars up to speed, find the right balance.

It's a really tough balance to find because you have the fast-flowing stuff, and the really slow stuff is pretty tricky here. Yeah, trying to find that right balance. I guess we did that in session and that's why we were on top.

THE MODERATOR: Also joined by Felix Rosenqvist.

Felix, with the Laguna Seca earlier this week, and media day, you've been getting a lot of compliments from some of the other drivers in the paddock, mentioning not only might he be off to a quick start, but maybe a championship contender. What does that feedback mean to you this early in the season?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: It's always fun when people think you're going to do well. I think I had a good preparation, definitely. But also I didn't expect to have such high expectations coming into my rookie year. Pressure is something we have to deal with in our sport. Might as well get into the season with high pressure.

It's been really fun. It's really exciting times to just learn more and more every day. Like Santino, I have a great teammate in Scott, a great team around me in Chip Ganassi Racing to get me up to speed.

Yeah, couldn't really be better.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the group.

### **Q. Marcus, what has been the biggest challenge switching from Formula 1 to now racing in INDYCAR?**

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, it's a very different type of car to drive, just in general, with a lot less downforce. Yeah, less power, as well. It's definitely different. No power steering. You have less grip in the corners, but it's more heavy on the steering. It takes a bit to get used to.

It's been a bit of a process for me. Coming back here to Austin, you have your references from the Formula 1. It's very different with the Indy car. But still I love the track in the F1 car, I love the track in the Indy car, as well. It's still super challenging. It's still very high speed in the first part of the lap. Flowing corners.

It is for sure a different type of driving, but yeah, both are very nice.

**Q. Marcus, as far as how it feels in the seat, how different does it feel from the Formula 1 car?**

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, you go quite a bit slower in the high-speed stuff because you have less load there, less downforce. You need to adjust that. For me, that's the biggest difference. The F1 car with all the downforce, it's more direct in the high-speed stuff. You have to sort of take that into account.

The rest, I would say the Indy car is moving around more, so you need to sort of play with the car more, with the steering, the pedals. You have to work harder to get around the track with Indy car, which I think is enjoyable and also challenging.

I think F1 is more on rails, so to say, and the Indy car is definitely moving around a lot more. It's a different type of challenge. You need to sort of tackle it in a different way.

Like I said, both type of cars on this track is really enjoyable to drive.

**Q. Easier to find that limit with an Indy car maybe?**

MARCUS ERICSSON: No, I wouldn't say so. Because the F1 car has so much grip, there is more you need to sort of force yourself to trust the car, having that much grip. Whereas in the NTT IndyCar Series, you find the limit, but then you have such a fine line between going over that limit or being below it. It's tricky to just be right to that grip level that you have in an Indy car.

It's changing a lot more the balance from corner to corner compared to an F1 car, where you have all the tools to tune it for every type of corner. As a driver, you can make more of a difference I believe in an Indy car because it's a more difficult car to drive, in my opinion.

**Q. (Question for Colton about comparing tracks.)**

COLTON HERTA: I'd say there's a lot of high speed and a lot of low speed, so it's hard to say that it's like one track. Watkins Glen, through the S's, is somewhat similar. It's quite a bit slower. But that quick change of direction, you still get that here with the long corners and the boot as well, that are similar to turns like six and seven.

Yeah, I'd say Watkins Glen is a pretty close track. But it's really a unique track. The surface is pretty abrasive. I think tire wear isn't going to be great for the

race. Stints will be tough to do. But, yeah, I guess we won't know how long we have to do on a set of tires for a stint until we know how many laps the race is.

**Q. (Question for Felix about blind corners.)**

FELIX ROSENQVIST: It's because you are going over a crest as you turn in. The further to the right you go, the more you go over the crest. If you turn in too late, you just tend to, like, get really light and go far. If you turn in too early, you got to brake later. That crest, yeah, it's quite tricky for sure.

**Q. Is that for the whole lap?**

FELIX ROSENQVIST: It's a long lap so you have plenty of time to get it back.

**Q. (Question for Marcus about coming to a new series and a track he has driven before.)**

MARCUS ERICSSON: It's going to be a bit strange because all the other tracks are going to be new for me. I'll be the expert of this track if you compare to the other guys in the NTT IndyCar Series. It's a bit different.

But, yeah, I try and make that to my advantage. Hopefully, that will mean that I will be, yeah, strong on this race weekend. I'm sure these two days of testing here will get everyone up to speed so that won't advantage won't be here for the race weekend.

One of my favorite tracks on the F1 calendar. I enjoy coming here every year. Always been a strong track for me. Even with people knowing or not knowing the track, I think it should be a good weekend for us here.

**Q. (Question for Colton about friends and family nearby.)**

COLTON HERTA: I have some family that lives out here, so I got to see them this morning. They're here watching. It was a nice little treat for them, too, to go quickest.

**Q. (Question for Colton about his engineering staff.)**

COLTON HERTA: That's what it's used for, we use our baseline setups that are all comparable. From there on, we kind of go our own ways. If we find something or they find something, they'll let us know. Other than that, that's kind of as far as it goes, is the baseline setups.

Yeah, if there's something major that they find that they think is useful, we'll be able to know about it.

**Q. Who is your engineer?**

COLTON HERTA: I just started working with him, Andy Listes. He was at Andretti, so he came over to Harding.

THE MODERATOR: As the rookies of the paddock, oftentimes, especially at spring training, leading into

May, veteran teammates, veteran drivers will start playing a few tricks to christen you all into the series. Has anybody had that experience yet or are we too early? Santino?

SANTINO FERRUCCI: Does it count if I got run over in Detroit?

THE MODERATOR: Did you literally get run over?

SANTINO FERRUCCI: Did anyone watch race one? I don't know if that counts as a prank.

My dad told me if anyone ever gets me, what you do back is go to a pet shop, get a bunch of crickets on a test day. You get a room key to the person's room. You release them in their room, they won't be able to sleep because the crickets will be going off all night.

THE MODERATOR: There also would be crickets crawling over them all night. I feel that's the worst part of the prank.

Any other questions.

**Q. Marcus and Colton, are you surprised to go this quick in your first session?**

MARCUS ERICSSON: I think, to be honest, everyone is just getting up to speed, getting into the track. I think times at the moment is not the most important. It's more about getting through the test program and everything.

Let's see in the afternoon how it goes. As always, it's nice to be up there compared to being down the list. At this time of the test, I don't think it makes a big difference.

COLTON HERTA: Kind of agree. Everybody is still getting up to speed. Setups are kind of probably pretty varied right now. Everybody is trying to find the sweet spot.

But, yeah, we still went quickest. I'm super proud about it. Not really surprised, I guess, because I knew if I could put the lap together, it would be quick. To be quickest is pretty cool.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.