

# NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

Wednesday April 24, 2019

**Press Conference**

## Fernando Alonso

McLaren Racing



THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Fernando Alonso. Weather conditions changing a bit today. How does it feel to be back here at Indianapolis Motor Speedway?

FERNANDO ALONSO: It's good to be back, yeah, to feel again the magic of the place. The facilities when you come in the morning, you see the size of everything again, doing the medical checks in the morning, preparing for the running in the afternoon. It felt good.

Unfortunately, the weather was not stable enough to follow the times that we had in terms of practice. Yeah, at the end it was not enough laps and not enough time on the car to get the proper feeling.

Yeah, I guess is the same for everyone.

THE MODERATOR: Regardless of the abbreviated session, not being able to complete the full refresher program, how important is it to get this track time even if you figured out things you might need to work on when we get back for practice during the 500?

FERNANDO ALONSO: It's always important. Any track time you have, you may discover issues on the car, you may discover things you can improve as a driver. Learning for us, it's a brand-new car. We need to check many things.

Yeah, as I said, today has been a difficult day for the weather and for, yeah, the time that they gave to the rookies. Nothing we can do. Hopefully we can take over this time.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Fernando.

**Q. Was it a frustrating day because all the waiting around because of the weather, then you couldn't get out because of the issue with the car? In your other series, in Formula 1 or sports cars, the show goes on whether it rains or not.**

FERNANDO ALONSO: It was frustrating for everyone, I guess. For us, obviously, yeah, we lost a little bit of time at the beginning. This was more or less expected because, as I said, it was a brand-new chassis, brand-new car. Everything fit in the last week. We expect to run slowly, step by step, short runs at the beginning. It's what we did.

So, yeah, if we could probably have the laps at midday, maybe you discover these issues, then you have hours to work in the car, be ready for the afternoon. The weather delays everything. You do the lap at 5:30 p.m., and there is no room to get back on track on time.

**Q. What was the issue with the car?**

FERNANDO ALONSO: Some electrical issue. Yeah, not clear what yet.

**Q. You still sound encouraged even though you're still working through an awful lot. You sound genuinely happy to be back.**

FERNANDO ALONSO: Yeah, I'm happy. I'm happy to be back here because this place is great. At the end, it's going to be amazing, you know, the two weeks here. Yesterday, as I said, we were slow because the weather, some of the decisions that people made in terms of running time and things like that. Yeah, not enough laps.

**Q. Fernando, this is a full McLaren effort this year vs. Andretti last time. What has been the biggest challenge or difference this time around?**

FERNANDO ALONSO: Well, basically I think is a bit of challenge, no doubt. I think we have to do everything by ourselves, not only in terms of setup-wise, on the technical side. It's also on the operational side, also on the strategy, tire management, the comfort side in terms of precision, steering wheel grip, basic things that they were ready with Andretti. You save a lot of time.

Yeah, basically it's a bigger challenge. But it could be a bigger reward, as well. I think some of the, yeah, philosophy or directions that McLaren may go in the next month, maybe now is a little bit different. With Andretti we just follow what we knew what was working. In a way it was easier. But maybe now we can discover new things. That's our hopes.

**Q. You came here in 2017. You were viewed as a Formula 1 world champion trying to win the Indy 500. Do you return feeling more a little bit like an IndyCar driver?**

FERNANDO ALONSO: Now I'm coming back as a Formula 1 world champion and 24 Hour Le Mans champ.

**Q. Does this feel a little easier to you than it did?**

FERNANDO ALONSO: And I'm 24 Hours Daytona.

You have 48 Hour of Daytona at this table now.

**Q. When you come here preparing for the oval, do you have to take a moment to reset your brain a little bit in terms of how you handle the car here versus Le Mans or 24 Hours of Daytona or anything like that? Is there a complete mindset change?**

FERNANDO ALONSO: Yes, absolutely. It requires a complete reset on your driving style and your mindset. Yeah, being ready to turn left for two weeks and to be brave on some occasions because it's all about that.

Yeah, I had the test in Texas two weeks ago, so that more or less prepare yourself to oval racing again. Couple of good sessions on the simulator, as well, in Charlotte. It was not too difficult today because of all that preparation. So, yeah, should be okay.

THE MODERATOR: Fernando, thank you very much for your time.

FERNANDO ALONSO: Thank you.