

# NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

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**Press Conference**

## James Hinchcliffe

Arrow Schmidt Peterson Motorsports

## Marcus Ericsson

Arrow Schmidt Peterson Motorsports

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by James Hinchcliffe and Marcus Ericsson of Arrow Schmidt Peterson Motorsports.

Marcus, we'll start with you. I believe you did your first oval test here at Texas Motor Speedway. What have you remembered from that test and have you learned even more in the short practice we had yesterday?

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, I think coming back here, it was a big difference compared to when I was here in April. It was my first-ever experience on an oval. It was obviously a big challenge. I was lucky to have James there by my side to coach me through the day.

For sure now after the month of May, I was feeling a lot more comfortable getting here. Also in the first round straightaway I felt quite comfortable. Even though this track is a different track and challenge than Indy, I was feeling okay.

THE MODERATOR: You're also coming off of your first podium finish last weekend in Detroit. How do you feel in terms of momentum heading into this weekend?

MARCUS ERICSSON: I feel great. Like you said, first podium for me in the series. The team has done a great job all year. I don't want to blame bad luck, but it's not been going our way, let's put it that way. To be able to sort of put a race together, the way we executed that race was great from driving to pit stops to strategy. To finish off with a podium was a nice reward for the team.

THE MODERATOR: James, part of one of the most exciting finishes here at Texas Motor Speedway a couple of years ago. I'm sure he wished it turned out a little bit differently.

I saw yesterday you mentioned you feel that even with the short practice you're further along than you were last year. What are some things that are clicking for you right now and the team?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: I think over the course of the weekend last year, we developed both cars pretty well, got both cars in a real good spot for the race. We were able to roll off with a similar setup. Luckily it seems to



have translated pretty well.

Obviously nobody got the amount of running they were hoping for yesterday. But for the couple runs we did get, I think for this time last year we're a little bit further ahead. We've just been trying to look at the data we were able to collect overnight, try to make a few changes for this morning.

We have a lot to squeeze into this next practice session. We want to get a bunch of race running done because you have to get a good racecar over the full distance. Qualifying is important, track position is certainly more important here than it used to be. Qualifying is going to be pretty key.

Feeling pretty good about it so far.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for James and Marcus.

**Q. James, put you on the spot: Raptors in how many games?**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Six.

**Q. Have you gotten any response from...**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: (Kahwi Leonard) has not responded yet to my offer. It still stands.

**Q. Marcus, it is almost like you're part of Team Canada because you have a Canadian teammate. You have another Canadian teammate in Robby. Canadian team owner in Ric Peterson. How does a guy from Sweden fit in? James said last week Sweden has a lot in common with Canada, it's almost kind of like the Canada of Europe.**

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, I mean, we both love hockey. Both countries do. Fortunately for me we usually beat the Canadians.

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Blatantly not true. Anybody with a Google can tell you that's a complete lie (laughter).

MARCUS ERICSSON: All right, we can agree to disagree on that (laughter).

No, I think so far it's all good guys in our team. Yeah, it's been working really good.

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: He's an honorary Canadian now, except when it comes to hockey. He's not good enough for that.

**Q. Marcus, coming off your best weekend, how do you translate into a solid oval weekend?**

MARCUS ERICSSON: I think coming from a result like that, no matter where you go next, you will bring that sort of confidence and momentum into that weekend. That's what we're trying to do.

I'm certainly feeling that confidence in myself. I think also you can see on all the guys on the team, as well, it was a good boost for all of them. They were obviously very pleased with the result.

I think just for everyone in the team, it's been a good boost, something we definitely can build on even though it's a very different type of race here in Texas.

**Q. James, the tire situation, you said you were going to try to do some long runs today. Hotter temperatures today. Do you think this will be the ultimate test of those new compound tires?**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Ultimately I think so. When track temp's up, it's going to be a pretty green track given the rain. This is worst-case scenario in terms of track conditions from the tire side.

Firestone have done a lot of work since last year. They have a couple different options for us. I have no concerns. I'm sure it's going to be fine. We're going to be able to race, no problem.

**Q. James, in talking to some of the guys yesterday, it sounds like everybody would like to avoid pack racing, if possible. Graham (Rahal) was saying yesterday if it leans more towards a pack race, it's okay because it's a good show. Scott (Dixon) yesterday seemed to have a different opinion, biased after having won.**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: I think ultimately pack racing is entertaining in a certain respect. But it's not the only way to put on a good race on a mile-and-a-half oval. What you really need is the right amount of tire degradation. If you look at the oval tracks we go to where we have a lot of tire deg, it traditionally puts on a good race.

Since we have been coming here in 2012 with the new car, we've seen a lot of races that came down to managing your tires. They were exciting races. '16 looked like a bit of a pack race because we all put on new tires with 10 laps to go. That wasn't indicative of the rest of the race at all.

You look at races like Iowa, lots of tire deg, good race. Phoenix, no tire deg, terrible race. It comes down to how much tires fall off.

This track traditionally has been a part of that. I don't think we need pack racing to put on a good show. It becomes more about strategy, managing your tires and setup accordingly. We've always been really good at

that. We've had cars that took care of tires over a long run, maybe not the quickest over a single lap, but that's not necessarily what you need to win the 600.

We'll carry on with what we've got. I think we're heading in the right direction. Hopefully we'll put on a good show tomorrow night.

**Q. This is the second longest running race on the current IndyCar schedule. This has always kind of held a special place in the history of this series. How big is it to still win at Texas Motor Speedway? One time it was huge.**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: It's still up there, for sure. I think Eddie Gossage and the team here do a tremendous job making this race a big deal. The show has always been very good here. The only place you get cowboy hats. It's definitely one that everybody wants to win.

The show is usually pretty good. The finishes are usually pretty close. That's what the fans want to see. As drivers, those are the kind of races you want to win.

**Q. Marcus, obviously the transition from F1 to IndyCar has been documented a little bit. Talk about for folks that haven't heard that your transition and how much help James has been.**

MARCUS ERICSSON: I think the two series are very different. The cars are very different. Obviously with less downforce that you have in the Indy cars, it requires a different way of driving, I would say. Also no power steering versus power steering is a big difference in the way it feels.

Also for me, maybe the biggest challenge has been the tires, to get used to that. The Firestones without tire warmers compared to Pirelli with tire warmers. A lot of things to get used to.

Obviously on the track, the road and street courses is something that's quite similar to what I've done all my racing life, whereas the ovals is something completely new. It's been a lot to sort of learn.

Yeah, I've been really lucky to have an experienced guy like James next to me in the team. Been asking him a lot of things, looked a lot at his data, videos, stuff like that. That's been super helpful for me to get up to speed, especially on the ovals.

But then also it's about experience as well. That's what rewards in this series. See some of the guys that have been here a long time, been on these tracks for many years, it's definitely not easy to come in and compete right up there straightaway.

It is one of the toughest series in the world. I've experienced that this year. But love the challenge. It's a great series to be part of. I'm having a lot of fun.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, we are at about halfway through the season. It's hard to believe. Marcus, how would you evaluate your first half of the season? James, as the team veteran, how has the team progressed up to this point?

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you very much. Good luck today.

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, I think from my side, pre Detroit has been disappointing result-wise, but very promising pace-wise. I think already from St. Pete, we had a good pace in the cars, both cars. It's just been one of those years there's always been something going against us sort of thing. That's been the feeling. We haven't really put on paper the pace we feel like we've had.

That's why the Detroit result really was a great sort of result that we really needed at that point when it happened. Hopefully we can build on that and continue to run up front for the rest of the year.

Yeah, it's been a big learning process for me. Like I said, the results have not been what I wanted. Hopefully after the podium last time out, we can continue to run up there.

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Basically echo what Marcus said. I think the results certainly don't represent the kind of pace we think we've had on Sundays. Our Saturdays may not have been quite as productive as we would have liked at a couple tracks. Ultimately the race pace is good. The cars have been raceable. Marcus especially has done a tremendous job on Sundays getting up through the fields.

I hate to say it because it sounds like a copout, but we've generally had a decent amount of not great luck. I am not even looking for good luck, just no bad luck. I think it would kind of change the look of our season a little bit.

I'm proud of the team, the effort that we've put forward. There's definitely some things we can clean up and improve. We're constantly looking to try to do that.

Ultimately I think the pace we've had, especially in the races, is a little bit better than what it looks like. We're going to keep doing our job in that sense, keep trying to execute on Sundays. Hopefully one of these days it will start falling in our favor.

**Q. Marcus, did you hear from any of your mates back in F1 after Detroit?**

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, obviously I had 10 of the guys from the (Alfa Romeo) F1 team were here, came out to see the race. They were very happy to see the race, were there celebrating with me after.

Then of drivers, Checo (Sergio Perez) sent me a message. I was also speaking with Daniel (Ricciardo). There are a few that have been reaching out, happy for my success.