

# NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

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*Press Conference*

**James Hinchcliffe**  
**Marcus Ericsson**  
**Jack Harvey**



THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the media center today. We've got three drivers, two of them from the Arrow Schmidt Peterson group, Marcus Ericsson and James Hinchcliffe, and from Meyer Shank Racing, Jack Harvey. Welcome, gentlemen.

We'll start with the veteran in the group, James Hinchcliffe, off a really strong run at Texas, but didn't end quite the way you wanted. What kind of excitement do you have for being here at Road America?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Very excited. When they announced a few years ago that this track was coming back on the calendar, I think everybody was thrilled to hear it. It's a favorite among the drivers certainly, and among teams, among fans, it's such a great event. It was the first place that I got to get back into an IndyCar after my accident in 2015, so special memories there as well.

For us, yeah, on the Arrow Schmidt Peterson car and the 5 car, we've had good runs the past two weeks, just haven't gotten the results to show for it. Running for the win in Detroit, battling against the front runners, the top three in Texas, and unfortunately, just don't have the finishes yet. The speed's there, though. That's the hard part. If we can just keep executing like that and keep putting fast race cars on the racetrack, we can be up front, and there's no reason we can't do that here this weekend.

THE MODERATOR: Marcus and Jack haven't raced here yet. Can you offer any advice for such a long track with so many places to get it wrong?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Have fun. Hang on. This place is great. I think, if you ask the drivers, this would probably be one of the favorites for sure across a lot of the guys in the series. I'm excited for these two to get to try it for the first time.

I was trying to compare it to something that they know. It's sort of like a Midwestern Spa. It's like Spa, but like in the '50s. That's kind of the feel that I've given them so far. They've both been doing awesome all year. They'll be up to speed here in no time. Looking forward to good results across all three cars.

THE MODERATOR: Marcus, you've had a couple strong runs back to back. At Texas, ran really well, seventh place finish, completed all the laps. At Detroit, podium finish. You've got to be excited about how the season is shaping up, at least coming into form.

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, for sure. I think already from the start of the year, we were showing quite a lot of pace on every event but didn't get the results out of it. It will be nice, like I say, both Detroit and in Texas, two good races, two good results, and that's certainly building the momentum. It's good for the whole team to get that, and we're looking to build on that this weekend.

I think it's a track that looks amazing. It should suit myself and us as well. I'm really excited to build on that sort of late form that we're having.

THE MODERATOR: How do you approach a new racetrack when you've not actually been on surface other than track walk?

MARCUS ERICSSON: I get a lot of practice of that this year because like every track I go to is new. We have obviously videos and stuff like that that I'm watching a lot to prepare myself, and we have the driver coach in Bob, who's been helping me a lot as well with advice, and obviously James with his experience. I can ask him a lot of questions, and he's always very helpful there. I just try to use all the tools I have available to be as prepared as possible.

So still it's a challenge. Every track I come to, it's new. It certainly takes a bit of time, but yeah, that's it.

THE MODERATOR: Jack, I would think at midseason here, you've raced six of the stops so far, you've got to be pretty happy with the way the team has at least shown everyone that you're really making progress.

JACK HARVEY: Absolutely. The season has gone about as well as we could have hoped for. I think we're on target for the targets we set at the start of the year. Obviously, Indy GP was the highlight, finishing third and getting the podium for everyone at Meyer Shank Racing. Honestly, at that point, it was the first podium for Arrow Schmidt Peterson as well.

So the momentum we've been building kind of came into fruition that weekend, which I don't know what the

expectations are really for this weekend, probably the same in terms of what they always have been -- try and qualify in the top 12 and try to finish in the top 10. This is hard going into interviews after these two always. They say so many good things that it's kind of hard to add to it.

I think we're all really excited about being in Road America. It hasn't been fun watching from the sidelines in Detroit and Texas, but it has been from seeing the pace of the cars and how good the guys have been doing. I know James' result is literally just about to happen. Marcus, obviously, has built some great momentum. So across the whole team, it really does feel there's something positive brewing, and hopefully we'll carry that on this weekend.

THE MODERATOR: You've been here, but you haven't raced here. Is Midwestern Spa the best fit?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Actually, that's what I told my dad when we left here yesterday. I was like it feels like Spa a few years ago. Even just with the terrain and the setting, how this place is, the elevation change and the long straights with some slow corners. I love Spa, and I'm sure we're going to absolutely love this place as well.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions.

**Q. Question to you, Marcus. James and Jack mentioned that it's Road America, maybe Spa a couple of years ago. In Spa, one of the most characteristic points is the Eau Rouge corner. Is there something similar here which is very challenging?**

MARCUS ERICSSON: I think the Eau Rouge is obviously a very unique corner in itself. I don't think there's anything like that here. I think this track has its own really challenging corners, and obviously the one that stands out is the carousel, being a very unique corner. It's going to be interesting to tackle that and see how that feels.

Yeah, I think the other thing that is sort of similar to Spa is obviously the elevation changes around the track and being a long lap as well. It's for sure quite a lot of things that sort of reminds the two of each other.

**Q. Many road courses nowadays have a lot of asphalt -- (No microphone). To be penalized with making mistakes with all of this grass runoff in that one small area, and it's a lot of lap time?**

MARCUS ERICSSON: I personally love the old school tracks. I've always said from now on my favorite track was Suzuka, which is one of the most old school type tracks that's left on the calendar there. I think we never want to be in the wall or to damage the cars, but we also want to have tracks that's difficult for us drivers and do penalize us when we do mistakes.

I think that's one of the problems with all the modern tracks today, the way they build them is that you can run pretty much anywhere on and off track without anything happening. Obviously, on this place, that's not going to be possible. I personally think that's good.

Obviously, we need to always look for safety first, but also find ways that you, as a driver, you need to be building up to it and not go over the limit and then sort of bring it back. Here it's a track you need to build up to every corner. You need to be working the brake. Can I brake a bit later? Can I go a bit faster? Because if you overdo it, you're going to be pretty much in the wall.

I like that sort of approach and the skill it requires, and I think that's something -- yeah, it's a bit different on a lot of the modern tracks today.

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: It's different for me because over here we don't really have those tracks. It's really more again a growing up in Europe sort of question. I kind of echo Marcus' point. From a spectator's standpoint even, watching what a lot of the Formula One tracks have become.

You talk about the new track is one thing to build them like that, but the really devastating ones are when they take a great old track, like and ruin it. Pouhon at Spa used to be like a real man-to-man corner, driver-to-driver corner. Now it's not. Now you fire it in until you go off in the concrete runoff, you drive it right back on track and back it up a little bit. That used to be a day-ending adventure.

So I echo his statement. I think it's great that IndyCar has got tracks that reward bravery but also penalizes mistakes.

MARCUS ERICSSON: Ditto.

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Do I smell maple syrup? Is there maple somewhere in here? Doughnuts. I know, I can smell my countrymen.

**Q. Just kind of the theme with talking to Marcus here, did you get a chance to do any sim work before coming here? What were the impressions from just the sim?**

MARCUS ERICSSON: Yeah, I did in the sim. I had a lot of fun. I really enjoyed the track. It's a track that, again, it's a challenging one. We've got long laps and a lot of difficult and different corners. So, yeah, it requires a lot from the car but also from me as a driver. I had a good day in the sim.

Obviously did the track work and everything yesterday. It's always a bit different in real life compared to sim land, but I feel prepared, done all the homework. So I'm ready to sort of kick it off. But definitely looks like one of the better ones on the calendar for sure.

**Q. And I guess the followup would be, with half the season done already, another half to go, but you've gotten a half a season to get comfortable with the car, go to IndyCar, go to places you're comfortable with and come back to your bread and butter here. Are the goals really set? What are the goals for the last half of the season for you?**

MARCUS ERICSSON: They're getting bigger and bigger for sure. It's been a lot to learn this year for me. Being a new series, new cars, new tracks, everything, it's been taking a bit of time to get used to everything, to get into everything. But now I'm starting to feel more comfortable.

For sure, we want to raise our game. Obviously, the last couple of races, we've been running up front, and we want to keep doing that, keep qualifying well in the top ten, and fight in the top five, top three in the races.

**Q. James, this is also a place where the campers are part of the story. I assume you've spent some time in the field, so to speak. Give us a sense for that, how enjoyable that is.**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Here in middle Ohio are kind of the two races that have that big camping culture, and it draws out a certain kind of fan. It's a passionate fan. It's a knowledgeable fan. We love places like this and races like this. Most nights after I get released from engineering, I'll hop on my pit bike and kind of go cruise around some of the camp grounds and just check it all out. This kind of reminds me of how I grew up racing. In motorsport back home, this is the same sort of atmosphere back there, so following dad to the vintage races and things like that, this is what I remember.

So I love that culture. I love that people come here and make a weekend out of it. It really is a family atmosphere. You see kids playing games outside their tents or the motor homes or whatever and go to the fence during the sessions. That was me as a kid, so this place really resonates with me a lot in that way.

**Q. Gentlemen, this may seem like an obvious question, but how important is qualifying position on the grid, and will this be a fuel-saving race? Because you wouldn't want to run out with a four-mile course.**

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: We don't want to run out with a 7/8 of a mile course anywhere. Running out is bad anywhere. Qualifying is always important. The IndyCar Series is so competitive. Passing is at a premium wherever we go, and track position is usually king. Obviously, long straights, big brake zones, this place provides more opportunity for good wheel-to-wheel racing than anything he is.

I think Scott proved that in, what was it, '17, where he drove around four Penskes one by one. So it is possible certainly to come up. It's not the most track

position dependent race, but the distance does kind of leave a little room for interpretation on pit strategy and stops. The windows are about one lap long. So that doesn't make that element of it very exciting. You can't dig yourself out of a hole too easily if you get into one. So it's definitely always better to start out front.