

NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

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Press Conference

Ryan Hunter-Reay

Andretti Autosport



THE MODERATOR: We welcome Ryan Hunter-Reay, today's third-place finisher. Ryan, that was quite an eventful last few laps. It looked like you had a shot at maybe more than third. But still it's your first podium in quite a while, but I think you wanted more?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Yeah, absolutely. Like you said, we were really pushing hard there at the end, and to see how quickly we were closing on (Scott) Dixon and (Felix) Rosenqvist, I thought they were in traffic, and I thought, 'Man, this could go anybody's way.'

I'm not really sure what Josef (Newgarden) was thinking there doing that. He tried to go around the outside, and the line through that corner is that you do a diamond and you come back to the apex, so he had to expect I was coming back at some point, and then just shoved his nose in there. I don't know, with the championship like that, leader, totally baffled me. I'm just glad it didn't cut down our right rear tire after fighting like that all day.

We started 10th. Amazing strategy from this No. 28 DHL Honda team. Obviously we've had a string of pretty poor results lately, and it's just a matter of execution. We stumbled at Iowa. We really gambled when it went cold at night. We thought it was going to be more of an understeering race, and we put all our money down on the table and we lost it all in the first hand. That's how sometimes this sport goes. But we were close today.

We were closing in on these guys. Obviously congrats to Ganassi. They ran a great race, good strategy, and we were closing on them, but just came up a little bit too short, so if we keep knocking on the door like that, we'll win plenty. It was nice to just get back on form where we should be.

Q. Did you have a chance to talk to Josef after the race?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: No. Where I got out of my car was right there across from his pit when he got out of his. I'm sure if he had an issue with it, he would have come and talked to me. I'm sure he would have probably liked that last lap back for sure.

Q. With the various strategies going on, is that enjoyable when some are on two (stop strategy), some are on three, you never really know where

you're at?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: As a driver you have no idea. You just have to keep your head down because every lap that you're going -- like the three-stoppers, every lap you're going you have to go as hard as you can because that could be the difference between the two-stopper coming out in front of you at the end or something. I've been through too many of these things where a lap or two of just letting off and conserving can really bite you in the rear end. So you never know. I had no idea where it was going to go until it kind of shook out there with 20 to go.

Q. Your season hasn't been the greatest in the world, but this is moving you the right direction; do you feel like that's true?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: I feel like we're just back to where we really should be. We've had speed. You look at Road America, we had speed. We had speed at plenty of the races. We finished fourth and fifth at Detroit, just missed the podiums there. We were just missing a little something. We definitely had it this weekend. We got it back. We qualified 10th. That put us in a pretty big hole to dig ourselves out of. But it's just little things. Right now as competitive as this series is, if you're missing a tenth and a half here or a tenth there, it's a big deficit, and if you're not executing 100 percent on strategy or approach or any of it, there's going to be somebody else who is. Yeah, we just missed a few, and it's nice to be back where we should be when we executed. That's what we did today.

Q. When Rossi was struggling at the end of his second stint, how tempting was it for you to go for it and make your break from Josef at that point rather than act as a buffer between?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: It was tempting, but to be honest with you, you can close in on a car from a ways back, but once you got within four or five car lengths, it was a different deal. You're sliding all around, the dirty air, it's a big difference. That's why even when I saw Josef close up at one point on me, I wasn't too worried because I knew once he got close enough, it was going to become a whole different world for him.

Yeah, at that point it really wasn't worth taking that much out of the tires to have a run at Alex, considering we were both on different strategies.