

# Colton Herta's Indy hopes blocked by calendar change

BY JENNA FRYER  
AP AUTO RACING WRITER

Colton Herta's hopes of returning to the Indianapolis 500 in the middle of his bid to reach Formula 1 took a hit with a calendar clash Thursday after Formula 2 races were rescheduled.

The 25-year-old IndyCar star — who became the series' youngest race winner at the age of 18 in 2019 — made the move to F2 this season with an eye on the super license points needed to race in F1 with Cadillac as its first American driver.

F2 has scheduled two extra rounds of its championship alongside F1's Miami Grand Prix and the Canadian Grand Prix, both next month. The race

in Montreal clashes with the Indianapolis 500 on May 24. The original schedule didn't have any F2 races in May at all.

They replace rounds in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia which were called off along with the F1 races there because of the war in Iran.

Herta had been in contention for a fourth car at the Indianapolis 500 from Andretti Global, which shares an ownership group with the Cadillac F1 team in Dan Towriss and the TWG Motorsports conglomerate.

"We're planning on a fourth car. But there are no shortage of people, and not just from IndyCar," Towriss said in February at the IndyCar season opener in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Now that Herta is not available, Andretti Global said Thursday it will focus on its current three-driver lineup for the Indy 500 and not enter a fourth car. The team fields cars for previous Indy 500 winners Will Power and Marcus Ericsson, as well as Kyle Kirkwood.

Herta is 10th in the F2 standings following the opening round in Australia last month.

"I think it's great if it gets me to Formula 1 and I would be incredibly grateful I took the leap," Herta told The Associated Press in January of his F2 move. "I think a lot of people feel it would be embarrassing if I fail, but I don't care what everybody thinks or if its going to tarnish my career."



MICHAEL CONROY/Associated Press, file

**Colton Herta prepares to drive during qualifications for the Indianapolis 500 last May. A change in his Formula 2 calendar means Herta will not compete at The Brickyard this year.**

# Alex Bowman cleared to return by NASCAR

BY JENNA FRYER  
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CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Alex Bowman has been cleared to return to the NASCAR race weekend at Bristol Motor Speedway after missing four races with vertigo.

Hendrick Motorsports announced Thursday that Bowman will drive the No. 48 Chevrolet on Sunday at the Tennessee track.

"It's been tough being out of the car, but we all wanted to make sure I was 100% ready

before returning," Bowman said. "I feel really good, and I'm excited about being at the track with my team and getting back to racing."

Bowman had to exit his car during the March 1 race at Circuit of the Americas because of the symptoms of vertigo. He was replaced by Myatt Snider that day.

Anthony Alfredo replaced Bowman at Phoenix,

and Justin Allgaier has driven the past three races for Bowman as he recovered.

Hendrick Motorsports said Bowman was cleared to return after turning laps in a street car at a road course in North Carolina before practicing pit stops, racing in a simulator and passing a medical evaluation.

"We're proud of Alex and the way he's handled this situation," Hendrick

Motorsports president Jeff Andrews said. "He's put a lot of work into his recovery and followed the medical team's plan every step of the way. From the outset, our goal was to prioritize his health and have him return when he was fully recovered and medically cleared. We're looking forward

to seeing Alex back in his race car this weekend."

Bowman's chances of making the playoffs are likely already over. Under the previous points system, Bowman could have had the chance to make the postseason by winning a regular-season race. NASCAR's modified

format for the 2026 season is no longer win-and-in and the top 16 drivers in the points standings make the playoffs.

Bowman is 144 points back of 16th.

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