

# NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

Thursday, August 6, 2020  
Indianapolis, Indiana, USA



**Conor Daly**

Ed Carpenter Racing

**Cole Pearn**

Ed Carpenter Racing

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome, everybody. On behalf of Team Chevy, we have Conor Daly and Cole Pearn from Ed Carpenter Racing. Conor the driver of the No. 47 U.S. Air Force Chevrolet in the Indy 500. Cole will be his engineer for the race.

Conor, how excited are you for the Indy 500 in your hometown? Secondly, can you talk about being with Ed Carpenter Racing, one of the fastest teams in the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, how excited are you to be with ECR?

CONOR DALY: I used to get this question a lot when I signed the deal. I was very excited then and I'm very excited now still many months later (smiling).

This team is so good at Indy. We know it. Everyone knows it. Just can't wait to get in and get in the car just for the first time, literally to do one lap. Like, when I got in the car at Texas this year, I knew the first lap, This is going to be a good weekend.

I just want to get out there, get some time under my belt, get Cole in the game here and see what happens. It will be a lot of fun. We have a great looking car to do it in with the U.S. Air Force, that No. 47, as well.

THE MODERATOR: Cole, welcome to INDYCAR. I know you had a successful career in NASCAR, then decided to step away from racing. What was so tempting about coming to work the Indy 500 with Ed Carpenter Racing and Conor?

COLE PEARN: Obviously Indy 500 is a huge deal, so definitely a bucket list item for sure. To get a chance to do it with a great driver and a great team as well, a team I kind of felt comfortable with, was kind of a perfect opportunity.

Definitely didn't want to go back racing full-time, so to get a chance to do one race, have it be in a competitive situation, is pretty ideal. Yeah, it all worked out.

THE MODERATOR: We'll throw it open to questions from the media.

**Q. You're very established in NASCAR, got a good career there. INDYCARs are not the same as stockcars. What are the biggest hurdles for you? What are the things you need to learn to get prepared for this venture?**

COLE PEARN: I think just getting more familiar with everything. Obviously when everything's kind of first nature, it comes quicker, you're able to make decisions better and quicker. I think getting more and more comfortable with everything.

Everything seems fine. Again, it's getting more familiar with it all. I think just getting through a couple days will feel a lot more comfortable. Definitely you kind of know where your feet are at that point. I think fortunately enough the Indy schedule is long enough that will hopefully help in that.

Never know weather forecasts and all that. Like Conor said, just looking forward to get on track, kind of get in the motion of it all.

**Q. Is the language or terminology different? Things that are the same or different?**

COLE PEARN: Yeah, I mean, honestly, a lot of things are super similar. Obviously the values that you're looking at are way different, way more downforce, a lot lighter car, all those things. You're still looking for the same things in terms of handling and all those type of metrics you kind of study are the same. It's just the values are slightly different.

I think, yeah, it's been good. Have had some time to at least prep on that side of things, get more comfortable with it all.

**Q. How long have you been in Indy with the team?**

COLE PEARN: Two nights. They were nice enough to



send me a computer so I've been prepping for a while. That was at least good from that standpoint.

**Q. Conor, an Indianapolis 500 guy, Indiana guy, the announcement there's not going to be fans, will that feel weird to you? Make it a different 500?**

CONOR DALY: When you think about it, we spend, like, a lot of days at the track when there's no one there because we're out there working, doing whatever. Even practice, there's a few people there obviously. Only one day a year where we have the massive crowd. We so look forward to that.

That is part of the reason why I love the Indy 500 is the crowd, the people, the sheer magnitude of the event. Yeah, I mean, it is very sad. It sucks. It's a terrible situation all across the board no matter what. But we're going to do the best with the situation we've got.

These teams are still working hours on end to prepare these cars for the Indianapolis 500, which is our biggest event, at the greatest racetrack in the world, I think. We're going to give it our best shot. We have a great partner with NBC to give us a great TV broadcast.

We just got to make sure that every single person in the entire universe will be watching the race, that will be awesome.

**Q. Will it feel different on race day, take away not having all the pomp and circumstance?**

CONOR DALY: Funny, because at Texas this year there were no fans obviously. Was it weird? Yeah. Realistically when you're lining up against all your fellow compadres up there, it's like, All right, I still got to beat all those guys. No matter what, you want to be the best on that day no matter if there's a million people there or no people there.

Racing is so competitive, you could be at the rental go-kart track and you still want to beat everyone. It's the same thing. Obviously it's much larger at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, but we're going to get out there and want to beat each other. They still, as far as I know, give you a glass of milk and a trophy, your face goes down in history forever. That's what we're going for.

**Q. Cole, how many T-shirts did they issue you? Can you wear one on the pit box or do you have to wear a fire suit?**

COLE PEARN: I don't know. Maybe you can ask for me (laughter). They gave me four, a bunch of crew shirts. I don't know if I'm going to take those out of the bag yet.

We'll see.

Hopefully it goes well and maybe you can get away with that, I don't know.

**Q. Is there something that you missed in NASCAR that you feel will be fulfilled doing the Indy 500?**

COLE PEARN: Yeah, I think just the competition side of it. Something that NASCAR is lacking or something I missed being away?

**Q. Something that you missed being away.**

COLE PEARN: Oh, yeah, for sure, just the competition side. Having a chance to line up your competitors and do better than them is definitely the goal.

I think obviously it will be a fully different experience. But racing is still racing, throw a green and checkered. So looking forward to getting to that side of it and getting into the action.

**Q. Cole, in the NASCAR world, everybody is so encompassed into it week after week. It's kind of relentless. How much were you able to follow INDYCAR with the drivers, the cars, the teams?**

COLE PEARN: Yeah, definitely. I always followed it. I grew up a big fan of INDYCAR, so followed it from that standpoint. Over time grew to meet and know a lot of people that were in the sport. Definitely wanted to stay paying attention to it. It's not like going into something totally foreign. You at least know the players, you know what's going on from that standpoint.

This season, obviously a little bit weird, but I've been able to watch it in more detail, watch races a lot closer than what I've done in the past.

**Q. INDYCAR generally has a fairly attractive schedule in terms of number of races, length of schedule. Is it something you would like to be part of full-time?**

COLE PEARN: I don't think so at this point. Definitely just focused on this race. Maybe this race, see how it goes. I don't know if a full-time schedule is back in my future any time soon.

**Q. How much fun do you have on planning with Conor? A fun-loving guy. Following you on social media, so are you at times. This is going to be a fun experience in addition to being a lot of work.**

COLE PEARN: Yeah, my experience with racing, it's way

more fun when you do well. Hopefully we'll do well and we'll have a lot more fun.

**Q. Cole, we can tell from your tweeting you're watching a lot of these races, NASCAR and INDYCAR. What has been your observation as you step back and watch it from a fan standpoint, observer? What do you see that's good or bad about that sort of experience the people are getting at home?**

COLE PEARN: Yeah, it's been eye opening a little bit. I haven't watched a race at home in a long time. I can understand why when I call my dad during the week, he had no idea what actually went on (laughter).

Yeah, I don't know. I think there's so much that goes on behind the scenes, I don't think viewers at home get to see or get exposure to. I think that was a little bit eye opening. I thought there was a little bit more disconnect than what I was kind of expecting.

I don't know. Now I'm getting more used to it so I'm not sure. Yeah, I know one thing, it's nice to be able to follow the race, close your computer, turn the TV off, go do something else. You don't have to go through the cleanup and go home afterwards.

**Q. You said you don't want to go back full-time for the foreseeable future. Do you expect you'll be closing the computer and going back to your life forever or would you like to recharge and come back or is it too early to say?**

COLE PEARN: Too early to say. Definitely not the A plan. Never say never to anything. Got to have a job and be able to pay for things and stuff like that.

Yeah, who knows. This experience I'm really looking forward to. I think it's fun to be able to go and try something different. I don't know what my view of it will be once it's over. Anxious for the new experience.

**Q. Cole, we've done a lot of talking about how different it is for experienced drivers to adapt to the Aeroscreen, for engineers to adapt to the new demands of the Aeroscreen on the tires and that kind of thing, new weight distribution. The rookies are not having to learn anything new. Do you feel the same way as not a rookie engineer, but a rookie INDYCAR engineer? Do you feel like there's less to unlearn and you can just soak up everything that the other engineers at ECR are going to throw your way?**

COLE PEARN: Yeah, a little bit. I think with reviewing past notes, you're always relying on last year's data to kind

of do your prep work. For me, it's still having to learn what the differences are and understand that. When you're looking at stuff from last year, trying to correlate that to this year, you got to have that. Obviously, the aero changes, the weight distribution changes.

Yeah, I feel like kind of in the same boat with the other guys as far as what they're having to adapt to.

**Q. When you signed the deal with Ed, was it a time when you realized how compressed the schedule was going to be and how quickly you were going to have to learn?**

COLE PEARN: Yeah, got a little bit more compressed after that. But still it was fine. I mean, I was kind of hoping to go to Mid-Ohio this weekend and at least get to hang out with Conor and the team, stuff like that, view it from that standpoint. That didn't happen.

In a way it's okay. It's been nice to have more time to prep with the singular focus on Indy. Everybody at the shop is kind of focused on that now because they're not worrying about Mid-Ohio. That's been nice. It's in everybody's frame of mind. That I feel is a lot better learning experience, better opportunity for me to get comfortable.

**Q. Cole, what was the reaction to Labonte family selling its NASCAR team, the complicated dynamics with being a Joe Gibbs Racing affiliate?**

COLE PEARN: Yeah, that sucks obviously to see a team go away for sure. I think it's bad luck on the JGR side. I don't think there's any correlation there. From my standpoint, obviously having gone through it, it sucks.

Yeah, I mean, again, I think it was a business deal on both sides of it. Sucks to see another team go away. I know they were in a tight spot for a long time. I think finally with the pandemic and everything, it just kind of fell apart. Sorry to see that. Know a lot of people there, great people. Hopefully they can all find jobs.

It's going to continue to be a tougher job market in that sport, for sure.

**Q. Cole, the genesis of how all this came together. Was Pete working on you for a while and convinced you to come over?**

COLE PEARN: No. We talked about it way back maybe that would be something. I think when the schedule all got changed, the guy that was originally doing the third car couldn't do it any more, so they were in a spot where they needed somebody. Yeah, they asked. It was like, Yeah,

why not? That's kind of how it came together. It was pretty simple from that standpoint really.

**Q. It wasn't Pete's influence so much?**

COLE PEARN: Yeah, he called and asked, just said, Would you want to do this? I was like, Yeah, sure. Then we talked to the higher powers, I guess, went from there.

**Q. Are you looking forward to bringing some of the culture that you built on the NASCAR side, Furniture Row Racing?**

COLE PEARN: Seems very similar. Obviously the shops are a lot smaller, less people, stuff like that. I think it's got a lot of that kind of scene going on. This is a huge race for them, they typically do really well here. Being part of that is going to be good.

It's been great being in the shop, getting to meet all the guys working on the team. Seems like a great group already. Yeah, it's been pretty easy so far. I'm the new guy. Just trying to find my place at this point.

**Q. Conor, obviously you have worked with a couple different engineers this year, kind of used to moving around. Does that make working with a different engineer this weekend different from what you've done in the past?**

CONOR DALY: I've learned to just try to get along with everyone. I have enjoyed working with a variety of people because everyone has a bit of a different way they like to do things, a bit of a different way that they like to tune the setup. I think I've learned from that, as well.

There are a few things that I know that I like in the car, and there are a few things that a lot of engineers really want to make work because that's what they like. There's a lot of different things I can learn from that.

I'm a very, like, trusting individual. I'm going to be like, Hey, I know that you are a very smart man and have done more school than me probably, have been in this racing world for a long time. Obviously Cole has an incredible amount of experience in the racing world. Was a driver himself, as well. He knows what's going on.

Is there a lot to learn in the INDYCAR world? Absolutely, I think for sure. There is for anyone, for all of us. We're still learning every day, even me. It will be cool to see how that progresses.

But, yeah, I mean, I look forward to getting into something new. This is an exciting time to get into the Indy 500

because it's been a bit of a crazy year. I mean, I just can't wait. It will be cool to see what his type of experience kind of brings to the table.

You're always looking for something else that 32 other people don't have, something small. All you need is something small on race day to help you just do a little bit better of a job than anyone else. You never know, maybe a fresh opinion to the situation might give us that little advantage.

**Q. Cole, have you talked to any of the fellow University of Waterloo guys that are in open-wheel right now?**

COLE PEARN: I haven't, not yet, no. I'm sure I will. Definitely I had a few people hit me up and stuff like that. Yeah, it will be another thing. There's definitely going to be a lot more Canucks around than there was in past life.

**Q. Conor, what is your understanding of NASCAR? Do you feel that will help the communication with Cole? Maybe it's happened already, something you noticed already, or something you maybe anticipate is going to help. Is your understanding of that side of things going to make the conversations between you easier?**

CONOR DALY: I mean, I think so. I obviously follow NASCAR really closely. I love NASCAR. I've done one NASCAR race, so I guess a little bit (laughter).

But, yeah, I mean, I think no matter what, you're still going to have a communication that he's going to learn. It comes down to when I come into the pits, I say, Look, the car is understeering one out of five. He has to learn how much that actually means. We have to get used to how that's communicated. That will be different.

A guy like Cole who has had so much success in racing, he knows what the goal is, and that's to be the best we can be. It's just basically going to be an interesting road on how to get there because we're going to be learning a little bit more as we go kind of each session.

**Q. We've seen a lot of changes to the 500. At the minute the practice looks pretty much the same. Is it really important that you've managed to keep the practice, get ready with Cole for the race?**

CONOR DALY: We always want more practice, I can tell you that. With Indiana weather, you never know. That's the thing we're a little bit nervous about now. Indiana, it can be raining like a hurricane for 10 minutes, then it's sunny for the next hour.



We'll be ready for anything. Even if we have two days in a row of a rainout, we get to Fast Friday, here is more horsepower, your first time ever on the track, let's go. We still got to do that.

I think this team as a group already has such a great handle on this event and how they like to run the cars, that is a great thing to not fall back on but just to have as an asset. All right, they know what they're doing. So that will be really nice.

**Q. Conor, you're on Twitter. I don't know if you follow Cole. Do you have a favorite Cole Pearn tweet? Are you aware of his persona on social media?**

CONOR DALY: Look, I did not follow Cole, to be honest. I seen Cole retweeted many times. Big Internet guy. As an Internet man myself, I have a passion for Internet humor, content, creation.

I got texts from so many people, messages. It's as if, like, we had hired the alpha of all racing. It's as if Mario Andretti has come to our team and blessed us with his experience and career, some alpha wizard of engineering. That's great. It's going to be a lot of fun to see what happens.

I mean, we're going to get along, I can tell already. That's the best part.

THE MODERATOR: Again, on behalf of Team Chevy we thank all the media for joining us today. We'll thank Cole and Conor for their time today, wrap-up the call.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports