

NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

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Rod Reid

NXG Youth Motorsports President and CEO

Jimmie McMillan

Penske Entertainment Corp. Chief Diversity Officer

J. Douglas Boles

IMS President

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the world famous Indianapolis Motor Speedway. My name is Dave Furst with the NTT INDYCAR Series. Great to see you on a special day at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

I want to welcome Roger Penske, chairman of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, kind enough to join us here this afternoon. Mark Miles, president and CEO of Penske Entertainment Corp.

Up on the desk, we welcome and say hello to Jimmie McMillan, the chief diversity officer with Penske Entertainment Corp. In the middle, Coach Rod Reid, 40 years of auto racing experience, some outstanding work with NXG Youth Motorsports as the president and CEO.

The only man allowed to wear a suit today, J. Douglas Boles, president of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Incredibly exciting news today as we witness the launch of a groundbreaking and completely diverse team in open-wheel racing, called Force Indy. It will be led by Coach Reid, the principal. A team that will focus on diversity through mechanics, engineers, of course the drivers, but other key staff and personnel throughout the race team. Of course, it will do so under the mentorship of Team Penske, the legendary open-wheel race team, motorsports in a whole.

Force Indy will compete and open things up, the first race will be the Cooper Tires USF2000 Championship opener at the Firestone Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, comes up in

March. Going to be here before we know it.

We'll start with Jimmie on the far right. You've seen firsthand the passion that Coach Reid brings each and every day. This is also a part of the broader Speedway, IMS Race for Equality and Change. How important is this day?

JIMMIE McMILLAN: As an African American male, I cannot underestimate the importance of today. Someone who did not grow up with the sport, but grew to fall in love with the sport over time and over being introduced to it by others. I have strived to spread that love to other African Americans, people of color. This is a pivotal morning.

All morning I've been thinking about this might be one of those: Where was I when it all started? To have the opportunity to be here with Coach Reid, it's just amazing.

I've had the chance over the past six years to work with Coach Reid in the NXG program. And to see his heart, his passion, his dedication to provide opportunities to many folks, many kids who wanted to get into racing, their parents didn't know how, didn't know anything about the sport, but they brought their kids to Coach Reid.

I happen to be one of those parents. My sons are participating in the program. My son I know is watching from him, looking at coach, thinking, There's a future for me.

This is very pivotal for the Race for Equality and Change that we are undergoing right now. I could tell you under our leadership, certainly under Roger Penske, but also under Mark Miles, Bud Denker, Doug Boles, Allison Melangton, Jay Frye, we are all committed to changing this sport. It is an everyday laser focus on what we can do to move the needle.

This is a significant move. To have Coach Reid at the helm, I can tell you the team is being led by the right person to take this initiative in the right direction. This is not about a driver, it's not even about Coach Reid just as an owner, but this is about the commitment to provide opportunities throughout the sport, whether it's accounting, HR, legal, marketing. There's so many ways in which we can be more involved and more engaged in this sport.

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Through that we're going to service the fans we already have. There have been people of color following this sport for a long time. For them, this will be a happy moment.

We hopefully also will introduce new people to this thing that we love called auto racing. As part of the Race for Equality and Change, this is a big step. This is also a big step in our social construct for providing equality and equal opportunity for people of color in all areas of our lives.

THE MODERATOR: Coach Reid, you were wearing a mask when you walked in, but I could tell you were smiling ear to ear. This is an important day, a dream come true in many ways. What does this day mean to you?

ROD REID: I have spent, as you say, almost 40 years. I won't go deep into the timeframe (smiling).

I've had an opportunity to see the sport from back when I was in my teens coming to the Indianapolis 500 all the way through to being involved with one of the first African Americans to run in Super Vee. We always dreamed of having a black enterprise that would be oriented towards people of color.

I want to be clear. This is not the first time that we've had black ownership in cars or teams. But I think this is one of the first times we will be able to do something that's sustainable because of the support and the interest from folks like Roger Penske and the Penske organization, we've been able to start on this path.

I kind of see this two way. One is that we are inviting the black community to come into motorsports through our effort as Force Indy. We are also inviting the motorsports industry to embrace seeing and having the presence of African Americans and people of color in the pits, in the paddock, in other places in motorsports.

I want to be very, very clear that we are about diversity. We are about more than just me as a principal and the drivers. As a matter of fact, one of our core projects that we've engaged in in terms of putting this team together is to make sure that we have those positions like mechanics and engineers and others in the mix.

Today I want to talk about who I'm really celebrating, the stars of Force Indy. That is these three gentlemen sitting in front here. That's Stu Kelly, Nadeem Ali and Derek Morris. They are part of the beginning and initial core crew that we're having. They have been spending a tremendous amount of time working so far to get us to where we are today.

I just want to mention very quickly that they're not just guys that love racing. They all individually have been doing that. Stu has been drifting. That Nadeem has been involved heavily in go-karts. Derek has run stockcars. They have good backgrounds from the university level, both in engineering, management, et cetera.

They've all come through Nexgeneracers, the NXG Youth Motorsports. That's what this is about, to bring those and give opportunity to those who not only deserve it but have worked towards this opportunity, getting a chance from us being able to say, I can now be involved in motorsports.

I want to applaud those guys, and thanks for being part of Force Indy.

THE MODERATOR: There is so much, as you know, most everyone in this room, that goes into putting a race team together, forming a race team. Rod, what does the fact that Team Penske is going to be there as a mentor, what kind of impact is that for this team?

ROD REID: There's no question that being mentored by the best in the business is a big plus for Force Indy. We have been just so honored to be a part and to be able to have an alliance with the Penske organization that will actually support us, give us the tutelage, if you will, to go and become successful.

They have, without question, Team Penske has earned I believe like 18 Indy 500 wins, 16 championships. They're absolutely the best. We're going to have an opportunity to align with them. We're going to start off in Concord, North Carolina, so that we can really learn, then we hope to bring that team back here to Indianapolis.

It's an invaluable experience to be working with the Penske organization.

THE MODERATOR: Doug, certainly an exciting day, but really for the industry as a whole this is a pretty exciting day. You worked with Rod for years and years now. What kind of drive does this guy have?

J. DOUGLAS BOLES: He's certainly driven. The thing I love most about Coach is how passionate he is, but how unselfish he is. You see that in the three guys he's called out here.

He's had a dream since the 1980s to develop a team like this where it wasn't just about an African American driver or African American owner. It was really about an African American business in a space that hasn't always seen a lot of African Americans in it.

For Coach to take along immediately guys that have been through racing, have been through the NXG Youth Motorsports program that's been here for 15 plus years, 2300 underrepresented youth have come through the program because of Coach Reid.

His commitment to come out here on weekends, take these kids, introduce them for a different sport. Jimmie talked a little bit about it. It's not just about the sport. It's about how do you introduce them to a lot of life skills that our sport teaches, trying to show them opportunities here.

The one thing I want folks to take away, I think Coach does too, this is not just about a race team this, this is a business.

When people see this announcement and they think, I don't know anything about racing, to Jimmie's point, it is a great opportunity to learn it. More importantly, it's a great opportunity for people that are interested in accounting, PR, marketing, things that aren't necessarily in motorsport, to be involved in our sport as a whole.

It's a great day for the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Fantastic day for Coach Reid and for Penske Entertainment Corp. This is a huge day for motorsports internationally as a whole to have this announcement today. We can't wait to see it flourish over the next few years, see where it goes, because this is just the beginning. It's not stopping at USF2000 we hope as we go forward, this is just a beginning, a continuation of Rod's dream.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. I noticed you're going to run No. 99. Explain the importance of that, why you chose that number.

ROD REID: It's so important for us to know where we've come from. There's a lot of history. African Americans have been in motorsports ever since the beginning of the car, the sport itself.

A gentleman in the 1920s by the name of Dewey Gaston, he went by the nickname Rajo Jack. He actually ran No. 33 for a lot of years, was very, very successful with that number.

He was staging a comeback in the early '50s, late '40s. He brought a car that he thought would be extremely successful. That car was a big block engine, thought he was going to put it up front. It was No. 99. He was never able to win in that car. I think he finished the best with like a fourth in one of his races. Then he stopped.

I thought it would be fitting for us to take on that heritage and use the No. 99 to move forward. With the help of the Penske organization, ourself, we wanted to put No. 99 in the winner's circle.

Q. Are the plans to run one USF2000 car or two?

ROD REID: We're actually working on that. There are a lot of moving parts. If you follow USF2000, they have some rule changes and so forth. Right now we're going to start with one car. We are currently vetting drivers. We're going to work on getting that announcement to you guys as soon as we determine that. For right now I think we're going to start off the season with just one car.

Our hope is that we will grow an organization that can serve more than just one driver.

Q. Rod, you mentioned already what an impact you feel like this can be for the entire racing community. Could you maybe expound on that a little bit. What do you feel like from your experience around this sport the last 40 years, what does this day mean for motorsports?

ROD REID: Well, I think first of all, it demonstrates visually that there's a commitment on the part of the leadership in motorsports, especially when we look at again I talked about the best in the business, a gentleman like Roger Penske, who has had an opportunity to really see what we do, and do something about it. This Race for Equality and Change is an unbelievable program that's allowed us to sort of have a stage.

But I think looking broadly at the black community in particular, there hasn't really been this invitation to the black community to say, You know what, motorsports is important to you, should be important to you as it is to all of us, we welcome you. We want you to come in as fans, enthusiasts, potentially having a career in motorsports.

If the community doesn't know about it, are not aware of it, not exposed to it, I don't think that's going to happen. I think that's important.

Why is that important for motorsports? Because now we won't overlook the kind of talent you see sitting in the front row. I think there's other talent across the board, people of color. I think motorsports can benefit from having all of our entire community involved in the sport.

Q. How does having a team that's based around this diversity initiative, how much more powerful do you feel that can be compared to we've have a couple black drivers in INDYCAR in the past, some other folks

throughout the paddock, but having an entire team centered around that, how much more powerful do you feel that can be?

ROD REID: I think one of the things that will happen is that others along the pit road will see us, we hope throughout the ladder system. We hope there are other teams, not just USF2000 teams, but up the ladder, INDYCAR will say, I'm used to seeing these guys, maybe there's some talent over there.

Our idea is to grow that talent so maybe we have an a mechanic that's working at a Ganassi, maybe have someone driving a trailer or working in the office. What we're trying to do is have someone in PR like Tracey Royal Communications, having them be a part of the community as a whole.

I think there's a strong opportunity for the entire motorsports community to see this.

Q. Jimmie, you've only been in your position for a couple months. You mentioned at that point how much potential you saw in diversity in INDYCAR. Looking ahead, how can this team serve as a jumping off point for what you want to do?

JIMMIE McMILLAN: Absolutely, it's a pipeline or a fuel line, if you will, where we're going to push a lot of energy, a lot of opportunity for a variety of folks who haven't got that opportunity thus far.

If you look at the sport, it shouldn't be a surprise to anyone that despite efforts by others, the sport still remains largely white. Some of the things that we've heard in our process of trying to evaluate those issues is a lack of applicants, a lack of people who have interest in the sport or who apply for positions when they're available, people who don't have the training that they need to jump on a team or be a part of a team in some way.

From my viewpoint, there's also a lack of education. Some of it is because people are not interested in the sport or they're not interested in coming to the race because they don't see anyone who culturally looks like them. This is going to be a great step to do that merger that Coach Reid is talking about where the sport is reaching out to the community, but now you've given the community a reason to come to the racetrack and root for a team. This is going to be tremendous in that effect.

Also, as we continue to grow and develop, we don't expect for folks to stay with Force Indy forever. As Coach Reid said, we're trying to graduate, matriculate people and hope they populate, like pipeline or fuel line, the entire sport.

That we can get that going in a way that creates opportunity amongst other teams.

It's not the only pipeline, but other teams start to realize there are talented African Americans and people of color that can do work and be valuable assets to your team.

When we talk to the teams, they say that. They're very interested in two things, one getting younger, and two getting more diverse. They just need a pathway and help to do it.

Thankfully we have this opportunity thanks to Mr. Penske and Rod and everyone here. We have a real opportunity to create change in motorsports.

Q. We've seen so much action around the social justice initiative this year. What do you feel in your experience can the impact be of Roger Penske putting his support behind this?

JIMMIE McMILLAN: It's daily effort. I can tell you that. Every day it's the top of my agenda. I have a whiteboard with a number of initiatives. The energy and enthusiasm and the effort and the work that is going into changing everything from how we do business internally as the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, INDYCAR and IMS Productions, who we hire, who we have in leadership, all the way to our community relationships, the work we've done with NXG to raise over half a million dollars to support that program, continuing to grow sponsors, the opportunities we're looking at in terms of the entire paddock, talking to the teams, helping them also to diversify, now this. That's all in a very short period of time.

I think the job we all have is to get the work done to sustain the momentum that Roger has started and sparked in all of us to keep the momentum going. That is something that we didn't have. We haven't had. When you have it, you give it to people like the people you see in front of you, these three young men, you give it to a Coach Reid, I think you're going to see some amazing and incredible results.

I just hope our fans are out there and they're ready and willing and able to come to the track and cheer this team on and cheer these young men on. I'm sure there are going to be young women, as well. To cheer them all on as they really do something historic.

ROD REID: Back in May when so much pain was in the country, I think all corporations that had any sensitivity to what's going on in our world, in American companies, I say that very, very warmly, that American companies all of a sudden opened their eyes and said, There's a lot of injustice. This just didn't start happening this year.

I had the pleasure of sitting down with Mr. Penske early on when he took over the property. One of the things we talked about was this whole notion of a lot of African Americans not feeling welcome. Why is that? Part of it is that invitation. Part of it is that whole notion that we aren't really here. I think that's the biggest difference when you talk about how has it impacted.

Now we have strong leadership in corporations, especially here at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. We have a lot of strong leadership who is saying, We want to make a difference. Not just because it's the moment, but because we want to do something that's not only sustainable but that is genuine. I think that is the biggest benefit from what happened.

We can always talk about the negative part. But I think when we look around the room here, we can say that Force Indy, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and all of the organizations that operate in this sport are taking a good look at what we're doing. I think it's a reason to celebrate.

Q. Doug, this is an 18-race season, USF2000. They're going to be here at the road course Grand Prix weekend. This is a very competitive series. Oliver Askew, Colton Herta, Rinus VeeKay.

J. DOUGLAS BOLES: If you look back at the Road to Indy Series, especially starting at USF2000, we have had 25-ish drivers that ran Indianapolis 500 this year that had come up through one of the rungs of that ladder. 100 plus I think over the history of Indy.

It is the place to begin, to cultivate as Coach said not just the drivers, but the mechanics, the team leaders, the folks that will make a difference not just on Force Indy but hopefully over time we're making a difference across the paddock and teams.

It is really competitive. I've gotten to know Coach, I know how competitive he is. I have a lot of confidence that this team is going to come out of the box and be competitive.

One of the things we talked about, I'm really excited about, you mentioned INDYCAR Grand Prix weekend, the 2300 kids over the last 15 years who have had an opportunity to race on the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, the racetrack he sets up every time he's here. Hopefully we have an opportunity to bring them out, get them to an opportunity to compete as they have the last few years on INDYCAR Grand Prix weekend over in the parking lot by the museum. But connect them directly to this brand-new team that will be competing here, to really begin to build that bridge that we haven't had from NXG Youth

Motorsports to real professional motorsports. That's going to be a fun day when the kids get to see what they have an opportunity to do.

Q. How big of an opportunity do you think this is for the sport as a whole, particularly in the U.S., given what's going on at the moment?

ROD REID: I think it's a great opportunity for the sport if they can take a look at our example. This should be like wildfire. I mean, people should go, You know what, we think we really want to take a look at potential talent out there.

I don't mind if all of a sudden there are three, four, five different organizations that are wanting to come through the Road to Indy that are considering being diverse. I think that would be a home run for us.

Q. Can you take me through how all of this came together, how all of you have had to work together to make this possible.

ROD REID: I can tell you that it was a blessing to sit down with Mark Miles, Doug Boles, be reintroduced to Roger Penske. A quick side-bar. We talked about the fact that we had been in the same company, I had met him back '80s, '90s, I can't say how long ago. I was five years old, Roger (laughter).

But we had a chance to connect and reconnect, if you will, and talk about what Nexgeneracers, the NXG Youth Motorsports was doing here at the Speedway. We knew that we had had a partnership, even though it wasn't a formal one, for a lot of years, with us being able to bring those kids and those families into the track perhaps for a lot of them the first time.

We started there. Just kept talking. Said, You know what would be a good way to continue this relationship? We talked about the fact that I think having a presence on the track, being part of the show, is a real key thing.

That's how it kind of came about.

Q. I understand Myles Rowe had a test in USF2000 back in July. Have either of you spoken with him at all, are in talks with him at this point?

ROD REID: We have spent the last couple months vetting a lot of drivers, maybe those who are testing cars, maybe those who have been overseas in the UK driving, those who are in other support series, F4, et cetera.

I can tell you there's a lot of talent out there. There are a



lot of deserving drivers. Our goal is to sit down and make a decision and choose one of them that we think fit our criteria.

Very quickly, that criteria includes being an American, it includes being someone that has been given an opportunity to go from karts to cars as part of that transition. We're also looking for someone that is youthful and can grow with us as we start to develop our team.

Probably the most important thing is they've got to fit what our mission is. We're really all about the full team. This is not just about the driver, as you've heard from everyone here.

Q. Rod, how important is it to be based in North Carolina near Team Penske's shop?

ROD REID: We thought initially with the alliance that we've been able to have, again I'll just talk about how thankful I am that they've agreed to work with us, we thought that would be a good place to start.

I mentioned that we hope to come back to Indianapolis in short order. But I think it's extremely important to have an opportunity to work with the best. That's why we're there.

Q. A few miles from Team Penske's shop is GoPro motorsports complex. They host a lot of major karting events. How involved have you been with that facility, see some potential talent?

ROD REID: We've been there a couple of times. At least I've had a chance to go down. I think my crew of guys here have had a chance to go over there and have a little fun.

I think that track, and there are many other tracks from coast-to-coast, that we have young drivers. There are a couple of young ladies that have been competing in go-karts that we know about. Those are working in an area down in NOLA.

I think it's across the board that there are really good opportunities for young people in karting to get into the sport.

Q. You said earlier you will start with Formula 2000. Are there plans in the long-term future to move up to Indy Lights or INDYCAR?

ROD REID: We think it would be a great opportunity to move up the ladder as we become more proficient at what we do. Our focus is going to be on learning as much as we can, using what we learn. We will measure our success by how well we can do in the garage and on the track.

Moving up I think would be a natural progression, as anyone would in motorsports. So absolutely those are things that we would consider.

Q. This project Force Indy, is it just concentrating on African American drivers or just also to other people in Europe in any kind of motor racing?

ROD REID: Our focus is heavily towards American drivers, men and women, that typically would not have an opportunity to touch motorsports. That would be our focus.

When we talk about people of color, having a diverse team, we fully will go beyond whether they're black and brown or other. But our focus right now is definitely on American drivers and crew and engineers, et cetera.

Q. Next year obviously marks the 30th anniversary of Willie T. breaking the color barrier. How significant is to it have a team operating under the Force Indy banner? How will you incorporate Willie knowing he's an international history maker in what he's done?

ROD REID: I think it's fantastic. I've been really fortunate enough to have known Willie, was around before he came to Indianapolis. He actually was running Trans-Am when we were doing Super Vee, if you recall that.

I think it's fantastic this celebration for him next year. I'm hoping there are a lot of opportunities for him to kind of showcase who he is. I know he's got a movie out and things like that.

We definitely applaud his efforts.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks so much.

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