

NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

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Michael Andretti

Andretti Autosport

James Hinchcliffe

Andretti Autosport

Joyce Kim

Genesys

Press Conference

It's really a great announcement today. We're really happy.

THE MODERATOR: We welcome in Joyce Kim, chief marketing officer for Genesys. Anyone that was in Indy last August saw the commitment that was made for James in the 500, signage at every turn, all sorts of activation. Genesys is a global leader in cloud customer experience and contact solutions.

Joyce, how did your experience last summer lead to this?

JOYCE KIM: Yeah, thank you. We're so excited to continue our partnership with James and Andretti Autosport. I mean, as you guys know, last year, sort of our first time into the racing arena, and I think the only thing that would have made it better than it was if we could be there in person instead of virtually cheering the team on.

We're really proud to continue this and deepen our roots in the Indy community, which for those who don't know is the largest footprint of our employee base around the world. Given Indianapolis and racing are sort of synonymous, we're really happy to continue this partnership again.

I think a lot of people have asked me why are you guys doing Indy 500. It sort of ties back to our business. We are in awe of sort of the amount of data and real-time things that are required, the split-second decisions that the drivers and the pit crews and everyone has to make. I kind of liken it to what we do for our customers at Genesys with customer experience, the data, the artificial intelligence, predictive capabilities.

It's all about the team, empowering with technology and data. We're really just honored to be a part of this. I can't wait to watch James and Andretti Autosport flying around the track in our Genesys orange No. 29 Honda. Hopefully this year we'll be able to be in person.

Thank you again. We're really glad to be here.

THE MODERATOR: Joyce, you mentioned it, deep ties to Indianapolis. This is a global brand, though. You threw it all into one pot that makes this partnership all the more stronger really. Very high level for your company.

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon. Great to see everyone here this afternoon. A very special announcement for Andretti Autosport.

Let's start with some introductions, shall we? Joining us today is Michael Andretti, CEO and chairman of Andretti Autosport. Joyce Kim is here, as well, the chief marketing officer of Genesys. Set to begin his 11th season in the NTT INDYCAR Series, great to see James Hinchcliffe here today as well.

In case you missed it, announced just moments ago, James will be back with Andretti Autosport driving the No. 29 Honda with Genesys orange on the car for 10 races throughout the upcoming 2021 season, including the 105th running of the Indianapolis 500. You may remember Hinch and Genesys were on one of four Andretti Autosport entries to get into the Firestone Fast Nine during qualifying for the Indy 500 last year. They are back in a big, big way in 2021.

We'll start with Michael. Congratulations. How satisfying is it to get Hinch locked up for the upcoming season?

MICHAEL ANDRETTI: Yeah, we're really excited. Having Hinch back in the family has been great. He did a few races for us last year. It was like having him come back home. Just gets along with everybody performs really well. We're excited to get to be able to announce this deal.

We're happy to have Genesys back with us as well. They've been great to work with. It's so fun to work with a company that is so excited about the sport and is getting behind it. We thank them.



JOYCE KIM: Absolutely. Like we said, I think Indianapolis continues to grow for us. It's not only our employees, but a lot of our customer base is there, as well. We're all in sort of continuing to activate and so forth.

We'll see sort of how we do it this year, given where the pandemic and so forth is. But, yeah, it's a very strong partnership. We couldn't be happier.

THE MODERATOR: James, full-time program with a team that you're certainly very familiar with, a sponsor you've become familiar with over the last year. How special is this day for you?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: I mean, it's a dream come true in so many ways. It's a culmination of a lot of hard work from a lot of people certainly. I love telling the story, we talked a lot about this last year when we did our three-race deal. It was two months from an Instagram message to signing a deal with Genesys. For a company to move that quickly in this kind of program was unbelievable. They took it a step further by sponsoring the race in Texas. You talked about all the activation on the 500. Now to jump up with a 10-race deal, it's incredible.

It just shows the commitment they're willing to give, the faith they have in us and this program. We're so proud to be partnered with them.

To be back full-time, as Michael said earlier, it's kind of like a homecoming. This team has been like family to me since I joined the first time back in 2012. We always said we'd get the band back together.

We did like a little reunion tour last year, but now we're fully back together. For me with Genesys onboard, being with Andretti Autosport, it's just incredible.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take some questions.

Q. James, your expectations coming in. Obviously last year was a little bit of a weird year for you in terms of stepping back from full-time competition, refocusing, different kind of goals than what you would have had if you had a full-time schedule. What are you aiming for this year? If we transform to the end of the year, what would you be happy with? Race wins, podiums, fighting for the championship?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Yeah, certainly it's a little bit different than 2020. At the same time all the races in 2020, you go in with the same mindset. You trying to win, you're trying to go there and help the team be better throughout the weekend, then in the race itself, trying to take that

victory.

That mindset continues whether you're doing three races, 13 race, 17 race, whatever it is. You have to go in there every weekend and do what you can to, like I said, help the team Friday through Saturday, then on Sunday do the best job you can.

For us, I think if you look back at the way Andretti Autosport improved over the 2020 season, it's no secret that it was a little bit of a struggle the first part of the year, but the last half of that season the team really came on strong and the cars were really competitive. I think that gave us a lot of positive momentum going into the off-season.

There's nothing stopping us from saying we should be running up front right from the drop of the green flag at Barber. Podium, race wins, I'd love to see all the cars up there running with a shot at the championship with three or four rounds to go.

Q. Michael, can you talk about the kind of lineup for this season, how you've come to that lineup. You go into this thinking you're going in with a bit more focus in those four cars to fight at the front, kind of a refocusing of the organization maybe.

MICHAEL ANDRETTI: Yeah, a little bit. Obviously having four instead of five can make it a little bit easier in terms of focus, for sure. Yeah, we're real happy with the way things have gone. We're real happy with our driver lineup. I think we have four great full-timers that are going to help each other to hopefully have four of them fighting at the end of the year for the championship. That's our goal. We'll have to wait and see.

I'm real happy with the way it all came together. Can't wait to get to the first race and see how we go.

Q. James, I have to imagine how tough it was to be in the car for six races last year but have to be on the sidelines for those other eight. What stands out to you? What do you remember most of those eight races where you were not in the car?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: It's funny. Every time something like that happens, I think in an athlete's career you can take it one of two ways. You can look at the negative, we're not doing this, I couldn't do this, not that, or you try to focus on the positives that come out of it.

I learned a lot in those eight races. It's been a while since I sort of got to see a race unfold from the pit lane or broadcast booth. You see a whole lot more of a race from



up there than you do from inside the cockpit. You only see one show when you're driving.

I still was able to connect with the team obviously throughout the season, having those couple races, staying in touch with how they were working, kind of sort of build up a little bit towards what we were hoping was going to be a full-time ride this year. Obviously that all came together.

I definitely had a different program in 2020 than I was hoping for, but really enjoyed my time working with NBC and all the talent there. Everybody was phenomenal to work with.

I definitely did learn some things that I think we can apply for next year and definitely helped me continue my growth pattern with the team and just being able to hit the ground running in the first race.

Q. Michael, I remember both you and James said back in February that you both had goals of this turning into a full-time program in 2021. It seems like it might have at least taken a little while to announce. Was there ever any doubt, sponsorship side or otherwise, that this would eventually come together over the last 10 months or so?

MICHAEL ANDRETTI: We felt very confident. I think we felt Genesys was very excited about it. We started talking about extending their program. Then obviously we had to talk to some others to try to be able to fill in the rest of the way, which we're just about there. Hopefully we'll have something to announce there soon.

Yeah, but we always felt confident that we were going to be able to get it together. I got to say it's always nice when you fulfill a goal, and we reached it. So now we're on to the next goal, which is win the championship.

Q. With Hinch having not taken part in the Sebring test, how much is it transferrable from what was learned there over to Hinch's driving style? Question for Michael, but Hinch's view on it as well.

MICHAEL ANDRETTI: I mean, I think when you're testing, you're testing basic stuff. It's not just stuff based on the driver's style, it's more like things we're testing overall for the team. I believe that we did learn quite a few things during the test.

I think the things that we did learn, not just from Marco and James' car, but also the other drivers, it should definitely translate into a better car for James, as well.

Q. James, how do you feel your driving style meshes

with your teammates'?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Honestly, quite well. I think for me, there were definitely some differences coming into the Andretti camp, sort of the general philosophy with the car and certain elements. Those first few races, especially on the road courses, took a little bit of time to get used to a certain element.

But I think we got there. Certainly by St. Pete you saw all those cars were quick, we were right up there with them in the Fast Six. That was for me a big indicator that Colton, Alex, Ryan, myself, we can all run pretty similar cars. I think that's really going to be a huge strength of ours over this season.

Q. Michael and James, the way you guys have been together in the past, now you're back together, you almost kind of seem to wonder sometimes what would have happened if you stuck together the first time.

MICHAEL ANDRETTI: Yeah, unfortunately things didn't work out. We had to go our separate ways there for a little bit. Yeah, it would have been fun to keep James within the team.

It is what it is. We're just happy to be back together. Hopefully we still have some more, bunch of more wins together.

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Yeah, I mean, to steal a line from Ross: We were on a break. But we're back together now, and that's what matters. I still think there's a lot of opportunity. As Michael said, I still certainly feel like I got a lot of racing left in me. This is a team that can get it done with championships and with wins and 500s. We just want to see that orange 29 Genesys car covered in milk in May, hopefully covered in confetti at the end of the season.

Q. Michael, as a businessman, after what we've all been through in 2020, the uncertainty of 2021, how surprised are you to see the driver car lineup and the sponsorship interest as high as it is?

MICHAEL ANDRETTI: Yeah, I think that says something about the momentum of the series itself. I think it's quite good. But you start to imagine, what if the stupid COVID wasn't there, where would we be?

I think it's at least a positive. We didn't go backwards, we're still going forwards, even though we had this hiccup with COVID. It makes me even more bullish about the future of INDYCAR.

Q. Hinch, given that you only had a partial program

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

last season, is there anything you can take from last year going into this season? If so, what is it in terms of your technical feedback and stuff?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Yeah, for sure. I mean, any time you're in the race car with the team, there's items that you can learn from, certainly take into the following year. There's no major changes to the cars. Every lap I turned in 2020 is going to be valuable, just going to add to the database of knowledge for 2021.

I'll be working with a different engineering staff now that we're a full-time program. It's people I had the chance to work alongside, some people I've worked with in the past on the car.

Yeah, I think a lot of the experience from last year is going to translate well. I don't think we should start behind the eight ball really compared to anybody. I think we should be right there.

Q. Michael, how beneficial is it to you to have James back on the team given his experience with you guys?

MICHAEL ANDRETTI: It's great having James back. Again, he's very quick. He's really a big help in developing a car. Also he fits in very well with all the other teammates, which is an important element when you have a team the size of ours. We have to make sure that personalities all work together. James fits in like a glove, perfect, with everybody. So, yeah, it's really great to have him back.

Q. James, I wanted to get your feeling on what it was like at the end of 2020 not knowing whether or not you'd be racing in 2021. Now that you've got your answer, is there a sense of relief at all?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: I think, sure. I mean, obviously, yeah. Once the pieces all came together, there was a sense of relief. We had some challenges over the off-season certainly, partners move around that we thought were going to be there but weren't.

I was so focused in my whole team, Don, everybody over there, worked so hard on cultivating the relationship with Genesys. They were just so awesome to work with. We're so happy that they're in for 10 races. That was really the backbone of this program.

I was very confident that no matter what happened, we were going to fight, we were going to scrap our way, do whatever we had to do. We had obviously a ton of support from everybody at Andretti and what they brought to the table.

I was confident all along. Even though we hit some roadblocks along the way, I knew that's what we wanted to do, I knew that's what the team wanted, it's what Genesys wanted. We were just going to keep fighting till we made it happen.

Yeah, a little bit of relief certainly. But I wasn't too worried about the uncertainty at the end of '20.

Q. You were saying this is kind of like getting the band back together. Some of your most successful seasons were with Andretti. Can you speak to why that is.

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: The culture in the team is just phenomenal. It's something that I just really took to when I first started driving there in 2012. That starts at the top with Michael. He's built an incredible organization. The record speaks for itself.

Just the atmosphere in the shop, the way we go racing, it just suits me I think as a person. I've had the opportunity to work with some incredible teammates there. I certainly think the bigger team, having four cars, these limited race weekends, and they're getting smaller, thanks, COVID, another thing that's made for us, less track time on race weekends. That program really does help.

I love working with other drivers, trying to make the whole team better. The atmosphere there really promotes that. I just put it down to team culture. I'm excited just to get back to work full-time with them.

Q. Michael, what has been your biggest challenge during this global pandemic? Is it working with sponsors or something else?

MICHAEL ANDRETTI: I think there's a little bit of everything. But I think obviously it's about trying to keep our partners happy because unfortunately because of COVID we weren't able to be able to deliver all the deliverables for them. We were lucky enough to have great partners that worked with us. We were able to get through it.

It was a challenge for us like it is for everybody I think out there in their own way. But we got through it. I think we actually got through it, coming through it, we're going to be a better team for it. I think we learned a lot of other little things that just make it stronger, bring us more together as a team.

Yeah, it was tough. I'm sure every single one of us have some sort of story like that.

Q. Michael, just wondering with Marco scaling back



his INDYCAR racing this year, tell me what your initial reaction was when you discussed that, what that's going to entail. What happens to the 98 car after Indianapolis with your team?

MICHAEL ANDRETTI: Yeah, it was an interesting time there when we were discussing where we were at, what we should do. Marco, we actually threw a scenario out that it may come down to only doing Indy only, a few other races.

I think when we put that out to him, he started thinking about, You know what, this time in my career, where I am, maybe it's time for me to try some other things as well, just focus mainly on Indy because that's the big one he still wants to win. He knows deep down inside that he can still win it.

I was completely behind him on his decision. I respected it. That's not to say he's not going to be back full-time again in INDYCAR in the future. But I think right now, for what he needed for his head and everything, I think in the end it was a smart decision on his part, mature decision. We'll see what happens.

I totally respected his decision and was behind him.

Q. The one word that I haven't heard mentioned yet today is 'fans'. That pandemic really screwed things up in 2020. What was your reaction to seeing an empty Indianapolis Motor Speedway on race day, and what is it going to be like just to have fans back?

MICHAEL ANDRETTI: Well, I mean, I think it was the strangest year ever in every way. I think the strangest part of the year was obviously seeing the start of the Indy 500 with nobody in the stands. It felt naked. It felt like it wasn't right, you know?

I just hope there's no way that will ever happen again, for sure. I'm excited about getting back there and having those 300 some thousand fans right down there on the track when you're getting ready for the start of the race. There's nothing like it. In the end, it's the fans that give it that electricity. You feel it inside when you're down there on the grid right before the start.

That was something that was duly missed last year. Hopefully that was just a one-off thing and it will never happen again. Looking forward to, again, like I say, getting back there. I'm happy we were at least able to finish the year with fans in the stands at St. Petersburg. I think that sort of was a nice way to finish the year, at least we had some of that feeling back again.

Q. James, you haven't had the amount of laps in the new Aeroscreen car as the other drivers have. What

are the things you can learn from with the experience the team has going forward, competing a whole season in an Aeroscreen car? What do you think you need to pick up?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: To learn how to stay a bit cooler is the number one thing. That's the biggest challenge we've had with the Aeroscreen (laughter).

Again, it speaks to the strength of having a four-car team. You have so much experience now (indiscernible) equipment on the car, I guess we could say. Sure, I may have a few fewer laps, but the data has prepared me. I can take all the lessons they've learned. We've developed the setups as we've had to at each track. Luckily it was less of an impact on the setups than we thought it would be. That helped a bit. Pretty much could run the same car you ran last year with only a few minor adjustments.

I have to kind of lean on my teammates and on my team a little bit. I'm with the best team to do it.

Q. You mentioned a different mix to the team going forward into this season. You have experience with most of the people in the team. Who do you think will be your greatest ally with the team?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: In terms of my teammates?

Q. Yes. There will be some more supportive than others always.

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: You know what, I think again that's what's so great with the culture there, is everybody is pretty supportive. We have an engineering trailer that everybody sits in, everybody can hear all the conversations. It's a very open book. Sometimes there's debates and healthy arguing and debating going on about maybe what to do or what the right move is. It's all very open, all very healthy in that sense.

I've had the most experience working with Ryan certainly. But I know Alex personally very well. Colton is probably the one I spend the least time around. Even of the races we did, he's a great help. He's quiet, to the point, kind of gets in and gets the job done. He knows a lot about racecars and how to make them go fast.

I think on any given weekend that could shift who your best ally is, whoever is hitting it the best on that weekend.

Q. Michael, this is pretty interesting going forward without Marco as a full-time driver. You've built a tremendous organization. Some might say as good of a driver as you were, as a team owner you're equal to

anybody in the paddock. Do you see Marco coming forward and being integrated more this season into dealing with the issues of owning a team and event organizations?

MICHAEL ANDRETTI: Good question. I'm not sure yet. I'm not sure. I haven't really talked to Marco. I'm not sure he'll be going to the races he's not driving at. In fact, I know he's looking to do other series, other types of driving.

There probably won't be a lot of that. I don't think we'll see him a lot at the INDYCAR races. He's going to be doing a lot of other stuff, which is part of the reason why he took this decision. He thinks it's a great opportunity to see what it's like to drive different types of racecars and things like that.

Probably to answer your question, probably not much of that from Marco this year.

Q. There was an announcement last week with Simona De Silvestro. In a kind of way you have a ghost driver on the track because of the relationships in the past. What is your reaction to their chances going forward?

MICHAEL ANDRETTI: I'm real happy for Beth. I know she's worked hard to get there. We talked to her in the past, were close to doing some things together. Obviously with Simona who has driven for us in INDYCARs as well as Formula E, we have a great relationship with her. I have a ton of respect for her.

I think it's awesome for the sport to have them come in as a team. They should do well. They have the support of the Penske organization, which obviously helps them on their learning curve. I'm real happy for them. I hope they have a successful program.

Q. Michael, you lost your uncle, your cousin, your mother. How has that been for your family? Have you been able to recover well or is it still there making you sad?

MICHAEL ANDRETTI: It's hasn't been great, I can tell you that. It's been a tough couple years, especially for my father. He lost his sister, as well. Yeah, it's been a tough time.

Unfortunately, it's part of life. We're all going to go through it. It's been tough to go through as much as we have in a short period of time. But it is the way it is. Life goes on. We have to march forward and be happy with the memories that we have of all the loved ones that we've lost.

Q. How is your dad doing? Is he taking it hard?

MICHAEL ANDRETTI: He's hanging in there. He's taking it hard. It's been really difficult on him, for sure. This COVID thing hasn't helped any. Being at home by yourself, not being out on the road. If you know my dad, he lives on the road. Not being able to travel I think has made things a little worse for him, for sure.

Q. Hopefully getting him back at the track will make him feel better.

MICHAEL ANDRETTI: I hope so. Hopefully getting him back in the two-seater, as well, because that's helped keep him young, as well.

Q. What has been the focus in the off-season for development of the team? Your cars were fast, but in traffic have seemed to struggle. Has that been one of your focuses for the off-season?

MICHAEL ANDRETTI: I don't think I'd agree with that. I think we had strong cars all the way through the field. If you watched James, the way we came up through the field after the mistake in the pit stop. We had four cars capable of winning the race and we shot ourselves in the race in the pits. Every single car that we had had a problem in the pits. That was the difference. Had that not happened, I think we would have won with one of them. James was one of them as well.

From that standpoint, I don't agree with that. Hopefully we are still going to have strong cars again next year. We've been focusing more on the tracks where we've been weak. There's tracks like St. Louis that I think we can do a better job at, a few others. Those are the ones we're really focusing on. Hopefully our guys have come up with the answer to be more competitive at the places we were weak.

Q. Genesys, is it a sponsorship deal only or is there any kind of technology exchange? Is Genesys with their technology helping the team at all?

MICHAEL ANDRETTI: At the moment it's just sponsorship. But we're always looking to see if there's ways that we can use our partners to make this a better team. Our guys are always thinking about that.

We still haven't figured out a way yet to do it with Genesys, but...

THE MODERATOR: We'll segue back to Joyce Kim. Outside of maybe the Indy 500, is there another track you're looking forward to seeing the 29?

JOYCE KIM: Well, I mean, certainly we'll work on the activation of the brand again this year. Again, we're all sort of waiting to see what happens with the COVID, how that all turns out.

Yeah, I mean, we may not do airports again, but you'll see us all over Indy, no question.

THE MODERATOR: I heard you say you have twin boys that were excited about this opportunity to get involved in racing in a family kind of way.

JOYCE KIM: Yeah, I have nine-year-old twin boys ha were introduced to Indy racing last year. They hear the name Andretti, they hear Hinch, it's pandemonium at my house, so (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: Hinch, you have a few more autographs to sign.

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: That's fine. I think I have a go-kart race I have to set up (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: Done.

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Absolutely. Any time.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations to everybody. What a huge opportunity it is for Genesys, James Hinchcliffe back for a full-time ride, 10 races with Genesys in 2021. Michael, congratulations to you as well. Season opening April 18th at beautiful Barber Motorsports Park. Thank you for being with us today.

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