

NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

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Larry Foyt

A.J. Foyt Racing

Charlie Kimball

A.J. Foyt Racing

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon. Glad you could join us for a big announcement from A.J. Foyt Racing this afternoon.

Larry Foyt is in his hard-to-believe 16th season with A.J. Foyt Racing, seventh season as president of the team. It was announced about an hour ago that Charlie Kimball would be returning to A.J. Foyt Racing, participating in the Grand Prix May 15th on the road course at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, as well as the 105th running of the Indianapolis 500. He'll drive the No. 11 Tresiba Chevrolet as he's set to compete in his 11th season in the NTT INDYCAR Series, 13th consecutive season that Novo Nordisk will sponsor Charlie, which of course the relationship goes back to his days in Indy Lights in 2009.

We'll start with Larry. Congratulations. Charlie joins Sebastien Bourdais and Dalton Kellett to make it a three-car effort in May. How happy are you to get Charlie back into the mix?

LARRY FOYT: Very happy. Thank you. It's a great announcement for us. We all know what a challenging year 2020 was. Charlie was awesome to work with. We know he runs great at the Speedway. Really glad we're able to run the GP running up to the Speedway, get that team clicking, ready to go into May. I know Charlie feels like he's got unfinished business there.

I'm really excited to be rolling into Indianapolis with three guys we know. I feel like that gives you kind of a bit of a head start going into that because even as much practice as we have there, it tends to go pretty quickly. You never know what's weather is going to do. There are a lot of unknowns. To have Charlie back onboard with Novo Nordisk and Tresiba is really great for A.J. Foyt Racing.

THE MODERATOR: Charlie, 11th Indy 500 start, third

place back in 2015. It would seem returning to A.J. Foyt Racing is a bit of a natural fit, correct?

CHARLIE KIMBALL: Yeah, it definitely feels very comfortable heading back to working with A.J. Foyt Racing. Larry was great to work with last year, continuing the relationship that's for more than a decade now with Novo Nordisk and the Race With Insulin program, which is atypical in sports, especially in racing, to have a relationship that lasts for that long.

Heading back to Indianapolis, Larry talked about unfinished business. After last year we have a solid foundation. I really enjoyed working with the guys from the team manager, Scott Harner, all the way down to the engineers, mechanics, everybody there. I think it's a great fit to be in the No. 11 Tresiba Chevrolet for this year's Indy 500 as well as the Grand Prix.

The month of May here in Indianapolis is kind of the cornerstone of the INDYCAR Series. For me, it's exciting to be a part of that.

THE MODERATOR: You mentioned Tresiba back on the fire suit. That sponsorship, it goes back years and years. That's meant so much to your career, hasn't it?

CHARLIE KIMBALL: It really has. For me, it's more than just what happens in the race car. It's the fact that I've used Novo Nordisk insulin to manage my blood sugar and diabetes from the day I was diagnosed in 2007. To be part of the Race With Insulin community, giving back to the diabetes community, empowering those people with diabetes around the world, it's important to me. It's important to Novo Nordisk. I think the fact it allows me to live my dream and race cars in the INDYCAR Series is the cherry on top of that.

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and open things up for some questions this afternoon.

Q. Charlie, what are you going to do the rest of the season? I know obviously you would like to drive the full season. With that not being a situation for this year, what do you plan to do the rest of the year?

CHARLIE KIMBALL: I think I'll just sit around, read books



(audio disconnection) travel, work to put some more opportunities together, maximize that. I'm a racing driver. I love being in a race car, whatever that looks like.

I think for me, I spoke earlier about what I really missed in 2020. Even though it was a full season, I felt like I missed some of those events that are really special to me: Long Beach Grand Prix comes to mind, Grand Prix up in Toronto as well. If I can put an opportunity together that allows me to be in the cockpit in the INDYCAR Series for those events, I will. I'm continuing to work towards that goal.

At the same time I'm focused on getting the job done in May. I'm focused on going out, getting the best result possible for A.J. Foyt Racing, figuring out how to get this big nose and ugly mug onto that Borg-Warner trophy.

Q. A chance that Sebastien is back with the team, Dalton. To be able to work again with those guys, how much do you think you can help the whole overall effort?

CHARLIE KIMBALL: That's the goal, is to add to a program rather than detract from it, especially as a third car. Those two guys are running all year, confirmed with Larry and A.J. Foyt. The more I can do to help their program in those two races, as well as races before then and after then when I'm not in the car, but still plan to be at the racetrack, make sure my face is still being seen, but also contribute to the team however I can.

I think the results at the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg at the end of last year with Sebastien, myself, both of us inside the top eight, really showed the progress we made as a team over the course of the year when we didn't have any testing, weren't able to really develop the car with all new drivers, all new engineers after that reset in that previous winter.

To be able to build on that progress that we showed in the last race, contribute to the team however I can, that's my goal and that's what I'll be doing.

Q. Charlie, how beneficial is it to you obviously coming back to a team that you know, but also the fact you worked with Dalton and Seb before?

CHARLIE KIMBALL: I think it's really valuable. Larry talked about the amount of practice we get at the Indy 500. Seems like a lot, but for that size of that event it goes quickly. You throw the weather in there, pretty soon you're thrashing and trying to get a lot of work done in a very short amount of time.

So having drivers that I've worked with as teammates, both

Sebastien and Dalton, who I'm very familiar with from training, things like that, is helpful. Also knowing the engineers, having worked with the engineers last year all season long, I think it really is important to keep that teamwork going and also just the mentality of working together that we built last year. That momentum will really carry us through the start of the season in April but then into the month of May here in Indy.

Q. Larry, for yourself, how kind of beneficial is it to you guys as a team running Charlie, the fact that he's been with the team before?

LARRY FOYT: Yeah, exactly. I think the thing is now we know Charlie and we trust Charlie. What's good is like he was saying, we feel like we have three guys now that we can be trying things with during practice and be learning from. That's just a really big advantage. It's a known thing, we know his feedback, we trust him.

That's just really helpful because, like he said, you have not only your race setup but also your qualifying setup at Indy that you have to develop. We've been working hard on our shop program here over the winter. We take a lot of pride in our Speedway cars. We definitely have some things we need to evaluate, so it will be really helpful.

Q. Larry, we understand that Charlie is running the Indy GP and also the Indy 500. For the third car, for the rest of the season, are you planning on filling that?

LARRY FOYT: Right now, no, we really don't. It's easier in May, just you have a lot of people that are used to -- as the INDYCAR Series grows to 33 from what is normally 24, a lot of those people live and are around Indianapolis. I think that just makes it easier to put a good group together for this third car.

We actually got this deal done, we kind of knew what we were doing pretty early, so we were able to already get a head start on that and be working on that. That's really important.

No, right now there's no plans to do anything outside of these couple races, so that's really our focus right now.

Q. Larry, you've talked about and been asked about several times over this last year the prospect of A.J. Foyt Racing transitioning into a three-car team full-time. Now that you have Charlie as a third driver for these two races in May, you said you don't anticipate transitioning into a bigger team this year, but when you have a veteran driver like that, a sponsor like his behind him that's been with him for more than a decade, do you see any opportunity for you guys

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

being able to work together in the future, perhaps 2022?

LARRY FOYT: Well, I'd love to have Charlie and Novo full-time. That would be wonderful.

Sure, as a business you're always thinking of growth. Growth is good as long as you do it the right way. We struggled a little bit just from our growth from one car to two cars. So going to a third car, it would have to be a really good situation.

It's always on my radar. We'd love to do it. I think Charlie would love to do it. We'd all love to do it. It just comes down to financially what can we get done and what can we put together.

We're always working on it, always looking forward, looking years down the road to try to keep growing our business.

So right now, nothing definite. Always things are bouncing around the paddock, you hear of things going on, a lot of teams talking about growth and whatnot. But right now for us, we're just focused on this year, focused on results. Us as a company, we've had some bad years that we need to recover from, we need to show what we're capable of. That's what the goal is for this year.

Q. Larry, what is the engineering lineup for the 14 and the 11? Who is going to be race engineering each of them?

LARRY FOYT: So basically we added, as you know, Justin to our lineup this year. He'll be engineering the 14 full-time. Mike Pawlowski will still be running the 4. Mike Colliver is moving to more of a technical director role. I believe we will have another engineer who is used to the Foyt team, will be running Charlie's car as well, to keep Mike in that technical director role. If not, Mike will fill in and do that car. We're just kind of debating that now.

We're really happy with the way the engineering group is working right now. I think it will be pretty seamless bringing Charlie and should flow really well.

Q. Charlie, what do you feel your best-ever race at Indy was? Obviously you had a third and a fifth. You've also kind of punched above your weight in cars that weren't so strong. What do you feel was your best-ever performance at Indy so far?

CHARLIE KIMBALL: I like that 'so far' because I hope it's going to be 2021, at least results-wise.

I mean, I think back to a couple of years. I mean, 2018,

2019 with a new team qualifying for the race, then running well inside the top 10, top 15.

Then looking back, I can't remember the year it was, it might have been '17, when we were running right up front, running in the top three coming up to the last pit stop, and I had a mechanical failure. Those are the results that no one ever sees because you don't see them on the final scorecard.

You know the work you put in all week long, qualifying weekend, Carb Day, race going to plan, then sometimes the racetrack doesn't give you that little bit of Lady Luck you need to get across the finish line and confirm that result.

Those three years really stand out to me. The results are nice, but a lot of times the result doesn't show the quality of work that you've put in over the whole month of May.

Q. Last year you guys finished off the year with one of your strongest runs of the season at St. Petersburg. How much does that help the confidence for the team going into 2021?

LARRY FOYT: Well, what I'd say is I'm glad hopefully we're going to have more street course races because our street course program seems to be very competitive.

Just no doubt the Indy 500 is on the top of our list. We really care about that race. We've been working hard to get our permanent road course stuff better because we felt like we were lacking some competitiveness at the Indy GP and struggled there. We've been working on some shop development stuff for that kind of racetrack. We have a Barber test coming up. All stuff that will hopefully benefit Charlie and the whole team as we roll into the month of May.

Q. Charlie, do you want to touch upon that?

CHARLIE KIMBALL: Yeah, Larry talked about the momentum and the belief. I think it definitely energizes the whole engineering office, the mechanics, both race shops, in Speedway and down in Waller.

A good result like that, it's the proof that the work you've put in all season, the development you've done over the course of race weekends, is paying off. That gives everybody confidence to keep working and keep that work ethic up.

I've seen that in conversations with Larry, the team management, with engineering, that there is a solid belief in the work that we accomplished last year and how that's



going to pay off this year based on the continuing development over the winter.

Q. In spending last season with the team, what are your expectations heading into both events? What do you feel you need to improve upon as a driver?

CHARLIE KIMBALL: I think as a driver, I'll answer the second part first, you're always looking for gains. The Indy 500, we ran really well last year when you look at comparisons and equal things. Yes, the 18th isn't the result we wanted as a team. The 4 car, we were definitely disappointed. But we overcame some challenges that I don't know anyone ever really saw from the outside. It was nice to get that result, have a nice clean month.

The Indy GP, I think we learned some things not only that July 4th weekend but also at the Harvest Grand Prix later in the year. For me as a driver, I definitely learned some things that paid off when we got to St. Pete, then beyond that here into 2021.

Q. Larry, your team has won a race here and there, but you haven't been consistent winners. Where do you think you're lacking? Have you ever considered doing any technical relationship like Meyer Shank Racing has with Andretti where they get engineering knowledge or maybe even a shop program? Have you ever considered doing that with one of the bigger teams?

LARRY FOYT: Yes, good questions.

I think one of our issues has just been in recent years too many changes. We haven't had consistency in drivers. We haven't had consistency in engineering. Just the way things have played out. We've gone through a manufacturer change, trying to get caught up with that. Just been on our back foot a little bit.

We really feel like this group we have together now is all pulling in the same direction. Probably has been a long time since we felt that way. There's a lot of positive vibes within the team. Like Charlie said, the results laid toward the end of the year last year made us all believe we're heading in the right direction. That's what I'm excited about, the consistency we have going in with the group and the drivers into 2021.

Technical shares? Certainly we've thought about it. Had some conversation. It's just never been something that really we were able to put together for whatever reason, albeit financially, whatever reasons, teams that just weren't in a place where they felt like they were ready to do it.

We're carrying for us, as a smaller team, a pretty large engineering staff right now. We really are putting our resources, as we have pivoted from just being a normal, I think, old-school INDYCAR team, we're really an engineering-led team now. That's been the goal over the last four or five years. We feel like it's all headed in the right direction.

We want to come out next year and start to turn I think what people think of when they think of A.J. Foyt Racing. We want to be back up front.

No doubt this INDYCAR field is ridiculously strong, I mean, from top to bottom. It is incredibly strong. Fighting for top 10s, then getting in that top five has got to be what the goal is.

Q. Charlie, is the Tresiba deal just a sponsorship deal in that they're putting the name on the car or is there planned activation during the month of May?

CHARLIE KIMBALL: I'm happy to answer that.

The whole Race With Insulin program for the 13 years now we've worked together has been about more than just a brand on the race car. We have done a huge amount of work within the diabetes community. Up until last year in-person events, community events, educating healthcare professionals about how I use the medications within a high-performance occupation like driving a race car. Interacting with families. For me, that's one of the largest values.

Obviously representing the diabetes community on the racetrack, and a stage like the Indianapolis 500 is special. But when you talk to parents about empowering their kids with diabetes to overcome that challenge and still do what they want in life, chase their dreams, that's when it's really valuable.

I'm so grateful for the work with Novo Nordisk and the Race With Insulin program, to be able to share that story and hear other people's stories. When I meet someone who's had diabetes for 50, 60 years, just ran their first marathon, it inspires me to keep doing what I do on the racetrack, and also keep doing what I do within the community.

It's always been about more than just what happens on the racetrack. I know that the last 12 months has looked very different for a lot of people. I'm not sure what the activation around it is going to look like yet. I think there are still plans coming together for that.

But the more I can do to help empower the diabetes



community and go out and win on the racetrack, I think we would call that a win-win.

Q. For example, given COVID, would there possibly be a commercial with you involved, TV commercial that would run during the races or even outside the races on general TV?

CHARLIE KIMBALL: I'm not sure what activation plans are coming together. Like I said, I think they're still in development. That's something that as those things come together we'll roll them out.

Novo Nordisk always does a great job of supporting the team, working with the team very closely. I know they enjoyed working with Larry and everyone at A.J. Foyt last year in a very unique situation.

We're still working on what 2021 is going to look like.

Q. After you win this year's Indy 500, will you use the money to run some more races?

CHARLIE KIMBALL: I don't know. We'll have to see if Larry can keep the people onboard. I think people are more likely to stay onboard when they're wearing a 500 winner's ring.

THE MODERATOR: Charlie, Larry brought up a good point, how competitive the NTT INDYCAR Series has become. It's hard to believe you're now in year number 11 in the series, when you were bright-eyed and bushy-tailed 10 years ago until now, the competition level has only just increased. It's been amazing to watch over the last decade.

CHARLIE KIMBALL: 100%. I think you see that not only in the level increasing within INDYCAR, but you see that with the interest from outside. Marcus Ericsson was one of the first to come over from a Formula 1 experience, come to INDYCAR and see how challenging it really is. Obviously Romain coming over and signing for the road courses, road and street circuits this year is another indication of that. Romain and I were teammates years and years to go, man, I want to say that was 2005, 2006 we were teammates back in Formula 3 Euro.

There's a long history of drivers doing well in Europe and looking to INDYCAR because of the level of competitiveness, the fact that anybody can go out there and win on any given weekend if you get it right.

For me, I've always grown up watching the Indy 500. It's such an important race, largest race in the world, largest sporting event. To be able to continue to compete in that,

my attempt to qualify for my 11th Indy 500 is not something that I scoff at either.

THE MODERATOR: Might be your biggest supporter, let's turn things over to Asher's Racing Channel.

Q. This question is for Charlie. Is there any chance that you could be joining A.J. Foyt for the rest of the races or maybe another team for some of the other races, too?

CHARLIE KIMBALL: Well, it's good to see you, Asher. I appreciate the support. I appreciate you pushing Larry on the last call about getting me back into the fold and on the team. I think it definitely helped get this deal done.

At the same time I'm working all the opportunities. I know Larry is, as well. He talked about the company growing, the race team growing, doing it right. I'd love to be a part of that. At the same time I'm trying to make sure I maximize every opportunity from when I'm in the car, other partnerships, try to put more together.

As I said earlier, I have helmet, will travel. I'd love to be behind the wheel at any point, at any race this year.

THE MODERATOR: Asher with the hard-hitting questions there. Nicely done.

Good to see good people back in the series. Congratulations, Charlie Kimball. The Grand Prix in May, of course the Indianapolis 500 after that. Congratulations, a three-car effort heading into the month of May.

The race comes up Sunday, May 30th. 100 days out from the race comes up next Friday, a week from tomorrow, February 19th.

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