

# NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

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## Ed Jones

Dale Coyne Racing with Vasser-Sullivan  
Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good morning, Ed, driver of the No. 18 Team SealMaster Dale Coyne Racing with Vasser-Sullivan Honda.

What is your outlook heading into this season? You're back in the series after a year away. Full season with Dale Coyne. What is your outlook heading into this year?

ED JONES: Yeah, it's first of all great to be back after a year out of not really driving anything. It's always going to be a challenge at the beginning. We've had two test days now. Both have gone really well. It's been nice to be, yeah, up to speed immediately.

For the season, we want to pick up where we left off, fighting for podiums, for the 500 again, fighting for that win. You can't underestimate how difficult the championship is now, how competitive everyone is. We're going to have to be on top of our game the whole time to be able to do that.

THE MODERATOR: How long did it take you to get reacclimated? You haven't been away for 10 years, but you didn't get a lot of seat time last year in much of anything. How long did it take you to get to feel at home again?

ED JONES: Probably about three runs, I'd say, at Barber, then everything was pretty good after that, so...

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.

**Q. A unique situation, your first year being the 'lead driver.' Is there any extra pressure being that lead guy for Dale Coyne, anything you learned from Sebastien in '17 or Scott in '18 or anything that kind of helps you in this new role?**

ED JONES: Yeah, it's a little bit different, but it doesn't really add any pressure. At the end of the day you're still there doing the same job, just trying to go as fast as possible, work with the team as well as possible.

Had a phase of that actually in my rookie year when Seb unfortunately had his injury. It's not the first time I've had to do it. Looking forward to the challenge.

**Q. How excited are you to be working with Romain Grosjean in the other car?**

ED JONES: Yeah, Romain is a great guy. Spending a bit of time with him at the moment. Again, it's more excited about being back in INDYCAR, to be honest. It's great to have a fast teammate. Yeah, we'll have to see how he gets on. I think he'll be very competitive. I'm looking forward to seeing how things progress. So far we've had two solid test days together. Seems like everything I've liked on the car he's liked. It's actually been quite easy to work together in that sense. That's always a good start. Will definitely benefit us throughout the season.

**Q. Any particular race that you're looking forward to returning to this season?**

ED JONES: Well, of course, Indy 500. That's always the big one. Otherwise it's all the street courses. I love the street courses. Hopefully we can race as many of them as possible with everything going on at the moment. Yeah, that's the races I look out for.

**Q. You mentioned you've had two tests so far. After a year out of the car, what was that like? Any cobwebs? Did it feel just like riding a bike?**

ED JONES: I would say actually, so Barber -- I don't know. I said it was the fourth run before; maybe it was a bit longer than that. It was probably the last run of the morning I put it straight up there at the competitive side of the field. But before that, I was struggling quite a bit. Yeah, it was tough. I'd never driven with the Aeroscreen, as well. The new track paving at Barber has made the car super physical there. A lot of the steering weight is ridiculously heavy. All the other drivers were telling me about it beforehand, but until you actually do it you don't realize what a change it is. So it was difficult.

Fortunately had a great team around me, felt very comfortable from the get-go. From that sense it didn't feel like I'd been out for so long. Everyone was super easy to



get along with. Once we got through the afternoon, I felt back up to speed. Everything was good.

Going into Laguna, I got in the car straightaway and it was like I'd never been away.

**Q. How was the adjustment to the Aeroscreen?**

ED JONES: It was pretty seamless, to be honest. When I got in the car in the factory and first had it on, I felt a little weird with it. Once you're driving, it's no problem. The heat issue is fine now with the vents you have. Yeah, just really easy. I knew they wouldn't have gone that route if they thought it was going to be a problem for the drivers. I'm sure it's going to be fine. It was just about getting in the car and experiencing it for myself.

**Q. How much have you worked with Romain so far this season in testing?**

ED JONES: Well, to be honest, in the two test days we've had, those kind of days, we're pretty much in the car the whole time. I think I probably got out of the car two or three times in those two days. It's hard to work through data each session which should be more familiar during the race weekend. But for sure the teams are talking to each other all the time, the two engineers communication-wise.

As I said before, it's been really positive. All the changes that I've liked or he's liked, we've both found to work for us, which as I said will help the progression of the team move faster. We can split things between each other and go that route.

**Q. Earlier this morning we announced Pietro Fittipaldi would be driving the oval races for that entry. How does it feel in your situation that you're not old, but in terms of tenure you're the elder statesman at Dale Coyne Racing at the moment, that they come to you for advice?**

ED JONES: Yeah, it's a bit different. Although Romain is a rookie in INDYCAR, probably just as much experience in motor racing as some of the best guys out there. He got up to speed very quickly. He'll be right there.

Pietro has done some oval racing in the past. I'm happy to help out where I can. But these guys are no slouches. I'm sure they'll be right there from the beginning.

**Q. Now that you spent a year away from the sport, does it make you hungrier coming back?**

ED JONES: Yeah, for sure. It was a tough year. Well, it

was a tough year for everyone no matter what field they're in. It's not something individual.

But not being able to race was probably the first time in I don't know how long that I've been out of a season in whatever series it is. It was always thinking about what to do next. I really got the hunger to come back for INDYCAR. Not only was that year out made me more hungrier to come back, but the way things for me in 2019, I reflect what I could do, probably frustrated me a lot more than anything else. It was a combination of things which meant that I really wanted to get back to INDYCAR and knew I needed to get back to INDYCAR.

Now I'm fortunate enough to be in this position. I got to take advantage of it and make sure that I perform to where we can with the guys around me, and the team around me I'm really confident we can do that.

**Q. As you continue to evolve and develop as a driver, where do you feel you could be even stronger behind the wheel?**

ED JONES: Yeah, there's always different small improvements here and there. At the end of the day, as I said before, the field is so competitive. All the drivers in INDYCAR, they're not looking for big chances, all those minute details. That's again what helps when you're in a team where there's no big egos that throw things off. Everyone is there trying to learn as much as possible and work together. That's where you find the small gains. Where you can make the difference putting everything together. That's where I believe I'll find the difference this year.

**Q. Obviously you going back to Dale Coyne, it feels like you're in a better head space, more like home. What is it about that team and you that mesh so well?**

ED JONES: Obviously it's my first chance in INDYCAR with them, had a great season. Personnel change there. But as I said before, in a team you have to have people with experience in all the team. But a huge part of it is controlling the people, using resources efficiently, not having egos where you're going one direction and never looking at any other options.

For me, this team has always been open to different things, learning what they can. As a smaller team, they use their resources probably the best of all the teams that I've been with just because although they may not have the most, they really make what they have worthwhile. That's what I've seen. I always felt comfortable here, have a really good outlook on what we can do this year.

**Q. Have you had a chance to sit down and talk much with Jimmie? Do you think he'll be a good resource for you this year?**

ED JONES: It's been great to have Jimmie there. He's been at the two tests. Also been talking after the tests, ways we feel we can improve the team or improve different aspects of things to work together. It's always nice to have another driver to bounce things off of. He has a lot of experience, a lot of success. It's been really useful for me. It's been going well so far. I'm looking forward to how we develop the relationship throughout the season.

THE MODERATOR: Ed, thanks for joining us. Wish you the best of luck this year. We're glad you're back in the series.

ED JONES: Thanks.

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