

NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

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Sebastien Bourdais

A.J. Foyt Racing
Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Sebastien Bourdais, driver of the No. 14 A.J. Foyt Racing Chevrolet.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Hi, guys.

THE MODERATOR: Since you came to the team, since you started running with them at the end of last year, now in testing, everything is running strong. What is going on there at Foyt that has you running so well?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: I don't know. I mean, the guys have given me some good cars. Obviously it started a bit rough at Indy GP. Yeah, I mean, I think there's a real good group of guys which got reinforced by the arrival of Justin Taylor. Yeah, there's the manpower, there is enough money to do things right, and passion, work. Yeah, I've had a good time.

I think we're setting up for the best we can. There's no particular expectations. We just working as hard as we can trying to cover as much ground and bases as possible and hoping for the best.

THE MODERATOR: Have the goals and expectations been recalibrated company to the strong performance at St. Pete and in testing?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: I've never been one guy to just say, We're going to do this or we're going to do that. It doesn't serve any purpose. Why would you limit yourself to top five or top three if you think you can win races? And vice versa. Putting yourself and coming out strong saying you're going to win races, if you miss, you're just putting a lot of pressure for no reason.

We know weekends are made or broken for two or 3/10ths. Predictions are impossible. It's pointless. Let's all work as hard as we can, feel like we don't leave any cards unturned, just leave nothing on the table. Just work as hard as we can, and hopefully results will come.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. It really seems like from top to bottom there's a renewed sense of optimism at A.J. Foyt Racing. Everybody kind of seems to be pumped up and fired up that there's going to be improvement this year. What do you see as being the biggest reason for that renewed enthusiasm?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: I mean, obviously we finished the season strong. We went testing and felt like the car was in the ballpark. We seem to be in the mix. Yeah, I mean, I think the more outings we get like that, the more confidence in what we got going on and where we fit is giving us confidence that we should be players.

I think there is a very good atmosphere. Everybody is enjoying that perspective. The fact that there is seemingly something to go to the track and fight for, it doesn't take much to get a positive dynamic. It doesn't take much to break it down either.

Hopefully we can just keep that dynamic and get the results to back it up because obviously it doesn't matter how promising the thing is. If you get to the races and you don't perform, the enthusiasm inevitably goes down. I'm just happy to see everybody kind of, like, pulling together, putting a lot of hours.

The guys were at the shaker yesterday, they're at the shaker again today. We're going to the simulator. There's really a lot of ground covered. That's refreshing both because we have enough people to do it, we have enough resources to go and get after it, thanks to Chevy trusting us to go to the simulator and stuff like that.

Honestly, everywhere I've been before ever since I've come back to the U.S. in '12, there was something missing. It seemed like it was always a bit of a struggle. There were some really good guys with Craig and Olivier, but there wasn't enough of them, we were short on money, something was happening. It just feels like the team is right enough right now to be able to have something well-rounded.

I really enjoy that. Hopefully it works out.



Q. In November of 2019 you had been dealt with some adversity, the ride went away at Dale Coyne. You've overcome that adversity and you're back. How much do you appreciate being back now full-time?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Well, I mean, it's really big. Obviously you don't know that you're going to get a second chance when you get the boot. It's really good that things worked out and we can try to just bring the name A.J. Foyt Racing back to the front. That's what we all are working towards.

On a personal level, for sure it's a big satisfaction. To be entrusted to be the guy who is going to kind of spearhead the effort. Yeah, just really thankful and grateful to Larry and everybody involved for trusting me with that project.

Q. You got in the car late last year and it needed to get into the leader's circle. Was that the sole goal for you those last few races? How huge was that for the team?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: I mean, it doesn't hurt. It's a pretty significant number difference going one way or the other. For sure it was good to get a bit of help from Takuma, get that million dollars to the team. For me, I tried not to think too much about it because I was brought to the last three points races.

You can't always control what's going on, so we just try to prepare the season the best we could, the 2021, that was really the goal, kick-start 2021 in 2020. It just so happens that everything works out. We both got to the leader's circle. A good result at the end. Then kind of teeing things off the best possible way for this season.

Obviously a lot of very positive things. Yeah, I mean, I really tried not to think too much about it because it was pretty stressful.

Q. Realistically where do you think the Foyt team can be on the grid this year?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: I think Larry was really kind of hoping for a top 10 in the championship, which when you look at the entry list, it's no easy task. Hopefully we can do that and show some glimpse of success. If we could win a race, it would be awesome. If we could get a couple podiums. But there's no guarantee. All we can do, like I said, it's just give it our best shot and see where we land.

Q. There's a lot of talk about Foyt, the emphasis is so focused on Indianapolis 500. Obviously that's a place where you've gone very fast in the past, also have had a couple of big misfortunes. Do you feel the team is

now more rounded and ready to take on all the other courses on the schedule? Are you part of that plan to make it a more consistent team?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Yeah, I mean, to be honest, I haven't really been thinking very much about the 500. It's obviously the 500, then there's just everything else between the road courses and the street courses, trying to get a good understanding of how the car functions and how you activate the best way possible the Firestone tires and all of that.

The one race that so far I've spent no time thinking about is the 500. You know in the background are those projects that the team obviously is pursuing to try and get friction out of the system, get the best aero car and everything. But the 500 kind of jumps in the front of the scene kind of late April. It's going to kind of arrive when we show up there.

But we did spend a ton of time and effort trying to obviously bring the team up for more street and road courses. That's what we've been focusing on now.

Q. You're confident that has paid off looking at the testing times?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: It looks promising. That's all we can say right now.

Q. Are the 24 Hours of Le Mans have been postponed to August 21st. The same weekend of the Gateway race. I don't know if you have been working on a ride for that race.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Unfortunately there was a conflict and there's still a conflict, so it doesn't really change anything.

Q. The Sebring race is in two weeks' time, a little less. Which are the expectations for that race, especially after the performance of the team after what happened on that race?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Yeah, I mean, it's a real shame. Obviously we had a pretty zoomy car at Daytona. It just didn't pan out. Got caught up into some action.

Yeah, I think the team has stepped up quite well. Tristan and Loïc are going friends and we work well together. We were very much in the mix at Sebring in November. Yeah, looking forward to it. It's always great to be able to kind of get as much running time as possible running into the INDYCAR season. We'll get to do that again.

Q. Jimmie Johnson coming into the series, switching over after decades in NASCAR, what do you see as his biggest challenge? What have you seen from his energy and vigor that he's put into his foray into INDYCAR so far?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: I can't talk to him. I have a huge amount of respect for Jimmie. I think his passion for racing is absolutely undeniable. He's one of the nicest guys you'll ever meet. He's super passionate about it.

It's great to see he's taking that leap. It's a huge challenge. It's so far from what he's done and knows. But he doesn't care, he's going to do it anyway and give it his best shot. I really hope that he's successful because it would be great for the series.

I would really kind of be sad if he didn't enjoy it because obviously he just comes very humble into this. We are race car drivers and we want to perform. I really hope he does.

Q. Tampa area resident, what do you feel like Tom Brady's success can do for the veterans in INDYCAR, showing what you can still do at 40-plus years old?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Yeah, I think their experience obviously shows it can be quite important for success. I'm hoping that we can definitely pack this up. It's been quite a year for Tampa Bay. Hopefully we can add our name to the list.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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