

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, May 30, 2021

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Helio Castroneves

Mike Shank

Jim Meyer

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We have been joined by our two victorious team owners, Mike Shank and Jim Meyer. Congratulations on not your Indianapolis 500 win, but your first win in the INDYCAR SERIES. Tell us how you're feeling.

MIKE SHANK: I grew up in Columbus, Ohio, three hours from here. We used to get the Indianapolis Star for the month, my dad and I. We would listen about Unser's, Andretti's, Rahal's, just dream. The minute I got out of high school, started driving race cars, trying to find a way to get to this place, one, and how to win it.

It's just incredible. I got to thank Jim Meyer, who came onboard with my wife and I about four years ago. We kind of talked over at Big Woods over here in Speedway. We kind of came up with a plan on what we wanted to do. Jim, with his connections, the people he knows, I got to give all the credit to him to make this happen from the base up. It would have been a lot harder without him. Glad to get the win for him.

THE MODERATOR: Jim, you're a local here in Indianapolis. What is it going to be like walking around town?

JIM MEYER: I don't know. This is my 41st year to come to the Indianapolis 500. I've never missed it. As I was kind of winding down my career, I thought what I'd really like to do is get more involved with it. I met Mike. The chemistry worked. We found out how to put a team together, a plan together. Winning here is unreal. I don't know what to say.

Our crew, team, Helio did such a great job today. Just so proud of him, really, really are.

THE MODERATOR: We'll now take questions from the media.

Q. Michael, three years ago you had the podium with Jack Harvey here at the Grand Prix. You remarked, I need to take a picture on the podium. What kind of flashback does today give you to day and what's the next step for the team going forward?

MIKE SHANK: That podium that year really got Jim and I excited. It excited our partners - AutoNation, Sirius XM. It jettisoned, I think you'd agree, to where we're at today. A little bit of success.

I feel terrible for Jack Harvey's name today. A wheel nut came out of a socket, ruined a for sure top five, six, seven run. Drove his ass off all day. His day I coming. He's elevated his program and our program in the process. I can't wait to get to Detroit with him actually.

Q. Are we going to see Helio in possibly more races later on this year?

JIM MEYER: We carefully planned the six races we've laid out to do with Helio. Obviously life has changed today. Mike and I will go back and talk about it. There's some other complications to it that aren't all 100% in our hands. We'll go back and talk bit, see where we are. We're just going to savor the moment right now.

THE MODERATOR: So you're saying there's a chance.

MIKE SHANK: He's got five other races.

JIM MEYER: Five other coming.

MIKE SHANK: By the way I believe Helio deserves to go for a fifth Indianapolis win. We're going to do everything we can to make that happen for him.

You agree, Jim?

JIM MEYER: I agree. It's fantastic.

MIKE SHANK: I thought the neatest thing riding around in that Camaro convertible with him today was all the fans stayed; no one left. The place was packed. I got to physically see the history-in-the-making type of thing. I got to witness it. I saw a thousand people climbing the fence



all around the track. It was just so cool to be a part of.

THE MODERATOR: We'll continue with questions.

Q. I know, Jim, you've been around this race for 41 years. Mike, you've been around it a long time. Did you think maybe separated from putting Helio in a seat that we would see another four-time winner here before you signed him to your team?

JIM MEYER: I can tell you we believed from the very beginning Helio to get a fourth. I will also tell you until I got directly involved after attending the event for 37 straight years, I failed to grasp how hard it is to win this race, just how many things have to go right, how hard you work to get everything prepared. Could not be prouder of our team. It's a team sport. I'm glad Helio was the driver. I'm thrilled he got number four.

By the way, I believe Mike and I will be sitting up here maybe not in the too distant future with Jack Harvey celebrating a win with him here as well.

Another four-time winner? Boy, I don't know. There's a lot of good guys out there. The drivers just seem to take such great care of themselves now. We're seeing it everywhere in sports. Mike and I were joking last night, Tom Brady, Phil Mickelson, Helio Castroneves, why not? It's just great.

Q. Mike?

MIKE SHANK: Listen, I mean, Jim and I looked at the numbers, the performance numbers from Helio in 2017. I didn't quite get him not running anymore. Of course, I thought he still had something left to him. He went on to do the Acura program, did really well in prototype. We felt like we needed a veteran to come in and help our program overall and also help Jack.

Jack was involved every step of this kind of talk. We want a young guy, experienced guy. We all agreed, I think, that we wanted Helio. Man, I tell you, he's just so good here. I really got to witness it today. Kind of around 140, 150, I'm looking at him. Finally I figured out about 155 he's doing this on purpose. Everything he did from 150 on was a chess match. He knew exactly what he was doing. That's the G.O.A.T. in him.

JIM MEYER: We practiced here I think in April, we did two days of practice. After Helio ran his first five laps, Mike looked at me, I looked at him, we go, Turns out he still has got it. We were very, very confident that we would have good outcomes today. We're just thrilled.

Q. Mike, we got to see you climb the fence alongside

Helio. Caught up in all this emotion. Can you take us through that.

MIKE SHANK: Don't fall off the fence (laughter). I'm really glad, my guys, I loved seeing our guys. By the way we have two full-time guys on that effort, that's it. Everyone else flies in on a contract basis. They get together limited amounts of time.

Yesterday morning, Saturday, day off, they were over at Andretti practicing pit stops. You got to witness that pay off today. I'm just grateful and thankful.

Q. We got a chance today to see a 46-year-old win this race, get his fourth. So much talk these last couple weeks has been the veteran experience versus the invigoration of this youth we have in the series. Why do you feel like his veteran experience paid off today?

MIKE SHANK: Everything I just said. It was a chess match. He was calculated. Exactly what I expected. We noticed something on video that he does in traffic to pass people. We gave it to Jack. We showed Jack on video, This is what Helio is doing, you should think about it.

I do want to say one other thing if I could real quick: I haven't mentioned a lot tonight, our alliance with Andretti Technology is a key part of us being successful today. We haven't talked about that a lot yet. I believe this shared technical alliance is important for a modern day team like ours to come into the series and be productive right away. Otherwise you sit back and learn for two years. We didn't want to see that.

I thank Michael, JF, Rob Edwards especially. He's the man in the field. I'll tell them that tonight.

JIM MEYER: We got great support all month, all season from Honda, HPD. We're just thrilled. I mean, for our team, but also for HPD and for our two sponsors, our primary sponsors, Sirius XM and AutoNation.

Our alliance with Andretti, we couldn't have done what we're doing without hit it. We compete, don't kid yourself, hard on the racetrack. Michael was the second person I saw after we won the race, to come up and congratulate us. It's just great.

THE MODERATOR: This is the 14th Honda-powered Indianapolis 500 victory, which makes it second of all time.

MIKE SHANK: Very proud of that.

Q. You climbed that fence, Mike. Is this the biggest win? You have some Rolexes.



MIKE SHANK: I met you at the Rolex. That at the time was life changing. Our relationship with Jim France is undisputed. I've already heard from him today.

This is probably times four or five. I mean, it's a level -- for me it's about respect. I fight for it. I have to prove it all the time. I'm a freshman almost every time. He's always yelling at me to relax. I think it's bullshit. I feel like we have to prove ourselves all the time.

I'm hoping, listen, that this is the start of just a continued solid program. I've told Jim, I don't want to have a six-car team. I want to do two at some point at a high level and I'm good, take care of our sponsors and partners really well. I hope this result you're asking me about, lands that.

20 years ago, I was overworking on Formula Fords and sports 2000 IRP. That's how I made my living, a thousand bucks at a time. To get here today -- there's other guys and girls like me that are doing it now, prepping Formula 2000 cars, club racing, Miata. Maybe they have aspirations. You're looking at dead-ass proof. That's America, just really proud.

Q. What does it feel like to win the Indy 500?

JIM MEYER: I can't even tell you.

Q. It makes you climb the fence.

MIKE SHANK: Yeah, that was really cool. I got to see the people's reaction to Helio, which I think will go down in the history books, which I thought was really special. The way they treat him, revere him. I think it would be really cool from him to get a fifth and us to be a part of that, and I think he's amenable to that, if we could.

Q. What does it mean to you and this race team?

JIM MEYER: Helio winning is just great for our sport. It really is. It's great for our sport. It will be a great story, bring a lot of publicity to INDYCAR racing.

MIKE SHANK: This is it. This is all I dreamed about for 35 years in the sport. And we got it.

JIM MEYER: He and I have sat many late nights talking about what we're going to do. All I've said to Mike is, I want to win that race. I just can't believe it.

Q. Was there some sort of payoff?

MIKE SHANK: He said, I'm done, cash me out, I'm going home.

JIM MEYER: It's hard to top this.

MIKE SHANK: That's for sure.

Q. You said you saw something he did on video. What does Helio do?

MIKE SHANK: I'm definitely not sharing that. Honestly, these cars are so equal. The way INDYCAR and Roger and his tech crew have done this, they've made it for people like us that are relatively new can win this freaking race. It's not like the old days when you have to have a super high performance motor at the right time with the right tire. If you watched that race today, you get 40 laps, 50 laps into it, there was nobody going to get lapped ever. They're all on this half of the track at the same time. That really shows you the equality front to rear.

Jack was running sixth, seventh, eighth. When he got back to 20th, it was hard for him to get around. He had the speed.

We work all day to keep the track position, these qualifying positions on the wall here. When you start up north of 10, you have real opportunity, played correctly.

THE MODERATOR: We had 35 lead changes today among 13 drivers. That's the most since 2017 when there were also 35 lead changes. The record is 68 set in 2013.

Q. Mike, obviously we've seen a lot of sports car success with you. Your INDYCAR journey has been a rocky one. To build up the program the way you have, methodically over five years, do you think that was the right plan? How did the atmosphere of the series change?

MIKE SHANK: I'll tell you right now. I'm going to tell you right now, Jay Frye, Tony George and their family when they ran the place. We came in right toward the end of their stuff. They made sure we got in the show. They wanted us. They proved they wanted us. We paid them back. We brought a great team this the track. Jim got involved. We made sure we had the right equipment, the right look, didn't embarrass anybody.

I put it on Jay Frye. Would you agree?

JIM MEYER: Yeah, when we decided what we wanted to do, I called Mark Miles. Mark said, You guys need to talk to Jay. Mike and I came over, I think we met with Jay twice.

Without his support and the money he helped us with early



on, knowing what he wanted, he wanted more teams, he wanted more competition, we wouldn't have been able to bridge that gap and get going. We're really thankful to the INDYCAR family for getting us going.

I want to mention one other thing: It's been a flawless month out here. The INDYCAR team ran this whole month, including this race, like clockwork. It's just great.

Q. Could you name a couple of key guys behind Helio's effort today?

MIKE SHANK: Sure. That's a great question. The first guy is Adam Rovazzini. He's our competition director. He worked on my sports car program in 2017. Then we decided to do Indy. He worked at Chip Ganassi for 15 years as a crew member on Dario's car mostly, I think a lot actually. We talked him in. He didn't really want to do it. We kind of talked him into helping here at Indy 2017 with Jack.

We kept building the INDYCAR program. He kind of took the reins. He's a tiger, a pit bull. He runs it exactly how we want it to be run, military-like a lot of ways but forgiving in others. He is the bond. He deserves a lot of credit. We'll talk a lot about this next week when we're talking to media.

Also Matt Swan, our shop manager. He came from Ganassi, 22 years. We decided to put him in the crew chief role. He overachieved, excelled. We're building a new shop in Columbus. He's in charge of building the shop and have Helio win the race, which kind of worked out.

Mark Bryant, Dave Seifert on the engineering side. They work at Andretti, but they're part of our package with Andretti. They deserve a ton of credit.

Listen, a lot of the guys that are crewing the car are part-time, but experienced. I watched all their stops. I'm like, Damn, this is pretty good. Again, Saturday morning, yesterday morning, they were at Andretti's for two hours practicing. They just didn't stop.

Q. Takuma talked about it last year when he said he won that race on merit, just the best car at the right time. Seemed to be exactly the case today. What does that mean to you guys that you 'didn't back into it'?

JIM MEYER: Number one, both Helio and Jack's cars have been good all month, okay? We knew we had good cars. We were confident coming in. We had particularly a really good day Sunday after qualifications when we practiced Sunday night. We were confident in the cars.

We know the quality of our drivers. Helio absolutely

earned that win today. He didn't back into anything, okay? He fought hard all day. Mike was exactly right, he along with our crew chief and our engineers, he had a strategy, and they executed it exactly like they planned.

Our pit crew today was flawless. It was execution. That's what earned that victory.

Q. Mike, are you from Columbus or Pataskala?

MIKE SHANK: Pataskala. We're proud to be in the city. We did a good deal with the city to build this new building. I live in Buckeye Lake, which is a little lake east of Columbus.

Q. This day and age, multi-car teams, especially in Indianapolis, the more cars you have, the better resources you get. What does it tell you? What does this win mean to both of you as a statement win, trying to prove that you belong in this sport?

JIM MEYER: Number one, I kind of got a little bit tired of reading we're the little team that could. We've never believed that. We had a plan. We knew we were going to start very slowly. Mike was incredibly disciplined. I wanted to go faster earlier. He explained to me how fast we could waste our money if we weren't careful.

We had a strategy and a plan. But we believe every day we can compete with anybody out here, anybody out here. I will also tell you having data from eight cars is certainly really helpful, right? That's where the relationship with Andretti Technologies really pays off for us, as well.

Q. Picked a heck of a place to get your first career victory.

MIKE SHANK: Sure did (laughter).

JIM MEYER: If you're going to win one, this is it.

Q. First two times Helio shows up here with Roger Penske he wins the Indy 500. First time he shows up with you, he wins the Indy 500. Do you see a pattern there?

JIM MEYER: I don't know. Helio is pretty good.

MIKE SHANK: Listen, what I figured out in this deal for sure is give him what he wants. If you just give him what he asks for, he'll do it. He'll do it any time, anyplace, anywhere.

I'm anxious to see where this goes with Helio, I really am. By the way, driving in a road course race in INDYCAR

today is the hardest possible thing you can do. It's not going to be easy when he goes on the road courses. We'll get a test day in July sometime on a road course somewhere, maybe Portland or something like that, to get him prepped up for the end of the year. To be parachuted like J.P.M was last week, it's really tough.

We'll see how it goes then. Where we take that program next year, right, Jim?

JIM MEYER: Yup.

Q. Last year you described your first Indy 500 you came to was with a bunch of mechanics. Was it in the '80s? When was that?

MIKE SHANK: When I came here?

Q. As a fan.

MIKE SHANK: Oh, '88 was the first time I was ever here. We didn't have a ton of money. I'm not kidding you. We couldn't come over here. Couldn't afford to spend a weekend here. I did come my first year of driving race cars in SECA. I came with some friends and sat on the front straightaway, just to get a feel for it. Got super mega sunburnt, drank too much beer, went home.

I knew this place is where we needed it.

There's the man right there.

THE MODERATOR: You won the Indy 500, you can come up whenever you want.

JIM MEYER: Let's put Helio in the middle.

Q. Was that race day or time trials?

MIKE SHANK: It was time trials.

THE MODERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, we have been joined by the 2021 Indianapolis 500 winner, and his wreath, Helio Castroneves. A few quick facts for you about his win today.

This is obviously your fourth win, victories in 2001, 2002, 2009 all with Team Penske. Today you became the first driver to ever do it with two teams. How about that?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: How about that? I must be doing something right (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: You are also the fourth oldest winner in Indianapolis 500 history, joining Al Unser, Bobby Unser

and Emerson Fittipaldi.

This is the seventh Indianapolis 500 victory for a Brazilian driver. You have four, Emerson has two, T.K. has one.

Last but not least, this was the fastest Indianapolis 500 in history with an average speed of 190.690 miles per hour. Breaking the record from 2013 of 187.433.

With that, I'll ask you how you're feeling. How was it out there with the fans, climbing the fence?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: That was really nice seeing the fans climbing the fence, celebrating. I did say probably some interviews before the race that I would love to have the fans climb with me.

MIKE SHANK: That happened.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: They made it happen. So great moment for everyone. Especially after last year, being so difficult with the pandemic, everybody comes back, even though it's not full percent everyone here, but very, very nice for everyone to celebrate.

I couldn't be more happier. I couldn't be more happier for Mike, for Jim. They did everything they told me, which is they promised to give me a good car. I said, All right. If that's happen we have a great chance. Just give me a chance to fight, opportunity to be up there, then I will fight. And they did.

Great moment. I mean, amazing to follow in this group with Al Unser, Sr., A.J. Foyt, and my hero Rick Mears. Super honored to be in this group. But more important is I love to be surrounded by great people. It was great to be with Penske, and now my new friends, I really am having a great time. New opportunity with this amazing team. Look what they're showing. They're showing already with Jack, several races here. They had a little issue in the GP or they would have won the race. It was the right strategy. Now we're able to execute.

It's a matter of time. This is a great group of people. That's why I love it.

THE MODERATOR: This is also the first time the number 06 car was on the Indianapolis 500. First time a number starting with zero has won the race. Fun facts here.

We'll continue with questions.

Q. Helio, could you speak to what was going on the last 60 laps or so. Mike said he was wondering what you were doing, but he figured it out. You were

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

playing the chess game. Were you sizing up the competition? When did you feel like you had the car to beat today?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: To be honest, I felt that my car was very good since after qualifying, after that practice. I knew it was very good. I felt the car great. I told Mike, I said, Mike, don't touch it, the car is really good. Then Carb Day, I didn't want to run much. We wanted to do some pit stops. Remember, this is the first time we're running. It's a little bit of timing, understanding. Even myself, I need to be understanding what the group needs. When you're going 60 miles an hour, I have to say I did not push coming in and out laps because I didn't want to make any mistakes.

The car was so good, so I just have to make sure that I stay there in the end. Once the pit cycles came in, I was in second place with Palou. Pato came to play a little bit. I was like just keep doing what I'm doing, understanding what I need to do. I lost too many races in second place here. I was like, this is not going to be the day.

He was very good. He was very fast. The Ganassi guys did a great job. They were very, very strong on their own. They really were able to do some amazing laps. I think it was almost 221. I try myself, and I couldn't do it. I decided just to wait for the right opportunity. I did a couple of tries. Like I said before, I remember my teammate, Sam Hornish, beating me a lot in those races by a nose. So I did a couple tries to see if I would cross the finish line first, and I did.

My strong corners were both two and four, I knew that. It's just a matter of, like, waiting for the right opportunity. When I saw the traffic, it was a bunch of it actually. I'm like, That's it, I'm not going to wait because I need that traffic to pull me so I can get the same speed. When I made the move, I said, That's it.

It was fun. When I saw Hunter-Reay in front of me, Is he going to block? What is he going to do? I don't know. Time again, make sure that Palou wouldn't dive and bomb me. It was perfect.

I was having a little bit of vibration towards the end, but didn't bother me. I just kept on it, make the right tools to change the car a little bit. When I crossed the finish line, I was like, Can you believe it? I don't believe it. Do you believe it? I was talking to myself, it was really fun.

Q. You always dream big. Are you sitting here right now still pinching yourself or...

HELIO CASTRONEVES: I said it. If I said it, I meant it. I dream big. This is a dedication of hard work, getting the

right people. But I can't do it on my own. I have to give credit to Mike and Jim. Mike especially to putting the people together. I tell even the boys, I had some guys that worked with Ganassi for a long time, they have experience, I have some new guys that were able to connect. The great engineer. I have to give the credit for the Andretti Autosport because they received me with the arms wide open. There was not a moment that they kind of look around. They have their own system. I learned from their own system. With that I gained, like, five other teammates, five or six other teammates. Jack and I work together, too.

Again, for me it was great to understand. I wouldn't be able to do it without those peoples. I'm so grateful for that.

Q. You're the first four-time Indy 500 winner to actually take a lap down the frontstretch. How did that all happen?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Say that again.

Q. You ran down the frontstretch.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Look, I don't know what I was doing to be honest. I was drawn by the positive energy of everyone. For a long time these people want to see a four-time winner. I say that because they tell me. Every time we sign the autographs, they are like, I've never seen a four-time winner. I want to see it. That's what probably made me thank all of them because they made this place special. I can't deny that without that I wouldn't be able to be who I am. I'm thankful for them to be here. This is great.

I don't even know my action. I was just so happy.

THE MODERATOR: Did you happen to get a chance to talk to any of those three gentlemen that were here, the other members of the four-time club?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: I bumped into Al Jr. last night at St. Elmo. I said, I'm going to try to join your club. He's like, All right, I'll be cheering for you.

I never had a sitdown. I would love to do that because they mean a lot to me.

THE MODERATOR: We'll work on a photo of the four of you.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: That would be great.

Q. When you got down out there with your spontaneous celebration, you immediately went to the Team Penske pits, was congratulated by a lot of those



guys. You said you'll always be family with them. How special was that? Like Rick Mears told me, if we couldn't win, we were all pulling for Helio.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: I didn't run to them. Actually I was just going, I guess everyone was coming over.

Look, we spend 20 years together. I know those guys. We've been together for so long. I cannot thank them enough. This win today, it's also what they made me become. I can't thank them enough for that.

But it was great. Cindric told me as soon as I signed with Mike, I'll be the first one to congratulate you in the victory circle. He did. We're friends. This is a huge community in racing. Seeing not only them, I saw Juan Pablo, Will Power, everyone.

MIKE SHANK: Sato.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Sato came by. Jack Harvey. So many of them. Members of other teams, too. If you're thinking about, yes, we compete against each other, but I hope I made more friends than enemies in terms of that. I'm so glad to be able to see them happy as well.

Yeah, no, I believe this group, as I said, they believe in me, I believe in them, and they are incredible people, and very talented. That's why we're here today.

Q. Two different aero packages. Did you learn anything in '14 with Hunter-Reay and '17 with Sato that you used today to keep the lead?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Yes, too many times finishing second, you better learn. I did. I used that experience to make sure that I bring the win. We did.

Q. What did it mean to have the fans back? What was it like, the energy between you and the fans as you had the extended celebration?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: It was very emotional, I have to say. As I mentioned, people climbed the fence. That was so incredible. Yeah, every turn you're seeing everyone with my shirt with different teams obviously. Did we have a merchandise on myself?

MIKE SHANK: We got a little. We'll have more now (laughter).

HELIO CASTRONEVES: That was the point, so many people cheering.

Look, this is a very special moment. It is part of history.

I'm so honored to be in this position today.

Q. Mike, those last 10, 20 laps, what was your anxiety levels like? What were you thinking as soon as Helio took the checkered?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: I want to hear that (laughter).

MIKE SHANK: High level of anxiety. Like I said earlier, when I figured out he had this planned, I got a real weird calmness over me. I thought, he is stalking this guy and he's going to pounce. Then we had some traffic right after that, and the race was over at that point. Once he got around that, that was it.

But three laps to go, I looked right at Jim, he's looking at me, I'm like, We got this. I think we can do this actually.

JIM MEYER: Mike got calm. I can tell you I didn't. It was nerve-wracking for me, absolutely nerve-wracking.

Again, I come back to our sport. What better racing could you get? I mean, how could you have a more exciting finish to any motor race than what we had today? The fans were all on their feet. It made great television. It was competitive every lap. It's nerve-wracking, if you ask me.

Q. I spoke with Simon earlier. He felt that you were almost toying with Alex towards the end of the race. He felt Palou maybe showed his cards a bit too early. Is that how you saw it?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Maybe, yeah. They were strong. I have to say they were really, really strong. I was understanding what the benefit to be in front, and be behind him. As long as I knew I could pass in turn two or four, I knew I would have amazing opportunity to win this race, and that's what I did.

Q. Anything special you'll buy yourself with your winnings?

JIM MEYER: He's getting a new house.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: I have to find a place to live first (laughter).

Right now I have a wife and a daughter, so nothing for me.

Q. After parting ways with Penske last year, this new adventure, how much did you want to prove a point and show you could still win at a Speedway, that you still had the ability to do that?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: It's not about to prove a point.



When I moved to sports car program, I have to say I learned so much. My knowledge of racing just expand. When you start racing with three different type of series in the same race with different speed, you start learning how to timing, you start learning how to calculate moving and pass without damage the car.

I have to say that was a great -- was it when I wanted? No, because I want to keep going at Indy. You do lose a little bit of the timing because it's a completely different car.

However, I took a different route. We finished with Team Penske winning the championship, with a lot of wins. It wasn't just like luck, it was a lot of wins. Then I want to go back. I said I want to go back. I am eager to want to go back. I did everything that I possibly could to go back. I'm very fortunate that Mike and Jim said, You know what, I can see this on you. Here we go.

When you work hard, when you put all the puzzles together, it should be a great opportunity. I'm so grateful for that.

Q. Mike, obviously you spoke about the relationship with Andretti. If you continue on this trajectory you're on, you're going to be successful in the next few years. How does that play into your relationship with Andretti?

MIKE SHANK: Yeah, no, the one thing that we've always said to Michael and Rob and JF, those guys over there, we always felt like we'll get what they have. We don't feel anything is being held back. They've given us the most current things. That's all we can ask.

We're working on another deal with them now. Again, I've kind of mentioned this modern way to go INDYCAR racing, which I consider these technical alliances, can make you look like a hero. That's what happened today.

THE MODERATOR: We have a quote from a member of the four-time club for Helio. It's from A.J. Foyt. It says, He deserved it. He worked hard to get it and he finally got it. It wasn't given to him. When someone works as hard as he did, I'm glad it happened for him. As I said, he deserved it.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: That's great.

MIKE SHANK: Very nice. Very nice.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Wow, that's awesome. Thank you.

Q. You've been in that position before, short end of

the stick when it comes to close finishes. Is there anything you would tell Alex Palou to kind of keep his chin up after a heartbreaking loss?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Oh, wow. I mean, he's young. He has an incredible talent. He won the first race of the season. Nothing to be shamed. I finished second three times. Did I stop because of that? No. He did a great job. He had a great car. He did everything he possibly could.

Last year he didn't finish. This year he finished second. That's a big improvement. He should think about the positive side, not the negative.

Q. Until today no driver had ever won the Indy 500 after winning it for Roger Penske. Your thoughts on breaking that trend?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Look, as I said before, Roger and I and the entire Team Penske I do feel we always going to be in great terms, great relationship, great friends, big family.

However, this opportunity is incredible. I'm talking about Mike, I'm talking about Jim, Liberty Group. These guys are incredible. That's why I'm happy. I'm happy to be surround by this incredible people. I'm just very blessed.

Just because I won with another team, they gave me the tools they promised, and I delivered. It was a great partnership.

Q. Reflecting on the last seven months, you won a SportsCar Championship, Rolex 24, Indy 500 all with Honda HPD, three different teams.

JIM MEYER: He didn't win the Rolex 24 with Meyer Shank Racing (laughter).

HELIO CASTRONEVES: You didn't hire me.

MIKE SHANK: That will change.

JIM MEYER: Turns out we're not that smart.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Look, I'm batting a thousand right now. I only did two races this year and I won them, and it was a big one. Very fortunate to do those things.

However, yeah, I want to do more. Don't get me wrong. I told Mike and Jim as well, we want to do more. That's what I got. I'm very happy with the opportunity.

As I said before, SportsCar gave me a great deal of understanding, knowledge about different cars. That was



great. I learned, maybe took a little longer, but I learned. Once you execute, boom, that's it. Super happy for that.

Yeah, no, it's quite a feat to win only two races. If you only do two races and win both, not a bad deal.

Q. On the Honda and Acura bit, you got to work with them, what was that like?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: With Acura?

Q. Honda.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Honda is great. HPD, because I work with them few years ago, three years with HPD, coming back here with Honda, it was absolutely incredible. They sat down with me. We have many meetings. That's what you need to have. When you have a guy that spent so many years with incredible organization, you have experience, you have information, you can really explore those things. They did that. Not sure if they were able to use it. However, we're here in victory circle because they are very competent in being able to give the right things for us.

Q. You did something today that makes a lot of us older guys feel fantastic. You really struck a blow for the old guys. Five of the top 10 guys were 37 or older. Tell me about what this means for older drivers.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: It's a proof, it's a label. People put a label and a number, say, The guy is old. In the past Mario Andretti, Rick Mears, maybe A.J. Foyt. All these incredible guys were able to race 50 years old. But all of a sudden, I see a young opportunity guy that it can be. Probably you going to spend more time and money on the crash as he's learning than actually a guy that experienced and make things happen.

Yeah, might take a little longer. When you were more mature, have you some habits that you want to create. However, I still have the fire. I love what I do. This is my passion. Jim and Mike, they are passionate about it. A lot of people here racing, they're passionate about it. You can't take that away.

So for me representing the old guys, let's put this way, I feel that the technology, the way it is, we can still go for a long time. I will, as long as I have the opportunity.

Q. Mean Joe Greene, I think it was him that said, I want to get one for the thumb. That means five. Can you win five?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Let's enjoy this first, then we talk

about five a week later (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: Helio, at the age of 46, you join some other athletes that have won some major championships lately: Phil Mickelson last week with the PGA Championship at age 50, and Tom Brady winning the Super Bowl earlier this year age 43.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: I said it before, if Tom Brady did it, why can we not do it? I said to Jim as well, people put a label on this type of situation. It's awesome to prove them wrong.

THE MODERATOR: Al Unser and Bobby Unser was 47, Al was almost 48.

Q. In December of 2004, you were personally blessed by the Pope. Can you compare these two?

JIM MEYER: Oh, my Lord.

Q. Did you bring the statuette you smuggled in your raincoat to be blessed?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: It was incredible day in 2004. Something is completely different in my professional life. I can't thank enough again an incredible amount of people that started with those two gentlemen sitting beside me. A big group, it's not only them. There were so many others.

For me it's just an incredible feeling right now that we're able to win a number four. A lot of people had, like, question marks. I understand. I get it. But I never stopped believing. That's what matter.

Q. You've been saying pretty much since last year you're open for business, want to run as many races as you can. Your team owners have said they might want to run you in some more races this year. How do you feel about expanding your INDYCAR schedule?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: I'm ready. I'm ready. I would love to know which ones. Doesn't matter what it is. Yes, I would by love to.

There's so many things that I still want to understand and develop, especially in the street course, road course. I love street course, by the way. We take a step. Right now everybody is excited. I'm excited. I would love to keep it going with this opportunity and see what lies ahead.

Q. Will you be asking them to run maybe the rest of the season?

JIM MEYER: He already asked (laughter).



HELIO CASTRONEVES: I asked before we win the race (smiling).

Now it's going to be email, Hey, you think about that? We will see.

Q. When you were talking about labels, you were one of those young guys when you won the first one. Can you compare what it's like to win one early in your career and now?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Sure. Well, so different. When I won my first one, I did not know what to expect. I was just trying to go fast. As long as I not in the top three, I wasn't happy. This time was completely different. It was working on the car, understanding what I need to win the race.

Because the way from my first win, it wasn't so much about drafting so close, when it would change in 2012 for this new car, that's where race started becoming switching. It took me a while to understand.

In 2017 or '18, changed for another new car. I was only doing once, so it took me a little time to understand again. When you change like that, you just learn. But as a young guy, I just want to go for it. Now I'm mature, I understand what I need to go for it. That's what I had today.

Q. Among those who greeted you afterwards was Mario. Did he give you a kiss?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: I don't know. No, I don't think so. Did he? Okay. That was cool. Look, he's an incredible legend in motor racing, motorsport world. When he came by, it was very nice. I always respect what they accomplished. Wow, yeah, that was special.

Q. Obviously as a driver you've talked a little bit about how you've matured over time from the first win to the current one. We saw Tom Brady and Phil Mickelson. They talked a lot about the mental side of how they've improved as athletes. How have you changed recently mentally in how you prepare for things?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Every person is different obviously. One of the reason I keep asking about Mike and Jim, I want to do more races, because I'm a different guy. I like to understand a little bit more. That's why I end up going to the races to watch Jack, to make sure I understand. Even I wasn't there, I was like, Okay, I need to understand how they operate, how they do it.

I don't think if I will be young, I'll say I'll wait for the opportunity and that's it. You start searching, you start

looking for it, and here we go.

When I finally get it, I knew exactly what I have to do. My mentality was more in terms of finding what I want instead of what I learn all these years. Basically we mixed it up. It turned out to be an incredible day.

Q. You said you learned a lot from the times you didn't win.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Yeah.

Q. What did you learn today from winning that maybe gets you to number five?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: I knew the potential of my car. I knew exactly what I have to do. Like I said, when I saw traffic coming before me, in front of Palou, I said, I got to get that right because that's what going to help me. Just like in practice, you have five cars, six cars, everybody line up, nobody passing each other. With 25 laps into the tires, I don't think he's going to be able to pass me either. That's what I was thinking.

Turned out to be the right thought.

Q. If I'm not mistaken, is this your daughter's first 500 win?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: 2009. Yeah, she was in my wife's belly in 2009.

Q. How did they enjoy this today?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: I didn't think she understand what's happening. Kind of like surprised. I think one day she will. Her interesting is not about racing anyway. It's okay. I'm good. They do their thing, I'll do my thing.

Q. Did she kiss the bricks? A lot of kids don't.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: She did. She was a little, eww. I'm like, Trust me, kiss the bricks. Then you clean your mouth. It's something you regret if you don't do it. So she did.

Q. Did you ever think time would sort of run out and you would never get a fourth?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: No, I did not.

Q. Why?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Because when I change from Penske to Mike, when Mike said, We're going to do

everything we can to put you over there, I believe him. When I walk into the garage, I see all the graphics they did. I notice they're doing everything they can to win this race.

I believe it. I saw the technical part with Andretti. They want to win, for sure. They had fast cars many, many years. So I knew I would have a good opportunity. I just got to find it. Sunday after qualifying, I found it, I was like, Now we just got to make things happen here.

I never stopped dreaming. I never stopped believing it. I'm so glad I did that because I want to know those young kids, sometimes they think hard work doesn't pay off. It just proof you still can believe in yourself and make yourself better.

Q. Did you have a chance to talk to Rick Mears?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: I have not.

Q. What did he mean to you in your career?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Rick and I worked together for 20 years. I think he's four-time 500 winner. All the wins, except this one, all the wins that I did the three previous, he was right there beside me. I always consult with him. Now that you mentioned that, just sinking in a little bit, I'm proud of myself that I didn't have Rick Mears to consult this time. I was on my own. Not on my own, I had these guys with me. Yeah, it was just me. I'm very happy.

This guy, it was like always, You're the best. I tell you what, I felt great. I felt great because they give me a great opportunity for that.

I would like to talk to him.

Q. Take that, Mears, I did it without you.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: No, not that (laughter). I'm now part of your club, buddy.

THE MODERATOR: There is a 12-year gap between your third win in 2009 and today's win. That's the second longest gap in between victories behind only Juan Pablo Montoya at 15 years between 2000 and 2015.

Q. Jim and Mike, how do you think this victory will change the perception of Meyer Shank outside of the motorsports community?

MIKE SHANK: It's important to me that we're respected and that the people understand we're here to win. This will change everything. When we won the Rolex 24 in Daytona in 2012, it was a big step for us. It really put us on this

path to where we're at today.

As I said earlier, this is times four, times five. It's a respect thing that I think we deserve. Jim and I fought hard for this. I'm just overwhelmed with the thoughts. It's just hitting me now really that we've won here.

I'm just so happy to be a part of history. What my opinion is with Helio and the four wins, that's one little nugget that I said, can you imagine if he could win four with us? What would that mean to us? Commercially, just respect? Jim agreed. Let's get Helio. That's what he did. It just was perfect.

Q. During the press day, you seemed very flat and you'd lost a very, very dear friend in the recent days. I guess he'd be looking down on you today and be proud of your result.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: You're absolutely right. Andrea was an incredible person. Definitely he rode with me. Put a sticker in my helmet. He rode with me. I do believe he helped me pass Palou with two laps to go, hold me on. It was a great day.

Q. What is it like working with Michael Shank and Jim Meyer for the last month?

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Well, let's start. Are you guys ready (laughter)?

Tell you what, incredible. Mike is a guy that's passionate about racing. That's what I love it. I love it because I'm that type of guy. Probably him sitting down have a dinner, we're going to be talking about racing, a long night.

But in the end of the day when I put my helmet on, when he put his headset or wears his series shirt, he's all business. He gets mad, he gets upset, but he gets happy as well at the same time. I like it.

He make the right decisions. That's what I'm more impressed by. You don't need to change who you are to be successful. I like that.

And Jim, he's all about passion. He's sharp. He knows he's getting to the business now, but he's a big fan for a long time. He knows what he wants. That's why I like to have him around with Mike because those two make a great couple, make a partnership.

Plus with the Liberty Group as well, it's great to have them around. All credit for Jim. Look what's happening. They now won the Indy 500.

When you put all these group like the same level, we want to win, we are passionate, but we want to win. That's why we're here.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, Helio. A wonderful day for all of us, great to see you interact with the fans there at the end.

HELIO CASTRONEVES: Thank you, guys. Thank you, everyone, for the hard work.

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