

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Graham Rahal

Sebastien Bourdais

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome, everyone. After a thrilling Indianapolis 500, the NTT INDYCAR SERIES gets back at it this week for the Chevrolet Detroit Grand Prix presented by Lear, the doubleheader on the raceway at Belle Isle, the Dual in Detroit. It all begins with practice Friday afternoon.

Two gentlemen who have won twice there join us. He's the four-time INDYCAR SERIES champion, winner of Detroit back in 2015 and 2016, driver of the No. 14 ROKiT Chevrolet for A.J. Foyt Racing. Good to have Sebastien Bourdais with us.

The only driver who has swept the Dual in Detroit over the course of a weekend, 2017. Six-time winner in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES driving the No. 15 Fifth Third Bank Honda on Saturday, then the United Rentals Honda on Sunday for Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing, great to have Graham Rahal.

Seb, been a busy start to the season, three straight weekends, the month of May. How badly did you welcome a weekend off?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: No, I mean, it wasn't bad at all. Actually I kind of like when we get in the rhythm. For sure for the mechanics and everybody involved getting the week off makes the transition after an exhausting month of May, technical teams, a bit easier. As far as I'm concerned, just ready to go. Yeah, looking forward to getting back to Detroit.

Indy wasn't there last year but I didn't miss anything because it didn't happen last year (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: Graham, certainly an unfortunate ending to your Indy 500. How much are you looking forward to getting back on track this weekend?

GRAHAM RAHAL: Yeah, I mean, I think it's great to turn the page now, move forward to a race that I've loved so

much. Like Seb, had some success there. I love the challenge that Detroit gives you.

I want to say thanks to Roger and Bud and the group for keeping their heads down and making Detroit happen this year. I know for a while it was looking pretty limited fan-wise and everything else. We're certainly excited to be back. It's become a staple on the INDYCAR circuit. We're excited to get a chance to turn the page from Indy, move on, hopefully have a great weekend.

THE MODERATOR: Let's go ahead and open it up for questions.

Q. You both have been through sort of the highs, the lows, the ups and downs. Coming out of Indy, as you get into the rest of the schedule, the meat of the schedule, where do you feel the series is, the momentum, how do you feel coming out of Indy the overall goodwill of the series?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: I think you know obviously we're all kind of starting to feel like we're getting some normalcy again in the system, which is great. Having the fans at the Speedway was huge. Thankfully I didn't have to experience an empty Speedway last year because that looked really, really gloomy. All across the board, it's one of those things that racing in front of no fans, it's like why are we even here.

Obviously it was saving grace last year that things can still happen. It can only last for so long. We're glad things are starting to look up, having that interaction, that emotion connection with the crowd. It's great that we pretty much going to get the full schedule in, having that again. Really looking forward to it.

I think the series has done a really good job with that. They've been juggling through massive hoops left, right and center to get the political sides aligned with the sporting and business side of things. It's a huge balancing act.

I don't think we can thank, like Graham was saying, Roger and the entire team on the INDYCAR SERIES side, the Detroit side for putting all the hard work, letting us do our thing, doing it all together.



GRAHAM RAHAL: For me, I think May was great. May was great to have back. As Seb said, it's tremendous to have fans. Obviously, as everyone here knows, we were out of the race at the end. I got to stand on pit road and listen to the excitement of the crowd. It was clear who they wanted to win, obviously.

To hear them chant 'Helio', to hear that, the place was rocking, every single person on their feet, it just gave me a lot of internal happiness to see that the sport's alive and well, right? People live it, people love it, people enjoy the racing.

I'll admit I was nervous the whole time. I am kind of maybe too involved in the business side. I was worried about the TV ratings, what are we going to see. Then a great rating comes, the best we've had since '16, highest ever on NBC. Yes, there's caveats as everyone likes to point out, but still higher than the Daytona 500 for the first time since 1995. Those are positive signs, I don't care how you look at it, for our sport.

I was excited by that. It gave me a lot of energy. I know everybody on my shirt here was excited by that to see what the sport is doing. Obviously we're in a critical year with TV contracts, things like that.

It was a good sign. I think the series is headed down the right path. We have a lot to thank Roger. I know we all keep saying that. Where would we maybe have been, a theoretical question, 16 months ago if the ownership was different? What challenges may we have faced that Roger stabilized our sport and gave us a chance to live?

We've got to be very thankful for that, to see where we're at today. Everybody is doing a great job.

Q. Could you tell me as you head into the rest of the season where you think your specific programs are at? Graham, where are you at? Do you guys know what happened at Indy with the tire?

GRAHAM RAHAL: Yeah, of course we do.

Q. So what happened?

GRAHAM RAHAL: Where we're at is we're in a good spot. We've done a great job this year. Our two misses are St. Pete and Indy. Both of those running right at the front of the grid. Unfortunately, as Seb knows, you're not going to win a championship with having errors like that. But we had a great shot to finish on the podium at St. Pete. We had a great shot to win the Indy 500. That's all we can ask for.

What happened is I think one mistake that led to multiple others. We don't need to point down to one single person because all of us have a part in that. We've broken it down. Certainly I think going forward we'll be in a better place.

As the old saying goes: We win as a team, lose as a team. It hasn't been discussed internally since after the review. Everybody accepted what went wrong. Now we're moving forward. Now we're focused on Detroit and making the rest of this year as best we can.

If I can say anything, I think the boys did -- yes, we know how it ended, but they did an unbelievable job to get us there. Once again, Rahal Letterman Lanigan had great cars come the Indy 500. We've been there the last several years. That's all we can ask for. I'm proud of them for what they've done.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: As far as we're concerned, obviously we kind of started pretty well, Barber and St. Pete. We showed pace, we felt good. There was that dismal weekend at Texas. None of our fault, but that definitely set the tone a little bit for a bit of a more conservative 500. When you've pretty much already wiped out your crash budget in a matter of 24 hours, I think we all felt very conservative, maybe a little bit too conservative, in quallie trim and everything.

Yeah, I mean, I guess the race was kind of looking all right, nothing special. There were some very strong cars, but not very, very many. We were kind of in the lot of cars like right there in the middle. I think if you look back at the lap charts and everything else, we probably would have finished anywhere from 15 to top 10. We were fighting the stage basically.

Yeah, I mean, it's one of those where you can rewrite the story. We went for the fuel strategy. There was no yellow, there was no action. The pack split in two. We ended up being hung out. Rossi for sure did a very good job at stringing us out. That was it. It's just the way it is. It's one of those 500s. In '16 what won the race, in this race it was a bad call.

Strategy with Scott, he limped home and finished 18th. We had to take that at the end and that was it. The team tried. We discussed it. At some point we knew there would probably be a call like that where you have to gamble. Either you go for the crazy one or you accept your midfield maybe a little bit better. I think it was going to be a little better than kind of average, but you just don't know that till you get to the end. We picked that one option and it didn't work out.

Looking forward, I think we know we're going to have some ups and downs, some places where we're strong, some places where we are not. Seems like our street course package is not bad at all. We just got to try and put pieces together for the road courses.

So, yeah, just looking forward to the next ones, keep our heads down. Obviously we're still trying to figure things out. It's a relatively new group kind of all working together and trying to make the best of our situation in a very, very competitive field right now. So we knew going in it was going to be hard. For sure the last month or so has not helped our cause. I wouldn't say it's really anything that we've done wrong, it's just kind of circumstantial, so...

You just got to stay focused and try and get it done.

Q. In theory you should look more at Detroit like you looked at St. Pete or Barber?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Yeah, I mean, I don't want to go into weekends saying, This weekend we're going to kill it. We don't know. We obviously hope so, but we can't know. I haven't been in Detroit in that car. What that kind of street course philosophy translates into Detroit, I hope it's going to be great.

Q. Graham, you're the last person to sweep this event. In the context of current INDYCAR with things being so competitive, does that make it more likely or less likely we'll see a sweep again in the near future?

GRAHAM RAHAL: Yeah, I mean, I think it's probably less likely. The depth of the field is incredible right now. It's very hard for somebody to get an advantage. That weekend, we were first or second in every single practice, every single qualifying, then obviously swept the race. To do that again, I think it's a big challenge.

It was a big challenge then, but I think you look top to bottom at the quality of the field now, there's not really many guys that are going to go miss, you know what I mean? There's going to be different opportunities.

Plus, Detroit, what I got very fortunate with there was we started up front with both those races. There was nothing abnormal. There was the red flag with two to go in the one race. The races were pretty green. I think in one we were able to get to a 30-second lead or something. There was nothing that really strategy-wise could have hurt me, no closed pits under yellow, none of that sort of stuff. It kind of stayed.

That's traditionally not Detroit. There's a lot of alternate

strategies that play a role. All it takes is you get one slow guy in the midfield that backs everybody up so much that all of a sudden an alternate strategy, a two stop or something like that, or a three stop I should say, can suddenly work.

I think it's harder to do today. I don't know how Seb feels, but I feel like it would be harder to see somebody sweep now.

Q. Once we get past the big target on the schedule, the Indy 500, how do you guys and your teams refocus and approach the rest of the year, especially if you don't get a great result there? Maybe kind of refreshing in any sort of way to have that behind you and be able to focus on individual races without having that big race looming in the distance?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Yeah, for us, there was, like everybody else, a ton of effort going into it, I feel mostly by going to four cars. That was the big piece that obviously added us a huge amount of preparation and work into it.

As far as our particular effort on the 14 car, we did the best we could, but I don't feel like we extracted every bit of it, nor did we singly just focus on that one race. I think, like we've discussed before, we've been trying to rebuild kind of a foundation for the team, trying to get setups figured out, whether being road courses, street courses, ovals, superspeedways. On its own that takes a huge amount of work, whether it be at the simulator or with the guys trying to run concepts.

For us, we take every event one at a time, do the best job we can, and try to identify what the weakness is, build on the strengths, and move on, document it and make sure we come back stronger with the team the next time around. That's kind of where we're at.

GRAHAM RAHAL: For me, I do think it is a bit of a relief when Indy is over. This year there's going to be a lot of heartache for sure. I think there's some just what ifs. We really felt like we had a strategy that was coming together, was just working. We've reviewed it since. It was. We just confirmed. It was looking really good. But we didn't finish, so it doesn't really matter.

At this stage we have to move on. I think that there is quite a bit of weight that's lifted off everybody's shoulders once we get into this weekend.

Every race is still a major challenge, but they're certainly different than the pressure that comes along with the 500. I think everybody was probably excited to turn the page at this stage.

Yeah, I'm excited for what's ahead. I'm excited for next May, clearly. But for now we're just going to focus on Detroit and then Road America is another great place we love, go home, Mid-Ohio, which I don't know but I'm guessing, like everybody else, is probably going to be a doubleheader or something.

For me, I think that's going to be a big weekend, so I'm just trying to focus on those right now and move on.

Q. With Helio's fourth Indy 500, we've heard a lot how Indy 500 victories are perceived in the sport at-large or the driver community. How do you feel a 500 is perceived both on your end or in the paddock in general, 500 versus a series championship?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: I don't know. I don't think I spent any kind of time trying to figure that out. Been lucky enough to win a couple championships and the 500 is missing.

I think there's no single biggest target or events than the 500 for us. Nothing really comes even close. How it's perceived in the paddock, I think we kind of know the answer. Outside, who cares at the end of the day? We kind of do it for the fans, for our teams and for ourselves.

I think it's a huge accomplishment, it's a huge task. Like most of us I think, or all of us, I was really super happy for Helio. He's a great figure of the sport. He's a super likable guy and a very deserving champion. At the end of the day it's super fitting that he's the one that gets a fourth win on that thing.

Yeah, as far as us, I mean, of course we'd take the 500 probably over the championship.

GRAHAM RAHAL: Yeah, I certainly don't think Helio is regretting the fact he never won a championship in INDYCAR. I think he's pretty happy with what he's got.

As Seb just said, I look back on it in hindsight, I was so frustrated as all of you guys can imagine. We always talk about Indy as this sort of living being. I thought back to the drivers meeting and how INDYCAR made this big push about the four-time winners. They're all sitting right there. It just felt fitting that Helio won the thing.

As much as it frustrated me, because I was really with Helio all day, right? You could see kind of the veteran mentality in the two of us versus the guys leading who were just burning fuel like crazy. I know they all said they had a shot to win, but they didn't. They were burning way too much fuel.

Watching Helio drive that day, it was he and I for a hundred laps I think together. It just felt like he was going to be there at that time. I felt like I was probably racing him from what I could see, the way he was approaching everything.

It's great for him. I mean, he's a great guy. He's a great champion. As I said a minute ago, to see the fans go crazy, that's what brings this place alive. It's really cool.

But I can assure you winning four Indys would be pretty darn good. I mean, I think anybody would probably take it over a championship. Then again I'd love to be Seb and have four championships. To me either way would work great.

Q. Obviously we go to Detroit this weekend. The first time we're using the aeroscreen on a street circuit in Detroit. I watched an onboard with you yesterday, Graham. The circuit is bumpy. Is there any way you guys prepare differently going into the track because the track is so bumpy and you're going to be using the aeroscreen for the first time?

GRAHAM RAHAL: I don't think we prepare any differently. I do think it's going to be an exceptionally physical weekend. It looks hot, upper 80s and sunny. Detroit does not have any long straightaways really. I do think it's going to be a pretty physical weekend.

Aside from everything else, everybody is pretty used to it now. We're a year into this thing. The aeroscreen has been a great addition, a great addition to the sport safety-wise. You look at the saves it's already had in its time. I think it's been great.

No, I think we'll just go at it and try to make sure that you get rested up on Saturday night if you have a full day on Saturday because Sunday is going to be another bruiser.

That's the element I think the aeroscreen changes. Maybe Seb can touch on it, too. I just think the general heat, the airflow is what makes it a challenge. We'll see that this weekend.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Yeah, no, I think like Graham was saying, setup-wise obviously you adjust the car whichever way. I think the tire evolution is probably just as challenging as the aeroscreen, the way you use the tire. Firestone is coming up with small variations and things, mixing things up because some chemicals get banned, whatever else. At the end of the day there's not a weekend that resembles the other. That's why when you look at the gaps, as tight as the field is, a tiny little difference, then it shuffles the whole order. You're talking about a 10th, two

or three maximum, and you're at the front or the back of the pack and your weekend looks very, very different.

There are some very, very key moments in the weekend that make it a great or good or a bad or terrible one (smiling). I think you just have to be open-minded, you have to get a look at optimizing everything. You know if you don't execute, then it's not going to be a fun experience.

The aeroscreen safety-wise, particularly for the ovals and the superspeedways, just a single biggest investment for sure is concerned as far as safety is concerned. For me for sure on the street courses I sometimes wish the screen wasn't there because I feel like it's making things extremely difficult and uncomfortable in the car. I think it's just one very tough compromise, right? You just add that big safety piece on an existing car that really wasn't designed for anything like this, how you manage the airflow and everything around.

For sure when it gets hot and humid, particularly on street courses, the body temperature inside the 120 degree cockpit gets pretty critical. Yeah, it's never really a fun last 10, 15 laps of those races. Doing it twice in a weekend, I think that dehydration level is going to be tough. Probably not the best suited for that because I don't deal super, super well with dehydration.

But it is the challenge, that's for everybody. We'll just have to add it to the numerous list that composes Detroit, I guess.

Q. Sebastien, correct me if I'm wrong, I believe we saw some drivers running like a type of an air hose on the front of the helmet. Is that something that we might see drivers use moving forward to help keep them cool?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: No, basically that was a Speedway thing. Some guys instead of having the piping kind of get dangled somewhat in the more turbulent airflow towards the top, you could see the hose down and kept it out of the way so you had that duct that was for some guys just the front duct, which definitely doesn't cool your head as much, it just gives you air. For some it was also rerouted to the top, so it was front and top. Instead of coming from the top down, it was bottom going up and top. So there were different options.

All of those for the Speedway came out just for aerodynamic and drag concerns. There was no added cooling or benefit to it. It was actually probably a bit of a loss. But when you're going around at 200 something miles an hour, you don't have any issues with airflow. The

cockpit doesn't get too hot, unless it's a hundred something degrees outside.

Q. Seb, with your amount of experience winning championships, races, how do you deal with setbacks or disappointments? Is there anything you do in particular with a new team to help raise the morale?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Yeah, I mean, it's always tough, right? We had some very positive dynamic. We talked about it. It's like I was saying, it doesn't take much to kind of embellish that or drag it down pretty rapidly.

For sure unfortunately the last few weeks between Texas and a not-so-great Indy GP, then a disappointing 500, sets you back no matter which way you look at it and present it.

I think the guys are mostly pretty excited anyways this year to just see some light and be like, We knew going in that it wasn't going to be easy every weekend, we're just going to capitalize on the good weekends and enjoy them as much as we can.

Yeah, we had pace. We probably didn't capitalize on those pace moments as much as we wanted to to turn it into results both at Barber and St. Pete. Really feel like we haven't put together a weekend yet. Hopefully it's coming for Detroit.

Q. Graham, how Indy ended for yourself, do you like there was a week off in between the 500 to Detroit or are you a type of driver you would like to get back into the car and back out racing as soon as possible?

GRAHAM RAHAL: Seb said it at the very start. I agree. I'm the type that once we get into a rhythm, we just go and go. I really like that. Plus when you have a crappy end to a week, you move on to the next week and get another shot at it. You don't have to sit and think about it forever.

Yeah, I mean, I would have liked to go right into Detroit. Having said that, I think what they've done is correct. The guys need a break. Everybody needs a break. Everybody needs to go see their families for a minute. Just recharge the batteries.

Our guys had a couple of days off, had a long weekend. They need that badly, so... That is the right way to do it.

Q. Obviously we're heading into Detroit. You mentioned it's probably going to be pretty hot, the track will be quite physical. How do you deal with the bumps of Detroit? Anything in particular that you actually put into the car to protect the knees and elbows? Anything different you do for Detroit

compared for other races?

GRAHAM RAHAL: No. Fortunately for me there's no space in there to do anything for the knees or elbows. It is what it is. They get pretty beat up. They'll be pretty bloody and bruised by Sunday night. You just do it. I don't know what else to say. I don't really have much of a choice.

We've been doing this a while now. Typically know what I'm going to be facing, how to get my body feeling generally pretty good. I mean, nobody's body feels great after a weekend in Detroit. Just got to focus on those things and prepare myself best I can, go out and do it.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: I'll just add something for the people. I think the series and the people don't always understand how typically difficult the 500 stretch is. We on the team side to keep everybody onboard is extremely challenging. It's not abnormal to lose a guy during the 500 week, to lose a couple between the 500 and the next one.

Definitely having a little break between the 500 and Detroit I think helps to kind of break that and not feel like you're running everybody to the ground and lose people. It's hard to find quality people these days, and you don't want to lose them.

THE MODERATOR: Forecast for this weekend sunny and temperature in the low 80s in Detroit, for what it's worth.

Q. Seb, you said after Texas you had to be a little conservative in May. Is that something you guys are going to have to do moving forward or are you going to be able to sort of go a little bit more all out?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: No, I mean, I think it's very much of a superspeedway concern, right? There is rarely small crashes on speedways. If you go on the trim and you miss, I guess I can speak for that, been there, done that, consequences can be quite high on the body, but certainly on the car. Very easy to throw one in the Dumpster after that. It's very expensive.

I don't say we were consciously careful or taking a very conservative approach. But at the end of the day when you look at your trim list, you may take smaller steps just because the doubt sets in a little bit more and you just don't feel like you want to take any chances with that.

Indy has that weird feel about it. You always feel like you got tons of time and then time runs out. That was on a very straightforward weekend where things were fine, no rain delay or anything like that. I think we just kind of -- it just kind of happened.

Going forward, no, I think for road and street courses you just do your thing. Sometimes bad stuff happens. But there's no particular conservative approach moving forwards.

Q. Knowing how you performed at Barber and St. Pete, what is your mindset for the rest of the season? What do you think you can accomplish with this team?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Nothing really different than going in the season. I think we feel like we will have shots at doing some good things. There clearly are some things we still haven't figured out. We're hoping to make a significant step forwards at the GP. Obviously we probably didn't get the best chance at it having that electrical issue on the first practice, not running a single lap. Obviously there are guys that those things happen to them, too, with Alex, and they bounce back, still had a very solid weekend.

We still don't quite understand everything and we got some work to do. Yeah, no particular target. Just really try to go through the weekend doing the best we can and feeling that we're not leaving stuff on the table. That's the mojo really that we're in.

Q. Helio is supposed to debut in SRX this week, which is supposed to be a series for retired guys. He won the Indy 500 for the fourth time two weeks ago. Do you think he should be in INDYCAR full-time?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: I think Helio should do whatever Helio wants to do.

GRAHAM RAHAL: I was going to say that's a loaded question (laughter).

Q. He wants to be in INDYCAR full-time. He said that.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: If he wants to go back full-time in INDYCAR, he definitely should. I feel like if anything, obviously I feel like he's been kind of pushed to kind of end his INDYCAR career.

Still as we speak, obviously he was finishing second in the championship how many times, fighting for poles, fighting for wins, being a dominant force on speedways and superspeedways and qualifying, just putting some massive commitment laps, being like, Hey, I may be aging but I'm still there.

I really feel like that's the only thing that I I've regretted for him, that it didn't end on his terms. He was definitely not showing a slowing down phase. Yeah, I think if that's what he wants to do, that's what he should do.

GRAHAM RAHAL: Yeah, I mean, I don't know what else to say.

Q. It's not that easy.

GRAHAM RAHAL: The speed is there. The speed's always been there. I drove with him in sports car. Speed is not an area in which Helio lacks.

I think what it comes down to, and don't take this wrong, I think this is a positive sign, it comes down to opportunity. Right now there's just a lot of young guys that are very good. The opportunities, like it or not, are probably going to go to Colton, probably going to go to guys like Rinus. It just is what it is. That's what it comes down to.

Does he deserve to be full-time? Of course. As Seb said, he did it forever. He didn't really get to end it on his terms I didn't think either. It was basically, Here is what you're going to go do next year. He didn't get to have kind of a retirement tour. Maybe he doesn't want one.

At Sonoma, basically they said, Yeah, next year he's going sports car racing. You could see the look on his face. It wasn't necessarily what he wanted to do. I'm sure he'd like to be there full-time.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Yeah, at the same time ending your career in INDYCAR on a four thing in Indy...

GRAHAM RAHAL: I was about to say, just showing up and winning Indy every year sounds good to me, too. You can make a hell of a lot more money than running full-time.

Q. He said he's going to be the first five-time member.

GRAHAM RAHAL: He's got a shot. He can definitely do it. No doubt about that.

Q. Graham, you mentioned 'turn the page' quite a few times in this call. You're a big stick-and-ball sports guy. You have the 24-hour rule in those sports. Do you have a 24-hour rule in INDYCAR? How long does it take you to get past Indy?

GRAHAM RAHAL: For me, it's more than 24 hours, but I think really you've got to go and look through what went wrong, as we said before, which we've done. You've got to rally the troops. We're a very tight-knit group at our team. I think those of you who have been around see that. You have to rally the troops, make sure everybody's minds are focused forward, forget about the past.

You have to identify what went wrong because you have to know what to do better or different next time. We're there.

That's the biggest positive of the group, is just the ability to overcome a lot. We'll be just fine.

For me, I know I still get texts from a couple of my team guys that are, Man, I'm still pissed off. I don't have nearly as many trophies as Seb, that's for sure. I sent them a photo of I think it's my five Detroit trophies. I said, Guys, this is what we're focused on now. Forget about what happened there. Let's just focus on Detroit. We got Detroit this weekend. No reason to be upset. Let's go forward.

So I'm sure, I hope, that's where everybody's minds are at right now.

Q. Do you feel like you're more of that leadership role for the team as the driver? Is it an engineer? Do they look to you as kind of the guy that helped propel them from that?

GRAHAM RAHAL: I mean, I think everybody looks to their driver. I think everybody looks how does the driver lead, how does the driver carry themselves, what is that mentality like to keep everybody motivated.

I certainly try. I feel a lot of pride, I feel a lot of responsibility, to both the 15 and the 30 cars on every given weekend to keep the vibe going, to keep guys smiling, particularly this year, too. Takuma has done a good job keeping his troops happy, as well.

But the 30 car has had a tough year in general. You got to get those guys going forward because that affects the 15, too. This is one big team. Making sure everybody's mentality is in the right place is super critical. As I said, we're a tight-knit group. We all spend a lot of time together.

So, yeah, I feel as a driver a lot's on you to keep things moving down the right path, for sure.

Q. These next three tracks are your better tracks in the series. A hundred points out, where do you want to be? Leaving Mid-Ohio, do you feel like you need a win in this next stretch?

GRAHAM RAHAL: Yeah, we need more than that. A hundred points is a lot. I mean, I know we're eighth in points. We went into Indy with a great shot at it and came out of Indy very empty-handed. I know there's a lot of people who feel the same.

I know Alex is leading the championship, but still you got Dixie up there. To overcome Scott Dixon is a bigger challenge than anybody else. We need to make sure that we go blow for blow. Newgarden is going to be up there.

Simon is having a great year. There are guys that are very consistent racers that don't really have a lot of issues that are up there. You're going to have to overcome that.

It's a shame because we felt like St. Pete was going to be our slip. If we just did everything right, we'd kind of be right there. Unfortunately we didn't. That's bitten us here a little.

It's not over. We're going to keep our heads down. In essence you have a double points weekend this weekend. Maybe you guys know about Mid-Ohio, my guess is that's going to be a double. You're going to have a double points weekend there. There's a lot of points to make up in a hurry. We just need to put our heads down and do the best that we can.

Q. You're going to be in Detroit this weekend, the Motor City, with the rich automotive tradition. What does it mean to you to win in Detroit and how important do you think racing in Detroit is? How important do you think it is on the INDYCAR schedule to have Detroit on it?

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: I think I can answer that on the Chevy side for us. It's huge. There's Indy and then there's Detroit. That's the list of priorities. For sure everybody gets the message. One of the main reasons why we have the Detroit Grand Prix is thanks obviously to the support of Roger and his team, but also the support they get from Chevy in general.

Yeah, I mean, there's no denying that this is a clear goal on the corporate side and the manufacturing side. Yeah, we were lucky enough to put two on the board for Chevy back in '15 and '16. Yeah, love to do it again. For us it's kind of another race, but we know it means a lot more if we get it done.

GRAHAM RAHAL: Yeah, I think, as I said earlier, it's a staple of INDYCAR racing to be on Belle Isle. It's tremendous to be there with the automotive history. While Honda is not directly based there, of course they've got a presence. Ohio is a huge market for Honda, as everybody knows.

Clearly we'd like to go there and beat those guys from General Motors. Having said that, there's very few, maybe nobody, that I respect more in the automotive industry than Mark Reuss and his team at GM. Mark is just an amazing guy, a gear head to the T, which I love. The support that he has given the race, they've given the race to keep it going, to make it happen, to give back to the city, same with Roger, giving back, revitalizing that island and everything always that they've done, it's tremendous to be

there, to be able to compete there.

Yes, I hope we can go and have a very successful weekend. But Detroit is for many years, maybe still, at least in the United States, is the hub for all of the automotive world. We certainly need to be there. We certainly need to have a presence. We missed last year and we're excited to be back.

Q. Graham, the team expanded this year to three cars for the 500. The 45 car actually did quite well, I believe finishing sixth from a 23rd starting position. Any plans to run that car this year again for a three-car effort?

GRAHAM RAHAL: Yeah, you know, I'm not 100% sure. I know they've been working very, very hard at it. We certainly are going to try. I can tell you this: I know that Hy-Vee has been tremendous for us. As many of you have seen Hy-Vee came on our car last year, but has wanted to increase their involvement. I know there's been a lot of discussions there.

Yes, the 45 did a good job at Indy. Santino managed to bring it home and do good work for us. I know the strategy at the end kind of opened that opportunity. Still, he overcame a lot. That team overcame a lot of adversity and had a great run.

I know as you guys all look forward and you've all read and seen, I'm sure checked out, the shop that the owners have decided to build, it certainly is going to need more cars to pay for that, I'm sure. I would imagine they're going to try.

Q. If the car came back again this year, would it be Santino?

GRAHAM RAHAL: I really don't know. I really don't know. Again, the position that I'm in is I really have to focus hard on the 15. We've got our hands full to try to push the team forward and do the best that we can.

For me to worry about those things, I know my name is on the side of the building, but I have no involvement with that. I focus on my tasks, cultivating sponsors. If there's something I can do that helps find sponsors for a third car or second car or whatever it may be, I've always been there to do it and I'll continue to be there to do it. But I don't know who the driver will be.

THE MODERATOR: I feel like this was good therapy for you two. Am I right on that?

GRAHAM RAHAL: Seb and I?

THE MODERATOR: Yes. After May, this was good,

therapeutic.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS: Yeah, talking, getting it out of your system.

GRAHAM RAHAL: Happy to answer Detroit questions, not as many May questions.

THE MODERATOR: Guys, have a great week. We'll see you in Detroit.

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