

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Wednesday, November 10, 2021

### Kyle Kirkwood

### Larry Foyt

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Earlier today, great news, AJ Foyt Racing announcing that 23-year-old Kyle Kirkwood will be taking the reins of the famed No. 14 Chevrolet in 2022. Kirkwood of course coming up the Road to Indy ladder system, winning championships in all three levels, Cooper Tires, USF2000 championship a few years ago, Indy Pro 2K championship and then earlier this year the Indy Lights presented by Cooper Tires 2022 championship. We'd like to welcome Kyle. Congratulations, Kyle.

Also joining us, he's the president of AJ Foyt Racing, great to have Larry Foyt with us, as well.

Let's begin with you, Larry. Congratulations. How did all this come together for you and the team?

LARRY FOYT: Well, it came together rather quickly, really, Dave. I was surprised that Kyle didn't have a full-time deal. It was just one of those things everyone kind of assumed he was locked up where he was. When I found out that he was available, it was kind of a no-brainer for us. The kid deserves to be in a full-time INDYCAR ride, and obviously with Seb doing his sports car things there were some conflicts there, and I think we really wanted a full-time driver in the 14 car. It just really worked out perfectly for us.

THE MODERATOR: Kyle, congratulations to you, my friend. Nothing else you can prove or win in the developmental series. Obviously you tested at INDYCAR several times, as well. Here you are, the ink has dried. How good does it feel to have a ride for 2022?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Oh, man, I'm absolutely over the moon right now to be driving for AJ Foyt Racing in the No. 14, filling in some really big shoes with Bourdais leaving like Larry mentioned and doing some sports car stuff. I'm at a loss for words because I'm ecstatic. It's been my entire career building up to this moment, all the way from karting. I started when I was four years old, and I've always had dreams of making it to INDYCAR, racing the

Indy 500 and competing for a championship, and to do it with a legendary team like AJ Foyt Racing is absolutely incredible.

**Q. I know you know AJ's history, the history of the No. 14 car. To know your name will now be on that machine, I guess there's a certain responsibility associated with that, but how cool is that?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: It's incredible. Like I said, I couldn't ask for a better predicament. There's so much history with the team, and with all the drivers that have been through that car, and I'm able to put my name on that list in my first ever INDYCAR season, I mean, how much happier could I get? This is pretty much the best moment of my life.

**Q. Kyle, I'm curious, were you starting to get worried as seats were filling up and your option was not picked up, that there would be nothing for you?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: No, to be honest. We actually had a handful of INDYCAR teams interested, even some stuff over in Europe, so I definitely would have ended up something full-time. The way everything came to fruition, I think it was the absolute perfect, perfect moment with a fantastic team where I could go in and also learn in kind of a low-pressure environment but also build up. There's a lot of aspirations throughout the team and with new people coming in where I think we can create something pretty massive.

**Q. Michael said last week that had the F1 deal gone through, Colton would have gone and you would have taken that seat. Was that your understanding, and were you sort of in a hold waiting for that deal to either happen or not happen?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: That's exactly correct. I was under lock with the team. Michael had the option on me until November 1st. They were trying to push the deal together for a while now. They were working on it for a really long time. Unfortunately they got to pretty much 1-yard line with it and it didn't work out. Ultimately Michael made it aware to everyone that I would have ended up in the 26 car for the season, but no, this works out perfectly for me. I couldn't be happier with the outcome of everything.



Ultimately I'm driving in INDYCAR full time next season.

**Q. How much time did it take between your option not getting picked up and you putting together a seat and a ride?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: It was, like Larry mentioned a moment ago, really quick. We had that option period until November 1st. Andretti released me from that actually a little bit early, and me and Larry got in contact and we spoke a little bit and we thought this was a perfect match for both of us, and it happened rather quickly, I would say within a week, week and a half.

**Q. Larry, Kyle is considered to be a rising superstar; what opportunities does that give the organization to have him in your stuff?**

LARRY FOYT: Well, it's really exciting. I think it's exciting -- that's the biggest thing we've got to do is put the right engineering group around him, so that's what we're working on right now, and obviously when you have a guy that's had the results he's had and is young and enthusiastic and excited to get in the race car, people want to work with him.

It's definitely a help on the team side to help you get the best people.

**Q. Is the No. 14, is that the one that operates out of Texas?**

LARRY FOYT: It is currently built in Texas, but all the engineers work together, so basically we just assemble the car in Texas and then it just meets up at the track with all the engineers. But we have pretty strict guidelines on how the cars are built, and they're built the same way. It works out pretty well.

**Q. Kyle being in the 14 doesn't require anything special; he can go to Indy and things like that?**

LARRY FOYT: Oh, yeah, exactly, sure. Then a lot of times depending on the way the schedule is, the 14 car will work out of Indy. It just depends on how we're headed.

**Q. Are you set with two cars?**

LARRY FOYT: Set with two cars, yes.

**Q. Kyle, I know you mentioned that you weren't necessarily worried, that you had several teams that were interested. Was this the only full season opportunity for you, or did you have the chance to essentially choose this full-season ride over any other**

**options in the paddock?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I don't know if I can exactly discuss which ones that I had. But we had other options for full season. This was the best opportunity for us.

**Q. Why did you feel like this was the best opportunity for you?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I mean, I talked -- really I didn't think that initially that I talked to Larry, and the way that he spoke about everything and what he wanted to do with the team, the entire team is so hungry to get back up front, and I've worked in positions before where I've started with a lower level team, if I look back at Indy Pro 2000, and I was racing for RP Motorsports, I think they finished fifth or sixth in the championship, they missed a couple races, but I saw what the team wanted to do, and I believed in them, and we ended up winning nine of the 16 races with the championship.

I think this is a pretty similar position that we're all hungry, we all want to do really well, and yeah, I'm ecstatic to try and push everyone forward to try and build an amazing team.

**Q. I know this team with AJ Foyt Racing has been trying with several drivers to just kind of take that next step in what's become an increasingly competitive INDYCAR series over the last maybe five to even ten years. I know Larry has said that this is going to be a two-car operation, they haven't announced the second driver, but I think a lot of us assume that it's going to be Dalton Kellett, who along with you is a fairly green driver, at least when it comes to racing in INDYCAR. Do you have any concerns about not only joining a team that still kind of feels like it's in flux and trying to catch up with some other teams in the paddock while also maybe not necessarily having a long-term veteran that you can work with?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: No, to be honest. I think like I mentioned in the past, every season that I've come into a new series, I haven't really had a teammate to base things off of, except for this past year in Indy Lights where I had Devlin DeFrancesco, Daniel Frost and Robert Megennis who had done a year in Indy Lights previously. So I'm pretty used to not really having a mentor on a team or having somebody to base things off of. It's a pretty comfortable atmosphere for me.

**Q. After that option expired with Andretti, do they have still any sort of a hold on you contract-wise, when it would come to next off-season? Or are you completely free from them from a contract standpoint?**

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KYLE KIRKWOOD: No, I'm completely free.

**Q. Larry, I imagine since it wasn't included in the release that you guys don't have the sponsorship totally buttoned up from this. What can you tell us about who is or may be joining this program? Will Rocket be involved in any way as they were this year?**

LARRY FOYT: I think they will be. We're just buttoning all that up right now, so yeah, I think they definitely have a desire to continue, we're just working out the details.

**Q. You had mentioned about you guys being a two-car full-time program next year. I know we had seen some posts online about a lot of open jobs for AJ Foyt Racing that has led to some speculation that you guys might be trying to field a third car. This off-season was that ever in the cards? Was that something that had fallen through or is this you guys trying to bolster your program from a two-car standpoint?**

LARRY FOYT: A little bit of both really. We're obviously trying to grow as a race team, as a lot of teams are right now in INDYCAR. I would say right now we know we'll definitely be two cars. Possibly there could be a third. That's on the sponsorship side that we're discussing, but we wanted to be ready if that did happen, but it's a bit speculation at the moment. But definitely the two cars, and we just wanted to strengthen the group as much as we could. That's why we're doing a lot of hiring.

**Q. I know when I spoke to you near the end of the 2021 season that you guys still felt like everything was aligning to have Dalton return to the team next year; is that still the same thing about six weeks or so later?**

LARRY FOYT: Oh, I would think so. We're just ironing out some details on that, as well, but we enjoy working with Dalton and definitely want to have him on the team. I think it'll be good, even though he has only had about a season and a half of INDYCAR, he's got a little bit of experience to help Kyle out, but we have a lot of data from a lot of years and some engineers with a lot of experience, too.

I think being a rookie is not going to hurt Kyle at all. I think it's actually going to be really fun for him.

**Q. Is this just a one-year contract with Kyle to start?**

LARRY FOYT: Right now, yes. Yeah.

**Q. Kyle, maybe explain how the Road to Indy helped you get through this with the scholarships. Would you be here today without having those scholarships to**

**move you through each level?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Definitely not. Pretty much my entire career has been based off of scholarships and people bringing me along, so I'm very thankful. Really that starts all the way back from AJ Allmendinger back in 2012 where he sponsored me in a karting scholarship. From there I had a Skip Barber scholarship, a Team USA scholarship, and then F4 I had the scholarship to F3, and then from USF2000 I had the scholarship Indy Pro, scholarship into Indy Lights. Without any of that, I definitely wouldn't be in this position right now because as everyone knows, it costs a lot of money to do racing, and in those lower levels you can't really bring sponsorship along because there's not much return on investment for sponsors. Without the scholarships I would not be at this point.

**Q. Larry, obviously the INDYCAR owners don't talk about Indy Lights a lot, but quietly do you guys pay pretty close attention to what's going on in those series?**

LARRY FOYT: Oh, yeah, of course we do. It's great, especially when we're at the same track together. You really can't keep an eye -- like Kyle said, we met back in the day from the Cave Motorsports guys, they were racing back when I was racing F2000, so they've been around, and when they say, hey, there's a really special talent coming up, you take notice and you watch. It was fun to watch Kyle. Obviously he was on everybody's radar through the paddock, and yeah, for sure, in Indy Lights.

I think what's also been great is you've seen kids like Colton come up and Pato and just jump in an INDYCAR and do really well, so it shows that the system is working really the way it should and that those cars are getting these guys prepared to be fast in INDYCAR, which is perfect.

**Q. Larry, I've watched a lot of these driver announcements. You have, as well. Kyle's enthusiasm and excitement seems to be at a level I've not seen many guys present. Has he been like that throughout this process this first week of November when you were talking? You talked about kind of the enthusiasm that makes other people want to work with him; that's unique, isn't it?**

LARRY FOYT: No, for sure. It's great. That kind of attitude just helps everything.

I know he knows that we haven't finished in the championship where we want to, and this is really, I think, an opportunity for him to really just help our whole organization as well as us helping him. That's what the

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goal is is we just want to go out and prove the naysayers wrong and get him good experience but also let him show what he can do in the car.

I think from that side, it's going to be fun. Then obviously our hope is that as we grow as a team that maybe it's a place he wants to stay and have a home here for a long time. That's the goal. We'll just see how it goes.

But no, the excitement is awesome. He's got a great attitude, and like I mentioned in our release, I think his -- he really is -- haven't really raced with him yet, but he seems like he's a thoughtful racer and he thinks about racing and he thinks about how he's going to have success. That's a really cool thing, as well.

We're just really looking forward to getting him in the car and getting after it.

**Q. Would you expect that the engineer on his car is in your building yet, or do you think he's not yet on your staff?**

LARRY FOYT: Potentially. We have options in the building, but we're also looking outside of the building, just to see what's out there. That could go either way.

**Q. Larry, I wanted to ask, why have you signed Kyle to only a one-year deal, because obviously we've seen in the very recent past, excellent drivers get poached by the big teams and leaving you in the same situation this time next year?**

LARRY FOYT: Well, I just think when we discussed things, that was just where it needed to be. Obviously we'd love to lock him up, but we as a seem need to prove that, and then also we'll see how he gets on in the INDYCAR, but maybe we can at that point. But at the time to get the deal done, one year was where it was at, and that's what we did.

**Q. Heading into 2023, obviously brand new engines and that kind of thing. You're going to -- do you think by then Kyle will have enough experience to give you the feedback that you require to help develop down the road with that Next-Gen car?**

LARRY FOYT: Oh, I think so. I don't think you win the championships he's done without being a good setup driver. Like you said, sometimes he didn't really even have teammates.

No, I think just from the little bit of talking to him and talking about some of the testing he's already done, he's got a great feel for the car and the tire. No, I think his feedback

is going to be great. Yeah, no, for sure.

This year all of our baseline setups, we weren't terribly far off, especially on road and street courses. We were fighting for the top half qualifying. A tenth or two and that puts you right up in the top 10.

I think our baselines where we'll be starting will be okay for him, and then from there he can hopefully lead us in the right direction.

**Q. Kyle, I wanted to -- I spoke to Larry earlier this week and he was saying he wanted to focus very much on getting you up to speed on ovals. Is that something that you have tried yet in a simulator, an INDYCAR on an oval?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I have not. I have not driven a simulate or on an oval. To be honest, if I go back in my simulator experience, I don't think it gives you the exact necessary tools to be able to learn something on a -- learn something that's going to relate to a real track, so I think ideally we just need to go testing on an oval somewhere, wherever it might be, and actually get me up to grips, because obviously in the Road to Indy we haven't done that much oval, especially speedway stuff. I've never been on a superspeedway. So there's a lot of dynamics that I need to learn, and that's probably going to be one of the tougher things that I'll have to come to grips with next year.

**Q. Have Chevy picked your brain about the Honda engine yet?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: They have not, no. I have not spoken to anyone at Chevrolet.

**Q. Kyle, you mentioned AJ Allmendinger. I'm curious how that relationship came about, and can you trace this back to AJ as a reason you're sitting here today?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Yeah, so the relationship with AJ is he was actually karting with a team called Kart Sport North America, which they actually own GoPro Motorplex now in Charlotte, North Carolina, or Mooresville, North Carolina, and we got along pretty well. At the time I was racing -- what was I, 13 years old racing Minimax, I believe, and we did a national race together.

He had the scholarship program come out, and I had a fantastic season and he decided to pick me. That's how the relationship came about, and yeah, I don't think -- I probably wouldn't have been able to compete in a lot of the races that I raced in in 2012 and 2013, I believe, if it wasn't for him.

It definitely -- he definitely had a role in where I'm at at this moment.

**Q. Larry, I actually just got back from Phoenix this weekend, and Cliff Daniels, Kyle Larson's crew chief, was talking about how he felt like he was the weakest link and had to kind of rise to match Kyle. Similarly you have another Kyle in your stable now; do you feel extra pressure that you kind of have like that can't-miss talent to perform with you now next year to kind of sway him to stay longer?**

LARRY FOYT: I don't think it's pressure, I think it's more excitement. Like I said, I think people want to work with him. They're excited about his record. But also for us, yeah, we definitely -- we are working to elevate the team, and when you've got someone excited to be with you and do it, it just definitely helps.

You know, that's a lot on me and Scott Harner is we've got to put the best people around him we can and let him do his thing, so that's the plan.

**Q. I know you guys unfortunately haven't won in a little while, but do you feel with all the moving pieces you guys have done over the last few years, just getting closer and closer to someone like Kyle, is this the closest you guys feel to ending that drought?**

LARRY FOYT: Yeah, I think what we've seen is if you get the right driver-engineer combination together in INDYCAR you can be successful even if you are a smaller team and don't have quite the resources. I mean, obviously right now in INDYCAR being a mostly spec-type series, the damper department is where you've got to put a lot of resources, and we got a little bit behind on that, but we've been working hard to really update and make that department a priority, and we're putting a lot of our resources into that for next year. We have some exciting things coming down the road. I think it's going to pay dividends, and we're excited to see what that does on track.

Like I said earlier, a couple tenths in this series is huge. I think if you can find a little bit of that elusive grip that the drivers always want, give them that feeling they're looking for, you can be right up front in INDYCAR.

**Q. Kyle, what are your expectations for next year. You're probably going to be fighting for 12th instead of taking off into the distance. What does it require for you in terms of a mental adjustment?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: To be honest, I get more satisfaction from progressing than I do just from winning. We go out

front, and like quite honestly, if I have a race where -- like for instance, Laguna this past year. I started from the pole and just led the entire race, but there's no progression throughout the weekend because we just had a car that was good and we just kept -- which those ones aren't the ones that are super enjoyable for me. The ones like Portland where we're qualifying fourth or fifth and being able to go right to the front again based off of what I'm able to do and what we're able to do with the car and progress through the weekend I think pays way more satisfaction to me than anything else.

If we can take a car that, hey, maybe we don't qualify that well but we put together a really good race car and we're able to make up a bunch of positions, that's way more satisfactory to me than just being out front and sailing off into the distance. Yeah, so at the end of the day I think progression creates a lot more satisfaction for me.

**Q. Back to your fellow rookies for next year, as I counted we have at least five, among which two are former F2 drivers. What are your expectations of the rookie battle next year?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Well, as we've seen in the past few years, there's been kind of a youth movement. A lot of the guys have moved up from Indy Lights, kind of get into the car and they're instantly quick. We saw with Rinus, Oliver, Pato, Colton, there's numerous drivers that get out of Indy Lights and do really well. A lot of it is traffic experience.

But when I got out of the Indy Lights car and got into the INDYCAR, I was like, man, this isn't that big of a deal. Within the first three laps I was in the INDYCAR at Sebring I was within a second of what Rossi did there previously in the test when they tested back in I think June or July.

I mean, it's not a massive jump, and I think I'll come up to pace pretty quickly. I've done that in multiple cars, so I think that's a strong suit of mine, which is nice because coming into INDYCAR against a lot of people that have tons of experience at the tracks, the car, racing it because now I'm actually going to have to do some fuel saving and some tire strategy or strategy in general.

There's a lot of new things, but I think I'm ready for it.

**Q. Larry, is this a case that you simply can't believe your luck, that you managed to capture this guy?**

LARRY FOYT: Well, we're very excited about it. Yeah, I mean, it was surprising that, like I said, he was available, so it definitely became something we wanted to get done. I'm just glad we got it done and excited to go racing with him.

As you can see, his excitement is wearing off through the whole team, so no, we're ready to go.

**Q. Kyle, I was talking to one of your buddies DeFrancesco about what we call the lightbulb moment, the thing where you got into the INDYCAR, you tried something that normally works in a Lights car and all of a sudden are INDYCAR, you went, whoa, that's how that works. Was there a lightbulb moment for you in your first tour in an INDYCAR that you could compare to the Lights machine?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Well, the biggest thing, like Larry touched on was the a.m. peer development. When I was driving the 26 car at Sebring I did something where in an INDYCAR that wouldn't be allowed in a Lights car where I was using currents in different places and the points where I was braking and what the tire allowed, it just -- it all clicked pretty quickly. I wouldn't be like there was a massive lightbulb moment, but there was one point where I used a curb, and usually in a Lights car that would cause you to just have a massive spin or a moment or lose a lot of time, but it was actually fine.

The INDYCAR just does a lot of things a lot nicer. You're able to exploit those differences from the Lights car to the INDYCAR.

**Q. Larry, being a Canadian based radio show, following Mr. Kellett pretty stringently and closely. Is there any kind of a timeline to confirm Dalton as your second driver for 2022?**

LARRY FOYT: I imagine we'll get it done here pretty soon. We're just ironing out some details. I think the intention from both sides is there. I think we'll get it done, and excited to see how he continues to grow with his driving. He definitely showed some great pace on some of the ovals and did a great job at some of the street courses, as well.

He's still got some to learn, but he's doing a great job, and I think we'll get the deal done.

**Q. Kyle, what was your biggest takeaway from the Indianapolis Motor Speedway test?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: So the biggest takeaway I had from it is kind of how much different you can set up the car and still go fast. We did two setup changes with the car, which I kind of got embedded in my mind, where one was super oversteery and one was super understeery and they both came out kind of the exact same way. That was a big takeaway that I took from it.

Fortunately Andretti was very open to me on how they were doing setup and what they wanted to try to use me as more of a development driver than just evaluating me, and that was for all the tests with Sebring, Barber and Indianapolis.

**Q. What do you feel you learned most in Indy Lights that's going to help you moving forward in this next step of your career?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Most of it is track experience. I think like I mentioned previously, the Indy Lights car and the INDYCAR are quite similar, a lot of brake points and just overall lines on track are very similar. Being able to take that knowledge from Lights and bring it into INDYCAR I think eliminates some of a learning curve where we don't have a ton of time on track, where I can kind of just take that and just instantly start working on development with the car and trying to progress and get the balance right, where I know with some people maybe if you're coming out of F2 or another series or whatever it might be, you have to learn the car and the track at the same time, where I think I've got a handle on things now after my three INDYCAR tests and all the track experience that I've had previously this year in Indy Lights.

**Q. What's your favorite moment from your championship campaign in Indy Lights?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: My favorite moment which I mentioned earlier was our Portland event. We started fourth, and I was able to make a pass early on and have a double pass on both Linus Lundqvist and David Malukas for the lead where they were definitely superior to us all weekend long, but we were able to pull off a win. I think if it wasn't for that, we might have not won the championship.

**Q. Larry, for you, we've talked about Dalton Kellett a bit here. What has impressed you the most about him so far in his brief INDYCAR career?**

LARRY FOYT: Well, I think he's just a very calculated driver. He's actually an engineer. He's a schooled engineer. He does think about it a lot and is really good at looking at data and trying to figure out how to go faster. He's been improving over the weekends, and that's all we asked of him to do as he showed up and where he was at and just trying to keep improving.

That's what we've seen. He's still got a little bit to go, but he's on the right track, so I think that'll be good for him.

**Q. On that scope of improvement, what do you feel is the biggest thing he can work on for 22 and beyond?**



LARRY FOYT: Well, I think with anything in INDYCAR qualifying is so important, so getting that ultimate lap at the right time, understanding when to push on the tire when the tire is there and ready, and then helping the engineers get the car to that point where you can do the ultimate lap. That's the biggest thing because some of these courses it is so tough to pass, and when everybody is within a few tenths of a second, it's really hard to pass.

So qualifying is important and getting that ultimate lap is something that he's still working on, and Kyle has a rookie will have to work on that, as well.

If you qualify tenth in INDYCAR you've beat a lot of good cars and good drivers. Everyone trying to get that ultimate lap, that's a big challenge on INDYCAR weekends.

**Q. I just have one question for Larry. I wanted to follow up on something. I know INDYCAR set up a portal for teams to look through resumes of folks who might be interested in getting into INDYCAR, whether it be on the crew or engineering side, just essentially a way for all teams to have the same opportunity to look at guys because I know there have been lots of teams that have been struggling to fill some spots. Maybe you guys were included in that. What is your guys' reaction to trying to use that site, if you guys have, and do you feel like it's the type of tool that teams could really use to potentially fix this problem moving forward?**

LARRY FOYT: Actually it's been great, very surprising. Been a lot of quality resumes that we're looking at currently that have come from that site. Good on INDYCAR to do that. It's been very helpful.

I was actually surprised at the number of applications we got when we put out the info that we were hiring. It's been super helpful. I've probably got 150 resumes on my desk right now that I'm still going through.

A lot of interest of people wanting to come INDYCAR racing because as you've seen through our paddock, I think we need a little more youth because some of the mechanics that have been around a really long time, our schedule is not easy, and when you start to have families and things and you're on the road a lot, it gets tough.

Having some younger guys that are willing to travel and be on the road is a part of motor racing all over the world. Been really helpful, and good on INDYCAR for doing that.

**Q. Had you noticed over maybe the last year or so that it had been tougher to either retain folks or try to hire**

**new prospective employees as this series' full-time entry list has continued to grow?**

LARRY FOYT: I mean, sure, a lot of us are fighting for the same people because good young people are great, but you have to have good experienced people, as well, to teach those young people. Setting that up, and with us not having an Indy Lights team to have that kind of feeder system, not only for drivers but for mechanics, it's just we have to probably work a little harder to find guys.

Yeah, I've definitely seen a shift. We have quite a few young engineers that we get applications for all the time, but the mechanics are few and far between. So when you can find really good mechanically sound young guys that want to work on race cars, you've got to try to get them and get them trained the way you want them to work.

But yeah, I've been very happy with the amount of applications we've received.

**Q. That's not how you got Kyle, from the portal?**

LARRY FOYT: No, not that way (laughing).

**Q. Kyle, you may have been asked this already. How did the whole signing with Foyt come about, because there had been a lot of stories saying that you were probably maybe going to Andretti. Can you kind of bring me up to speed on how you wound up with AJ's team?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Yeah, so Larry actually mentioned that early on in this, but it came together pretty last minute. When the Andretti thing fell through, we knew we had to -- actually Andretti allowed us to go venture out and see our options, and we were actually pretty flattered on how many options we had.

The way it came about with Larry is we had a conversation. I really liked what he was talking about and how he wanted to progress with the team, and I thought it was a perfect scenario where I can grow as a driver, first year coming into INDYCAR, and potentially we can all grow as a team together, which I think Larry mentioned earlier, when you have kind of this atmosphere where everyone is excited, there's a lot of progression, big things happen.

There's only -- we're not racing Formula 1 here where there's a big gap between all the teams. It's a pretty small gap between all the INDYCAR teams. Just a little bit of progression and a little bit of energy can put us right back up front.

**Q. Just from a young man's perspective, racing for a**

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**legend like AJ Foyt, and I'm sure you've probably been asked this already, too, what does that mean to you?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: It's exciting. I remember watching Foyt Racing when I was a kid, six, seven years old, in INDYCAR, and man, it's such a historic and legendary team. They've obviously done really well in their past, maybe not in the past couple years, but we want to bring it back up to speed and contend for wins because we're all hungry, we're all racing drivers at the end of the day. Larry was, as well. AJ was, too.

We're racers through and through, so we're going to do everything in our power to go back to the top.

**Q. Larry, this is such a game changer in my opinion for AJ Foyt Racing and everything going forward with Kyle. How can you build the organization with Kyle going forward, and what does this mean for the organization, because like Kyle said, there have been a few lean years recently, but this is a thing that could totally turn things around with signing Kyle, and of course Dalton, as well, too.**

LARRY FOYT: Yeah, no, you're exactly right. Just like Kyle touched on, that's the thing is we all want to be pulling in the same direction. We've all got the same goals.

Like we talked about earlier, the hope for us is that things go so well that we all want to continue together and keep building this thing, so we just have to see how that goes. But that's the thing; the first part is done, meaning we feel like we've got a great driver, and we're going to put the best around him that we can and go see what we can do and then just continue to build our resources, build our team, and when you've got a guy, like we said, like Kyle that not only has shown how capable he is, he's got a great attitude, people want to work with that. I think it's going to help us attract the best people we can.

**Q. Kyle, what is the biggest difference besides speed that you've noticed between the Indy Lights car and the INDYCAR?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: The biggest difference is the tire, going from the Cooper tire to the Firestone tire. They're much different in the ways that they create grip. The Cooper tire doesn't allow you to combine a lot of brake pressure and lateral grip, whereas the Firestone really does. That and how fast the Firestone comes in. So you create a lot more temperature with the Firestone.

I think a lot of that has to do with the carbon brakes, too, but there was days where we were running Indy Lights and it would take up to 10 laps just to build enough heat to try

and push, and it was about 45 degrees at Indianapolis when we were testing, what was that, last week on Monday, and I went out and within a half lap the tires were already in. That was definitely something new to learn.

But it's actually really nice being able to just go out and push right away. It's actually really enjoyable.

**Q. Larry, have you looked to Dalton to give Kyle any advice since Dalton has been into this INDYCAR series for a couple years now?**

LARRY FOYT: Yeah, I think for sure, Dalton's experience will definitely be helpful. There are just things, learning about how the INDYCAR weekend goes, how to use your tires, things like that, that Dalton has already been learning, and he's had obviously a great teammate in Sebastien Bourdais who helped Dalton, give him a lot of good information.

As a team we definitely have a lot of good information that can speed up Kyle's learning process, but I think as we've seen, these guys come out of Indy Lights and they get in an INDYCAR and they go fast. I think that's what we'll see out of Kyle, as well.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, Larry, and congratulations to the Indy Lights presented by Cooper Tires champion, the trophy is there -- well, a lot of trophies, just ready to add some more to that trophy case, Kyle Kirkwood, congratulations, driver of the No. 14 Chevrolet in 2022 for AJ Foyt Racing. Thanks, everyone. Have a great rest of the week. We'll see you again soon. Thank you.

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