

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Monday, January 17, 2022

### Devlin DeFrancesco

#### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Have you been given any advance warnings about what today is like, any advice?

DEVLIN DeFRANCESCO: No, I'm just happy to be here.

THE MODERATOR: Talk about kind of your indoctrination to the INDYCAR side of this team, what your expectations are, just kind of where you stand coming into 2022.

DEVLIN DeFRANCESCO: You know, I have a great team of people around me, great people behind me, as well, and great teammates to lean on. I'm hugely looking forward to the challenge. Not long until we get started, and the tests were very, very encouraging. I'm hugely looking forward to getting started in just over a month's time.

**Q. Where is your internal advice coming from? Who are you leaning on for most of your information at this point?**

DEVLIN DeFRANCESCO: You know, Andretti is such a big team, I have great engineers behind me, a great strategist in Rob Edwards with a ton of experience, so great team of people on the 29 car. As well great teammates, Colton I grew up with and know him very, very well, and Romain, as well, gotten to know him quite well recently.

You know, they've been very helpful in getting me up to speed.

**Q. Did you expect your career to develop so quickly and become part of the top INDYCAR team within a few years?**

DEVLIN DeFRANCESCO: During the 2019 season, I went to the INDYCAR 500 and met up with Sean Jones and my current boss George Steinbrenner. We got into discussions on how it would look and what the plan was and things like that, and two years later, three years later, we've made things happen.

At that point it was a dream, but now it's a reality, and I'm

super excited to get going.

**Q. Some Canadians use graphics in memory of Greg Moore. Good examples are James Hinchcliffe, and in the past Lance Stroll. Will you also use those?**

DEVLIN DeFRANCESCO: Yes.

**Q. The day you were announced, Mike Tyson tweeted about you and congratulations and that he was looking forward to INDYCAR, a little bit of a strange crossover for the series. What's your relationship with him, and do you think that he'll get him out to a race?**

DEVLIN DeFRANCESCO: First, he's a great guy. Had dinner with him a couple months ago. So the relationship with him is through one of my sponsors, Wesana. They specialize in psychedelics. He's a part of that group. It was really cool to meet him recently.

Yeah, definitely looking forward to bringing him to a race at some point in the near future.

**Q. What would you considering a successful campaign for you in your first year in the NTT INDYCAR Series?**

DEVLIN DeFRANCESCO: Well, the team have set me targets. I intend to achieve those. You know, there are some great rookies this year, so Rookie of the Year would be quite a nice target, and to be fighting with my teammates from the middle, towards the middle, end of the season is definitely on the to-do list.

**Q. How important is it for you to have all this wealth of experience with all your teammates in Andretti Autosport?**

DEVLIN DeFRANCESCO: You know, I think it's going to help massively in the learning process. They all have so much experience and come from different backgrounds, as well. It's just a way for me to learn so much faster, more avenues to take.

**Q. We've got quite a strong rookie class this year. Can you share some considerations from your side about your different strengths and where you expect**



## **yourself to end up in that battle?**

DEVLIN DeFRANCESCO: For sure. I think we definitely have the potential to be top rookie towards the end of the season. My strengths have definitely always been in the high speed, so ovals is something I take to quite well. I guess you could say I'm quite brave.

I think I'll definitely be quite strong at those events, and the fast road courses, as well. And even street courses. Street courses is something I enjoy, as well. But definitely my commitment in the high speed has always been one of my strengths.

## **Q. What do you think is going to be the toughest challenge for you, not only just the first couple races but as the season progresses?**

DEVLIN DeFRANCESCO: You know, there's still a lot of unknowns, not having tried the Firestone red compound yet. Don't get to try that until St. Pete. I think we're only going to get maybe one or two sessions before qualifying. Only getting to have one bite at the cherry before qualifying, that's going to be tricky, but I have such a great team of people behind me, I'm just excited to get going, and I have everything around me that I need.

## **Q. Are you a driver that is happy with a top-10 finish, or are you one of those drivers who is upset if you don't get a podium or a win?**

DEVLIN DeFRANCESCO: You know, I'm always push to win and be at the front. I'd always be pushing to be fighting at the front and for victories.

## **Q. Except for you, who is your favorite INDYCAR driver so far?**

DEVLIN DeFRANCESCO: You know, a lot of these guys I grew up with and have known, have a good relationship and known since I was quite young. I'd say Colton and Pato are people that I gel with quite well because we had a relationship from when we were quite young.

## **Q. Following up about Mike Tyson in a bit of a roundabout way, I know INDYCAR is kind of on this upswing in terms of media attention. I know we've seen some big name shout-outs from you including Mike and Fernando Alonso from time to time. I know you're a new driver to this series, but with some of the connections you have, do you have any sort of perspective on what the series can do to try and start to deliver Mike this sport to some bigger name celebrities or just continue to build on the 14 races that they have on network TV and things like that as**

## **we move forward?**

DEVLIN DeFRANCESCO: You know, I think the captain Roger is doing a great job. I think INDYCAR is moving in the right direction. I think Mark Miles is doing an amazing job, as well.

The time of race starts I think is critical, and that's been adjusted for this year, so it's going to get definitely more eyeballs watching us week in and week out. I think things are moving in the right direction, and to be able to bring like Mike and Fernando to a couple races is just going to bring more eyeballs to INDYCAR racing. I think it's all going to be positive, and I think they're doing the right things.

## **Q. Where did you have dinner with Mike?**

DEVLIN DeFRANCESCO: I can't remember the restaurant. We were in Los Angeles. I think it was a steak place with him and the guys from Wesana and Filo. That was the week -- I think it was the week before Laguna.

## **Q. Any interesting tidbits about him or did he give you any insight or ideas about being a competitor?**

DEVLIN DeFRANCESCO: Boxing is actually quite similar to motorsport in a couple ways. I actually train at a boxing gym call Boxer in Miami for about a year now. The training I'd say that when you're in that mindset and in a rhythm, I'd say there is some overlap. Having discussions with him about his youth and upbringing and his competitive spirit, I definitely see crossover. So yeah, he definitely gave me some advice just in general.

## **Q. You've got quite the origin story being born I don't know how many weeks premature and what you weighed, but maybe tell people a little bit about that and how that's shaped who you've become as a person and a driver.**

DEVLIN DeFRANCESCO: Well, for the people who don't know, I was born 15 weeks early. I was less than a pound when I was born. The priest actually came to the hospital and gave me the last rights and said, you're not going to make it. Somehow I'm still here.

I do a lot of work with the Sunnybrook Foundation and things like that for mothers that are in that situation, as well, and families that are going through that situation because it's always nice to give back.

I'm definitely -- I've come a long way, but will never forget where I came from and will always be grateful.

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