

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Monday, January 17, 2022

### Tatiana Calderon

#### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Tatiana, this was announced this morning, your ride with AJ Foyt Racing and ROKiT as the sponsorship. I know this has been in discussion. Give us some background on how long the process has been.

TATIANA CALDERON: Yeah, it's been an amazing time that I have spent with ROKiT for the last two years in Super Formula in Japan, but obviously when the chance came to test an INDYCAR last July and I felt really great with the team in the car, of course. We've been in discussions really since then, but good things take time, and we finally managed to put everything together last week.

I'm very excited, very thankful to both ROKiT and AJ Foyt for this amazing opportunity and to really start this thing quite soon and get acclimatized with the car and the team around me.

**Q. You've had the one test; what has been your other INDYCAR experience in terms of attending races? How many have you been to?**

TATIANA CALDERON: Well, I started my career here in U.S. in Star Mazda 10 years ago. It's been a while. So I know some of the tracks that I tried to remember everything. Of course a lot of things have changed. But I've always been kind of following INDYCAR because also I come from Colombia, Juan Pablo Montoya has been racing here in America for many years. He's been kind of my idol, as well.

But in the garage it was only Mid-Ohio that I had the chance to really see an INDYCAR team from the inside. Yeah, a lot of things to learn for me this year.

**Q. The Japan transition has been very good for -- we saw last year with Alex Palou. Do you expect to be prepared for this endeavor?**

TATIANA CALDERON: Yeah, I think Super Formula is a great preparation for any single-seater series. I think it's a super quick car, very tricky. Also I had to learn how to communicate differently. The culture was very different, as

well. But I think that has prepared me more for this opportunity.

Of course I don't expect anything to be very easy, particularly at the beginning, because I've only done one test day in INDYCAR. I think we'll have probably three days before the first race.

A lot of things to take in, but I think it was a great preparation with Super Formula and sports cars that I have been racing the last couple of years, as well, to help with fuel save, with tire save and pit stops and all that. I think it's been quite good for my career.

**Q. Have you been to the team shop down in Texas yet?**

TATIANA CALDERON: Not in Texas, but their one here. We spent last week doing some seat fit and getting back into rhythm with everybody. Yeah, I'm excited to actually drive for the first time here in 2022.

**Q. You have such an extensive resume behind you; what is it about INDYCAR that caught your attention, and also, do you believe that INDYCAR does a good job with female representation in motorsports?**

TATIANA CALDERON: I think INDYCAR has always been in my radar. I think I've always been very competitive, and I want to be where the best drivers are at, and I think INDYCAR is pretty high up there on the single-seater ladder. I've always enjoyed single-seaters quite a lot, as well.

It's an honor to be racing in INDYCAR after I started my career 10 years ago, and I was just watching those races. Yeah, huge privilege in that sense, and I think here in America, in INDYCAR, there has been many female drivers coming through, so I think there is more opportunity at the moment for us here.

I will obviously make the most out of this opportunity, and I'm really hoping that I can do well and inspire even more girls to join in in karting, in single-seaters, and that they know this is also a great opportunity to showcase that.

Yeah, can't wait to get started and see where we end up in



the first race, but obviously build up to it step by step, and I think as long as we improve every time we're on track, then I'll be happy.

**Q. Have you had a chance to meet AJ yet?**

TATIANA CALDERON: Sadly, no. We were supposed to meet very soon, but with all this COVID situation, with the weather, it's been -- it has not been easy. He had a birthday yesterday, as well.

Yeah, hopefully very soon.

**Q. Do you have any idea what to expect?**

TATIANA CALDERON: No, I think obviously I've read a lot of what he's done, about the Indy 500, as well, everything that has won. I think it will be a privilege to be able to share some experiences with him, to look at him in the eyes. I think that's one of the biggest things I would say sometimes when you have that connection, that feeling with somebody. Hopefully it will be very soon.

**Q. Did you give any consideration to the ovals?**

TATIANA CALDERON: Yeah, definitely. Obviously I've only tested the car one day back in July, so we thought to take things easy to start off with, the road courses, build up to hopefully test in an oval, see how I feel, see how my confidence with the car comes.

But of course who wouldn't love to do Indy 500 one day. Yeah, we're just taking it step by step.

**Q. Are you still going to be a reserve driver, or has that come to an end?**

TATIANA CALDERON: I'm not sure at the moment, but my full focus is obviously here in INDYCAR. I want to do the best job I can, and I think in order to do that, I need to be focused on one thing. We'll figure out the next bit in the future, but I'm just super excited with this opportunity and to be present and focused on one thing.

**Q. We've had a lot of successful drivers from Formula 2 and Super Formula recently coming to INDYCAR. You've done both. What do you think your experiences, how can they help you getting into grips with INDYCAR this year?**

TATIANA CALDERON: Well, I think they will be very useful, all those experiences, particularly because there's not much time that we have in the car in preseason, so only a couple of days of testing, so I'm kind of used to that. But yeah, all the tracks sort of will be quite new, especially

with an INDYCAR. It's quite a heavy, big car, just with the tires to get a feel for the degradation, as well, here.

Because I've been changing continents and cars and tire manufacturers, I think that's definitely going to help me to speed up the process, but I still want to take step by step this steep learning curve.

Yeah, I don't expect it to be any easier, but I definitely feel more ready than I was a couple of years back if I had the opportunity. Yeah, looking forward to making the most out of it and to learn as quick as possible.

**Q. As I recall, now that I think more about it, weren't you involved with Derek Daly and his driving academy years ago, so therefore you must have quite a relationship with the daily family and Conor even?**

TATIANA CALDERON: Yeah, we were teammates with Conor when we were driving with Juncos Racing in Star Mazda, and I worked with Derek, as well, the first couple of years that I was here in single seaters.

Yeah, I've always felt really, really confident here. Everybody has been very open to help, as well, and yeah, I have a lot of relationship with many of the drivers that are here in INDYCAR. Yeah, it will be fun to see them back on track again after so many years.

**Q. Who else in this paddock have you raced with?**

TATIANA CALDERON: Well, I raced against Alex, a little bit against Pato in Formula 2 where he did only one race. I've raced with Montoya, as well, in the World Endurance Championship. Yeah, I need to think, but there are many others for sure. Lundgaard, Callum Ilott, as well.

**Q. Quite a few.**

TATIANA CALDERON: Yeah, I'm pretty sure I have more, but -- Felix Rosenqvist, as well, in Formula 3. Yeah, a lot of familiar faces.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports