

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Christian Lundgaard

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome to your first content day. Anything interesting happen to you along the way so far?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Hopefully I'll get some good pictures that we can use.

Q. You've been photographed a lot.

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Oh, yeah.

Q. You and I talked actually the other day about your Sebring test. You're the first person that's come in here today that's gotten to test. Everyone else so far still only has one test day. Is that beneficial? We don't race at Sebring, but did you feel like that was a beneficial test?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Definitely. I think the most track time you can get in the car is beneficial. For me also as the first day as an official driver, it was good to spend the time with the team and learn a bumpy track. I know that it's not the worst, but it replicates as much as we can the real tracks, and I think for me just to get a feel of how it actually feels in the car, how the car handles on bumps was very beneficial for me, so I was very satisfied and happy with the test.

Q. What kind of expectations do you have for this year? It's a different lineup at Rahal Letterman Lanigan with three cars, different dynamics with you and Jack coming to the team. How do you think this works?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: To be honest in terms of expectations, it's a little tricky one because everyone would say, okay, he's new. He needs to learn. But at the same time I have the same feeling, but I still want to do well. But I don't want to put too much pressure on myself.

Whatever pressure the team or sponsors or everyone behind the scenes put on me, I don't really mind because pressure is a good thing. It means that someone knows you can do it, so they're expecting you to.

But I'm here to learn. I'm here to use the first -- the beginning of the season to prove myself and to learn, but I don't want to spend the whole season trying to learn and then see where I'm at after that.

Obviously I compete to win, and that's my goal.

Q. You had a dynamite first event last year at Indianapolis on the road course. I would assume that gives you a huge head start for 2022.

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Just in terms of track time I think that helped for the future. I'm happy that Indy road course was the track that I drove at. I know I tested at Barber, but the track is very European, and I'm used to the European tracks. For me to start there was a good benchmark, but once we get to Nashville, Detroit, those kind of circuits, I wouldn't say I'm going to struggle more, but I'll probably need more time compared to the others because they've been there.

But at the same time I'm here to win, so I'll do everything in my power to do so.

Q. And St. Pete obviously very tricky, as well. That will be another one that will take some quick adaptation.

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Oh, yeah, I think all tracks it difficult to get to, but once we get there and we do some laps, we'll see where we're at. It didn't take me long to be fast enough at Sebring, which is a track I've never been to. It took about five laps. If we can do the same in St. Pete, we should be doing pretty well.

Q. If I remember correctly from your one race at Indianapolis, one of the things you struggled with during the race was getting a hold of the tires and making sure they're in the right performance window. Is that something you've been focusing on during the off-season?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Yes and no, because I haven't really done a long run in the car since because my first day in the car was five days ago. I think we've focused more on getting comfortable in the car and so on, but it's



definitely something we'll have to work on just after the first race. After the race last year, I knew already more than I did before. I think if I would have redone the race on Monday or technically on the Sunday, it would have been a completely different result.

I'm happy about that, having the knowledge, but it's about putting it on the track, and that's the next step.

Q. There's also quite a large group of rookies coming in this year, and I think there's five, maybe six now with the announcement this morning. Is the Rookie of the Year award a particular goal for you, or are you more just focused on week to week?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: The rookie championship is one thing, but there's also a main championship to win. I'm not going to say that I'm going to, but I'm going to try and hard as I can to. I race to win. I don't race to finish second or third. But we've got a good lineup in the team, and I'm sure if we can learn from each other -- Graham is a strong racer, and if I can extract as much from him as possible, I think we have a very strong lineup.

Q. You have some experience on street courses. What is your thought on street courses? Do you think that's something that should be a strong point for you? Is that something you're looking forward to?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I sure am looking forward. If I'm wrong, I would say there's probably stronger drivers, but at the same time I want to maximize my potential on those kind of tracks and obviously improve.

I think we've seen strong drivers in INDYCAR on the street circuits because they've done them for I don't know how many years, and it's circuits they have driven on before where I'll come in new, but my Macau campaign in 2019 I came in as a rookie and finished fourth.

So the potential is there, I just need to put it together and learn as much as possible.

Q. Question on this rookie class. You said you're focused on winning overall, but how do you size up that rookie competition? Some heavyweights from F2, from Indy Lights. How do you look at those guys?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Obviously the Indy Lights drivers coming up to INDYCAR knows some of the tracks which I don't, but it's up to the team to help me prepare for every weekend as best as possible.

But I think we've got the strong drivers, and we've got the rookies that will come in and have to learn. I think the new

rookies that come in and have the advantage and have prepared themselves the best will also have the advantage from the beginning of the season.

To be honest, it's difficult to answer now. I think when we all get to test together, I'll have a better view on who is where and who can do what.

Q. Of those street tracks which is really a part of American racing, is there one of them that you look forward to in particular?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Not a specific one, but I think all 17 races of the championship I'm looking forward to. My sim arrived the other day, and I've basically been nonstop practicing on all of them, and I can't really pick out which one I want to do the most. I can do 20 laps on one and then go to the next one. I would say all of them is probably my favorite at the moment.

Q. Like Romain Grosjean, did you move to the U.S., as well, full time, and what's been the biggest adjustment for you coming to the United States?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Yes, I have moved here. I moved to Indianapolis to stay near the team, to prepare the best possible for the season with the team. I know some of my teammates -- Jack is quite close to me, as well. It's good to spend time with the team and my teammates, as well, so we can spend some time in our free time together.

But it is a full-time project. We're not here to do it half. We're here to deliver 100 percent and even 110 percent. So yes, I have moved here.

Q. I know you were a part of the Alpine Academy in previous years, and I'm wondering in what ways did being part of that program prepare you for the opportunity that you have this season.

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: Yes, Alpine, as in the academy program, they develop us pretty much to be as good as the F1 drivers. We are being educated on all sorts of stuff, behind the scenes how to analyze data, how to understand the data. Basically everything you can imagine. Compared to the other drivers that hasn't had that experience, we should have the advantage.

I also think that's one of the stronger points for me is to adapt really quickly, and I think also having been part of Alpine has definitely helped me get that.

It's something that I can only be grateful for.

Q. I know you haven't had much of an oval

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

background before. How do you feel you'll be able to fare with that, and do you think you'll be able to have much time track before Texas in March?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I'll have a test at Texas before, which I think will come in quite handy. At the moment I don't know what to think of it. I drove my home sim at Indy the other day, and it felt a bit easy, but it might also have had a bit too much downforce, so I think once we go to Texas and have a real good in the car I will have a good feel of how loose the car is and how stable it is, as well. At the moment it's quite difficult to tell for me, but I'm looking forward to going out and racing at high speeds.

Q. What do you feel you're going to have to adapt with the most with any of the ovals?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I think I'll have to learn pretty much everything from top to bottom. Driving a car is one thing, but driving is quick consistently is a complete different one, and that's something we need to be very good at is delivering when we need and also when we are struggling. It's a long learning process, and I'm all for it at the moment.

Q. You said that INDYCAR is your main focus for this year, but there's a chance we could see you sports car racing this year, maybe IMSA?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: At the moment I wouldn't really say that there is -- at the moment I wouldn't say that the opportunity will even come, but it's definitely not in my view at the moment. At the moment it's 110 percent at INDYCAR, and it will be for quite a while. Yeah, I guess that's explains.

Q. On your simulator, iRacing or rFactor 2?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: A bit of everything, honestly, all sorts of different cars. At the moment mainly INDYCAR, but I would also like to drive different cars just to develop skills, I would say. It's good to have the experience in different cars and understand how different cars handle and get the understanding of setups and so on, but I would say at the moment mainly iRacing is the majority of the time I spend in the sim, but I also do a set a course or even do F1. That's more for the fun of it really. I like the career mode because you can do your own team and so on.

But iRacing is very well built for INDYCAR I would say. It's got most of the tracks.

Q. With the expansion at RLL of the third car, there's probably going to be some team staffing changes. For your car, how much of the folks will be back, and how

do you see that as either a positive for you with any new people?

CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD: I mean, I'm new myself, kind of. So to come into a new team, I have to learn and know new people, and how many new people in the team I'm actually not quite sure. I know some comes from the BMW team. Some are probably new.

But it's a great group of people. I know the team is extremely dedicated on who they hire. It's a strong point for the team to do that and have that.

But how many new people, I don't really know. Even if I'm allowed to say or not, I don't know, because I don't know in general. So it's a bit difficult to explain and answer on.

THE MODERATOR: We'll see you soon. Good luck to you.

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