

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Monday, January 17, 2022

### Takuma Sato

#### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Here is Takuma Sato to talk about this new team, Dale Coyne Racing. They've been very successful in a lot of iterations. Engineering staff continues to change, but the consistency of the program continues to be punching above its weight. How do you feel about it?

TAKUMA SATO: Yeah, absolutely. I'm thrilled and really excited, not just because of the new season with new team, but the Dale, someone who really dedicated for the organization and driver.

Of course, no offense, all other teams do same things, too. But in particular Dale. I'm purely excited to go to the new season with Dale Coyne Racing. It's resource-wise not one of the biggest team. In fact, it's one of the smallest team. I've been there with A.J. Foyt. It's really family oriented.

Also Dale's team has a very competitive in any field. Superspeedway, we observed couple times just speed in speedway, which is very excited, as well as street course, road course. Very successful in the last few seasons with Dale.

Once again, there is no reason why we can't be competitive again. With new organization I'm entirely excited about it.

THE MODERATOR: I suppose you know Dale's history as a race caller, his strategy usually as good as anybody in the paddock.

TAKUMA SATO: Yes. I'm fully aware of that. That's something, of course, that's quite looking forward to, working with Dale himself. He will be on my pit stand. He will call my race, which is, yes, always exciting.

THE MODERATOR: You could win a third Indy 500 with three different teams.

TAKUMA SATO: Nothing is impossible. Showing that Dale Coyne Racing is always showing a pure road speed in Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Very, very excited.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. I believe you're the first two-time winner that Dale has ever had drive one of his race cars. What kind of a symbiotic relationship can you have, what you bring to his team?**

TAKUMA SATO: Let's see. It's natural bonding we bring on the table with both sides of the experience. Dale, the car is extremely competitive in terms of road speed. What I've experienced in the past few years, in particular with the winnings on the 500, that's something that I can support to the Dale. We will see if that's a magical, chemical reaction starts.

**Q. Dale's ability to sometimes pull the rabbit out of the hat with his pit strategy, he got Carlos to Victory Lane. If you can do that, that's pretty good strategy. Do you marvel sometimes at how smart he is for the resources that he's got to work with that he can be that competitive?**

TAKUMA SATO: Yeah, absolutely. Dale himself, too, driving until recently, 1991, which sounds really like yesterday. He knows about the business in the cockpit as well as just like you, Martin said, his ability to see the race the whole race and stories. That's something out of the pocket. Suddenly Dale Coyne Racing has become very competitive in the field.

That's something special bonus to me. I'm not expecting everything race like that way. At least we have a great partners and boys, the new challenge with the kind of very positive feeling, it's always helping me.

**Q. You have a rookie teammate this year. He is less than half your age. Are you going to take up kind of a mentor role with him? What are you expecting from him this year?**

TAKUMA SATO: I'm here to support him as well probably the biggest competitor from him, too, that he can be as a target. He see me as a target as well as we need to work together to bring the whole team level.

I'm do anything for the team and David to get up to the



speed. But talking about speed, he's already fastest at the winter testing including some of the veterans there. I'm not worried about his speed because he already showed tremendous as well as maturity of the good race craft in INDYCAR, Indy Lights Series.

I'm sure he needs to learn so many things, but I'm really looking forward to working with David, like you said, not even half of my age (smiling). Yeah, working together, we'll be a good combination from my side, too.

**Q. What can you tell fans and media that might not know a lot about David?**

TAKUMA SATO: We'll find out together. David is obviously nice guy. Initial feeling is very, very nice guy, very dedicated. When we have a dinner together with Dale and I, Dale just called David, Why don't you come in? He was on the gymnasium. He just jumped to the showers, come to the dinner. That sort of guy. He's very humble, good attitude.

Again, I haven't actually watched him on the racetrack yet. Again, I feel a very positive feeling. We help or support each other. Our intention is one goal: to bring Dale's car to the winner's circle.

THE MODERATOR: David is 20. How old is your oldest?

TAKUMA SATO: He's 20 years old.

**Q. When you won your second Indy 500, the team had a lot of its history in Chicago because at that time Bobby Rahal was still living there, Michael Lanigan is from Chicago. Now you're driving for a team based there. How much time have you had to spend up there?**

TAKUMA SATO: Chicago, like you said, really Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing organization is just to come from the Chicago. Its actual race team isn't in Chicago.

Now that Dale Coyne Racing is just in Chicago, I spend so many times over there, really looking forward to, all the international flight, sometimes I have to go back to Japan, is always go to the Chicago O'Hare Airport. It's convenient in terms of that point of view as well as the great Japanese community down there.

I'm looking forward to spend some time more in Chicago. Yeah, first and foremost Dale Coyne Racing is such a good, small, compact team I'm extremely excited about working together.

**Q. What do you think of Dale Coyne Racing require**

**decision?**

TAKUMA SATO: Sorry, I need to understand the question more specifically.

**Q. I'm sorry. What do you think you were racing for decision?**

THE MODERATOR: Expectations for the season.

TAKUMA SATO: Expectation?

**Q. Yes.**

TAKUMA SATO: Sorry.

Yeah, expectation. It's obviously positive and high even myself. Those things, we don't do the expectation too much because just pointless for me. We want to focus. We need to get know each other first before put 100% commitment. On track everything has to be perfect to win the race. Before that we need lots of listen, tons of things to get it done before the season. But we have one single day physical testing allowed to. Incredibly challenging.

I'm very positive, very excited. You can tell that I'm very, very excited. Hopefully we will be showing the speed immediately to compete one of the toughest in the field at the moment in INDYCAR.

Expectation shouldn't be too much high, but I certainly feel it's very, very positive to get out of top content as soon as we could.

**Q. All these years you already have explained a lot of things of how to drive the car in the Indy 500. I want to know in your point of view what are the steps that you can do to accelerate to a new team?**

TAKUMA SATO: I think a lot of things has to be done when you get to the new team. Honestly, we don't have much time to integrate together. You have to use your experience a lot.

But not only for that, just the feeling. With the boys, for example, at Dale Coyne Racing, boys extremely dedicated and so passionate. Everything is in a reachable distance by good meaning.

I think we can be tied up very, very quickly. Dale Coyne Racing showing tremendous speed at the Speedway, have some good experience in the 500, so does Dale. With combined everything, I can see only very, very positive.

Certainly challenging but looking forward to. I'm sure with



the testing, very limited, but I'm sure we can find a good speed and a competitiveness as soon as we could.

**Q. Can you tell me a bit about the excitement level of joining a new team. Is it sort of like a new beginning in your career?**

TAKUMA SATO: Yeah, I mean, just exciting. Just like a kid have a new Christmas present. It's just excitement as well a little bit nervous in what's going on. We just don't know. Moving to the new team isn't necessarily always easy thing.

The flipside, it's always dramatically exciting because the future we can make it together. That hope and excitement is the same level between team and myself. We both very, very, yeah, looking forward to the first race.

**Q. August of 2020 as you're pounding down the milk after the win, empty grandstands. Eight months later you walk out to some cheers. What were the feelings like coming out in May?**

TAKUMA SATO: Absolutely, 2020 was a difficult season for entire world, right? But we have to be appreciated actually we race there, even there's no spectators, for the sake of safety for everyone else.

Still win is a special day for me. It was a fantastic day. But the last year, 2021, when we come back to see even 50%, 150,000 people, looked like full. It just feel the joy of this is how we supposed to be as just name of the sport. Indy 500 has to have a spectators with that.

Coming to 2022 season, hopefully with the situation obviously challenging again, but hopefully we will see 100% of spectators. We are super excited as the fan will be.

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