

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

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### Dalton Kellett

#### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Dalton Kellett. Welcome.

DALTON KELLETT: How's it going?

THE MODERATOR: We spoke to you the other day, you had one teammate. Now you have two.

DALTON KELLETT: As of this morning, two. It's exciting.

THE MODERATOR: Let's talk about your role in this. Probably going to do a little bit of advising and coaching and leading as the senior member of this organization. Seems strange to believe 24 races in, a senior member. How does that role suit you?

DALTON KELLETT: I mean, I would put some air quotes on that. The team and I have talked. Realistically I'm not Seb with four championships and all the wins under his belt. The relationship between myself and Kyle and Tatiana won't be the same. I think it will be a communal engineering. The experience I do have, haven't had a chance to have yet in INDYCAR, I'm sure when those moments come up, there will be questions. I'm more than happy to lend whatever experience I can to help them along.

THE MODERATOR: Better to have experience than no experience.

DALTON KELLETT: 100%.

THE MODERATOR: You must have some empathy for what they're about to go through. It's a challenging road.

DALTON KELLETT: It's a big undertaking even for the most prepared drivers. Kyle certainly is one of the most successful drivers to come out of the Road to Indy in a while. It will still be an adjustment for him I'm sure. When you get into INDYCAR, there's a lot that you have to learn as far as the feedback you need, Firestone reds, the schedule, the cadence is different than it is in Lights. There's a lot more going on as far as the engine, dampers,

feedback, all that.

That will be certainly an adjustment. It's exciting to see how the team gets on.

THE MODERATOR: You referenced Bourdais, maybe not specifically things he did for you, but what a difference having a real veteran in an organization does for a young driver.

DALTON KELLETT: I think for me it was great to have sort of -- whether his way of doing things is the right way or not, it still gives you a direction that you and as the rookie can kind of riff off of. It took some of the decision making out of my hands, sort of put it in his. I was able to focus on driving technique, the bits of feedback I was giving to the engineer.

For me coming into it green as far as INDYCAR is concerned, that was a good thing. Then specifically just looking at, like, sort of Seb's braking technique. Things I caught onto that we talked about that were helpful.

THE MODERATOR: How much undertaking is that going to be for the new drivers going to a new venue?

DALTON KELLETT: It's always an adjustment when you haven't been somewhere. Thinking back to Detroit, Nashville, I think those were the only two new ones for me last year. To be honest, I felt like those two events were actually strong for us, for our program.

I think a big part of that is doing the preparation on the simulator and the team looking at video. I think as long as they're the type where they can get something out of the sims, I think that will be a good preparation tool for them. Obviously that's kind of like specific to each person, whether you like simulators or not. For me I thought that was a good tool preparing for those races.

THE MODERATOR: They say in sports the jump from year one to two is the biggest jump. Did you see that jump in your improvement? I assume you would expect that to carry over into year three.

DALTON KELLETT: As far as what I felt personally, I felt there was a tangible, sizable jump there. The results



weren't what we always wanted, but we had some highlights at Gateway, some races that were going well. We had some consistency issues that I feel like we've dealt with from the mechanical side that shouldn't hamper us.

Coming back at it with the experience of sort of that year and a half is going to be really helpful.

THE MODERATOR: Your oval program, obviously that's where your biggest strength had been previously. I was going to note Gateway, you finished 12th. You must feel Indianapolis, maybe Texas, good places for you?

DALTON KELLETT: I think so. I think the ovals were sort of less of a question mark for us last year. I think still kind of the theme of last year was that qualifying was a bit of a struggle. Track position is just so important in these races, if you don't get that good starting position, it can be really difficult to make the positions up. It's really to work on the qualifying side. That puts you in the position to have sort of a place that you can kind of strike from, not just -- when you're starting towards the back, you're already in a bad spot as far as the first pit cycle with the leaders coming up close. Being up the field at the start is goal one, no matter what track you're on.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. You mentioned ovals, last season being a bit of your strong suit. Qualifying something you need to focus on. What in particular with qualifying do you need to focus on? On the back end of that, what have you been working on the most during the off-season?**

DALTON KELLETT: I think with qualifying, really it's getting the most out of that. You really have one or two laps to kind of get it done, ensuring that the first lap you're up to speed enough where you have a lap in the bang. Once you already have that safe lap, really just going to 100% and maximizing everything you can to get every last hundredth out of the car and yourself on that last lap that counts. I think that's really the focus.

It's really to the point where it's more of a mental game than a technique, all that. You know what you need to do, it's kind of executing it without making mistakes, or if you make a small mistake just moving on and not being too affected by it. It's really getting that mental approach down where you can attack qualifying like you need to.

**Q. You mentioned your two other teammates, which makes A.J. Foyt now a three-car operation. Do you think this will help your development process? Will there be too many cooks in the kitchen?**

DALTON KELLETT: That's a good question. Obviously anytime you add another entry to an existing program, there's going to be a learning period and a time where we're all getting used to how the work flows together.

The good thing is that there's two fresh faces, so it's kind of like a fresh start. Not like you're throwing something into an existing program. The team has done a great job as far as putting the necessary personnel together. I'm confident from that standpoint in my limited time with Kyle and Tatiana it seems they'll be great to work with. We'll have to see how things work out.

**Q. Tatiana tested with A.J. Foyt last season. She obviously knows her stuff within the team. How beneficial is that going to be to you with her bringing in a fresh perspective, also with Kyle as well?**

DALTON KELLETT: Certainly. I think they'll both bring some fresh aspects to what we're thinking from a setup standpoint. That is kind of the good thing about rookies, I felt it in the last couple years, there was a time with Seb where he had a preconceived notion of what the car should be and what it could be before the aeroscreen. You add in the aeroscreen, it totally affects, changes what the car can even do. Sometimes it's beneficial to have that blank slate. I think that will be a good thing.

Obviously Tatiana is coming with a pretty wide background as far as her experience in different formulas, different cars. Same with Kyle. He's racing Daytona in a couple weeks. He's obviously been doing pretty well in the Road to Indy. They're both coming in with a lot of great experience. It will be exciting to see what they bring to it as far as the setup and technical standpoint.

**Q. What would be a strong, solid season for you? Top 10s or further up?**

DALTON KELLETT: I think given where we were last year, we want to be incremental, right? You want to focus on breaking the top 15, do that consistently, then kind of go from there.

I think for the first quarter of the year, definitely the main goals are improving in qualifying and consistently finishing ahead of where we were last year. If we can be getting towards that 15 to 12 mark where we finished up at Gateway for our best finish last year, if we can best that at this point this year and be a little more consistent around that range, that would be a very strong step up for the team and myself.

**Q. Last year you were the teammate of Sebastien Bourdais. What have you learned from him?**

DALTON KELLETT: To give you a really specific example, I think something that we see in junior formula, sort of the way you attack the brakes is prescribed in a very specific way. Seb without going into specifics was maybe doing things a little bit differently, just the way he was ramping up the brakes, kind of leading into it, was a bit different to what I'd done previously. I thought that was a good -- it wasn't like I applied it everywhere because sometimes what works for one person doesn't always work for the other. It sort of made me think about rechecking what I was doing, think about the technique that I hadn't really considered.

When you see someone doing it a bit differently, you kind of think back and sort of reevaluate what you're doing, see what works and what doesn't. Moments during the year he was doing things differently, we talked through it. That was a good learning opportunity for me.

**Q. If Paul Tracy and Greg Moore were racing now, you be just an INDYCAR fan from Canada, who would you be looking for more?**

DALTON KELLETT: I would probably be Team Greg. I love P.T. He's certainly a Canadian legend in the INDYCAR world. I think Greg was definitely a fan favorite as well. I would be Team Red Gloves. Sorry, Paul.

**Q. Now that you're taking a leadership role, which advice would you give Tatiana and Kyle? Which advice would you give to each of them?**

DALTON KELLETT: I think the best thing you can do as a rookie really is to take things step by step, whether you're experienced or not. Coming into an INDYCAR is going to be a big adjustment, there's a lot going on. Focusing on what you're doing, trying to excel at one thing, maybe not getting too lost in the big picture, really focus on what you can control at that moment.

Then just making sure you're staying on top of preparation, being kind of ready when you get to the track. These weekends go a lot quicker and are a lot busier than you might have been in, say, Indy Lights or different series. Where you thought before you might have had the time to do some prep, video or data, you're probably not going to have the time to do as much of that stuff as you did before. Making sure you're kind of ready when you get to the track is a good way to start every event.

THE MODERATOR: It changes from teammate to teammate, but how quickly do you establish a bond?

DALTON KELLETT: Depends on personalities. Some you click with right away. Some it grows a little bit. Seb and I

weren't best buddies right off the bat. After the year we spent together, that relationship got better and better. Might be an age thing, too. When you're younger, have more common interests, you might click right away.

As far as working together, I think we're all professionals. As far as the engineering room goes, I think that's going to come together certainly by the end of the first event or so I'd say. The initial sort of gelling, then from that you're getting more and more in tune with each other.

THE MODERATOR: You'll be with Tatiana and Kyle at Wednesday's test. Will you spend more time thinking about the changes that are made, how that applies to your program, or more attentive to their needs?

DALTON KELLETT: My engineer asked me to bring a camera, take some video and stuff, so I have some assignments as far as stuff they want to get. The focus is obviously on the two cars that are there at the test. That's the objective for that day.

From my perspective, I'm certainly going to be also spending time just hearing how they talk with the engineers, seeing what the changes are, what the effects are. It will be an interesting exercise to kind of see the other side of it, see how the team is working together. I'd say a little bit of both.

**Q. Your third season, now you're the seasoned veteran. How strange is that, the longest tenured driver out of this group of three?**

DALTON KELLETT: It's a unique position to be in. It's certainly exciting. I think we talked about it a bit earlier, but it's important to emphasize. I think the relationship is different when you have a rookie like myself the last year and Seb, a seasoned veteran, a known quantity, versus what we're going into this year, which is a semi veteran and then two rookies. I think it will be maybe a bit more of a communal aspect.

On the flipside there's definitely experience I have had doing a year and a half in INDYCAR that the other two won't. Certainly in any situation that I can help and offer my experience, I'll be certainly doing that.

**Q. Last week fellow Canadian announced he'll be running an entire IMSA season, Robby Wickens. How proud are you of being able to see him be able to get to the point in his rehab to return to racing?**

DALTON KELLETT: Yeah, I'm confident to say there were a lot of tears shed that day by a lot of people in the racing industry. An inspiring story. I train at Pit.Fit, where Robby

does a lot of his rehab. To see him work that hard in the last few years is inspiring. I know Robby back from the karting days. To see Brian seem give him a chance to get back in it, it's an amazing thing.

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