

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Tuesday, January 18, 2022

### Conor Daly

#### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Conor Daly has joined us.

CONOR DALY: How's it going?

THE MODERATOR: Doing well. The season begins February 27th so you're right on time.

CONOR DALY: Yeah. I mean, it's kind of par for the course really. I've done late deals before, I've done no deals before, and I've done I guess somewhat early deals before.

Yeah, doesn't matter, as long as we got it done (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: How did the process come together? It was a juggling act as it usually is.

CONOR DALY: Well, I'm willing to tell you a great story about it. This truly is a very Conor Daly-type story, how this all came about.

Everything kind of seemed to be going the wrong way, all of our deals we were working on were kind of pitter patter out. I planned a 30th birthday trip to Las Vegas, obviously. At the time I had talked to a long-time friend of ours, both me and Doug knew him as well, Doug Boles. He had this idea for this meeting with this guy that was interested in racing, INDYCAR racing. I was like, You know what, happy to do it.

Are you going to be in Vegas by chance like December 17, 18?

I said, Funny you ask. Yes, I will be there for my birthday.

I went out there with me, Alex Rossi and two of my other friends from Indy here, and Travis Pastrana met us out there as well.

Had this meeting on Saturday. I was like, This is it, this is what I got. I have this meeting or I have nothing.

We woke up Saturday. My friends, they were still

celebrating. I was not. I was locked in. I was sweating. I was like we tried to have lunch. I ate food. Travis got in. He's very exciting. It's very tempting to start doing what Travis wants to do, which is like jump off of buildings, cool stuff like that.

I said, Hey, I can't. I got a meeting.

I go to this meeting at like 6:00 in the afternoon, to do whatever they're going to do with Travis and Alex.

By the next hour and a half we shook on a deal what it was announced at. I was like, Wow, that was the craziest thing.

After that I went back and shouted at Travis and Alex, my friends, I think I'm employed. We had an incredible next two days.

Ed, I texted Ed that night. It was obviously -- he's on east coast time. It was very late for me by the time the meeting was done. Ed called me at like 5 a.m. Vegas time. I think I just did this deal. I was obviously still awake because we were celebrating.

I said, Hey, man, how is it going?

He was like, Is that legit?

I said, I think so.

He said obviously, Call me when you wake up.

I obviously went to sleep for a while and called him. Yeah, incredible story. It was a wild. People always say, Conor, you spend too much time in Vegas.

I was like, Guess what, got me a job this time, you losers.

It was great. Worked out well.

THE MODERATOR: Multi-year?

CONOR DALY: Yeah. It was an incredible deal. Todd at BitNile, the holding company, they want to do an incredible amount in INDYCAR. They love INDYCAR. Todd has been an INDYCAR fan for a long time, which is really, really cool.



Obviously we love the people that support our sport, right, which is really cool. Now he wants to get directly involved. He's big on undervalued assets. He thought I was an undervalued asset, which I appreciate. That's great.

We're going to try to really blow this program up, have an incredible time with it, make sure we do the business that we can do for him, give the support that he's given us for him and his companies.

THE MODERATOR: Somehow I'm not surprised.

CONOR DALY: Yeah, me either. Travis, I tell you what, the look on his face when I told him.

He's like, Man, that's awesome.

It was great people to celebrate with. Alex Rossi, Travis Pastrana. Mount that on a wall somewhere.

THE MODERATOR: You're going to be in the 20 car all year, which means Ed is not.

CONOR DALY: Yeah. Since the announcement people every day are asking, Are you doing Indy?

I'm like, What part of the full season is not the Indy 500?

It's really funny to see. It's just hard for people to disassociate Ed. Even me, Yes, I think I'm doing the full season.

What is Ed doing?

I haven't asked him yet, to be honest.

Actually I have to thank Ed in a very large way because, I mean, he did step aside for me to drive the 20, which is really cool.

He's always been a great owner. He loves the team. He does a great job with who works with us. This was obviously a very business-driven move. It's hard to jump out of the seat. I mean, I'm a race car driver. Ed is a race car driver. You know what I mean?

Yeah, it will still be great to work with him at Indy. He's the boss so he can do whatever races he wants, I'm sure. Who knows. All I know is I'm in for the season, which is great.

THE MODERATOR: Amazing stuff.

We'll go to questions.

**Q. Had this deal not worked out, what were you going to do?**

CONOR DALY: Great question. I considered a lot of things. But I really don't know. Anything that I had planned in the background, like a B plan, still obviously had to have some sponsorship, whether that was NASCAR truck racing or whatever it was. All of those deals were kind of not falling away but being subtracted from the numbers that we needed.

I really don't know. Doesn't matter now, I guess (smiling).

**Q. A full season with the same team. How good will that continuity be for you?**

CONOR DALY: Well, honestly it's awesome. I have not had that since 2017. That's a long time ago. I feel like I was a child back then. Didn't even have a mullet, didn't even have a beard. That was my second year in INDYCAR at the time. A lot has changed since then.

I was speaking to my engineer Pete yesterday. He's like, I'm really pumped to do the whole season with you. That's going to be great.

Yeah, it will be nice just to kind of have that relationship.

It is awkward going from team to team. There's no doubt about that. It's just an odd thing. In racing you're very much in-house, you know what I mean? You don't want to share information with anybody else because you got to keep it in-house, keep your stuff going on. Everybody is a little bit like, Great to see you, where you going now? Someone else that we want to beat?

Kind of an awkward situation. It will be something that I've craved for a long time just to get back to. It will be nice not taking stuff from one locker to another.

**Q. We've only got a real direct front view of you. How is that mullet doing?**

CONOR DALY: We went a little bit more less. I don't know what someone called it today.

Josef said, That's hot.

I said if Josef is saying that, that's good. Josef is a beautiful man. It's important that he respects it right out the gate. That's good. I'm going to write that down in my notebook later, my journal.

**Q. As one of the most popular drivers in the series,**

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

**what do you think INDYCAR could do in order to grow the fan base?**

CONOR DALY: Great question. Wow.

I mean, every sport is looking to grow their fan base, right? It's a power play all across the board. The more people that support it, the more your sport as you said, the people in the sport are succeeding.

There's a lot that people are doing all across the board. You're seeing different entities with television programs, with different social strategies.

I don't have the answer for that. Everyone has their own opinion on that. I mean, I think for us as drivers, we have to do a lot more. I think it takes more work than it used to.

Our goal as a kid, you were to be the best driver you could be. I think a lot of what we have to do now is be the best brand that you can be. The driving is obviously the most important part. If you're winning races, doing things, that's great. If there's no one watching those races, that's also a problem because then you need to be able to race more and win more. There's also a lot of work you have to do to make sure there are races to win.

I think there's a lot that we have to do as personalities. I think there's a lot of drivers in this series that are awesome, awesome talents, but also awesome personalities. I just think we have to work harder to do that. It's not necessarily one person or the other. A lot of it comes from us, too.

Would I love to see us have a Netflix show? Yeah, for sure. But I'd also like to go to the moon. I don't know which one of those things is going to come first but it's hard to do both of those things.

There's a lot of people that want to see our drivers and the series go to a very, very high level. Everyone is working to do that. It's not like everyone is here sitting around hoping that it's going to happen. Everyone is working towards that goal of seeing INDYCAR grow and succeed and have people get there. I have faith in those people that are working there.

Hope is not a strategy. As long as we're doing things, eventually that goal will be reached where our fans are continuing to grow. Hopefully see us all do cool things on the racetrack.

**Q. Do you think, talking about the Netflix stuff, will be cool that you have some camera behind you? How do you think will be the dynamic if you have someone looking for you in every place that you go?**

CONOR DALY: I think it's awesome. I think that's the way to really bring people into what we are doing. I think there's so much that we do that is not -- when you watch the TV broadcast, we put on our helmet, we get in the car and we try to do things that not many other human beings can do on the planet, which is really cool. There's also a lot that goes on to get there.

I think that's a massive step that could be discovered and will be shown for sure, so... There it is.

**Q. On the media side, we've lost some really big names, full-time driver-wise, in the series from Hinchcliffe to Ryan Hunter-Reay, Sebastien Bourdais. We're seeing a lot of maybe unfamiliar faces to a lot of INDYCAR fans. I know part of growing this fan base is getting the 14 races on network TV. Another part has to be having drivers build brands to make a lot of these young drivers be more familiar faces to a casual INDYCAR fan. What do you feel either drivers as individuals or the series can do to help build some bigger brands, bigger names?**

CONOR DALY: Well, I mean, the guys that you said that we lost, I could immediately tell you guys that we just gained. You know what I mean? There's guys like Kyle Kirkwood. We know Jimmie Johnson and Romain Grosjean are full-time. They're superstars, take a lot of attention. Kyle Kirkwood is an electric personality. I've hung out with him. I like that guy. He's very, very talented.

But as the previous question, we got to make sure that we make sure that people know that those guys are there, you know what I mean?

I think there's always a changing of the guard. There's always people I've seen in the sport, out of the sport. It's weird to think I've seen that, you know what I mean? Devlin deFrancesco that was coached when I was in INDYCAR. It's wild. Devlin's dad used to sponsor me when I was in F3. It's crazy. It's an awesome position to be in, see all these young guys like Callum, the rookie class is really cool, strong, you know what I mean?

There's a lot that is going on but there's always going to be new people in and some people out, some people that come back, some people that go away. It's kind of part of the game, right?

I'm excited about the talent that we have. Obviously the full-time drivers right now, I mean, it's probably the most full-time drivers we've had for a long time. It's very, very exciting. Everything about it is really cool.



You have Patricio O'Ward testing in Formula 1. People are saying, Is he going to Formula 1? Is he going to Formula 1? He's in INDYCAR right now. That's really cool. You know what I mean?

THE MODERATOR: With the rookie class, Tatiana, you have worked with.

CONOR DALY: Yeah.

THE MODERATOR: In Star Mazda?

CONOR DALY: Tatiana was my teammate in 2010. It's crazy to see. She's been awesome. Her family is great, great people all across the board. I've obviously followed her journey since we were teammates. I keep up with her every now and then, talk to her every now and then. It's cool to see what's going on. It's great. Have another female in the series, awesome. Great stuff.

**Q. You seem like no matter what interviews, being on track, on Twitter, you seem like you're a person who is always just yourself. You don't ever seem like you have a façade or anything like that. I don't know that you agree with this, but I know some fans feel maybe it's because so many of these driver deals run year to year, sponsors are so important, some drivers maybe hold back or don't show their true selves in front of the camera. Is that something you feel like would go a long way helping build some of these driver brands or get fans to know more about a driver? I as a person who follows the series know all those drivers, but maybe the casual fan might not know who Kyle Kirkwood is off the track, something like that. Is that something you feel would be important?**

CONOR DALY: I mean, I think a lot of people agree with how I do things. A lot don't obviously.

I think I would love for everyone to be able to see these guys how I see them sometimes. You know what I mean? That's never going to happen. We're never going to see certain people in the lights. They don't want them to see themselves, right? Everyone is going to do what they want to do.

Teams are going to have certain policies as well, right? There's a team effort that goes around with their drivers.

I mean, I can only say what I can say, right? We have incredible people here. We have incredible people that want to see this series succeed. I think in general who doesn't in this paddock want us to grow, right?

Again, the common goal for everyone is to, like, be better,

be more successful. Everyone wants to win races. Everyone wants to succeed. Everyone wants to make more money. By doing that all together, we can all hopefully attain that common goal.

I would love to see a lot of us work together to do that I think better. There's a little bit more we probably can all do together.

Do I have the answers? No. I'm not the INDYCAR wizard of success obviously. I think there's a lot of cool people that we have in the series that are working to make that happen and I trust those people.

**Q. What does the continuity of the deal with ECR do for your confidence?**

CONOR DALY: I think it takes confidence to be at a very, very high level. I've been a guy that's there to do a certain amount of races. Now I'm the guy that's doing all the races, which is really cool.

I know that us as a team, we have done so much together already. I think from year to year we've shown that we've improved for sure in a lot of different areas. I'm excited for what's ahead. I think when I listen to my engineer say, Hey, we're going to test here, here, here and here.

I'm like, That's a lot of places, which is great. If I get to Texas, wow, haven't done that in a long time. If I get to test at Iowa, haven't done that in a long time. That will be really, really cool. I can't wait for those types of things. It builds the confidence.

Confidence right now is at an absolute massively high level. I can't wait.

THE MODERATOR: Appreciate your time. Congratulations on your Vegas trip.

CONOR DALY: Thank you. Yeah, Vegas, you always hope is successful for many, many different reasons. This one was extremely successful.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations.

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