

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Wednesday, February 23, 2022

**Julia Steinbrenner**

**Devlin DeFrancesco**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. Thanks for joining us again today.

Announced earlier today, big news from Steinbrenner Racing, as a new ownership structure has Julia Steinbrenner joining her brother George IV as co-owner of the team. As we all know, Steinbrenner Racing once again partnering with Andretti Autosport to field the No. 29 PowerTap Andretti Steinbrenner Autosport Honda for rookie Devlin DeFrancesco.

All this, of course, as the season opener approaches, the Firestone Grand Prix of St. Petersburg this Sunday, a home race for Julia who lives in the Tampa area, and as luck would have it, we are joined by both Julia Steinbrenner and Devlin DeFrancesco here this afternoon.

Congratulations to you both, Julia, especially for you. We'll begin with you. How exciting is this, and how did this all come together?

JULIA STEINBRENNER: Thank you. I appreciate the congratulations. It's extremely exciting. I cannot wait. I'm thrilled. It kind of came together slowly but quickly at the same time. It's something that George and I have talked about quite a bit, and I've been with the Yankees for eight years and also as the executive director of the foundation that we founded together.

It kind of was more of a matter not necessarily of if it would happen but when it would happen and how we would do it and just kind of letting it happen organically.

That day finally came, and yeah, I could not be more excited.

THE MODERATOR: Working with your brother in this sort of scenario, who has the final say?

JULIA STEINBRENNER: You know, it really just comes down to we work extremely well together, and we're very

lucky for that. We don't often have a difference of opinion, and so it'll really just come down to respecting each other's opinion. I have great respect for his opinion and vice versa.

I don't think that we'll have an issue. I don't think we'll have an issue.

THE MODERATOR: That's good that a family is getting involved in racing as you guys are, congratulations again. Also driver Devlin DeFrancesco joins us. Hi, Devlin, you've got a new boss. What's the pressure?

DEVLIN DEFRANCESCO: I'm super excited for the opportunity to have Julia on board and also hugely grateful to have George for the last two years. Not only hugely excited to continue working with him but to have Julia Steinbrenner on board, she's going to be a great addition to Steinbrenner Racing with the No. 29 entry.

THE MODERATOR: I've got to ask you about just the general excitement of the start of the season, the preparations all kind of behind you now, your first race in the NTT INDYCAR Series literally days away now.

DEVLIN DEFRANCESCO: It's hugely exciting. It's been a long time coming. It's been a very long off-season, and I think everybody got a taste with how things are regarding where everyone seems to stack up in Sebring, but hugely looking forward to the race weekend coming this weekend in St. Pete.

**Q. Julia, is this another step in trying to create more autonomy for Steinbrenner Racing?**

JULIA STEINBRENNER: Yeah, you know, I'm really -- I think there's just so many aspects to coming to this decision and coming to this decision at this point. I think that alongside just my brother and I working extremely well together and we've always wanted to work together just in a closer aspect, I think that kind of being able to split our time between the Yankees and between Steinbrenner Racing and having that just happen organically and very cohesively, yeah, I think it's a promising future. I'm excited for it.

**Q. Also, how important is this market for you**

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**personally and for the Steinbrenner family? You can't go anywhere in the Tampa Bay area without seeing home of the New York Yankees, home of George Steinbrenner Field here in Tampa.**

JULIA STEINBRENNER: Yeah, we're very lucky that Tampa is not only an unbelievable place to live but has for so many years accepted our family with open arms and just been so wonderful and receptive and not even just in the world of sports but in the world of philanthropy. Tampa has just been an unbelievable place to live, and I've really found that in Indianapolis, as well, obviously my brother having been rooted there for five years.

But the more I get up there the more I kind of see the similarities and just how receptive people are up there and just trying to help out up there, as well, and from a philanthropic standpoint. But yeah, Tampa is great. We love Tampa.

**Q. Are there more Yankee fans in the Tampa Bay area than Rays' fans?**

JULIA STEINBRENNER: Ooh, between a rock and a hard place with the questions. You know, I would like to think so. I would like to think so. It's really cool that pretty much anywhere you go you see a Yankee hat, and that's something very special. I think that's something very, very cool and something I find a lot of pride in that that is what our grandfather created. Definitely find a lot of pride in it any time I see somebody wearing their Yankee gear.

**Q. Devlin, being from Canada, what's your take on how important the Steinbrenner family is to sports in the United States?**

DEVLIN DEFRANCESCO: You know, massively important. Look what the family has created, not only on the baseball field but look in auto racing, what they've been able to put together and them getting me through the Road to Indy into the NTT INDYCAR Series and creating a team, and they've been a massive, massive part of Andretti for the last couple years, so hugely grateful for the opportunities they've given me and love to see what they do in baseball, as well.

**Q. Julia, fantastic to see more and more females getting involved in this sport and other sports, as well. I think you'd agree with me that it's a whole lot more than just choosing a gender, it's choosing someone for a role that is qualified to do it and can do a good job, and I know that that certainly is paramount in your mind. Yeah, the gender thing is cool, but the idea is you've got to be qualified and you've got to be able to do a good job for this to stick. You'd agree with that,**

**wouldn't you?**

JULIA STEINBRENNER: Absolutely, and I think that you can have that conversation when it comes to gender, as well, but just as a conversation in general. I think that that is what is so cool about what's happening in sports with more women or people from all creeds and colors, all across the map, just having the accessibility and the availability to even have the opportunity for these jobs and these positions because there are so many wonderful and qualified people and so many wonderful and qualified women even that I've met in the race world that just really know their stuff and are just incredible.

I'd love to see that kind of come forward a little bit more, but yeah, I absolutely think that that's true. I think that it should matter much more what your qualifications are and what you can bring to the table.

**Q. The last time we did one of these you were just announced as joining this team. You've had a time to interact more with the guys, not necessarily a lot more cockpit time, if any, the fact that you've been around these guys a lot more, but are you more optimistic now that you've had time to spend time and have lunch and do the usual things that drivers and teams do?**

DEVLIN DEFRANCESCO: Very much so, with the great group of people I have around me and the No. 29 Andretti Steinbrenner PowerTap Honda, it's very encouraging. Even the testing has seemed to raise my confidence for sure, as well, and the addition of bringing Julia on board, as well, is only going to boost that. I'm hugely looking forward to getting started, hugely looking forward to the opportunity that they've given me, and ready to get going.

**Q. Can you speak to some more of the specifics of the roles you've had both with the foundation, the Yankees' foundation, and what you expect to be involved with specifically with the race team?**

JULIA STEINBRENNER: Yeah, absolutely. So I've worked with the Yankees' foundation for eight years, and we have had the George IV Foundation for just about two. With the George IV Foundation I serve as the executive director, so kind of wear a lot of hats in that regard.

With the Yankee foundation we have a Tampa Yankee foundation and we also have a foundation based in the Bronx and in New York, obviously Yankees' hometown.

I do a lot of community outreach for that and working very closely with the organizations that we support, and I just actually recently came on as co-president with my aunt who's run it for many, many years since our grandfather,

my brother and I's grandfather stepped down from it.

I love it. I'm very passionate about it, and it's definitely not something that I will ever stop doing. I'm very blessed to do it.

**Q. What do you expect your racing responsibilities to be, and have you and George talked about those roles?**

JULIA STEINBRENNER: Yeah, definitely. So I will be at almost all if not all of the races and kind of be the more hands-on side of things for now, and I really love and gravitate towards working with sponsors and kind of being a facilitator and working on B-to-B and being at the track and getting to know people. But I'm also very, very excited for kind of the strategy side of it and working with Dev and working closely with Dev and his engineers and maybe squeezing my way through the pit stand a time or two and putting on those headphones and bugging Dev while he's zooming around the track.

You know, I don't really want to limit myself to having one specific thing. I think that all encompassing and excited to learn as I go, but I'm very confident at what I can bring to the table for this year.

THE MODERATOR: Julia, maybe this is a deep dive into the administrations and whatnot, but do you have any feel yet for your background in baseball, how that will play into management of a race team yet?

JULIA STEINBRENNER: I mean, I think it's extremely helpful to have those years of insight and be able to take that and just in any sport to have that insight and have kind of that knowledge of having done it for several years and be able to bring that into any other sport is extremely helpful, especially on a management side because you get to see what happens in the background and the logistics and what it takes to run a team on any level.

It's a lot. There's a lot that goes into it. It's hugely helpful that I have had those kind of behind-the-scenes experiences to be able to take into it.

**Q. I think it's not surprising these days that car racing has a female owner or co-owner. What is the biggest challenge for you right now to take the co-ownership on this team, and if you could say something about your near and far goals at the INDYCAR, what result would you be satisfied with, end of the season or in a couple of years?**

JULIA STEINBRENNER: Yeah, you know, I guess I'll start with what do I see now and in the next couple years. For

this year and for the next two years, we have some really incredible sponsors that we've brought on that are new this year, so I'm extremely excited about kind of working through that and figuring out how to further those relationships, and that's something that I really love to do and I'm really passionate about. I definitely am in the near side of things really looking forward to that and diving into that.

In the far future just continuing to get more and more involved. I would love to get more involved in all aspects of INDYCAR and not just being a co-owner and really immersing myself in the sport and getting to know everybody and being -- there's so many wonderful women in the sport. I would love to see more. So if I can even just for one person be, oh, I can do that and help create that narrative, and there's been so many amazing women that have paved that road for me so that I can be here today, so if I can help to continue that in any way shape or form so that we can get some of these really amazing women that I have met and all the ones I have not met involved in the sport, I would love to see that.

**Q. Devlin, you have an amazing series behind you. In all of the races in the last two years in Indy Pro and Indy Lights you reached the finish line. At such a young age, how did this work out? What is your secret? And have you been in contact with previous Canadian drivers in INDYCAR, or who have you had the best relationship, with any other Canadian driver?**

DEVLIN DEFRANCESCO: Well, regarding in the lower formulations, I think keeping calm and having a very strong team of people around you is critically important. I think that's some of the most very important factors, and bringing Julia on board only strengthens that, so hugely looking forward to that.

Regarding the Canadian drivers, I know Paul Tracy quite well and James Hinchcliffe, of course. They've both given me some guidance coming into my first year in the NTT INDYCAR Series, so definitely leaning on them a little bit more some help, and they've really been helping out, so hugely looking forward to getting going and lucky to have those two other Canadians in my corner for sure.

**Q. Julia, what is your birth date, which month and which day?**

JULIA STEINBRENNER: For when I started?

**Q. No, when you were born, the birth date.**

JULIA STEINBRENNER: October 5th. Best day of the year. (Laughter.)



**Q. With George taking a small step back from INDYCAR, how quickly do you think you can learn the ropes of this new role, or will you be around to help train you a little bit?**

JULIA STEINBRENNER: That's a great question. He definitely will still be around, definitely be there for any questions or learning curves or anything that I might have. You know, being around for the last several years that there has been a Steinbrenner Racing has really -- I've kind of tried to submerge myself into the sport and I've really grown a new passion for it. I grew up watching it, but just to really be in it as with anything, when you're in it and you can see it and appreciate it, you really grow a whole new passion for it.

You know, I feel pretty equipped, but I know that there will definitely be some things along the way that my brother will be right there to swoop in and help me with.

**Q. Devlin, going into St. Petersburg, what is your pre-race routine? How do you get ready for -- get pumped for the race?**

DEVLIN DEFRANCESCO: Super looking forward to it. Honestly generally my pre-race routine is if I'm in a calm state, music, headphones, go over the pre-race strategy with Rob Edwards and my engineer Andy Listes and would be George, which will be this weekend George and Julia this year, going over all the strategy with them for this weekend, and get in the car and get going.

THE MODERATOR: Julia, you were talking earlier about women in this great sport. Certainly it goes back to the '70s with Janet Guthrie and most recently Beth Paretta last year getting a team to the 500, Tatiana Calderon driving the road and streets for AJ Foyt's team this year. We've got women's history month coming up in a couple of days, the month of March. It seems like it's a special time for you to join this group of women helping lead the NTT INDYCAR Series and INDYCAR in general.

JULIA STEINBRENNER: Yeah, it really just kind of came together, the stars aligned and it was great timing. I just love to see it. I love to see it, and I hope to continue to see it. I would love to see more of it. It's just awesome. I think it's awesome for the sport. It's awesome for representation. It's awesome for the little girls at home like I was watching INDYCAR my whole life, and to see that and to see not only things like this where female ownership but female drivers and female engineers and pit crew and all these different moving parts, to see females working in all these different roles is just awesome.