

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Thursday, July 28, 2022

Callum Ilott

Ricardo Juncos

Brad Hollinger

Press Conference



we know how difficult INDYCAR is. We say that from the beginning, for us, for Brad, for myself, was important to put all the resources in a one-car team this year to learn, to apply our philosophy, which is a little bit different than the standards. That takes time.

I think we are performing really good. For us to be sitting here today with this announcement is very important. I want to thank Callum and his sponsors and Martin, his manager, as well for the trust in the team.

Obviously the team members of Juncos Hollinger Racing, this year a challenge we are showing every race weekend a little bit of improvement. That's a team effort clearly. So I'm very proud of the whole team.

That's basically what I have to say. I want to thank everybody again.

THE MODERATOR: Brad, your thoughts? Somewhat still new to INDYCAR, but a huge announcement for you guys.

BRAD HOLLINGER: Yeah, it's great news. The evolution from F1 to INDYCAR has been terrific. I love the collegial atmosphere.

Ricardo and I have hit it off significantly, along with Callum. I think we have an outstanding young driver and couldn't be more pleased to have him with us for the next couple years, which is phenomenal.

He certainly has demonstrated his evolution from F1 to INDYCAR very quickly. His learning curve is staggeringly quick, along with being extremely fast in the races.

Each week he gets a little bit better, so we're very excited in terms of where we are. More good things to come over the next couple years, no doubt, which we'll allude to here in a minute. We're really, really thrilled.

THE MODERATOR: For you, Callum, we get to see your smiling face around for some time to come. Your thoughts about your future right now.

CALLUM ILOTT: Yeah, obviously we got to continue the rest of the year, get that finished off. Obviously, yeah, we've been improving a lot. We had a great result here in

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. Great to see everyone here today.

Big announcement today, right? Joining us this afternoon, finishing up his rookie season in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES, Callum Ilott, driver of the No. 77 Juncos Hollinger Chevrolet.

He's no stranger to racing with his background at Williams. Just last year added has a co-owner of the race team. We welcome in Brad Hollinger.

And he founded this race team back in 1997, moved to the States in '02 and created really a legendary team that has grown each and every year now competing in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES. We say good afternoon to Ricardo Juncos.

Big announcement for the team this afternoon. Ricardo, we'll turn it over to you to do the honors.

RICARDO JUNCOS: Thank you. I want to take the opportunity to thank IMS, this amazing place. Obviously all of you guys to be here today. I guess that's quite a few people linking on the Zoom as well. Thank you, everybody.

We are here today to officially announce the continuation of Callum Ilott as a driver for Juncos Hollinger Racing with a long-term, multi-year partnership with him.

For us is special because one year ago we were have to choose from about four to five drivers who's going to be the driver representing the team. We make a deal with Callum for the last three races of last year. After that we turn around to continue with us on '22 full season.

It's been great. For us to announce the continuation together I think is exactly what we need as a team. I think

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May.

Last couple races, even the oval in Iowa, was good and strong. We've got some clear goals that we need to achieve towards the end of this year and then I think over the winter the hard work starts again to develop, get the most out of this INDYCAR paddock and try to push to get as many results as possible in the next couple years.

Yeah, I'm super excited to continue what we're doing, show what we can do as a little powerhouse.

THE MODERATOR: Callum, three races last year. It sounds like you have found a home here. Why is that?

CALLUM ILOTT: Obviously from the European side, INDYCAR was always a bit of a mystery. You never really knew how to compare it as a European driver. So having Romain come here, Marcus Ericsson and even Felix, establish a base, you kind of could guess they really enjoyed the racing here.

Getting to experience that, it's a tough start. It's not an easy one to come into as we've found, but we've been chipping away at it.

I've just really started to enjoy the racing, the competitiveness, but also the friendly nature of the series. As a team there's lots to do, as a driver there's lots to do to achieve more. Also I'd like to be a part of the series as it grows, try and compete at the top to make the series what it should be, which is one of the best series in the world.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Ricardo, a long time to get here. When you joined the series a couple years ago your goal was to be full-time. You had to do it piecemeal. What's your reaction to how long it's taken, now that you're finally here a full-time member?

RICARDO JUNCOS: It's been, like you said, we start in 2017 with the two cars here at the Speedway with the Indy 500. A small team, only myself. I knew from day one would be very, very difficult to become a team even full-time, like you said.

Since day one, the beginning of 2017, we were trying really hard with my guys to find the sponsors, the drivers. We did what we could, right? Only Indy 500. 12 races in '19 with three different drivers. It was very, very difficult. Then 2019 with Kyle Kaiser, we crash here, the car with no sponsors. It's been quite tough for us to finally get there. I knew from day one we have to find a proper partner, people that can push to the next level by ideas.

So when Brad and I met and we had kind of the same philosophy, that was a day-and-night shift. It's exactly what we needed as a team. I guess he has what we don't and vice versa. We have a great combination.

But the most important thing is I think we share the same vision. That's probably very different to try to put just one race with one driver, try to find people to compete at INDYCAR level, it's so hard, right?

It's been quite hard the last five years for us compared to now. Now we can see, we can be predictable, we can organize two, three, four, five years ahead, which is what we need to compete at this level.

Obviously I'm very, very pleased, very happy to be where we are today from where we're five years ago, no question.

Q. Callum, Rick Mears was telling me even though the cars are the same chassis, there's enough adjustability and it really allows the driver to make up the difference and showcase what we can do. Have you experienced that?

CALLUM ILOTT: Yeah, obviously as a new team you're very limited on what you have. So we've been taking the small options that we have and trying to put it together to make the best of what we've got. A few of the races so far we've really, really showed the pace that we have out of that.

Obviously the future is to create more options, more potential to increase the speed. But, yeah, as a driver, it's super, super competitive, super tight. We'll see again this weekend the differences in qualifying, it will be very minimal.

Yeah, it's important that you have a fast driver. I think they've found one (smiling). Yeah, that's where the difference can be made. That's why INDYCAR is as competitive as it is.

Everyone enjoys that. Everyone respects that. We try to push as much as possible.

Q. Ricardo, you said you had a choice of looking at four drivers. What was it about Callum that attracted you? Explain how well he fits in with your team.

RICARDO JUNCOS: Yeah, so at the beginning we just have Juncos with all of the drivers. It was something different about him in my view on the personality, the way he express himself. I can see what he want to achieve as a person, as a driver, as a human being, which for is me

very important.

At the same time we don't know, right? The original plan was to have three different drivers for the last three races. The last minute the other two drivers couldn't make it, so Martin, myself and Callum worked together with Ferrari in that moment for him to be allowed to do the three races. That's what happened.

At that time, maybe because of the luck, we were having the chance to have Callum for the three races. Plus 20 laps maybe Thursday here because we test prior to the three races. We have many issues, so I don't think he complete 20 laps.

At that moment he was the driver already knows four tracks of the championship going to '22. The way he approach the team, the way he react as a driver, I have no doubt in my mind that he's different, and were gambling in the right way. I feel that way with Brad, and that's what we made happen.

You don't see I think the difference between drivers is one thing. I think it's small, little details that make a difference in a person actually. So when you put together all the things that I think Callum has as a positives, even if they are small, but all together I think makes a big difference. You guys can see this year results. I think we were right. We are happy that we will make the right choice, and now we continue.

Q. Because INDYCAR driver contracts are such a big thing these days, could you shed any light? Was it a renewal of the original deal or a new deal?

RICARDO JUNCOS: Brad, you answer that.

BRAD HOLLINGER: Yeah, it was the extension of an existing deal. We decided after the last three races -- the first three races last year that Callum was someone we really wanted to be with the team for several years, not just one season. I think it gives us a much better chance at advancing the ball, which is where we want to be, obviously at the very front.

We just didn't get into it to participate, we got into it to win it. I think with Callum we have that opportunity to do it.

It takes a little bit of time to gel the team, not just the driver. Having a few years under our belt makes it's a much more palatable experience for everybody. It allows us to set not only one season goals but the next two, three season goals so we keep moving up the ladder and keep fighting for the championship over the next couple years.

That was the objective. We negotiated a longer-term agreement.

Q. An extension over the last couple months?

BRAD HOLLINGER: We really didn't have an option. We decided to sit down with Callum and Martin, his manager, and say we'd like a long-term arrangement, and they both agreed. They thought that was a really good idea, liked what they saw, and our willingness to invest heavily in the team, which we're doing, and I think the fruits of that labor are beginning to bear out significantly.

Q. Callum, your decision to stay with the team, you've turned some heads here as an INDYCAR rookie, did you think about exploring your options on the market?

CALLUM ILOTT: First of all, yeah, the last couple weeks have been interesting for the whole paddock I think. It's been quite entertaining.

But before that, the idea was to have a long, long career in INDYCAR, learn and take my time, help the team progress.

At the end of the day Ricardo and Brad have put a lot of investment in from the beginning, gave me the opportunity to come out here. The trust in them and the trust in me, vice versa, I really respected that.

We did the deal quite early on this year to continue. I'm a man of my word. Of course, there was a lot of interest from other people, but I was very honest from the very beginning if anyone approached me, Look, this is what the situation is.

But, yeah, I'm very happy to continue. I think we've got a lot of momentum. Also there's interest for engineers and people to join as well. I think as a team we'll grow, hopefully quickly. It could be slowly, but we're definitely on the right track to improve.

Q. That interest may have picked up from other places the last couple weeks, is that what you're referring to?

CALLUM ILOTT: Yeah, yeah.

Q. Callum, obviously the Ferrari deal, is that still open or are you more focused here?

CALLUM ILOTT: Long-term I'm focused here. I still have a contract and agreement with Ferrari that stands for a little bit longer, a few more years.

But, no, I'm definitely out here to see a career and make it work. Of course, if there is potential in Formula 1, then that

would have to be discussed. But at the moment I'm very happy here. It's a great career. It's some strong racing. Actually a bit more enjoyable than it was in Europe, so...

Q. What's the status of the second car? Does it have an announcement that guides more people for a second car?

CALLUM ILOTT: I think the target, irrelevant of the second car, is to build a base. I think we've been able to operate, but the idea is to accumulate as many people as possible to help build the team, build the brand.

We've been able to operate. We need to start looking at development, like other teams are doing. Irrelevant of the second car, even though it is the idea to go to two cars, we need more people to start putting that effort in.

Q. What would the status or timetable be for a second car? Are you targeting this year or next year?

BRAD HOLLINGER: We're targeting next year right now. Ricardo can allude to that a little bit more for that. We're happy to say that is the game plan for sure.

In terms of drivers, I'll turn that over to Ricardo.

RICARDO JUNCOS: It is quite difficult, INDYCAR, right? One of the key components is the system, the engineers, how you apply all that. It's easy to do two cars, three cars, four cars, the whole thing goes to nowhere, right?

We're going to prioritize the quality. Having one car, you still can perform quite okay. No question the second car will put us to the next level. That's intention. But, like I said, we need to make sure is properly first, not just do two cars just because, because otherwise can be the whole program damaged.

We're working very hard to see how we're going to put the program together. As of today, we don't know that yet, but that's clearly the way to go.

Q. How difficult is it to be the only sing full-time team in INDYCAR?

RICARDO JUNCOS: It's a huge disadvantage, but is what it is. We knew from day one is our situation and we take it.

Imagine for Callum being a rookie without knowing the tracks, we go to Toronto and we were P7, hundredths off P6, 2/10ths from P1. We were the only one with old reds. Technically we could be front row.

Being the first time, we have nobody to compare. It's very

hard. We are hypothetically comparing to imagination.

Having two cars is big advantage. But we know the different. But have to be right, right? Not just because you go to two cars. If it's not right, it may be worst. That's the key question here, how we're going to do it.

No question being only one-car team in the level of INDYCAR today, everybody can see is a little bit disadvantage. But, like I said, we knew from day one going to be like that so no complaints.

Q. Brad, can you discuss what it's like having come over from Formula 1, now heavily involved in INDYCAR.

BRAD HOLLINGER: Well, I think there's a pretty dramatic difference in terms of the persona or the culture, shall we say. In Formula 1 it is all business, all 100% corporate. You have obviously manufacturers, OEMs, that pretty much drive the success or failure of the various teams. That's only getting more significant over time. Even with the salary cap.

Formula 1 is essentially all about research, development and engineering, who has the best engineers and technical expertise.

They have outstanding drivers, no question. However, make no mistake, if you put Lewis Hamilton or Fernando Alonso in a Williams car right now or one of the back markers, they're not going to run to the front. Whereas in INDYCAR, you have fierce competition. It really is in the hands of the driver. I think that's really exciting for the fans and probably the best racing in the world, without a doubt.

As Ricardo mentioned, you can be P15 and 3/10ths off the pole position, which is just astounding. Obviously if you're in 15th in Formula 1, you're three seconds off the pole position, and will get lapped in about 15 laps.

I think that's the significant difference between the two.

The other element is just back to the cultural experience. To me it's much more collegial in INDYCAR. There's cooperation among the teams. They're very supportive. People talk to each other. They're not trying to hide the ball and everything.

They're certainly not going to tell you their setups for a particular race, but if you have a need for something, they reach out and they help each other out. That's a breath of fresh air, as well.

I think it's a really, really exciting league, and I think the sky



is the limit for INDYCAR. I think it's on a huge uptick for sure.

Q. Ricardo, how important was it for you to have continuity with Callum in the car for next season?

RICARDO JUNCOS: I think is good. Like I said, we discovered this kid probably when no one was paying attention. We took the chances, but everything was clicking. Even I said to Brad before we even put him in the car, I felt that this guy is the guy. He was that way.

You can see his personality. One of the big aspects is the feedback, the way he describe and help us and the engineer to go in one direction is one of the big thing. That is one of the biggest things he has on open of everything else. But that's very important.

Maybe that's the reason why with one-car team we can be quite okay or good because the leadership he has on the engineers side is very, very amazing. For me to continue with him is big. Like Callum was saying, we trust each other. Now we are actually performing better than what we expect last year. So we are ahead of our own game.

That means I have confident now going forward we should continue doing this, growing as we grow. Yes, I'm very happy with him.

Q. Callum, how excited are you to be going into your second full-time season having it nailed up?

CALLUM ILOTT: Yeah, I think obviously I'm super excited to continue in the series with the same team as well. That makes it a lot easier to continue what you've been learning.

I think, as well, knowing how tough it's been not only as a one-car team with no data to follow, no access to a simulator this season. The personal development has been all at the tracks. It's been a very steep learning curve every weekend. It comes with the pros and cons of some mistakes but some great results and rewards at the end of it.

I think the development over the winter, knowing all the tracks, knowing where I'm at, makes it a lot easier.

But, yeah, as a team, as a driver, it's great to continue, it's great to build off the results we have. Even coming back to this race weekend at a track we've already raced at, it should be really good to see if we found anything more and where we're at.

Q. Callum, you talk about the fact that Ferrari is still supporting you. At the start of the season you said

they weren't really going to help you out. Is that going to be in place or are they going to give you a little bit more assistance?

CALLUM ILOTT: It doesn't quite work like that. No, what assistance could they give out here that might be of use to me? I don't think there's much I can get out here.

Obviously from the Formula 1 side, when you join these academies, you normally sign a very long-term deal to get you to Formula 1. Unfortunately I'm kind of waiting in line, second in line, for whatever that was. I don't see much of an opportunity at all changing anytime soon.

Otherwise there is not much that I believe they can do. I may be surprised, someone may surprise me one day of some engineering help or something like that, or maybe I get a call to help out over the winter. I don't know.

It's not really a situation like that. It's more of a wait-and-see. You have your side of the pond which you're working on and I've got mine.

Q. What do you expect for next season?

CALLUM ILOTT: Look, from the speed aspect, I've already set a good benchmark, and I hope to already be starting from that kind of position for next season.

I think as a team, I've got to put a pressure of on these guys to build the background as much as possible and see how we can improve. Like I said, we're a bit limited on options of what we got to test at the moment. We need time. We need development on that side. That only comes in the breaks.

That's where some more speed can come from. But also I reckon next year being a bit more comfortable, not having to learn the tracks, but take my time to develop the car in the sessions, that probably helps in the FP1s. I reckon we should start where we finish off at least.

Yeah, I really hope we can be fighting at the top for podiums and wins. I think a podium is on the cards probably for the end of this year.

Q. Ricardo, what would be your criteria for the driver of the second car?

RICARDO JUNCOS: Is a tough question at the moment. We don't know yet. We are evaluating options as well as sponsors going forward. It's a tough situation because we want to do it right. To do it right we need a certain budget. The budget needs to come from the sponsors and sometimes from the driver as well. We are evaluating

options at the moment.

As of today I don't know. But the criteria will be kind of what we did last year when we choose Callum, kind of the same deal. We are going to apply the same kind of thinking behind so we can replicate what we did with Callum with the second driver.

Q. Apologies for the F1 question. About Alfa Romeo, are you going to still be working with them, FP1s, testing? Has that even been discussed?

CALLUM ILOTT: I have no agreement with anyone but Ferrari. The reserve stuff was just a call up on the weekend. I'm sure if they ask in the off-season, I can go and do it. Otherwise I am fully focused on INDYCAR and there is no other agreements.

Q. As for a teammate in the second car, if there was to be one, what would you like to see in a teammate? Someone who is going to be very experienced or someone young and fast? Is there someone within INDYCAR right now who you would like to have as a teammate?

CALLUM ILOTT: I mean, from my side, I would like someone to teach me what I haven't been taught. Obviously that's a hard one to learn what you don't know in a sense.

So, yeah, if someone was super experienced and can teach me some stuff on the oval, someone who can develop the team. Otherwise I think they're going to have a tough time competing against me for speed. Otherwise, yeah, help develop the team as much as possible, see what I can get out of them. That's my personal side of things.

Q. Ricardo, had you considered rather than having a teammate for Callum, instead forming a technical alliance in the same way that Meyer Shank did as they evolved? If so, who would you see that alliance with?

RICARDO JUNCOS: No. I mean, that's a good question. We enter thinking we going to try to partner with someone on the technical side, but we didn't. We did not have any options.

I think the way we develop the system we have now today in place, we going to continue doing that. It's a little bit quite different than others. Sometime you can say Meyer Shank did with Andretti, but sometimes doesn't work either. You can see last weekend.

There are pros and cons. I think we are going to stay

alone as we are now going forward. If we are doing good now with one car team, no technical alliance, if you can add a second car, I think we're going to be doing our own things.

I'm quite happy and secure doing that more than a technical alliance. Also there is no one that I can see willing to align with us on the technical area as well.

Q. Callum, obviously the big step for you was learning ovals. You did a brilliant job at Iowa. Is it something that you actually have come to enjoy or is it something that you have to deal with?

CALLUM ILOTT: I really enjoyed Iowa. I did really enjoy that. I think the speedway stuff, it's a bit different. I don't know if I quite like the commitment and the style in a certain sense. I'm still figuring it out. I think it took some other drivers who came over a bit of a while to decide if they enjoyed that type of thing.

I have a real appreciation for the oval racing. I think there's a lot of technique which I never even thought about before. It's a very different, tough style of racing.

Yeah there, are parts of it which are really enjoyable, parts which are not quite as rewarding, like crashing at Indy and being out for a race weekend. That's part of the game, part of the job. That's why we do what we do, take the risks that we have. People sometimes forget that.

When you mess up, it bites you in the ass.

Q. Would you say ovals are where you would most like to have a teammate?

CALLUM ILOTT: Yeah, I mean, for me, if I look back to Indy, I think to be honest with a teammate we probably could have avoided that crash. I think there were a couple of factors where if we would have developed a bit more and had a bit more target towards some things to think about, could have helped me, helped the team to not put myself in that position really.

There's a lot that goes to it. There's a lot of testing, options that you have to go through. Having a teammate not only gives you data as another driver, but you can try twice as much for the setup, see what's wrong or right. Obviously most of the time on a test day you're going through all the things that actually don't work, you find one that works. That can happen twice as quickly.

The ovals will probably teach me the most. If we have an experienced teammate who knows what they like from the car on that side. Hopefully I can learn a thing or two on the

road and street circuits.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations. Big day. Thank you.

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