

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Saturday, September 10, 2022

Linus Lundqvist

Henry Malukas

Daiva Malukas

Mike Maurini

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Celebrating a 2022 Indy Lights presented by Cooper Tires championship here today. Yes there's race 2, but this could go on all night long tonight. Great to be joined by Linus Lundqvist, driving the No. 26 HMD Motorsports with Dale Coyne Racing Machine, 23-year-old from Stockholm, Sweden, getting it done this season in 2022. Also joined by Henry Malukas, owner of HMD Motorsports, Daiva Malukas, as well. Great to see you, as well. Congratulations. Also Mike Maurini, the general manager of HMD Motorsports. Congratulations to all four of you.

Linus, lead us off. How does this feel?

LINUS LUNDQVIST: Difficult to put into words. You know, we knew that we had a good chance of winning it this weekend, and I thought I had my emotions under control, but I was clearly wrong. As soon as we crossed that checkered flag and I realized kind of what we've done, it all sort of just came to me, because this is more than just a win and the championship here. It's the years that we've had before that with my family.

Yeah, it's been a long journey. Couldn't be more proud of the way that we've done it, with the people that we've done it, as well. Got to say a massive thank you to these guys. It would not be possible without them, and I'm happy to get a championship for them.

Q. Did you allow yourself to celebrate in some form or fashion when you arrived here at practice because that's kind of when you clinched it, or did you want to wait until after this race and really soak it in?

LINUS LUNDQVIST: No, we wanted to wait after the race, for two reasons. One, I think it would be better to do it, and secondly, we still wanted to do in the race. It was a mixed

feeling because obviously the race wasn't the best for us, so I was annoyed a little bit all the way through the race until I saw the checkered flag and I saw the whole team on the pit, or at the start-finish line, and I just realized what we've done.

A lot of emotions right now, and I've got to say, as well, a massive thank you to my sponsor, especially for this weekend. I've got ProClip; massive thank you to them. And Jula and FX Airguns that I've had along all year, as well. It's a championship for them, as well.

Q. Five wins, nine podiums, six poles for Linus Lundqvist this season. He led poles, wins, podiums, top 5s, most laps led, most races led. That's pretty dominant, so congratulations. Daiva and Henry, we'll hand it over to you guys and Mike, as well. HMD snaps three consecutive championships that were held by Andretti Autosport, really putting the stake in the ground for you guys in Indy Lights. What's this like to win a championship?

HENRY MALUKAS: Well, this is the excitement. This is official HMD two years we started before that. Obviously I don't want to take any credit. We have an amazing group of people, and obviously AJ is here. This is the guy, ex-soldier. I respect the guy a lot.

The key people, that's the guy, Mike Maurini here. So just amazing job across the board. Obviously Linus is a true champion. He showed last year, and I'm glad he came here just to show what he can do as a team.

It was a long journey, but obviously we're still very young, so I think there's more to come.

DAIVA MALUKAS: I can say I'm extremely happy for Linus and especially for the team. The team works really, really hard, and I think they really deserve to have the championship in the books. It's really, really exciting.

Q. Mike, you've been pretty busy this season --

MIKE MAURINI: No, it's been pretty easy. (Laughter.)

No, it's been pretty good. To go against Andretti Autosport, it's obviously an INDYCAR team, so a little bit more

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resources than what we currently have, but we're changing that as we speak. Congratulations to Linus, thank you to Henry, Daiva, AJ, the whole team, for putting a lot of stuff that happened throughout the whole year, but thank you and congrats.

Q. Henry, we've talked to Linus a bunch about his future, and he doesn't really know what's going to happen. Is there a potential that he can stay with you and do something next year?

LINUS LUNDQVIST: Say yes. Say yes. Say yes.
(Laughter.)

HENRY MALUKAS: It is definitely potential. I mean, we've already talked many times about that, and I hope myself to do that. It would be very cool to see him with David. I think that would be a great team and that would help each other push each other just like we did last year in Indy Lights. So it's very possible.

Q. Would that mean HMD has two INDYCAR programs?

HENRY MALUKAS: Yes.

Q. There you go, Linus.

LINUS LUNDQVIST: Ha. Confirmed, yeah, okay, it's done.

HENRY MALUKAS: Well, it's not confirmed, but that's what we're trying to do. I don't know about Sato, what his plan or the future. Like zero. But Dale could run three cars. Obviously depending on Honda. I know Honda are looking for a good driver. Sitting one here. If he can put everything together, I hope so. Obviously this is a lot in many aspects to get that going. But I definitely support that, and hopefully we can pull off.

But if Sato, it would be easier even to do that. We need I would say a couple more months or so.

Q. Do you see HMD standing on its own ever?

HENRY MALUKAS: Yeah, I see it. Why not.

Obviously a big step, and we have to be very careful not overdo it. Obviously I'm just learning myself. It's a much bigger step than I thought from Indy Lights. It's huge.

I just do not want to suffer the team like Indy Lights we had obviously -- actually David did help a lot for the team, HMD, because I put through this new teams, like we had go-kart people, and -- like 2019 it was very hard to watch

him to go through this, and it takes time. It takes years to get the performance up and running and the people.

But we did it, obviously, so thanks to David Malukas an top of all the other -- he just helped -- I think he helped all the chemistry and everything. He brought that, and then obviously Linus show up in 2021 and just -- Linus, Benjamin, that was a dream team. I'll never forget that one.

So I don't want to repeat that. In INDYCAR it will be much more. It may not be one year or two or three, especially a rookie and everything. So we have to really be cautious about it.

Q. I know the reports are out that you guys are thinking about eight cars next year in Lights. In a championship like this, how does that affect -- does it give you a big boost heading into 2023?

MIKE MAURINI: Yeah, we will be eight cars, yeah. We have eight drivers signed. So yeah, we're moving forward with that, and hopefully we can repeat. A lot of the drivers that we have for next year are new rookies in the series, so I think we have set ourselves up pretty good for 2024, but next year there's a few surprises that you'll see.

Hopefully it's a good year.

Q. You guys aren't easing into this, are you.

HENRY MALUKAS: Yeah, we're having a good time.

MIKE MAURINI: Some of us are.

Q. Linus, how do you celebrate tonight knowing you've got to race again tomorrow?

LINUS LUNDQVIST: I was going to say we have a race again tomorrow, so not too much, but on Sunday it will be a proper celebration.

Q. David's name has been linked with other teams. Is he definitely coming back to HMD with the INDYCAR program or is there a chance Linus could take his spot?

HENRY MALUKAS: He's coming back this year, yes. '23 with Dale, obviously. Yes, in the future, there is proposals. David would decide that. I kind of hold him through the years; he had no options. But I think he's getting ready to become a man, so he can do whatever he has to do.

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