

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

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## Romain Grosjean

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We've got Romain Grosjean, season No. 3, obviously back in the DHL colors with Andretti Autosport, driving the No. 28 Honda.

Your thoughts about getting started again, back in the car tomorrow, and here we go for season No. 3 for you.

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: Yeah, finally. It's been a long break. It's very unusual for me to get such a long time off from the racetrack, since last September in Laguna Seca. Very much looking forward to getting back in the car.

I think I got lucky that I got unrusty with the Rolex 24 last week, but looking forward to getting back in the car and see how much progress we've made over the winter.

**Q. Even though you're not in an INDYCAR you are piloting something judging by social media. Do you care to explain?**

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: I got bored of waiting in the airports so I thought I was going to fly myself and do my pilot's license. It's actually something I wanted to do for a long time. It was very complicated in Europe to do the pilot license, to go to the ground school twice a week, and with our life it's impossible. I decided to tackle it and went through it pretty fast, so having a lot of fun with that.

Went twice at St. Pete just to land on the start-finish line, and that was pretty cool. The guy, the air traffic control was like, yeah, left on acre five, turn, and then back. I was like, oh, yeah, going over the racetrack, I'll take it, and I go back to the pit lane I was like, oh, yeah, yeah, that's true. So it was quite funny.

**Q. Just kind of thinking about the fact that back in your Lotus years in Formula 1 you worked with Benjamin Peterson's dad and you watched him grow up in the paddock in Formula 1. Now you're racing against each other and he's a rookie this year. Talk to me about how special and wild that is.**

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: Yeah, it's really cool. Yes, I've

known Christian for a long time; 2012, 2013, we had dinner in Paris with Christian. I've saw him at the race season then. Actually Benjamin asked me if he could use my helmet design for the last few years. In 2014 I think he copied my helmet design for his first helmet. He's just changed now. He's got his own, but until that point he was carrying the helmet in different colors but the same design, which I thought was super cool.

Yeah, so I think he's a great kid. It's a great family. I've been following what he was doing.

When you see someone at first like yeah, my son wants to go to racing. Okay, a lot of kids want to go to racing, but they pursue and they pushed hard, and I'm happy to see him in Indy. I think he did really well in Indy Lights or Indy Next, and I hope he's going to have a good season.

**Q. Tell us a little bit more about becoming a licensed pilot. You said it all happened pretty quick. How many hours? Was it all in the off-season?**

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: Well, I've wanted to do it since I'm 30 years old, so not that long ago, but some years ago. Being with Alexander Rossi, flew his plane to some races last year. I thought that was pretty cool. I thought, okay, I'll look into it. Found a school what I could all the theory online.

So actually I started doing the theory in Nashville. That's when I started getting the first book online, and since then I've done my private pilot license, my multiengine license, my instrument flight rating license, and I've got 115 hours of flight time, I think.

Commercial by the end of the year, so then I can take Roger -- Roger can pay me to fly him around to races if things go bad with racing.

**Q. Are you planning to fly on your own to most races this year?**

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: Yes. I'm flying to the race and i drive my RV and then fly back to -- I flew to Daytona for the race. I'm definitely going to fly to St. Pete, and yeah, pretty much everywhere I can. If the weather is good enough, I'll be flying.



**Q. It seems like driving the motor home is another example of where moving to America seems to have opened up these opportunities, possibilities for you that you wouldn't have maybe gotten --**

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: Yeah, I think America is very -- there's one thing that I told my kids and I told my friend about America, and for me that's the biggest difference between Europe and here, is here everything is possible. If you have the wish, if you give yourself the possibility of doing it, everything is possible.

It is different in Europe. Much more boundaries on the way. Much more steps that you need to do in a certain order. But if you want to be extraordinary, if you want to do something different, you don't need to do those steps because you can work through.

Yeah, I like doing things, and when I do them, I like doing them well. But here I think just the opportunity of driving the RV, flying planes, for my kids to do whatever they want to do, we love that here. Yeah, it's been the best discovery for us.

**Q. The Andretti lineup going into '23 obviously is different with Alex leaving, and now you have Colton who's 22 but has been there the longest. Obviously you have a lot of experience, more probably experience than anybody on the team. Can you give us your perspective on how you think that'll work this season?**

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: I think it's going to work well. I think we've got a strong lineup again, with Kyle joining in. We know Kyle is a very fast driver, so it's going to be exciting to have him on board.

We know what Colton is capable of. I think I've got some experience. I've got one year of experience with the team. We've made some -- we've worked hard during the winter on my side, but also on Tim's side. I think last year wasn't the year that we wanted.

Everyone has been working really hard and I'm excited. I think everyone that you're going to see today or you saw yesterday in the room is excited. Everyone thinks that he's got an amazing win to break, and has done more work than the others, but I don't know, time will tell, track will tell us, but we feel like we've done some good steps.

**Q. Another question on becoming a pilot. Just trying to get a perspective of the plane you're flying and what it can do. Would you be able to fly from Florida all the way out to Laguna Seca, or is that out of your realm --**

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: Yeah, Laguna I'm not going to do it because it's the one weekend I would need three fuel stops, but I'm coming to Portland with it because then we go to Laguna and then I fly back. Portland is a two-day trip. It's about 10 hours in the middle with one stop in the middle, sleep in, and then fly over the Rockies the next day and get a beautiful view of the U.S.

**Q. How are you going to fly Roger in his plane if he goes straight?**

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: I just need training. I have got the instrument endorsement already. I have got complex. I need to borrow Roger's plane and then fly it, but I'll need the training on that one.

**Q. I know you mentioned that Rossi has become a pilot. I think if I remember right, Ed Carpenter might be looking into it, as well.**

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: I think they share a plane.

**Q. Okay. What is it about being -- I don't know if it's being up in the air that high, if it's just the thrill of that type of machinery when you're obviously someone that loves that and does that for your day job, what is it about being a pilot?**

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: Freedom. Freedom to go anywhere you want, anytime you want. It's the beauty of it. I took my wife for lunch in Key West last week. 37 minutes to go, 41 on the way back, and we're in Key West, as far as you can get south in the U.S.

We can go to the Bahamas for a day if we want to. Anywhere. I think that's just great to know that you can do whatever you want.

**Q. On the racing side, you mentioned last season wasn't what you guys were wanting it to be from a team perspective, from your experience in your first year with Andretti. After you guys had an off-season to go over things, diagnose, was there any one or a couple takeaways that you felt like led to kind of a very up-and-down year for your introduction at Andretti?**

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: I think we looked at everything. As I say, it wasn't one thing, it was a few things together that we could do better, so we've tried to tidy everything up. The team has done some great work. I've been doing my own work, too, on my side.

I think also for Olivier and myself it will be easier in year two as a team. Olivier has had the whole winter break to

do his stuff, whereas last year we came in and was like almost ready to go.

Yeah, I'm excited about that. But what I'm excited about the most is that I am genuinely looking forward to jumping back in an INDYCAR, and that's a feeling I like having, because that means I still love more than anything -- well, I love my job a lot and I want to go racing.

**Q. Wanted to ask about the Lamborghini experience at Daytona and how many more GT races you're planning this year, and how helpful is it to you for preparing for LMDH last year?**

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: Well, Lamborghini is a lot of fun. I've enjoyed my time with the teammates in Daytona. The BOP wasn't in our favor, so we knew it was going to be tough.

But I think we did a very good job at what we did, finishing fourth in the lead lap, being so far off the pace. So that was awesome. Endurance is something I wanted to do for a long time. I think the most beautiful thing about the INDYCAR Championship and IMSA endurance races is that they don't clash, so we get the chance to do both.

I get the chance to be very selfish and drive INDYCAR and just look after myself, and I got the chance to share experience like 24 hours, which are very strong with teammates and team.

This year I'm going to do -- I've done Daytona, I'm going to do Sebring, probably Petit LeMans; next year the program includes those races plus Le Mans 24, so I'll keep my fingers crossed like that we get the weekend off from INDYCAR.

I think it would make a lot of sense. There's how many of us, 16 or 12 INDYCAR drivers in Daytona? 10? So 10 to 15 drivers let's say doing both, and I think for both series it's amazing. If we can get Le Mans, it's also amazing because it's just cool.

I remember Mario flying across the Atlantic doing Monaco and the Indy 500, and those guys, they were racing everywhere, Formula 3, Formula 2, Formula 1. They were doing the races in opening of the Formula 1 race, and I think that's very cool for us.

So yeah, looking forward to the project. There's going to be a lot of development coming on. By the time we finish the INDYCAR season the LMDH will be here in the States. And that's when I'm going to spend a lot of time on it.

**Q. For next year INDYCAR will still be your priority**

**and Lamborghini will just be the endurance races?**

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: Yes.

**Q. Although you have much more experience in racing and you're by age the oldest driver at Andretti Autosport, a lot of people look at Colton as the longest tenured driver there, and he's only 22. When you look at him and see what he's been able to accomplish at such a young age, what do you think, and what do you think of the upside that Colton Herta has?**

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: I think we're all different. The drivers that come very early in Formula 1. I mean, look at Verstappen. Was racing at 17; was world champion when he was 20 -- I don't know. I'm not good with numbers and age.

But I think, yeah, it's very cool for Colton. He came very early, decided that -- I guess because of the family story, U.S. was going to be his style of racing, and came very early, youngest INDYCAR winner, which is awesome.

But yeah, as you say, he's got a lot of experience already. I think it depends on generation. Some generations come very early, some of us come a little bit later. There's no real rules in racing, it's not like you need to be a certain age to be a certain place, so I like that, and for sure Colton is a great asset in the team, and I'm looking forward to doing another season alongside him.

**Q. Just a question about the 100 Days in May, the documentary series that's going to be leading up to the Indianapolis 500. What do you think it will do for the series, and have they interviewed you yet or followed you around at all?**

ROMAIN GROSJEAN: I think it's an awesome news, and it's great that we've got the 100 Days to Indy going on. I think a lot of people will discover INDYCAR behind the scenes and what it is really, so I'm very excited about that.

We haven't started shooting yet. We haven't started doing interviews. I believe it's coming. It's starting from like this weekend.

But I think we've all seen what some other series could do for some other sports, and I think we've got the right people doing it for us, so I'm excited to see what we can produce.

THE MODERATOR: That will wrap things up for you. Thank you so much, Romain Grosjean, have a great content day. We'll see you on the track tomorrow.

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