

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

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## Agustin Canapino

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Great to have the rookie for Juncos Hollinger Racing, Agustin Canapino, after so much experience in Argentina and now carrying the Argentine flag for the team.

Just announced a couple weeks ago, and you just arrived to the United States 10 days or so ago probably.

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: Yes. Hello, everybody. It's only two weeks ago.

### Q. How has the transition been?

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: Oh, difficult. I am very happy to be here. Of course it's my first time outside my country, outside my language. I never speak English all the time, so sorry for my English for everybody, but I'm trying to learn day by day, and I'm excited about this opportunity.

### Q. Callum said that you only started learning English last year; is that correct?

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: Three months ago I only could say hello.

### Q. How are you learning? Who's teaching you?

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: A teacher from Argentina, a friend to my main sponsor and manager. I started to do two, three classes a week, and I don't know, I am here.

### Q. How long are the classes?

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: Hours and a half, but I focus a lot to at least try to learn to speak, to communicate, and of course I need to improve a lot, but at least I can speak with the engineers and some people.

### Q. It's actually fascinating. Your English is fine; it's mind blowing. Like we're idiots.

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: No, I think it's really bad. This morning actually a lot in the car because I need to speak

English every time, but I don't know.

### Q. This is your first time out of Argentina?

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: Yes, my first --

### Q. You've never left Argentina before?

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: Yes, I left, but only for a few days, but it my first time living outside my country. I did my career in South America and speak Spanish, only a little bit of Portuguese. When I did stock car in Brazil I did two races, but otherwise Spanish.

### Q. You're the first Argentinian I've seen since the World Cup. How was that?

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: Oh, my God, we are very proud. We are very proud, especially for Messi. He's like a God in our country, and he is a God. But we are very proud, very proud of the soccer in our country is very, very important sport, very popular.

We are in a bad moment in our country, economic moment is very bad in that moment, so this situation is very good for all the people because we are in a bad moment.

### Q. I know Ricardo has been talking to us for a while about wanting to add a second full-time driver alongside Callum to continue to build this INDYCAR team. When did the prospect of joining INDYCAR and conversations with Ricardo and Brad come to your attention? How long had this potential opportunity been in motion for you?

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: Oh, everything started in the test because we did exhibitions in Argentina. We had a lot of people watching the exhibitions, very successful event. It all started there in Sebring and I started the exhibitions.

Honestly, I didn't expect that, so I have all of my 2023 ready in my series in Argentina, and Ricardo called me in December, we have a chance to do that, so of course I need to change everything, to talk with my team owner in Argentina, make a new life very different.

But I take this opportunity because for me it's my first

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opportunity outside my country. Of course I know, it's very difficult to me. I never did any full season in a single seat car, but I'm very excited and I will do my best. I will do my best.

**Q. What about this INDYCAR opportunity, as one who has had so little time in single seaters, open-wheel racing, and someone who's had such an incredibly successful career in stock cars in South America, why was this something you wanted to give a shot?**

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: Because it's INDYCAR. INDYCAR is in my opinion the most demanding and competitive category in the world. For me it's a big opportunity to try something outside, something in international level. We are here with Grosjean, with Dixon, with Power, of course Callum, one of the best drivers in the world, so for me it's a big opportunity.

Of course we are in trouble because I don't know the cars, the tracks, the ovals, but I love the challenge. I love the situation. So I know it's very difficult to me, but I have confidence. Of course I need time. I need time. I need to learn day by day, test by test. That's it.

**Q. Again, your English is amazing, but were you worried? Is there a backup plan if you wouldn't have gotten it so quickly in three months? Were you nervous about being able to get up to speed quick enough?**

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: No, I don't know, so I'm very -- always in my life -- it was very difficult, honestly. I lost my father two years ago. I have a very tough infancy -- I don't know the name, but when I was a child always was very difficult to me, so I am like this.

I am very focused on when I have an objective in my mind, I go for that. I don't know. Honestly, I think my English is very bad. Sorry.

**Q. It's not.**

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: This is the situation. I always try to do perfect everything, and if I can't do it perfect, for me it's not do it. I am like this.

**Q. You always figure it out; it always works out?**

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: Yeah.

**Q. What's important about knowing English with communicating to the engineers? Are there certain things you had to know how to talk to them about the car? Are you going to be learning that in the next few**

**days?**

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: It's very important. It's very important, but I need to practice. Need to practice the conversation, need to practice to hear the engineer. Ricardo helped me, of course. Tomorrow and on Friday and of course in St. Pete. But I need practice. I need to do laps. I need to hear my engineer in English. I need to speak with you in English. I need to practice and keep my focus on everything.

**Q. How big of a culture shock was it moving from Argentina to Indianapolis?**

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: The cold. But I love United States. It's very different. All is very different. I'm very happy to be here. I like this experience with my girlfriend. All is very, very different, the food, the weather. I don't know, all -- I'm enjoying a lot the experience. Only two weeks I am here. I need to live a lot more.

**Q. The exhibition run that Ricardo had with the car in Argentina, how big was that, and how do you describe to us really how that helped seal the deal for you to be an INDYCAR driver?**

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: Yes, yes. Maybe about that, it's better if Ricardo talks about that. But it was very successful. We had a lot of people, more than 70,000, because in our country, the motorsport is very popular. It's the second sport after the soccer. We have a lot of fans, so you can see in social media the people are very crazy with this opportunity for me.

We have a lot of fans of motorsport in South America, especially in Argentina.

**Q. Do you think there will be any translation from the Turismo Carretera to the INDYCAR?**

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: No, it's very different. They're different because the demanding -- especially the physical demanding. INDYCAR is the most demanding about the physical conditioning in the world, so I think this is my big challenge, the physical, especially because the races are very long here.

I did 40 minutes, 45 minutes races in my country and here are two and a half hours, and especially the ovals. I think all is very different. But at the end of the day, it's racing cars. I think this is the most common thing is racing cars.

**Q. You've had a long relationship with Chevrolet; how cool is that to keep continuing that --**

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AGUSTIN CANAPINO: Oh, it's awesome. It's awesome, because in my country the Chevy fans are a lot. You can see a lot of people with tattoos, with the Chevy logo, with my car, with my sign. The Chevy brand in my country is very popular, so for me it's a good thing.

**Q. I wanted to ask, you say a racing car is a racing car, but obviously those Chevys are front wheel drive, the TC car is front wheel drive. What are the bad habits that you have to get out of doing in order to be where you have to stop thinking like a touring car driver and start thinking like an INDYCAR driver? What are the big challenges there?**

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: I said racing cars, of course you need to go fast in every car. I say that. But it's very, very different. It's much more difficult, much more difficult an INDYCAR car than I drove in the past. Of course I know that, and this is the challenge.

I love that, because now I have to do more professional, more preparing, and I have the best drivers in the world in the track. All is very different, of course, and most demanding.

**Q. How much simulator time have you had so far?**

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: Simulator? Not too much. Not too much because I am a work in progress with simulator in my home, but I am a Williams Esports driver in the sim racing world. I love the simulations. Of course I did a lot of races or tests with an INDYCAR sim, but it's not the same. It's very different and more difficult.

**Q. I know there are some things that are common to you, the Chevrolet logo, visit Argentina. Are you a Porteño, or are you from other places inside Argentina?**

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: Where I am from?

**Q. Yeah, are you a Porteño?**

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: No, I am from a small town like two hours from Buenos Aires. The name is Arrecifes. I am from there.

**Q. Being from Arrecifes, what led you to start racing cars throughout Brazil or Argentina?**

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: Yeah, I did my entire career in Argentina, because in our country we have a very strong categories and very popular. We have very good sponsors. We have a lot of fans in the tracks. Always we have 40, 30, 50,000 per race watching the races; 50 cars

in only one category.

It's very popular. It's very important, but of course it's touring cars, it's not INDYCAR, and low car drivers. The big difference now is the other drivers, the car and the ovals. This is my big three difference I will have this year.

**Q. You started 18 years ago like a virtual driver. Could you talk a little bit about that. Plus, your INDYCAR rookie season starts with a race near to St. Petersburg. Talk about that.**

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: Yes, I couldn't do go-karts because I couldn't for economic situations and a lot of other things about my family, and I started when I was 15 years old. I was older in comparison of the other drivers.

Everything in my whole career, it's like now very weird, very strange, very challenge. I did all my career like this, with a lot of difficulty, but I love that because I grew up with all of these situations, and I can take this opportunity with a lot of motivation unless, of course, it's very -- I don't know what happened, but I am here with a lot of confidence, and I am very happy to be here.

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