

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Wednesday, February 1, 2023

Conor Daly

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Conor Daly joins us now. Of course, he drives the No. 20 BitNile machine for Ed Carpenter Racing. Chevrolet back onboard once again with the team.

Conor, how is your content day going so far? You're working ahead a little bit.

CONOR DALY: Yeah, there's a track walk to get to. We did all this yesterday with our sponsor. This is day two of wearing my funny onesie and shoes that are uncomfortable.

THE MODERATOR: At the risk of you answering the same question over and over again, you're looking forward to getting back in the car tomorrow?

CONOR DALY: Yeah, man, it's rare to get to drive our INDYCARs now in the off time. These days are really, really important. It's just honestly good from a physical standpoint just to get in the car.

We can train all we want, and I've had the most consistent training regime of any off-season thankfully, so it feels good what we've been doing in the gym, but there's nothing like getting in these cars to drive to really prepare yourself for the first race.

It's going to be important. Try to do as many laps as possible.

THE MODERATOR: I'll give you a sponsor plug; big announcement today about the BitNile cars. How exciting is that?

CONOR DALY: It's awesome. BitNile.com across three Ed Carpenter Racing cars, it's really cool. It's a conversation that started almost just over a year ago in Las Vegas. Now it's a sponsor across three race cars.

Really, really cool to have that presence, to have that support. Yeah, I'm just pumped to get it going. The cars look great. We're all very excited and just ready to pump the BitNile.com website, the launch March 1st right before

St. Pete. It's going to be fun.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. It is rare for you guys to get on track and do as many laps as possible. It's even more rare to do it at a track you've never been to. What is the challenge going to be like trying to make the most out of this place?

CONOR DALY: Well, I'm trying to think back to I guess the last time we all had to learn a new track. It's probably Nashville. We're going to have to do it again at Detroit, right, because Detroit will be a new one for us this year.

We've done it before. But when it comes to Nashville, it was very, very time condensed, then we went racing. This is just two full days of testing.

It's hard when it comes to just two full days of testing because obviously some people will adapt to it quicker than others. You might feel like a hero, then the next day you might feel like a zero because some people have caught up.

Is really kind of funny to see. It's kind of a shame that it's all officially timed and judged upon day one because it could be a complete flip in day two.

But these days are important because hopefully it is an indication for us on all the permanent road circuits that we go to, right? This is a permanent road circuit that we get to test at which is important for a number of tracks: Mid-Ohio, Laguna Seca, Indy GP, all the permanent tracks we go to.

Hopefully it's helpful for us in all those scenarios. We'll see what happens, I guess.

Q. Is it important maybe to stay a little bit measured? It's not like any track exactly on the circuit.

CONOR DALY: Yeah, and it's a long lap, too. I guess if we're kind of thinking and simulatoring that it's a minute 44, 43, 42. That's kind of what I heard. But I don't really know. When it comes to tire stints, as well, we can only really get 18 to 20 laps out of tires. Like, that's not a lot.



Hopefully we can use those laps just as efficiently as possible. Again, yeah, it doesn't matter to us how fast we go, as long as we get something out of it, right? How do we judge some changes? If that's great for a certain section of the track, right, that could represent a section of another road track we go to.

There's a lot that we can learn, for sure. Realistically we kind of have to keep ourselves, I guess, in check with our expectations and what we want, make sure that we focus on our test plan, just get through that, and enjoy it, enjoy what we can learn, take a lot from it.

Q. I was listening to your podcast this week. Wanted to follow up on something about the Vice show. I couldn't agree with you more that hate sells. That's what reality television is about is drama, you guys butting heads. To your point, you tend not to be honest about each other. Is that the big challenge? Have you talked to other drivers or producers of INDYCAR? Do people understand as much as I know you tend to get along in public, you kind of need to dispense with that a little bit to make the show work?

CONOR DALY: Yeah, no, I mean, it's important to just be honest like right after races, too. I told the producers and the director, Really get in our faces right after the races. That's kind of when we really will be honest about what happened or what's going on or who did what to who.

I think there are really a lot of, like, for sure a lot of us do get along. Honestly on track a lot of those friendships go out the window. There are people that you can trust, I would say. I would say friendships are irrelevant on track, but trust is definitely something that you do have more with some than others.

Talk about that, you know what I mean? Talk about who you trust and talk about who you don't. I think that's something people would really want to see.

Honestly, it's uncomfortable I guess to be generating that type of chatter between drivers because, again, there are some fans and people that support some drivers more than others. If there is something said about that driver that they support, then they will come after you.

But honestly, good. What's happening on, like, F1 and NASCAR Twitter is very aggressive and very angry and very crazy at times, but it is people talking about it, so that's good. The more talk the better. If it causes a conversation, great.

Q. Have you talked to Santino since last July?

CONOR DALY: July?

Q. Indy road course.

CONOR DALY: No. I don't really talk to him at all honestly. It's kind of what I do.

We got to the Thermal racetrack at the same time. That was about it. Looked at him and went straight to my room. That's all that matters to me (smiling).

I mean, I'm honest. I don't really care. I think it's great.

Q. You were a massive proponent when this show was announced in December. You've been taping with these folks already. How have your initial conversations and interactions with them compared to what your thoughts or expectations were coming in in December?

CONOR DALY: I mean, honestly, right out the gate, I think it's very professional. The way I felt like I was being interviewed at the track when we did our sit-down one on one, very high level. That's good. It's not just some guy with a phone and someone interviewing with you with a little microphone. It's real stuff.

I think there's obviously room for all that, but when you talk about a real television production, that's something that is hopefully going to make a difference for all of our jobs, including everyone sitting here, right? Hopefully it takes everything to a higher level and it takes all the recognition and everything that we do to a higher level.

That's going to be fun, I think, at the same time. The director is awesome. I like him a lot. He's done some cool stuff. The documentary for the PGA TOUR, Netflix show that just came out, the trailer for that was really cool. He was part of that. There's a lot of cool stuff that is going on.

I told every driver that I see, Just talk to them, just doing something with them. If you have a chance, just do it because you have to. Just do it. It's not that hard honestly. It really isn't. We have time to do it, so just talk to them and be a part of it.

Q. You of all people know how important an off-chance networking opportunity can be. Birthday trip a couple Decembers ago turned into BitNile being on all three of the ECR cars. I know that's potentially part of why INDYCAR is at Thermal for this test. What do you understand beyond the on-track part of it of why we're here, what the importance of that might be for the paddock and the series?

CONOR DALY: Yeah, I mean, if I'm honest, I don't know the full story behind it. I know it's nice outside, so that's good. And the track is a very good-looking track. I've been there yesterday. We did some photographs out there on the track. It is a great facility. It is really, really cool.

If there is some business to be done, that is important for our sport obviously. It still is driving on the racetrack, so that's also important for all of us as drivers and teams.

I don't know who we're going to meet tonight at the welcome party, right, or whatever it is. I don't know who is going to be here at the test over the next couple of days.

But for me, I'm excited to meet whoever it is that might be here. You know what I mean? I've been here once before way back in the day, 2014 or '15, because the O'Gara company, who has a giant garage out here, I've done a lot of work with them in the past, drove one of their Lamborghini Supercars out here way back in the day. That's been a long time, I feel like.

It's cool to see where the track has come from and where it is now, where it might be going. It's certainly really cool. So, yeah, who knows. But I'm just excited to drive (smiling).

Q. Non-INDYCAR related. What can you tell us about talks that might be going onto secure you a Daytona 500 ride a couple weeks from now?

CONOR DALY: Great question (laughter). I mean, I didn't know anything about that until recently. Who knows what will happen in the next couple days or weeks, I guess. Is it February yet?

Q. February 1.

CONOR DALY: Happy February, everyone. We made it to February.

Q. If that were to present itself, I know you would be someone that would have to qualify for the race. You have some stockcar experience, but not on an oval.

CONOR DALY: Only truck experience on an oval.

Q. Would you be like, Of course, I'm going to try that sight unseen without any practice? Does any part of that, the difficulty of even just qualifying for the race, play into your mindset?

CONOR DALY: Well, if that opportunity were to come up, I chatted with a young man by the name of Helio Castroneves earlier, and I think for him an opportunity like

that could probably come about really anytime. But for me, I don't know if an opportunity like that would come again.

I have done a lot in my life by, you know what, if there is a chance to do it, might as well do it. So who knows what might happen. But if there is a chance, I feel like I can't not do it, or not try to do it at least.

Q. You are going to be making your hundredth start at some point this season, maybe Long Beach.

CONOR DALY: Yes.

Q. Go back to 2018. Did you think that would be even close to possible?

CONOR DALY: Man, 2018, that was an interesting one. Not really, honestly.

I've seen many drivers make all their large number starts, which is pretty cool. But, yeah, it's hard to say. Earlier today someone in one of the media rooms, it's going to be your ninth season.

I haven't done nine INDYCAR seasons. I've dabbled in nine seasons, but I haven't done nine seasons of racing.

It's been cool to be around for nine seasons. But I'm just excited to be here again. This level of continuity is super important, right? We have a great off-season to work together with the team, to work with all of our partners, to really market what we want to market really well this year with BitNile.com.

We want to be faster at certain places. We've been able to look at all those places all during the off-season, which is really cool. We got to do a lot of simulatoring days in the end of last season, the beginning of this season.

There's a lot of really cool stuff. Even after the Indy 500 last year, there's areas where, like, I obviously have not been as good at qualifying there as my teammates have been, so that's really an area I would like to be better. But, boy, have we been good in those races the last two years. Excited to take that to another level as well.

We know our cars, when we show up there, are very, very good. All of it is good. I did not know I would get to this point. I'm 31 years old and I'm still racing INDYCARs, which is kind of crazy. I hope to do that for many more years, too.

Q. All three cars have the sponsorship. You're a mature driver on that team. This is one of your first real mature seasons going into it, 2023, with the kind



of stability that you have. How does all of that feel at this point in time in your career?

CONOR DALY: Well, it feels great for me, honestly, to have that environment to be in. Last year there were several tracks that we went to as a team for the first time. You're right, we now get to go back to places like Iowa, St. Louis, together for the second time.

That's awesome because I think we had great qualifying efforts at Iowa, for sure, and I loved where we were going in the St. Louis race until we ran into some issues there. I think there's a lot of really cool stuff that we all got to experience really together for the first time.

There's a lot of really exciting stuff ahead. There's a lot of really cool stuff with Todd Ault and BitNile.com that we're going to do together. Everything just feels great. I'm excited to get going again.

A lot to look forward to. Yeah, it all starts tomorrow.

Q. I covered that race at the Roval that you ran in, your first NASCAR race. You finished the race.

CONOR DALY: That is true (laughter).

Q. You raced pretty well, although you did have an electrical issue.

CONOR DALY: Electrical fire and two exploded left fronts, which was my fault, I believe. One of them maybe not (smiling).

Q. What did you think of the whole wild atmosphere? If you did get to do Daytona, it's not so much qualify by time, it will be in the qualifying race, which in some ways may be a benefit to you.

CONOR DALY: The good thing about doing the Roval was it kept my body in race mode longer. Obviously our season ends in the middle of September. I got to do a long, three-hour event in a race car in October. That's helpful.

With how hard these cars are to drive nowadays, it's super important to keep your mind and body sharp like that.

The Cup car isn't as physical to drive, but it's still hot and still gets the heart going. So that's important. So, yeah, it was a great experience to be able to do. Not the smoothest experience, I will say, but really cool to get to do that and be a part of the NASCAR Cup Series and hopefully obviously shine some light on the INDYCAR SERIES as well.

I think we deserve more attention than we have got in the past. I hope we continue to get more in the future. Obviously people still want to do these races in this series that we're a part of. Kyle Larson is coming to do the Indy 500. Everyone wants to see that.

Hopefully this show will get us to another level. The promotion that I think the Penske Entertainment Group are going to put into this series is going to be more and more, which I think we all can agree that we need. I'm excited to see how that is used and how that is displayed for everyone to see so we can have more and more eyes on this great series that we have here in front of us.

Q. I believe you're buddies with Pat McAfee. He has a huge podcast.

CONOR DALY: He does.

Q. You know what sells. Are you taking any of the things you learned from him that you might be able to apply to this docuseries?

CONOR DALY: That's a great question. Pat and I haven't spoken for a long time because he's probably one of the busiest men in sports right now.

I talk to a lot of his boys on the show all the time, see them downtown Indianapolis. Honestly it's super cool to see what they have done. They have done it in a great way. I think they've become so massive. The money that they are making is one key factor that tells you they're probably doing things right.

I've learned a lot from him. Hopefully we can just keep building and growing and just doing fun stuff, just doing cool things that people want to be a part of.

I think we are. I think we're on our way there, for sure.

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