

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Wednesday, February 1, 2023

Ed Carpenter

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are joined by the boss in Ed Carpenter. Earlier today, the BitNile.com press release that came out, confirming it will be part of your 20th Indianapolis 500 later this year, competing on the rest of the ovals in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES.

ED CARPENTER: Yes.

THE MODERATOR: You're back. Are you ready to go again?

ED CARPENTER: Yeah, I am. Feel good.

THE MODERATOR: Can we get you a cup of coffee? You okay?

ED CARPENTER: No, I'm good. You know me (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: A lot of energy with your guys. They seem pretty pumped.

ED CARPENTER: Yeah, there's a lot of great things going on with the team. You hear about it, you hear about plans. But we spent a whole day yesterday doing basically what we're doing today just with our partner. They had a whole team there.

For Conor and Rinus, I think it was the first time they were able to hear and see a lot of the plans that are in place for this year.

It is an exciting and encouraging time just to lead into this weekend or this week, really kicking off the season.

THE MODERATOR: I know you won't be in a car until, what, Texas?

ED CARPENTER: Yes.

THE MODERATOR: You're amping up, starting the season. You got to stay out for a couple races.

ED CARPENTER: Yeah. That's somewhat normal at this

point. It's been the cadence of my season for a while. For a while we didn't have a race before Indy at all. I'm thankful that we have Texas leading into May just to get things going.

The teams, our crews, are mostly the same, but we do have a little change. To be able to, for the 33 crew anyway, get a race under our belt, work out some kinks if need be leading into May is helpful.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. With this announcement being such a big presence, a big proponent for your guys' team this year, can you tell us a little bit more about how this came to be. We know the story of how Conor found them. Backing all three cars this year, I imagine that's a larger investment from them. How have they helped you?

ED CARPENTER: Yeah, Conor, the Vegas trip, that's real. There's another player involved in that that has been instrumental in helping run the project and growing it.

But really Todd, I think all major partners that work like this, at some level they share a passion for the sport. Todd's wife is from Indiana. They had been attending the 500 as fans for a long time.

He happened to be fans of all of us. Before we all met, he was actually in negotiations with another INDYCAR team. It kind of fell apart. We all met. It was pretty interesting, the whole process.

Last year I think Todd always envisioned something looking like what we will look like in 2023. I think last year was a learning experience for everyone. Now we're launching into a bigger project with BitNile.com, which is very exciting. I can't wait for everyone to see all the things they're doing and what it will grow into as the year goes on.

But, yeah, there's a lot of energy, a lot of passion. So long as everything is successful, hopefully it will be a long-lasting partnership.

Q. I'm not someone that understands Bitcoin and everything around it very well. Probably asking a silly



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question. When you're going all in with a partner, instability around Bitcoin, is there any sort of a risk of having your team be all in on that?

ED CARPENTER: I think last year was probably more of a direct Bitcoin relationship. With the new BitNile.com, it's going to be more diverse than that. We all still believe in Bitcoin, it's a part of what's happening, but it's not dependent on it as maybe in the past.

I don't have a whole lot of concern in that regard, just knowing the plans, what you will all see come March 1st and after. It's going to be part of it, but it's not all of it.

I think we're in a good place. We live in a sport, an industry, that is volatile all the time, so it's great. I look at it as a good fit. We've got a partner that is spread across all our cars and believes in it the way that they do. Hopefully it lasts for lots of years. If it doesn't, we'll still be thankful for what we have right now.

Q. Going in with two full-time cars, your oval program, do you have any vision of filling out the rest of those street courses, Beth, some other program or driver?

ED CARPENTER: Not for 2023. We had plans and talks about doing more, but we kind of set a date on the calendar. If we didn't have everything in order from funding and people, the full program in place by a certain date, we wanted to be disciplined and focus on exactly what we're doing.

That's the plan. I don't see that changing. Things can always change. If we're going to have growth, my focus is doing that in '24.

Q. The BitNile relationship came from the famous or infamous Conor Daly night in Vegas. This relationship expanding, does that mean anything for Conor with his future with the team?

ED CARPENTER: It's a good question. Rinus, he's on a multi-year agreement. Conor is in the last year of a multi-year agreement. We'll see where it goes.

There's those conversations, an element to that that is team and driver. There's obviously an element that the partner and sponsor is connected with. We're fortunate we all have a great relationship, we all work really well together. We'll just see what happens.

Q. When Rinus was in here, he mentioned there are some new faces. He said he was asking for extra help on the engineering side. Can you discuss some of that?

ED CARPENTER: I mean, yeah, we've been really fortunate. We've been able to bring in some new people. We lost a couple. All things considered, I would say our turnover was low.

For a year and a half we've been trying to add a couple positions that we didn't have. I think we're happy with the people we've been able to bring in. Some new faces in engineering, some new faces out on the car. Hopefully have a deeper team, a little bit of a restructure at the shop, but minor relative to other teams.

Q. Any areas you're looking to shore up?

ED CARPENTER: I really think it's more depth more than a specific area. I think we're not venturing. It's not like we created a new department or project. It's just more depth on the bench, more people working on the projects we already had going and furthering them. Just more depth.

Q. When you look at how you've grown this team organically, you started off in USAC, Indy Lights.

ED CARPENTER: Can we call it Indy Lights when we're talking about the past?

THE MODERATOR: That's a dollar (smiling).

ED CARPENTER: Seriously, I raced in Indy Pro Series. Is it all INDY NXT now?

THE MODERATOR: This is a conversation over a Bourbon.

ED CARPENTER: We'll table that for now (laughter).

Q. The organic start of your team in USAC, going up through development series...

ED CARPENTER: Well-put.

Q. Three-car effort now, how proud are you of what you've been able to put together? You really put that business degree that you got from Butler to good use.

ED CARPENTER: Yeah, I had a conversation with Ryder, my 13-year-old. He got in I don't know if it's inducted, part of the National Honor Society, seventh grader, he had to write an essay to do it. A lot like me at that age, I don't want to do this. I think he said like, Why do they make smart kids do extra work? That's not fair.

I'm like, Here's the deal, Bud. You're doing it whether you want to or not.



I'm going to write an essay on how stupid this is.

You are not.

I didn't even want to go to college. My parents luckily convinced me it was the right thing to do. I'm very grateful that they did that. Someday I'm sure you'll be grateful that I'm making you do this. So shut up, write an essay, not about how it's stupid, and I'm proud of you.

Yes, I'm thankful to my parents encouraging me to go to college. It's not necessarily what I learned at Butler, but just learning how to think and be strategic and manage my time.

But, yeah, it's been a journey for my whole career. I've been fortunate to learn from a lot of smart people, have great mentors.

The Vision Racing experience, not being an owner of that, but being involved step by step through the process, definitely was very beneficial when we were forming Ed Carpenter Racing.

Driving for Eddie and Sarah, different people I drove for, you learn things that you like and you don't like, things that you would want to emulate and things you'd want to do different. You try to put that together.

Really the biggest thing is all of what I consider key essential employees at Ed Carpenter Racing have been with us from essentially day one. We've just built it together. It's very much a family, but also very serious, goal oriented. We continue making progress.

Q. By being able to grow this team from the ground up, you might have bought some stuff from the old Kelley Racing.

ED CARPENTER: With Vision we did. No, when we started, the only thing that I have left from Vision Racing is an old, old external hard drive, which I need to open it up one of these days, look back into it.

Yeah, we had some things that Derrick had assets-wise, but for the most part we did start it from nothing.

Q. With the added relationship with BitNile this year, what would be a really good result for you at the end of the year? Are you looking race wins or consistently on the podium?

ED CARPENTER: Yeah, absolutely looking for race wins. I think we feel like we have that in our team, in our driver

lineup. So for sure race wins and consistency, consistency inside the top five, top 10 with all the cars is where we want to be.

Rinus nearly won a race last year. Probably should have at Barber. We've had places that we've been super competitive, like Indy and others. We definitely had some weaknesses and disappointing results last year, too.

Looking to show a level of consistency that we haven't had lately. So getting shored up. Absolutely wins are the goal.

Q. Put my Road to Indy hat a little bit. Can you shed some light on the decision to sign up Josh Pierson as ECR's first development driver? We've seen similar things with Ganassi. Are you thinking of an academy program for ECR?

ED CARPENTER: I've always looked Road to Indy, always kept an eye on it over the course of every season. Rinus is a prime example of that. We were talking for a couple years. As it relates to Josh, I met with him and also Stephen Simpson, who is working with him. Stephen had worked with ECR a couple times in the past helping to spot at some races. We always had a good relationship.

Just met with him. Saw an opportunity to help Josh. Hopefully Josh can help us at some point. It's always good to have an eye ahead. I think I've always done that in the past anyway. But we just kind of formalized this a little earlier than I have in the past.

Yeah, I think he's a talented young man, very polished and savvy for how young he is. Excited to be working with him, being a part of his development. Hopefully seeing him in one of our cars here before long.

Q. Does that mean he will visit the shop, be on your pit lane or wall during the season?

ED CARPENTER: Yeah, I mean, Josh will definitely have a presence with the team and be welcome whenever he's available when we're on track. I think you'll see myself and some other ECR team members present for his sessions when it's practical.

So, yeah, he's been at the shop this off-season a little bit. We communicate when he's off doing the other series that he's running. Just keeping up with everything that he's doing in the car, out of the car, all the different ways you have to prepare to get to this level.

THE MODERATOR: We'll end things up with Asher.

ED CARPENTER: Did you get your homework done?



Q. Yes.

ED CARPENTER: Good (smiling).

Q. What are your goals for 2023?

ED CARPENTER: Yeah, my number one goal is the same every year, and that's to win the Indianapolis 500, whether it's in my car would be best, or the other team cars. After that, be as competitive as possible, win as many other races as possible, place our cars hopefully in championship contention at Laguna.

Q. What's your most favorite race, what race are you most looking forward to this year, except for the Indy 500?

ED CARPENTER: I would say Iowa. I think it's a spectacular event, always has been. Hy-Vee is taking it to another level.

I think consistently that's put on some of the most exciting racing on the calendar each and every year. Now it's just an all-around great fan experience as well.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Ed.

ED CARPENTER: Have a good day, everyone.

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