

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Chip Ganassi

Mike Hull

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Joined by ownership/management of Chip Ganassi Racing. Of course, on the left, Chip Ganassi, now part of his 15th INDYCAR SERIES Championship as a car owner, and to his left, our right, long-time managing director of Chip Ganassi Racing in Mike Hull.

Chip, congratulations. Getting it done early. You don't have to sweat it out next week, huh?

CHIP GANASSI: Yeah, that's pretty big. I remember one time with one of our championships with Alex Zanardi, Morris Nunn said to him, you know, it was after he had won the championship, he won another race. I thought that was a pretty big statement today.

Just before the race I said to Alex, I said, Hey, let's go wrap this thing up today.

He said, For sure. He said, We're going to wrap it up with a win.

I said, Oh, okay.

So that was pretty big, I thought.

THE MODERATOR: Pretty impressive. Of course, Alex joins an elite list of multiple-time champions from Chip Ganassi Racing. Scott, of course, a six-time champion. Dario Franchitti, two-time champion. You already mentioned Alex as a two-time champion, and certainly he's so young in his career. He has a long way to go, and who knows how many he can rack up?

CHIP GANASSI: Yes. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Mike, your thoughts on another championship winning season for this organization?

MIKE HULL: Well, it's fantastic, but that's an

understatement. Working for Chip for as long as I have and to do what we've done 15 times, if anybody would have said that at the start, I would have probably quit on the spot.

I would say one thing first about American Legion. They've supported us dramatically, and I'm not a PR guy, like you, Dave. It's just I'm going to say that about American Legion.

September is Suicide Prevention Month, and their program is making a difference. I know Chip was at the American Legion Convention and heard that this week, but Be the One is a big deal for servicemen and women, so we're proud of that.

Proud to work for Chip. Proud to represent a lot of people. I talked to Barry Wanser by phone when I went back to the truck a few minutes ago and told him that we were going to dust the entire team for fingerprints because his are all over what we do with -- I was told by one of our communications people today that we've had three cars in the top 10 at every race this year.

That's how you win a championship. You work together to win, and that's what we do. Really proud of the effort of everybody doing that.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Chip, worst finishes all season, two eighths. In the 27-car field, just random acts of taking people out. What's that like? In the big victories, he won by -- he had some big wins by big margins.

CHIP GANASSI: Yeah, no question. The guys screwing the car together know what they're doing. The guys engineering the car to make it fast know what they're doing. And the guys calling the strategy know what they're doing.

When you pair that with a driver that knows what he is doing, it's a formidable combination that's tough to beat.

Even our own team, it's tough to beat even within our own team. We have great guys on the team, and it's tough for

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them to do.

Q. Question for you, Chip. With Dario, Alex Zanardi, and now with Alex, you had three championship drivers from Europe. Do you have a representative in Europe to keep you updated with information about young promising drivers in Europe in various categories or championships?

CHIP GANASSI: Yeah, you know, everybody knows who the guys are that are good. You can see in these different formulas, guys that can win races know how to win races. Guys that can win championships know how to win championships.

I've always said I don't care if they're from Mars. If they can win the race, they're going to be in our car.

Q. Hitting heroes on the team, Ricky Davis is one of them. It's the fifth time he has won a championship on your team. If both of you can talk about the value of Ricky Davis at Chip Ganassi Racing?

CHIP GANASSI: No doubt. You have guys that tenure on this team is rewarding, and it rewards the entire team in having the experience at what it takes to win a championship. Ricky obviously has that.

Q. Mike, do you want to talk about Ricky?

MIKE HULL: We were lucky enough. I'll take full responsibility for Rick. I hired him in 1994, and he's done some fantastic things for us.

At his advanced age, like mine, it's really good still to be working in this business, and what a great contributor.

Q. Where does this rank for you in terms of the wins in the championship, given that you guys have a one/two finish this year?

CHIP GANASSI: Well, that was the standard set a long time ago, whether it was with Zanardi and Vasser or Dario and Dixon. That's kind of the standard around here, so we're always trying to beat our own records.

I guess this is pretty high up there since we won two before the last race, so I have to say it's right up there.

Q. For either Mike or Chip, whoever wants to answer this, how hard was it to manage two competitive teams with Alex and Scott, especially after how evolved the season after Indianapolis and the dominance for Alex and then Scott's resurgence?

CHIP GANASSI: It's not hard at all to manage professional drivers. They know what they're doing, and we don't have any No. 1 driver in our team. We have all No. 1s, and we've always said that.

We've always run the team that way. We don't tell who gets in front of who or when or what. They just race each other.

Obviously the only rule is don't hit each other, but we let them race on this team, and they know that.

Q. I think this is really for Mike. I think it's a great find that you found Marcus Armstrong. I think you did very well this year. Then you've announced that you've hired Linus Lundqvist, but he hasn't, I don't think, tested with the team. What do you look for and what criteria made you decide to go ahead and sign him for next year?

MIKE HULL: I think Chip says it well. It's their heart to begin with. The thing that you take for granted is their ability to be able to drive and their ability to be a team member, to be able to unselfishly give more than they get really.

It's a pay-it-forward situation at Chip Ganassi Racing with our culture, and that goes throughout the entire group of people that work for us. We give more than get back to each other. That's really what we look for, and you see the results over the years.

I think that's what's in common with all the drivers that have won for us, won racing multiply and championships. The drivers that we have announced and will announce will do the same thing.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for coming in. Chip Ganassi, Mike Hull.

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