

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Christian Rasmussen

Mike Maurini

Henry Malukas

Daiva Malukas

Press Conference



succeed, he's going to do good in the future, there's no question about that. What he showed this season, it's just unbelievable. He makes looks easy.

Obviously this is the proof we are here to stay, right? I mean, there was a lot of questions. Four cars, six cars, then nine cars. Yeah, it's like how you going to handle that stuff?

I think it's amazing. I use that approach from transportation: the more you have, the better you get. That's my approach (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: Daiva, congratulations. This sport is very special to you, to be part of another championship run.

DAIVA MALUKAS: Yes, it's very exciting. Last year it was really special because it was first year. This year I'm exciting to be second year in a row. It feels so good. It feels awesome.

I think we proved that we are here not by accident. We have amazing people behind all this, and without them we wouldn't be here. Amazing drivers, Mike, everybody all together put us here. We very excited.

THE MODERATOR: Mike, I know you juggle a lot. Nine-car team. There's a lot of satisfaction when you look up and you see one of your drivers atop the podium like this.

MIKE MAURINI: Yeah, when Christian approached us last year, there were some questions about what we could do, where we could be. We just made it all work. We knew he had the talent to win; we had the program behind him that could also do that.

Here we are today, fast forward a year. 12 months ago we were making a deal, now sitting here as champions. That's pretty cool.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions.

Q. Two is no coincidence at this point, right? What does this say about what you've been able to establish

THE MODERATOR: The winner of the race and season-long championship, Christian Rasmussen.

Also joining us Henry and Daiva of Malukas, co-owners of HMD Motorsports with DCR. On the far left Mike Maurini, the general manager of HMD Motorsports.

The numbers are pretty impressive, Christian. Five wins, seven career now, five wins this season, two poles, eight podiums, 10 top fives, 13 top 10s. Big season for you. Congratulations. You get a chance to kind of take this in yet, what this feels like?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I don't think so. I don't think it has sunken in yet.

But, yeah, it's come down to hole season's worth of hard work, from not only me but from everyone involved. My mechanics, my engineers, Mike, everyone involved in this journey.

It's been amazing. We've had a super good year. We've been strong from the start. First win came already in Barber. We've been strong all year, obviously dominant on the ovals. Just been able to show how competitive the team is, how competitive our package as a team is on every occasion that we have been able to this year.

THE MODERATOR: Henry and Daiva, congratulations. Your commitment to INDY NXT by Firestone, certainly second to none. To have another driver win a championship, success throughout the entry list really. Henry, your thoughts on winning another title and doing so with Christian?

HENRY MALUKAS: Well, I mean, I think Christian did amazing job. We need more drivers like that. He will

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with this organization and with this team?

MIKE MAURINI: I mean, Henry and Daiva don't say no. Whatever we ask for, we pretty much get. I think they give us the tools that we need to succeed.

We work. We look into the future and build backwards. Our goal was to win in '23, and we started that process in '22, '21. I think next year with some returning drivers, new drivers that we have, we've already built out next year on what we could be, 2025 as well. Thanks to them for allowing us to do this. It's a lot of work. 51 full-time people now. It's a little bit to manage, but we do it.

Q. Christian, obviously you're ending this on a high. Your thoughts as you end your INDY NXT career and get ready to look forward to INDYCAR?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Say that again.

Q. Wondering your thoughts as you're getting ready to look forward to INDYCAR.

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Yeah, I think it's been a long time coming. I think we've proved to everyone that I'm ready to make that step now. My last year, it was a good learning year for me. But coming back into the series and doing as well as we have this year really sets a point over that we're ready to make that step.

I couldn't have done it without these guys that are sitting beside me. They kept believing in me all year long and kept me in the car. I'm forever grateful to them for doing so.

Yeah, I don't think this championship has quite sunken in yet (smiling). It's wild to think about that I've won the championship at this level now. Second guy in history to win all three ranks of the Road to Indy is truly amazing.

Now I just hope that we make next year happen, get a full-time INDYCAR ride. I would say that's kind of the last step of the Road to Indy, your first year in INDYCAR, because we still have to go in and prove ourselves.

I truly believe I'm ready for that now, and I think we'll have a good shot at doing so.

THE MODERATOR: Henry and Daiva, your commitment to INDY NXT by Firestone second to none. What is it about this sport, why INDYCAR? Where does this passion come from?

HENRY MALUKAS: Well, the highest racing sport in the United States, right? I think there's nothing else there to

compare. Obviously when David started, it wasn't really a dream or looking to that. I think maybe about 12, start developing this, Oh, that's maybe possible.

I think that INDYCAR, this is insane. It's just unbelievable. I mean, I've been many, many different type of racing events and series. This is so far hands down a lot of excitement there.

I'm really having good time. With David I have good time, but also it is different feelings brings you. With INDY NXT, I truly have a blast. I don't have that scared feeling.

THE MODERATOR: You can relax a little more.

HENRY MALUKAS: Relax and just enjoying.

THE MODERATOR: Daiva, such an integral part of this series.

DAIVA MALUKAS: It's really big becoming from racer mom to becoming team owner, it's kind of big step. I think we doing good, amazing job. We have amazing crew. We looking forward.

THE MODERATOR: Christian is shaking his head yes. Doing an amazing job.

Q. Mike or Henry, how would you describe what the next couple-year plan is for HMD Motorsports both in the INDY NXT SERIES as well as any INDYCAR pursuits you might have, with the new building coming?

MIKE MAURINI: Well, that's a tricky question. First and foremost, obviously the shop is a priority for us. We've done this job out of a 7,000 square foot building, our new one is going to be close to 85,000.

Obviously what we want to do is a dream, so we just have to work hard to make that dream come reality. Yeah, that's where I am at the moment.

HENRY MALUKAS: I don't think we dreaming any more (smiling). I think it's coming.

Obviously we very tight in space right now. We start with two cars. Now we have nine cars in the same space. The building should be done this year. That opens a lot of possibilities. Obviously we would like to still to move into the big cars. Without David, obviously. I'm happy for him. What we want to do, our side here.

Q. Mr. Malukas, talking to David about how the whole family thing started with racing, he said you were quite



a terror with the Corvettes. How did it begin for you?

HENRY MALUKAS: I always like (indiscernible). I like the racing side, no question. I did myself nothing that level. I mean, it's all like amateur more.

Yeah, I would definitely enjoy with the Corvettes, things like that. I think maybe that's where David got it. I mean, I remember when he was, like, four years old (indiscernible), Oh, dad, do one more time.

Q. Also Chicago always has had a deep history with INDYCAR racing, Carl Haas, team owner in CART, Michael Lanigan, Dale Coyne, yourself. How important is it to have the Chicago connection with INDYCAR?

HENRY MALUKAS: I think for us is very important. Obviously, I mean, Dale Coyne been long time, but most teams is from Indianapolis. I think it is important to becomes roots from Chicago.

Kind of moving towards Indianapolis, but still have kind of it's all this mentality, everything comes from Chicago. All the support, obviously DCR, all the business based in Chicago, so...

Q. Christian, huge difference in performance from yesterday to today. Was that a considered decision to wrap up the championship, show people what you could do, or did you find something last night?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: No, yesterday was very much of just securing the championship. I knew I didn't have to go for the win. Obviously if you get the chance to take it, you take it. But we didn't have that chance. Hunter was fastest yesterday. I think we missed it a little bit on car setup, but we fixed that for today and showed what we were truly capable of doing today.

Today, as long as I crossed the start line, I knew I was champion. So today was just pure enjoyment, show everyone what I can do. I kind of wanted to show how dominant of a fashion I can do this. I think we showed that pretty well today.

How much did we win by?

THE MODERATOR: 17 seconds.

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I think that's enough, so... I'm happy with that.

Q. Since you've been so instrumental in helping your son David into INDYCAR, are there any plans of helping Christian establish himself in INDYCAR, as

well?

HENRY MALUKAS: Yes, of course. We'll help as much as we can. The first step is already done, so we'll try to do the next steps, as well.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations on a terrific season.

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