

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

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## Kyffin Simpson

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good morning, everyone. The dust certainly has barely settled on the 2023 season, but a lot of teams looking ahead to 2024. Chip Ganassi Racing finding itself celebrating 15 INDYCAR SERIES championships, but this morning made the announcement that Kyffin Simpson will make the move to a full-time NTT INDYCAR SERIES schedule next year.

Kyffin joined Chip Ganassi Racing as a development driver in May of 2022. Since then it's been two seasons in INDY NXT. He'll join the likes of Scott Dixon, Alex Palou, Marcus Armstrong and Linus Lundqvist for a pretty impressive presence in the paddock area.

Kyffin joins us from Indianapolis this morning. Certainly this was a goal. What was that like to know that it was a done deal, signed, sealed, delivered, now you got that Chip Ganassi Racing Honda shirt on for a long time now?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, it's awesome. Just couldn't be happier about it. It's always been my dream to race in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES. To be able to do it with Chip Ganassi Racing, 15-time champions, five 500 wins, it's pretty incredible.

THE MODERATOR: I know you tested a Ganassi car almost a year ago now. What do you make of that test and how eager are you to get going once again?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: I'm super excited. I can't wait to get back in the car. Driving that car last year at Sebring was one of the most fun things I've ever done. I just can't wait to get back in it and get back in the car with a great team, as well.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions for Kyffin Simpson.

**Q. Kyffin, I'm curious, this year you kind of drove all over the place. Asia Le Mans, IMSA, INDY NXT. In what area do you feel like you've grown as a driver within your race craft this past year doing all these things?**

KYFFIN SIMPSON: I think it's helped me in a lot of ways doing all these different series. Racing sports cars I think has helped a lot with my fuel saving and pit stops, 'cause obviously we don't do that in INDY NXT, you're just pushing flat out for 35 laps or however long the race is.

I think doing all that this year was very helpful, but also just general race craft, being in close races with other drivers has been very helpful, just doing lots of racing this year.

**Q. Being a development driver with Ganassi in 2022, starting in May of 2022 to now, in what ways has that helped better prepare you for the role to step in as opposed to what would have been for most guys being independent for the whole time, not being in a development situation?**

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, I think it's been very helpful being able to work with the team, learn the team, learn how they do things. Also just learn all the engineers and mechanics. Just meeting them has been very helpful.

I think that will be something that helps me a lot going into this next year. I think it will be very exciting to work with them even closer than I have previously.

**Q. You're going to be going up against a teammate for Rookie of the Year in Linus. How do you think that's going to be? You're going to be teammates, working close together, but that's bragging rights for a rookie title.**

KYFFIN SIMPSON: I don't really have any expectations set for myself right now. It would be great to win Rookie of the Year. Yeah, I don't have anything specifically set for myself right now.

**Q. Kyffin, it will be the first year as a rookie driver in a team such as Chip Ganassi. How much pressure do you have with that deal that you have to face?**

KYFFIN SIMPSON: I don't feel too much pressure. I know it's with a great team. I know that the car's going to be good, so I'm just going to be focused on doing my job as best as I can, learning everything I can from my teammates



'cause obviously they've got a lot of experience in Scott Dixon and Alex Palou, as well Marcus Armstrong, who won Rookie of the Year this year.

**Q. Your goal, apart from being the Rookie of the Year, which will it be?**

KYFFIN SIMPSON: It would be great to be Rookie of the Year, but I don't have any expectations set for myself. Just want to learn as much as I can. If results come with that, then that's great.

THE MODERATOR: Back to the test that you had almost a year ago now, Kyffin. What stood out about hopping in the Chip Ganassi Racing car?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Well, it was the only INDYCAR I've ever driven, so I can't compare it to other team's cars. Comparing it to the INDY NXT, which I've had a couple years' experience in, I just thought it was all around a much better car. It's got more aero, more power. There's more that you can do with the dampers, as well. Just all around drives better.

It was just a ton of fun to drive. I can't wait to get it on a real high-speed track rather than Sebring.

THE MODERATOR: If you're going to hop in any machinery in INDYCAR, hop into the Chip Ganassi Racing machine. That's certainly the way to go.

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, for sure.

**Q. Knowing you've raced so many different things this year alone, let alone these last couple years, coming into INDYCAR, what do you feel your biggest strength as a driver is?**

KYFFIN SIMPSON: I don't know what my biggest strength will be in this car, as I've not done too many laps in it. The last time I drove it was a year ago now. I feel like I've progressed a lot since then. I'm not sure what it will be when I get into it the next time.

I feel like I'm usually quite good with tire management. I hope that shows to be a strength in this car, as well, because I've heard it's something that's quite difficult.

**Q. From season one to season two in INDY NXT, I know you stepped up with a couple podiums. I imagine your points finish with missing a race, not picking up points at Barber, doesn't show exactly where you would have finished in a full season. What do you feel you learned the most from season one to two in the INDY NXT series?**

KYFFIN SIMPSON: I just feel like I got a lot more comfortable with the car. I felt like I was a lot more on top of the car in testing and being able to get the car to where I wanted it balance-wise and just general feel-wise.

I think that was a big thing that helped me this year in INDY NXT. It's just kind of the thing that comes with experience. Hopefully when I make the jump to INDYCAR, having experienced teammates can help me out with that.

**Q. We've had younger drivers in the series before. Colton Herta won before he turned 19. You turn 19 in a couple weeks. Not out of the ordinary to have a driver yet to have turned 20 in the series. I'm sure you'll encounter some folks that will wonder if you're too young, if you could use some more experience in INDY NXT for another year. What do you feel your message is for folks who wonder if you're ready to make this leap into Chip Ganassi Racing?**

KYFFIN SIMPSON: I feel like I'm ready. I feel like I've made a lot of progress this year. I feel like making that next step, I'll be able to make good progress in INDYCAR, as well.

Mike and Chip also have faith in me. That helps a lot. It helps me believe that I really can do this.

THE MODERATOR: Those two have a pretty good eye for talent, no question about that.

**Q. Through this season, how much have been chattering with the Ganassi team both in the workshop and paddock? How much time have you been able to spend with the guys you're going to be working with full-time in 2024?**

KYFFIN SIMPSON: It's been great working with them. I've been able to spend quite a lot of time with them. I was able to go into the Texas race this year. I spent the whole 500 with them.

Even more than that, I tend to always try to spend as much time as I can on race weekends with them, even if I'm there racing in my own series. I try to get over to the timing stand for the races usually and, if I can, qualifying as well. I think all of that's been very helpful.

**Q. When the development deal was signed, a multi-year deal, was it always considered there would be an INDYCAR seat two years down the line or is this a development that's only recently come along, like you started talks with Chip and Mike, and hence the deal came about?**

KYFFIN SIMPSON: There was no guarantee I would be in an INDYCAR seat this year, but I was always hoping that I could be. It was just kind of something that I tried to make happen, and here we are.

**Q. Given the amount of time since your most recent test, when these talks started taking place about going to a full-time ride next year, was some of the parameters being like you need to get as much test mileage possible before, or did you go into this knowing that you would likely sign a deal having only had that January test and not running INDYCAR before you signed your first INDYCAR contract?**

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, we don't really know when I'll be able to test next. This season has been very busy, and they've been busy chasing the championship. They don't usually like to test too much during the year. Also they've been very busy with the hybrid test getting ready for next year.

I'm sure I'll get more seat time in the INDYCAR, but with the one day I have, they were very happy with it. Hopefully next time I get in an INDYCAR I can do the same if not better.

**Q. Do you get to do much simulator work with the team, as well?**

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, I've gotten to do some simulator work. I've got a bit more planned during the off-season, which has been great so far. It's been great working with a couple different engineers. I think that it's been very helpful, helping me get ready for next year.

**Q. Given you've raced with the Cayman Islands license, but also have the Barbados one as well, have you decided which one you're going to use next season?**

KYFFIN SIMPSON: I believe I'm going with the Cayman license. They haven't had a motorsport federation down there before, so I wasn't able to use a Cayman Islands license. But I believe they almost got that set up, so I should be able to use that for next year.

**Q. Based on the INDY NXT results, you have this relationship with Ganassi already, had you not had that relationship, would you have been confident to talk to other INDYCAR teams to pitch for a seat, or has this been more about impressing teams in other ways outside of your INDY NXT results?**

KYFFIN SIMPSON: I think if I hadn't been with Chip

Ganassi Racing, I probably would have been looking for an INDYCAR seat this year. But I think definitely being with Chip Ganassi Racing has helped me be able to find a seat, for sure.

**Q. I wonder about when you're named driver for Chip Ganassi Racing in the series, do you get an encouraging talk from Chip himself? If so, what goes with that?**

KYFFIN SIMPSON: I did actually get a text from Chip this morning. He was just encouraging me, giving me some advice for this upcoming year.

**Q. It was mentioned West Coast. The Thermal Club is just down the road. Have you ever been here before? If not, what are you thinking, what are your expectations about it?**

KYFFIN SIMPSON: I've only heard good things about that track, honestly, talking to other drivers that drove there this year. I'm really looking forward to going. It looks like a really fun track. I'm excited to get out there.

THE MODERATOR: I know you're not wasting any time. You want to talk about maybe moving to Indianapolis, finding a place, getting involved with the team a little bit more.

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, I just moved out here in June. It's been great getting settled in, working closer with the team, just being out here by all the drivers, as well, is cool.

THE MODERATOR: What is the next step for you as far as getting more involved with the team and certainly testing, all that sort of thing?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Eventually I'll be spending more time with my engineer, whenever I find out who that will be, and spending more time working with them closer. Hopefully I'll be able to find that out soon.

Yeah, I haven't been told that yet.

**Q. When Linus was signed, he wasn't sure if he was actually getting the previous chassis that Marcus raced on or not. Do you know if you're going to be driving that chassis or if this is a new build that Ganassi brought in as the fifth entry?**

KYFFIN SIMPSON: I don't know anything to do with what car I'll be driving or number or crew chief or engineer or anything like that. Those are questions for the team because I just don't have answers yet.

**Q. You've got this kind of long-term relationship with HPD, which provided a scholarship to SUPER FORMULA, but you chose to stay in America instead and do INDY NXT. Have you continued having that relationship with them, and has that helped going into a Honda-powered team for 2024?**

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, I worked with them in '21 with Formula Regional. I've tried to keep that relationship over the last couple of years. They've been great helping me out getting me an engine for next year.

I'm excited to be driving a Honda again.

**Q. Now that you're saying your testing program isn't certain right now, what is your mindset about oval racing, given also that INDY NXT doesn't have too many ovals? How do you look forward to oval racing?**

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, I'm looking forward to jumping in the INDYCAR on an oval. I think oval racing in INDYCAR seems to be quite a lot different than how it goes in INDY NXT just with the cars being so different. They seem to drive very different on ovals. I think it will be a very big learning experience the first time I get on an oval, even if it's one I've been to before.

I think that will be an exciting part of this year.

THE MODERATOR: Kyffin, what is on your plate the rest of the week as a driver now for Chip Ganassi Racing?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Actually I fly to Belgium this afternoon to compete at Spa for the European Le Mans Series. I'll have a busy week doing that.

THE MODERATOR: Like anyone would. That's awesome. Good luck out there. We'll wrap it up. But congratulations on the announcement for 2024. Can't wait to see you out on the racetrack.

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Thank you.

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