

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Monday, September 25, 2023

Roger Penske

Chairman, Penske Corporation

Hon. Tony Evers

Governor, State of Wisconsin

Shari Black

CEO, Wisconsin State Fair Park

Scott Dixon

Driver, Chip Ganassi Racing

David Malukas

Driver, Dale Coyne Racing

Press Conference



Further down, he is a six-time NTT INDYCAR Series champion, the winner of the 2008 Indianapolis 500 presented by Gainbridge, and the winner of the 2009 INDYCAR Series race right here at the Milwaukee Mile, it's great to have Scott Dixon with us.

We're also excited to welcome one of the rising young stars in the NTT INDYCAR Series. He just completed his second season. He certainly appreciates the tradition and history of the Milwaukee Mile, was born and raised just down the road about 90 minutes or so away in Chicago, we are joined today by David Malukas.

Just announced by Wisconsin State Fair Park and Penske Entertainment, the return of the INDYCAR Series to the famed Milwaukee Mile as part of the 2024 NTT INDYCAR Series schedule marks the first INDYCAR series race at the Mile since 2015.

But it's not just one race in 2024. For the first time in the track's history, we'll be hosting two INDYCAR Series races in one special Labor Day Weekend set for Friday, Saturday and Sunday, August 30th, through September 1st.

If that wasn't enough, the timing of that weekend is going to be crucial for the 2024 NTT INDYCAR Series championship, as it will lead directly into the season finale just two weeks later down to the streets of Nashville for the Big Machine Music City Grand Prix and the celebration of the 2024 champion.

The rising stars of the sport will also be competing that weekend on the super fast one-mile oval located just outside here. The Indy NXT by Firestone series will be making their first return since 2015, so we look forward to seeing the rising stars return here at the mile, as well.

Finally, the Milwaukee Mile INDYCAR Series double-header will air and be available nationally on Saturday of Labor Day Weekend. Fans can watch it on Peacock, and on Sunday they will be able to watch it on USA Network along with Peacock, with additional coverage extending to 223 global markets in 142 countries thanks to our global network TV partners.

THE MODERATOR: Good morning, everyone. My name is Dave Furst from INDYCAR and the NTT INDYCAR Series. Great to be back and great to see everyone back at the Milwaukee Mile on this Monday here.

A couple housekeeping items before we get started. Reminder that today's announcement is being streamed live on INDYCAR.com and the INDYCAR app powered by NTT Data.

Press releases detailing today's announcement are available along with the release that was distributed this morning on the complete 2024 NTT INDYCAR Series schedule, and a reminder that all the participants in today's announcement will be available for media interviews following today's news conference.

Joining us this morning, he is the chairman of the Penske Corporation, owner of Penske Entertainment, INDYCAR and the NTT INDYCAR Series, we'll say good morning to Mr. Roger Penske.

We know it's a big announcement when this gentleman joins us. He's the governor of the great state of Wisconsin, Governor Tony Evers. Governor, thank you for being here.

We are excited to be joined by the CEO and executive director for Wisconsin State Fair Park, say hello to Shari Black.



We'll start with Roger Penske. Roger, good morning. Your interest in returning to the Milwaukee Mile is certainly well-documented. What is it about this legendary facility that you've been coming to for years and years, what is it that compelled you to bring the series, the officials back in 2024?

ROGER PENSKE: Well, first let me thank the Governor for getting behind this project. We had a chance to get -- almost a year ago. We talked about it earlier, talked about the chance to come back here, and certainly, Shari, with you and your team, to be able to look at the track, I think there's a huge commitment here from the state and certainly the Wisconsin Fair Board, John Yingling, the chairman, and we got together to talk about what we needed to do to bring it to the current standards to have an INDYCAR race here. The commitment from the state and certainly the Fair Board has given us that opportunity.

But for us as a series, we're trying to be different, and I think the diversification, that's what it is. We're going to have six ovals next year. That's one more than we had this year. I think it's important as we get ready for the Indianapolis 500, which is obviously our premier event, but also with our road races and also the street races that we have around the country.

To me, this opportunity was really obvious. It's in our backyard, and we have a tremendous amount of fans in this part of the country that love INDYCAR racing.

My understanding when I talked to the Governor was it was 1939 when they had the first race here, so I'm not sure exactly what we ran here at that time, but having Scott Dixon here who's been a six-time champion and David Malukas, I think they understand what this means to us.

This is our DNA, oval racing. We love to go racing on the streets and also certainly on fixed road courses, but this opportunity for us, as we look from an INDYCAR standpoint, to create a bigger footprint within the sport, and the television coming out of these types of ovals is amazing, the passes, the competition, and I'm sure Scott and Dave could talk about it.

But for me from the standpoint, this is a great opportunity that we're trying to build the INDYCAR Series. There's lots of competition out there today, but this to me will give us a really crowning opportunity to take this series to the next level. And guess what: Double points that weekend. If you can come into this race leading -- if you're really able to compete here and make a dent in the points, this is a chance to do that.

It's going to be exciting, and I think it's going to mean a big

difference to win this race coming up next year.

For me personally, it's a great commitment, but it's a commitment as a team. It's not just INDYCAR. It's the state, it's the Fair Board and all the people that are in this market here, and really I want to thank everyone that's committed to this, so we're very excited. Governor, again, thank you for getting behind it. It's very important, believe me.

THE MODERATOR: Governor, Roger mentioned 1939. Legendary winners here read like a who's who of INDYCAR history. To see INDYCAR return after an eight-year hiatus, what does it mean to Milwaukee, the State Fair Park and the state of Wisconsin?

TONY EVERS: It's great to be here. First of all, thanks to Penske's great work to make this happen in such a short period of time.

In reality, it's a huge win for southeast Wisconsin. It's a huge win for our state. It's a huge win for the State Fair Park and tourism in general.

I am jazzed about this for a couple reasons. One is obviously I care about tourism in the state of Wisconsin, but in the executive residence there's actually a poster from 1939. Things look a little different from the way it looks today.

But anytime you have a chance to redo history and take this into a whole different level, you have to take advantage of that.

A lot of people should be thanked for that, but the history of this organization and this track is why we're here today.

The other thing is we want to make sure that we have a top-notch experience for the teams and for the fans and others, and I know the State Fair does a great job at that. My wife and I have gone 54 consecutive years to the State Fair, so we get it. You guys do a good job, by the way.

We want it to be a great experience, and it will be.

The partnership, making this happen, believe me, this doesn't always happen where we set a goal to do something and accomplish something. Sometimes in politics that takes generations. Sometimes in this case it took a year. Thank you for doing that. Because we can show that things can get done at state level, whether it's Team Penske, the State Fair Board, all the folks that are part of the State Fair, the state agencies, many of them are here today that have played a role.



It's been a team effort and a really good effort, and we're going to have a lot of fun next Labor Day Weekend.

THE MODERATOR: Governor, thank you. Shari, again, thank you for hosting us here today. I certainly know the folks here know Wisconsin State Fair Park annually hosted one of the most popular state fairs in the entire country. The INDYCAR double-header weekend will take place a couple weeks after the state fair in 2024. State Fair Park team will serve as the race promoter while hosting the event beginning next year.

Talk about how excited you are, coming off a great state fair, to double down by hosting the INDYCAR Series for a couple races in 2024.

SHARI BLACK: Yes. We are thrilled to welcome INDYCAR back to the Milwaukee Mile. There's just so much that we feel we can offer here. Wisconsin State Fair Park has a very talented team. We actually have just over a million people that attend our fair annually as well as our year-round events bring in another million people during the year, so we certainly know events.

With our talented team, we have some very big new ideas for this event. We think we can expand the footprint and help encompass more of our vendors that offer some unique food and beverage options as well as some programming that we'll put into this, as well, and that will help. People all over, race fans can come and enjoy this as a family-friendly event, as well, throughout the whole weekend.

THE MODERATOR: Awesome, can't wait. Speaking of those that can't wait, we want to recognize some of the State Fair Board members in attendance. Give a shout-out, as well, board chairman John Yingling, thanks for being here; Wisconsin Secretary of Tourism Anne Sayers is here; Deputy Secretary of the Department of Tourism Paul Hammer is here; and Paul Zeller is here. Thank you so much for being a part of this announcement today. Thank you all.

You guys are looking forward to it. Those two at the end are looking forward to it, as well. Again, Scott Dixon, six-time NTT INDYCAR Series champion, won here at the Mile not once but twice. First did it in the Indy NXT by Firestone series formerly known as Indy Lights. That was back in 2000. He scored a very memorable INDYCAR Series win here, as well, in 2009.

Scott, we know you love ovals. We know you love the history of this sport. Should be a lot of fun in 2024 coming back to the Mile.

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, I think all of us were definitely extremely excited for the announcement. Some of us heard the whispers of it coming back on the schedule. I know it had been talked about for maybe the last year or two.

A tidbit: I think the first time I won here, David wasn't even born, so that gives the span of history I've had at this place.

Some great results here, maybe the win, but then I've also had some records. I think I destroyed two cars in four laps and actually didn't make the race and was sent home. So some mixed feelings back in the earlier days.

But this is huge. I think as Roger touched on, the timing of this event is going to be very special. A double-header, it's big points on the table before we go into the season finale and for the championship fight.

I think I'm especially really pumped about that and where it's going to fall on the schedule, but it's so good to be back here in Milwaukee. A lot of great memories from this race and obviously a great area for our fans. Definitely excited to see it back on the schedule, and I know everybody up here is going to want to do the best job possible and hopefully we can pack the place out and put on a great show for everyone.

THE MODERATOR: Labor Day Weekend, should be a lot of fun. Again, as someone who grew up just 90 minutes or so down the road here, is this a home game for you?

DAVID MALUKAS: Yes, yes, this is pretty much a home track is going to be that sort of feeling. I'm super excited for what's coming, especially being a double-header.

Short ovals is kind of something that we've had a lot of fun in and a lot of success, and I think the racing in INDYCAR, like Roger said, it's something very special and unique to our series, so it's very good to have two more coming around, especially here at the Milwaukee Mile. I think me, Scott and the rest of the crew are going to have a lot of fun and put on a good show.

Q. Shari, you said "big new ideas." Do you care to expand on that a little bit?

SHARI BLACK: Well, I think we understand we need a bigger footprint, so for those that are local and are familiar with our Harvest Fair, that's sort of what we are planning to follow, kind of that footprint where it really brings out our Central Park area. There's a lot of area for programming, and as I mentioned some of our local vendors that have some fun and unique offerings will be able to open.

In the past it's always been along Grandstand Avenue, which is right outside of the track, so we're trying to go more inside of the fair and have more that festival feel.

A lot of vendors bring in their own music acts, so we're hoping they'll do that, as well, so kind of that festival-type feeling is what we're looking for.

Q. Roger, this is about the third or fourth resurrection we've had in the last -- since Scott won. This place has had a hard time kind of getting over the hump, getting over that 15,000 or whatever. The best days were more than 20 years ago. What makes you think you can succeed not just once but on back-to-back days as far as getting a turnout for this?

ROGER PENSKE: Well, look, it's obviously a key part of our schedule, but more important, I think as Penske Entertainment took over the Series and operates the Speedway, I think we've come in with a team of experienced people that we can partner with Shari and her team here at the fairgrounds.

Before you had promoters coming in and coming out. But we're committed. We've invested heavily in the track at Indianapolis and also certainly in the Series, and it's important that we take the Series to places that are long-staying capabilities, which you have here. They've got a great track. You drive in here this morning, the place is clean.

One of the areas we like so much is we have this wonderful convention center that the state has provided here at the park, and we'll have all of our chalets, all of our entertainment for our sponsors and people like that can really set up there, so we see that's going to be great entertainment, especially as we come down to the end of the series, being able to use that for what it's built for, to bring fans into the state and certainly for tourism, and we'll use that as a key.

Also, we're looking at opportunities to have entertainment. We have the opportunity here with an entertainment here at the fairgrounds, and maybe Saturday night we can have some music. We haven't committed that yet.

A number of sponsors we've touched base with are very interested to be part of this. We haven't announced anything at this point, but I think it's our experience -- as you know we were in the speedway business for a long time with Michigan and California and all over the country here, and then to come here and put this under our control in conjunction as a partnership with the Wisconsin Fair Board, I think it works out.

We've got the capital to do it, but even more important when we step back and you look at the track and the money that's been allocated by the state funding in order to take it to the next level from a safety perspective and also for a fan, I think we're doing that also.

Those are all things that had to happen before we could come here and say it's going to be sustainable.

Q. I just want to clarify, Shari, did you say this is going to tie into Harvest Fair?

SHARI BLACK: No, Harvest Fair is a separate event, so if you have not been, it starts this weekend. You are welcome to come back. But looking at that footprint, that's similar.

Q. Roger and Scott, you guys know the history of the series and the history of this track and its legacy in the sport of racing. What does this place mean to you both as someone who's been an owner, someone who's been a racer, just the history of this place?

ROGER PENSKE: Well, let me answer it as far as an owner is concerned with my racing hat on. You think Rex Mays and Bettenhausen and some of the greatest drivers -- Roger Ward racing up here. These are the great names in the sport. Always right after Indy they used to come -- obviously would come here to Milwaukee and run.

To me, it was just part of the DNA of the series, and we kind of lost that, and I think that's one thing we're trying to do as an ownership group to bring this back, and I think this just solidifies our involvement in the sport, and the diversity which I talked about earlier that we can have, the fastest mile ovals and the fastest ovals not only here but not too far away in Indianapolis.

I think this is certainly critical.

If we're going to run at Indianapolis, just think about it. We need the drivers like David to be able to compete on a mile racetrack before they go to a place where you're qualifying, as Scott and his team did this year, at 234 miles an hour. Also it's a training ground when you think about it for all of the drivers as we go forward.

It fits all the -- checks all the boxes really for this.

SCOTT DIXON: Totally agree. I think from a driver's standpoint, for me the love of and passion for INDYCAR racing was the diversity. You had short track oval, superspeedways, road courses, street courses, and we kind of lost a lot of the ovals off the schedule, so to get back to that -- my first year in Indy Lights there was six

ovals and six road courses, so to come back to fundamentally what is part of the DNA of INDYCAR I think is important in moving forward.

I love these tracks. They're a lot of fun. They're action packed. The fans will have a ton of fun.

It's probably changed a little bit from last time we were here. The cars and the performance and actually the raceability has gotten a lot better, as well, so the show will be fantastic.

Q. Scott, you said you had heard the whispers that it might be coming back here. What was it that you missed about having an event here, and what was the reception like among the drivers about the possibility of coming back when those rumors started?

SCOTT DIXON: I think it fell more back on to short track ovals. It's part of what I grew up doing in the Indy NXT or Indy Lights back in the day. It was definitely -- the Indy 500 is the Indy 500; it's a fantastic event, amazing event and one of the toughest races in the world.

But to get back to these short tracks, and I think when I won the 500 in '08 you do the media tour and you come straight here to Milwaukee and continue racing at one of the toughest tracks possible.

For me, yeah, these tracks, they're fun, they're hard, but a lot of it is the history, and I think the more you do it, you really understand what it was all about.

Q. For Roger, just a general scheduling question, no Texas stop next year, the one Indy Road Course. Obviously you add something, you have to take something away, but what went into those decisions?

ROGER PENSKE: I think we loved to have the Texas event -- the television with the Olympics has really changed the scheduling for sports across all different aspects of sports, so we couldn't get together with Texas due to a NASCAR event, but also the fact that we could come here and add two events gave us one more oval, which as I talked about earlier -- Scott talked about the reason we cover the competition, just think about it. 27 cars -- we've had less than one second between the qualifying. It was not that way in the past.

Right, Scott? In the past, we had big changes. It's so competitive. When you see these guys get out of the cars after qualifying, to me, for us to be able to add the ovals to the schedule even made us a much stronger series I felt. We'll be back at Texas hopefully in another year, but this Olympics really kind of threw a rock in the middle of the

scheduling of all of sports right now.

Q. Roger, I know you've had great days here, and I know there was one year where Helio's wing literally collapsed when he was leading. What is it about this place that some drivers like Scott have told me it almost is a little bit like a road course but it's an oval, and it's so challenging and you love so much about it?

ROGER PENSKE: Unfortunately I'm not a driver so I can't give it to you lap by lap, but these guys are committed. We have real athletes driving these cars today. These guys are in shape, and you have to be just to hang on. We don't have power steering or anything. Some of the other sports have power steering. This is all about the driver themselves.

I think the flat surface in 1 and 2 and then a little bit of banking over in 3 and 4, it's just -- you're almost running to qualify here wide open. I can't tell you what I think the speed will be, but it's going to be amazing.

Look, it's a place -- the other thing, the people in the grandstands can see the whole racetrack. That's another thing today. They feel like they're in the cars. They can see what's going on. It's not coming by every minute and a half or whatever it might be.

I think the visibility, the fact that we can have entertainment for our corporate sponsors, we're going to bring more visitors into the state, which is obviously one of the key reasons that the governor has given their commitments here, and we can partner with the State Fair board and get the benefit of their relationships with the baseball team and all the other sports we have here in the state.

To me, it all came together.

Q. Talk about the importance of the pride here in Milwaukee and there's a lot of tradition --

ROGER PENSKE: We like history. You follow me? When you think about 100 years at Indianapolis, and if they started here in 1939, there's no reason we can't come back.

We're coming back with a better product, and to me, the infrastructure here -- remember, to go around the U.S., to find an oval that has the infrastructure that we have here, and then to have a partner that will help us promote this, it doesn't happen. So I think that was one of the reasons we felt this was really a perfect combination and partnership with certainly Shari and her team and John and the Fair Board.

