

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Kyle Larson

Rick Hendrick

Jeff Gordon

Tony Kanaan

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up day two of the INDYCAR Indianapolis Motor Speedway rookie orientation program. Currently joined by two men who are no strangers to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. 10-time winner as an owner, Brickyard weekend at the track, the owner of Hendrick Motorsports, Rick Hendrick is here with us. And the man who has five of those 10 wins, now the vice chairman of Hendrick Motorsports, Jeff Gordon.

Rick, we'll begin with you. It's great that you were here to witness this firsthand, but to see Kyle out there finishing rookie orientation, what were your thoughts watching it today?

RICK HENDRICK: I guess today it was kind of a dream and something we were going to do. Today, you just kind of officially pull the trigger for the rookie test.

Seeing the Arrow McLaren guys working, the team, the preparation, everything has been very impressive. It's really cool to be here.

I really want to thank Roger for the name on the pylon out there. I thought that was quite an honor. I was surprised to see that. He told me today the track was mine (smiling).

But anyway, no, this is like home for Jeff. This track's got so much history. Never think we'd do this. But to be here today and watch it unfold is pretty special.

THE MODERATOR: That was all RP. Pretty cool.

Jeff, Kyle has been looking forward to getting in a car, really get going in this program. I'm sure you're a little jealous looking back at your career, your feelings about the Indy 500. To see this first step, how important and successful was it?

JEFF GORDON: Yeah, hard not to really get excited for this opportunity for Kyle. Somewhere deep inside wish I had gotten an opportunity.

But I'm absolutely having a blast watching Kyle go through this process, seeing Rick here in Indianapolis, a part of an INDYCAR going around, being an owner and sponsor in this event. It will be his first time witnessing this event at the same time. I'm so excited to see it through that lens.

As Rick mentioned, there's been a lot of discussions, a lot of planning, and today we're really seeing it unfold in reality. Couldn't be more thankful of INDYCAR, Indianapolis Motor Speedway, certainly Roger. What an amazing facility this is that he has.

To go out there and see what Arrow McLaren did, as well, to just get Kyle up to speed and through the test was great.

On the other hand, Kyle, watching him in his craft, his element. I could tell he was a little bit nervous. My palms were sweating before he got out on track, as well. Immediately you just see it click when he made those first few laps and went into Kyle Larson mode of how do I get up to speed, go fast.

He doesn't want to just come here and compete, he wants to come here and compete competitively.

THE MODERATOR: 10 for 10 on the first laps. Went right out and knocked it out. Pretty impressive. 72 total laps for Kyle today. 217.898 miles an hour his fastest.

We'll open it up for questions.

Q. You guys are in the business of getting race fans goose bumps. In a lot of ways was it a goosebump for both of you when you saw the car coming down the stretch at speed for the first time today?

RICK HENDRICK: Yes, it didn't really hit me till I saw him. We had the car here when we had the unveiling. But when you hear it and see it come by and he's in it, it was goose bumps. It was goose bumps, it was pride. Happy for him because it's on the bucket list for him. Probably Jeff and I,



too.

But, no, to hear it, see it, watch the speed when it came by, that brought it all to life.

JEFF GORDON: Yeah, I mean, again, for me, I come to this place, it's just so special to be here. I go back as a kid, the first time I came here. My memories of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, my heroes, seeing my first Indy 500 live, going to the museum. It seems so surreal here we are having Kyle Larson and Rick and Hendrick Motorsports be a part of this effort.

I mean, I think next May is going to be just an experience I'll never forget. It definitely was different walking in here today. It's one thing to be a competitor on your own, it's another thing to be supporting an effort, a team like Arrow McLaren, just seeing how well they prepared for today, how smooth it went.

Q. You guys have a NASCAR Cup Series championship to contend for this week at Las Vegas. To be able to come here on Thursday before heading to Las Vegas, how difficult is that from the goal at hand to win the NASCAR Cup Series championship and how much does it emphasize how important this program is going to be?

JEFF GORDON: Getting Mr. Hendrick here, his schedule, to work around, he's a busy guy, I think it shows how much he cares about this experience, supporting Kyle.

For Kyle, that guy is off racing all the time. He's all over the place. The team is well-prepared. He and Cliff have been prepping and planning for this weekend. They're very well-prepared for this next round. Feel very good about this next round.

The last round, that was the nerve-wracking one. We saw it all the way down to the final lap at the Roval.

From our standpoint, we're fortunate to have enough people and depth at our organization to be able to prepare for what's ahead and really make sure that's the priority and the focus for the company, to go win a championship this year, get through this next Playoff round and go to Phoenix, but also be up here and be able to enjoy a day like today.

RICK HENDRICK: To tell you how important it is, our president of Hendrick Motorsports is standing back there, Jeff Andrews. When I asked him on the box if we're going to win Vegas, he said, Yeah. Then Gary Davis, our COO from the automobile side here, sponsorship.

This is a big deal for us and the company, everyone involved. We want to do it right. We don't want to come up here and stub our toe. We know how hard it is.

Thank goodness we are teamed with someone like Arrow McLaren, watching the professionalism out there, just the tools and techniques they use.

This is very, very important to us, no different than Garage 56. When we said we were going to do it, we spent a year, whatever it took, to do it. Although we don't have as much to do in this situation as we did in that one, but still we want to look the part, be the part, and put our best efforts into it.

Q. Jeff, you were talking about having sweaty palms being nervous for Kyle. How are those feelings and nerves in your role now different from nerves or excitement that you would have had as a driver in Kyle's shoes if you were doing something like this new?

JEFF GORDON: I think some of my nervousness was in conversations with him, putting myself in the driver's seat of what would I be going through right now when this is the very first time he's ever been an INDYCAR, he's going to go out there and go 220 miles per hour, only being here in a stock before that and a simulator.

I think, Rick kind of alluded to this, but making sure we're doing it right. We're partnering with a great team to be sure this goes smooth and we're aligned in a way that we can make it successful, as well.

We know what Kyle's capabilities are. We've seen him drive everything and anything, succeed at it. But this is different. We're going to recognize that. He's going to get a limited number of laps and experience before they're ready to start qualifying and get him prepared to compete in this race.

It's exciting on one hand and nervousness on the other. But I'm certainly going to live vicariously through Kyle a bit, through this experience, and just see how excited he is about it. He clearly is.

Q. Looking ahead to the coming months, quite a while before May, does this mark an end for a heightened focus on this, you ramp back up in the spring? Take me through if you know yet the next couple steps of this process.

JEFF GORDON: Yeah, I don't even believe we've gotten to the point of logistics of what's going to happen next May, right? We're taking it one step at a time, getting Kyle fitted in a car.



We came up and visited with Arrow McLaren guys, had lunch with them, just walked around their shop, just talked about the opportunity and the ways we can support it.

It's a nice collaboration that we're going to learn from one another from what they do in INDYCAR, what we do in NASCAR.

This was certainly an important step. We mainly were praying for good weather. We got that, perfect weather, as a matter of fact. I haven't even had a chance to download with Kyle of getting him in that car.

It's nice to see that first run, him clip off those laps, getting through phase one as quickly as he did. I think we're on our way here to a smooth day.

THE MODERATOR: Joining us this afternoon, 2021 NASCAR Cup Series champion, this coming May will drive the No. 17 HendrickCars.com Chevrolet for Arrow McLaren, Kyle Larson. To the far right, the newly named sporting director for Arrow McLaren, the 2013 winner of the Indy 500, Tony Kanaan.

Kyle, a big day today. How do you sum it up?

KYLE LARSON: It was fun. I guess mostly what I anticipated in a way, the speed and the grip didn't feel thankfully scarier than what I thought it might. But just like how much the car wants to pull left, you have to fight it back to the right on the straightaways. All that was something I didn't expect.

The way the wheel was lighter, a lot lighter than the simulator, but still a little heavier than what I expected. Other than that, I thought it went really smooth.

I think more of the pit road side of things is where I'll have to work more on. Just the steering is so slow, you have to turn so far getting in and out. If you're coming in around someone, leaving out around someone. Getting used to the steering at the slower speeds will be something to get used to.

Then maximizing the apron, braking for pit road, stuff like that, is stuff I'll have to really focus on and work on, maximizing potential.

Overall it was a great day. Felt like everybody at McLaren did a really good job prepping me to make things easier to get up to speed. Thanks to everybody there.

Yeah, glad to be through today and look forward to the open test in April.

THE MODERATOR: Tony, you've been with Kyle almost every step of the way during this journey so far. How did he do?

TONY KANAAN: I mean, it makes my life easier when you have a superstar, so it makes me look good.

I woke up this morning, I was actually nervous. I didn't know why. There's no reason for me to be.

Yeah, awesome day. I think the good thing is Kyle and I were teammates back in the day. We won the 24 Hours of Daytona together, so we knew each other. We fit in each other's seat. It was seamless.

I think we did what we were supposed to do today. It was a lot of information that I was trying to filter and tell people to stop talking to him about. He doesn't have to worry about that.

Yeah, come back here in April and get on.

JEFF GORDON: Tony, you're the first guy I ever met that can fit in Kyle's seat. That's the most impressive thing you've said so far (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: We'll continue with questions.

Q. Kyle, you mentioned you feel like you're working on things on pit lane. Towards the end of your last session when you stalled it, what happened there?

KYLE LARSON: Yeah, I didn't know what was going on. I didn't think I was doing anything different leaving. I think when I hit the first gear shifting on the way by, because the pit road speed limit, pit road whatever deal, is on the back of the wheel. I think I hit that also and turned that off, so then it was doing some anti-stall things. It wouldn't let me go.

TONY KANAAN: He did not stall, by the way.

KYLE LARSON: It just wouldn't go (smiling).

No, so I think those are, like, little things maybe to adjust on the wheel, as well. I'm glad that I did that today because we'll probably move that button to the front of the wheel so I don't make that mistake again.

Yeah, I think other than that, it went smooth.

Q. Especially through phase two, you went 15 for 15 on hitting the laps, five miles an hour range you were supposed to be in. Phase one was a little bit up and

down. What was the difference in your comfort going through phase one through phase two?

KYLE LARSON: When you're running more throttle, it's easier to kind of hit your target. So the slower the speed, it was just kind of hard for me to, like, figure out my timing. I would roll out on the straightaway, then I'd run wide open through one or two. I'd look at my dash. Okay, I think I'm okay for three and four, run some draw. I come off of four, I'm too fast, have to slow down a lot. Vice versa, I'm having to play catch-up on other laps, barely getting by.

Once you went faster, you're running more throttle, it's easier to stay within that window.

Q. Rick, once upon a time, a lot of Hendrick Motorsports drivers raced outside of the Cup Series. You've had a change of philosophy. Your thoughts behind that, how to keep somebody like Kyle sharp running extra races outside of a Cup car?

RICK HENDRICK: We always did not want them in anything other than a Cup car or Xfinity car. When I first started talking to Kyle, he convinced me that it made him sharper.

One of the shows I watched, they had a clip on Kyle Larson crashes. I called him. He said, You weren't supposed to see that.

No, I think it does make our guys -- it helps them. William has followed in his steps, run other cars. Chase, too. Alex got hurt this year, a pretty bad example. Alex gets hurt in a car, he's done racing those cars. Then Chase gets hurt on a snowboard. They've got to have a life.

Jeff and I have talked about it. I think it does make him sharper to get in other things and drive 'em. I know one thing, he would be hard to handle if he wasn't in those kind of cars. I'd have more problems with him, I think (smiling).

KYLE LARSON: Yeah, I might be skiing or snowboarding more often (smiling).

Q. Kyle, you mentioned in May about how much this meant to your dad. Have you talked to him last night or this morning about this test?

KYLE LARSON: I mean, they were here this week. I was surprised when they weren't sticking around for today. They had to get home to California.

Yeah, I was surprised that they go to so many of my things. Knowing how big this was, I thought they would... They had to get home because their dog, my aunt was watching

the dog, and she's going to Hawaii. They had to go back to get the dog. If not for that, they would have been here.

No, I'm sure I'll get to talk to them. I don't know if I'll get to see them this week in Vegas. I'll call them and talk to them on the phone.

It's going to be exciting next year when April or May comes around because it's going to be real then, race time, getting ready for the race then.

Yeah, this is such a huge race to myself and my family and so many people that I'm glad I get to do it.

Q. Rick and Jeff, once y'all conduct the postmortem of this next year, next June, July, whenever it is, if everything goes well from a commercial standpoint, competition standpoint, could we see Hendrick expand their involvement in INDYCAR or even just outside of NASCAR overall?

RICK HENDRICK: I've learned not to commit, not commit, say I'm not going to do anything. I made a statement I wouldn't run Indy, and 30 days later I had to back it up and say I am going to do that.

I think as opportunities present themselves, we kind of look at 'em, Jeff and I talk about 'em a lot, with all of our other teammates back at Motorsports.

We like to race. We enjoy the IMSA racing. We enjoyed Garage 56. I wish we had more places to run that car.

Our main goal is to win championships in NASCAR. But I've learned never say never because he's got a lot more gas in his tank than I do in mine (smiling). But we're always looking at options.

Q. Kyle, what is the best piece of advice you've been given about racing in the Indy 500 and who gave you that advice?

KYLE LARSON: A lot of people have said the same thing, like trusting your instinct. If something doesn't feel right, at least during practice and testing, the couple weeks leading in, you've got plenty of time. If something doesn't feel right, just pit.

I think me even just feeling the car today, like, it feels so stuck, I can tell where your confidence could get too high, then you're back into the wall the next corner.

So I think if you feel something, just pit. Tony told me that. Danica was texting me last night, same thing. Kurt, Jimmie. They've all said the same thing.

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I've got a lot of people I can talk to. I'm sure I'm going to be able to soak in more and more information now that I got to drive the car once.

Q. Jeff, you alluded at the beginning of the press conference being the kid from Indiana that grew up just outside the racetrack, dreaming of coming to this venue. Having your hands so deep in this program, talk about what it means to you personally to see this program finally hit the track now.

JEFF GORDON: Yeah, I think for me, my dreams came true in the inaugural Brickyard 400, racing here in a stockcar. Of course, I wanted to race here in an INDYCAR early on, but the opportunity just was really never there.

When Kyle came onboard, he made it clear that this is something he'd like to do, and he'd like to do it before he feels like he's outside of his prime, I guess, is the best way to put it.

I got excited about that. I didn't know how Mr. Hendrick was going to feel about that. I think between Kyle, myself, just the history of this place, it eventually kind of came together.

Yeah, this is definitely going to be living out a dream of mine through this experience. I'm equally excited to be a part of it in the capacity that I am, see it and hear about it through Kyle's eyes and experience.

We want to come here and make a mark. We also know this is one of the most competitive forms of motorsports and racing in the world, and it's not going to be easy.

Q. Every time NASCAR comes here, we always hear the drivers talk about the appreciation they have with this track. Now that you've taken that first step, do you find yourself having a new appreciation for this venue?

KYLE LARSON: Yeah, I don't know. I don't really know if my views of this place have changed. I really love this facility. I think every time I come in, I realize more and more this is the most beautiful racing facility that we get the honor to go to. I think Mr. Penske has done a great job with it since he's taken over.

Yeah, I mean, obviously getting to turn laps around here in an INDYCAR, getting to, like, feel what that feels like, it makes it even more special. I've gotten the chance to race here on the dirt track, I ran the road course, the oval. We get to thankfully come back on the oval in the Cup car.

This place is just awesome. Golf course is amazing, too.

Love playing golf here. It doesn't get much better than this place.

Q. Kyle, you talk about your appreciation for this place. How special was it for you when you actually hit the track in an INDYCAR doing those laps?

KYLE LARSON: Yeah, it was really cool. I don't know. I wanted to get up to speed. I didn't want to take too long to get up to the 205 mark. I didn't want to get made fun of, Why did it take you so long? I did put pressure on myself to get your confidence built up here pretty quickly.

Thankfully, after three or four laps, I was able to judge off the tach, we were in there. The ROP was nice because I was not ready to go flat for a while. Building up to that speed and pace and confidence was nice to do in ROP.

Yeah, just going to feel what an INDYCAR feels like, be low to the ground, feel the acceleration through the gears was pretty crazy. All of that was eye-opening and an experience that I know for sure I'll never forget. I look forward to kind of getting around cars, feeling how the dirty air affects things.

Q. Jeff and Kyle, what impresses you about the ability to get in anything and go quickly? Jeff talks about Kyle Larson mode. Where does that come from and how does it develop?

JEFF GORDON: I followed Kyle's career from when he was first getting into Sprint cars. The first time you watch him behind the wheel of a race car, it's hard not to be impressed with the talent and his abilities.

I only got to race against him a couple years in the Cup Series. But having him now at Hendrick, now I see how serious he takes it. You heard here he's a humble guy as well. Those two things, talent and confidence and humble, usually don't come in one package.

I've just gained a great appreciation for him. We're certainly fortunate to have him at Hendrick as one of our drivers. Arrow McLaren and this whole team is going to feel the same way about having him in an INDYCAR.

KYLE LARSON: I don't know what Kyle Larson mode is (smiling). I feel like Kyle Larson mode is lot of overdriving and a lot of mistakes (smiling).

I don't know. I'm just fortunate I get to drive really good race cars in all forms of racing that I compete in with great crew chiefs, car owners. Rick Hendrick, his equipment is as good as it gets. Cliff Daniels, in my opinion, is the best crew chief in the Cup Series. Sprint car stuff. Paul Silva is

the best team owner, greatest crew chief in sprint car racing. Dirt models I run for Kevin Rumley, top of his game, considered the best, if not the best.

Yeah, I'm just very lucky that I get to be driving these cars. Obviously it takes a lot of hard work on my part, all that, to get to that point. But still, I'm very fortunate to be in the position that I am in all different types of racing.

Q. Kyle, I'm going to assume that's the fastest you've ever been in a race car. I just wanted to confirm that. Also, was there any difference in the sensation of speed in this car versus other cars you've driven?

KYLE LARSON: Yeah, I remember testing in Michigan maybe in an ARCA car like right after they repaved it. That was back when ARCA had the big horsepower. I think we went 220 something into turn one at Michigan. I think we were about that in INDYCAR.

I would say both, because you're running by yourself. Like, both times it didn't feel like... 220 on paper is like crazy fast. Obviously it is. But when you're out there by yourself, this track is so smooth, it doesn't feel like you're going 220, or it doesn't feel any different than going 195 at Daytona or something.

I did look at the wall one time thinking, like, man, that would really hurt if I hit it (smiling). So things are obviously happening quickly.

Yeah, I think when you get around cars, you get passing... These INDYCARs make some big runs because the tow is so big. I think when people are blowing by you so fast on a straightaway or you're doing the same with the tow that you get, I think that's when the sensation is - Tony can probably speak on it - but I think the sensation is more when you're around other cars. And probably too when you go into qualifying trim, that's when it's going to be crazy. I think going another 20 miles an hour faster... 220 to 240-plus is a big difference in sensation. I'll get to experience that next year.

TONY KANAAN: It feels fast when you see the wall coming and it's not going to stop, so... That's how you know how fast you're going.

It's a unique place. It's definitely, like Kyle said, you put 33 cars around, 20 laps to go, I think the sensation of speed and dynamic of the race changes. That's something you will experience, as well.

Q. Tony, what's your evaluation of Kyle Larson, the INDYCAR driver? Second of all, you fit in his seat. Does that mean when it rains at lap 80, you're the relief

driver?

TONY KANAAN: I don't think Kyle Larson needs an evaluation as an INDYCAR driver. He's a complete driver. Out of his generation, it's the best I've seen.

I've tasted a little bit what these guys do, like he does, trying different cars. I know how much I struggle, and he wins and everything. He's just one of the best race car drivers in the world right now. I'm very fortunate to actually get the chance to work with him. If I can contribute... When we win this one, I'll still get a ring, and I can say I have two 500s instead of one.

The other question, if it rains at lap 80, Mr. Hendrick either let me drive the car or not. My helmet and suit will be in the truck (smiling). Hopefully it won't happen and Kyle will get to enjoy the whole thing.

I've had pretty good runs here. I love this place. Although nobody believes me, I'm good with my decision this year, so...

Q. Kyle, we've heard so much about the development of the Gen 7 Cup car, the similarities to an INDYCAR. Did you notice any similarities?

KYLE LARSON: I don't know. It's hard to say. I mean, you're processing a lot while you're out there. You're by yourself.

I think there was times when I got a lot of wheel in it, and I would say yes, like the steering is quick until you get to a point, then it's not dead, but you can keep turning and it's not obviously as effective. That maybe in a way, I could tell some similarities.

I think from talking to people, where it's become more similar is just the aero balance shift between clean air and traffic. I think it's obviously something I didn't get to experience today because I was by myself.

Yeah, I think as I get to being around cars, I think the difference in balance is where it's gotten a lot closer. I think the style of our racing has trended more to them. Maybe not every weekend, but a lot of places, especially like Daytona, Talladega, Atlanta, you're saving fuel to have a shorter pit stop and kind of get track position that way, where it sound like that is what INDYCAR guys do a lot.

Just the overall strategy of the race has trended more like INDYCAR. I think the cars in traffic has, as well.

Q. Mr. H, we saw Will Power give you a helmet. Can you comment on that situation.

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RICK HENDRICK: Yeah, Will, his wife was real ill in Charlotte. She was going the wrong way. He called, and we got her moved into another hospital, had some of the doctors join in. She came out of it.

I was surprised to get the helmet, but I was more than happy to help them through that difficult time. I'm glad she's okay. But the helmet was a real surprise and a real gift.

I told him I love trophies and helmets. He said, This one hasn't won a race this year, but I did wear it in the Indy 500. I said that was good enough. That was a great gift.

Q. Jeff, I think under normal circumstances when you're helping a younger driver for a day like today, you might have something insightful to say and experience. What did you have to say to him?

JEFF GORDON: I'm looking forward to downloading with him a little bit further, just about the process and what does that grip feel like the first time going into a corner, cold tires on the apron. More just race chat stuff.

I've gotten pretty comfortable in the new role that I'm in. Being a race car driver, not being in the current cars, in the competition that they're currently in, my input is more of what can we do to make the race team stronger and better, the communication, the people around him, the tools, just provide the resources.

That's what Rick taught me in his role as an owner. That's what I want to be there for. I'm probably more focused right now on looking at the car, how do we position the logos and the sponsorship. We're capturing it all to create some content. What can we do with that.

When me and Kyle talk, how was your last Sprint car race, about the experience today, then we'll do the same when we get to Las Vegas, talk about the Cup car this weekend.

Q. Tony, you talked about shutting down some of the chatter around Kyle. From an INDYCAR perspective, what were they trying to feed him that maybe he's not ready for yet?

TONY KANAAN: Think about you have a wheel with 25 buttons, then you have the weight jacker, front bar, rear bar. You have telemetry you can analyze. Engineers, they're just trying to give you all that, which it's way too much information.

I know for a fact, because the past four years, three years, since Jimmie and I got together to do what we did here in

INDYCAR, I started racing other series. Every weekend I had to reset my head, different wheel, different car.

Especially him, he just raced two nights ago, won the championship, then he comes here, you get the thing. It's too much overthinking. Then why are we going to feed him all that right now, because we're going to come back here next April. We're not going to remember that. It's too long.

He has a championship to win. I mean, I was like, I let them talk. He went to change. Don't worry about it, just enjoy the racetrack. I didn't want him to miss the first moment because I think it's extremely special. I remember my first time here. But also he was here to pass ROP.

The wheel, we have six months to figure out. We'll talk now that he physically saw it as a driver. We probably understand a lot more than the engineer giving you the data, the picture of the wheel.

Go feel the buttons. Hey, do you want the pit lane speedometer back here? Now it's not okay any more. You have to have experience. That's why I was trying to tell them just to let him enjoy the game, now we'll start working.

Q. Kyle, did it feel natural to you out there at that speed in this car?

KYLE LARSON: Yeah. I mean, it was harder to go slow, like I said earlier. It was hard to get yourself to run 205. I felt like I was happy with that because I felt like it felt fairly comfortable.

Like I said, honestly for the most part it was kind of everything I expected. I watched a lot of onboard video, all of that. We got to work on my line a little bit today.

Yeah, I mean, nothing jumped out like it was too much of a surprise, so I was happy about that.

Q. The last time the Brickyard 400 went around the oval here was 2020. The late John Andretti used to say the comparison between the two cars almost doesn't look like the same racetrack. Did you get that sensation?

KYLE LARSON: I don't know. The stockcar stuff, the track conditions are really good obviously today, but the stockcar stuff is slow. I just remember being really tight through one. You're off the gas a lot. Two would be tight. Three and four would have a better balance.

In the INDYCAR, I think the track was really good. You have more downforce probably than what we're going to

have coming back, all of that. Obviously, way more downforce and speed than a Cup car. The balance of all four corners felt way more similar than the stockcar. So that's nice, I guess.

Yeah, I don't know. I mean, overall width and stuff, the track didn't feel real different.

Q. Mr. H, you have every type of trophy you can get in NASCAR. Where would you put a Baby Borg?

RICK HENDRICK: That would go right in the middle. That would be something pretty special. I don't even let myself go there, think about that. First I want to make the race.

Just to say you could win this race, could win it, would win it, you might be able to build off of that, just that trophy and the car, because it would be that special.

I wouldn't do that. I'm not going to build a car.

JEFF GORDON: Don't say things that you're going to take back later (smiling).

Q. Looking ahead to these next months till the open test, are there plans to do any other oval running or the on-track plan is practice in May? What will you focus on and work on before the race?

KYLE LARSON: I just learned there was an open test like yesterday. I don't know what other plans there are, at least for me in the car, before then.

TONY KANAAN: We have plans. That's all I'm going to tell you (smiling).

No, we have plans. Obviously there's a lot of things we're going to talk about. Hopefully get him on track before that open test again. Not finalized yet, but give him as much time as he can to feel comfortable.

I'm confident that we will, so...

THE MODERATOR: We will leave it there. Another step towards the 108th running of the Indy 500 Presented by Gainbridge.

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