

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Chip Ganassi

Alex Palou

Mike Parra

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. Obviously a special announcement earlier today from DHL Express and Chip Ganassi Racing as the leading global brand in the logistics industry begins a multi-year partnership establishing DHL as the primary partner of the No. 10 Honda-powered Dallara, driven by the two-time reigning INDYCAR SERIES champion, Alex Palou. No better place to begin this partnership than at the Firestone Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, which comes March 10th of next year, just a few hours away from the DHL regional headquarters in Plantation, Florida.

Joining us this afternoon, Chip Ganassi, team owner of Chip Ganassi Racing. Chip, good to see you.

CHIP GANASSI: Thanks, Dave. How are you?

THE MODERATOR: Good. Mike Parra, CEO DHL Express Americas and head global sponsorships. Great to see you, as well.

MIKE PARRA: Great to see you again.

THE MODERATOR: The aforementioned two-time INDYCAR SERIES champion, Alex Palou joining us across the sea. Congratulations, dad, by the way.

ALEX PALOU: Thank you, Dave.

THE MODERATOR: Chip, let's begin with you. Certainly an exciting day for yourself and the organization. Really what stands out to you about this exciting opportunity?

CHIP GANASSI: Well, thanks, Dave. Good morning, everyone. Good afternoon, everyone.

It's not often you get to partner with a massive brand like DHL. I think that about says it all. They're a massive international brand with a massive footprint. It's a real

feather in our cap to have them on our team. I'm pretty excited, I got to tell you.

THE MODERATOR: Mike, DHL has really been a visible brand across motorsports and in the INDYCAR paddock. What does today mean to you and the company? What ultimately motivated your organization to jump into this opportunity?

MIKE PARRA: First of all, extremely excited to be part of CGR and Chip Ganassi Racing. As you said, we've been in INDYCAR for over 12 years. The opportunity for us to compete at the front of the field was just simply too compelling, too compelling to pass up.

When you get a chance to race with a two-time champion in Alex behind the wheel of the yellow and red in the future No. 10 Honda, we believe this collaboration positions us exactly where we want to be.

Alex, a Spaniard in nature. I'm going to be moving to Spain. That wasn't in the mix when we were talking about this deal at the time. Even the team in Spain, I was telling Alex when we were coming on here, the team in Spain called me today. They're extremely excited about this opportunity.

Global guy, two-time champion, then DHL joining an organization in CGR that's won 15 INDYCAR championships, and three of the past four, hard to pass up on this opportunity.

THE MODERATOR: Alex, congratulations on this news today. You'll be looking to defend your title and win a third championship in 2024. It's got to be exciting to do so with a new partner in DHL. What are the feelings heading into 2024 for you?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, thank you everyone for tuning in.

It's been an amazing opportunity, and very special to represent a brand like DHL, not only because of how big it is worldwide, but it's very close to my house. I just see DHL trucks and vans everywhere. For me it's, like, really common.



It's just a really special opportunity to represent a brand like that, a car that looks so good. It's easy to see from TV. Hopefully my family will appreciate that, looking from home.

Yeah, then we have the opportunity now, after an amazing 2023 season, to try and repeat what we just did. It's been an amazing year. I couldn't be happier the results that we got on track.

It's going to be tough to repeat that because everything works so well. The team, the organization did an amazing job giving us amazing cars all season. But we're working hard. That's what we want. That's what we prepare ourselves for. We want to get that No. 10 DHL car Honda in St. Petersburg.

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

Q. Mike, obviously such a long relationship with Andretti. What was the reason to not continue down that avenue?

MIKE PARRA: Yeah, no, first and foremost, I have a friendship with Michael. I consider him family, to be honest, in a lot of different ways.

It was just an opportunity where we both came to the conclusion that it was time for both of us potentially to look at other opportunities. Nothing concerning in that part.

We were a big part of bringing Jamie Chadwick over to Andretti Autosport, lining up Michael and myself on bringing women into the INDYCAR SERIES, in the INDY NXT Series. Nothing of concern, to be honest. It was just an opportunity too good to pass up for both of us. That's what I would say.

Q. On the Jamie Chadwick subject, even though y'all aren't affiliated with Andretti anymore, are you doing any type of partnership with Jamie in any capacity?

MIKE PARRA: Yeah, we are. That's a good question. Thank you for asking that.

We're going to be doing an ambassadorship role, which was the original intention when we spoke to her a couple years ago. We've been following Jamie for five years, my team has. Yeah, we'll be doing an ambassadorship role with her inside of the series, but more importantly outside the series.

Q. Does that mean there could be some opportunities for her with the brand to grow a little bit more, whether that's the current path with Andretti or a potential path

if she ends up in INDYCAR with maybe a Ganassi car?

MIKE PARRA: Yeah, you can never say never. You can never say never with Jamie. From an ambassador standpoint, we're already working with her. Yeah, we'll see when we get there.

Q. Could you both take us through a little bit of how this relationship came to be. Chip or folks at CGR reached about striking out a deal or Mike was looking around.

CHIP GANASSI: Yeah, I'll take a stab at it.

Interestingly enough, we have a new salesperson on staff. He called me up one day, said, Hey, I got a phone call from somebody that may be interested in sponsoring us. They're on another team currently. They were thinking about seeing if we had any availability.

I said, Sure, tell them we have availability. Who is it?

Then he told me.

That was kind of how I found out about it.

MIKE PARRA: Yeah, that's exactly it. As we knew we were coming to an end with the Andretti relationship, again very amicable and the utmost respect for Michael and J.F., the entire team there, we went out into the market.

We were looking at other things, as well, by the way. We were looking at MLS. There was a big interest here locally obviously with Messi and the team here in Miami. MLS was approaching us. There was various different things that we were looking at.

This opportunity to stay in INDYCAR, which we've been loyal to, the series, then the opportunity to join CGR. Again, as I said at the beginning, too hard to pass up on it. Chip and the team have been nothing but cordial with us. We've worked through something that we think is going to be an incredible opportunity to work together.

Q. This is news focused on primary sponsorship on Alex's car. Chip, there's occasions where primaries drift from car to car. Will DHL be featured in a primary way on other cars or is it primarily focused on Alex?

CHIP GANASSI: Yeah, obviously it's primarily focused on Alex's No. 10 car. I think you're going to see our partnerships spread across all cars this year at some point or another in some fashion. I don't know that it's going to be in a primary fashion on other cars. You will see participation on all vehicles I think by, in fact, all of our



primary sponsors.

Q. How many primary races would this be for DHL for 2024 on the 10?

CHIP GANASSI: That's a good question there. I can tell you they're a major part of ours for most of the races. I can tell you that.

Q. Alex, you were asked in Laguna about the potential of running the No. 1 when it was assumed you might be running with the American Legion next year. Are you still planning on running the 10 next year and defending your championship in 2024?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, we will be running the 10. The 1 is always calling, obviously when you have the ability to win a championship and to choose. At the same time the 10 is very special. I won already two championships with it. It's very special to the team and to the brand, CGR brand, in general.

I'm a little bit concerned also about people running the No. 1 and not being able to win. So, yeah, we had to continue with the 10. I didn't push for the 1 or anything like that once I really thought about it. I like the 10. It was also my first-ever number in a go-kart. Yeah, I'll try and repeat a championship with the 10 now.

Q. What does the idea of representing such a storied modern-day INDYCAR brand like DHL going to be like for you?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I mean, I think I've been lucky enough to represent very different brands, big brands. The first year we had (indiscernible), we had NTT, then we had the American Legion starting small, then being our primary sponsor and winning the championship with them.

Now to have DHL, it gives us another opportunity to hopefully make also my name and the team's name bigger just because it's a global brand. As I said earlier, today I can see DHL trucks and vans and planes all around Spain. It's all around Europe, all around the globe.

It gives us another opportunity I think being also a big brand like that, it's super easy to see all with the colors that it's pretty close to Spain.

Yeah, it's exciting. If I have to change colors every day or not, that's CGR deciding. I don't think it's better to stay always in one color or better to always keep on changing. I think whatever is best for the team, whether it gives us the opportunity to keep on making our team as big and as strong as it is, it's the most important thing.

Q. Your team recently admitted a breach of contract with this ongoing lawsuit with McLaren. I wanted to give you a chance to comment on anything that was recently released.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, it's still ongoing. As it's still not closed yet, I cannot really comment more of what's been already released. Yeah, whatever all the documents and everything that my lawyer said are true, and that's my comment, let's say. Yeah, once everything is settled, once everything is done, I'll be hopefully able to answer more questions in detail.

Q. Chip, with your expanding to five cars next season, how big of a deal is this for you on a personal level, not just a team perspective?

CHIP GANASSI: Yeah, I don't look at it as four or five cars. We're running multiple cars out of our facility in Indianapolis, whether they're INDYCARs or sports cars. The number of cars seems to stay about the same. It changes from series to series each year.

We've run seven or eight cars out of that shop plenty of times. It's not really a huge change in that area. I might say other than making the tent a little bigger at the racetrack, buying a few more plates for lunch, I don't know that there's much change in the way we do things. Probably no change at all, as a matter of fact.

Q. Alex, what does it mean to you, reigning champion, to get DHL on the car?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, it's super special. I mean, we're welcoming a new sponsor to the team. We're welcoming a huge sponsor. As I said, it's very special to represent such a big brand like that. I think small kids that don't really follow a lot in motorsport, they know what DHL is. It's super visible, it's a brand that you see everywhere. Hopefully we'll not only help the team continuing to win races, but we'll also help getting more exposure everywhere globally.

Yeah, I'm excited. It's obviously challenging to get a big sponsor like that. You need to deliver. At the same time that kind of pressure is what drives us. That's what we do. It's what keeps us working every day, not only myself but everybody on the 10 car and everybody back at the shop at CGR.

We're excited and we cannot wait to start.

Q. Alex, the announcement today says the deal is multi-year. People have been focused on what's

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happened in the past, not focused on what's in the future. We haven't seen any confirmation about a new contract for you or your plans for the future, more focused on the past. Are you part of this multi-year deal? Have you come to some sort of new agreement with Ganassi about your future?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, that's right, it's another new deal. It's going to be multi-year, as well. It's not been announced like specifically, but it was, let's say, announced today.

So, yeah, I cannot really mention more than that. Yeah, it's going to be a multi-year deal.

Q. Alex, about the pressure being with DHL. Now that you are the champion for 2023, how does it feel to sign with them? How do you feel the pressure for next year?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I'm super excited about obviously getting DHL, as I said. The pressure is part of our sport. It's part of the game. It's what drives us to be better, to push our limits every day, to try and beat everybody. At the end of the day that's what we have to do. We have to win.

Yeah, I'm excited. I think all the team is the same way, excited the same way. Once you win one race, it's not like you relax and say, That's it, I'm done. The feeling you get, it's so good, you want to do it again. When it's one championship, it's multiplied by 18.

Yeah, everybody is excited. Everybody is working hard. The pressure, it's just good pressure that hopefully will keep us on pushing hard to be better every day.

Q. About the championship you won, you became the first driver to win the championship before the season ending since Sebastien Bourdais in 2007. Does this statistic show how hard it is to win the INDYCAR SERIES?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I think INDYCAR has always been super, super hard. Especially nowadays with now the points system is, it's really hard to win it before the last race of the season.

But we had an excellent season overall. Our worst position was eighth, I believe. We had five wins. We were always running up front. We just felt like it was our year. It was one of those years that everything went well.

I don't expect to have a lot of years like that. Hopefully we get some more, but it's not going to be 10 more years like that obviously.

Yeah, I think we took advantage when we had that opportunity, when the cars were amazing, where I felt great, where the luck was on our side. Yeah, we will try and do it again. It's going to be tough. We hopefully will work hard enough that we can do it again.

THE MODERATOR: Mike, we talked a little bit about your connection with Andretti, but maybe from afar, what was about Chip Ganassi Racing that you always admired, what the common themes were during the conversation period you had with Chip?

MIKE PARRA: I have to tell you, I love racing. I started following Chip when he was doing NASCAR, then a bit on the INDYCAR side.

I got to tell you, some of the things that really cemented it for our team, Greg Hewitt, our CEO in the U.S., Chet Paul who runs commercial for us and sponsorship in the U.S., and Joe Siegel, who is on the call, when you walk into CGR, you walk the hallways at CGR, the first thing you see is the intimate relationship that Chip has with everybody that works for him. You can just see the rich history of Chip Ganassi Racing on the walls. It loops around the whole building. They started a second row. That second row is almost complete. They're making room for the third row (smiling).

He could stop and tell you about every one of those wins that started with the Andrettis, by the way, working with Chip in that. The rich history.

He takes you downstairs. When you walk in where they're working on the cars, you walk in and meet the team, he's just got a personal relationship with every single person. That just aligns with our values at DHL.

We are a results-driven company, but we say without compromising our respect-based behaviors. That's Chip. That's what I saw not only in Chip, but in Mike Long, the whole team there at Chip Ganassi Racing.

I would say that, and finally we're in 220 countries globally, with 630,000 employees on a worldwide basis. Chip is in a global racing. His name is global. He's global in nature. All of those things and his passion and dedication as well, not just to speed, but his passion and his dedication to the communities that they live in and serve in also was a big attraction for us.

THE MODERATOR: Sounds like both companies believe in that very deeply.

CHIP GANASSI: Yes.



Q. You've talked about what attracted you to each other. Why are you still interested in INDYCAR? We've just had the news that hybrids introduction is going to be delayed. DHL has been using electric vans since 2019. What is it that's keeping you in this series rather than more sustainable forms of motorsport? How do you feel about this latest news, the introduction the hybrids is being pushed further down the road?

MIKE PARRA: For us, first of all, I mean, I think you know the history of DHL. We're in many different racing leagues. We're in Formula 1. We're in Formula E. That's our commitment around sustainability. As well, we're partnered with Kalitta Motorsports. We're in Moto GP. We're in WEC's sponsorships. We're pretty much covering all the leagues. We're not in NASCAR. Again, we get a lot of calls to go to NASCAR, but it's just not our cup of tea at the moment.

We love INDYCAR for a couple of reasons. Number one, it's in Canada, INDYCAR. INDYCAR will be back to doing some shape or form international racing even further. It could be in Argentina or going down to Mexico or going back out to Asia-Pacific and Australia or doing more races in Canada.

The following is growing for INDYCAR. You got to give kudos to the owners and to Roger, to what's happened in the series. Michael and the guys that have been committed to INDYCAR, as well, have brought this series and continue to grow its affinity amongst the race fans. Last year the races were jam-packed. The audience is growing. That's what keeps us in INDYCAR.

CHIP GANASSI: My question is, what do you think about the hybrid situation the last few days? Is that what you're asking about?

Q. What is your reaction to the introduction being pushed down the road? Where do you feasibly see it being introduced now?

CHIP GANASSI: It's interesting, it takes a lot of things to come together to make an announcement that you're going to go hybrid. I think it takes -- it's equally difficult to announce it's going to be delayed.

It's unfortunate, no question. But it's probably the right decision. Knowing all I know, and from what I understand, it was probably the right decision to make.

Sure, it's not our first choice. I wouldn't say it's the optimum thing to do, to delay it, but it was the right thing to

do with everything I know.

Having said that, if they bring it in halfway through the season, I don't think it's as big a deal as people would think. In the test that we've done with the hybrid, the teams are going to find it very easy to transmit over to that program when the time comes. I don't see that as a big thing.

We want to make sure it's ready, when it's ready for prime time, then bring it along, but not too soon to discourage the type of great racing we have right now. I don't think we want to do anything to impede that. Our on-track product is very, very good right now. More passes, more on-track passes than any open-wheel series in the world I think right now. I think that speaks for itself in terms of INDYCAR.

We don't want to mess that up or we don't want to mess up the Greatest Spectacle in Racing, which is the Indianapolis 500. I think if the hybrid comes along sometime after that, it will be fine. It won't be such a big challenge that we're all distorted about here on Tuesday.

Q. You mentioned a mid-season introduction being tabled. Was that ever seriously discussed?

CHIP GANASSI: I don't know that that's been tabled unless that's new news I'm not aware of. Yeah, I was told they're thinking of bringing it sometime after the Indianapolis 500, was my latest news.

THE MODERATOR: Chip, you're correct on that.

Q. Mike, in terms of the DHL partnership, it is expected for the brand to assume a new integration model now that you have a Spanish driver, presence in Spain? It is expected for the brand to take a more hands-on role, ads in Spain?

MIKE PARRA: Well, it's funny you ask that question. Before we joined the call, I was telling Alex that we want to leverage the opportunity when he is in Spain to meet with our employees, our customers in Spain. Actually in Barcelona, to be exact. That will be something we'll work with Chip and his team and Alex to accomplish that, making sure that it doesn't affect or impact racing here in any way, shape or form.

Yeah, we definitely do look forward to that opportunity. I was saying the team in Spain is very excited. They'll be watching. I'm sure there will be many more Europeans watching now that the yellow and red colors are on CGR's No. 10 Honda.

Q. Chip, you said a few months ago when there was

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sports

the contract talks with Marcus Ericsson to review that you were making efforts to keep the other drivers in the team. Now with the DHL sponsorship came to be, was this part of the efforts to keep Marcus in the team or this was a completely unrelated development?

CHIP GANASSI: Yeah, no, I'd say the two are mutually separate.

Q. We heard in the last week the comments made by Honda about maybe pulling out of INDYCAR in 2026. As a team owner that supports Honda engines, what is your take on that? Are they right in claiming costs of INDYCAR racing are too high?

CHIP GANASSI: I heard those same comments that we all read. I really haven't caught up with Honda lately, haven't caught up with them yet to discuss what exactly they mean and where they're headed.

I think it certainly got our attention. It's something we have to keep a close eye on.

Q. About the deal with Alex and Chip, DHL, could you consider to have another partnership with Formula 4...

MIKE PARRA: We're always open to explore opportunities. I think we're going to take it one step at a time and enjoy this announcement today and enjoy this upcoming year with CGR and Alex as the pilot of the car, then we'll see where it goes from there.

I think one of the great things that we've always done as an organization is we're open to exploring different things. I mean, I would have never known I was going to get into the bass boat fishing sponsorship, and we did that last year with a Japanese guy who fishes here in the U.S. called Takumi Ito. He's a Japanese guy. The opportunity was brought to us, and it was a small sponsorship, but it had incredible return not only for the brand but we got into a sport that we never even thought we would get into. I've never fished in my life. I need to get into bass fishing now from that perspective.

Yeah, anything is possible. We're going to take it one step at a time and work through the relationship, just consummate this partnership as we move along. We're excited. We're really, really excited about next year, then we'll see where it goes from there.

Q. Chip, what kind of support do you think you can give Alex while he's dealing with the legal situation to keep him focused?

CHIP GANASSI: Yeah, I mean, I think the good news

about Alex, nothing sort of on the periphery seems to affect him on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. When you look over his record with our team, you can see that he's had 50 starts with our team, and in those 50 starts he's had 24 podiums. Think about that, 24 podiums in 50 starts with Chip Ganassi Racing.

He's only the second guy to win multiple championships at 26 years old or under in the hundred-year history of INDYCAR racing. When you look at statistics like that, he knows he has our unwavering support in anything he wants to do.

This is just a little speed bump along the way.

THE MODERATOR: We'll leave it there. Again, congratulations DHL, Chip Ganassi Racing. Our thanks to Chip, Mike and Alex. Thank you all very much.

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