

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Pietro Fittipaldi

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up day one at NTT INDYCAR Series content day with the driver of the No. 30 Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing Honda, Pietro Fittipaldi. Pietro returns to the series after making nine starts between 2018 and 2021 for Dale Coyne Racing. Welcome back. Wrapping up your day, how has your day been so far?

PIETRO FITTIPALDI: Yeah, it's been a long day for everybody. It's tiring. It's one thing after another. But I'm extremely happy to be here.

Yeah, looking forward to getting in the car soon.

It's amazing to have 5-Hour Energy on board. It's an iconic brand. I remember growing up watching both my uncles race the Daytona 24 Hours during the pit wall and I remember all the teams have been the little 5-Hour Energy drink stands there, so I remember it from years ago. It's amazing to have them on board.

Q. I asked you this when you were introduced, but you don't have to go far to get experienced advice from anybody, whether it be in your family or whether it be Max or anybody like that. Now you're on a team where some veteran drivers and Bobby Rahal and all that. How much do you tap into that, to make yourself as good a race driver as you can be?

PIETRO FITTIPALDI: Yeah, you tap into it as much as you can. As you said, my family has a lot of experience with the motorsports world, and now going into a team like Rahal Letterman Lanigan with Graham there and Bobby Rahal, both drivers that have a lot of success in INDYCAR, I'm for sure going to be speaking to both of them throughout the season trying to learn and prepare as best I can.

It's a big privilege to be part of this team, and as well to have a family that understands so much about racing.

Q. I think we asked you this when you were introduced a couple months ago, but just following up,

will you have any sort of a reserve driver role with Haas going into 2024?

PIETRO FITTIPALDI: Yeah, it's a good possibility. We're just talking through the details in terms of calendar and stuff like that because for sure the team has known that my priority is INDYCAR, and I need the time to be able to prepare well for the races and be fully 100 percent committed to INDYCAR.

But it's a good possibility, so it's working over the calendars and seeing the best way to do it.

Q. Obviously you've played in the INDYCAR sandbox not too long ago, but why is this a better opportunity and a better fit for you now to chase a full-time opportunity in INDYCAR versus maybe a few years ago?

PIETRO FITTIPALDI: Well, I think it was just that a few years ago, things happened, and I didn't have opportunities at the time for a couple reasons, and then I got the opportunity to start working with the Haas F1 team and then kind of started focusing on that.

But I've always been in touch with a lot of the team owners, friendly, and I've been speaking to Bobby for many years, and the opportunity was there, and it worked for both of us, and the team had strong partners on board. I'm super happy to be a part of the team, and I'll be racing full-time in INDYCAR. It's something I wanted to do for a very long time.

Q. Obviously you've seen the news with Guenther today and how that's transpired with Haas. I'm curious if I can get your thoughts on his influence over your career.

PIETRO FITTIPALDI: Oh, Guenther, I'm extremely grateful to him for the trust he had in me. I learned a lot through him as a boss, as a friend, as a mentor. He's a person that I respect tremendously.

It's a decision that the team made, but I know that working with Guenther, he was a great team boss, and I learned a lot from him, and I can't thank him enough, to him and both

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Gene, as well, for the opportunities they gave me in my racing career.

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Q. Last five years or so you've obviously bounced around to quite a lot of different series. You've done loads of different things. Do you see your long-term future in INDYCAR or is this something you want to do for the next few years of your career?

PIETRO FITTIPALDI: Absolutely, I've always wanted to do it, and it was just a matter of opportunity. Sometimes I think from the outside it's easy to be like, I think the driver has to do this and do this full time, and the racing world doesn't work like that. There's a lot of variables that are in place to be able to have a driver racing.

At times you just have to take whatever opportunity is given to you. That's kind of how I was the past few years.

Even racing in WEC this season this past with season with Team JOTA, we were very strong over there. We won a race at Monza. Basically won every practice and qualifying session in Le Mans.

It was going really well in the World Endurance Championship, and I had opportunities to do MDH for this upcoming season which would be amazing because, WEC and IMSA together, they're growing so much in popularity, but when the INDYCAR opportunity came by, I was like, I've always wanted to do this and I got to go for it.

Q. Obviously the team had quite a decent year, particularly the win in Toronto, and you had a few poles between the team. Do you think personally you can reach those ambitions next year? Do you think poles and wins are in the cards for you?

PIETRO FITTIPALDI: For sure. I think you have to believe, and the team has shown tremendous pace, especially on the road courses and towards middle to the end of the season. I know the work that they're putting into it.

But we know how competitive the INDYCAR season is. Every driver on the grid basically can win the race, and with the amount of strategy that's into an INDYCAR race, it gets so complicated at times. Sometimes you're the fastest driver and at the time with the best strategy and then you still end up not winning the race. That's how crazy it can get.

But I think we have to take it race weekend by race weekend, maximize each and every session, and then the results will come.