

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Dennis Reinbold

Don Cusick

Ryan Hunter-Reay

Conor Daly

Press Conference



progressed, he did some driving with Ed Carpenter Racing, we stayed in touch and decided pretty much after the season that we wanted to keep going forward.

Conor I've known for a long, long time. I talked to him I don't know when. Conor, you can fill us in on that. Some time ago and said, Hey, if you ever have the opportunity to drive for us, we'd like to have you in there.

Our criteria really, Don and myself, was, Let's go out there and do everything we can to win the race, put the best drivers possible that can do that. Ryan's proven track record is certainly stellar. Every time you turn around the last several years, Conor is charging to the front.

That's what we wanted to put together. We're excited to be back with Chevy again for I don't know how many years we've been with Chevy, but they're a great partner and support us fully.

We're excited to put this effort together. It's probably our best effort that we've had from the start going into the season. We've been around, Dreyer & Reinbold Racing, our 25th year of being at it. We're a little past due to win this thing so that's our goal this year.

THE MODERATOR: Don, let's turn to you. You clearly enjoy being in Indianapolis every month of May now. How much are you looking forward to returning this year?

DON CUSICK: Super excited as always. It's just kind of become a thing like where else would you want to be on Memorial weekend or the two weeks leading up to it, for that matter. I'm super excited.

THE MODERATOR: Ryan, what did you learn about this organization last year that brought you back to 2024?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Yeah, no, it was an absolute pleasure working with Dennis, the entire Dreyer & Reinbold Racing team. It was really refreshing to see the motivation in everyone's faces from day one. Just what they put into this event is special.

I felt that. We all worked really hard together. We showed strong every day we were on the racetrack, really had a

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. As you certainly know, a couple hours ago big announcement from Dreyer & Reinbold Racing, an announcement with several layers. Begins with a renewal of their partnership with Cusick Motorsports as both look head to the Indianapolis 500 Presented by Gainbridge.

They also announced their dynamic driver lineup for the month of May, that includes Ryan Hunter-Reay, the 2014 winner of the Indy 500, and 2012 INDYCAR SERIES champion. Ryan will drive the No. 23 Chevrolet. Conor Daly returns to participate in his, hard to believe, 11th Indianapolis 500, driver the No. 24 Chevrolet for Dreyer & Reinbold Racing/Cusick Motorsports.

Both Conor and Ryan joins us, as well as team owner of the Dreyer & Reinbold Racing, Dennis Reinbold, and from Cusick Motorsports, Don Cusick.

Dennis, what did it take for all this to come together as you prepare to race the Indianapolis 500?

DENNIS REINBOLD: Well, we started talking about what we can do with only one goal. Our only goal is to win the race. So we started there. I've had conversations with each of these three guys with me today about just that.

I'll start with Don. Don and I started talking about that really from the time we met. Talked more throughout the month of May last year, as well as through the summer and ongoing to what is it we can do to team up to really put forth the best effort to give ourselves a shot to win this race.

Ryan pretty much after the race last year, I was like I talked to him and I said, We would definitely want you back. We talked a little more. As the time went on and the season



strong race day going, as well, if not for some little hiccups that were to no fault of the team at all that got in the way. That's Indy. It happens that way.

Really it's great to be back with the team. Great to be back with Cusick Motorsports. Thank you, Don. It's great to be back with Chevy. I have a great relationship with Chevrolet over the years. Won the championship with them. Look forward to working with them and my friends at Ilmor.

I'm really psyched. This is a huge opportunity to team up with Conor, all-American lineup. We're ready to fly the stars and stripes high.

THE MODERATOR: Conor, I know you've watched Dreyer & Reinbold Racing's organization for a long time. Nitrocross as well. What does it mean to join a group that is so committed to the Indianapolis 500 and certainly the goal of winning it?

CONOR DALY: Yes, Dennis mentioned it. I've been an INDYCAR fan since I was breathing and living on this earth. Most of my childhood, Dreyer & Reinbold Racing cars I was a fan of. I always thought Dennis Reinbold had great-looking vehicles as well. The Purex Wagon back in the day. How could you not cheer for that car? Mike Conway was there. There were so many cars that you could root for.

Obviously in my position right now, I would have loved to have been doing more INDYCAR racing, of course. But the Indy 500 is without a doubt my ultimate goal. To win, I want to be like Ryan and to be able to know what the milk tastes like. Obviously to be able to do that for Dennis would be amazing.

Dennis has even loaned me a car before in my life. I owe him already. Like, when my Subaru broke down many years ago, I actually got to driver a loner car from Dennis Reinbold for a while. I appreciate his generosity. I made sure that was in the deal for this month of May, to have a nice loner vehicle.

It's awesome. It's the best possible scenario. All you do when you show up to May is have the best chance to win. I've obviously got a lot of experience there now. I do believe I know what it takes to run up front. Obviously Ryan does, too.

Going to the shop, going to see the level of preparation that this group does, it's such a high level. It's kind of hard to believe they're not running full-time. You know what I mean? You see the preparation, you see the people, getting to work with a lot of folks there, even on the Nitrocross side. It's pretty cool.

Great to be with Chevrolet who I've worked with many years at the Speedway. Chevrolet and Don Cusick being a part of this, enjoyed being a part of the INDYCAR sport. We love that.

THE MODERATOR: Let's go ahead and open it up for questions.

Q. Don, I know Stefan was kind of the cornerstone of your team for a while. He won't be able to compete. Yet you're back, moving on. I know you paid some homage to Stefan when you made the announcement. Could you talk a little bit about if there's still a role he may be playing in the background.

DON CUSICK: Oh, yeah, for sure. So first of all, the opportunity with Dreyer & Reinbold Racing was a really great one. We went through, as everybody knows, a lot of stuff last year. I think that really kind of helped cement who they were, who we were. We wanted to come back with Dennis and the group. That's number one.

As far as Stefan goes, unfortunately he had the injury, I think it set him back a little bit. I'm not sure that he's done trying to be a part of the Indy 500. Look, we'll always support him. He's a good guy and a good friend. He is the reason that we ended up in the Indy 500.

That said, he's given us his full support and blessing. Depending on what happens this year, hopefully he's around in May and able to say hi to everybody.

Q. Conor and Ryan, you've raced each other a lot. What is it like to be teammates and complement each other on a race team?

CONOR DALY: I'll start.

I mean, Ryan and I were teammates in 2019, too, at Andretti. That's when I first got to experience that. Obviously that operation was massive. I was just the guy who was coming in to do the 500. It went really well for us then.

When you're teamed up with someone who has a ton of experience, I think that just helps the whole operation, right? If we have questions, we're able to either go to each other, go to the team, we can kind of figure out where we want to go pretty quickly. It's just good.

Everything about it, as Dennis said, I think this is a very strong lineup. I'm just excited to kind of get going. It makes you want to get on track as soon as possible.

Q. Ryan?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Absolutely. I agree with Conor. I think the strength that we have this year for myself especially is that I've been with the team for a year. We know our strengths, what we need to do better moving forward. I think bringing Conor in, we're going to have great communication.

It's a situation where we're capable of putting any bit of egos aside and really working well together and pushing this two-car team.

Like Conor said, we were teammates in 2019 at Andretti. I don't know how many cars we had in the garage, eight, seven, six. There's a whole lot of noise at that point, a whole lot of information buzzing around. It's really tough to focus on really what matters.

I think in this situation, this environment with this team, I think it gives us the opportunity to push forward together.

Q. I'd be remiss if I didn't ask this, even know it's an INDYCAR Zoom. Conor you were groomed to be a Formula 1 driver. You've both driven for Michael Andretti. Yesterday he got some bad news from Formula 1, they rejected his bid to bring a team to F1. Were you surprised, shocked? If so, why?

CONOR DALY: Listen to my podcast if you really want to know. I have a lot to say about that.

I dislike it for the Andretti name. It's just sad. They put a lot of work into that. I've seen a lot of effort go into it. Why wouldn't you want to race against the best? If you're not going to get to race against more folks, I don't know. Kind of weird for me.

There's a lot more to that one.

Q. Ryan?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Yeah, I agree. It just doesn't make sense. Obviously Andretti has the funding, the capabilities of going in there, and I think being competitive. Look at the past. I think Marshall Pruett said it yesterday afternoon or whatever it was, that you enjoyed watching some of these underdog teams come in and try and fight against the powerhouses of McLaren, Ferrari, Mercedes. It kind of leaves a bad taste in your mouth. It makes you feel like this isn't the real deal, this isn't what racing is all about.

Yeah, I don't know. Like Conor said, I could go on about it. We'll focus on what matters, that's going out and winning the Indy 500, the greatest race in the world.

Q. Dennis, you mentioned this is the 25th year of your team being in existence. Also the 10th year of being an INDYCAR-only team. 2013, 2014 timeline, what went into the decision of being an Indy-only entrant? In 2024, do you feel your team is in a better position, your goal is to win this race, now to win this race than when you first started in 2014?

DENNIS REINBOLD: When we stopped being full-time, we realized that it would take a significant investment to really concentrate and do the testing required to be able to compete for wins on different disciplines of courses, like short courses, street courses, natural terrain road courses, and superspeedways.

Indy was at the core of what we did. We didn't have enough sponsorship to be able to really invest in all disciplines of racing, so we focused on Indy at that point in time. It's really kind of that simple.

Since then we've sort of evolved to where all of our time and testing, our year-round focus for the program is just directed toward the Indy 500.

We did dabble with the Grand Prix a time or two and some other races, but really to not put the effort in on testing and have the budget to develop the (indiscernible) program and things for those disciplines, it's really a hard stretch to think you're going to be competitive.

We focus on Indy only, and that gives us the advantage of full year one focus and being able to do our testing with a purpose for that one race.

I don't know if that answers your question. That's kind of a roundabout way. I did think it was funny, Conor mentioned he borrowed a car from me a few years ago. We're kind of back in that mode a little bit. I remember you brought it back in one piece, so that's a good start. We hope that happens this May as well in a good spot.

Q. Ryan and Conor, you both have been Indy-only entries before. Dreyer & Reinbold Racing seems to brings good superspeedway cars. Do you feel there's an advantage with the package and program you have coming into May this year?

CONOR DALY: I think the best part about coming into May this year honestly is the fact that probably the hybrids have been delayed for us personally. We would have way less time to get used to those or operate those systems. If anything, I would say that helps us.

Obviously there's going to be some lighter components,



things that will change the balance of the car drastically with the way the weight balance shifts. That stuff we can figure out. If it's a different mechanical balance that we need, different stuff that changes the balance, Ryan and I are smart enough probably to work with our engineers and the group to figure that out.

We obviously know the cars are fast. Every year that I've been a part of the 500, at least in the last several years, I've always found a Dreyer & Reinbold Racing car in the top five or top 10 as you're up there racing. I started right next to Ryan last year. I saw his car plenty of times.

Going into the race knowing that, I mean, that's why we're here. We don't show up to lose. Both Ryan and I want to win. When it comes to doing the Indy 500 only, I think this is the best shot that we have.

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Yeah, I mean, I agree. I found last year a tremendous upside to the Indy-only focus from the team. I mean, nobody was tired. Everybody was motivated. That's just the tip of the iceberg.

The amount of attention to detail that they put into these cars, that the team does, is the best I have seen. I've been with a lot of great teams.

It's double sided. I mean, there's advantages to it, then the disadvantage to it is you're not coming in kind of in full rhythm after doing development testing, like Conor said.

The hybrids have been delayed, however there are components going on the car that will shift the weight distribution and potentially change the setups quite a bit. We're going to have to get to work right away trying to understand what these new regs and this car spec needs.

As he said, I'm completely confident that we can get on top of it, but we will be playing just a little bit of catch-up there. I think it's something that we can handle. I'm looking forward to it. Like I said, the Indy 500-only focus from this team and the amount of talent and quality of people on the team really makes a difference for me. I'm looking forward to getting back with this group again.

Q. Ryan, hard to believe it's been 10 years ago since you won this race. Do you feel this group right now around you basically has what it takes to win?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Absolutely. I wouldn't be here if I didn't. I thought that last year as well. We had a broken front wing adjustor. I don't know what they said, it was a \$25 part or something like that somehow breaking. No fault of the team at all.

It was tough to trim the balance, to change the aero balance in the race. We had to trim the rear wing the whole race. It was tough. We made it around it. I think if we wouldn't have had that, we would have been up in the top five fighting at the end.

Indy is funny. You have teams like Ganassi and Penske who come with all the greatest resources, everything you can throw at it. You'll have one team car up in P2, another car consistent P12, things like that. There's so many details that go into this race, that go into being fast a single lap even at the Speedway.

It's tough to say. I remember being at Andretti, every year I felt it was a bit of a lottery if we were going to have the fast car in the stable or we were going to be one of the ones that was really having to almost get desperate to get the speed out of car.

I think they do a great job on the car prep here. The consistency of what they've done was beyond my expectations. I've got no reason to think otherwise, that we can go out there and compete for a win.

THE MODERATOR: Dennis, when Conor brought the car back, was the gas tank full or not?

DENNIS REINBOLD: I don't know. I didn't check. Probably not, but that's okay.

CONOR DALY: Back then I was living day to day, brother. I don't know if I filled that sucker up at all. I was probably using gift cards.

Q. Don, what does it take to beat the big three and the other 31 cars this year?

DON CUSICK: I've been an INDYCAR fan since 1963, so I guess the first thing I'd say about Indy in particular is it takes a hell of a lot of luck. I think there's an old saying that the track decides the winner. I think there's a lot of truth to that.

But obviously it takes a lot of prep. It takes a lot of good people. It takes an excellent pit crew, two really good drivers. I think we've got all that. That's what makes it exciting for me.

I genuinely go into the month of May feeling like we have a real shot at it. I did last year, too. A lot of circumstances and weird things happened. Indy certainly bit us in the car that Graham ended up driving.

Yeah, I'm super excited. I think we have all the right pieces.

Q. Dennis, it's not uncommon with a new regulation change that it affects the smaller teams the most. With the incoming hybrid, which will be in the Indy 500 presumably next year, does that put a greater emphasis on a more all-in approach this time around?

DENNIS REINBOLD: Well, there are spec changes every year. So yes and no.

We as not being a full-time team, they have to get the parts out to full-time teams first and foremost. We completely understand the need for that. We try to get our parts and components as quickly as we can in the queue. That puts us behind and limits some of our ability to do testing.

We're playing catch-up whenever there are big changes like that. But we anticipate that. As soon as we get the parts, we dive in full force and arrange our testing accordingly.

Like a lot of the testing that we have scheduled, we've pushed back from what we would normally do just because of parts availability. We work around it. It's not ideal. At the end of the race last year, if they said, Here is your parts that you're going to run for next year's 500, that would be ideal. It doesn't work that way because we have a lot of developing to do with those pieces.

We understand. I think we've been pretty successful at getting those things ironed out in pretty good fashion. The open test that we do, we've talked to Chevy, we've worked with Chevy quite a bit in the off-season on different components and different things. Everyone's in the same boat. From that standpoint, it's a pretty even playing field.

It actually can sometimes benefit us to have changes and pieces and things like that because no one has them dialed in as of yet. You can look at it both ways that way.

Q. Knowing there's a significant change with the hybrid introduction coming, does that make things attractive to pursue a full-time effort or is this a scenario where we can expect a month of May only thing?

DENNIS REINBOLD: You never know. We're open-minded to whatever presents itself. If we have a good situation that makes a lot of sense to us, we would look at doing more races in the future. We have all the components and the people to be able to roll that out.

It just hasn't been a great fit to get back re-involved on a full-time basis. We've been kind of close a couple different times, so we're still looking at it, still open to it, for sure.

Q. Ryan, we know 500 which happens change the way you face the race or something like that?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: I think experience in general over the years you learn every lap, every time you're at the Speedway, you learn different nuances. Especially in the race.

My earlier days I always had a sense of extreme urgency too early on. You have to work with the car through the race. It's going to change as the temp comes up, as the ambient track temp comes up, whatever the weather is doing. There's so many different variables you have to be conscious of and help guide you in your decision-making process and how you approach the race.

I think it helps generally. I've been close quite a few times to a second one. You kind of know in the first quarter of the race if you have a shot at it with how the car is handling in relation to especially your competition.

I think just the experience there and winning the 500 obviously in '14, learned a lot in that process. You also learn a lot through the years where it doesn't quite go to plan.

Q. Conor, although there's a long way to get into the 500, do you have a list of drivers that you think they are going to be your main competitors and you try to study them in this season?

CONOR DALY: That's a good question. I mean, I think when you look at the 500, it is hard to tell. As Ryan said, sometimes you'll show up and half the Penske cars will qualify in the middle of the field and you have no idea why, but Josef wins. You can win from anywhere on the grid.

It's tough to really say. No one would have predicted that Rahal would have been as slow as they were last year, right? We know those drivers are very qualified drivers.

I think what's interesting about this year most is that actually there's no more oval races before Indy. Everyone is getting onto an oval or superspeedway for the first time at the test in April. It's going to be hard to tell until the test.

The test you can tell I would say like 3% of what you need to know. People can kind of go back and do a lot of work in between then and the start of the month of May. But you'll know pretty quickly. You'll know after the first couple days of practice which cars you really need to be concerned about and which cars are going to be the fastest.

We'll see. I can only predict that the regular household names: Penske, I would say the Foyt cars are going to be fast again, why not, Michael magic over there. Arrow McLaren, why would they not be super fast? They have a million people working at that operation now so they should be fast. I wouldn't expect anything less from any of those top teams that show up to win just like we do.

Q. Conor, I think you've said on the podcast that you aren't actively pursuing this year full-time in INDYCAR, but looking beyond this car into 2025, are you still looking for full-time INDYCAR or are your views elsewhere, maybe NASCAR?

CONOR DALY: Honestly, it would have to be the right situation for me. I'm obviously not going to slot into any of the well-coveted seats. Maybe if I win the Indy 500 this year, that's a different conversation. That's obviously the goal.

Who knows. No doors are ever shut. I'd love to convince Dennis to go full-time racing, you know what I mean? That obviously takes a very, very large investment. In the end that's what it's going to take. That's what it's going to take for me, for anyone that wants to go full-time INDYCAR racing essentially.

We'll see. I would never shut any doors. I love the sport of INDYCAR. I do believe I have a lot of unfinished business in that realm.

Q. Ryan, how much longer do you plan on doing this, driving in the Indy 500? Do you have a particular end date in mind or happy to keep going for now?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: No, I don't. I talked to Gil de Ferran about it at one point. We all miss him dearly, that's for sure. He was a great mentor in many ways. He told me, he said, You'll know when that fire is not there, you'll know it when it's not there. It's very obvious.

This race, the 500, I think about it before I go to bed, when I wake up in the middle of the night thinking about different things I need to be on top of for this one race. That fire is burning as bright as it ever has.

I haven't even thought about any of that. Just going out, put the best foot forward, making sure I'm giving 110% to this team, to the effort that all these folks at the team are putting in as well.

I'm excited, as eager as ever. I haven't even thought about it.

Q. After what happened last year in the final laps,

three red flags, what Conor was saying some drivers we know superspeedway experience, are you kind of concerned of aggressive driving for this race?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: I mean, I think Conor and me are in agreement. We talked about it a little bit at one point.

There needs to be a higher level of respect amongst the drivers in superspeedway racing. We are out there doing 230, 240, whatever you want to call it.

There was a lot of moves last year that were very road course like, street course like. Especially on restarts, things like that.

I think as a group, it needs to be brought up and we need to be conscious of it. Yeah, then you have the unknowns, some new drivers coming in again. We've always had that. We've always had an influx of some new drivers to the Speedway, the 500. You kind of deal with that as it goes.

Definitely there were some questionable points in the race that we need to address that as a group.

CONOR DALY: Like after attending the drivers meeting in December, there's definitely going to be some I think adjustments to how things are called, right? Josef Newgarden snaking down the straight below the pit lane entry, I think that's probably going to go away. I think the drivers are always pretty unified in what we want to see on how many moves you can make down the back straight if you're trying to snake down the back straight, stuff like that.

It is tougher to pass these days than it has been in the past. Aero kit era, the racing, it was less difficult to get a run. The cars are certainly a challenge to drive in traffic. When you do get an opportunity to make a move, not only do you not want to give that space up if you're the one defending, but you have to get that position if you somehow get a good-enough run.

Everybody becomes a little bit more desperate. That's kind of the era we're in. There needs to be consequences for making some overly aggressive moves. Sadly at Indy, you're not going off in the grass and getting back on the track, you're hitting the wall really hard.

I'm curious to see what happens. I think what will be a big part of that is how the mechanical balance of the car changes this year with the lighter parts, what Ryan mentioned with changing the weight distribution because how the cars race affect how aggressive you need to be in trying to make your way around someone or defending.

THE MODERATOR: Ryan, you want to talk about going

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

into the grass turn three at Indy? We'll leave it there?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Yeah, I actually really agree with what Conor said. We are in that era of INDYCAR racing now where it is extremely tough to pass. You do have to make it work when you get the opportunity because it might be 25 laps later that you get that next opportunity.

Yeah, the one in '14, I had it planned out in my head, it panned out a little bit later than expected. On the day we actually looked at it after, there was spike and wheel spin on that moment, kind of got the car straight to turn into the can corner from the bottom. Never been there before. I'll tell you what, never been a feeling like it. Turning in the bottom from three is something else.

Q. Conor and Ryan, you've both been teammates with Rinus VeeKay, starting his fifth season. Recently said it feels like he's only starting his second season. Did you ever get used to driving INDYCAR given you have been around for a while? How was the experience of being teammates with this crazy Dutchman?

CONOR DALY: I mean, Rinus is obviously very talented. I've never not said that. He's a really good driver. I think he has a lot more to come.

Honestly I think, yeah, he is better than certainly his results showed last year for a multitude of reasons. But yeah, he's a good driver. He has a long future in this sport.

Yeah, I guess that's interesting. I've done over a hundred races, which seems ridiculous to me. Like, I'm still showing up to the race shop, like Dennis' shop, I can't wait, I feel like it's every day is the best day ever.

I assume Ryan probably feels the same way or else he wouldn't show up. It's the greatest feeling ever to be an INDYCAR driver. It's the greatest feeling ever to be a part of the greatest event in the world, the Indy 500. Honestly, when you're doing the season, it's the greatest thing ever.

Time flies. That's the only thing you don't get back. You have to enjoy every day while you can.

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Yeah, I agree with Conor. I think that Rinus has a massive amount of natural talent. What you then have to do with that natural talent is build it within an organization. You have to constantly evolve. That's racing in general, right? You have to constantly be evolving.

Even if you come off a championship year, you can't I'm going to do the same thing I did last year, expect those results. The competition is continuing to push forward.

You have to constantly be out of your comfort zone.

You have the experience of the past, but at the same time I remember sometimes 10 years into my INDYCAR career I'd walk up to a test day at Sebring, look at this race car sitting there with six or seven guys working on it, thinking this is what I do for a living. It's the same feeling like Conor said. You show up to the shop, you feel like a little kid Christmas morning.

As long as that part doesn't go away, it means it's all there for you. I think Rinus has plenty to come. It was for sure fun working with him. Yeah, hopefully he has a bright future and a successful career ahead.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for joining us. We'll leave it there for now. Congratulations everyone at Dreyer & Reinbold Racing, Dennis, Don, Cusick Motorsports, Ryan and Conor as well. Thanks for hopping on here this afternoon.

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