

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Thursday, May 23, 2024

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Sting Ray Robb

Christian Rasmussen

Agustin Canapino

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Continuing with Row 8, starting 24th, Indy 500 rookie and last year's INDY NXT by Firestone champion, driver of the No. 33 Ed Carpenter Racing Chevrolet, Christian Rasmussen. Starting 23rd, returning for a second Indy 500, driver of the No. 41 Goodheart Pray.com Chevrolet for AJ Foyt Racing, Sting Ray Robb. Also joined, starting 22nd from Argentina, driver of the No. 78 Juncos Hollinger Racing Chevrolet is Agustin Canapino.

Christian, how was your week? Kind of chilling?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: No, it's been a good week. Pretty slow from what we've been used to, driving all the time. It's been nice having a few days off.

As you can see, I've gotten very sunburnt, enjoying it a little bit too much (smiling). I'm excited to get back into it and get back to practicing for the last practice on Carb Day, then get into the race.

THE MODERATOR: Stingray, two hours tomorrow, how crucial to dial in the car for Sunday.

STING RAY ROBB: Yeah, I hate to say it, but we don't have enough track time right now. I have no idea what kind of race car we have.

I'm hoping with the lessons we learned on Monday and the lessons we're going to learn tomorrow, because there's no rain, despite what others think tomorrow. We're going to be good. I think the car has a lot of natural speed in it.

I'm excited to see how it shakes out because it's so competitive this year. Even a little advantage is not going to be the difference maker. It's so tight. Everyone is here because they deserve to be here, which makes it fun. It's going to be a fun race.

THE MODERATOR: Agustin you had a sniff towards the front last year. What do you expect to happen? How will it play out on Sunday for you?

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: Hello, everybody.

Big expectation, honestly. Our car is running fast. Unfortunately we had that problem on the last outing in the qualifying when we were in a really good situation to be in the top 12. Anyway, I think the car is fast.

We need to improve our race pace a little bit. The funny part, we are the most rookie row just behind the most experienced row in front of us. It's fun, that part (smiling).

I think the start of the race will be fun. We'll see. It's a long race. The important thing for me is try to maximize our potential for the race.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Row 8.

Q. (In Portuguese.)

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: The difference is big between one year and another. Coming from a touring car series, the difference is mega. This year I am starting to feel much better. I learned a lot the previous year about the car, the tires, the brakes, the track. Everything is totally new for me.

I think the team is growing a lot. We are improving a lot this year with the team. We are a small team but with big expectations. I'm really happy with our progress. We need more luck, more execution.

We have the pace to be in top 15, top 10 every time, but we need more execution in my side, like a driver, like a team. But it's a work in progress. The good thing is we are showing a good pace. Every time is better.

Q. (Question about faith.)

STING RAY ROBB: I think the faith has been a big part of how I handle the highs and lows of racing. We're also aware there are many highs and many lows in racing. Having that foundation of a faith to lean on has allowed me



to find my identity in something other than the results because it is very easy in a competitive sport with my competitive nature to kind of get sucked into the number that's on the screen.

Having my personal identity tied to something that's firmer and also much more far-reaching, it adds purpose to what I'm doing on the track just as much as I am away from the track.

Q. (Question in Spanish.)

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: The first time you're here, it's so fast, so tricky. After some runnings after the days, at least for me, I'm starting to enjoy the situation because is incredible. Is really fun, is really impressive because you have to work in every area little detail. You have a lot of tools to try to go faster and faster and faster. Every little detail in your driver and setup is all about the confidence with the car, with the track. You have to pay attention to the weather conditions.

It's fantastic. I love it. I love this place. Of course, the difference is it's impossible to describe because I have to talk hours and hours. In English is difficult for me. I prefer to say only it's a big difference, but I'm starting to enjoy this year about this place.

Q. Christian, how is your experience as a rookie that already has a lot of focus on you and all these kind of racing lines and everyone talking about the kind of way you are driving on the track?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Yeah, I mean, it doesn't bother me that they're talking about it. I think for me, practice has been all about getting comfortable, figuring out what you can get away with, what's over the line, stuff like that.

I think we learned a lot during practices on maybe where the line is and maybe what's over the line, stuff like that. But then again, I think that's what practice is all about. I think we made great experiences with that. I think that's just going to set me up stronger for the race.

Q. Christian, could you picture being here today middle of the season last year? Did you think this was possible?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: There were definitely points last year where it seemed pretty, pretty far away. Again, last year I tried not to think too much about it and just focus on the job at hand, which was basically winning the next race. That was kind of what last year was all about.

We pushed through and we got through, won the championship, which ultimately got me here. I'm very fortunate to have had great people around me that have been able to fill those buckets up last year where that was a big struggle. I basically owe everything to them.

Q. Stingray, talk about being a rookie here and absorbing all the stuff that's going on. Has it been overwhelming at times? There's 18 million little pieces of promotional things that happen for this race.

STING RAY ROBB: Yeah, I mean, I definitely have a lot more experience now compared to last year this time. I think last year I overbooked myself in many situations, on the track, off the track. I can kind of relate to Christian about finding out in practice where to cross the line and when not to. If you don't do that in practice, you do it in the race, it doesn't end well as I found out last year.

I have a lot more confidence going into the season just with my expectations changing. Kind of talking about the 18 million things you mentioned, there's more to it than just saying yes to everything here. There's a lot of opportunities to say yes to, but I think the nos are just as important during the month of May.

For me, it's been a good month so far in the sense of just how to manage my time better, set my expectations each day, how to manage each day. You can really get caught up in the wrong things too early on in the race, in the month rather, then hurt yourself for the race.

Our focus has been in the right spot this season, I think, with the team and myself.

Q. Agustin, what have you learned about saying no and yes?

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: Yeah, so I think is a big change. Of course, is difficult to explain here. Is a lot of amount of things were new for me the last year because I never run in an open-wheel and I never run in an oval. Everything is completely different.

The good thing is the team improvement, I think. If you look our pace this year, especially on Fast Friday, the car is running really fast this year. At the end of the day our race car is racing. It's very important to have a quick race car.

I am happy with my improvement and the improvement of the team. We need to improve our execution to get better results.

Q. As the only Argentinian in the race, do you feel any



extra pressure?

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: I feel it. Of course with Argentinians, they want to win everything in every sport. It's not easy with Argentina fans. We are like this, so I'm very happy to be here.

Honestly, the Argentinians haven't too much opportunities to race this race. For me is a big honor. I am very proud of that. I'm going to do my best.

Q. Christian, have you had an explanation for why the second run was waved off?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I don't think there was any confusion on the second run. There was an issue during the run, which was out of my control, unfortunately. But no confusion. We had the pace to be higher up than where we ended up, but, yeah, no confusion. Just an issue out of our control.

Q. Agustin, how have you felt things have gone for you early this season? Do you feel you're in a better place?

AGUSTIN CANAPINO: Yeah, definitely, definitely. We are in a much better situation than the last year in both case, in my case and the team case. I think we are showing the pace. Again, we need to improve our execution.

It's still in progress, but I think we are still in a really good situation to try to achieve more top 10s, to try to achieve other results. I think we can do it. I am with a big confidence about that.

Q. For Sting Ray, what differences have you noticed this year now with Foyt?

STING RAY ROBB: Yeah it's been very good. I'm very happy to be with AJ Foyt Racing just for one sake of being local. I think there's a lot of advantages to being close to the track on a month of May. There's a lot of things that can be done at the shop that get carried over to the racetrack, a lot of prep work that can be done back at the shop.

There's a lot of good experience there this year. The car has much more natural pace than I had last season here. Obviously last season I had a lot more drama than I wanted starting on the last row. Pretty stressful as a rookie. Not something I would recommend to anyone. Hopefully that's my last time I have to do that shootout there.

This year being solidly in the field, even though it wasn't a

spot I was super happy with, just without the issues we had during the day, could have been further up, the team is doing a good job.

We should be good come race day.

THE MODERATOR: We'll cut you guys loose.

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