

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Friday, May 24, 2024

**Chad Gordon**

**Keenan Watson**

**Caitlyn Brown**

**Kyle LaPier**

**Tom Jones**

**D.J. Rupert**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up this year's One Stop to Share Pit Stop Challenge competition won for the 19th time by Team Penske, getting it done with also driver Josef Newgarden.

Who wants to speak for the group? Introduce yourself to everybody here and tell us about the team a little bit.

CHAD GORDON: Chad Gordon, chief mechanic, outside front changer.

This is the A-Team, the 2 team here: Kyle LaPier changing inside rear. Caitlyn Brown, superstar, changing inside front. Tom Jones over here, air jack and tire guy. Keenan Watson, outside rear, fastest one in the pit lane. And D.J. Rupert, fueller.

THE MODERATOR: I'm looking at your path to getting it done here. You faced the 7 crew which at one point this year had the top pit rankings, I guess. Then you advance to take on the 12 car. The 12 car is generally the top pit crew up and down pit road. You got to beat the best to be the best.

CHAD GORDON: We train with the 12 car guys all the time. We get the same coaching, the same facilities, all the same stuff. We expect to be here.

THE MODERATOR: Do you want to go down the row, talk about it? Who wants to lead us off? Caitlyn, you got something to say? What is the secret?

KYLE LaPIER: I can't see, I don't have my glasses on

(laughter).

I want to thank everybody back at the shop. We have a lot of people behind us that let us do what we're doing. Without them, we're not up here. We have guys working on our guns, working on our upper rights to make sure the nuts go on easily. Those guys are the real champions here, it's not just us.

THE MODERATOR: Caitlyn, so you're aware, this is believed to be, you're believed to be, the first woman to be part of a winning pit crew in the Pit Stop Challenge for the Indy 500. I mean, last year's 500 win, this year you're doing this. Take us through that a little bit.

CAITLYN BROWN: Yeah, for me it's just show up and do what everyone else does, try to be my best.

It's so cool to win something for Roger, especially at IMS. I think they said this was the 19th pit stop win for him. To get him his 19th 500 and now his 19th pit stop win, it's pretty cool.

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

**Q. For historical purposes, how old are you, where do you hail from?**

CAITLYN BROWN: 25. I'm from Wilmington, Illinois.

**Q. How did you get involved with Team Penske?**

CAITLYN BROWN: Just connections and knowing people. Moved down to North Carolina to pursue racing. Got involved with late model dirt stuff. They knew somebody from Penske. From there I got my foot in the door.

**Q. Did you start wanting to be with a NASCAR team or did you want to be with the INDYCAR team?**

CAITLYN BROWN: Originally I had my eyes set on NASCAR. Once I got to Team Penske, I knew they're involved in a lot of different series. They're successful in all of them. I knew that was always an opportunity if I wanted it. In '21 I had that opportunity. Once I came over to this side, I knew this is where I wanted to be.



**Q. For anybody else, there's been many times in the past where Team Penske has come in and swept a pole, the pit stop challenge and the race. Does this feel like it's one of them years?**

CHAD GORDON: I think we'd all be lying if we didn't say we'd feel good about it. There's still also 500 miles to race on Sunday.

**Q. Roger Penske always wants to win because it showcases how good you guys are.**

CHAD GORDON: Everybody sitting here, when we got told we were doing this again this year, we were pumped for it. This is, I don't know, we like showing up for this, showcasing everybody on pit lane. There's a lot of talent out there.

**Q. How many of you were on Josef's team that won a couple years ago in 2022?**

CHAD GORDON: Three.

**Q. What is it about not only this crew that's on the stage now but the Team Penske crews where you're able to be so quick and successful?**

D.J. RUPERT: Honestly I think it's just training. I think we probably do off-season, what, three days a week, and we're doing four to five stops a day non-stop. I think it's just continuing to push the limits to find what a normal stop would be, going above and beyond that.

KYLE LaPIER: We had a new strength and conditioning coach this year, too, really seemed to help with our overall fitness in the off-season. We were working out four times a week some weeks on top of having pit stop practice. I think that was a huge one for us.

THE MODERATOR: What kind of exercises are you doing?

CHAD GORDON: A lot. Cross fit stuff. High intensity. Explosive power, yeah.

Also to go back to your original question, there's a lot of camaraderie and teamwork that goes in between us, the 3 and the 12. We're all constantly watching each other's film, trying to pick each other apart, figure out where we can be better. Just the overall teamwork collectively is helpful.

**Q. When you're down in the box, is there any trash talk going on with the other team?**

KYLE LaPIER: Some of those guys we used to work with. It was actually pretty friendly. I got a couple friends on that car, so...

There was no trash talking. We're all friends.

**Q. In baseball they say you can tell the catcher because their knuckles are all gnarled up. I'm sure you get a lot of battle scars from what you do. What are the battle scars that you take home with you?**

CHAD GORDON: I don't know. I'm not a good person to answer this because I have callouses and burn marks from 13 years of professional racing. I can't tell you what callouses are from what. If you show up and work, they show up.

**Q. Is it a lot of scraped knuckles or sore knees?**

CHAD GORDON: That's every day. That's just getting older.

TOM JONES: Everybody back at our shop, a lot of our trainers, everybody who is there as far as physical therapy, there's not a whole lot of severe injuries that you have to take time off. It's just bumps and bruises.

THE MODERATOR: Did anyone here play high school sports or athletics in college?

D.J. RUPERT: Hockey.

KEENAN WATSON: I played for a big club in Charlotte, soccer, three years in high school.

TOM JONES: Hockey and football, track and field.

CHAD GORDON: Baseball and peewee hockey for me.

CAITLYN BROWN: Baseball and softball.

KYLE LaPIER: Baseball and wrestling.

**Q. What is the difference between pit stop in the race and this challenge?**

CHAD GORDON: Not much really other than the car entry speed just 'cause here during the race they're going 60 miles an hour. You got to pick the car out of a line and make sure you're paying close attention to the car coming at you and the cars around you.

Here they don't have a whole lot of time to accelerate. It's just as changers and crew members hitting your own marks and doing the same things you know how to do.



**Q. Do you feel this is a big challenge?**

CHAD GORDON: Sure. You're up against the best crews in INDYCAR. Being the fastest on pit lane any week is a challenge. To showcase it here like this makes it extra special.

**Q. Do you feel any different because I see as soon as you walked, a lot of people want to chat with you. Do you feel the vibe different from the people?**

CAITLYN BROWN: Yes and no. I do sometimes. Other times I just feel like they're just excited in general to see a crew member. Yeah, no, I don't think so.

**Q. Mr. Penske spends a lot of time with the guy on top of the timing stand, the race strategist and the drivers. What's it like when Mr. Penske comes by and congratulations all of you?**

KYLE LaPIER: I mean, everybody looks up to him on our team. You don't get a bigger guy to envy in racing than Roger Penske. He's like probably everybody's hero if I had to say so.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations. Good luck on race day.

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