

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Saturday, May 25, 2024

Zak Brown

Scott Borchetta

Tony Kanaan

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for joining us today.

Joining us today we have Scott Borchetta, who is CEO and owner of Big Machine. We have Zak Brown, CEO of McLaren Racing. And Tony Kanaan, racing director of Arrow McLaren.

We have an exciting announcement today leading into the season finale where all roads lead to Nashville.

Scott, share the good news with us today.

SCOTT BORCHETTA: Thank you for being here to announce that we are going to be an official sponsor with Arrow McLaren INDYCAR to make as much noise and sexiness and aspiration to come to Nashville for the season finale for the NTT INDYCAR SERIES championship.

Working with Zak, who I've known for years, and Tony, who we've had a relationship since 2013, we're going to make a lot of noise and make a fantastic season finale.

THE MODERATOR: Scott, what makes you most excited about this partnership and all the noise that you'll be making around the season finale?

SCOTT BORCHETTA: I think, to begin with, you look at two of the best drivers on the racetrack right now. About this time tomorrow, we could all three be sitting in Victory Lane taking a photograph.

We'll be on the front wing of Alex and Pato's cars for the rest of the season, and we'll have the primary livery in Milwaukee leading up to the Big Machine Music City Grand Prix.

But if you look at the combined social reach of McLaren, of

their drivers, of Big Machine, our artists, and INDYCAR, arguably we have one of the biggest social media platforms in sports. We're going to absolutely utilize that.

THE MODERATOR: Zak, you've shared ideas on how to build more hype and excitement around INDYCAR racing and the series. How do you think this partnership will amplify that?

ZAK BROWN: First, Scott and I are going to do some more vintage racing together. We have a common passion for the history of INDYCAR racing.

SCOTT BORCHETTA: Kind of appropriate that it's Legends Day.

ZAK BROWN: Exactly.

I think everything that Arrow McLaren and McLaren in general try and do is be the best entertaining motorsports team in the world. I think to blend sport and entertainment, which is really one in the same, but to bring together these two audiences, both are athletes, both entertainers and racing drivers, I think is very exciting.

Scott has a great vision for INDYCAR. What he's done for Nashville and done for INDYCAR in Nashville, and really globally, is awesome.

To come together, I think both being promoters and very focused on the fan, at the end of the day I think we'll put together a good collective show and cap it all off with hopefully competing for a championship in Nashville.

THE MODERATOR: Tony, you've had a relationship with Scott and Big Machine for several years now. What can you say about the enthusiasm that both bring to the series?

TONY KANAAN: I mean, it's hard for me to sit here and talk about my brother here.

ZAK BROWN: Doesn't look like you, Tony, at all (laughter).

TONY KANAAN: He looks much better (smiling).



... when all is said, we're done.®

We look at his passion for sports. You talk to these two guys up here, they know probably everything about the history of racing. I think that's what nowadays, especially with this new generation, we're trying to educate or show them how cool this is.

If anybody knows how to throw a party, Scott does. How to organize an event, Scott does, with his team. Being associated with him since '13, since Dario retired actually, on my birthday, December 31st, in 2013, he says, We're spending New Year's together. Do you want to be part of the Big Machine family?

I've been there ever since. I told him even after I retire, will still try and help. It's really cool to see what he's trying to do. I think he has the vision. These two guys, as far as vision and being promoting, is a winning situation.

I'm glad to be part of it. I won that race in 2004, so it's a pretty cool race to win. We'll do anything we can to promote the race and INDYCAR.

THE MODERATOR: You brought that souvenir with you?

TONY KANAAN: Took it out of my trophy case. I'll show you guys.

SCOTT BORCHETTA: This is our official announcement. We're bringing the guitar trophy back to the Big Machine Music City Grand Prix.

TONY KANAAN: This is probably the most popular trophy in the house. The kids try to play. I cannot play. It's pretty cool.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take some questions, please.

Q. Zak, how big of an announcement is this for Arrow McLaren, given that you guys are expanding, doing really well for the series?

ZAK BROWN: It's awesome. Anytime we can get involved with a partner that has a tremendous amount of consumer reach, hit the youth, men, women, around the world, I think as I mentioned earlier, entertainment, music combined with motor racing and INDYCAR is very exciting.

On a personal level, my father is/was in the music industry. It's something that I find really cool. I've got a lot of friends in Nashville that are in the music industry. Scott and I have on a personal level a lot in common for our passion for the sport and the history.

That will make it super easy working together because we both have a very clear vision of what excites the fans

'cause I think you're looking at two the biggest fans of INDYCAR racing, so we're talking to ourselves to a certain extent. Excited to put on a good show.

Q. Since it's all musical here, do you have any special soundtrack for this collaboration?

ZAK BROWN: That's a good idea.

SCOTT BORCHETTA: We'll be working on playlists this afternoon. I love that (smiling).

Q. Tony, you're one of the last drivers, along with Scott Dixon and a few others, that actually raced on that oval. How big a challenge do you see that being as the final race of the season?

TONY KANAAN: Yeah, I think it's going to bring some spice into it, for sure. It's a very different type of oval, especially because of the concrete. Maybe Scott will have an advantage, but maybe my teammates will. I can tell them all about it.

But yeah, I think it's going to definitely bring something more for the finale because the type of track and the type of the surface, for sure.

SCOTT BORCHETTA: I can tell you, too, maybe speaking a little out of school, but INDYCAR and Firestone are very inspired to make sure they have a great tire. There's going to be a couple of tire tests. They're going to make sure we have a fantastic tire for the finale.

Q. Zak, are you channeling your inner JMI days to come up with some creative marketing ideas?

ZAK BROWN: Fortunately I'm sitting next to one of the best promoters and marketeers around. I think between the two of us, and our collective teams, I think it would be incorrect to take all the credit. It's fun to do that, but we both have some very talented people that support us.

When we get the two groups together, I'm sure we'll come up with some pretty cool ideas.

Q. When the venue change was announced, Scott, you said you were going to work on ways to get people out there. Have you done any brainstorming? Anything else you can tell us?

SCOTT BORCHETTA: To kick off downtown on Friday, we will have the pit stop competition. We will have our fourth annual Freedom Friday. We're going to shut down Broadway and it will be our biggest lineup yet. Live and Free on Freedom Friday. We'll have the talent



announcement coming pretty quick. It's going to be billed as the biggest album release party in the world.

We'll have stages out on the superspeedway on both days. We'll have a full lineup of music. Again, I'm not going to announce any of the music guests today. We'll definitely have that aesthetic.

Zak was touching on our marketing teams. I'm so proud of a few of the things we've come up with our team.

For our billboards around town, especially keeping in touch with Nashville, with the speedway, on the corner of 1st Avenue and Korean Vets Boulevard, we have a wraparound the building that says, At 175 miles an hour, you're only 11.2 minutes away. All the billboards around, at Brentwood, you're 9.1 minutes away. We want everybody to psychologically realize it's not that far away. To come back downtown Saturday after qualifying and practice, it's going to be rocking there, as well.

We're going to keep it feeling like Nashville all the way to the checkered flag.

Q. (No microphone.)

ZAK BROWN: We might have the Zak Brown Band play. Might be the three of us.

SCOTT BORCHETTA: We would be cheaper (laughter).

Q. (No microphone.)

ZAK BROWN: No, I'm looking forward. It will be exciting. I think we saw how awesome the Nashville race is, which is why it was put to the grand finale. I'm sure when we get our collective teams together, we'll come up with some pretty awesome ideas.

Q. Tony, obviously you have two great promoters next to you. You have the driver hat, sporting director hat. Now you're promoting. What have you learned from these guys?

TONY KANAAN: Sorry, say again?

Q. What sort of insights have you learned about marketing and promoting from these two?

TONY KANAAN: Obviously I've known these two for a long time. Since I've left Andretti, I had to kind of discover that a little bit and survive.

I've always picked up Scott's brain on some of my stuff. Obviously with Zak, always trying to do better with my role

now especially with the team. We just need to bring the most and try to understand what people need as far as the race, what fans want from that prospect.

I think as my relationship with the fans are extremely close, I think I can relay that to Scott. We sat down just a couple days and we brainstorm a bunch of different things. They're fun to do.

The stuff that I hear from the fans on an autograph session, then on the sponsor side, what can we do for them that is going to bring something to either their clients or guests.

Been learning a lot lately. Working quite a bit more than I used to. It's been pretty cool.

SCOTT BORCHETTA: I got to compliment Tony, too. He's always been fan first. That's why we have been together for so long. It's still block and tackle. We can do all the high-end, super digital marketing, et cetera, but we can't forget shaking hands. How do you sell a million albums? Shake a million hands.

Tony understands that as much as doing the signings. He knows that one-on-one fan-first is what wins. Were going to really continue to amplify that.

Q. Zak, obviously the 500 is the race with the most viewership, attention and attendance. How do you feel that can be translated into the rest of the season and Nashville?

ZAK BROWN: I think it's just helping create exposure for INDYCAR. If we look at Formula 1, how popular that's become, it's the same Formula 1 that I grew up following, but Netflix in particular did a fantastic job of exposing Formula 1.

I think an Indianapolis 500, having partners like Scott where you take a sport that is already awesome, but expose it to people that maybe don't see it on a regular basis is what will turn them into a fan.

We have a great product, we just need to promote it more. Sport is entertainment, and I think that will continue to grow our audience.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you all for coming on a busy day, busy weekend. More fun to come.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

