

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Ricardo Juncos

Conor Daly

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: The Olympic break is over. It's on to a fast and furious finish for the 2024 NTT INDYCAR SERIES championship beginning this weekend.

Announced earlier today by Juncos Hollinger Racing, the return of Conor Daly, who will drive the No. 78 Chevrolet for the rest of the season.

Conor, good to see you.

CONOR DALY: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Also joining us the co-owner of Juncos Hollinger Racing, Ricardo Juncos.

What does Conor bring to the team that makes this such a good fit?

RICARDO JUNCOS: I think he's kind of back in the team, right? It is a welcome back. I remember Conor maybe in 2003 go-kart time, then in Indy pro 2010, one of our best championships ever. I think together we have a lot of good things. Now he's kind of coming back obviously many years later.

I think Conor obviously has a lot of experience in INDYCAR. I remember when he was fighting against Rinus VeeKay, two Juncos cars in the Indy 500. I think he has a lot of experience, for sure is a big plus.

He also worked before with some of my technical guys and engineers in the past when he ran for Carlin. I think the combination can be quite a good thing to see.

THE MODERATOR: Conor, you never know what's going to happen during the course of the season. How much are you looking forward to getting back on the track now?

CONOR DALY: I mean, honestly, this is a huge deal for me because I appreciate the fact that Ricardo committed to, if we really want to score the points that we want to score, do as good as we can do, to get some races in a

row is really helpful. To be able to work with the team, to be able to test a couple weeks ago at St. Louis was really helpful.

Obviously I'm still extremely new to the whole hybrid side of it. At Portland, that will definitely be more in play for sure, so that will be a challenge.

I think this is going to be a great situation purely because, as Ricardo mentioned, the familiar faces that are there. Even Alan Mc Donald who was there my very first INDYCAR street race at Schmidt Peterson back in the day which was a lot of fun at Detroit.

A lot of great people, a lot of people from the Carlin days when we qualified on pole together. Everything about it is kind of primed for hopefully a great few weeks to cap it off for them in a really positive way.

THE MODERATOR: Generally speaking, you've had some good drives at World Wide Technology Raceway. This is a nice jumping off point for this journey.

CONOR DALY: Yeah, I love this track. After the test a couple weeks ago, I see no reason why we shouldn't be confident.

My teammate, Grosjean as well, he was also at the test. I think we go into it for sure with some high expectations. Yeah, it's a bit of a different race outlook for sure with how different the cars are this year and tires. For some reason I feel like Gateway, World Wide Technology Raceway, excuse me, puts on a great event for us as usual.

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

Q. Conor, this will be your sixth different INDYCAR team over the last 14 months. You've done some racing in ARCA, NASCAR Trucks, Xfinity, GT World Challenge. What has this process been like for you, and do you feel in some way it helps you become a more adaptable driver for whatever comes your way the rest of your career?

CONOR DALY: Well, it's definitely been an interesting year. From the months of last September till the beginning



of May, I did more NBA All-Star Games than I did INDYCAR races. I thought that was kind of a wild thing.

Now I get to do six weeks in a row in racing in essentially three different series all the way to the end of September with our last Truck race.

This is what I do, though. I try to work hard just providing myself opportunities. I want to be involved in a competitive situation. This happened to come up. Obviously I want to be as competitive as possible for Ricardo, for this team. There's points to score that need to be scored. I want to be that guy. I think with this group for sure it's highly possible.

It's been chaotic this year. There's been not a ton of races, but really good moments from the 500 to Xfinity race at Indy. There's been a lot of times where I've actually had a big smile on my face this year, which is nice.

This kind of I think restores that same smile because it's a great chance to just go racing in a field that I love to be a part of, but also love to be competitive in. Yeah, it will be a lot of work for sure. That's what racing is all about, putting in the work.

Yeah, I'm excited to do it.

Q. Ricardo, Conor comes with losing Agustin Canapino. Could you give us a little bit more perspective on the timing for this change. Is it leader circle related? Is it wanting to get a feel for Conor?

RICARDO JUNCOS: I think is a little bit of everything. Is not just one thing alone. So we analyze all the situation with the group, Agustin included. We made the best decision for everyone.

It's not just one thing. That was my guy, and we choose him out of open-wheel, was a big challenge, crazy move in a way. I think when you see what he did last year, was really, really good. Surprised a lot of people.

On in side, knowing the situation in our country, in Argentina, where he came from, is tough. We took the risk again based on his performance for this year.

I think he did excellent job considering the situation, not just on the sporting side, meaning that he never race in an open-wheel, now here he is in INDYCAR. But also coming from a totally different country, culture, language, everything else that he need to adapt. I think he did an outstanding job.

Obviously the results on this year were not the results we

were hoping for. But I'm always going to be thankful for him opportunity and the big chances that he took.

We did it together. We did things that in the history of motor racing in Argentina never happened. Like, two times Indy 500. Not something that happen often. Been in Argentina more than 87 years. That didn't happen in a country that has passion about motor racing. For our country was huge.

Looking forward for the future, as well, I think this is about life and this is about things move forward. Learn from things, and that's why I keep saying we try something, I always going to be happy about it. There is nothing worse than not try things in life.

Like I said, for me it was an honor to have him. It is one of the best drivers in the history. Today he's a better driver, for sure. I think it's almost two years in INDYCAR teach him a lot of things. Now he's going back in Argentina, continue there. Obviously all the luck for Agustin going forward, as well.

Q. There's been a lot of speculation over the last couple weeks, months, about the future of this team, talks about DeFrancesco camp, buying out your ownership, buying out Brad's ownership, becoming an additional owner in this team. Can you give us a sense of where this team is at right now, the health, the future of this program?

RICARDO JUNCOS: Well, I hear the rumor. It is a rumor. I think in INDYCAR is in a good space, to be honest, generally speaking. A lot of good things are happening, and will happen for the next year, two or three. You see a lot of intentions of new teams coming in. Used to be more than that. I think it was about four to five teams willing to join INDYCAR, as far as I know, from rumors.

I only can say that in our side, all still the same. As of now, I'm not with Brad Hollinger doing anything. Of course, we have different options and different people that approaching us.

You mentioned DeFrancesco is one of those. We have an (indiscernible) with all of them. Because of that, I have to follow the rules and stuff like that.

For the moment, nothing has been said to anyone. As of now, the programs we set from 2021, as we said before, we are executing. Right now I can tell you just rumors, like many others, but nothing is set yet.

Q. Conor, we've been talking about how many teams you've driven for in your career. We all know in

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

INDYCAR the different levels of equipment, how we rate them. Where would you kind of rate the Juncos Hollinger Chevrolet-powered entry, what you're going to have a chance to fight with on Saturday?

CONOR DALY: I think the proof is in what the team has already done this year. A lot of great qualifying performances, a lot of bad luck that they've been a victim of at times.

Yeah, I mean, I think we have a great chance at competing. I hadn't been teammates with Roman before. We definitely kind of at the test pushed each other run by run. One run I'm fastest, then he goes faster, then I go faster, he goes faster. It's kind of nice to just go to work like that.

The reason why I'm more confident is because I've actually worked with a lot of these guys before. A lot of the engineers, especially Yves, the technical director, he was the technical director at Carlin when we were flying. I definitely have a lot of faith in those guys.

For sure this team, I think it's looked at as an underdog, but I think there's a lot of great things going on in this race shop and with this group.

It's a very exciting opportunity because I think there's a lot of great potential here, for sure.

Q. It sounds like there's a lot of synergy. Without trying to throw shade at other teams, would you say, given what you felt at the test, that this is probably the best opportunity you've had in a very long time?

CONOR DALY: I mean, I don't know about that 'cause the Meyer Shank opportunity last year was really cool, although very short-lived. That was something that I think was also very good. I don't want to say anything like that.

Without a doubt, it's the most consistent opportunity I've had so if we build on something that we find at Gateway, we can probably use it. I get to go to the simulator, stuff like that, stuff that I have not done in years. That's really nice.

But that's how you're supposed to go about doing it. You know what I mean? Use the information day to day, develop the car, then things that you learn one weekend you take to the next. Everyone else is doing that.

This is one of the most competitive championships in the entire world. It's hard to be good. You have to have all these things going your way for that to happen.

Q. There's a wide pool of talented drivers that any owner could pick. What made Conor the easy choice?

RICARDO JUNCOS: I think it's like I said before, even if it's true that we have options, I think Conor first of all was one of my guys, right? We have a history together. He's back with us now.

He did really good things when you see what he was able to do. He's talking about the different teams. It's obvious he's very good. I remember when he was doing Indy Lights, he was leading the championship when he decided to go to Europe. He was beating Josef Newgarden.

He's one of the good ones. I never has a doubt on him, never. We'll see now what we can do for these five races.

THE MODERATOR: Stroll down memory lane, Conor.

CONOR DALY: Good memories (smiling).

Q. Conor, how does it feel to have that feeling of being wanted? It seems like every year it comes in and you'll get this analogy in sports, you hear about players wanting to be a starter. It's not how you start, it's the guys in the game at the end of the game. Your thoughts on getting that feeling of being wanted again.

CONOR DALY: Well, I think obviously I still have to do the job every weekend. When I show up, I put everything that I've got into this.

It's been something that obviously, if you followed my career, it's been quite a tornado. There's a new Twisters movie out. But it's been crazy, it's been up and down.

I think when it's been up, I'm very, very proud of it. When it's been tough, there's always things that either I will take responsibility for or I will understand why.

In the end, it feels really good to hear him say that. Again, I think I'm not at the young end of my INDYCAR career. Like, I know that. I have so much that I want to do. I have so much that we train every day for, for these chances to come about.

Even if it was one race, I would go about it the same way. But this is an opportunity to go and find success together. This team is right on the verge of getting trophies and bringing home some champagne to the race shop. I would love to be the guy to do that.

I'm excited, but my life exists for the next six weeks, then who knows what happens. That is the way I've had to live, which is usually tougher for maximum, maximum

performance. I'm going to do the best I can, put everything I've got into it and show them I really want to bust my butt to deliver some results for these guys.

Q. What can you have learned from the teams and take the good and apply, bring it over to Juncos, so forth?

CONOR DALY: I mean, honestly there's not a lot that needs to be brought to this team. Even the short time I've been there so far, I think they have impressed me beyond belief. Like, there's a lot of great things happening there.

I think, when you compare to maybe other newer groups, other two-car groups that have been around a long time, this group is certainly at the sharp end of those, fighting with the big teams that now have huge budgets, huge staffs. It's very impressive.

I think there's nothing that needs to be brought, other than I guess what I've learned in my career so far, the experience that I can go off of just to work with the engineers and be like, Hey, this is I think where we need to be. We'll see what happens.

In the end, every day that we have to go racing, it's a full team effort. Everyone in the pits does their job, I do my job, we all do our jobs. Everyone has to be prepared. When all of that stuff goes right, you should be rewarded with good results.

Q. Your plan on the next six weekends will be race by race or you have special targets?

CONOR DALY: When it comes to goals per race, I've talked with Ricardo about this, realistically I know points are the most important thing. We want to fight at the front, but I think I would have to probably reduce the risk overall because points are most important.

I think obviously we're a racing team, so we want to compete at the front, we want to do the best job that we can. I don't like setting expectations 'cause I truly don't know enough about us as a group yet until we get into a race or two, then I'll figure it out.

But yeah, I personally hold expectations very, very high for Gateway because I know I have gone well there in the past and that we've got to test there.

We have to go out early to qualify, but other than that I think we'll be in great shape.

Q. Milwaukee and Nashville, you ran before on these tracks. What expectations do you have?

CONOR DALY: Nashville, I have not been on a track like Nashville I think ever in my life. Definitely an interesting one.

Milwaukee I drove in 2009 when I was racing against Ricardo in the Indy Pro 2000 Series. That track is very unique. I'm honestly very curious to see what that feels like in an INDYCAR. I know most everyone tested there. That will be an interesting one. Older surface, a bit bumpy, tire deg is really important for the race. We'll see.

But I love the idea of Nashville. Any bigger ovals for me, that's an exciting situation for INDYCAR racing. That's the INDYCAR racing I grew up loving.

Q. How has it been working with Roman so far?

CONOR DALY: It's been good. I've actually been speaking to Roman since he got over here really. I think right when he got over to do INDYCAR for the very first year, we had dinner pretty early on just to kind of chat, see what's going on, see how he liked it over here. He's always been cool to me. There's been a lot of different thoughts and opinions, he's been involved in a lot of interesting altercations in this INDYCAR SERIES. He's always been really cool to me.

After just being his teammate for one test, the guy is extremely talented, and he's been great to work with. I think this team is in a great spot. It's nice to be a part of it.

THE MODERATOR: Roman posted that Conor is going to be an awesome teammate on those ovals. Let's go team.

CONOR DALY: I saw that. Hopefully I'm some assistance at Portland, too (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: We'll leave it there. Thank you.

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