

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Eric Warren

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good morning. Welcome to the Nashville Superspeedway and the Big Machine Music City Grand Prix Presented by Gainbridge.

We're celebrating champions this weekend. We wanted to start by celebrating Chevrolet as the 2024 manufacturer champion. Their third consecutive manufacturers championship in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES, their ninth since they returned to INDYCAR in 2012. Of course, with one race remaining, they lead the series with 11 wins, eight NTT P1 awards.

Here to talk about that is Eric Warren, executive director for general motorsports competition.

Very successful season for you. Tell us how you guys did it.

ERIC WARREN: Thanks, Dave. You took some of the stats there away from me (smiling).

The manufacturers championship really comes down to performance and reliability. If you look at last year, we won the manufacturers championship by 12 points. As we sit here today, we're up 150 points with still a race left.

If you look at that, it really comes down to the quality of our teams, the performance of our teams. As we looked at this year and any year, manufacturer's goals are to win the Indy 500, which we did with a great performance there; to win a manufacturers championship, which we've done. We got one goal left with the drivers, and the race is tomorrow. Hopefully we'll have some good fortune there.

The important part is looking at our teams. Really, if you go back to that important race in the month of May, the performance there of sweeping the Fast Six, we swept the podium at three different events.

I think what's really important is all of our teams, Team Penske, Arrow McLaren, Ed Carpenter, Juncos Hollinger, AJ Foyt, they've contributed to the manufacturers points. The strength of our teams, what we've been able to

accomplish on the racetrack, has been the big difference this year.

THE MODERATOR: Obviously INDYCAR is hugely competitive. We saw a record number of passing in Milwaukee. What does it take to succeed at this level certainly on a consistent basis like you have done this year?

ERIC WARREN: Again, I think it's our teams, our drivers, our ownership. We really invest a lot in those relationships. At the end of the day it's about people and performing in the moment.

Last year we really spent a lot of time as Chevrolet meeting with each of our teams and our drivers, really digging into the details of where we lost performance or where we needed to improve.

If we look at our partners, our great engine partner with Ilmor, really the work that they did along with the propulsion group at GM, we closed that gap down where you could see it from the first race. Look at our road course performance this year compared to last year. That was a big part of it.

It's also deeper than that. We've invested a lot in our own personnel inside of GM and Chevrolet, engineering, the relationships with the teams. If you look at what it takes to win, as competitive as this series is, from different aerodynamic configurations and tweaks and simulation, all the things that modern racing requires with investment in simulators, it really comes down to the relationships between the teams and manufacturers, how we can support them in what they need, engineering, give the drivers the confidence to execute and the teams to make good decisions during races.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions.

Q. Not only did you have a decisive season, but midway through you had a new formula with the hybrid engine. How proud are you of the effort with the motor generator unit, which was the part that General Motors was responsible for? I haven't heard any issues that have happened with that unit.

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ERIC WARREN: Of course, I couldn't be more proud, the fact we've won seven out of eight since that started.

Again, the relationship with Ilmor, our engineering at Chevrolet, so much time was spent on that, again, in parallel with the engine development for the rest of the season. A lot of interaction with the series, INDYCAR, Honda and GM.

As you look at this package, successful as it has been, it's really that collaboration. It really comes down to not just Chevrolet, but Honda and INDYCAR, how we work together.

I think as we look towards the future, that collaboration between that group and the industry as a whole is really what allows it to be successful and keep the competition as it is.

But certainly the success of the hybrid, our performance, it was a big factor. I hesitate to call it a fear, but a focus of where we put our effort. Seeing the successful performance is because of our efforts.

Q. (No microphone.)

ERIC WARREN: No, I think I would say without any issue you get into the details. As an engineer you always look at it it's not perfect. It has performed great. It's a whole system.

Certainly the MGU and the super capacitors and the whole package has really been flawless, if you look at it.

Q. About the hybrid, so much was made of that in the pre-season, changing engine formulas halfway through. Can you expand on that? Was that a result of your preparation? Did we make too much of it, it wasn't as big of a switchover as you thought it would be?

ERIC WARREN: I think if you look at the amount of effort that the series put in in testing, making a decision to make sure it was all ready before we implemented was key to that, right? There was a lot of push early on to say, Let's get it the beginning of the year.

We really took our time, did it correctly. The amount of hours that were spent on dynos between all of us, Honda, Chevrolet, all the partners. There's a lot of work that went on behind the scenes to make sure the package was ready.

Then to actually perform better requires a lot, how do you

implement the tools, teach the drivers, the teams learn how to use it. All that has to come together to be successful.

I think everybody really did their homework and the results show it.

Q. The communication with the teams, at St. Pete when Chevrolet had such a great start, Pato O'Ward talked about there was a meeting with McLaren. Is that something that continued throughout the year with all the teams? Was there an emphasis put on having that line of communication be more open this year?

ERIC WARREN: I think our program across the board, we've really been investing in more engineering capabilities. Our Charlotte technical center, what we've done across all our series at GM races, we want to race with the teams, be there with them.

We did have big meetings. Why are we losing? We don't want to lose. Having that relationship and getting into where we can technically contribute really came down to quite a few items that we needed to be better at. The way we invested our effort, with the right areas, we had learned.

Even you look at the Indy 500 from '22 to '23, we made the big step. We kind of learned. Again, you look at what we did this year, continued with that. It really comes down to making sure we're giving the teams what they need and maximizing our resources.

It is a lot of different pieces. Fuel mileage. A lot of strategic things the year before that Honda and some of the teams showed a big difference on fuel economy for the same horsepower, focused on that. Our road course performance, how we deploy the torque, how we get off the corner setups. It's all of it together.

I mean, I think the teams obviously are the ones that have to execute. They've done a great job. We just try to listen and help where we can.

Q. Obviously this is great winning the championship. Still have a NASCAR championship, IMSA. You had the announcement with Cadillac on the IMSA side. Any updates there? Any updates on the Formula 1 side as you look forward?

ERIC WARREN: Sports car, it's great seeing sports car, all the manufacturers coming in. We talk about golden eras of racing. There's a lot of excitement around sports car.

Cadillac, what's great about that vehicle is there's a lot of elements where you can see the different styling and design, fans. Of course, the sound of it is very unique. It's



been an exciting program. The level of competition in there is something that requires continuous work.

We're not where we want to be certainly. Chasing the Porsches and Acura on the IMSA side, we've been competitive. Got a lot of work to do in the WEC series and continue to invest. On the pole in Fuji this weekend. Excited about making that progress.

We have to keep investing in that to be competitive. We got into it globally to expand the Cadillac brand. We want to compete. We'll continue to invest in that, both people, technology, team, drivers. Until we're winning, we're not going to stop.

On the F1 side, been working on it two years. It's a process. We're developing heavily a power unit. We're developing heavily the car. We will continue to go through the process. Had some positive meetings this past week. We're not giving up on that one. We've made a commitment to enter. One way or another we're going to be there.

Q. Looking ahead to next year, there's going to be a couple more Chevrolet-powered teams. Can you expand on how close to the limit maybe Chevrolet is on resources to supply that, but also trying to maintain this level of performance.

ERIC WARREN: Anytime we get an opportunity to add a quality team, we want to take a hard look at it. With Prima, one of the things as we looked at them coming from Europe, the success they had in some of the lower series, their access to drivers, experience with drivers, is something that we felt like will add to the mix.

It is difficult as we add teams because, again, as much as we as Chevrolet want the teams to work totally together for Chevrolet, they're still racing each other and still competitive. It creates more mouths to feed, information. We see that as a positive. The more we can learn, more we can try different things.

But there's a limit of we don't want to spread our resources out too thin and not be able to compete.

Q. (No microphone.)

ERIC WARREN: I always say we're over the limit. Certainly I get told that by our finance people (smiling).

But we keep pushing. We're maxed out. Again, it's important to us that the series is successful. Sometimes just the attrition of people and teams and everything, we have to keep investing in it. We try to look at each

situation individually and whether we can handle it. I think we're okay.

Q. In terms of development, you never focus on one thing, what would be the key aims for next season where you're focusing to improve?

ERIC WARREN: I still think we have to improve on some of the road courses. When you look at the consistency of Palou, obviously he's leading, we want to be leading. I think we understand that more. We still have work to do.

I think, again, continuing working that with our teams, trying to figure out where to raise those deficiencies, I think we'll continue to push.

Q. Talks seem to be going pretty well for a new car. From your standpoint, how important would it be to maybe readjust the weight so the extra weight of the hybrid assist is more towards the center of the car? How much are the engine manufacturers offering ideas?

ERIC WARREN: I think as an engine manufacturer, certainly we have involvement there. But we're also, as Chevrolet, really partners in the series.

Again, I think as we talked about the hybrid, as we look towards the future, what have we learned there? How do you improve the efficiency of the engine is really what we're about on the engine side. How do we transfer technology to the production side?

As we get opportunities to talk about that, it's important that we all work together. There's elements such as the weight, but it's a whole system and whole package that we're still working on.

We're excited to be a part of it. I think when we all work together, great things can happen.

THE MODERATOR: It's been a championship season. Congratulations. A chance this weekend to pad the stats a little bit.

ERIC WARREN: Thank you.

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