

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Alexander Rossi

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Switching to the No. 20 Ed Carpenter Racing Chevrolet in 2025, Alexander Rossi, beginning his 10th season in the NTT INDYCAR Series. Of course eight-time winner in the series with a bit of a new look team, a lot of changes for Ed Carpenter Racing heading into 2025.

I know you're ready to get back on the track. You've got to wait a couple weeks before you do that, but are you looking forward to getting started?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: For sure. I think the team is changing at a rapid rate, which is pretty exciting to witness and be a part of, and I think that there's a lot of excitement internally about the things that are going on.

It's certainly a busy time for everyone involved, and I think we're all still trying to find our place a little bit in somewhat of a totally new organization. But it's going really well, and experience that I've had so far has been nothing short of awesome.

Looking forward to getting on track in February at Sebring and then seeing where that takes us for the first week of March.

Q. You did have an opportunity to hop on the Indianapolis oval with the team. Did that help break the ice a little bit as you look into this off-season?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, for sure. That was a good one to get under our belt kind of right before the super long break kicked off. The car and team operated at a level that you would expect based on their previous results and past performances at Indianapolis, so that was a pretty seamless day and an exciting day for everyone, to have our new partners in Splenda and Java House on board and represented.

As I said, it's growing and changing every day, so what you saw in October, it's going to be a very different look come February and March.

Q. What is a successful season for Alexander Rossi this year? What does it look like at the end of the year?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: You know, it's being in the conversation and having an opportunity to win at Indy, which I think is to be expected of ECR and myself.

I don't really have an expectation quite yet because I haven't driven the car, so I don't really know what I don't know at this point. I'll be able to answer that question a little bit better after the test in February.

Q. Kind of a related question, this is a very different challenge, a different team dynamic than what you've been a part of, I imagine, since you joined INDYCAR, an Andretti team that was used to being at the top of the sport, an Arrow McLaren team that wasn't quite there but had high aspirations, and now you join ECR where this team has won races, been towards the top of the championship a time or two but maybe haven't quite been, from a consistent performance standpoint, at a level that you've competed at the last couple years. Is this an intriguing, exciting new chapter for you, joining a team that's a little bit different and trying to maybe take it to a different place than what you've been doing the last couple years?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: That's a good question. I don't really look at it that way so much as I think if you ask everyone at the organization where they've been the past couple years is not where they want to be, where they expect to be, so there was the effort and the search, I guess is the right term maybe, for how do they and we now as an organization change what the past couple of years have been.

This series is so competitive, and there is every year more cars and drivers that are capable of winning. Like what do we need to do from a staffing, investment, procedure, mindset standpoint to bridge the gap and make the step that everyone else is making.

That's a work in progress. That doesn't happen overnight. But I certainly think that steps are being made in the right direction, steps that are very cool to see.

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I think there's the potential to surprise a lot of people at points in 2025. Obviously, as I said, nothing happens overnight. We're not going to go from the results that have existed the past couple of years to all of a sudden winning every race sort of thing, but I do think that everything in this sport is very small margins.

We've often talked about this car has been around for so long. It's not that there's some magic thing out there. It's about putting puzzle pieces together correctly and executing efficiently, and that can add up to results pretty quickly.

We have the tools and resources and are gathering the tools and resources that didn't necessarily exist in the past, and that's opening doors and opportunities for what should be a step forward for the organization in '25.

And then obviously to answer the first part of your question, yeah, this is a long-term thing that I'm a part of and something that's very exciting to be a part of, to contribute to, and to do it alongside someone that I have a very good working and personal relationship with Ed, something that I feel like we as a group, Ed, myself, Christian, Ted Gelov from Heartland, we can all do as this kind of foursome and push things forward and get the results that we want.

Q. This may be a tough question to answer because you were onboarded at ECR as Ted was coming on, as well. With the influx of support from him and Heartland, as best you know, how much -- how big of an improvement can funding and new ideas and a partnership like that bring to this team and what you guys can do in '25 in the future versus where they have been the last couple years?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, it's a little bit of a hard question. I think that what we've seen in this sport and we've seen in other championships, funding and money isn't the solution to everyone's problems. It certainly gives you the capability to have a better rate of development. It gives you the opportunity to maybe entice people into your organization and that sort of thing.

But it's still about the people, and I do think that a lot of the main people that have been at ECR -- sorry, that are at ECR currently have been there for a very long time.

There's a lot of loyalty in that organization, and there's a very close-knit group of individuals that, in their own right and together, are very, very good at what they do. They've maybe just not had all of the tools, resources and people to help them deliver the results that they are capable of.

I think number one is people; number two is growing the good people and creating that environment; then number three is having the available funds to go do the projects and build the things that you need to do.

Q. I imagine you may have seen the commercial that FOX put out on Sunday with Josef. A lot has been said and celebrated on that type of marketing and the angle they took in trying to promote Josef and lift the sport up as this new relationship gets going. What were your thoughts on what you saw on Sunday and what you've seen over the last couple of months as this momentum has built toward FOX airing INDYCAR for the full season in '25 and beyond?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I didn't know Josef was -- I just thought it was a Tom Brady commercial. (Laughter).

My guy. No, I thought it was great. I think is a commercial with Josef or a commercial with Pato or Alex going to change the perception of INDYCAR racing? No. Is it a huge step in a direction that we've all been looking for in terms of out-of-the-box thinking and cool, trendy marketing and all of the buzz word stuff that you want to be a part of and be doing? Yeah, 100 percent.

So I think this partnership with FOX has been talked about at length in terms of the positivities that it's going to bring from a TV viewership standpoint, but I think the thing that's possibly the most impressive/most important in my mind and I think a lot of the drivers' minds is the kind of push that they're putting behind it with their other properties, bringing in people like Tom Brady who are FOX employees, pushing it during the biggest sporting weeks of the year in the NFL playoffs and really using their other avenues of promotion to elevate the NTT INDYCAR Series is what we've needed and wanted.

Obviously it's going to take more than a couple commercials, but this is a huge step in the right direction and something that is very, very awesome to be a part of. I don't think any of us could be more excited and thankful for what they've done, and can't wait to see what they do in the future.

Q. You touched on this, I think when you got here in 2016 you probably didn't know a lot of people and had to learn three or four different teams when you went to McLaren as far as all those employees. Do you feel you're maybe a little bit ahead of schedule? You have that test from October, you and Ed are close friends, live down the road, the close-knit community that ECR has. Do you feel like you're closer to having those results earlier? Sometimes for drivers they go to a

new team and it takes a half season or full season to start seeing results. Do you feel like that camaraderie is there because it is such a small group?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, I think we have a couple things going for us. Number one, it's as you mentioned, I've known Matt Barnes for a really long time, as well, so having the relationship on the engineering side right out of the box is huge. We already kind of speak the same language in a lot of different ways.

But also I think the other big thing is, yes, in 2023 going to Arrow McLaren was a big transition, but the bigger transition was really Honda to Chevy. So being able to stay in the Team Chevy family and not have to go through that driving style transition that I kind of had to do from '22 to '23 I think is really the thing that'll put us on the front foot more than anything else.

Q. Have you set yourself any targets for the upcoming season?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Probably should. But no. Let me work on that.

Q. 10th season, hard to believe. Now that you evaluate your previous nine, have you accomplished what you'd like to accomplish? I know you've won the Indy 500, but I'm sure a championship would be on the line, too. How would you evaluate the first nine years? Just your thoughts on nine years in the series and now you've got No. 10 coming this season.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, it goes fast. I think that it's very easy to look back on -- I think, any athlete looks back on the missed opportunities more than the success. That's just the nature of the business.

But you also have to remind yourself that you're entering 10 years, a decade of driving race cars, and being able to have a pretty good understanding of what my future is going to be for quite some time, it gives you the foundation to really have an unlimited view of what is possible.

I think that there's certainly challenges ahead. I've certainly dealt with my share of challenges the past couple of years. But to be able to do it with ultimately friends is a pretty unique opportunity and one where I think it's going to be able to push each other forward to go do the things we want to do.

I think there's a lot of lessons learned. I think there's some good times. I still lose sleep over the bad times. But it's all motivation for what we have coming up in the future.

Q. Speaking of lessons learned, it could be nothing, but I noticed you went to a lot of IU football games this year. You've got a horse. Is that kind of the underrated story and coming to ECR could be the underrated story. Any lessons learned from watching IU football, seeing that culture, owning a horse?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Interesting. That's a very good question. Owning a horse, probably not. I don't think so.

Motorsports and horse racing are very similar, though. There's so many variables that exist, right. In racing we all know about you add into that racing plus an animal, there's obviously a lot you can't control, but it still takes a team and a common goal and a common culture, which ties in very well to the next part of your question with IU football.

I didn't really go to traditional college, so my knowledge of college sports was none, and then my friend group got very excited about IU football this year for obvious reasons, so I went to my first two college games this year, and not knowing anything about really IU's college football past but seeing and understanding what the power of one person can do -- we often talk about culture.

We often talk about it's the people that are the most important element, and all of those things are true, but it really only takes one person to offer a new approach, a new way of thinking, and getting people to buy into that, and you can see the results that come from that.

That's an inspiration, I think, for anyone that is either an athlete or looking to do something in business or in life, that it just takes one to make a difference.

I'm now a Hoosier fan for, I guess, life because that's how college football fandom works, and look forward to next year.

Q. Season tickets?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: My buddy already has them, so I think we're locked in there.

Q. Do you have a sweatshirt?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I do have a sweatshirt, yeah.

Q. Do you tailgate? What's the experience?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: So we were supposed to tailgate -- the one time I went down to Bloomington, we were going to tailgate and it was the hurricane that ran through Nashville when we were there, had Helene, so we didn't tailgate, but we still went to the game.

Then I went to IU playing Ohio State, and that was really underwhelming because I was sold that that was this amazing magical place, and it's just fine.

Q. I think a few people have asked this today to various drivers, but I'd like to get your take on the discussion of maybe a new car in 2027 --

ALEXANDER ROSSI: It's not a maybe, man. It's happening.

Q. What do you believe are kind of the keys that they kind of need from this new car compared to what there has been for the last however many years?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I have to weigh my answer to not get in trouble.

Here's the thing. I've actually talked to quite a few people at length about this. There's some people that have the belief that it needs to be this super futuristic crazy looking ultra modern car. There's other people that are like, okay, it needs to be this super light, high-horsepower thing that does track records everywhere.

Ultimately what I think needs to be done is we already have, and I don't think it's a debate, we already have the best product on track that exists globally, so to reinvent the wheel I don't think is something that in my mind that needs to be done. I think it needs to be an evolution of the car we've had.

Obviously technology has developed, materials has developed. We have added a lot on to the DW12. So integrating all of that is going to have benefits from a cost standpoint, from a safety standpoint, from a workability standpoint for the mechanics to have things that fit and flow and work a bit better together.

But ultimately I don't think we need to do anything that's beyond what we already do because I think what we already do is pretty good. It just needs to be an updated version of what we have. So that's my opinion.

Q. Have you seen the initial plans --

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yes.

Q. Are you allowed to share any thoughts on that?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Probably not. You've got another 20-odd drivers to ask that question to, so I'm not going to be that guy.