

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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David Malukas

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We continue this afternoon's session, joined now by David Malukas, driving the No. 4 AJ Foyt Racing Chevrolet, beginning his fourth season in the NTT INDYCAR Series, his first with AJ Foyt Racing after a couple of top 10s in the races you were in last year, 2024, brand new year. We all follow you on social media. We know you kind of enjoy that arena. What's been going on?

DAVID MALUKAS: Well, I just finished up all the FOX stuff, which was so cool. They have a drone, and I even watched the guy, and he's got these goggles on and he's just flying around. He's doing his own Indy 500. It's just crazy. He's doing like 10 donuts per person. I can't believe it.

But it was so cool. We're doing some cool poses, cool shots. They had the smoke machine, good music. I honestly was having a good time. I was so tired because I only slept five hours because of the early day, but that like my -- that was a natural coffee boost over there. I was having a good time. That was awesome.

Q. New team, new year. I'm sure you can't wait to get back on track.

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, I can't wait. Last year was chaos, definitely a year of learning and maturing, and at the end of the season I had actually another surgery on my hand to clean up all the scar tissue because the movement was very limited, so I had to still do some PT for a few months until Christmas time.

Now the hand is doing really well. We did the C fit, got the grip strength back up, and I'm excited to go out there and perform and forget this injury ever -- well, it's not perfectly back, but it's a lot better, so I'm really excited.

Q. David, this is a chance to have a complete season with the same team after last year's saga. How important is that going to be for you to really get a chance to get off the ground running? I imagine you're probably going to be pretty careful in the next couple of weeks.

DAVID MALUKAS: Oh, 100 percent. I've been so careful. I think the craziest thing I've done this off-season is go zip lining with my nephews and the drop was only like two feet. I had to lift my knees up the just do the zip lining. That was the most chaotic thing I've done.

But no, like I said, I've matured a lot, and not just from individuality and outside of the car, but also in the car I've matured a lot. I'm excited to take that maturity, be consistent, have a full season, and actually build with the team that I have and the crew is incredible and I'm very excited to get some very good results. It's going to be a lot of fun.

Q. Also, FOX is gearing a lot of their telecast to the Generation Z, the younger generation audience, a lot of good young talent in the INDYCAR Series. Do you see INDYCAR at a tipping point here where there's a lot of young faces, a lot of exciting drivers, and it may be a chance to really excite some of the younger crowd that may not be INDYCAR fans?

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, I think you hit it spot on. I think the next generation definitely is starting to come in, and I think those fans are starting to come.

I've had a lot of experiences last season where fans would come up to me and tell me that they're watching INDYCAR and they're there because of me, and that made me feel incredible. It's an incredible feeling.

I'm just really excited to actually be able to connect with my generation into racing and get them in. And I think with everything that FOX is doing, it's incredible, because I am also Gen-Z, so it's my generation, so it's good.

Q. You're one of the youngest drivers in the series dealing with one of the oldest people in racing, AJ Foyt. That's got to be a little bit of a -- are there times when the two of you kind of look at each other and try to figure out what the other is thinking?

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, actually it was a pretty good -- I met him at the Indy test a few months back, and he was telling me all of his stories. He's got so many cool stories.



It was a really cool experience. It was a good time.

But I think with what we're doing at AJ Foyt, being with AJ and being the new generation, I think it's a perfect setup going into this season. We have a lot of cool ideas and content with how we're going to mix all that together and mixing the new generation with history. It's going to be awesome.

Q. Obviously you're going into a team who have a lot of momentum behind them coming off a really strong season last year. Do you have any expectations going into the new year?

DAVID MALUKAS: I think just from all the chaos, for sure 100 percent just having that consistency being up there. I think with the way the team's success has been, especially this last season, I think it's very, very strong. Expectations are definitely very high.

I think with the team that we have, we definitely want results. I think with my teammate as well, Santino, on the ovals we're going to be a pretty strong suit.

Expectations are high going into it. But at the end of the day, it just feels good to do a full season and have a consistent season.

Q. We saw you're going to have car No. 4.

DAVID MALUKAS: That is correct.

Q. How cool is that for you?

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, it was a little bit last minute. I mean, I knew for a while. I wanted to say it really badly, and then I decided to just sneakily just do a post, just DM 4. I think that has a good ring to it and I'm really excited. I am just excited from constant side of things because I can just replace the "a" in Dave and just No. 4. I think it will be really cool. It's good merch.

I'm just really excited because then I can wear it. Imagine little Dave but then the A is a 4. It's pretty cool. I'm not gonna lie.

Q. Last year you didn't really have a chance to get the season started like you wanted. You just kind of had to watch from the sidelines and everything. How important is that to have a defined start point and just do it as you planned from the beginning?

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, sitting on the sidelines watching, that was really tough. That was hard. I definitely had to keep some emotions in watching everybody go around.

It was good. I learned a lot, especially being on the sidelines, just seeing what the engineers have to deal with, all the screens, the strategy. There's a lot that I learned that as a driver you don't really know much of what's going on, so I think it was good by the time I got in the car I didn't get angry at the engineers or the strategy on what's going on because they can see a lot more than the driver can see.

So I think that was the No. 1 thing that I learned and that I will take going into this next season.

Q. The transition going from a Honda to a Chevy, I know you don't have experience inside the cockpit yet, but what's that transition in a simulator been like and how excited are you to join the Chevy family?

DAVID MALUKAS: Well, I did a lot of off-season testing just when the hybrid system was coming out with Arrow McLaren, so I did have a lot of Chevy testing done. I think that was their previous version before the hybrid came in, so it definitely was different.

So I have some familiarity with some of the Chevy engineers, as well. So going it, it's not completely going fresh. I think we have something to already start going off of.

But as of what I remember and going into it, I think it'll be fine. I know there's some talks about the engines being a bit different, but from when I went into the car they felt very similar. I couldn't tell major drastic changes.

Q. I don't think the results, especially at Gateway last year, showed what you're capable of doing with obviously running up front. I know you're going to take it a race at a time and talk about the race that's coming up, but you've got to be champing at the bits with Santino, with how fast the Foyt cars have been at Indy to get back to IMS, and that starts in April at the test.

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, anytime I start thinking about it, the nerves and the excitement starts building up. I'm really excited, man. The car is going to good. Good teammates, good engineers, good crew. Everything is lining up, so a little bit of luck, who knows, it's going to be really exciting.

Q. I'm excited to see what Santino and you can do at AJ Foyt Racing. You may not have been in the car with the team yet to figure out if both of you are similar in setups or different; how do you anticipate getting along with Santino?

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, I'm very excited and interested to see how the setups and things are going to be. We did do some simulator work together, but as of now the driving doesn't seem too far off.

Of course it's not going to be until the Sebring test we'll know the driving styles and how to compare. But talking with the engineers, it seems that we are in some form similar in some ways, especially on the ovals.

I think it'll be pretty good. I think we'll be good teammates and definitely be able to pick on each other and be able to do two different setups. I think that's the main goal is having two drivers with the same driving style so we can use two different setups with the limited practice sessions that we have so we can clear two birds with one stone. I like to put it that way.

Q. I'm just curious on how much time you've spent with AJ Foyt and can you talk about what that experience has been like?

DAVID MALUKAS: I mean, it hasn't been too much. It's been short. I've probably had two conversations with him so far. But each conversation has been amazing.

Obviously for me it was a little bit hard because I'm going into it as, like, it's AJ and you're trying to have a normal conversation, but the entire time it's like I'm talking with AJ, so I'm kind of trying to act normal, act normal, you're not acting normal, and I think he could sense like what is wrong with this kid, what is he doing. I think he could sense it a little bit.

But he was very chill. It almost felt like we were good friends and he started talking about the stories and the past and the history. To say that he's had me on the team, that meant a lot, too. Both conversations we've had have been great, so I just hope to give him some results in return.

Q. What did you get AJ for his birthday?

DAVID MALUKAS: I don't know, can we say what we did? Unfortunately we can't.

Q. An Indy 500 win would be the perfect gift.

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, a little bit delayed but I don't think he would mind. I think he would take it. That would be very cool.

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