

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

Kyffin Simpson

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Continuing on this afternoon, day one of the NTT INDYCAR Series content days here in downtown Indianapolis, Kyffin Simpson joins us, driver of the No. 8 Chip Ganassi Racing Honda, beginning his second year in the NTT INDYCAR Series, finished second as the Rookie of the Year battle heated up there towards the end of 2024, and back at it, full season, ready to go. What did you learn from year one that you're going to apply in year two.

KYFFIN SIMPSON: I learnt a lot. I think most of it was just getting comfortable with the car and comfortable with the team and some of the new tracks that we went to, as well.

I think going into year two, I'm just feeling a lot more comfortable.

Q. Obviously going from five cars to three cars, the concentration, that should help perhaps?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, perhaps. I think going from five cars to three cars, it was just a bit unfortunate, but kind of necessary with the charter system. But it is what it is.

Yeah, we'll just focus on doing the best we can this year.

Q. In terms of focus for the team is I guess what Scott was alluding to a little bit. See how it pans out this year for you guys?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, we'll see how it goes. It's not guaranteed that'll make us better, but hopefully -- that's the hope.

Q. Last year with the five-car team, I don't want to say it would be easy to get lost in the shuffle, but five cars, engineering staff and all that. Now that it's a three-car team and you're one of the three, do you feel there's a lot more effort and attention placed on what you're going to be able to do in your development in INDYCAR?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Not necessarily. I think last year

having five cars was good in a lot of ways because we got a lot of data. I think having five cars at a test is very helpful because you're able to run through far more test items than you would with three cars.

In some ways having five cars is better, but like Dave mentioned, it's a lot more focus when you downsize to three cars.

We'll see how it goes this year and see how we go when we get to Sebring.

Q. A lot of drivers have said when they work as a teammate with Scott Dixon, they really learn as much of what it takes to be a champion by what he does out of the car as what he does in it. Have you found that to be the case?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, absolutely. I think Scott is -- he's just so passionate about the sport and passionate about what he's doing, even though he's been racing for 20 years. It's great to see and very motivating, as well.

But yeah, just how he conducts himself out of the car, how he puts so much into training and being physically ready for every weekend is great to see.

Q. Your race pace, especially on road and street courses, was pretty strong this year, but the results maybe didn't meet that. Is that more getting used to the red tires in qualifying, or is that having to put the entire weekend together?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, I think a big part of it was me kind of working up to it throughout a weekend, and when I would get in a race, I would have time to really settle in. I think going into the second year, that'll be a lot easier for me, having more of a baseline of exactly how the car should feel in a first session.

I'm looking forward to getting back to St. Pete and trying to start off a lot stronger than we did last year, but I think I've done a little bit of quality sim work over the off-season, and hopefully that will be shown in St. Pete.

Q. You worked with Seb Bourdais last year a lot. What



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was the best advice he gave you last year?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Oh, so much. With Seb, he just kind of -- Seb is very focused on how the driver can give feedback to make the car better. So most of what he advised me on last year was trying to feel the car better and give better feedback, which was very helpful for sure because the way he goes about it is -- I wouldn't say unique, but it's very detailed.

Q. Like Dave said about condensing from five to three cars, you have the unique perspective this year of four of the last five seasons, those are your two teammates that won the championship. What have you maybe observed or seen about how they approach a race weekend or a car change or just the culture about that team now that it's just you three now and they happen to be the season champions in four of the last five years? Is there a lot you've learned from them? Any advice they've given you or that you've observed from them?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, for sure. I think every weekend that I drive with them, I learn a lot. Just every time I pull up their data, I just compare it to mine and kind of see how they're approaching each corner differently and then in the engineering room, as well, with feedback and how they describe the feeling of the car, as well.

It's just interesting to see all the little differences between me and them and try to get me as close as possible to where they are.

Q. I've noticed that your social accounts have been a bit more active and reactive recently. What was the thought process behind that? Is that just kind of the task of the modern racing driver, to try to drive as much social interaction around you and your brand as possible?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, just having some fun with it, really. Just kind of posting whenever I have something fun to post.

But you've got your normal days throughout the week where you're not really doing anything and you're just kind of going throughout life normally.

But yeah, anytime I do something fun or something like that, I try to make a post and just continue that social media exposure.

Q. Anything wild planned as the season gets going?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Nothing wild. Talked about going to

DR for a kite surf trip maybe. That could be fun.

But yeah, nothing planned as of right now.

Q. DR meaning --

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Dominican Republic, sorry.

Q. Now you've had your full rookie season, how do you reflect on the last year? I know you didn't really have any set expectations, but how do you assess your first year against how you expected it to go?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, I think my first year, I'm very happy with it. I was very happy with how he performed in the races. I think some of our results didn't really show so well for one reason or another.

But I felt like we performed quite well, and I think if we can be a bit more consistent this next year and kind of stay out of some unnecessary incidents, that would be ideal. I think we had a couple too many crashes last year, whether it was me making a mistake or it was getting into some sort of issue with someone else.

I think if we clean all that up this year, we'll be looking good.

Q. Can we expect your rivalry with pickles to continue throughout the course of the year?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, that's looking to continue throughout the rest of my life probably.

Q. New color scheme; have you been able to see the car since it was announced?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yep, got to see the car yesterday briefly. Looking good. I like the new colors. Excited for everyone else to see it, as well, soon hopefully.

Q. Besides the Indy 500, what race do you have circled that you most look forward to on the 2025 schedule?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Road America is always my favorite track. I think among a lot of drivers, it's a track that we all like. We all enjoy racing there.

Last year obviously didn't go as planned, but hopefully we can get another Fast 12 there this year and then we can have a solid race.

Q. Just your thoughts on the INDY NXT -- we're seeing more and more guys -- Jacob Abel got a full time ride,



obviously Louis Foster is the champion. Just looking back on your time there and preparation and how that really helped you going into the NTT INDYCAR Series?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, for sure. I think INDY NXT is obviously a very important step into INDYCAR. I think you get to learn a lot of the tracks, which is important, but also the style of racing based off how the rules are and all of that. It's just kind of -- how the rules are create the style of racing, and then because of that, it's kind of different to how you may race in Europe or anywhere else.

I think learning how to race in INDY NXT is very important and makes the transition to INDYCAR a lot easier.

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