

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

Nolan Siegel

Press Conference



Q. Looking ahead to next year, full-time ride obviously, full season with a great team. How much are you looking forward to this?

NOLAN SIEGEL: I'm really looking forward to it. We've done a lot of work this off-season, and I think I'm really happy with the people that I have on my car. I'm excited about the group that we have on the 6. I can't wait for St. Pete. It's been too long.

Q. If I'm not mistaken, I believe you have been on the oval at IMS in both a Honda and a Chevy in the last year. What's been the differences? What have you learned? The hybrid test obviously probably different than what you had back in May, but it gives you more of a baseline of comfortability heading into your quasi-rookie season.

NOLAN SIEGEL: Yeah, as far as the differences on the oval, it was hard to tell at IMS. I did my ROP again in the Arrow McLaren car, in the Chevy, but hard to tell ROP kind of in the off-season, you're going slow, the track is not there. It was the hybrid test.

There was a lot going on. I wouldn't say that I really felt any major differences. I'm sure that they will come into play when we get running in May.

But I think you need real running for that.

Q. My second question would be your relationship with Tony Kanaan. Obviously we saw him during the month of May kind of giving you some advice, as well. Now you're officially alongside of TK. You've got Pato who's been great at the 500; Lundgaard brings a new set of skills. What's that process been like towards the end of last season and turning the corner toward 2025 and building that relationship with Arrow McLaren and Tony Kanaan?

NOLAN SIEGEL: Yeah, it's just been good to have time with everyone in the off-season because I started in the busy part of the season and we just didn't have a lot of time

away from the racetrack to get to know each other and to talk.

My relationship with Tony and with Pato, those relationships have grown a lot, and they're both very, very valuable assets for me.

Obviously both have a ton of experience at the speedway. Both been very fast at the speedway. I'm looking forward to going back in May.

I think that's the month that I am most looking forward to, and I think it's going to be a different experience this time around.

Q. Will things come more natural now that you're settled in, you know which race car you're going to be running in, your dad is not running out of the paddock at Road America to go get your suit? Talk about only having to focus on being in the race car.

NOLAN SIEGEL: Yeah, last year, I mean, really all year, I'd go to the racetrack, and whether it was I didn't know if I was racing the next weekend or didn't know what I was driving or something new came up, there was so much to think about apart from driving the race car.

That brought a lot of challenges that I won't have this year. So I think it's going to be really nice to know what I have and know what I'm doing and be able to focus on driving the race car instead of focusing on finding a ride for the next weekend or finding a ride in INDYCAR or WEC or IMSA, INDY NXT.

There's so much less going on in a way, which sounds weird to say given that it's my first full season in INDYCAR and first full season at Arrow McLaren, but it's actually much more simple than it was last year.

Q. You're going to have a new engineer this year, Kate. How cool is it to be working with someone that's as fresh as you are and that probably will look at things a little bit differently like you might at your age?

NOLAN SIEGEL: I've really enjoyed working with Kate. She is new to the race engineer role. She is by no means



new to INDYCAR. She has a lot of experience and has been doing a phenomenal job so far. Really excited about working with her, and I've spent quite a bit of time with her now, and we get along really well. I think that makes a big difference.

Looking forward to it.

Yes, I think while on the surface you look at new driver, new engineer, how is that going to go, I think in a lot of ways a new perspective can be a good thing, and there are a lot of engineers that have been around for a long time and have a lot of experience and knowledge. Sometimes it's nice to have someone that's open to experimenting and open to trying to do things a little bit differently.

I think we're going to find quite a bit of speed and have a good time doing it.

Q. What is a good season for Nolan Siegel when you look back in September?

NOLAN SIEGEL: The goal is to be on the podium and win races. It's super competitive. It's an incredibly competitive race series, and it's by no means easy and every weekend isn't going to be smooth, but I think if we capitalize on the weekends where we have a strong race car and we're in the positions that we want to be in, we're going to have chances to be up front and be celebrating on Sundays.

Q. Nolan, something that I asked Christian, obviously he's the new addition to the team, but you came in at a very hectic time. McLaren is an internationally famous brand. It's the brand that seems to sell the most merch, even at INDYCAR races. What is it like? Is there any more pressure driving for a team that not only has such a large and demanding fan base, but really you have a lot of demands with the media, with sponsors? This is a team that's very, very involved. Describe that process and what it's like to adapt when you join a team of this caliber.

NOLAN SIEGEL: It is difficult at times from that perspective. I think the expectations are very high from a team like McLaren. There are a lot of people watching. There are a lot of eyes on it.

At the end of the day, the people whose opinions I care about are still the people that I work closely with, and from that perspective, it's no different than any other race team.

So yes, there are a lot of people watching, but at the same time, it's the same size as any other race team, and I'm working closely with good people.

There are the media obligations and there's a big fan base, but I think you have to kind of separate that from the on-track running, which is -- at the end of the day, it's a very good INDYCAR team. It's an INDYCAR team.

I think just separating those aspects of it is important. But it's an honor to be representing a brand like McLaren, and to be able to go to the Formula 1 races and see what those guys are doing and be a part of that organization, as well, it's an honor for me, and it's very cool and not something that I expected to be doing right now.

Grateful to be here, and I'm -- I'm grateful to be here and grateful for all aspects of being a McLaren driver.

Q. I ran into you in Las Vegas; tell the people how fast you got the road track going on the backstretch there in Vegas.

NOLAN SIEGEL: Yeah, we were doing 200 miles an hour in road cars in Vegas with passengers, which was -- I remember it was me, Pato, Mika Häkkinen and Christian, and we all did our first session and came out and we're like, we're not doing it the next day. We're done; no more.

Then we all came back the next morning and we were all excited to do it again. But no, it was interesting.

Q. You said in the summer kind of ahead of the closing of the 2024 season that your goal was to just learn and be in as good a shape as possible getting to St. Pete this year. How do you feel that learning process went as you went through those early races with Arrow McLaren, and do you feel that you are in a position where you can fight near the front this season?

NOLAN SIEGEL: Yeah, I was thrown into the deep end for sure, but I think that those challenging weekends and moments are when you learn the most. I feel like I am in a much better position going into 2025 than I would have been having not done those races, and I feel like myself and the whole team has used this off-season very productively, and I feel like we're in a really good spot going into 2025.

The goal is to go into St. Pete feeling like there was nothing more we could have done to prepare, and I feel like we've been doing that so far.

Q. You kind of mentioned the work that you've put in as a team over the off-season. Can you go into any of the specifics that you wanted to improve on yourself?

NOLAN SIEGEL: Yeah. Going into my first full season in



INDYCAR, there was a big focus on physical preparation. I've gained like 15 pounds, which was a -- I don't think it was an issue last year, but I feel like I'm in a better spot physically now to drive the INDYCAR than I was last year.

We've reviewed at this point almost every race of the season from a strategy standpoint, just to help me better understand INDYCAR strategy and the INDYCAR rules. I think it was a challenge last year for me to be thinking about strategy in the car just because I didn't have the experience and didn't know what different scenarios really meant for our race.

So I think I'll have a much better understanding of that and be able to be more involved in the strategy while I'm driving a race car.

It's hard, right; we don't have very much testing so it's hard to really work on driving-specific things, but there's so much more to it than that.

Q. As the youngest driver on the grid, with McLaren that's a big expectation, but they do have an extensive junior program and resources for young drivers. Do you think that's helped you, and do you think the team themselves have been prepared for a younger driver coming in because of that?

NOLAN SIEGEL: No, I would not say that I've been in any way part of the McLaren junior program. The INDYCAR team functionally is kind of its own thing. But having my teammates and having Tony Kanaan with me has been very helpful.

There have been people that have been very willing to help and have a lot of experience on the INDYCAR side, but there's no real connection to any McLaren junior program in any other aspect. I'm not a part of the McLaren junior program. I'm a part of the McLaren INDYCAR team and the goal is to win INDYCAR races, not develop a junior driver.

Q. Since you're with McLaren, is there any interest or has there been any discussions about you moving up into Formula 1 someday?

NOLAN SIEGEL: I would love to race in Formula 1. The goal right now is, again, to be a championship contender in INDYCAR. That is the main focus at the moment.

If I had the opportunity to do a Formula 1 test or have reserve position or something like that, I would absolutely be open to it, but my focus and goal is not to move to Formula 1.

Yes, I would love to do it, but there's no focus being put on that. It's all on INDYCAR at the moment.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports