

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Wednesday, January 15, 2025

### Sting Ray Robb

#### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good morning. Thanks for joining us here Day 2 of the NTT INDYCAR Series content days at the Indiana convention center. Sting Ray Robb leads things off, driver of the No. 7 Juncos Hollinger Racing Chevy this year, beginning his third season in the series, had a ninth place finish at Worldwide Technology Raceway last year before the transition to JHR.

Congratulations on the transition to the new team. How are things going? Easing into it, I'm sure.

STING RAY ROBB: Yeah, it's a little bit of a return back home. I spent three years with those guys in the same shop. We won a championship together back in the USF Pro 2000 days, and hopefully we can get back on some of that winning form again.

It's a good program. I think they've done a good job to kind of contain the group that they have and have some continuity going next season, which I think is a big part of it. Not relearning over the off-season is a good thing.

**Q. A little bit of a homecoming, too, some familiar faces, certainly Ricardo.**

STING RAY ROBB: Yeah.

**Q. You guys go back a while right?**

STING RAY ROBB: I began driving for Ricardo 2019 was my first year with them. The green is not foreign to me. It's been a minute.

**Q. First of all, how do you reflect back on your second year in INDYCAR? What sort of improvements maybe do you feel you made compared to your rookie year with Coyne?**

STING RAY ROBB: I think that there was a lot that was improved on last year. I may not have showed it all the different times, but there was a lot of little mistakes that real are I cost us some good results last year.

I think the most obvious ones were in St. Pete, the brake failure there, Barber Motorsports Park, the steering wheel failure there, and then engine failure at Toronto -- not engine but actually another mechanical failure.

It was just all those little details that kept catching us out, and I think that is where I am looking forward to improve most this year, is be consistent. Obviously have some better speed; qualifying is a big part of that. Hopefully we can do that.

**Q. Can you talk maybe a little bit about how the move to Juncos came about and how long it may have been in the works and how things moved after you started discussions?**

STING RAY ROBB: Yeah, our plan was to stay where I was going into the middle of the kind of crazy season, if you will, the summer break a little bit. But obviously with the news coming out about David's signing I could see the writing on the wall that I needed to look elsewhere, and so we began talking to other teams.

When the Juncos opportunity came about we got the deal done with them pretty quickly to try to solidify a seat, and also because Ricardo was very excited. I've been in that garage before, for three years, like I said, so working again with Ricardo, he and I actually weren't on the best terms after our last breakup, if you will, so we kind of had to solidify a good relationship again, acknowledge where we both went wrong, and it was good.

Having a good, honest conversation of where we both were saying, okay, does this really work for us and the answer was yes. I think that Ricardo is a success because of where he came from and his winning passion is a big part of who he is, and it bleeds down to the team. It starts from the top.

I'm excited to be back in green. I think the deal was something that we had been trying to get together sooner, but when the announcement finally came out, it was nice to get that solidified.

**Q. I just want to ask you about how you see the difference in the shop, in the team, since the last time**

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**you came with Juncos? What you can explain us a little bit about the growth of the team?**

STING RAY ROBB: I mean, yeah. The last time I was there was back in the INDY NXT Series, and so the shop was much more focused around that program, I think, than what it is now. I think that INDYCAR has taken over the whole shop, which is good. I think that puts me in a good spot now.

I think that the group there has grown significantly. I remember when it was just a small group of us that were running USF Pro 2000. It's nice to see them kind of grow into their footprint there in the garage and also just seeing the program grow.

I think Ricardo has done a good job to put people in place, along with Brad Hollinger, to put good, smart, intelligent engineers, mechanics, and having that be consistent throughout the seasons has allowed them to improve every year.

I think that that's the big thing in INDYCAR racing, is you can't expect to make huge leaps and bounds forward in the series. It's the little things over time that make a big difference.

**Q. About all these new charter systems, a lot of people are saying that now the budget, it's changed a little, it's growing; you need to have more funding. But also it's some opportunities to try to work with the companies. You have been very good in finding these sponsors and move your brand. Can you explain how do you see it's changed, all this, looking from the back up?**

STING RAY ROBB: Yeah, it's a great question. I think that everyone is kind of in the same situation right now. I think that we're all fighting to gather dollars as quickly as we can. But the new FOX program is a big encouragement for that. I think the charter system is a big encouragement for that. We've seen some new companies on board on very recently as well as for other teams, as well.

I think for us we're really excited to see this program grow as far as our team as well as INDYCAR as a whole. I think they're headed in the right direction. They're giving us more tools to work with.

Then for ourselves, I think what we're looking forward to most is just having the ability to grow our footprint in the worldwide motorsports realm, and I think that's going to be coming very quickly.

**Q. Third team in three years, probably not ideal, but what kind of positives can you take from that? Can you sort of take the best from each team and bring it to this year? Is that kind of your goal? I know it's not ideal to be at three different teams in three years.**

STING RAY ROBB: Yeah, I think this is a good spot for me to be in. There is a lot to learn from each place for sure, and I think that each program has been very different from the other and so I can kind of see the patterns that I like, the trends that I like, and also who those people are. Who are the key people that I really lead to lean on.

Each team has their core, and so being able to identify that core because I've been with three different teams, it is challenging going into a new season with a new team, but at the same time I've been able to see that kind of grow throughout other seasons.

I'm hoping this is going to be a good spot for me to stay for a while and have some continuity going into future seasons. But yeah, I'm excited for this year to be with the team I'm with.

**Q. How about teaming up with Conor? He's a guy that generates attention that can only really help benefit you and the team.**

STING RAY ROBB: Yeah, absolutely. Conor is a great personality to have him in the paddock. It's great to see him back in a race car. Obviously the team is very excited to have him on board with his podium finish at Milwaukee.

I think he's been with a lot of teams, as well, so we're both in a similar situation as far as a lot of knowledge from a lot of different places that we can hopefully put together and get some good results from.

**Q. Has he got you lined up yet for Speed Street?**

STING RAY ROBB: That is to come. You guys will probably see me on there in the near future.

**Q. Third team in three years, but I'm sure all of those experiences are a little bit different. Do you feel any more confident or comfortable with the history that you have at JHR coming into this experience compared to coming in each of the last two seasons to a brand new team, brand new family around you?**

STING RAY ROBB: Yeah, I do feel a lot more comfortable because there are familiar faces. It's not just Ricardo. His brother Ale was my mechanic back in 2020 when we won the championship there. He'll be on my car again this year.

So it's nice to be able to have that familiarity, having that culture already known ahead of time. It allows me to be on form a little bit earlier than I would have been, and understanding the communication that's necessary.

Now, I don't know the rest of the crew as well. My engineers, the mechanics that are on the car, those are still all new to me, so I'll be facing some of the same challenges I did in the past. And again, it's not ideal, but being with the team, I think that's a good spot for me.

**Q. What is a good 2025 INDYCAR season for Sting Ray Robb?**

STING RAY ROBB: Great question. Recently married, so hopefully that stays. Happily married, I'll add. Keep the first things first.

But I think that enjoying racing is going to be a big part of it. I think that a lot of times this sport, especially for myself, I know why I'm here. I know what I'm doing. I've been a winning driver in the past, and I've enjoyed that. Winning championships. I think that's easy to forget sometimes when you're challenged like this going into a top-tier series like INDYCAR racing.

So kind of returning to that form would be nice. I know I'm not going to come out and win St. Pete probably, but at least enjoy it on the same level that I used to.

I think a winning season if you were to put a number to it, I'm not sure I could. I'm not sure I could tell you that.

**Q. Sting Ray, you're going from a Chevy team to a Chevy team, so that should be pretty easy for you to adapt. But in terms of testing, now you're with a new team. There's a couple open tests. Would you think that there needs to be more opportunity, or are you able to, with the time that you do have, get acclimated to everything so that you're ready to go when the racing starts?**

STING RAY ROBB: There's never enough time. I think you ask any driver in the paddock they're going to say give us more days, especially for me. I think that being with a new team, I would like to spend 10, 12, 14 days in the car, but that's just not how it is.

We'll be a little rusty I think even still going into St. Pete, but that's the beauty of INDYCAR racing. You're getting to see the raw talents go out and compete at a high level even without the seat time. We do have a few days, I think. I don't know what the number is currently, but it's never enough.

**Q. When you were at Foyt, Michael Cannon was there as the technical director. Now he's gone to Prema. I don't know how much you learned from him because I don't think you worked directly with him; you had a different engineer, but what do you think is going to happen at Prema? Do you see them as being a real threat based on what you know of him? Do you think he can convey all the knowledge, because he's been from Ganassi, a lot of different teams even before that? What do you expect to see from Prema?**

STING RAY ROBB: Yeah, Michael is, first off, a great guy. I think that he is a talent in the paddock that is definitely someone that I would like to work with again in the future. I think that he is one of those guys that he makes things happen, and to have him join Prema is a threat for sure. That team has some good results in their history, as well.

I think coming to a new series will be a challenge, having a new team put together will be a challenge. I think that they're going to be hard-pressed to work well and form fit, I guess you could say, to start the year. When you get different personalities like that all working together as new people in the room, it can be a challenge.

I'm sure Michael has got some tricks up his sleeve. He's a brilliant guy, and I'm sure they'll have a good run at some point during the season.

**Q. You didn't steal his notepad before you left?**

STING RAY ROBB: I may have taken some pictures. No, I'm just kidding. I wish. He knew better than to let me have access to those.

**Q. Sting Ray, the last time you were at Juncos in 2021 your rookie year in Indy Lights back then was quite a struggle, I think. It ended with you leaving, ended with Juncos pulling out of the series altogether. Now that you're back as a team, can you reflect on how it has changed compared to what you saw back then?**

STING RAY ROBB: Yeah, I mean, that was a big part of our conversation when we began talking with them again. At the end of 2021, I was fairly disappointed with the results that we'd had after winning the 2020 championship in the category right below.

We were hopeful that we could come into the series and be strong right from the start, and it was a struggle. We didn't get it figured out by the end of the year. The last race of the year was at Mid-Ohio and I remember being one of the front runners in that dry race.

We had the pace by the end of the season, but it was a

struggle to figure out why we were struggling so much throughout the year. I think a lot of it was because the focus was on the INDYCAR program. A lot of the focus was kind of diverted to that and making that the best program it could be.

INDY NXT didn't get to see the best of Ricardo Juncos. Ricardo and I have talked since then and I've seen him at his best. We won a championship together the year prior. It was quite the contrast for us. So being able to come back in a much better situation, I think the culture is much healthier now, the priorities are very, very good. The passion is still there.

I think that's the big thing that's important is this sport is very challenging, and INDYCAR racing is very, very competitive. It's full of great drivers, great teams.

Having that passion can go a long ways just because it creates obsession, and that obsession can lead to good results. So I've seen that from Ricardo in the past, and I think that it will continue in the future.

**Q. How has Sting Ray Robb developed since your 2021 rookie year in INDY NXT?**

STING RAY ROBB: I think I've grown quite a bit. Obviously I'm a little bit older now, a little bit wrinklier maybe, but at the end of the day I think I'm in a much more mature spot. I'm in a much more confident spot.

2021 Sting Ray Robb was just a kid from Idaho trying to figure out what he was going to do with his INDYCAR dreams. I achieved those dreams now of being in INDYCAR now, so it's on to the next step. We're still dreaming big trying to do some good things.

**Q. I wanted to ask you, you've had experienced in a Honda and a Chevy powered car, one season with Dale Coyne and one season with Foyt. What are the main differences from the past years, and how is your driving style going to adapt to the different challenges?**

STING RAY ROBB: Great question. I think that the transition for me was a bit easier than I was expecting. Both programs are very, very good, and it's great to have them both in INDYCAR racing.

I think the biggest difference for me and that driving style was sort of the focus on where they gather the speed from. A lot of times you'll see a difference in the torque curve of each engine, and one can be better than the other depending on what circuit you're at.

I think that's the biggest difference is how the power is applied oftentimes leads to certain speeds on certain parts of the racetrack than others. The Chevy and Honda, they're both very competitive, very well matched, and I think the Chevy this last year especially had a little bit more torque or horsepower at the top end so we saw them be so quick on the ovals.

So we'll see what it's like this year. I think it's always a give and take and they're always moving the needle forward, so we'll see who comes out on top.

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