

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Christian Rasmussen

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Continuing this morning, now with Christian Rasmussen, driver of the No. 21 Ed Carpenter Racing Chevrolet, beginning his second season in the series, had a top 10 at Mid-Ohio his rookie year after winning the INDY NXT by Firestone Championship the year before that. Back full time, new firesuit, clearly some other accoutrement as well. Are you looking forward to 2025?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I am. A lot of cool things are happening within the ECR organization, so it's super cool to have been a part of during the winter and seeing the change kind of happen.

I think we have a super exciting year ahead of us.

Q. What are some of the changes just off the top of your head?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: You know, just all the stuff that we've been able to do with the extra funding that we haven't been able to do previously. Yeah, just more opportunity for us, so it'll be interesting to see if that amounts into lifetime. Obviously we hope that's the case.

Q. A lot of newness obviously for you last year. That's in the rear view mirror. Are you more comfortable heading into year two?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: For sure. I think just having a year under your belt is a huge change. Instead of going into St. Pete with no INDYCAR experience, I have a year under my belt, and I felt like towards the end of the year, I think that things just started to click. The results were kind of reflecting that, as well.

We'll just try and start where we left off and then see where we can go.

Q. Obviously at the end of last season you had some pressure on you to keep that car in the leader's circle. How did you deal with that? Is that something you felt on a week-to-week basis?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I mean, in racing there's always pressure. I've been very used to that my whole career. Coming up through the ladder system, it's very much been either I win this year or there's a good chance I won't race the next year.

I've kind of been exposed to that pressure through my whole career, and I think I kind of just leaned on that experience from previously to kind of get through it.

For me, I try to do the same thing every weekend. I focus on that weekend. I try to do the best job I can on that particular weekend and then see where we end up, kind of a deal. It's not really a big difference weekend to weekend.

Q. Now that Abel has gotten a ride with Dale Coyne Racing, the number of drivers coming from INDY NXT keeps growing in INDYCAR, which is what that series was created to do. To see you being an INDY NXT champion, how do you feel about how that has taken hold and become a viable path into INDYCAR?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I think it's awesome to see, and like you say yourself, that's what that series was created to do. It's good to be a product of the ladder system to show that it works because I would not be in INDYCAR today or last year without that. It's that simple.

It's good to see. It's a great training ground for young people like myself to get ready to INDYCAR. It's the only open wheel junior category where you do ovals. I think ovals is a huge -- I know ovals is a huge part of being fast in INDYCAR. You need to be able to do that. Yeah, it's a good training ground.

Q. Obviously this is going to be your first full season in the series. Looking back at the end of last year, how useful was it to get those additional oval races for bringing that momentum into this year, and what did you learn from that?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Yeah, I think it was super good. It was a good opportunity for me to practice and get a feel for what the ovals outside of the 500 feels like because the 500 is kind of a different beast compared to all



the other speedways.

Yeah, it was good. It was good to kind of figure out what I need to do better, what I did well, and then kind of take that experience into 2025 so that we can be even better.

Q. Looking at the overall season last year, how would you reflect on your rookie season versus what you expected in the series?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Yeah, I mean, always expecting more. I think the season was a little bit up and down. We had pretty good pace on multiple locations but never really had many results to show for it.

This year it's focusing on transferring that speed into results, as well, is the main goal.

Q. Obviously looking ahead to the season, the team have gone through a lot of changes, whether that be on your team or the investments. What feels different in the team compared to last season considering all of these changes that have happened?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I think there's a lot of hope within the team. I think a lot of the team members are really believing in what we're doing, that it'll make a difference. There's good spirit within the team.

Again, it's cool to be a part of. Excited to get started, get back in the race car and see where we can go because I think I also personally think that ECR is on the rise for sure.

Q. I want to look forward to 2025 a bit more than looking back on 2024. First of all, when Ed Carpenter Racing announced their lineup for this year and that you were going full time, they specified yourself and Alexander had signed multiyear deals. Does that knowledge that you have yourself, locked into a team for at least the near future, change how you approach the season at all?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: No, it doesn't. I also said previously, I go into every race weekend trying to do the best possible job that I can. It's nice to know in the back of your mind that there's some sort of security going forward, but it's racing. Everything can happen. You're never 100 percent secure. You always have to perform to stay. That's kind of the mindset that I'm going in with. Again, doing the best job on each weekend that I can and see where we end up.

Q. We've talked a lot about how much time you put in on the ovals and those last three races of last season. I think you only ended up missing Iowa and Gateway --

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Correct.

Q. Do you feel that that was sufficient practice to prepare yourself for this full time season? You clearly had things locked down at Indianapolis last year. Is there anything you still feel you really need to get on top of on the ovals side?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I've always felt fairly comfortable around the oval, whether if that was USF2000, Indy Pro or INDY NXT, and surprisingly, as well, in INDYCAR. I felt pretty comfortable right away.

No, you're always building as a race car driver. You're always trying to get better. I think overall I was in a decent spot. I was comfortable and we were decently quick, as well, so I think we're just going to focus on getting the car out, getting the cars as fast as we can, and that's pretty much it. Go for some cool passes.

Q. When 2025 comes to an end, what does a successful year for Christian Rasmussen look like?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I obviously want to do better than I did last year, and I think the expectations from the team is definitely higher with how much has been invested. It's hard to kind of set a number of it, but eventually obviously the goal is to compete for wins, podiums, and frequent top 10s. I think if we can get a little bit of that, I think it'll be a successful year.

Q. Obviously Splenda is a normal brand in a lot of kinds of racing, but it will be very interesting, the reflectors of this brand inside the car. How do you think about this new kind of sponsors on INDYCAR events?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: I think it's super cool that we get more consumer brands into INDYCAR. I think it's super important for the sport, as well, that people that are looking at the cars are seeing brands that they know. I think if you look on a lot of the cars, you'll see brands that not really many people know about.

It's cool to be representing a brand like Splenda that are that recognizable, and I think it's good for the sport, as well.

Q. You will have an internal fight with Alex, with a lot of experience racing, but you will try to be in the Fast Six, Fast 12 every race I suppose.

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Yes. We are definitely trying to get more into the Fast 12 and Fast Six. I'm not sure if I understood that question. But I think the teammate you



mentioned, Rossi, obviously he has a lot of experience, so he'll be a good benchmark for me to lean on and learn from.

Yeah, excited to work with him.

Q. The first thing you need to do as a driver is win over your teammate.

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Yeah, that's the first guy you want to beat for sure.

Q. Just touching up on Rossi being your teammate, you have a veteran and Indy 500 winner alongside you. How has he been valuable in your transition from the junior category until now, and do you think you'll have this continuous season learning from him, as well?

CHRISTIAN RASMUSSEN: Yeah, I mean, I hope so. He's going into his, what, ninth season of INDYCAR, and I'm only going into my second. To say that I have nothing to learn from him would definitely be a lie.

But yeah, I'm excited to work more with Alex. We've only really worked together on the sim days so far. It'll be good to get out on the track and really work together, drive alongside each other and kind of see how we will work together.

But he's been very valuable in the sim so far. He's had some good feedback. He's a good guy to lean on. Obviously he's super fast. He's won the 500. He has a lot of experience that he brings to the team.

It'll be a good pair, I think.

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