

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

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### Conor Daly

#### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Conor Daly joins us, driver of the No. 78 Juncos Hollinger Racing Chevrolet, beginning his 12th year being associated in the NTT INDYCAR Series, back as a full-time driver, 115 career starts to his credit with many more to come in 2025.

What's it been like so far, content day 2025?

CONOR DALY: Well, honestly, it's nice to be back. I think a lot of drivers are like, oh, this is tough. But you don't realize how much you miss it until you don't have an opportunity to do it.

I think it's important to appreciate it, and it's cool to be here. It is a long day, but it's cool to be here and just chat with everyone.

**Q. Just getting to know the team again; any changes that you've noticed on the outset?**

CONOR DALY: Yeah, obviously there's a couple little personnel movements, and we have different suit colors, so that's new. But yeah, it's just been a lot of working on putting the best possible organization together as a group. We want to be successful together. We want to focus on actually preparing now instead of just jumping in and going.

With preparation comes much more success we hope and believe, so yeah, it should be fun.

**Q. Of the handful of times that you've had a full-time situation in your career with one specific team and not those years bouncing back and forth between Carlin and ECR, how does it compare to those years being with this one group for a full year?**

CONOR DALY: Yeah, honestly it definitely feels a little different only because of kind of -- we got a taste of it last year. It's almost like I got a little pregame ceremony or something like that. It all happened so fast, though, and it was so much fun.

Now it's like, oh, we can -- I can make a new seat, my first

new seat since 2020, which is ridiculous. My seat has been painful to be in for the last however many years. But guess what, it costs money to make a seat, and none of these teams that I'm going to jump in for one race are going to spend money to get me a seat.

I can do something like that, which is very helpful. I can have my own steering wheel grips. That's very nice. All those small things are -- again, all of the people that are winning and contending, you have to have all those things because this is the most competitive championship right now, and it's like, everything has to be perfect. Everything has to be right.

It's just doing all those things feels right. And just getting a little desk in the office. I'm going to get my own desk in the engineering office. I want to have a computer so I can finally be fully integrated in the team systems. All of those things are what you are supposed to do as a racing driver at the highest level.

That's going to be nice to be a part of. I get to work with my engineer that I've worked with for however many races we did last year, and I think he's a really good young guy, and that team over there is a good group of people.

It's just all the things that you want to have as you move forward, and yeah, we just kind of see how it plays out really.

**Q. How would you describe the mentality difference of going through your day-to-day life say last year or at other times in your career where you were -- maybe you only knew you were doing the 500 that year but you were wanting to be around for other opportunities? The year that you ran for MSR and RLL, things like that, versus this year it seems like you, I imagine, probably have a lot of pressure on yourself because you have this great opportunity, you want to perform really well, but I imagine there's a different mindset or mentality that you're living with. Can you put that into context?**

CONOR DALY: Honestly, I don't think I really need to change my mindset because I think we've seen recently in this INDYCAR world that, yeah, probably good to just live it



one weekend at a time. You never really know what's going to happen, and we've seen people just kicked out. I've been kicked out.

It's just something that you have to be ready to give everything you've got, every single weekend, because everyone's attention span is very short, and you're only as good as your last lap that you've done.

No one is willing to wait around it seems anymore. There's I think drivers on the out side looking in right now that shouldn't be because there's -- it's like, well, some of the things didn't go great, you're gone. It's something that you just have to be aggressive with yourself. You have to be aggressive with the way you attack every weekend.

Honestly, I'm super lucky to just be here anyway. Just going to try to enjoy that.

Still crazy we only get like one test day before St. Petersburg. That's kind of a bit wild. But that's going to be the most important day of the last eight months. So use that test day at Sebring the best we can to make sure when we roll out at St. Pete we're ready to go.

**Q. Would you say that feeling that I have to take this one race at a time and do my very best because I never know when my last race is going to be, is that something you've always had in your career? Was that maybe really solidified to you when you had the shock of losing your seat mid-season a couple years ago?**

CONOR DALY: Honestly, I think I guess just don't mind it being like that because it does -- I put a lot of pressure on myself, which I'm working on relieving that a little bit and just kind of doing what I know how to do, which is be a race car driver and be competitive.

But yeah, this sport will put you through every mental and physical battle you will ever know. I feel like I've experienced most of those.

But yeah, I'm super thankful to be here with Ricardo and Brad, who they want to be a successful race team. They're trying everything they can to be competitive, to use the resources that they've got. We've got to find the resources, as well, to compete. We want to be able to make sure we find as much as we can because other people are doing that, as well.

That's what happens when you're competing at the top.

**Q. When you look back at Milwaukee and your podium finish there, how much of a moment was that that's**

**really helped you get this spot that you're in this season?**

CONOR DALY: I think it's the only reason why I'm here, honestly. That's it. It's a results-based industry. It's an industry that -- we showed a lot of other speed in other places, but even the 10th place in Nashville that I thought was one of our best races in a long time, we qualified sixth, finished 10th, that's not really what matters.

You've got to get trophies. You've got to be up front. You've got to be doing stuff that makes people take a second look, take a third look even.

Even still, there was times where -- thankfully that I'm there, our engineering group, they're like, Portland we were pretty fast too but no one will know because we got wrecked and we missed a session.

But in the race I think they were actually more impressed than they thought, because everyone thinks I'm just an oval guy. So it was just nice to at least show them that, too, because we're going at this for the whole thing. We want to go at this every weekend and try to get podiums every weekend.

Yeah, it's nice to be in the position we're in, I think.

**Q. Also you're one of the most recent INDYCAR drivers that have stepped outside their comfort zone and tried the Daytona 500. Helio is doing it this year. He's picked a year where there's a lot more entries than normal. How difficult is it going to be for him to get into that field just because there's only a couple of spots that you can get into the race with?**

CONOR DALY: Well, I mean, they made a rule for him that he's going to make it no matter what. That was nice. I definitely wouldn't have got that.

But honestly, I'm super pumped to see how Helio likes it. I actually talked to him a little bit about it before because I started hearing rumblings about it. I know Justin Marks. That guy is awesome. I've talked to him multiple times about how much excitement he's got for the Indy 500 and stuff like that.

I think it's going to be cool and I'm going to be cheering for him. That's our guy. Helio is our guy.

It's tough, though. I'm glad they have a practice session now, which before was something that I did not have. We were in very different scenarios when it comes to the situation, but I think it's cool.

Just great to have motorsports crossover. I don't know why we don't have more. I think it's huge for just the general racing community.

**Q. Also because you're involved business-wise with Dirty Mo Media, you get a little more interest in a broader aspect of motorsports because of who owns that company and how well they place their podcasts. How much has that really helped benefit you?**

CONOR DALY: Well, the fact that Dale Jr. is on your side is cool. He's a great guy. He's been very supportive of us, and they love INDYCAR. There's a reason why we're there as an INDYCAR podcast. They see how exciting INDYCAR is. They see that it's probably an under-utilized asset right now and they want to help the growth process.

So we're going to keep trying to put stuff out there, keep getting our racing out to more and more people, and Dale is a great boss, and he loves racing of all kinds, just like I think a lot of us. We can watch all kinds of forms of racing on Saturdays and Sundays. Dale is one of those guys that loves all that stuff.

**Q. (Indiscernible).**

CONOR DALY: All of them but two, so I don't know how many. No Ganassi and no Penske.

**Q. As a driver, you've had to really put on the business hat. You've been really determined to stay in INDYCAR racing. You went to Vegas and then landed the Bitcoin sponsor and then Polkadot. It seems like you've done that pretty much on your own. You must have a sense of the whole picture now of what it takes to fund a team for a ride. I've heard that the costs are now maybe eight to ten million for a car ride instead of five to six million, and that can't all be the hybrid cost. Do you know what's contributed to raising that up so high in the last couple years?**

CONOR DALY: The more money you spend, the faster you go. It's as simple as that. That's honestly the equation of it. If you can spend extra day at the wind tunnel, an extra day on the shaker rig, get more damper development work, that's what it is. This is extremely competitive, and if you're not doing everything, someone else is.

That's the difficult part. And yeah, when I was a rookie in INDYCAR with ECR, we were happy to have like a \$1 million sponsor. Like sweet. I wasn't making any money, but we had a shot at it.

But now if you want to compete, you've got to do a lot of work and it is -- it's actually my least favorite part of the

business is the business side. I focus -- I spend 98.9 percent of my time probably on the business side for most of what's going on, and the peacefulness of that 1.2 percent that I can actually just be like, oh, cool, driving, that's great.

But thankfully once it's all locked in and once we're in the position we're in now I can shift more of that focus to being a driver and my manager and the team at JHR to kind of take care of all the rest of the stuff.

But it is just stressful. I wish it wasn't the way it was, but for someone like myself, I have to create opportunities for myself. Like I obviously know that. There are drivers that have plenty more trophies than me that don't have to worry about that, which is justifiable, so I just have to work on getting more trophies, and then it'll be easier. That's up to me, and that's the team and us as a group. So hopefully it becomes easier.

**Q. What did you think of FOX's commercial featuring the racing Greek God?**

CONOR DALY: Well, look, I think that Josef commercial I think put a smile on everyone's face. Got to make stars, right? Josef is a star, and some people hate him now, which is funny, but boy, is that a huge deal for us.

But it's also cool to see. If you make something cool, it will go very far because everyone thinks it's cool. So sometimes when we see things and we've seen ads or this, that and whatever, it's like, well, that was cool if you really love INDYCAR, but it wouldn't appeal to maybe someone who didn't like INDYCAR.

But this was just like -- it shouted at your face, like hey, whatever is going on here is sweet. I thought it hit everything exactly how it needed to. Fastest racing on earth right at the end. It was like burned into my brain. I was like, I need to see what's going on here. I know what's going on here, but it makes you ask the question of I'd like to see that again or I'd like to know what else is going on here. It gave you a plot twist. Alex Palou, who's that guy? Why does this kid hate it?

There was something that I think appealed to just an audience, and it was 45 seconds or whatever it was. Very, very excited about what the future is looking like there for sure.

**Q. This is content day. We have no mohawk. We have no shenanigans. Is there anything happening in the back alleys of this convention center?**

CONOR DALY: Not that I've seen yet. It might be too

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

early. It's still before noon, so I don't know if anyone has had enough coffee. Will Power, I said his hair looked like he had dad hair, and he's like, oh, no, really? So he was upset about that because he had to put on a hat.

But Will also, it's weird seeing Will in a white and red suit. I'm like, is that Josef but different? It's not the black and red Verizon -- I'm like, this is kind of wild. A lot of different costumes out there everyone has got on, so it's a fun day.

And Robert Schwartzman who I have never met before, he's like, I thought half the day has already been gone by and it's 10:00 a.m. I'm like, welcome to the big show, brother. This is what it's all about.

**Q. What is dad hair?**

CONOR DALY: I don't know, it's dad hair. Nathan knows. He's a dad now. A little tired maybe, doing some work, maybe didn't pay as much attention to it as normal. It's not a bad thing.

**Q. I want to ask you about the evolution of the team, Brad and Ricardo, if you can tell us a little bit about that.**

CONOR DALY: Yeah, so Brad has been super supportive of us as a group, and then Ricardo, I mean, Ricardo is like -- that guy would die for this team. That guy loves what he's doing. He wants this group to be successful as much as possible.

Bringing in Dave O'Neill, too, Dave O'Neill is very experienced. He's a great guy. David Brown, as well, who I've met, who I believe was my dad's mechanic in Formula 1 in 1982 at Williams, which is crazy. I don't know if that's a confirmed fact, but I'm sure that makes them feel experienced.

But yeah, it's a good group, and there's a lot of young guys there, too, that I think are extremely, extremely talented mechanics and chief mechanics. The youth and the energy in that team is really, really strong.

It just feels like a great growing environment and a team that obviously -- it takes a while to find success in this sport. Like any new team that's come in, it takes you some time. We're working our way there, and I'm excited to be a part of the journey.

We've got to get them -- let's try to win the Indy 500 this year together. That would be a great start. Then go from there.

**Q. Talking about the young talent, did you meet**

**Leandro when he was a kid? Last year I spoke with him and he's arming all the strategies. What do you think about this growing even in the family?**

CONOR DALY: Yeah, Leandro Juncos was a child when I met him at first. I held him like a baby when we won the 2010 championship, and now he's on my pit stand. That makes me feel old, actually, if we're talking about elderliness.

But the kid is smart. He's grown up around racing his whole life, which is cool, and to have Ricardo be able to have his son in the team, that's got to be a proud moment as a dad, as well.

**Q. Everything is on the internet is real, then you are a very wealthy driver who came with budget. Can you explain to me what happened with your Subaru?**

CONOR DALY: Well, it's still in my garage, so it's a car that I will never sell. I love Chevrolet, though. I'm a Team Chevy guy, obviously. But yeah, it's been a long journey with my blue car in the garage, and it's got some flat spotted tires currently, but it will never be sold. It's an endless pit of money that never returns, but it's been fun. It's been fun.

**Q. You've mentioned a lot how you want to shed the oval specialist tag and that you're also a road course driver. How important is that for this season, to jump out of the gates in the first five races on road courses just as a reminder that I'm an all-around driver here?**

CONOR DALY: I mean, super important. St. Pete is a race that my rookie year we were close to winning that race. We were in the top 3 until we had a piece of Carlos Muñoz's front wing side pod and we overheated.

We've had strong runs at St. Pete. I love St. Pete. But I've had a lot of weird stuff happen to me, as well. And Barber is a place that I don't really enjoy, but Thermal was a place that I got to test at. That was cool. I don't know how good the racing is going to be there. But the Indy GP is a circuit that obviously I know very well, have had some pretty reasonable speed there before.

There's a lot of tracks at the beginning that I'm actually very excited for. I love Long Beach. So yeah, it's important to start strong. It's important to start with a lot of points on the board and just a bit of -- probably a bit of reassurance for sure for myself.

But we get a test day at Sebring, which could be super helpful, and yeah, we're trying to wait to see how much simulator time we get, as well. Simulator time is going to

be important with the Chevy folks, and just get ready. The team was quick at St. Pete last year with Romain. Obviously we didn't have the hybrid there last year, so it will be a little bit different this year, but should be fun. I'm excited for it.

**Q. In a previous life did you compete against Prema?**

CONOR DALY: Probably, yeah. I knew of them. They were the team that was the team in F3. I was doing GP3 and then F3 Euro Series was still a thing. Prema wasn't in GP3 when I was doing it, but for sure knew of them and you can pick their cars out from a mile away.

**Q. Also the lineage of drivers that are in INDYCAR that have had Prema backgrounds is impressive.**

CONOR DALY: Oh, yeah.

**Q. How well do you think they'll be first year out of the box?**

CONOR DALY: That's a great question. Honestly from what they've put into it so far, if you just do the math, they brought in a lot of good people, a lot of smart people. They did a really cool YouTube announcement which was very high level.

So there definitely seems to be no shortage of funding over there, which is the most important thing, like we talked about. Good for them, man. If you want to get in and swim with the sharks, just jump in, go for it. It's cool, and I'm excited to see how they do.

Obviously Callum, we know he's a good driver. I like Callum a lot. Yeah, I'm glad he's back, too.

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