

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Wednesday, January 15, 2025

### Louis Foster

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Continuing on, Louis Foster will drive the No. 45 Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing Honda, ready for his rookie season in the NTT INDYCAR Series and fresh off a very dominating 2024 INDY NXT by Firestone Championship when he had eight wins and six pole positions, as well. That's ancient history now; it's full speed ahead.

How much are you looking forward to your first year in the NTT INDYCAR Series?

LOUIS FOSTER: Obviously a lot. It's going to be a lot of new experiences. It's kind of a weird thing to go from reigning champion to complete rookie, so it's a very stark difference.

But I think the same approach in every championship I've taken is the same one I'm going to take for INDYCAR. Obviously it's going to be a much bigger step than I've ever had before in terms of competition.

But we've worked really hard, the team, myself, learning each other, getting to know each other, me trying to get the ball rolling immediately with the new things for myself that isn't in INDY NXT, like fuel saving, pit stops, hybrid, all that stuff.

Also just race distances, as well, how long it is compared to INDY NXT. There's a lot of new things, but I feel like we've kind of hit the marks we wanted to hit at this point already and there's still one more test to go.

**Q. You guys have been very smart, very deliberate at Thermal working on pit stops. It wasn't necessarily going out and getting speed, trying to rip off laps, whatever, but it was a very -- looking at the big picture of you and I thought that was a very smart plan for you guys.**

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah.

**Q. More of that, the same I guess, before we get to St. Pete?**

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah, definitely. I think there's still things I want to work on, but when you get asked to a drive car as fast as you can, you kind of hit a point where you've -- once you figure out the car, now you're just doing more laps if that makes sense.

There's a certain amount of time that you need to spend really focusing on dialing in the car, et cetera, et cetera. But for sure at Sebring, especially a track we don't race at, it's going to be about those other parts rather than pure performance at a track that like I said we don't race at.

**Q. Heading into the Sebring test, what are the boxes you want to check off being your first rookie season in INDYCAR and what do you have plans for as far as that? And also, what track are you most looking forward to heading into the season?**

LOUIS FOSTER: Firstly, I think we've ticked off most of them; completed most of them, no. Mainly fuel saving. That's kind of the biggest one right now. Definitely starting to work on some pit stops, as well, do a few more live pit stops.

Just the things that would catch me out in the race. Being a rookie obviously it's a year that I can probably afford to make a few more mistakes than I obviously would. But the goal is to be able to go into the season and people think this guy is a rookie, really? We want to limit those mistakes and make sure that we've kind of got everything nailed down.

Then as for my -- I mean, it's the 500. There's no other real answer to that, is there? That's going to be a really, really fun one.

**Q. When you walk into the Garage Mahal up there in Zionsville and see that facility, it's pretty much a Formula 1 type facility. You've got all the resources there to really put out a tremendous effort.**

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah, exactly. The first time I walked in, like I said, I was actually quite surprised with the facility itself. Like you said, it is Formula 1-esque. It's very well done. It's all very organized. The people there work really

**ASAP** sports . . . when all is said, we're done.®

hard and everyone is really motivated.

I think the team struggled a little bit more than they wanted to the last few years, and we've made some switches around in the team over the winter and I think that we've all got the right mindset to approach the season and really surprise some people with some results.

**Q. Also, you're the latest INDY NXT champion that's made it up to INDYCAR. It has become a true entry point into INDYCAR. Earlier we had Marcus Armstrong in here talking about all the GP3 drivers that want to come to INDYCAR, GP2 drivers and all that. There's a lot of great young talent out there and only so many seats. Where do you see all this going?**

LOUIS FOSTER: There's obviously, like Marcus said, a lot of good guys out in F3 and F2. There's a bottleneck in racing nowadays. I think that's quite obvious. I think there's a few reasons for that. I think one of the main ones is people aren't retiring. You've got people like Alonso in F1 and Hamilton, and then in INDYCAR you've got Scott and Will Power, which they're still performing insanely well for how long they've been in the sport, which again, is just one of those things I think people with advancements in how people train, you see it in all sports.

Look at Cristiano Ronaldo in soccer. It makes it very competitive to get into INDYCAR, which is a good thing, and it does make it very tricky for young drivers. I'm glad I've got my opportunities. It's very hard to get your foot in the door. Once your foot is in the door, as long as you can perform, I think you can have a long lasting career.

**Q. Also you had the advantage that in INDY NXT you have run ovals and a lot of the drivers GP2 and GP3 don't. Just to continue the lineage of INDY NXT champions that have made it to INDYCAR, how proud are you of that?**

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah, definitely. Like I said, I moved to America three years ago with the sole purpose of making it to INDYCAR. I borderline -- no, I did. I left my life behind in England and put all my eggs in one basket into pursuing INDYCAR, and there is no greater series to prepare you for INDYCAR than INDY NXT, so I definitely feel well prepared and to join the line of champions to make that progression up definitely feels special.

**Q. Clearly you can't shake Jacob Abel.**

LOUIS FOSTER: He just follows me, man.

**Q. Is there a rivalry? Do you consider it a rivalry between you and Jacob?**

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah, we had our disagreements in 2023 for sure, but last year we kind of got along pretty well. We didn't really have too many issues with each other. Although he was many main rival all year, honestly I didn't see him on track that much usually.

First one was Portland. That was the only time I actually really battled him, to be honest with you. So yeah, it was a fun year for myself and it's great to see Jacob in the series. I hope he does well. I hope he gets on well with his new team. He's a good guy. I'm focused on myself, so...

**Q. I think we figured out that Scott Dixon is starting his 25th season in INDYCAR. In your case in the NXT Series last year you were pretty dominant, but going from '24 to 2025, I've never seen so many driver changes. Usually there are two or three and that's it. Did you have any conversations or potential with other teams to move up to INDYCAR other than the Rahal team?**

LOUIS FOSTER: We had a few other options, yes. It's very difficult in the current market because there's not many opportunities. The fact that we had options made me feel quite grateful.

I know that just because you win INDY NXT doesn't necessarily guarantee you a lot in INDYCAR. Look at Linus a few years ago. We knew it would be a bit of an uphill battle and that's why I tried as best as possible to do well in INDY NXT.

But yeah, it has been a very busy off-season for teams and drivers and trying to get a seat, but I'm glad we got something sorted early so we could prepare very well. Had we got a signing in February, it's like, okay, now you've got no preparation and we're going in blind; whereas I feel pretty comfortable going into St. Pete now.

**Q. Since you came to America three years ago you found success pretty quickly. You started winning and then obviously last year you had a really good season. I'm not going to say you're not going to quickly find success in INDYCAR, but it's going to be a step tougher. Are you mentally preparing yourself to not necessarily be in the winner's circle every weekend?**

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah, it's weird. I've had this discussion a lot recently in the sense that I think it's the same for most drivers that get to INDYCAR. You spend your entire junior career winning everything or being up at the front all the time because to get to INDYCAR you've got to be a good driver, and if you're a driver you tend to win.

Then when you get to INDYCAR, depending on the weekend, the team, how it's going, it's just so competitive that a good day could be 10th, which I would -- a 10th last year I would have put my head in the sand and cried.

It's definitely a weird way to look at things for sure. I want to be able to be on the podium next year. If we could win a race, that would be great. But realistically I know that we're not going to come out aiming for a pole at St. Pete. We'll try our best, but the chances are we probably won't be.

But I think it's just about building and trying to see where it all fits in because the truth is right now I have no idea where we're going to be. I don't. It's so fresh and so new.

But yeah, it's definitely a weird kind of experience to not be in the winner's circle or be fighting for wins every weekend.

**Q. How do you feel about kind of shift of mentality going from a champion to a rookie is going? Has that been something you've found challenging over the last few months, or do you feel you've already become settled?**

LOUIS FOSTER: Not particularly challenging. I think it's important no matter how well you do -- you talk to any driver that's won multiple INDYCAR championships, they don't win one and then get a massive ego. It's the same process year after year.

If something works, stick with it. I think it's the same process I took last year. Again, you don't know everything. I think you'd be an idiot to assume you do no matter who you are.

I'm sure there's always stuff to learn. I am sure if you ask Scott he would probably say something similar, that every year in INDYCAR he learned something new; although he's done it for 25 years now.

I think it wasn't too difficult to make that transition because I'm surrounded by so many new things that realistically I don't know what I'm doing, or I didn't at the time, and now I'm starting to get an understanding of what I need to do, the goals, the expectations put upon myself, the goals I need to set.

I think it's going to be something that -- there's still so many unknowns I'm not going to be able to answer for anyone or myself until we start hitting races and seeing where we're at and what we need to focus on because, like I said, it's still so fresh.

**Q. Obviously this is your first INDYCAR content day. FOX have come in with some major production things.**

**What were your impressions? What sort of things were they making you do in terms of content you're filming with them?**

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah, obviously it's my first INDYCAR content day so I don't have a lot to base it off of. But yeah, so far it's been very full-on day but they've done some pretty cool things. I'm sure they're going to turn out awesome and they've put a lot of effort into it, and I only see it as a positive thing for the series.

I think it's going to promote the growth of INDYCAR and I think it's what INDYCAR needs to push the boundaries and really compete with other motorsports out there.

**Q. Louis, you and Jacob Abel both spent time in New Zealand in the CT Formula Toyota Racing Series. Spending those weeks down there in New Zealand and then going back and competing in the INDY NXT series and then it's led to where you are now, do you feel that that helped you be race fit when you returned to the States?**

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah, I think there's a lot of positives for doing winter championships such as the one down in New Zealand. We spent three weekends down there, myself, just finishing up the season, and yeah, you definitely hit the ground running for sure.

You get your winter where you've been hibernating a little bit. It helps you kind of kick start it all. I think for myself when I did it back in 2023 it was helpful for going up to St. Pete in the first qualifying session for most drivers is your, like, fifth.

You just kind of get the start-of-the-season blues out of the way and it just helps kick start your main championship. I think winter championships are definitely important to have a full attack on the main goal for that year.

**Q. Looking at the INDY NXT season this year, even though you're not part of it, it's obviously expanding, there's more cars, and Ganassi have cars there now. Do you see the strength of INDY NXT becoming even stronger which will result in more competitive drivers such as yourself heading to the main game?**

LOUIS FOSTER: I hope so. This year in INDY NXT I think will be a very tough championship. There's a lot of good drivers.

But yeah, it's only going strength to strength, I think. It's more drivers from a lot more countries and a lot of different disciplines. I think it's going to be a great year for INDY NXT. I think it's going to be a tough one to call.



But yeah, the better the drivers that are in the feeder series to INDYCAR, then you would assume as long as people are promoted because of success, it will become more competitive in INDYCAR, and that's what I hope, and I think that's what everyone hopes.

**Q. What can you carry over from your INDY NXT experience to your first year in INDYCAR?**

LOUIS FOSTER: I think there's a decent amount but there's a lot of new things, like I've said. I think confidence is probably the biggest one; coming into the main series as the feeder series champion is definitely a big confidence boost.

But mainly just the hard work that we put in to win the championship in INDY NXT in the first place, continuing on that process and the way I go about things is now proven championship winning way to do things that I think I've been taking the same approach, and it works.

I think that's the biggest thing, when you find what works, to stick with it, and that's what I'm going to continue to do.

**Q. How do you think you're going to get used to the new hybrid system?**

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah, I've had an opportunity to use it for both my tests now at Laguna and at Thermal post-season. It hasn't been too difficult to learn, to be honest with you. It's been a bit more hands on. I think the straights become not as easy as they used to be. I think usually you just sit there and put your foot down, but now something's going on, so it does make it a little bit more active in the car with changing settings and stuff.

But it's not too bad. It's definitely a great addition to INDYCAR, and it gives us drivers another thing to use.

**Q. How do you handle the mental and physical demands of a full race season, especially as the competition intensifies?**

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah, I think this year obviously the season is a lot more condensed, which makes it more difficult for drivers with traveling and keeping in shape between races.

But yeah, physically it's obviously spending a lot of time in the gym, looking after your body and making sure you're race fit and ready, so a lot of cardio, a lot of weight lifting just to be as fit as possible when the season rolls around.

During the season, I think mentally it's focusing on yourself

and not letting outside factors mess with you, and I think that's kind of the key. I've never really struggled too much mentally in the car. I've always had my way of looking at things and doing things, and I've kind of stuck to that.

But yeah, it can definitely take a toll. I imagine this year is going to be my busiest year ever racing, so I imagine it's going to be mentally fatiguing for sure.

**Q. With this being your first season in INDYCAR, you're with two veteran teammates in Graham Rahal and Devlin DeFrancesco. What does it mean to be able to lean on them for this upcoming season?**

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah, obviously a lot. I think coming in as a rookie it's super important to have a good database and team around you, and with especially Graham who's been in the series for so many years, he has just such a wide amount of knowledge and information that I can feed off of.

Already I've been talking to him about pit stops and Push-to-Pass stuff and tires and lots and lots of different things that without that, I would be going in blind.

But he's helped me out with a few of those things that I'm sure there will be much more in the coming weeks and months that I'll pick his brains for.

So yeah, it's super helpful to have that, and I think without that, I'd be a lot less prepared.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

