

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

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### Robert Schwartzman

#### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Robert Schwartzman joins us, driving the No. 83 PREMA Racing Chevrolet, rookie who moves to the NTT INDYCAR Series back in 2019 as the F2 champion, F3 race winner, along with Callum helped unveil the team's cars, big launch on Friday down in suburban Charlotte, North Carolina.

Welcome to your first NTT INDYCAR Series content day. What's the review? How would you describe this today?

ROBERT SHWARTZMAN: Well, it's really well managed, honestly.

#### Q. We'll take that.

ROBERT SHWARTZMAN: I've never seen -- obviously I've never done so much media in one day and I was like -- I seen the list and I was like, how do we do that, so much. How do we squeeze it all in.

But really well organized, guys. Really quick, really spot on. Just go there, boom, boom, boom, off you go, done. Really well managed.

#### Q. What are the expectations for 2025? Nervous going into this?

ROBERT SHWARTZMAN: Not actually. I've done 20 years of my career. You get nervous when you have something to lose, that thing when you can lose your name, your status or something or a race you are leading. I feel fully excited. Everything is new.

I've done like 20 years in Europe racing from karting to junior formulas to the higher level formulas, being reserve F1 and stuff, and here it's like fresh air. Like at some point after 20 years you know all the tracks already, you know all the people.

Here it's new. It's cool. Last year in 2024 I've done hyper cars or WEC and we actually were in Austin, so I was like, well, that's another good thing. I have a good vibe in the U.S. here because we took the win.

Yeah, really looking forward to racing here. We are rookies. We have nothing to lose. We have only to gain. So that's the mentality.

#### Q. Just to continue the conversation, just to know you're into music and have a song, how did that come about and how important is music to your life and what would you like to do with it and promote that through the series, too?

ROBERT SHWARTZMAN: Yeah, so basically the music thing came a long time ago from my dad. My dad was educating me quite a lot in music, mainly classic. Like nowadays it's rare you can see any teenager or a youngster listening to classic music, where at some stage I also was like, dad, what is this, it's boring.

But at some point I got my ear into that. I realized how the melody is structured, how everything is structured, that that's where it all comes from. Then I started listening to some different artists like from when I was a kid, I liked rock, heavy metal, some pop songs and stuff, but like a mix.

I just like the top level, so in any genre there is a top artist that is just, like, the best. So I listen and try to learn and understand what is their unique thing, like if you remember Michael.

Like he's incredible because his voice, his moves, the way he was putting the music with the rhythm with the moves. It was just like something out of this world. So that's why nobody in the pop industry even came close to what Michael did.

I just got into it and it just caught my ear and I started to expand my knowledge in that, and at some point when my dad already passed away I was like, I was feeling really bad and I was listening to a lot of music and it helped me, just my mood, my motivation. It sort of felt like a friend, like I'm listening and somebody is talking to me in a sense.

So I was like, wow, this is really cool. I had a friend and he was doing hip-hop, like he was writing lyrics and stuff and I was like, can I join in? Can you just teach me? Can we



just do something together? And he's like, yeah, come in.

We started doing the beats and he started explaining to me how it works, the hip-hop industry and stuff, and I was like, this is cool. Then we decided to write a song. We wrote a song. I released it. I don't know, it's up to people whether they like it or not. I personally quite like it. I can't say it's the greatest, but I think as a baseline it was kind of good and I was happy about it.

But at that stage I had to stop it a bit because I didn't really have any promotional company that would promote it well because where I was located it was not -- like it was not English, the language that would be interesting.

Actually now that I come here to U.S. maybe at some point I would really love to speak with some people who would be interested into collabing and working, because I really love music, love the whole process of it.

Yeah, I just need a team, let's say. Basically it's like if you want to become a racing driver you cannot be just driver; you need a team to drive. So that's the same with music.

Therefore at the moment it's on break, but I really hope that here in U.S., because obviously in English with its quite famous hip-hop industry here, to get in along and try to do something and get back on that.

**Q. Can we hear that anywhere?**

ROBERT SHWARTZMAN: Yeah, you can go to Spotify. It's called Active, my song. My name is Shwartzzy, so I shortened up my name. You can check it out. Have a listen.

I have others, but as I said, because that song that I released, it was mainly my following that was -- that heard it. I need someone else from the music industry to expand it because racing people can hear it and it's really cool, my fans and stuff. I like it a lot. But if you want to grow, you need to expand the boundaries.

**Q. What does it mean to be chosen to be one of two drivers to lead PREMA into their U.S. adventure?**

ROBERT SHWARTZMAN: Well, I'm really, really happy and thankful for the team for their trust because when we had the discussion, they had a lot of other drivers, other opportunities, and obviously there are some drivers who have more experience in America than I do.

So for sure in one sense it's sort of a risk for the team to go for it, but the team knows me. We worked four years together. We've won together. We've won a lot of races

and we know each other really well. So we both have full trust that we can win here together.

At that stage it was pretty clear that none of us had any doubts about each other. We understand that we need some time, obviously, because everything is new and we need to set up the whole team, people. It takes time, and we kind of have an expectation to go in the first race and dominate.

But that's the target, and I believe we can achieve it. Inside we will achieve it. I feel like we will achieve it.

But yeah, so from my side, again, it's really cool that me and Callum are there because we're both ex-PREMA driver; now we're back with PREMA. Again, I think that decision has been made because the team knew who we are. They knew what we are capable of, and I think they were searching for that as we were searching for a team who is motivated to win and are determined and will do everything for it.

That's where we found each other, and our journey begins here.

**Q. A little bit off of Steve's question, you talked a little bit about the importance and the coolness of PREMA choosing you. Why did you want to come to INDYCAR? I know you have a lot of drivers that you competed against that have come here in recent years, but what was the pull of wanting to come here and compete in INDYCAR, a category that's new for you but I imagine one that's also fairly familiar?**

ROBERT SHWARTZMAN: Well, I think when you grow up and you race in the single seater -- I've tried the WEC, and I've realized that it's not for me, at least at this stage in my life, because you have to share the car. You don't really drive much. I want to drive. I want that feel.

I really missed a lot because after Formula 2 when you reach the result, when you win and stuff like that, you kind of go back. That's it; door is closed.

So there is either Formula 1 or INDYCAR or Formula E, as well. But those are the only three options for single seaters. I really liked and loved the racing in U.S. and the competition, and because the cars are quite similar alike to each other, so it's much more for me up to the driver in this series to make the difference, let's say.

So therefore already a couple years ago when I did the test with Ganassi we were already putting an eye on that series. I really wanted to join in, but at that stage there were no space, no places, and at that stage I was working



with Ferrari and Formula 1, so I had a contract there, so therefore there was not such an opportunity.

It happens -- like the timing happened that PREMA announced they were joining INDYCAR. Again, it's a team that I know really well, and my contract was expiring at the end of last year, so I was like, okay, this is probably a right moment to push for INDY.

So it happened, everything in that sense. I think it's like meant to be. And there we are. For me, I'm very happy where I am. I'm happy with the team I'm driving with. As I said, it's just happened so that I've already been looking for the series for quite a few years.

**Q. You're making this jump to the series, having finished runner-up in the Formula 2 championship; you won the F3 championship in 2019, so you've done a lot of winning in your career. I know you maybe haven't been able to do as much driving the last couple years as you would have liked, but can you describe a little bit what the mindset is going from someone who's used to winning, who's used to having a lot of success to a role with a team in a series that I imagine is going to struggle a little bit, going to have some ups and some downs just as you and PREMA are learning the sport and competing against folks that have been here for a long time?**

ROBERT SHWARTZMAN: Well, yeah, it's a good question actually. Whenever I was winning with PREMA and generally I had this winning, winning consequence of races and championships and stuff and I was always up there. It's obviously a rhythm that you get.

But it honestly gives you so much pressure because everybody is looking at you as a winner and they all expect you to win. So unless you don't win, it gets on your shoulders. Honestly, it's quite difficult. I had that for like three years, that pressure on me, and it's tough.

Here, as I said, we come here and I have zero pressure. I just want to enjoy. I want to have fun. I'm sure that we're going to have it and we're going to come up to that level.

We're going to come up to winning, and that's what we are here for and that's what PREMA showed in Europe, I showed in Europe. So we have everything. We just obviously need some time.

At the beginning, who knows. We don't know how much we're going to struggle. Is it going to be very difficult, medium, light? I have no idea. We'll see. But in any circumstance, I will do my best to always deliver. And again, I don't feel any pressure because everything is new

to me here.

I just want to, again -- I have only to learn and to gain. Therefore that was also part of the decision that I've done to come here, is to finally feel back that excitement of racing and learning and working with your team and come basically from zero to here.

How do you say? That's my goal. I want to, with the team together, bring it up from scratch, up to the P1. That's the target. I think that's the best part and that's the process where I will enjoy it the most.

To go to a team who is already dominating, it's good. It's nice, because it's a high chance you're going to win with them and bring results. But your own part, you would not feel like it. You already went to a buildup project.

But to build your own one and bring it up to the winning side, that's another story. That's what I want to do, and that's what I'm here for.

**Q. In Formula 2, that was about three years ago now. You've done some racing in the sports car endurance racing, things like that. Have you done any actual races in an open-wheel car?**

ROBERT SHWARTZMAN: Nope.

**Q. You've done test sessions and practice --**

ROBERT SHWARTZMAN: Yeah, so after Formula 2 season, I've done only testing in Formula 1, practices, testing, so quite a lot of mileage on Formula 1 with different teams, and Formula E. That's the 2 series. And one day testing with Ganassi two years ago. That's basically the only testing.

Racing-wise since Formula 2, I haven't raced in a single seater.

**Q. So you'll have quite a bit of side-by-side action here in open-wheel car again. Is that a different mindset versus the sports cars of how to race somebody side by side?**

ROBERT SHWARTZMAN: Well, in sports cars it's not that you have much opportunities to bump each other. There's some contact, it's more durable as a car, but you can easily ruin your race by contacting things.

We had some moments last year where if you, like, have a contact and they break your rear diffuser, you're going to lose so much track. I did one hour like that and we lost a lot, a lot of time in it.

It's not as simple -- it's not as different. Also for me as a driver I don't like to have much contact. I always trying to be fair and give some space and play fair. I hope that other drivers here are going to be the same and respectful, and unless it's like this, there should not be any problem.

**Q. What's your relationship like with Marcus Armstrong? He said he knows you pretty well.**

ROBERT SHWARTZMAN: Well, with Marcus, we started off from New Zealand end of 2017. We had this TRS championship where we had a lot of fun and we were battling until the end in that championship. I managed to win it.

Then we went to Formula 3 Euro Series. We had a season there together.

Then the next year in Formula 3 in 2019, again, we were teammates.

So we were teammates for quite a while, plus we were in the same junior program in FDA, in Ferrari Driver Academy. So we spent quite a lot of time together, had some quite fun. So it was me, Callum and Marcus that were in that sort of group.

So yeah, that's where I know him for quite a long time, and then because I stayed in Europe, he went here to U.S. to Indy, and now we're back. So obviously we know each other. We had some good fun in the past.

**Q. And an impressive line of drivers that have competed with PREMA earlier in their career that are now in INDYCAR. To be able to continue that tradition, how cool is that for you?**

ROBERT SHWARTZMAN: Yeah, of course. I think PREMA very often chooses the best drivers as possible. That's their target. That's where they are working really hard to get the best of the best in any category.

To be a part of the team here in INDYCAR, it's a big privilege. As I said, I'm very, very happy about it, and I'm just looking forward to having a good time and to just improve, improve and gain, gain, gain until we come to the moment where we're going to be winners.

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