

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Friday, May 9, 2025

**Graham Rahal**

**Devlin DeFrancesco**

**Louis Foster**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Also, as mentioned, joined by Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing with the first time three cars in the Firestone Fast Six with Graham Rahal leading the way, driver of the No. 15 Fifth Third Bank Honda for Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing. His first front row start of the season, second on the IMS Road Course.

Rookie Louis Foster with the season best third place starting position in the Mi-Jack Honda for Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing, and Devlin DeFrancesco matching his best career start from a couple of years ago, 2023. Ironically, right here on the IMS Road Course.

Graham, we'll let you kind of speak for the group. Then we'll open it up for questions.

GRAHAM RAHAL: It's a huge day for us. Really happy for these two guys as well as everybody on our organization. It's been a lot of hard work. I think coming into this weekend we expected to be good here, but I don't think we unloaded necessarily in a great place this morning. I don't know, we were just battling the rear of the cars. It's cool, though, so it's hard to tell conditions-wise as things change throughout the day.

We battled hard today. I thought we made a lot of improvements. There's a lot of great feedback between all three of us to try to figure out the right steps forward as we went into qualifying. You know, we were all just standing out there talking.

I wish we could understand what works here that we could take to everywhere else because it would certainly be nice to have this confidence going to any track. We're not going to complain.

Huge, huge, huge deal for us to have three cars in the top five. Massive. For Honda to do what they did and just so many cars, so competitive. I'm excited for tomorrow.

Obviously, Alex, I don't know what we have to do to beat him. I don't know if anybody does. We're going to give it our A effort. If there's one place I feel confident that we've run up front a lot, it's here. It would be nice to get over that hump and get a win for sure.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up to questions.

**Q. Graham, how do you begin to describe how Jay Frye must feel about a day like this? This is a great redemption for him to come back in here and have all three of you guys in the top 5.**

GRAHAM RAHAL: Yeah, I mean, I don't know. I'm sure he feels good, but I do think in many respects Jay has already added an element to our team that was not present for a while. Just leadership, kind of that go-getter mentality.

You all know his "MSHGSD" tag line that he goes by, but we've lived it now. It's been a lot of fun for me to work with Jay. I think these guys will say we had a team meeting the other day, kind of a pep talk from him. As long as I've been at RLL, we've never had somebody other than my dad do that, and I've been here a long time.

It was great to see, and I think these guys can speak too. The changes are going to happen. They're going to take a little bit of time, but this certainly feels good. It feels good. Ask these guys. It feels good to them. It feels good to our teams.

Our mechanics have been busting their tails, particularly with Takuma's car getting a rebuilt for the 500. If you don't believe this, it puts a huge smile on everybody's face tonight. I think it's a special day for us.

**Q. Devlin and Louis, do you have anything you want to elaborate on that?**

DEVLIN DEFRADESCO: I think Graham is completely right. A lot of work has gone into this program and from the offseason to now, particularly on the 30. I think there was a lot of frustration leaving Barber, because I think we had the potential to be up front. It just came down to



execution. It's good to see us making steady progress as a group.

As Graham said, it's going to take time. I'm very lucky and very grateful to be a part of this organization. I feel very fortunate to be able to be here as things are transitioning on a good positive direction.

**Q. Graham, does Jay bring a lot of football coach mentality into this role?**

GRAHAM RAHAL: Yeah, there's definitely a little bit of that, for sure. You know, it's good. I think, too, Jay sees from a logistical standpoint a lot of things right away that perhaps have been stated for the last few years, but haven't been seen internally from the top because, you know, Dad is not there every day. Mike is not there every day.

Having Jay there as a guy that just unleashes and does what he needs to do, it's going to create a lot of positive change as well.

You guys see and these guys will say it, we have a great group of people. We have great mechanics. We have the engineering staff that's worked their tails off tirelessly to get us to this position. The turn-around that we had in the offseason for Indy, I mean, we're excited. We're pumped up for this month, and hopefully today is a sign of what's to come in the next two weeks.

THE MODERATOR: Louis, do you want to chime in on the culture for the team right now?

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah. Obviously Graham speaks best to it having been on the team for many years. Obviously Jay has been a very fundamental part of the organization ever since he joined. Obviously I've been on the team without him and with him. Obviously he joined kind of a bit later than me.

But, yeah, he's a great addition to the team. These two said it all. This is a great start. I think we had a great 500 test as well as a group, bar the Takuma's crash.

Yeah, I didn't expect to be back up on this podium this soon, to be honest with you. Obviously I'm used to this room, but in Lights. It's nice to be back.

**Q. Graham, you said something about last week you didn't practice on the reds, and you felt like that was a mistake. I'm curious how involved do you get in strategies? Was it common for you to say, Hey, we need to do this this time, or is that fair?**

GRAHAM RAHAL: Well, I mean, Bob, we did practice because we had to, but we had a mechanical issue in practice at Barber, and I did the red tire run, but the rear of the car was not right.

So I really didn't feel like I got a great feel for them going into qualifying at all, and then when we went into qualifying, I think we were kind of arrogant to believe that in Practice 1 we were quite competitive. So we kind of thought, well, we're going to get through.

Then we ended up just missing it, and instead of doing red-red to advance, we ended up starting 20th. That's the game that we play today. Look at the lap times in Q1. I mean, everybody does the same lap time. It's nothing.

So coming into this weekend we all talked yesterday about, look, if we leave Practice 1 and we're feeling good, okay, we won't run reds, and we'll just do red-red in qualifying. If we feel dominant, then we won't do red-red in qualifying. We'll do black-red. If we don't leave Practice 1 feeling great, then we need to leave Practice 2 feeling great. That's what we did.

I think it was just nice strategically for something to actually play out right. I mean, that's what I think is maybe most rewarding for all of us sitting up here. We thought long and hard this week about we've got to maximize qualifying. We've got to start at front because we do have pace, and we haven't been doing it this year. I think it just feels good to see all of that methodology and all the thinking kind of come together like this.

**Q. For Dev, did those guys try to force you to grow a mustache too?**

DEVLIN DEFRANCESCO: No. Maybe a bit taller. Try to grow a bit taller, but not a mustache. Can grow in some fashion.

**Q. Graham, I remember when we asked you about Jay's hiring at Long Beach, and there was some uncertainty with him coming in this spring, just how much you guys would be able to feel that effect of his leadership and knowledge coming into the 500 this year, coming out of the open test. Do you have a sense of how -- I know you were on a good track even in this offseason. Do you have a sense of how much of an impact Jay will have been able to have once we get to this May, or will we see just continued leaps and bounds through the end of the season and next year?**

GRAHAM RAHAL: I don't think he's really had an effect in that regard yet, to be honest. I will tell you, it's been impressive to see him on the sponsorship task this week,

and I have always said, our sponsorship team is solid. We've not had the results. Yet, we have a lot of logos on our chest. We had a little bit of a hole for the 500. He was a man on a mission this week. It was very impressive to watch.

That just shows his value and his connections, how he can help the marketing team and everybody else, connect those dots. Those are the areas I think we're going to see him most effective in the short-term.

In the long-term, you know, the one thing that you know about Jay, if you know Jay, is most everybody loves Jay, and so he's a great recruiting tactic for us as we go forward too.

At the end of the day this is kind of like football in the sense that a lot of where people go is if it's an attractive home, and sometimes that's about money, and sometimes it's not about money. Sometimes it's about happiness and the whole picture.

I think what Jay does is he'll bring that to us, but it takes a period of time. So I don't think you can show up and be, like, Oh, I saw this from Indy last year. I think culturally we're seeing a shift. That is going to continue to get better.

**Q. Louis, you won here in Indy Pro. You won here in INDY NXT. How much of that previous experience in the junior category has helped you in your event preparation in working with Devlin and Graham for this weekend?**

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah, obviously a lot. This is the first track I've come to in INDYCAR that I've actually won in a junior category. The previous rounds, two of them I had never raced at and the other two I had never won at

I know this track really well. It's always been quoted as a European-esque track. Europeans tend to do well here, et cetera.

Look, honestly, at the end of the day all the credit is to the Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing crew and the engineers. I think it's clear to day when we have all three of us in the Fast Six. I did my job, but they definitely did their job as well. So massive credit to them.

We'll see how the race goes. I've had pretty good qualifying results so far this year, but the races have been -- there's still more to get there for sure. Being a rookie in INDYCAR is very difficult. We'll see how the race plays out.

I think we have a good understanding of what we're going

to do tomorrow. Yeah, just need to get a good result honestly. See how the race plays out and try and get some points on the board.

**Q. Devlin, you led the race here a couple of years ago in the summer. You were driving for another organization at that time. How is the different environment here of Rahal Letterman Lanigan helped you out for this weekend and getting back to this track for the first time I think since?**

DEVLIN DEFRANCESCO: Yeah, it's been my first time back here since then. Everyone has really rallied around me in this organization, and everyone on the 30 especially, but everyone at the whole organization as a whole has rallied around me. This guy next to me has played a huge part in me coming here, and it really has been a big advocate for me.

I'm just grateful to be able to give back to everyone on the 30 that's put in so much work. There was very high level of frustration leaving a few of the previous rounds because we knew what we were capable of. I think we move on to tomorrow, and tomorrow is simply about execution. I think this team in general, our race pace seems to be quite good. We seem to have a good level on that, a good handle on that. I'm excited for tomorrow.

GRAHAM RAHAL: This guy in the engineering room before qualifying, he look at the groups. He looked at group two, and he looks at me and goes, Oh, my God, are you seeing group two? What did I tell you?

DEVLIN DEFRANCESCO: I forget now.

GRAHAM RAHAL: They put their pants on one leg at a time. Just focus on you, and you will be just fine. Look at him. He can do it. He can do it.

**Q. Graham, how have they made you better this year?**

GRAHAM RAHAL: We're just a light-hearted group.

LOUIS FOSTER: Such great drivers. Just coaching him so much.

GRAHAM RAHAL: This guy to my right is a lot like my puppy running around and keeping it light. No, I think, look, actually Dev and I have a similar driving style, so in that regard it's been late brake, hard on the brakes, somewhat aggressive, things like that.

I think for me I actually look at Louis' data. Louis is very smooth. A little earlier on the brakes typically, but exits are very, very strong and benefited him greatly at Barber.



It's nice to see that stuff and see how it works. Both of them have been very diligent in their work to understand what works, what doesn't, how to be better. I said this from the start. One of the very first things when we announced him last fall I think it was, he called me that day and said, I need to work on my tire saving. How do I do it? I think that work ethic has carried through with both of these guys.

It's great to see them have success. I think we'll be very strong tomorrow. I think if we can work as a team in the morning and make sure we can get the cars because there is going to be some tire deg, and it's going to be hotter tomorrow than today. If we can work to get all of our tires in the right zone, we should all have a strong day today.

**Q. How much confidence does this result give you as we head towards going that way down the main straightaway in a couple of day's time?**

LOUIS FOSTER: I think obviously momentum is big in racing. I mean, look at what (indiscernible) is doing right now. They're just rocking on through to the weekend. I'm hoping we can carry that momentum into the Indy 500 testing.

And also, as I said earlier, we had a good test here. Takuma was rapid. From my rookie time ever on this circuit, the 500, we were quick, the 45. Graham and Dev are both really quick, and they both knew exactly where their time loss was.

We figured some things out also in the race running later in the day. Yeah, I think we've got a pretty strong car for the 500. I don't know how the open testing plays out. It's my first time. I didn't know who was sand bagging, who wasn't, etc. When I walked in the driver's room and he was smiling cheek to cheek, I knew it was good, so...

**Q. Graham, you just mentioned earlier your engineering stuff. Is your famous long-time engineer Eddie a part of the team? Number two, I told that Kenny Brack is part of your team. If so, can you maybe explain what kind of role he has in your team?**

GRAHAM RAHAL: Yeah, Eddie is still. He's here. He's with Takuma for the month, but Eddie has been with us since I joined the team. He's been with us a long time. He's just an awesome man. He's just a great dude.

Takuma absolutely loves nothing more than Eddie Jones. Those two, for the 500 I think they've won it before. They'll be very, very strong together.

Kenny is part of the team. Kenny more specifically comes

and helps on the ovals. You'll see him probably, I would imagine, start of next week. He'll be here, but for us I think Kenny -- everybody that knows Kenny from the past, he's a very diligent worker. He understands this place as well as anybody, and on a lot of our ovals where we're struggling, we send him out to watch, to get videos, to listen to the team, to listen to the engineering, to listen to the griefs.

I think Kenny is a valuable, valuable part of the program. We'll see him going forward. Kenny and Dad have been, as you guys all know, very, very close since he drove for our team all those years and stuff. It's good to have him around.

**Q. (Off microphone)**

GRAHAM RAHAL: Yeah, Eddie sent me a photo of his Super V just the other day too. Qualified 14th at, I don't know, Mosport or something in probably 1945, and yeah, he sent me a photo of it. Eddie is a great story. I mean, designing, building his own car in his garage and stuff. He's an awesome dude.

THE MODERATOR: A little history made today by the team. Congratulations. Good luck tomorrow.

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