

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Thursday, May 22, 2025

Colton Herta

Jack Harvey

Ryan Hunter-Reay

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Nine-time winner in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES, driving the No. 26 Gainbridge Honda for Andretti Global with Curb Agajanian, it's Colton Herta.

Starting 26th on Sunday, a rising TV star, while also making his eighth start in the Indy 500, driver of the No. 24 DRR CUSICK INVEST Chevrolet for Dreyer & Reinbold Racing, Cusick Motorsports's Jack Harvey.

And starting 25th, the 2014 winner of the Indianapolis 500, the former NTT INDYCAR SERIES champ, making his 17th start at Indy, driver of the No. 23 DRR Cusick Wedbush Securities Chevrolet for Dreyer & Reinbold with Cusick Motorsports, it's Ryan Hunter-Reay.

Colton, we'll start with you. I'm sure you're champing at the bit to get back in the car in that two-hour session tomorrow.

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, always. Normally you're a bit nervous getting into a backup car around here, feel like you typically lose speed. But it didn't feel like that Monday, and the balance felt very nice.

It makes me excited for tomorrow and for Sunday.

THE MODERATOR: Jack, rising TV star at FOX Sports, putting that aside for at least a week. How much are you looking forward to Carb Day tomorrow and then obviously on race day?

JACK HARVEY: I think with all the drivers it's always a privilege to get to compete in the Indy 500. Probably like a lot of people, we felt good on Monday, so we're hoping that just translates to Friday and the race.

THE MODERATOR: Ryan, do you care to introduce your guest?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Yeah, this is Ryden over here.

He just is graduating from fifth grade and missing his last week of school to be here because he would rather be nowhere else, so that's what we're doing.

THE MODERATOR: Your thoughts about missing your last week of school? Grab the microphone. What's it like to miss the last week of school for this?

RYDEN HUNTER-REAY: I think it's better than going to school. Way better.

THE MODERATOR: We agree. We'll open it up for questions for all three, or four, for that matter.

Q. You guys are staying across the street. You get to come and watch your dad race. That's pretty cool. Your friends get into it? What's this week like staying so close to the track and having this place as your playground?

RYDEN HUNTER-REAY: It's really cool because we get to kind of scooter everywhere. Yeah, really fun.

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Like his own little playground here. Tough life.

Q. Jack, for you, race car looked pretty good. How much is it patience and how much is it wanting to go forward because there could be a lot of potential we'll see? Restarts are going to be key here. How do you methodically work your way up knowing you have a good race car underneath you?

JACK HARVEY: I think patience is probably the right word. It's obviously a super long race. We really just need to be there from halfway to the end. I think feels like a pretty fast row, at least from what I observed on Monday. So I think we're all probably hoping that if one of us is going to the front, that we all just kind of as a convoy go to the front as well.

One thing that has been really cool with working with everyone at Dreyer & Reinbold and Cusick Motorsports is the emphasis they put on the pit stops and the preparation they've done. So far the stops have looked really great in practice. So I think that's going to be more of an asset to

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us than a hindrance, which I think for a part-time or single-race team, it's a really huge thing.

If the car is good and balance is good and everything is ticking away nicely, then hopefully we'll have a great day.

Q. Colton, for you, Monday, getting back into the car after what we saw over the weekend, how important is the two hours tomorrow, and where was your comfort level when you got out on Monday?

COLTON HERTA: Like I said, it was just like being in the other car. They matched everything pretty perfectly, which for me has never happened. It was a surprise. Usually at least a few things that you need to button up and change that are different on the backup car to the actual race car, but you know, for me it felt exactly the same.

So it filled me with a lot of confidence. Made it easier just to get straight back to work and on with the run plan instead of tinkering with things that don't really matter.

THE MODERATOR: How much running will you guys do, do you think? Ryan, you go far enough back where some teams didn't run much at all on Carb Day. Now it seems like it's the opposite?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Yeah, it's become a proper practice session. We'll get as much out of it as we can, run as much as we can.

Conditions will be a bit different. We'll have a little bit of lack of track temperature, so that might change. Balance a little bit. The wind is going to be different for race day. But with that said, we still have quite a list to get through.

THE MODERATOR: Jack, same for you?

JACK HARVEY: I would think so, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Colton, as much as you can?

COLTON HERTA: Yeah, we didn't run a lot on Monday, so we could run a lot on Carb Day, so it's going to be similar to race day.

Q. This is for both Ryan and Jack. I'm curious how your approach and preparation for this race has changed from when you were racing full-time to this year where it's your only INDYCAR race on the schedule, especially when driving for a team that's also done a one-off?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Yeah, it's different for sure. It's a lot to get on top of because you have a whole -- you have a

massive group of people coming together that need to operate and execute as efficiently as possible in a very short amount of time. There's a lot more to be on top of, which it kind of comes a little bit more natural when you are running the whole season because you've been working with those folks, and you're kind of in your rhythm.

But with that said, from a driving perspective, Indy is so unique. Indy is Indy, so there's nothing different on that side of it. It's more just trying to get that large group of people together and make sure that everything is kind of as you need it.

With all the new scenarios and protocols with the hybrid and trying to get -- and it's our first weekend with that as well. It's our first, I should say, race with that. Yeah, it's just a lot to manage on that side, but this group does a great job with that every year. It's a fun group to work with. It's not so bad having Jack there either.

JACK HARVEY: That's the nicest thing you've said to me.

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: We've been working really well together. It's been fun.

JACK HARVEY: Been getting choked out by your kids and RKO'd, and now a Ryan compliment. This week is pretty much complete, I think, at this point.

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: They nicknamed him Muffin Man.

JACK HARVEY: The bad nicknames, that's become my thing. Then I came into Ryan's RV the other day and "Pirates of the Caribbean" was on, and I said, Well, you could call me Captain Jack. And then that's low-key pivot into Captain Muffin. I don't know. Maybe I'm just an easy target for bad names.

I think one thing, only doing the 500 this year, you hear all the drivers say, oh, I enjoy the month of May, but I don't think all the drivers do enjoy the month of May because they've been busy up to May. The season is going good for some people. It's going bad for others. Everyone else, apart from us, really, is going straight to Detroit.

When I say I've enjoyed everything this May, I mean that. Every media availability that we've had, I haven't done anything other than totally willingly, every sponsor dinner that we've been to, because I'm grateful to be here, knowing this is, as it stands right now, the only time I'm going to wear my helmet this year. Even on some off days where in other years I wouldn't come to the track, I wouldn't -- I would take that time for myself, where right now I've just been here taking it all in.



Having Ryan as a teammate who has been great when we're on track, and his feedback to the team is huge. Dreyer & Reinbold Racing, they know this disco dance. They get prepared for it as a single event every year anyway. I think they probably help us both navigate some of that. Also, from a timing perspective, when it's time to ramp up, et cetera, I really think I've just enjoyed the month.

Q. First of all, Jack, you're a lad from Lincolnshire. How on earth have you acquired the nickname Hollywood? It seems like you've been forced to embrace it now it seems?

JACK HARVEY: That's a pretty accurate observation, I would say. I think it started by -- well, it definitely -- I know it started by Will Buxton. I see Kevin. He was a culprit in this too. So between the booth and Kevin, and I low-key think Georgia was involved. I can't remember exactly how Hollywood Harvey came up.

Just for context, the village that I grew up in is like 1,000 people in a small town in a small part of the United Kingdom two hours north of London. This is a rural place, guys. The fact that Hollywood Harvey is my nickname, I have my friends who didn't get to see the build-up to it. They're, like, Oh, big-time now, you're on TV. I'm, like, I know it's going to come across that way. Even these hooligans, they all heckle me now saying Hollywood and stuff. Kind of been forced to embrace it.

I've had worse. Muffin Man is worse, I have to admit. So maybe we'll make a game out of just bad nicknames, but if it was an Olympic sport, I think I would be gold medalist right now.

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: -- got a very explicit British vocabulary now.

JACK HARVEY: Ryan has been watching some TV shows, and his vocabulary has rapidly improved.

THE MODERATOR: For instance?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: We can't give that out.

Q. Colton, you put out a fun video the other night. Have you wished anybody else goodnight? I know people were pretty suspicious after that. Has anything else come from it?

COLTON HERTA: No, that was just a trend. I'm not on TikTok, but my girlfriend is, and she's, like, Oh, man, you should try this. I thought it would be funny to try, but no, I didn't expect it to blow up like it did. I was kind of

surprised.

Q. Then a racing question for you, Colton. Obviously you said after the crash in qualifying that Indy doesn't really scare you. I just would like to get an insight into that mentality. How at those speeds with the wall so close do you build up that fearlessness as a driver?

COLTON HERTA: I think everyone is kind of like that. No one would be able to do their job or do their job well enough to keep a seat in this series if you're afraid of driving the car. There are scary moments, and maybe you're a little bit more nervous to get into the car after a crash, but once you kind of get going, all that fear kind of evaporates or that nervousness, at least for me.

I feel like if I was scared in any sort of way, I wouldn't be able to do it. I wouldn't be able to stay flat around here, even on heavier downforce. It does test you at times and maybe you are a little nervous at times to get inside the car, but once you kind of get in, you get into that mindset of, like, I want to be the best here, and I want to be the fastest, I want to beat everybody. You kind of forget about the past.

Q. This question is for Hollywood. I'm just kind of curious. You have driven Honda your entire career. This is the first time you've ever had Chevy. I'm kind of curious what the differences you've noticed with the power band pounding laps around Indy.

JACK HARVEY: Nothing crazy, honestly. I would say, too, just top-tier organizations. My time with Chevy so far has been really good. I think probably some of what I hear other people talking about is the drivability of the car, on throttle application. That probably shows up more so on a street circuit and then road course and then probably least affected at the oval.

Yeah, my time with Chevy so far has been really great. Yeah, first race weekend not in a Honda, but that's fine. It would be pretty cool if I can't win it, to see Ryan win it, and then just a Chevy driver after that really.

Q. My question is to all three drivers. May is the Mental Health Awareness Month for INDYCAR. It brings a lot of excitement and a lot of pressure as well to perform. How have you guys been coping with that pressure as you prepare for the race?

COLTON HERTA: I think for me what helps the most is just being stuck into it. Just looking at the numbers and the data and being able to talk about it with the engineers and having a clear plan on how to be better. I think you struggle a little bit more when it's not clear of what the

steps are that we're going to take to be better. That's it for me.

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Yeah, I think qualifying day, really Saturday is probably the longest day of the whole year for anybody involved in this business and especially from behind the wheel. It's extremely stressful, but I think over time over the years you just learn to kind of deal with that.

It never gets old, though. It's not like it becomes less stressful. You just deal with it in a different way, and you manage that a bit more. Yeah, it's always come with a lot of pressure and obviously consequences on the racetrack and all that stuff. It's part of the job.

JACK HARVEY: I set boundaries with people from the team, sponsors, myself, et cetera. We do what is absolutely required, but after that if it's 10 o'clock at night, if it's urgent, you can call me. If it's not urgent, let me have that moment to myself and unwind.

One thing I did this month, which hopefully you guys will do too, is watch "Andor Star Wars," but I paced it out. I watched an episode a day because I used that as my time to unwind and do something I actually enjoyed.

Not taking on more than I could feasibly do and having boundaries I think was the best thing that I implemented this month of May.

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: So I'm working on my vocabulary. You are watching "Star Wars."

THE MODERATOR: How was it?

JACK HARVEY: It was excellent. It's like top tier "Star Wars," Dave.

Q. This question is for Jack. Jack, obviously you've got your new role with Fox, but what has it been like switching off from that for the month of May and being on track back in the car?

JACK HARVEY: It's been pretty easy, honestly. I would say the opportunities that Fox has been given to me this year have been brilliant. It's kept me in the paddock amongst all my pals and in an environment and a community that I like to be a part of.

Only getting to race once a year, I knew we had a lot of free time. Finally when I got the call from them, I was just really happy. That's an area I still have to work on. It's not totally my comfort zone. I feel like we're making progress on it. Wearing the helmet, putting the suit back on, that's still a place where I feel the most at ease, the most

confident. It's been if un.

Actually one thing I'll share, both FOX Sports and Dreyer & Reinbold Racing with Cusick Motorsports, both organizations -- I guess three organizations there, haven't really overlapped. Everyone has been very respectful when it's been time to be a pit reporter and then announce the NXT races and then also when it's time to be driver.

The mutual respect between everybody has probably allowed me to focus on both jobs that I have this year to 100%. I'm very appreciative of that. When we've been able to maybe speak to the guys when I'm in the car, that's just a fun bonus, but it's come at a time that's convenient to the team, convenient for the booth.

So, yeah, I feel like I'm living a pretty awesome life, honestly.

Q. Just a quick one on Dennis and Don. What's it been like working with those two guys?

JACK HARVEY: They're awesome, honestly. A lot of respect for everybody at Dreyer & Reinbold Racing and Cusick Motorsports. It takes a village to be competitive at this. We all know that. We've had a great team of people right at the very top. It's hard to get that message across.

What the team, both sets of teams, stand for and how they want to be, they radiate all the time. And they set the tone, and it trickles down through the entire -- well, through both organizations. I think me and Ryan are lucky that as a single-race entry that we're with both of those teams.

Q. I've got one question for each driver. Let's start with Colton. The Indy 500 is often called like a patience race. How do you personally train yourself to hold back when your instinct is usually to go full send?

COLTON HERTA: We have a little bit less time from where we're starting to hold back, but it is still a really long race, plenty of opportunity to get into the top 10 with 50 to go or so.

For me I think it's a little bit easier with the experience. It would be hard for me as a rookie to kind of understand how long the race is and how many things can happen during the race to either move you up or down the order.

Being here and going through my seventh Indy 500, I think I understand it a little bit more, so I think the experience helps.

Q. Then for Jack, you've been in the pit lane all season

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as a reporter, like you mentioned earlier. How has seeing the sport from the broadcast side changed your perspective as a driver coming back for this 500 run?

JACK HARVEY: It's probably just appreciation for what goes into actually a good show and a good presentation of the INDYCAR SERIES, whether it's TV, radio. So much more goes on than I think drivers are typically exposed to. That's not necessarily a bad thing. It's just everyone is doing their jobs.

More so just some appreciation and respect and gratitude for how hard so many people work just to try and make this a great product that people can come watch.

Q. Then for Ryan, you're a former winner here at the 500, so you know what it takes to finish up front here. What's one thing that the rookies or the younger drivers don't realize about this race until they're, like, deep into it?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: It's a long race really. Like kind of Colton said, you can't really just focus on I have to get to the front now. It's several cars at a time. Get some on the track. Get some in the pit lane. Work through it methodically that way.

You know, I think just knowing when to take the lunge and when not to, I think maybe the experienced guys have an upper hand on that, with it being all about keeping the momentum up. It's tough now, though, with the cars how they are and the current specs, everybody is very desperate for every pass. There's a lot of blocking going on.

It's definitely a bit of a different approach than it's been maybe, I don't know, ten years ago, but we all adapt to that and drive accordingly.

THE MODERATOR: Ryden, who is going to win on Sunday?

RYDEN HUNTER-REAY: My dad.

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: There it is.

THE MODERATOR: Right answer. Guys, thanks for coming up.

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