

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, June 1, 2025

Bud Denker

Michael Montri

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Joining us for our post-event press conference here, we have Detroit Grand Prix chairman Bud Denker and Detroit Grand Prix president Michael Montri. A very interesting weekend, a very full, exciting weekend, and you can't end it any better than the amazing race that we just saw.

Overall your thoughts on a very hectic but rewarding weekend here in the Motor City?

MICHAEL MONTRI: Just a phenomenal weekend. From the jump on Friday through this beautiful weather day in southeastern Michigan, crowds, great crowds. We had a record ticket revenue number for this race this year. Just been a phenomenal event. I think everything went really smoothly and just glad that it all came off well.

THE MODERATOR: Bud, a lot of momentum coming into this event and I think this only continued to build throughout the course of the weekend.

BUD DENKER: Yeah, that was the key piece for us, especially for FOX, to have them show that amazing event here. Kyle hit the numbers right on the head, over 7.1 million people last week watched it, peaking at 8.45, and then coming here. So I'm hoping, crossing my fingers, for a big number here in Detroit, too, that we can show some great comparisons.

But the momentum from last weekend really got us excited here for our event. We talked about it all week long. Michael and his team, it's amazing what they do. What's our team, Michael, less than 20 people? Less than 20 full-time people pulled this thing off. Isn't that crazy?

The choreography of building the walls and creating a city within a city is something that we take great, great pride in, and then our focus is on ensuring our customers, who are also you, are well, well, well taken care of.

We exceeded, I think it was, on Friday last year's ticket

revenue already for last year on Friday of this past week. Everything else from Saturday and Sunday was gravy.

What we sold Saturday and Sunday for the day was rooftop parking. If you had a chance to look out on the rooftops, every single floor was full of people. We're learning and they're learning, and in my mind the best seat in the house is not in the grandstands, it's in those rooftop places to watch all the race, but you can hop from rooftop to rooftop.

THE MODERATOR: Third year back downtown. The undertaking of what it means to bring it back downtown, but learned a little bit more and a little bit more improved year after year. Talk about where we are coming into this weekend. Everything looked beautiful, done earlier. I think we all felt the momentum and the buzz a little bit earlier for this event, so talk about the process of it being the third year.

BUD DENKER: Well, big investment this year. You all may not see it but we see it, just in the infrastructure alone. And I'll just talk about one detail. Our walls and fence this year were all the same. There's no more mesh, no more cables. None of that that we've had in the past.

We all had this new Geobruigg fence and walls. We spent over \$4 million more of investment this year on this event to make it look consistent. What that allows you to do is make your Sundays look consistent, make the track look clean, make it look very professional.

So one thing as far as why you saw a better presentation was because of the investment we made this year in our event. By the way, those fence panels you saw here, those are the fence panels we use next year in Arlington, Texas, and by the way, those fence panels we have here are the fence panels that NASCAR will use in Chicago.

So we're sharing these resources now across our series, which makes a lot of sense. Why should they sit for 51 weeks and not be used when you can use those resources across multiple races, multiple series. That's one thing.

Michael can talk about the changes we made for the customer experience in the River East, which we executed

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sports

this year so well, but also what we did outside here with our plaza and what we learned on Spirit Plaza.

MICHAEL MONTRI: Yeah, I think one of the reasons the rooftops look so crowded is we added viewing platforms this year, so instead of seeing just kind of shoulders and heads poking over those walls, you actually saw people and then another row of shoulders and heads. Just more people viewing from up there, which it's a phenomenal view. Any of those rooftops are amazing.

It's always good to see those things packed. I think it really creates a stadium atmosphere around that Blue Cross Blue Shield double-sided pit lane. I love the atmosphere. We kind of program the speakers like a rock concert, crank it up and go.

BUD DENKER: Talk about last night, too.

MICHAEL MONTRI: Yeah, I was just going to say, on Campus Martius last night, we had a really great concert, had probably 6,000 people there. I haven't seen the numbers yet, but probably 6,000 people there last night in Campus Martius right downtown, and the atmosphere around that, and that's a demo that, much like the Snake Pit, quite frankly in Indy, it's a demo we may not hit if we don't have that concert. But it's just another way to expose our brand, our sport and our event to a different demo.

Friday night, too, we had the cruise night. That was our inaugural cruise night with partnership from the Detroit Auto Show, and that was a big hit, as well. We had almost 300 people register for that. We only had spots for really 125, so we wanted to make sure the experience was right on the first year.

That's something we can grow over time, as well. There was a ton of demand for that, and to link -- in the Motor City, to be able to link Detroit car culture with this event up in a more direct way is going to be a huge plus for us going forward.

BUD DENKER: How about the one stop where everybody came in? They all came in and took tires. There must have been 20 cars on pit lane. That's the first time we've probably had that many cars on pit lane at one time. And I was going to say, are they all going to make it out.

So the fans really, really got a thrill seeing all those cars come into pit lane right in front of them, just feet away, and then all of them leave at the same time. That was pretty darned cool. So I've been waiting for that for three years, and we finally got the opportunity now to do that.

By the way, we have a bunch of people here from

Arlington, Texas, for the Grand Prix there, and they were seeing what their pit lane is going to look like because we're also going to do a duel pit lane, as you know, in Arlington, as well.

THE MODERATOR: Before we open it up, quality of racing, we saw from each race throughout the course of the weekend great racing, very exciting. Talk about how this track played out in each one of those racing series and the thrills that the fans saw this weekend.

BUD DENKER: Well, I didn't think those large GTP cars would be able to pass as much as they did at this track. Turn 1 is 27 feet wide. It's narrow. But you saw some banging and some clanking off those cars yesterday in GTP and GT that we haven't seen before.

I'm not sure how many passes there were yesterday, but we saw a bunch. Anybody have the number of passes today yet? Anybody know? Any idea about number of caution laps today? Less than 40 something? 261? Last year we had 47 caution laps. We had 261 today? What did Long Beach and St. Pete have? Very curious to know. That's more than I thought we had. How many caution laps again you said?

Q. 19.

BUD DENKER: But the other reason for less caution laps, our restart zone was changed. Talking to the drivers, Kyle Novak talking to us, we changed the restart lane from Turn 8 and 9 versus out of Turn 2 on the front straightaway, so the mayhem wasn't as much mayhem as we had last year by starting it on the front straightaway, too, so I think that was a good decision.

MICHAEL MONTRI: I mean, it was great racing all weekend long. I think now that we're through the third year of this event, when you look at this circuit from a 2D map version, when you see how the track is laid out, it doesn't look very exciting, but man, does it race exciting. You cannot deny the quality and the level of racing that happens on this track year in and year out. It's happened three years in a row. Even last year with so many caution laps, we had a ton of passing.

It has proven itself over three years, and look forward to continuing to prove that.

Q. Bud and Michael, when the field had a great start, got through without any incident, did you throw your fist in the air --

BUD DENKER: Yes.



Q. It really was an exciting start with no contact.

BUD DENKER: Yeah, in fact, my wife was next to me under the pit-out area at the time, and she said, they made it through. Cautions breed cautions, right? We saw that situation with Alex, unfortunately.

But getting through there -- I thought we weren't going to have any cautions like we had the first few races, and that changed.

But yeah, I think that was significant because that was two -- yeah, they're side-by-side coming out of that first restart, right, and that was amazing to see them come through there sometimes three and sometimes four wide. How they got through there was amazing, and I was happy to see there was no caution, unlike what we saw in the INDY NXT race, right?

Q. Also, how taxing is it on some of your key people in the fact that it is just a few days after the Indianapolis 500?

MICHAEL MONTRI: We love this position on the schedule. Let's start with that. No, it is. Look, on the event side of Penske Entertainment we have grown pretty quickly here in a short amount of time, and we have, as Bud mentioned earlier, a very small team of dedicated people that get it done.

We are involved, obviously, on the event side in IMS, but they have their own team over there. So really for most of the management level folks, we have separate teams. We can focus on Detroit and they can focus on IMS.

BUD DENKER: Many of our team members here now will shift to Iowa, so they'll move on to Iowa, which is key, and then guess where they go next after that: Nashville. Not only are they doing one race, they're many, many races here. It's amazing, I say this all the time, we've got a small, small team of people, mostly female, predominantly female, predominantly under 30 years of age, and they're all doers. There's nothing they would do themselves versus asking someone else to do, and that's what the difference is in our organization.

Q. (Indiscernible.)

MICHAEL MONTRI: You're right, Roger is the best. You talk about a doer, he's not going to ask anybody to pick up a piece of trash. He's going to pick it up.

Q. You just said the track is relatively narrow, especially for the GTP cars. Is there technically a possibility to make it wider?

BUD DENKER: No. How's that for an answer? No, because right now the curves are -- the blocks are already on top of the curbs. If you had them obviously in the street, you could widen it by an extra, what is it, meter and a half up on top of there, so it's not possible to do that because they're already on the curbs.

Then the other question I'm always asked is can you lengthen the track. Well, you can't, because then you're into a neighborhood beyond Turn 1, and you can't go beyond Turn 3 because then you're into Huntington Convention Center with no runoff. Your runoff then is into the warehouse.

But I also want to comment about the fact that the safety of our course today, to see those two guys wreck in Turn 3 today was breathtaking, and to see them both get out was amazing, but I also want to comment on our volunteers. The volunteers that put that wall back together in less than about 20 minutes. Those are all volunteers. We don't pay them a dime, and they put all the walls together for us, all over the runoff barriers together, and they're just an amazing group of people.

How many volunteers did we have this year?

MICHAEL MONTRI: 1,500 total, but that on-track services team is I think 40 people.

BUD DENKER: They put together every single one of our barrier walls or our runoff walls. Especially I heard people comment on the broadcast about what a great job they did.

Q. You just mentioned you have a relatively small group of team, number of team. When is it technically possible to close it for traffic and start to modify it to a racetrack? When do you start, Thursday, a week before?

MICHAEL MONTRI: Sure. It varies what we do in the street and what we do in the parking lots. So where that giant sweet structure is in the parking lot, we start that six weeks out because it's mammoth. It takes a long time to build. In the streets, though, we don't start until May 1, but when we do, all the streets remain open. We don't actually close any streets.

Then we start on Jefferson the week of the race. We don't actually close anything until Tuesday of race week. You can pretty much get around anywhere you want up until Tuesday of race week. Then we build a grandstand right in the middle of the freeway down there in Turn 3.

As Bud mentioned, these new walls, this new wall and

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panel fence system, it allows us to build it faster. It allows us to leave these gaps open and then close them much easier and much cleaner.

Q. When I walked around here and also on television sometimes I could see a couple of German companies seem to be involved with Siemens and also there were hanging banners with Jägermeister, so I was quite happy coming from Germany and seeing German companies involved. Can you say more about the involvements of these companies at the Grand Prix?

BUD DENKER: Well, I prefer Jägermeister. I actually pay for those banners.

MICHAEL MONTRI: Where did you see those because they're not really supposed to -- got to work on that.

BUD DENKER: But Siemens was interesting; Kyle mentioned this, they have a big work force here in Detroit, but they also have their national convention coming up here this week, so they took --

MICHAEL MONTRI: At Huntington Place.

BUD DENKER: At Huntington Place. Their national convention is at Huntington Place this week, so they had a lot of people come in internationally and from across the country for their national convention, which is why you saw so much more signage, and we got a lot more revenue from them as a result of them having their people here.

Q. If I would have read you have 19 core people, I would have thought that would have been a typo. That's incredible. I guess three years into it, anything today you saw that popped up thinking, that's something we've got to tweak right off the bat? Or is that an understatement?

MICHAEL MONTRI: Every other minute pretty much. That is the beauty and the curse of a temporary circuit. There's always something that you can improve and keep changing and massaging it. In fact, if you came into the venue on Friday, if you came back Saturday, something might have been different. We improved overnight and every night throughout the weekend, and that's just kind of what you have to do and what we do do.

But yes, all kinds of things.

Q. I mentioned to you last year and I don't expect you to remember this, but I talked about how impressed I was with the cleanliness and how important that is for people who bring their children. You probably even improved it. It's mindboggling to me the detail that

goes into that and the emphasis on that. Talk about your partners that you participate in that with.

MICHAEL MONTRI: No, absolutely. We do have a small team, 19 people. Less than 19 actually, it's more like 15. But besides that, it does take a number of different vendors, stakeholders, partners to make that happen, and on the cleanliness side, we have Downtown Detroit partnership and they have their Clean Team that they send out. For the rest of the year, they keep downtown Detroit clean. They focus particularly on the Grand Prix venue for this weekend, but that's what they do. They do a great job doing it.

Priority Waste is our trash hauler partner. They do a great job. You have to rely on all these vendors obviously to do the job and to take the direction to do the job how you are want it done. It's certainly not rocket science, but it's a good partnership.

BUD DENKER: We expect a clean, very clean environment. We're in 400 dealerships around the world, right, and they'd better all be pristine. As I mentioned, our customers are everybody here, including you. Everybody here is a customer of ours, so that's the way we treat this versus anything else that we have here.

The expectations we have about pristine, clean environments exist from our businesses to what we have here today. There's not a piece of trash that I will ever walk over without picking it up, but I feel the same way walking through our dealerships in the same respect.

Q. Just curious how you guys appreciate or feel about the reputation of this course becoming especially since this is the third year here, a very rough-and-tumble, elbows-out aggressive fight on the track? How does that align with the spirit and the character of the city of Detroit?

BUD DENKER: Well, the slogan of our city is grit. Grit. That's the Lions' slogan, too, is grit. I think I am right in this number. I think I mentioned Long Beach has less than 10 manhole covers on their circuit, and we have --

MICHAEL MONTRI: 264.

BUD DENKER: That's going to be a little bumpy. You can't take manhole covers out. In fact, manhole covers are the baseline for what you do all around the rest of your track. You can't lower them. You can't raise them. But what we do do is we do put an epoxy over many of the manhole covers that are anything that are sunken a little bit. 264.



So from less than 10 to 264, you're going to have a bumpy track. What we did do this year, we raised up Turn 5. I think all the drivers would say getting into the apex of Turn 5 was much easier, and there was good passing there, as well, so we did get to listen to the feedback there.

I listened to Louis Foster's comments, and you know what, it's a street course. It's not going to be an oval. It won't be an oval. 264 manhole covers? How many manhole covers on the Indy 500 speedway? There won't be any manhole covers going away here, too. So it is what it is.

THE MODERATOR: 261 on track passes, 181 for position, both of those are streets of Detroit records. 261 on-track passes, 181 for position. 261 is the second most on either of the two circuits here in Detroit, Belle Isle or the streets of Detroit and 181 passes for position is an event record. Pretty good.

BUD DENKER: What was Long Beach and St. Pete?

THE MODERATOR: I don't have that.

Q. For either of you that have this information or want to answer, I think someone asked last year about the uncertainty of the Ren Cen and how that might affect this course or this venue. Do you know any more about that a year later, what happens eventually to this building might affect what you guys are able to do here in future years?

BUD DENKER: Yeah, it's a bit TBD. You may have seen since last year's press conference that Bedrock and GM announced that they want to take down two of the towers here and make more of a park layout. That's still a little ways off because a couple things have to happen. In 2027 the NCAA championship is here in Detroit, and Michael is on the sports commission, and those 1,500 rooms in the Marriott are part of the requirement to have that tournament here. So nothing is going to be going away here from what we understand until post-2027.

It requires also, if you saw between state and city funding, over \$300 million of support to do that, which hasn't been approved yet.

Is it going to happen? Is it possible? Sure. But when is it going to happen? Don't know. Don't have any idea. But we do know that their desire is to change it. We don't know when it's going to happen, though.

Q. From what you know about what may happen from what you were talking about on that project -- I know you said it hasn't been approved yet. Do you know how long that would take from the start of it to getting

everything leveled and cleared off from a timeline standpoint as if -- I guess what I'm asking is whenever that does start, do you have an idea of if it would affect the Detroit Grand Prix at some point in the future?

BUD DENKER: We don't. The good thing about this city is because it's our hometown, we've involved in a lot of these discussions relative to process. One of the big questions is going to be what happens to all the paddock space. You can't lose your paddock space. You can't lose your pit lane. It's one thing to lost Atwater Street, but you can't lose your paddock space and your pit lane. Just don't know, and we know we're a couple years off before we do know what that's going to be.

Q. The initial agreement you signed with the Detroit City Council was for three years, which expires this year. What does next year hold? What does the future of the Grand Prix hold through this process with the City Council?

BUD DENKER: There is actually an answer to that question. Where are you.

LETTY AZAR: We have a new contract with the city, a new three-year contract with the option for an additional three years beyond that.

BUD DENKER: So that's '26, '27, '28 with an option out beyond that.

Q. I met some people last night that were from Citizens. There were so many more corporate sponsors this weekend, I thought, and you mentioned the garages were full. It's a great spot to watch because there's so many of them. How much of the momentum of FOX and the building of INDYCAR that we are seeing really come to the forefront obviously off the 500 definitely helps a week later, but how much momentum INDYCAR-wise have you seen and how much is that to do with what FOX has been able to do in promoting the sport?

MICHAEL MONTRI: Well, a lot of it. I will say on our sponsorship side, we have always had a really, really strong corporate partnership here. I think as most of you know, we're a 501(c)3. We're not in this to make money, we're in this to make a great event for the city and the community, and all of our corporate partners make that possible. We've always had a really strong corporate event here.

I will say, though, on the FOX side, what it has impacted is I feel a different buzz around the event. I feel more interest in the local media. I feel more interest in the fandom, and



just people that want to come out and see what it's all about. So I think that has definitely weighed in.

I will tell you, too, that after seeing some of the images from the broadcast -- NBC didn't use a drone here last year, but those drone shots really give the entire world an amazing idea of what the city looks like from about 200 feet up, and it gives our circuit a much better impression internationally, nationally, and I really do believe that when people see those images or those drones out over the water looking back toward pit lane, those drones down by Turn 3 seeing the city and everything, I do think that it will impact the people that want to come here to see this event and the city in general. I really do believe that.

FOX has done such a phenomenal job. They've been so accessible. The directors, the executive producers have all had direct contact with not only the Detroit event but all of our promoters. They've done a phenomenal job. Couldn't be happier.

BUD DENKER: How many corporate sponsors this year?

MICHAEL MONTRI: We had 93 corporate sponsors, which is only two less than last year, and with everything that is going on with tariffs and all the uncertainty right now, to have 93 here, just amazing.

Q. I know you touched on this briefly, but really how cool is it to have both races be so incredible with the late race passes, both in GTP and then what we had in the INDYCAR race? Like you said, the fact that the GTP cars even fit through some of those tight spots was quite remarkable?

BUD DENKER: Yeah, it is. The top of this building says Chevrolet and General Motors, it doesn't say the show. There's some aspect of those guys wanting to win the race around their corporate headquarters for sure. But they're all so great. Those people are all racers, too, Mark Reuss, Eric Warren, Jim Campbell, they're all racers. That's just racing. But it was amazing.

For the fans to see that, the kind of racing, bumping through the last couple laps of the race, I think the Cadillac got passed three or four laps to go in the race. It was a great pass. The Porsche got bumped out of the way with about 10 laps to go in the race in Turn 3.

Really, really solid racing, and it just goes to the fact that, yeah, it's bumpy, but boy, it's competitive as hell in terms of what it does. I also think it separates the great drivers from good drivers in many cases, too, so I think that's clearly something that we like to see.

Q. You talked about the success of the rooftops. Is it safe to say you'll have more next year? What goes into that, I guess, from you guys' perspective?

MICHAEL MONTRI: I think we ran out. I think we activated every rooftop we have access to. So no, I don't plan on doing any more rooftops.

But we can change the programming on those rooftops. We can do all kinds of things. It is literally a blank slate up there.

Q. Are there similar things you can do that you incorporate on the rooftops elsewhere, adding spaces?

MICHAEL MONTRI: Yeah, we look at our fan zone spaces and our interactive display spaces every year. In year one we really had those spread out over the entirety of the circuit because we wanted people to walk around and discover, and it didn't really work. So we moved all of our displays and interactive displays down to Woodward last year, opened up Woodward all the way to Campus Martius, and that really went well. And I will tell you that it was even better this year. The foot traffic on Woodward between Campus Martius and Spirit Plaza, which is basically where the racetrack is, and then over that bridge into Hart Plaza was phenomenal.

I think for that area, it really, really worked well.

BUD DENKER: I'll say this, too; this hasn't been asked but I'll mention this, too, the fact of giving back. On Friday we had our gala at the new General Motors world headquarters. It was the first event ever held there, and GM is not even moved in there yet. We had our first ever event there at the GM headquarters, and it was amazing. About 500 people. We raised over \$2 million for charity. That will all go to five charities in our city.

So they're going to be in some big, big checks from us for having this event here, and it doesn't go out -- in fact the Corvette ZR-1, bin #1 for next year went for \$1.4 million. A lot of generous people stepped up in our city to offer opportunities for these charities.

Now we're at close to \$10 million we've given for charity now in just the years we've been here racing.

THE MODERATORS: Bud mentioned giving back to the community, and one of the things we're most proud of is what we have done with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Southeastern Michigan. You may have seen some of our correspondent club students here with us in the press conference today. They've been with us all day long. They



got a chance to tour the media center. Raise your hands, guys.

Q. Can you just tell us about the importance of community engagement and the economic impact on Detroit?

BUD DENKER: I'd love to. First thing we did when Michael and I said we're going downtown Detroit was we said we would make the most inclusive event our city has seen and state has seen. The fact that you can come down for half our racetrack and watch for free, that's pretty good inclusion, right? You can't do it at the Lions, can't do it with the Tigers. Can you do it anywhere else at any sporting event? No. Here you can go for free. We can bring all cross-sections of our city together and come here.

Number two was to give back, and I just mentioned the amount of money we're giving back to these local five charities that we've targeted here in Detroit.

Number three was to help our businesses. How many small businesses did we have come down?

MICHAEL MONTRI: This year we had 14.

BUD DENKER: 14 small businesses that were selected from other parts of Detroit that were able to come down on Woodward Avenue and display their wares in the booths that we built for them, so maybe they'll sell some stuff and people will go back to their store as a result of that. So that was inclusion as well, too.

The fact that we allow these Boys and Girls Clubs of Michigan and people like yourselves that are able to come in, maybe through an artistic program, Photoshop program to design our barrier walls, which are so beautiful, the fact that we still use our college here for creative studies to design our poster every year, and the fact that we've now got a correspondence course with you all to have you get experience in doing what everybody else here has been doing is all part of being inclusive.

The economic benefit -- two years ago, our first year, we had a study here by the University of Michigan that provided over \$101 million of benefit to our businesses compared to what Belle Isle was, about 55 million. That's all about the inclusiveness that we've provided to this city.

MICHAEL MONTRI: I just want to add, too, that we have eight really, really important community partners that make that all possible, that really fund all of that for us. So thanks to them.

Q. Today I seen Mr. Merrill in work mode. I seen all of

you in work mode. After this you have another race coming up and more planning to do. When do you think it will be done? What will you be done with all of this? When does your season end in terms of sports?

BUD DENKER: Well, Team Penske has 72 races this year to compete in, so it's not going to end anytime soon obviously for the race teams. But the other thing about it is we've got 74,000 people running our business. Beginning tomorrow, I'll go back to start making money for our business versus spending it here like we do so well.

But Michael can talk about the recap. Tomorrow we'll start recapping the ideas of what worked well, what didn't work well because it's fresh in our minds. Every year we want to improve, just like we do in our businesses, and every year we want to ensure that we provide the best experience for our guests, which include yourself.

I think we have a great product here. I think the buzz in the city this year, the vibe in the city was different than I've seen it so far; it really was. I stayed at the Shinola Hotel last night, the last three nights, and just walking around our city was a different city than I've seen since we've been here. Mind you, we've only been down here three years. This is our third year, so I think you're going to see that build and build and build.

The tent pole events we have right now, the biggest events we have are Indy, Long Beach, I think St. Pete has become that, and I think Detroit has become that, and look for Arlington, Texas, next year to become that, as well.

Q. Piggybacking off that longtime engagement, you said people have been down here for three years. I want to give a huge shout-out to our volunteers for making this possible, everybody who's been participating. A lot of our volunteers, a lot of people engaged with the Grand Prix have a lot of longtime engagement.

Going into next year, planning, everything else, I just want to ask, are there any more plans on how to engage and kind of reward these volunteers for their hard work, anything planned for them? I remember the banquet, that was really great, got to meet a couple people.

MICHAEL MONTRI: Yeah, exactly. I will say that I've been with Penske Corp for a long time. Not all of them have been in Detroit. When I moved back to Michigan in 2012, I was reporting to him and chairman here. I was told to come on out and work the race.

So I spent my first year working for the Grand Prix as a volunteer, and that was 2013. Then I did it again in '14 and

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then all of a sudden I was running it in '16. I don't know what happened there.

But it is amazing to spend some time with our volunteers. It is a family reunion every year. These folks have been, a lot of them, have been doing it, some of them, since 1982, since it was here. But a huge number of them -- I wish I had the number. A huge number of them have been 10 years or longer. It's about 250. 250 have been doing it 10 years or longer. 250, 10 years or longer.

So every year we have a thank you -- it's typically a breakfast. Last night it was a dinner. So we had a thank you dinner last night for all of our volunteers that are 10 years or longer as volunteers. What was amazing to me in that room was how many young people were in it for 10 years or longer. It was just really, really cool to see.

They make the difference for this event, period. When you go to other events, there are a lot of other great events. Bud just mentioned a handful of our tent pole events. None of them have the volunteers that we have in the city of Detroit, and I think that says a lot about -- not really about what we do, but the culture that this event has cultivated in those volunteers since 1982.

THE MODERATOR: Look forward to hopefully seeing some of you sitting in these chairs in a few years. I truly believe we have some great young journalistic talent in the room. It's been fun working with you guys this year.

Any final questions for Bud or Michael?

BUD DENKER: Thank you all for being here and your coverage. With FOX's leverage we're seeing a lot more across the air waves but also we saw a lot from you all, too, so we appreciate everything you do to help support our event, and can't wait to see those numbers from FOX later this week.

Q. Last year you said the rooftops were free. Were they still free this year?

MICHAEL MONTRI: Well, they were free the first year.

BUD DENKER: But we learned.

MICHAEL MONTRI: If you were in pit lane, everyone that you saw had a ticket of some sort. We have a number of free viewing areas, in fact over 50 percent of our circuit is free. None of those around pit lane are free.

THE MODERATOR: Appreciate everyone's coverage this weekend. You guys have been great to work with. We hope you enjoyed the fruits of our great media center here

in Detroit and we look forward to seeing you next year. Thanks for your coverage this weekend.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

