

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Mick Schumacher

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: It was a very full day of testing at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway road course, including the man who joins us, Mick Schumacher. His first time in NTT INDYCAR SERIES machinery, testing the No. 75 Honda for Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing. Mick with 43 starts in Formula 1 and currently competes in the World Endurance Challenge. It was cool to see a Schumacher back on track at IMS after his legendary father won five times on the old road course configuration.

Mick, again, thanks for doing this today after a very long day. Hopefully very productive day today and after a debrief, as well. Just your initial thoughts on your day here with the race team.

MICK SCHUMACHER: Yeah, it's been obviously good, good to get to know the car, get to know the team. I think we managed to get through all the run plan and the test items we wanted to do, so obviously very happy with that.

Yeah, I think we're stoked about what the lap times are doing, and I think it wasn't a main target, but still it went pretty well. Yeah, happy about today.

THE MODERATOR: Obviously you had a very full weekend with the team, the seat fitting. Had some time in the Honda simulator, as well. Did you get everything out of the test that I guess you would have liked or at least get everything out of the weekend that you would have liked?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Yeah, for sure. I think it was a great preparation. I think it was really important for me to kind of get to see how a race weekend would run out, and I think it was kind of close to that.

It was good to have the time with the team also back in the factory before I came out to the test. The simulator itself was a great opportunity for me to get a taste of the car before actually driving it, so it wouldn't be a complete surprise, even though it wouldn't have been. It was actually pretty close to what I'm used to and what I've driven before.

So, no, very productive and very happy about the preparation we've done.

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

Q. Especially after the back of this test, are you now keen to kind of actively explore INDYCAR as a full-time option for next year? I guess what is on your radar right now, and what is the process that you are about to kind of undergo in terms of what you might be racing in 2026?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Yeah, I think in terms of what I'm doing in '26, it's very open. Obviously the options are all there. I think INDYCAR is one of them, so I really just wanted to know what it was so that I can make my mind up.

I have different options, and this being one of them, so I think, yeah, there is good potential. It's about me now trying to figure out what I want to do and if this is one thing that I would consider for long-term.

Q. Why is it something you are considering? I know especially now after the few days you've had with RLL actually getting to drive the car, what do you see is the appeal of INDYCAR as someone who has obviously grown up the F1 ladder?

MICK SCHUMACHER: It being similar to a single-seater or it being a single-seater. I think that's what's kind of attracting me to it. I love having open wheels. I think one of the things my dad always said was, The Schumachers are usually faster if they can see their wheels. So I kind of do like that quote. Yeah, I think it's just the appeal of racing 17 times a year.

Q. Obviously, I mean, the backdrop is pretty cool behind you. This is somewhere where your dad had a lot of success. How nice and how much did it mean to you to actually get to drive this track today. How cool that was for you?

MICK SCHUMACHER: It was great. I was here earlier this year in May, I believe it was, just before the Indy 500,

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and the place was quite crowded compared to now, but it's still nice to be here, to get to know the racetrack.

It's obviously one of those racetracks which they race on, so we had good data to compare and analyze what I was doing and to see how it compares to the full-time drivers.

Q. Finally, obviously as an F2 champion, you moved into F1, and obviously the goal there is to become F1 champion, but when that doesn't work out, did you kind of re-evaluate what might make a successful career for you? I guess at this moment in time if you were to, say, look ahead 20 years, what would you be happy with from your career?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I think the most important part would be to look back at it and say, okay, I enjoyed everything I did, and I think that's really why we are doing it, because we love the sport, we love racing. That's what it should be.

Yeah, as long as I am enjoying my time and enjoying what I'm doing, I will be doing it well. Therefore, yeah, again, that's above everything for me. The main point that I'm looking at it is that I enjoy what I'm doing.

Q. Was it emotional for you to run in the track when your dad, the legendary Michael Schumacher, won five times here at Indianapolis? How does it feel to run here?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I mean, I think obviously I was very focused on doing all the program, and I believe the track has changed a little bit since then, but it's still been amazing to see the track. It's been amazing to see the facility. Yeah, I think overall just very happy to be here.

Q. How was your day? How do you feel being back in a single-seater car?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I love seeing my wheels, for sure. It's obviously a bit different to all the single-seaters that I've driven so far, as we have Aeroscreen, so it was getting kind of hot at times, and air flow is a bit difficult, but those are all things you're kind of getting used to and understanding about what those little change and differences are.

I think there's great potential in safety in that Aeroscreen, so I think that's where why everybody is very happy about it. Nonetheless, maybe the disadvantages it brings, like air flow. Yeah, I think it's been fun. It's been good to see the car, and it's been fun to drive it.

Q. What was your biggest impression inside the

INDYCAR? You know, you've been in Formula 1 since a few years, and what's the biggest difference for you?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I mean, it feels very much like an F2 car. Maybe a little bit heavier in terms of steering. So I obviously was pretty successful with the F2 campaign, and it's quite different to F1. F1 is obviously another step ahead and has just a lot more downforce, a lot more power, hybrid system, and all that stuff. It drives itself a little different.

This one is probably more -- you have to be a bit more aggressive. You can be more aggressive. The tires do take quite a bit of that, let's say, rigid driving. Yeah, there's a lot of fun in that. There's a lot of fun. I think every aspect has their benefits and negatives.

No, it's been good to see. It's been good to see the difference, and I think both have their flare.

THE MODERATOR: You talked about how heavy the steering was. How physically demanding was it in the car? Did you have a long enough stint to really have a good feel for that?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I think I got a good idea of how it would be. We didn't do a very long stint. We were focusing on other aspects of driving, but I think a lot of the guys that I've spoken to scared me more than what it actually was. I think it's not as heavy as I would have imagined and anticipated.

THE MODERATOR: Do you care to tell us who told you that? Who scared you the most?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I think most drivers that I spoke to, they said, Yeah, you better get into the gym if you want to drive that.

I didn't think it was that heavy. I actually thought it was more fun actually with the steering as it was just because you kind of feel like really -- like you feel very connected to the car, and it gave you a very positive feeling and feedback.

Q. These cars are said to be more tail-happy than what you have driven so far. How did you experience it, and how fun is it to drive with a loose car?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Yeah, they are, but they are also not. Like, I mean, a red car is actually pretty loose on the rear, especially in entry. It's fairly similar to that.

Obviously a bit lighter, more downforce compared to the red car. The only, I think, real difference comes into play

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here compared to F2, because the F2 with the Pirelli tire, you are trying to save that rear as much as possible, which you know, you wouldn't quite do in here. You pretty much get after it to keep the tires in a good window for the most part of the stint.

Q. How much do you think what you have to adjust to oval racing when it comes?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I don't know. I haven't done an oval test. I haven't driven an oval, so it's hard to say. I believe it's -- so far, from what people have told me, if you have a good feeling for a stable car and if you have a good feeling for when you kind of get close to the limit, you're going to do well. That's, again, only people telling me, so I can't really answer that question quite yet.

Obviously that could be something interesting to try down the road maybe to do an oval test at some point.

Q. Would you consider racing an INDYCAR while keeping some of your commitments in Europe, or it has to be one thing or the other? I think perhaps a better calendar in INDYCAR while keep racing in WEC, for example. How do you see it?

MICK SCHUMACHER: To be honest, I think that's thinking quite far down the road yet. Obviously if I were to commit to any championship, I would do it 100%. I think dual programs are not quite on my radar, as I feel like it would take quite a lot of energy and would be pretty distracting to do both. So if I were to commit, I would commit to 100% to either/or.

Q. Is there any time length for you to make a decision on whether to race in Indy or not? Would you like to test on an oval before making that decision?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I mean, I think obviously at some point I want to be sure about my future, so I think it won't be too long until I make a decision. Whether that's going to happen before or after I do an oval test, I do not know.

Q. We already talked about the ovals. Mick, many drivers in Formula 1 have voiced some safety concerns about oval racing, which has kept them from seriously considering a move to INDYCAR. How do you personally view that risk, and is that something you think about when maybe considering a move to INDYCAR in the future?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I think safety is obviously something that is at a high priority for everybody. I think INDYCAR has made a lot of adjustments and changes to make it safer, and I'm sure they're going to improve even

further.

I think at some point you can only make it as safe, though, with the speeds that you are going, but yeah, again, I think all the precautions have been taken.

So, I mean, I'm not concerned. I haven't driven an oval, so I can't say it more than that, but for now, I haven't heard anything that would scare me off it.

Q. How different are the Firestone tires compared to Pirelli in F1 or the Michelin you are currently using?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I think they're all a bit different. All have their charm. I think the Firestone driving today reminded me a lot of my F3 years, the two years that I did with the Hankook tire where the tire was pretty much still evolving throughout the run, and you could pretty much use it even after 15 laps and still do a decent lap time. So far so good.

Q. If you could only choose one, what would you pick... winning the Indy 500 or the INDYCAR Championship?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I haven't really gotten that far into it. I obviously heard a lot of people say they would love to win the Indy 500 more than anything else. I, on the other hand, I have a bit of a different mentality.

I think for me a championship is always going to be the holy grail, so I think if you win the championship, you can always win the Indy 500, too. But if you win the Indy 500 and nothing else, then you won't win the championship, correct, so I'd probably pick the championship and then say I'll win the Indy 500 in the same year.

THE MODERATOR: Or the other answer is both. You could go with both.

MICK SCHUMACHER: Exactly.

Q. What are the chances of you racing in the category next year, Mick?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I still have got to let everything sink in a bit, figure it out, and yeah, I guess make a decision down the line. It's hard to say how high the percentage is. Today has been very fun, but yeah, I guess I've got to analyze a bit more and see what, yeah, that would look like.

Q. Could you describe the sensation you get while driving an INDYCAR?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Sensations are very similar to driving an F2 car, with F3 tires, like F3 European tires, European championship tires.

It's obviously you're pushing pretty hard most of the laps, and the Aeroscreen kind of disappears at some point, so you kind of get used to driving without it, like as if it wasn't there. The only big change is that you don't get much air into your face, so it's sometimes a bit different to what I'm used to when sitting in an open seat -- open leader, sorry.

Q. Have you received any recommendation for any drivers in this category?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I have spoke to a couple of them. I know a lot of them. I raced with a few of them since I was in go-karts. I think from everything that I've heard so far, everybody enjoys the championship, and they say it's very fun.

Q. How was the preparation for the INDYCAR test, and did it differ to the other series you've been in?

MICK SCHUMACHER: It really was pretty extensive. We've done a couple of days in the workshop, but then also we did a half a day in the sim. I think it compares pretty similarly to what I've done so far in racing. It wasn't in any way, like, groundbreaking, but it's been definitely good to spend so much time with the team beforehand and be able to talk through some of the points that we're keen on trying, some of the points that we're feeling like would be important for the team, but for me as well to test.

I think that enabled us to have a very good, I would say, approach to today and a very structured approach, which is something that you definitely want.

Q. What was it like working with RLL? How well did they support you, and were they good to work with?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Yeah, they were great. I think it really feels like a family business and family-owned team, as you can feel that everybody enjoys what they're doing, and they're there because they're passionate about motorsports.

So, I mean, that's for sure something that I felt right from the get-go from walking into the workshop that everybody is very excited about racing and very keen to just have people trying their cars and seeing what feedback they have to obviously move forward and improve.

Q. What was your favorite part of the test? What was the most challenging part?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I think my favorite part was -- I guess favorite and most challenging part was to kind of get to know all the new words they used for racing. Like new tires isn't new tires. It's stickers here. First time they said it, I was like, What is stickers?

Communication is a bit different. Obviously we're doing things in feet, yards. PSI here is not so different because that's what we did in F1. Yeah, pounds is something completely new to me.

Yeah, a lot of the things were a bit different, but it's good to work with another metric as well and get to know it.

Q. A lot of people from Europe are now going with Indy NXT and INDYCAR, and a few of the people on the grid currently you raced with in F2. Did that influence your decision to participate in this test at all, or was it always something you wanted to do?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Yeah, not really. I definitely always wanted to try it. I've been following it here and there since a couple of years.

I saw a couple of the guys who are racing here, and they all said it was very fun. Therefore, yeah, it did definitely somewhat spiked my interest, but it wasn't a key element that people that I've used to race with that are over here, that that's the reason why I came.

Q. Finally, if you do come to INDYCAR and join the grid next year, what can you take from your time in Endurance and in F1 to help you in INDYCAR?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I think in any championship it's helpful to have the background knowledge of all these different categories and different cars, because they will all teach you something new and different, right?

Personally, I take a lot of my knowledge and kind of put it all together so that it fits the best wherever I go. Whether that's INDYCAR or another place, it will always help me to move on and move forward and essentially be a better driver, but also a better driver for the team.

THE MODERATOR: I don't know if you heard the phrase "box, box" in your ear today, but that's a recent addition to INDYCAR, which I know you're familiar with overseas. It's evolving.

MICK SCHUMACHER: Box, box? What did you say before? Did you say pit?

THE MODERATOR: Pit.

Q. I was going to ask you if you spoke to your F2 contemporaries, particularly Christian and Callum, but I think we've kind of covered that. I want to talk about the fact that you did the Indy road course. It's one that's been very popular with European drivers when they've come over. I wonder if that was a conscious decision to do the road course? What do you like to do somewhere else like Mid-Ohio or Barber or some of the other great tracks around America?

MICK SCHUMACHER: It wasn't a conscious decision, actually. It just happened to fall well into the plan. So I didn't actually know it was a very -- like, the track for Europeans.

I did enjoy the track. It was good. Obviously very old-school. I like it. You get punished if you make a little mistake, but not in a bad way. You just go off into the grass, for example.

Yeah, I mean, to come back to your first question that you didn't ask, I did talk to Callum a lot about it. I saw him a couple of times in the WEC field when he was racing, and we actually spoke a bit about INDYCAR. So, yeah, I did talk to some of the guys.

Q. Can you just talk to me a little bit about the differences between driving the INDYCAR to driving a Formula 1 car?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Yeah, obviously I think it's all a bit more, I would say, maybe that sounds bad, but a bit more old-school. In an INDYCAR it's more rough and an F1 is probably more fine-tuned. Like aero pieces are important and crucial. If one little piece doesn't sit right, it can affect the whole car. There's a bit of a different approach to it being -- like INDYCAR being a spec series, might have a lot to do with that, because they want to keep the costs down, whereas in F1 that's something if you have more money available, you'll use it.

The procedures are a bit different and sometimes, I would say, clinical in F1 and very precise, whilst here it's maybe a bit more -- yeah, the term I used before, rough and a bit more contact to the road.

Like the fact that they don't really have a skid was very interesting to me. That it's just the tub that is the limit. As long as you don't break the tub, you're good to go down. There are a couple of differences, a couple of differences that are very interesting.

I think both, again, have the ability to -- I think you can use stuff from INDYCAR, bring it over to Formula 1, but vice versa, I think there's a lot you can bring from Formula 1

into INDYCAR to maybe improve.

Q. How did this whole opportunity come together for you, Mick? What enticed you to say, you know, I'm going to go test out the INDYCAR at Indianapolis?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I think just the fact that I wanted to try the car. It was pretty simple as that. It was very interesting to see what that would be about and how it would feel to drive an INDYCAR and actually if it is as heavy as everybody says it is, which it wasn't, so it's a good thing, right?

I think overall the decision was very easy for me to say I'll try it and just happened to be here in Indianapolis.

Q. What was your initial reaction to getting in an open-wheel car around such an historic racetrack? What was going through your mind kind of when you got off the pit lane and started going around the road course?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Honestly, not much. I was focused on driving, driving and doing my plan. I think I'm here to essentially kind of do a job. Hence, why I wasn't really, let's say, driving through nostalgia, but driving through the here and now and trying to focus on what I had to do.

Q. About a possible future driving full-time INDYCAR, is there a specific aspect of the NTT INDYCAR SERIES that attracts you the most to it?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Yeah, I think probably the one word that stuck the most with me that somebody told me who works here in INDYCAR, that the most important aspect of that team or, let's say, of making a decision is the driver at the end of the day. The fact that they rely so heavily on the driver is something that really spiked my interest and made it interesting for me to come out and try.

Q. Earlier you talked about you having several options for 2026. Can you elaborate on that one in terms of racing series? Is it now a matter of you choosing between either WEC or INDYCAR, or is there a surprise third option perhaps?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Sorry. I didn't understand the first part. What was the first part of the question?

Q. You said you had several options for next year. Can you elaborate on that one in terms of racing series a little bit? Is it you choosing between WEC or INDYCAR, or might there be a surprise third racing series? IMSA, for example.

MICK SCHUMACHER: I won't go into detail, because I don't think it's really necessary. Yeah, I do have the options and, again, INDYCAR is one of them, as is, yeah, some other ones out there.

It's a matter of me trying to just figure out what I want to do. Again, I probably won't take too long to make that decision. Then, yeah, I'll make sure to let everybody know.

Q. So if you decide to move to INDYCAR, what would matter most to you? Like, immediate results or a long-term project to adapt and grow?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I think that's very far into the future. I guess something to think about at another point. I'm happy that I managed to do the first test, and we got everything out of it that we were hoping. Yeah, in terms of results and stuff, I think that that's something to think about for another day.

Q. Why do you think INDYCAR is becoming more popular between drivers, like European drivers are getting more attracted to moving to INDYCAR?

MICK SCHUMACHER: It's a good question. I don't know. I think it's a fun series. I think, therefore, a lot of people are keen to try it out. I was certainly and curious about what the car felt like.

Yeah, I think there's a certain appeal as well in Racing America. I feel like they're great fans, very fun to be around. I think they're, yeah, great people to put a show out on the racetrack.

Q. You spent most of your career within the FIA ecosystem. If a full-time move to INDYCAR became realistic, would that affect your ambitions to eventually return to Formula 1?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Sorry. Can you ask that one again?

Q. You've spent most of your career within the FIA, the feeder series F1, and now in WEC. If full-time in INDYCAR became realist, would that affect your ambitions to return to Formula 1, because it's so far away?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I see. I do not believe that it would be in the way of coming back, no. I think INDYCAR has great talent and great people racing in it. Yeah, I don't think it would stop somebody from moving back to Formula 1.

Q. My interest is you're a professional driver. You don't just go out and just do a track day because it's fun. You're seriously considering INDYCAR. Is there anything about the variants of the types of racing that we have, whether it's -- I know you haven't done ovals, but we have short ovals, large ovals, you know, dedicated road courses, as well as street courses. Are there any races out there that interest you, any tracks that interest you, given that you are looking into this NTT INDYCAR SERIES approach?

MICK SCHUMACHER: There are great tracks out there. I think one of the big points, it is one of those places where you will find more old-school racetracks than new ones, and I think everybody kind of understands what I mean with that. I think that aspect is pretty fun.

Also, street circuits are usually very challenging, and they demand a lot from a racing driver. Yeah, I think there's a good mix from racetracks out there at the INDYCAR SERIES.

I don't want to talk too much about ovals. That's why I didn't kind of go there. Yeah, as I said earlier in this meeting, I am considering at some point maybe doing an oval just to see what it's about, whether that's going to be a short, mid, or long oval, I don't know. I didn't know there were those three different lengths to it.

But, yeah, I think, again, the series is a great series. It's a spec series, but still, there is some development you can do from team to team. So, yeah, racing seems fun. We'll see what opportunities it might have for me.

Q. Finally, outside of the Indy 500, are there any specific races that you may have watched on television, and you go, Boy, I could myself in a car on that track? Are there any tracks that call to you?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I don't know how to really answer that, because I did watch a couple of tracks, but it's hard to really kind of feel that way if you haven't driven it.

I definitely am interested in seeing some other tracks out there. Today was good to be here to see this track. It was definitely a fun one. Racing, I'm sure, is a great pleasure here.

But, yeah, there's no real knowledge of mine that would say, okay, that one track is one that I would like to race on, for now.

THE MODERATOR: Mick, thank you very much. Great to see you on a track, regardless whatever happens here in the future. It was wonderful to see you, though, in NTT



INDYCAR SERIES machinery. Great to see a
Schumacher back on the IMF road course. Thank you for
your time.

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