

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Rinus VeeKay

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: As you know, another piece of the puzzle for 2026 was announced roughly an hour ago as Rinus VeeKay now joined Juncos Hollinger Racing. Rinus had a very strong season this past year with the podium on the Streets of Toronto among two top 5s, seven top 10s.

Next year will mark his seventh season in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES. Where has the time gone, Rinus? As this morning's announcement pointed out, Rinus's signing is the first of several upcoming initiatives by Juncos Hollinger Racing to cement its position as a consistent challenger in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES.

With that, Rinus joins us this morning. Rinus, congratulations. Tell us about how this opportunity came together.

RINUS VEEKAY: Yeah, thank you very much. I'm very excited, definitely. So, yeah, it came together. Of course, I knew Ricardo already from our time in the Road to Indy, the championship we won, and the vice championship in Indy NXT.

We already knew each other. We always talked to each other, obviously see each other around.

Yeah, we were both interested to working together for this season, and we met up a few times in the last season. I talked to the new people from -- the H in JHR. And I really liked their mentality, their ambition, and basically everything they told me really aligned with how I think about what needs to be done to be successful.

It was an easy match. I think everybody is as excited to start the new season.

THE MODERATOR: Maybe also notable, back with Chevrolet Power for next year. Definitely had a very successful season last year. How did that set up an opportunity for you like this here in 2026?

RINUS VEEKAY: Yeah, I mean, it's kind of like coming home after doing five seasons with Chevy Power. Of

course, had five incredible 500s and qualifying efforts at the 500.

Yeah, I'm really excited to come back, but ultimately, you know, the biggest decision for me to go to Juncos Hollinger Racing was the team itself.

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

Q. Rinus, there was some talk you potentially could stay at Coyne, potentially go to Foyt, go to JHR. How long did it take to get this finalized, and how many maybe different teams did you think you might be racing for this year before this decision was made?

RINUS VEEKAY: Not too many, actually. I kind of touched with JHR pretty early, and it didn't take us very long to get a deal done and then all get happy with the terms.

For me it was really between Dale Coyne Racing and Juncos Hollinger Racing. Those were, for me, the big options for 2026.

It's always hard to make a decision like that, especially having a very successful season with Dale Coyne Racing in 2025. You think about it. You look in some different kind of perspectives. For me this clearly was the best move for me for the future.

Q. Next season, two of the first three races you would consider potentially new tracks, right? You have Arlington, and some guys have probably raced Phoenix, but relatively a new track. Is that a good thing for your organization, or is that a bigger challenge when going up against some of the bigger, more deep organizations?

RINUS VEEKAY: I would say it's 50/50. For everybody out there, it's about getting it right, getting the philosophy right and just knowing what the track is like and mastering it.

I think right now with the car being as old as it is, everybody has kind of figured out what it needs to a certain type of track. Yeah, definitely with the technologies that

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Juncos Hollinger Racing has, I think we should have a pretty quick start to the season.

I myself, having driven for two totally different teams, can bring a lot of just know-how and knowledge to the team to speed up that process.

Q. I just wondered, obviously I know it wasn't ideal the way in which things ended with ECR, but how beneficial did you find it last year obviously for the first time in your career after five years with the same team actually going to a different environment, and how much did that ultimately help you to grow as a driver?

RINUS VEEKAY: Yeah, actually I think at the time I didn't think so, but it was probably the best thing for my career to have a change of scenery. You know, at ECR I came in as a rookie, kind of got comfortable there. Yeah, I just always had the same infrastructure around me.

Now, last year with Dale Coyne Racing and really I was really honored, I needed to prove myself. I really was a lot more involved with the team and learned a lot more in one season than I would in one season with ECR, being there for five years.

So a lot of new people. Two different race engineers, as well. I think that also showed Juncos Hollinger Racing what I can do, because if you are at a team for five years, nobody really knows how good it is. So if I go to another team and what I did with Dale Coyne Racing raised enough eyebrows where Juncos Hollinger Racing was very interested in me, and the same way the other way around.

Q. Obviously the race teams came together and found you in a time where you were struggling and obviously didn't have a ride, and they had had a bit of a tough year, as well. Can you just give a word to Dale Coyne Racing and reflect on the year that you had there and ultimately the importance of the role that they have played in your career, even if it has only ended up being that single year?

RINUS VEEKAY: Yeah, for me it was a great year. Probably my best year in my INDYCAR career. Giving me the opportunity, and I think the same the other way around. We needed to help each other. They came off a really rough season and for me, the position I was in, we really needed each other.

I mean, what we've done together has been great. It's been a lot of fun for me. I think I've driven the best season I could have, made minimal mistakes and really, really mastered the INDYCAR race craft. It's been really good.

Yeah, I think whatever the future holds, definitely the upcoming season with Juncos Hollinger Racing, I will benefit from what I've learned at Dale Coyne Racing.

Q. What were maybe some of the reasons behind deciding to obviously leave Dale Coyne and then ultimately making the switch to Juncos? What were the big appeals for you making this move this year?

RINUS VEEKAY: I see a lot of ambition, a lot of good people with incredible track records working at the team, and I think the team is a lot better than what they have been able to show. So I think with me coming into the team, showing what I've done to Dale Coyne Racing last year, not only as a driver, but also in really leading the team into making the right decisions, altogether I think we can do really well.

Yeah, I mean, the car is already great, but then on the road and street courses I can help them a lot, and I think we can be a consistent contender for top 5s and top 10s.

Q. Do you see this as a long-term project, or is it for now a single year, see how it goes? Obviously a lot of movement expected in the driver market next summer, of course.

RINUS VEEKAY: That's one thing, but for me it's for a number of years where, you know, I really want to help this team get where they deserve to be and, yeah, work with them in the future and really hope to get them into one of the top teams.

Q. Obviously it was a very late deal with Coyne. How important was it to get this done nice and early ahead of the winter so you can plan the season ahead? You mentioned the H. Obviously Brad, we're familiar over in Europe with his time in F1 with Williams. I wanted to know a little bit more about the impression that Brad made on you when you chatted to him.

RINUS VEEKAY: It's really nice to get everything done nice and early. Definitely it's nice to work a whole offseason. Even though it's very long, we don't get to drive very much. We still can get a lot done with the team, especially being new. Getting to know the names, doing pit stop practice, really getting that brotherhood ready for the season, especially since this one kicks off so quick.

Then, yeah, I mean, having to get to know Brad was very nice. He's really excited and really wants to win really badly. So do I, so I think that ambition, that just really the wanting to do everything they can possibly to win is something I share.



I think them hiring me is step one for their move to become one of the top teams, so that's what I'm really excited for. Brad knows when needs to be done to be successful, so I'm really excited.

Yeah, I've just known them as a person, just met them on the phone. I'm really excited to come into the team and really become a regular at the shop floor.

Q. The team last year at JHR, they kind of got better at ovals with Conor and Sting Ray. How exciting is it to kind of build on that, not only at the 500, but with Milwaukee, Nashville, and Gateway?

RINUS VEEKAY: Yeah, I'm really excited. That's one thing I struggled with a little bit last year. I think that's not a secret that with Coyne we struggled a bit on the ovals. An oval becomes a lot of fun when the car works the way you want it to, so I'm really excited for that.

Yeah, I think I love oval racing, but a car is just very important there. It's going to be a lot of fun, and the same for road and street courses. I think we can qualify really well with that car and keep racing up in the front and put ourselves in a position to get on the podiums all the time.

Q. 2026 will be the third different team you've driven for in the last three seasons. How important is the ability for you from here?

RINUS VEEKAY: There's been a bit more hopping than I expected a few years ago, but no, it's been really good. I think last season really showed what I can do to a team and as driver, too. I think a new infrastructure, a clean slate really helps.

Yeah, now being with Juncos Hollinger Racing I'm really excited to get started and get a lot of success together, like we have had in the Road to Indy. We've won 13 races and a championship, so it would be incredible to match that in INDYCAR.

Q. You said that JHR feels like a return home. Do you think your transition period will be easier than others moving to a different team?

RINUS VEEKAY: Yeah, definitely. I've worked with a lot of people inside the team. Not only the Argentinians, but a lot of the Brits that come from a long time ago with Carlin Racing.

I know a lot of people on the team. Of course, I'm going to have to remember a lot of new names, but it's going to be very exciting. I live 25 minutes from the shop, so it will be

easy to go in and get some work done.

Q. 2026 will be your seventh season in the INDYCAR SERIES. How much have you grown and improved as a driver since your debut? Is there any areas you feel like you can still improve on?

RINUS VEEKAY: I think there's always areas to improve on. Even for the greats, even for Scott Dixon, I think he still has some points.

No, for me I've grown a lot as a driver. I think really understanding how to build up a strategic INDYCAR race is just really hard. I figured that out really the last season and a half. It's made it just so much easier for me to make decisions in the car and be a little bit less dependent on what people tell me.

Q. How excited are you for the upcoming Indy 500, considering that both you and Juncos have done very well there over the last few years?

RINUS VEEKAY: Yes, I'm very excited, especially for the 500. Yeah, it was an important point in my decision just to really have a good car for the 500. I can also bring some information and just knowledge from myself from the last six seasons to, yeah, help the team.

I'm really excited. I think we can do very well. I can always say we have a shot at winning the 500. You never know what happens because Indy picks its winners, but I'm very excited. I think we can have a historic season together.

Q. How much growth have you seen in the team since your days there back in 2018 and 2019?

RINUS VEEKAY: Oh, a lot of growth. I can see the influence that Dave O'Neill has brought to the team and just the professionalism within the team. It seems like a very well-organized team.

Yeah, just cannot wait to get into the shop more often and learn more about how they work and really get involved a lot more. Yeah, I think it's going to be very, very easy to transition into the team. I think everybody just shares the same mindset.

Q. Will you kind of enjoy the challenge of fighting with perhaps in some races with the big dogs, with the big teams with this smaller team like Juncos still is at the moment?

RINUS VEEKAY: Well, of course. I always like to make it hard on everybody when I race. My goal is to make Juncos Hollinger Racing one of the top teams.



Yeah, I think their number one step in becoming one is signing me and really, really get good results. I'm excited. I think we can do great, and I think they can give me the car to be comfortable driving in the front.

Q. You said early on that you and the team really see eye to eye on what needs to be done to be successful. What are some of those things that need to be done?

RINUS VEEKAY: A lot of it is approach. Not necessarily investments. I think everybody talks about dampers. It is very important, but it's also important to keep the basics. You know, really master the basics, like we did at Dale Coyne Racing last year.

I see they have a lot of really good people and really good just -- yeah, a lot of good stuff they can work with. For me you have a lot of data, but still a driver needs to tell a team what needs to happen, what it's supposed to feel like, and what do we need to chase.

The last season and a half I've really began to master what this car needs to feel like, what we need to chase in INDYCAR to be quick, and even if you don't have the car to win some weekends, you can really maximize on some other parts.

Yeah, you know, it's a shared effort with everybody together, but I think really getting that team all together and working together when we're not racing is very important.

Q. You're going to be obviously joining a new team with a new teammate in Sting Ray Robb. Can you talk about the relationship for your teammate and how important that is to you coming to a new team?

RINUS VEEKAY: Yeah, I've known Sting Ray for a while. He's a great guy. I've heard no bad stories about him. I've never raced with him in cars, I think, but no, he's a great guy. Yeah, I've always enjoyed seeing him around.

Q. You last season performed ended up in a high with the Toronto podium. You said that early before that you have been in conversations between Dale Coyne and JHR. Apart of those options, did you have any other option on the table? At the moment when the season finished because when Will go to Andretti, and there was that side, yeah, were you in contention for one of those seats?

RINUS VEEKAY: You always try to find out. You always want to see what your options are at all times, but it never showed like we were -- like I was a definite option. I looked at the cards we had, and we made the right decision, I'm

very sure.

Yeah, I mean, we've inquired, but for now, yeah, the right decision by a mile is going for Juncos Hollinger Racing.

Q. I'm thinking about you can talk also about what is the potential that you see in Juncos Hollinger, because you mentioned something about it.

RINUS VEEKAY: Yeah, I just see what they can do with their results the last few seasons. They've shown a lot of signs of a really quick car and success. They've just been lacking the consistency to do it every time. I think that's what I can bring to the team.

I think the team is a lot better than other people think. When I see how they run the team, when I see how -- when I see their cars and see how the car handles, it just looks really comfortable. I think the car has a lot more pace than I think has been shown. I'm excited to give it a spin and see what it really can do.

Q. Do you know the family in Juncos? We know the difference that you already have with your family growing and having trouble in the time you were away. What do you see in the team, like in this small family science to this, the team is trying to grow to a bigger thing?

RINUS VEEKAY: Yes. I mean, we're all trying to get to the top. Yeah, the ambition between Juncos Hollinger Racing and me is the same. We both want to become the top. Of course, I've already known Ricardo for a while, having a lot of success with him in the Road to Indy.

There's something about the South America temperament that I really like. They don't give up, and whatever they can do, they do it to be successful. That's what I really share.

It's just really nice and ready to meet everybody on the team. My wife has been accepted very welcoming to the team. It's just been really nice already, very family-like, like you said. Yeah, just cannot wait to really get started on the job.

Q. Do you have any preference to have a Chevy on your side again, or it's not that big a deal for your side?

RINUS VEEKAY: You can be successful with both. One track the Chevy is going to be quicker. One track the Honda is going to be quicker. From what I've known, the grass is always greener on the other side.

No, I'm excited to be back with Chevy, and I'm sure we can



be very successful together.

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Q. I was just wondering, obviously because Dale Coyne and JHR are two quite similar teams, some of the smaller teams that are often kind of punching above their weight a bit, so from a leadership perspective from yourself now as kind of that team leader, like you were last year, what qualities do you feel that you have brought to the Dale Coyne team that really helps that you could also maybe transfer this year to help JHR too?

RINUS VEEKAY: I really think guidance. There's infinite things to look at on an INDYCAR and how to make it quicker, but altogether it's what can they do to make the car respond to my influence the best?

I've been able to show that really well with Dale Coyne Racing. I tell them what to fix, and it's being fixed. We keep it very basic, but in the end I've shown to be a good driver in INDYCAR in the past few years.

I think my leadership within the team -- you know, we're having a lot of fun. That's one thing. Fun is very important, but also just communication within the team to really tell them, Hey, we need to work on this and this, I don't like how the dampers feel, stuff like that.

I can pinpoint and narrow the search to what they need to fix.

Q. You mentioned that sort of kind of keeping that feeling good. Obviously Dale Coyne had the tough situation at Indy last year, and it felt like you really helped to pick Jacob up. How important is it for you as well to make sure as that kind of lead driver, more experienced driver, you are also lifting your teammates up and kind of keeping that morale high in situations like you had in May?

RINUS VEEKAY: Well, that's the thing, I'm being hired to make the team better. That's their reason for hiring me, to make the team more successful. That's my job description. That's what I'm going to do.

Yeah, I have to think big-picture with the team to bring everybody up. Even though racing can seem like a very selfish sport, it's still a lot of people behind the scenes that make everything work.

You've got to be a team player, and I'm excited to be one, again, here with Juncos Hollinger Racing.

THE MODERATOR: Rinus, congratulations. Thanks for your time.

