

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Tuesday, November 25, 2025

Bobby Rahal

Jay Frye

Mick Schumacher

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good morning, everyone, or good afternoon if you're joining us overseas. As we all know and the reason we're gathered here today, the week started with big, big news in the NTT INDYCAR Series as Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing announced the addition of Mick Schumacher to their three-car full-time team.

Mick is impressive; his world-class resume includes 43 starts in Formula 1 and three podium finishes in the World Endurance Challenge.

Also as part of the announcement yesterday it was revealed that Mick will drive the No. 47 Honda for Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing. Mick joins us today, as does the co-owner of Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing, Bobby Rahal - good morning to you - and the team president of RLL in Jay Frye. Good morning to all of you guys and good afternoon to Mick.

Mick, how excited are you to start this new chapter in your racing career?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Hi, everybody. Very exciting news. So excited we got it out early, so really good. I think we're all very keen to get the season going.

I think there's plenty of work still to be done to get me up to speed, but I believe that's why everything has gone so smoothly already the first test that I'm sure there will be no problem to get that going, as well.

Q. I've got to ask you about the No. 47; what does it represent to you and the family?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Yeah, I mean, to me, the No. 47 was obviously a choice at the time to go in Formula 1. Mainly I wanted No. 4, that wasn't available; I wanted No. 7, that wasn't available, either. So I kind of combined the two, and then there were so many little funny twists with

that number. As I saw that it was basically available in INDYCAR, I was like, okay, I would love to, if possible, get it for the car as well, and it did, so it worked out, and I'm super happy to have it back on the car. It just makes things very simple and nice for me to see.

THE MODERATOR: Bobby, congratulations. How big a move is this for your race team?

BOBBY RAHAL: Well, I give tremendous credit to Jay for really making this all happen. It was his energy that we were able to get this all together. My friend Dirk Müller who drove for us as part of our BMW team for a number of years was instrumental in getting us together with Mick.

We did the test, as everyone knows, and it went very, very well. Everybody was just so impressed with Mick, not just his pace and all that, but his persona, his humility. Just the way he went about his work was really impressive to people within our organization.

I think that was a big reason why we worked hard to try to put all this together. I'm really thrilled because I think between Mick, Graham and Louis, we've got three strong players, probably the three strongest we've ever had as a three-car team at least. I feel very good about our future together and just really pleased to welcome Mick into the organization, and I know it's going to be a successful experience for everyone.

THE MODERATOR: Jay, congratulations. Coming off Mick's test on the IMS road course, what was it that impressed you about maybe the feedback he provided and how quickly did you know this was going to be a perfect fit for this race team?

JAY FRYE: Well, thank you, Dave. It was pretty quick, and when we say quick, we were fortunate to have Mick come in for the test. It was a four- or five-day thing. We came in on a sim, we did seat fittings so we had a lot of activities over a four-day period, which was really cool. Then obviously the test went very well.

If you look at it, I think Mick has 5 or 6 million social media followers, that type of thing. Certainly after those four days, he had 150 new followers that were part of the RLL



team, so it was an amazing experience. Excited about the future, excited we were able to put this together.

A lot has happened in the last month, and then a lot is going to have to happen in the next month, too, but we're up for the challenge and ready to go.

THE MODERATOR: The countdown to 2026 is on. With that, we'll go ahead and open it up for questions.

Q. Mick, I'm curious, was there anything you were looking for at the test at Indy and/or anything that you experienced during the test at Indy that convinced you that this was the right path to go?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Yeah, obviously I just wanted to see the car, wanted to know how it feels to drive. But I think ultimately it was also just the passion that people had, to see that and to see how excited they were about racing. They showed me this is something I could see myself in and working in as an environment.

Definitely I think as a whole, it has been a very good experience, and I guess therefore I just wanted to seal it and make sure that I can get more of that in the next year.

Q. I'm not sure what your F1 aspirations were before this, but does this have any impact on how you feel about potentially trying to get back to F1?

MICK SCHUMACHER: No, I think that in any case, obviously the world of F1 is a very specific one and a special one, but obviously it's still a single seater. I think that there's been plenty of great drivers, and numerous also settled into affiliation with some other teams in F1 for good reason, so I don't see why the move to INDYCAR would close that door, no.

Q. In the week since the test, what has the decision-making process been for you to determine that this was the right option for your future? What was on the table for you for next year, and how did you come to this eventual decision of INDYCAR?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Well, I think that ultimately for me, it was just interesting to exploit that single-seater route again and kind of be more settled in it.

Obviously I think to me then INDYCAR was the best option. I just had to kind of confirm it to me and to everybody around me that this is something that I could see myself doing for the long-term, and therefore, yeah, I think that the decision-making process was pretty simple. It was just trying to figure out, okay, how committed would I be, and obviously I wouldn't be here if I wouldn't be 100

percent committed.

Yeah, I'm very excited for it. I think it's a great championship. Obviously looking forward to the oval testing. It's something that still is on the cards, and trying to explore that.

But to me it was important not to do like a half thing but actually go in and do it 100 percent, and definitely ovals are a part of that. I've had good conversations with people around who had good and bad views on it, and I just had to make an average out of that and decide it for myself.

Q. I'd like to follow up on the oval factor because I know a lot of people from the F1 world kind of mention this perceived danger of INDYCAR. Do you have any feelings on that front? Was that something you kind of weighed up?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Yeah, of course it's something that I've been thinking about. But on the other hand, I think motorsports on the whole is dangerous, so I don't really see why particularly that one thing should be more dangerous than anything else.

Obviously there's been multiple things, and Jay has been a big part of that, in making oval racing or just racing in INDYCAR safer, and therefore we've had multiple conversations about that, and they've all been positive to my ears. So yeah, that's why I ultimately took the decision, and I don't think there's really -- of course it's not to be taken on the easy shoulder. I don't take it on the easy shoulder. I think that it is crazy speeds; it is super quick. We're obviously racing hard side by side. But I accept the risk for the enjoyment of the racing's sake.

Q. For Jay, I know you've only been here since earlier this year, but the team has seen a lot of changes in recent years. I know this is your first off-season leading them. You've signed Mick, you've signed Louis; there's more high-profile personnel coming up. Why do you think for the team this year could be different and this could be the year where they really kind of kick on?

JAY FRYE: Well, thank you. Kind of what you just said. There's been a transformation of kind of the entire team. We've got tremendous commitment from the team owners, from Bobby, Mike and Dave. They've put a lot into this organization. There's going to be a lot of things that we've, I guess, not announced yet. Obviously we just did a deal with McLaren on the IMSA side, which is big; this thing with Mick; you mentioned Louis. We've brought in probably 10 new people to the office to this point.

Obviously like I mentioned a minute ago, over the next month there's going to be a lot of new things happening with Mick and with Mick's team. We've already over the past month started kind of working quietly on what that could look like. Obviously with today and yesterday's announcement we can go full speed ahead.

We're excited about 2026. It's going to look a lot different than it did in 2025, and like Bobby mentioned, it looks like we're in a good spot from a historical perspective with the team, so just excited to get started.

Q. What is on the agenda in terms of a testing platform, Mick?

JAY FRYE: So probably we're going to kind of -- we've thought about how to divide it up. It's probably going to be four oval tests, two road courses and then one street course, which will be Sebring. Three of those have been already scheduled and the other ones we're working on now to see how it fits throughout the race calendar, too. It'll probably be four, two and one.

Q. Mick, what would have to happen in 2026 for you to classify that as a success, and what are your goals for next year?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Yeah, good question. I think that obviously everything will be pretty much new to me. A lot of the racetracks are new, oval racing will be new, so there's a lot of things that I still have to understand, to learn. Obviously have great teammates alongside me, who one has a lot of experience and one who has just had fresh experience.

I think I have a good combination there of kind of pointers to go off.

What would be a success, I think honestly ultimately just the feeling that we've been able to put everything in place and that we put ourselves, let's say, as a target. What that target exactly will be, I think that's something we'll have to figure out as we go and kind of match our expectations to what we can achieve.

But I am very positive. I think there's lots of good things out there and lots of good things happening at the moment, so I don't want to say, okay, this is a target right now, but definitely our aim is to do our best, and that will be figure it out along the way.

Q. You mentioned the simulator earlier. Have you done any oval running on the simulator, and has any of that surprised you with the technicality of it, the technique of it, anything like that at all?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I mean, I've only done oval racing in my home sim, so nothing like on a scale of what we're going to be doing. Obviously it is technical for the reasons -- it being one of the harder races to go after is because of that closeness that you have from car to car, but obviously the speeds that you're going at, as well.

But no, overall I think I'm just very excited to get going in the real car, learn what it is about it, and also to get that wheel-to-wheel action in those ovals because I think there's a lot of things you could do good or could do bad, as it hurting performance-wise.

Yeah, definitely a lot to learn still, and I'm very excited and eager to learn. I'm sure we'll be able to do that all together.

Q. The INDYCAR calendar next year has no conflicts with IMSA sports cars. Is there any interest in doing any sports car racing in addition to your running in INDYCAR?

MICK SCHUMACHER: As previously mentioned, for me really this year is about being 100 percent focused on what I'm doing. I think it's already enough for me to kind of learn all the new things that I have to get after. So the focus really lies on that.

So no, I think the answer is I don't really see myself doing IMSA on the side.

Q. This might be better for Jay or for Bobby, but do we know who your race engineer will be, or does Bobby or Jay know?

BOBBY RAHAL: I think Jay is in charge of that, so I'll let him answer that one.

JAY FRYE: Not yet. Obviously that's something we've been -- what I mentioned earlier about quietly talking to others. There will be some announcements coming up in the next couple weeks.

Q. Mick, obviously every driver who will go through INDYCAR dreams of racing at the Indy 500, but are there other tracks you're more excited to discover?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Honestly, I'm excited to discover all of them. Why not? I think there's some really cool tracks out there. I think the Indy 500 obviously is pretty intense and a very special and historic track. But I think overall I'm very much looking forward to getting to know all of them.

I think there are very exciting tracks out there. Obviously



the car being the way it is with no power steering makes things also quite exciting. Yeah, I'm trying to beef up a little bit and be as strong as I can for it and be ready for whatever comes my way.

I think from what I understood, Barber is one of the harder tracks to race on. Will be definitely interesting, and I'm looking forward to it.

Q. You said that INDYCAR is more about pure and direct racing. Can you elaborate on what that means to you, like how important it is to you?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Yeah, I think it reminds me a little bit of good old karting days. I think pretty similar to how WEC racing was. There's a lot of side-by-side and maybe a little touch here and there. From what I understand, the cars are pretty robust, as well, when it comes to side-by-side action, and I've talked to a couple other drivers, and they really enjoy the racing side of things.

I think for me, it was really just about getting into my own car and doing and feeling that and kind of being able to take the opportunities that are given to me, and therefore, yeah, I'm just purely excited for the great racing that there will be and the fun that will bring up and create.

Q. So you will run alongside Louis Foster and Graham Rahal. How do you plan to leverage their experience?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Well, since obviously joining WEC, I've kind of learnt this new approach, let's say, to teammates. Before that, it's obviously always trying to beat everybody, and I guess it's still kind of there, but you also understand that as long as you're not one, two, three in this case, there's no real reason to fight each other, and instead I think there's a great incentive to bring the team forward. I think that's what we're really all after.

Therefore I'm very excited to connect with them. I've spoken to Louis quite a bit already, about different things, and I'm very excited to meet Graham and kind of hear what his thoughts are about racing in Indy, and then move on with him and really try and all pull on the same cord so that we're going the right direction as a team.

Q. Mick, can you compare what the INDYCAR feels like compared to the F1 car, even the sports cars you've been driving, how the speed feels and that sort of thing?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Yeah, of course. The car has the windscreen, so there's a lot of air that is not really being brought to the driver, so compared to F1 I think that feeling of speed isn't quite as excessive or as crazy. In F1, one of

the big things that stands out is the speed that you have, acceleration in corners with the downforce that the cars create. Obviously we have quite a bit less downforce and quite a bit less power in the INDYCAR, so what I kind of referenced to was a bit more of a feeling like in an F2 car, just with better tires.

It is a car that you have to muscle around the track, so you kind of fight it quite a lot. You try and overdrive in some ways to get performance out of it. That is obviously very different to all the cars that I've been racing so far. You kind of try and underdrive an F1 car just to get the best performance out of it, to try and get the best performance out of the tires.

It is very tire driven, obviously. Championship-wise in WEC, it is a bit different. WEC you do have tendencies where you are really driving all out and try and get the best out of the tire and out of the car.

But I think INDYCAR just kind of sets a little bit higher bar when it comes to really pushing hard.

I've really enjoyed it. The test that I did in Indy has been really fun. Also learning more about the car, how it behaves, the little things that we can change here and there are very interesting, and I think, yeah, it's a different driving style. It's a different car, obviously, so I can't say if it's more fun or less fun than F1, but it's obviously racing a car, and I think there's nothing more fun than racing a car around a racetrack.

Q. In F1 when you start a race you have a pretty good idea where you're going to finish. It's very based on the car's performance. In INDYCAR almost anybody can win a race. You can't hide behind a car that's not a frontrunner. How fun is that for you as far as living up to that challenge?

MICK SCHUMACHER: No, it's great. I think it's the way it should be. I think it's great that you have so many different potential winners. It is down to yourself to really dig deep and try and get everything out of you.

Yeah, I'm very excited for it, and I think there's lots to look forward to.

Q. This is a question for Jay. You recently brought in Gavin Ward in a special advisory role. Part of what Gavin is great at is working with drivers and getting them up to speed, obviously winning a championship with Josef Newgarden. I wanted to know how much Gavin will be working with Mick and what else you have planned for Gavin for working with the team.

JAY FRYE: Yeah, Gavin has been here, I guess, a couple weeks. Obviously a great guy, phenomenal talent. Part of the thing or a lot of what we talked about when we were talking with him was the opportunity with Mick if that did happen, which obviously it has, which is great, so Gavin will be involved with the Mick program a lot, and part of what we talked about earlier about who the race engineer will be with Mick and that team, Gavin will be part of that decision-making process, too.

Q. Bobby, you had mentioned earlier on the call that this is kind of the strongest three-driver lineup you've had in a while at RLL. Can you explain what you see out of these three that separates them from past seasons?

BOBBY RAHAL: Well, I think it's like anything; a driver does not perform in a vacuum, right? And so it's all about the people. Any driver would tell you, it's not just down to him or them. You've got to have everything going.

I think this last year we saw great performance gains on a consistent basis in the road course, street courses. Between Graham and Louis, they were in the top six on multiple occasions, probably as many as I'd say some of the Penske guys or what have you.

Obviously we've brought people in to not just continue that progress but also to really step up the performance on the ovals. So I think when you look at this whole group now, bringing guys like Gavin in, Brian Barnhart, there's others that have come in that I think are going to be fundamental to our overall performance, and that will be able to give these guys cars that they can go out and do battle with.

I do think that both Louis and Graham fully understand that working with Mick can only help them, too, in the long-term.

I just feel very positive about the guys that we have driving these things now. A lot of experience, a lot of potentials. Louis did a super job last year for us, and it's only going to get better in my estimation.

Yeah, you add it all up, and I'm quite sure it's not going to take Mick very long to figure it out. I feel very strongly about our potential for 2026.

Q. Hearing Mick talk about the environment and everything that he felt from that test day with RLL, prior to Jay, do you feel like that environment was set up for somebody like Mick Schumacher to come over? Jay makes s--- happen, gets s--- done; he's got a lot of stuff done there. How proud are you to see where RLL has come this last year and rejuvenated to come into 2026 with some fresh momentum?

BOBBY RAHAL: Well, like I said, one of the reasons I asked Jay -- he and I have known each other for a number of years and had a lot of discussion. He's a fighter. He's a competitor. I just love that because I think that level of competition has to go from the top all the way to the bottom.

He knows teams, and I think we're already seeing the benefit of that.

As I said, I saw really good performances last year. Maybe not the finishes that we had hoped for. Maybe some mechanical issues or what have you. Detroit, Graham was leading and then had a wheel issue in a pit stop. Louis was right behind him.

There was a lot of indications that the competitive side was much better, and we're continuing to push that, and I think with the people we've added, it'll just get better.

I think a lot of that is the influence that Jay has brought into the organization, so I think -- and the people that he's brought in.

Yeah, I think I feel quite good about the situation that we've got in front of us.

I would also tell you that my partners, whether it's Mike Lanigan or Dave or Alex Wright have come in, and I think the passion to succeed is as strong with them as it is with me, and certainly as it is with Jay, and when you combine all that, it makes a pretty powerful force.

I think the horizon looks good. The sun has come up on the horizon, and we're going to have a good year in 2026.

Q. Mick, you said after that test in October that you wanted to make that decision on your future pretty soon after that test. When did you come to the conclusion, and when did you talk with Bobby, Jay and ramp up the conversations about wanting to sign this deal for 2026?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Yeah, obviously I think pretty soon after. It didn't take very long for me to kind of understand what I wanted. I think for me, again, it was just important that I knew that this car was fun to be driven around a racetrack. It surely was. But also the ambitions the team had and the efforts they put in also just for that one day of testing for me were obviously amazing.

I think in that sense, there was a lot of great spots here and there that really combined things and made it sure that I really wanted to do this. So yeah, pretty soon after, I was



sure that this was a good thing for me, so we started working on what a potential future would look like.

Q. Bobby, for you, you've been in the sport a long time, as a driver, as a team owner. You've seen it from all angles. If there was one piece of advice you would offer Mick for next season, what would it be?

BOBBY RAHAL: Well, everything Mick says, to be frank, I think is right on. His approach, his level of expectation, his -- I think as I mentioned when we first talked, when I first was speaking about Mick, just the way Mick goes about it I think is so important.

We've seen drivers come from Europe, and some have been successful over here, some haven't. And some were very, very good drivers in Europe at the time.

It's really about the approach. I think he's doing it. He's approaching it the way it should be, which is he knows it's going to take hard work. He knows he's going to have to work with his teammates. He knows he's going to have to be committed to it, which is so critical, which he made clear in this talk today that this is 100 percent of his effort, and I think that's so important.

This team is here to help Mick. We're here to create an environment, and we've always worked to create environments over the years that are beneficial to the guys driving the cars, in good days and bad days.

For us, it's all about creating the environment, getting the guys to work together for the betterment of not just themselves but the betterment of the team and their partners. I think that's the way it'll be approached by everyone.

I think we're in a pretty good spot there as we start this.

Q. Going from the feeder series in the formula European side to F1 and then endurance and now coming to Indy, what have the difference in the series taught you about your mental endurance and how to adapt to different forms of racing?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Yeah, I mean, obviously I've raced a couple different championships and different series, and on a very broad spectrum. I think just going into it, I think the mental side has always been important, but it always gets more and more important, especially when things are new, like in my case next year.

I think that being mentally resilient when things don't go well is an important task, and I think the previous years have taught me how to do that and how to deal with certain

situations. Therefore, yeah, I'm happily equipped with what I think I need for next year, and I'm very excited about it.

Q. There's three new tracks next year. Does that take any pressure off of you knowing that they're an unknown for everyone on the grid?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I've always been somebody who kind of has thrived under pressure, so I don't really mind having pressure. But I don't think it's a bad thing that there's three new tracks for everybody.

Obviously it's quite a change when you have driven on a -- I'd say it's an advantage if you have driven on a racetrack before because you get in and you have all the little insights on the racetrack that you need to kind of go out and be quick right away, so that will be lacking for me at some of the tracks.

But the sim work that we've done has been super helpful and super positive in which way I'm sure that it's going to be pretty good and easy to kind of get down to the speed that everybody else is doing pretty quickly. Yeah, why not; I'm excited about the three new tracks and excited to see what they'll be like.

Q. You were in the formula driver academy alongside some of the current INDYCAR drivers. Are you looking forward to getting back on track and battling with them next year?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Sure. Actually there are a lot of drivers that I've raced throughout my years in racing, and I think it's just going to be fun to see them again, catch up, but also race hard against them. So yeah, definitely.

Q. Coming to Bobby and Jay, what would you guys consider as a win for the team next year?

BOBBY RAHAL: For me, it's being competitive every race. Obviously you're looking for good finishes. This is a tough series. There's no -- everything has to go your way, really, in order to win a race.

For me, it's all about improvement every time we go out. It's consistent performance every race, regardless of the type of circuit it is. We do that, then we'll be in a good place.

First things first, and that's taking it day by day, doing the right job every day, being competitive every day, and then the results will come.

Q. I was wondering, you mentioned how you don't necessarily think that moving to INDYCAR closes the

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

book on Formula 1. I was wondering, how advanced did negotiations with the incoming Cadillac team get?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I mean, I think that the whole situation has been a tough one in some ways, but also I think understandably they went into a different direction. The information that I had up to pretty much the end, we'd been in contention for that seat, and then they went a different direction, which is fair enough, and it just led to me having to understand, okay, what do I want. Do I want to try and keep getting back on to the F1 grid or do I want to do racing that I enjoy. That's obviously single seaters, and yeah, thankfully the opportunity came up with a team, and I'm super glad and super happy to be here where I am now.

THE MODERATOR: We'll leave it there for now. To Mick, Bobby and Jay, thanks for this opportunity to catch up. Congratulations. Can't wait to see the No. 47 on track at the season opener at the Firestone Grand Prix of St. Petersburg and testing certainly before that. Thank you all three. Thank you, guys.

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