

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Tuesday, January 27, 2026

### Louis Foster

#### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Louis, are you ready to go here in 2026?

LOUIS FOSTER: Yes. Very ready. Itching.

#### Q. What do you look forward to the most?

LOUIS FOSTER: Honestly, just driving again. I haven't driven since Nashville. Kind of been a long time out of the seat really. But yeah, just looking forward to getting back into the swing of things. Nothing in particular.

#### Q. Hair game is strong.

LOUIS FOSTER: I was supposed to get it cut yesterday but because it's snowing, everything is shut. So I had a haircut place booked, and they were like, it's closed. I was like, Oh, God. It needs to be trimmed a little bit.

#### Q. The team hired Ryan Briscoe, announced it this week, as a driver coach. How excited are you to really be able to utilize him to improve your game?

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah, I think driver coaches are extremely important. If it's done right, they can be extremely valuable to the team. Not only to the drivers, but also to the engineers.

I have never worked with Ryan before, but I've only heard extremely positive things. Once we get to be able to sit in a room together, get to chat, get to know each other a bit more, yeah, I'm sure it will be great.

I think he did a great job for Prema last year. Obviously he's a very well-versed driver in INDYCAR, understands it very well.

For me, one of the big things driver coaches can be quite good at is almost translation between drivers and engineers. There's a mixture of language that's used. Sometimes the understanding can be helped to increase when there is a driver coach there to almost bridge that gap in a way. Looking forward to it.

**Q. Also bringing Mick Schumacher on as a teammate. How inspiring or excited are you to see that dynamic of having a guy, Michael Schumacher's son, as your teammate?**

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah, no, cool. Yeah, he's come ahead to INDYCAR to prove himself here. It's a big step for him from where his career was, a big move should I say, to come over here and kind of put all of his eggs in one basket out in America. It takes a lot of guts and courage to do that.

Clearly his head is in the right space. Clearly he wants to be here long-term. Yeah, I mean, we'll see how it goes and see how testing goes. Obviously there's going to be some things he's going to need to get up to speed on with the American ways of racing, with the tires, the car, all those things.

I'm looking forward to it. I'm hoping he can bring his experience in Formula 1 across. I think for me that is the part, if that can be brought across, that can help us as a team at the end of the day. That's what I care about, the team doing better, us all reaping the rewards of each other's knowledges and successes.

**Q. How much have you been able to interact with him to this point?**

LOUIS FOSTER: Not a ton, to be honest with you. He's been in a little bit. Obviously he still lives in I think Germany or Switzerland maybe. He's been in a little bit for some seat fits and stuff. I think they're quite focused on getting him ready for the oval testing. I was there for his test at INS on the day. Spoke to him beforehand a little bit to give him some food for thought.

At the end of the day it's a single seat. The guy has done many, many years of single seater racing. He doesn't need me to how to drive a car. Simple as that. I think he'll be fine.

But yeah, no, he's been super nice guy, super thoughtful with the team. The team loves him. I'm looking forward to getting to work with him. I think it will be a good thing for

... when all is said, we're done.®



the team. I think it's a person in position that we can really have all three drivers fighting to improve. Yeah, I think there's only positives from it.

**Q. When you talked about him coming over, bringing over Formula 1 experience, what specifically does this team need to move up?**

LOUIS FOSTER: I don't know 'cause I haven't driven in Formula 1. That's a question you should probably ask Mick.

**Q. What do you think he can bring?**

LOUIS FOSTER: I mean, from my understanding, again like I said, I don't have the experience that he has in that world, so I don't feel I can speak on it in detail.

But from my understanding, Formula 1 is a very technical sport. There's a lot of data-driven, I would assume. I think there's certain ways of looking at things that Formula 1 has that INDYCAR doesn't look at things certain ways.

So I think that once we kind of get into a bit through the season, Mick kind of has an understanding of how things work over here, maybe he can bring some new ideas. He's already got new ideas. He's a very detail-oriented guy. There's already things he brought up, yeah, probably not a bad idea.

Just general things really. If he sees something that he thinks might be off or might not be the kind of thing they would do in Formula 1, he has an idea, we'll try it and see how it goes.

But yeah, I think just a general knowledge base. Again, it's hard for me to answer because I don't have that understanding in Formula 1. I didn't go over there and do that.

**Q. You had incredible pace last year but in the races things fell off. What did you learn through the first season to maintain that pace through the races?**

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah, there was a lot of things. I think each weekend for us, the difficulty was it always tended to be something just slightly different. If we had one issue, we worked towards fixing that issue. We didn't master it immediately, but we got better.

Then the next weekend there would be something different. To give you some perspective, at IMS, after starting third, I killed my tires. We worked on that massively for Detroit. I learned a lot of things, understood different ways to go about it.

And then the next race where we started well, like Road America, we had the wrong setup on the car. We had too much wing and we had too much understeer in the car and we were just slow.

To another race weekend where I've a good result, Mid-Ohio we picked at a very bad time and got stuck in traffic and that cut our race.

So it was always different things. I think it's taking all of those hits on the chin, learning from them, trying not to do those mistakes again.

So really there isn't one specific thing. I wish there was because it would make my life a hell of a lot easier if it was just one thing. As it always is in this sport, it's not always one thing. It's a lot of different small, minute things that add up. That's the difference between being successful in INDYCAR racing and not.

Yeah, we learned a lot of things. I go into the season with a lot more knowledge, 10 times the amount of knowledge I went in with last year. Yeah, I think we can start on a much stronger foot this year, specifically in the races.

**Q. What is the status for the stache for St. Pete?**

LOUIS FOSTER: I'm keeping the stache for now. If a charity thing arises again, I am not opposed. I'm upping the financial requirement this time. It's going to be 10k, not 1k. Dario threw that in like it was a blink of an eye. We're upping the financial requirement.

I'm keeping it for now. I'm not superstitious. I didn't get polled because I didn't have a mustache.

**Q. Ovals is something that really needs to improve on. What has been the word inside of the Rahal team of improvement?**

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah, as soon as Gavin came in kind of the first point of interest to talk with him was about that. We had a big meeting, long meeting, about ovals, short ovals, kind of getting up to speed from the driver's perspective on what we feel in the car, the reasons why we can't achieve what we want to achieve, giving him just an understanding of where we're at, what we've tried, what we think works, what we think doesn't work, so he's more up to date with our current situation.

It's not an overnight fix. We don't get a lot of testing in INDYCAR. It's something we need time on. Ovals on a simulator are very tricky. You can do stuff on road and street courses on simulators, but ovals on simulators

... when all is said, we're done.®

personally I think are very difficult to get any useful information from.

It's hard because we just don't have the time. We're behind the eight ball on it clearly. We don't have the ability to fix it. The only chances we do get are limited. Making the most of our time, especially at Phoenix.

You know, Mick has some oval testing coming up, but that's more about him learning ovals. I think it's unfair to put too much stress from a setup perspective on him there. I think the key for him is to learn ovals and get used to them. If we can get some data from him, that would be great.

Yeah, there's a lot of ideas floating around. There's obviously a lot of new personnel on the team that are working towards that. But, yeah, there isn't a simple fix. We have to see what we can roll out with when we come to Phoenix, but also the first ovals of the year. We'll have to wait and see.

**Q. What is one aspect you want to improve on in 2026? Are you wanting to improve more on ovals? Late-race stints?**

LOUIS FOSTER: I think for me, we'll say pit stops. I think my pit stops last year could have been better. Getting more used to kind of coming in harder and getting on the marks better. That's one thing I would say.

Then yeah, a general thing would be races as a whole. I think each part of the race needs improvement, whether it's from -- yeah, from my perspective as a driver, whether it's general race pace, tire saving, but also from a strategy standpoint, we need to get better at that as well.

I think everyone is very understanding of where our shortfalls were last year. Everyone is trying their damnedest to make them right.

**Q. It's been almost a full year since Jay Frye has become president of the team. What has he brought to the team that's helped rejuvenate it?**

LOUIS FOSTER: Everything basically. You all know Jay is a great guy. He talks with conviction. That's something that's often overlooked I think in life these days. It's something I respect a lot.

Firstly, he brought Droplight on board, my primary sponsor. They've been super, super great for the team in every way really. That's rejuvenated a massive part of the team alone. Jay was predominantly behind this Mick deal, as well, to get Mick on board. A lot of the personnel changes

as well on the team. New additions was because of Jay.

The guy is restless. He doesn't sleep. He's just working tirelessly to make this a better organization. I feel it's unfair to give him one key thing because there's so many things he's done.

**Q. Might be a little something you can't relate to, but does he bring a little bit of an American football coach mentality to his job? He has that organizational skill and focus.**

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah, I can see that. Again, I didn't play football, American football, as a kid. I get what you're saying. Yeah, I would say so. He's obviously that kind of guy. He's a very American American, I guess you could call it, right?

Yeah, I mean, he's a great guy. He says what he means. At the end of the day that's something, like I said, it's super respectable. I appreciate people that speak their mind and don't chat shit.

**Q. A couple new tracks coming on the schedule this year. What is your level of excitement for tracks like Arlington, Markham and Phoenix? Which track are you looking forward to the most?**

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah, I think they're great additions to the calendar. I think all three of them are. I think that doing the Phoenix race with NASCAR is going to be pretty cool. That will be interesting to see how that dynamic works.

For me, Arlington is definitely kind of my kind of race I'm circling. I think it's going to be a really cool event. It looks from the renderings and from the preparations going into that event like it's going to be an event that it's going to be a hallmark event of the calendar, almost like a Long Beach kind of thing.

I hope it goes well. Obviously a first year for a lot of these events, I'm sure there's going to be some growing pains. Hopefully we can start from a good foot on all those events and have them in the future.

We'll see how Markham goes. Kind of interim, but not really. Nice to still be in Canada. That's important for the series. There's a lot of Canadian fans, I know that. It's great to give them the ability to come to races, as well. That to me is super important, that we're still in Canada.

**Q. Next year we have the independent officiating team coming on. What are your thoughts on that, how that might change the dynamics of weekends this year?**

... when all is said, we're done.®

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah, I mean, bluntly it shouldn't change anything if it was done right beforehand. It's nice to know that there is somewhat of an officiating board that might not have biases, simple as that.

It's nice. It's a good step for the series. I think it gives confidence in teams and drivers that this is the right place to be, the series is going in the right direction from a competitive standpoint.

Yeah, it just gives everyone more peace of mind that they know someone is out there that is making sure everyone is by the book.

**Q. Knowing that you guys do have a lot to work on, how do you prioritize what you're going to be working on, set the bar and the goals for the year ahead?**

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah, good question. I think for me, it's focus on the big things first, the things that will increase performance the most first, right? I think that's the key. Anything that takes us from being, where did we finish last year, 22nd or something, whatever takes us from being 22nd in the championship at the end to top 15, those key three whatever things they might be, those are the first things to work on.

Once you've got those nailed, then start working on other things. I think you can spread yourself too thin sometimes. It's about taking it step by step. I've said this before. Obviously there's a lot of new people on the team. There's a lot of new faces, new ideas, and motivation to improve. We want to be fighting up front at the end of the day. We want to be winning races, of course.

Is it consistently going to happen this year? Probably not. Our goal is to do that in two, three years' time. As long as we're going in the right direction, that is a positive in itself. We want to get as far in the front as we can possibly. I think it's taking it one step at a time, not giving ourselves too high of expectations not to disappoint ourselves.

At the end of the day we're going out there, we want to win a race this year if we can. We want to be on the podium this year multiple times with different cars if we can. We want to be -- for me bluntly, I want to be able to finish where we start instead of going backwards because that's what we did last year. Those are the key things for us. If we can start doing that consistently, we can start going, right, now do we take it to Penske, Ganassi, McLaren.

Bluntly, that's going to be the gap that's going to be harder to bridge than the current one we've got. It's a complex, multi-year scenario because of where we are, but it's

something that I think everyone understands and everyone knows that it's going to take time and everyone is behind it in the right way.

I think better time and effort towards that goal, I don't see why it shouldn't be achievable.

**Q. You mentioned pit stops are something is going to work on. Is there one other thing you see as a big thing to focus on right away?**

LOUIS FOSTER: Yeah, I think tire management still is something that I want to work on more. Improved last year definitely, but there's more room for improvement there, for sure. That's something that I want to work on, mainly reviewing things from last year.

Obviously I can't go out and practice tire management because of the lack of time we get in the cars. But it's something that you can kind of review and look at, Okay, well this didn't go well; why? This didn't; why? Dig into the data and understanding, I have brake biases here, my bars were here, the amount of time I was wheel spinning was this percentage of the lap.

It's all in the data. It just takes time to dig through it and figure it out.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports