

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Sting Ray Robb

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: New teammate for you this year. Are you looking forward to working with Rinus?

STING RAY ROBB: Yeah, Rinus is great. We've been friends for a long time, which is kind of fun. I think we met back in 2014, 2015, something like that, in go-karting.

We've had a long history together and it's actually been fun. We went rock climbing a few weeks ago, him and his wife Carman and my wife Molly, the four of us went rock climbing.

So we've been doing some extracurricular, outside of the racetrack activities to try and start building that relationship before the season even starts.

Q. Who is the best rock climber?

STING RAY ROBB: I like to stay humble.

Q. You, by far?

STING RAY ROBB: Yeah. I will admit, it was their first time ever doing it.

Q. Who was better between Rinus and his wife?

STING RAY ROBB: I'm not sure he wants me to say. They're both very competitive, though. It was fun to see their competitive nature come through because Carman got on the wall and we climbed for way too long to be honest. Our skin on our hands was barely hanging on.

But she got a climb and it was very impressive, very well done, and then he tried it, and for the next 30 minutes he kept doing that climb over and over and over again. It's like, Rinus, give it up, man. Your wife has got you today. We'll come back tomorrow and start again.

Q. Looking at your stats from last year, your finishing position was higher than your starting position, which is awesome, but I think your average starting position was like 22, so what would it mean to be able to

improve that, and do you think you can get more top 10s if you can start up higher in the field?

STING RAY ROBB: Yeah, qualifying is hugely important. You see issues with cars all the time where they can come from the back of the field. My race at Long Beach, I think we started 17th or 18th at that event and finished where we did. It's not impossible by any means.

But I did have my best qualifying results of the year last year. It's just the consistency wasn't there. I think just building that consistency in is probably our biggest focus this year. Still have those key performances that move us forward, but if we can build in that consistency and shrink that window of performance down, so to speak, I think that's the key part of what we need to be able to do.

Q. You talked about the consistency of being with the same team. Has there been a lot of turnover at the team level as far as the staff or anything like that? Do you feel that's fairly consistent, as well?

STING RAY ROBB: There hasn't been a lot of turnover, thankfully. Mechanics-wise we have a solid group. I think we were one of the most reliable teams in the series last year, so that was really good to see.

But our engineering staff has been what it was as last year, pretty much. I will, I think, be working with someone new, same person on the team but someone new to me on my car, which is fun.

But yeah, the staff, they're working well together, I think. The continuity from last year -- I think to be fair, there was a few guys that were lost at the beginning of last season, went to other teams, and there was a bit of recovery to be done because of that.

I think having the same group held together year to year is going to be a huge advantage.

Q. Three straight races to start off the year so no time to really go back and reevaluate. How much is that going to be a change from what we've seen in past seasons?



STING RAY ROBB: I mean, it's tough. I think that those first three races are important, like any other three races would be. But even more so to get it right from the beginning. You can't recover on those weekends but it's going to be so early in the year, if you have early setup issues, that will be really tough. So being mechanically sound and reliable is super important, and we've been that.

I'm excited to be with a team that is so dedicated to getting the car ready to go in working reliable order from the first race. So it'll be good.

Q. You've already talked a little bit about Rinus as your teammate, but from a track standpoint, to be able to share the same information, it seems the two of you have similar personalities, so how much does that really help in communication?

STING RAY ROBB: It's great, yeah. Having someone like Rinus that has the experience he has -- he's a race winner. There's something to be said about that. It's been a while, but it's still there and he's still super competitive.

I think having someone like Rinus where I've known him a long time, we've been friends for a long time, that relationship I think is probably underrated in this sport when you have the single most important competitor on the racetrack as the one that you're sitting across the table from.

Having a beneficial relationship where we can work together on things is going to be good.

Q. You talked about having a second season with the Juncos Hollinger. There's that familiarity, continuity, newer teammate, one of the smaller teams in the series, obviously. Where do you feel like the team is at in terms of its evolution for you to continue to take, as a team as a whole, not just yourself but Rinus and the team, to take another step forward to continually move up the grid in terms of race finishes, qualifying finishes? Where do you see the evolution of Juncos Hollinger right now?

STING RAY ROBB: Do you mean expectation in results or just in where we've improved year to year?

Q. Where you improved year to year and how you see things now that you've had a year with them moving into the 2026 season.

STING RAY ROBB: Great question. I don't know. We haven't been on the racetrack. We literally have not sat in a car since August. That's the hard thing about this series. You look at any other sport in the world, a golfer, for

example, he's probably got thousands of hours of time hitting the same ball over and over again.

What have we done? Nothing.

There's obviously some key things that we can work on, dampers, aero, I can work on myself a little bit. I've done some driver coaching during the off-season which was a bit revealing for me, which is great.

Those are things we want to see that we were lacking in. We want to find weaknesses, and when you find weaknesses you can go to work on them if you just think you're as good as you're going to be, what's the point in showing up to the racetrack.

I think that the biggest thing that we did this off-season is identified those weaknesses and try and negate them as much as we can.

Q. To follow up on coaching, what was revealing to you about your position in life?

STING RAY ROBB: Thank you for phrasing it that way. Very kind. You know, it's interesting because as a young competitive athlete you always see the motivational videos of you need to work harder, you need to stress yourself out more, you need to be more aggressive, push more.

When you correlate that to a racetrack it means I need to brake later, I need to hit the brakes harder, I need to hit the gas sooner, I need to hit the gas harder. It's like race cars don't work like that.

Probably the biggest thing I've learned, and I think it was actually Jackie Stewart that said this in a video a long time ago when he was still driving talking about the car is just like a balancing platform, and how you coordinate it, don't shock it, you just kind of manipulate it and let the car do what it's going to do.

I think that's been the toughest thing for me coming in as a young driver to INDYCAR. I was I think a bit forceful in my inputs. What I mean by that is you can't make a car do something it doesn't want to do. That's what I've been working on this off-season.

It's kind of funny, I've been working on cars that aren't INDYCARs. They're big heavy sedans that are a lot less fun to drive, but they're more revealing because there is a lot of weight to them. That's kind of the way INDYCAR has gone as we've gotten more into this chassis and age there's been more weight added on, aeroscreen, hybrid, anything like that, and it's become a bit more of like a touring car in a sense, so the driving style has changed.



I think that's why you've seen guys, if you look back even 2018 when Robert Wickens came into the series, Robert was a great driver to start. I am giving him all the credit in the world. I think he was one of the best talents that didn't get to see the results yet.

But with his DTM background when he came into the series, I think it was more familiar for him than it would be for a young junior level formula car driver to step in.

A modern example, Scott McLaughlin. He came into the series very fast. Look, fast drivers are going to be fast no matter where they are, but because he had that heavier car background I think that correlated better to an INDYCAR than what we would have expected versus someone that's maybe coming from INDY Pro 2000 or USF Pro 2000 so to speak where it's a bit more of a go-kart. It's light, nimble, short wheel base. It's just a completely different package than what you would be driving in a sedan or a touring car.

Q. How is home remodeling? Do you know what you're doing?

STING RAY ROBB: Home remodeling has been fun. It's nice being a homeowner. Molly and I, we've been settling in as much as we can in Indy. Obviously she's a local, so that's been nice. We've got some chickens at home that we've been taking care of, so learning how to take care of chickens, having our own little farmstead going on here in Indianapolis has been good.

Working on little things here and there. The racing season is coming up close so, Molly has a honey to-do list for me just about every day when I get home, which is nice. I've got things to do.

Q. What's the most difficult thing about chickens?

STING RAY ROBB: Getting them not to peck each other. You never heard of the pecking order? I didn't realize this was a thing. I thought it was just like a fun phrase. It's a real thing.

Q. How many chickens are we talking?

STING RAY ROBB: 11, currently.

Q. You've clearly, from your answers, put a lot of thought into driving this off-season. My ears perked up when I heard the name Jackie Stewart mentioned. I've always been curious, how much do you go to the past sometimes and watch old things to kind of learn about your driving or maybe learn something to take into the future?

STING RAY ROBB: Probably not as often as I'd like. Honestly, it's tough because you can read old books, you can watch old races, but the details are what matter in this sport.

If you were to go and let's say I'm a baseball player and I want to work on my swing. Well, my swing is different than what Babe Ruth would be swinging, right, but that worked for him. There's probably some key principles that he applied that I can apply, whether that's a mental approach or physical approach, whatever that is.

Q. But it's the same in motorsports. Some drivers have certain styles and other drivers have certain styles, but I think it's being able to have that knowledge, have that sort of ability to look back and not just focus on that but look at it in the grand scheme of everything, sort of a big world view, you know, what's that lens that we're looking through, and then make the adjustment.

You can't do that without that knowledge. It's important to look back at the history, guys like Jackie Stewart, of course, read those books, do all those things, but that's not everything. What's important is what we're doing right now. It's a bit of both.

Q. I think we'll see a lot of patriotic things this year. Your suit looks patriotic.

STING RAY ROBB: I'm American, man, one of eight in the series, so I'm proud to show it as much as I can. Having partners that believe in same values as myself has been awesome. So America 250 will be exciting. I'm hoping for some exciting things to come and maybe some INDYCAR announcements. I'm looking over here; D.C. would be cool.

I say that as an American Patriot. It would be so cool to see INDYCAR flying American flags like we already do during the month of May. Indy 500 is one of the most patriotic events we have in this country, and the playing of the Taps before the race gets me every time. I start crying, and I think this year it will be even more because we see the impact and we see history playing out.

Q. Obviously it took you a little while to be announced back at JHR for the year. Was there any doubt there, and what was the reality of the situation in terms of just a bit of a wait for the announcement?

STING RAY ROBB: Yeah, the off-season was pretty boring, so we had to spice it up a little bit. That's the best answer I can give you for now. Other than that, I think that



being on a two-year contract, it was a done deal on our side, so the announcement was a little bit slow.

But it's the off-season; what else are we going to do? We've got six months to burn.

Q. After three years in the series, I know you've obviously pointed out with three different teams. Where do you feel like you are in your development as an INDYCAR driver? What's your feelings on the trajectory you're on?

STING RAY ROBB: Never content. If you were to ask Alex Palou if he's content, he would probably say no as well. At least I hope he'd say no. I think the moment you become stagnant in this series, that's the moment you're going to fail.

I'm by no means content. I'm not happy with what's been done in INDYCAR yet. I'm not feeling like I've achieved enough yet by any means. I'm motivated. I'm hungry. I want to prove what I'm capable of doing.

If I start winning races, that's great, but I still won't be content.

Q. Obviously with the continuity, what do you feel kind of is maybe the ceiling of what you want to achieve this year? Have you got any goals you've set out for yourself, especially off the back of this coaching and everything you've done this off-season?

STING RAY ROBB: Yeah, as far as goals go, I think the easiest thing to do is to look at the results and define expectations on that. But that's probably the worst thing that we could do because expectations are a result of the procedures that we make happen. I talked about those weaknesses ahead of the season and the way that we've been working on those.

So I think that our goal is to work on those weaknesses and just continue to reveal those, find any other issues that we can find in myself, in the team, in the car, whatever it is.

All those revealings are what's going to lead to good results. If we do that, the results are going to come. It's not a matter of if we need to work harder or push more, like I was saying earlier. It's a matter of doing things the right way and it will just fall into place.

Q. You mentioned driver coaching a good bit so far. Did you get coaching from anyone in particular?

STING RAY ROBB: I did, yes.

Q. We're not going to find that out, I take it?

STING RAY ROBB: Yeah, it's someone that's pretty well experienced. I have a great driver coach in Adam Carol. He was with us last year, and I think there's a lot to learn from him still. But proper driver in himself, talented, and I think he's got a good head on his shoulders to learn from.

Q. You mentioned D.C.; is there any race you're looking forward to this year with the three new tracks we have?

STING RAY ROBB: The new ones are for sure exciting. I think having some more street courses on the schedule is fun. My best result last year was at a street course so I'm looking forward to that.

But I think they're fun anyway. With a go-kart background I think it's a bit more second nature in the sense of it's familiar. If it's what we're used to a little bit more. That's good to see.

I think Phoenix will be exciting, as well. I've been listening to reports from other drivers and hoping for the best. I think that my experience there at Phoenix, I went to a NASCAR race there -- that's like a bad word in this room, I think.

I went there a couple years ago. I think it was 2022 or 2023, and that was a super fun race to watch, just sort of the atmosphere there, the way the stadium is set up around the track. It's pretty fun to see.

Q. Yourself and Rinus have both front ran at the Indy 500. Is the team putting any particular focus on the showpiece or is it just another race in a long season?

STING RAY ROBB: I mean, how much more pressure could we put on it than what we already do? I think it's already high pressure. It's more intensity than ever.

I wouldn't say the team is putting any more focus on it than they already would because they're already putting as much as they can.

Again, I'm going to go back to my answer is we have weaknesses and human beings and we're going to try and work on those as much as we can. That's building off last year's results and the year before's results. Rinus coming in from other teams as well as I'm sure going to bring some background and experience, as well, because he's qualified so well there, he's run so well there, he's been very competitive, and that's in the nature of who he is at this point at the Indy 500.

So if he can bring that to JHR, I think that would be a very good thing.

Q. You're returning to Juncos Hollinger this year. How has that felt being able to continue on from last year's momentum into 2026?

STING RAY ROBB: It's great. I think that it's nice to come back with a second year with the team because of what I said earlier, of just having that continuity, understanding that the pedals are in the right spot, the seat is in the right spot, the steering wheel is in the right spot, everything is comfortable before we even arrive at a racetrack.

Those seem like little things. They do make a difference. They're time consuming, they're little bugs here and there that you don't want to have to worry about.

But from a bigger picture I think it's nice not to have false expectations, having false hope. We can have real hope and real expectations, which is kind of fun because we know where we're at and we know what we're capable of doing and we can prove that.

So working on those things during the off-season is vastly important, and being able to have that direction from day one of the off-season versus day 60 or whatever it is, it just allows us more time to get to work.

Q. What are you hoping to achieve this year?

STING RAY ROBB: I mean, if I said anything other than winning, would I be accepted as a race car driver? That's the answer we have to give, no matter what.

I think the reality is we just need to be more consistent, again, keep working on those weaknesses, and if we do that, then the results will come.

I'm going to be honest; I said this a second ago. I'm not content with what I've done yet. But I can look at the results from different places and say, okay, we're capable of doing it. Gateway 24, Indy 500 24, Long Beach last year, things like that where it just came together. It didn't seem any more difficult. It wasn't that I worked any harder. I didn't drive any harder, so to speak.

But it worked. We'll just keep doing that, and I think that will lead to the things that we want to achieve.

Q. How do you think you and the team can work together to gain that consistency?

STING RAY ROBB: I think looking back at the history of what we've done, understanding where things went right,

where things went wrong, and how do we move forward with that. It's an ever-changing environment in INDYCAR. I think the moment that you think that you have everything nailed down and you have your expectations right, it'll flip on you, whether that's tire compound changes, weather changes, strategy changes. It changes every single weekend, moment to moment.

Q. Finally, how do you find the limit in your car, and how do you push it past the limit?

STING RAY ROBB: How do I push it past the limit? That's an easy thing to do. Finding the limit is a whole other thing. There's a lot of ways that you can do it wrong, and there's very few ways you can do it right. I think that's what separates the greats from the not so greats. The way that you approach the limit and how quickly you can get there, that's what makes a great driver.

I remember even in my karting days, if I was really in sync with a go-kart, you knew where it was before you even sat in the cart. The same thing can happen in INDYCAR.

There's almost an inherent nature of knowing where that limit is if you're doing things right, but with an adaptable series like this where we have different tires weekend to weekend as far as compounds for different tracks, different surfaces, multiple surfaces on the same racetrack -- you look at Detroit or Toronto, now Markham, all those surface changes just make the car a different animal turn to turn.

Being comfortable in the seat that you're in and finding a limit through what you've already experienced is super important.

Q. On the subject of coaching, since you brought it up earlier, what can you learn from other coaches in other sports? For instance, Indiana won the national championship, Curt Cignetti has been hailed as probably the greatest coach to be able to have a turnaround like this. It's never happened before. The focus is next play, next town, next series. You don't look too far ahead. Are those similar things that equate with a race driver?

STING RAY ROBB: Yeah, absolutely. I think a lot of what he applied, it's not new. It's not the most genius thing in the world. It's just doing the right things, and he did them all.

I'm now an IU fan. Fernando Mendoza, props to him, Heisman. That was pretty exciting to see. But I think the biggest thing I saw from that team, and Mendoza talked about this a little bit, was sort of their stoicism. And that's not to say that stoicism is the best thing in the world, but



having sort of that displacement play to play, game to game, week to week, I think allows you to have more ability to prepare, better expectations, but it also -- having your identity tied to something other than the results, which it sounds like they did, that's probably the most important thing.

Q. Also you brought up Fernando Mendoza. In a lot of ways, you're very similar. You're both very grounded, have a strong foundation, a faith-based foundation. What did you think of what he was able to do and the way he portrays himself?

STING RAY ROBB: It's great. Yeah, he's got some humility, he's got great skills. Seems like he's got a great head on his shoulders. I think there's a lot of athletes out there that are outspoken about their faith these days, so it's really encouraging for me to see because I was inspired by someone.

Tim Tebow, he was kind of my early inspiration in karting days. I remember seeing him wear the John 3:16 eye black at the national championship game. So I said, okay, what's going to be my eye black. So I got to show my faith on the forefront of my career every step of the way.

I think it's more than just showing it off. That's not the goal. The goal is to be changed by it. When we're changed by the things that we believe in, that changes how we react, it changes our character, and that hopefully drives us forward in the performance that we want to achieve, drives us forward in excellence.

I think that he did that very well. He portrays himself very well. Obviously the performance shows that he's capable of believing in what he believes.

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