

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Mick Schumacher

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: How would you rate your first content day? 10 is an acceptable answer, by the way.

MICK SCHUMACHER: I haven't finished the day yet, so can't really say where we're at. Everybody has been very welcoming, very fun to hang out with. The whole screening, whatever we did, was quite challenging, so yeah, it's good.

Q. Obviously a lot to happen over the next several weeks before we hit the opener in St. Pete. How anxious are you to get going? How excited are you?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Yeah, I'm very excited about racing. That's what we're here for. I haven't had much of that yet, so looking forward to getting under way next week. Testing starts the season, I think, in a proper way, so really looking forward to that and then taking it away from there.

Q. You just mentioned more testing coming up. What has the adjustment been like going into an INDYCAR?

MICK SCHUMACHER: The adjustment has been fine. It's really just about putting the dots together. I think it's mostly vocabulary at the moment, where it's been very different. Metrics have been quite different, as well. Instead of talking about meters we're talking about feet or yards or stuff like that. It's quite tough for me at the moment.

We're in a transition where I'm trying to understand everything and putting everything together. The team has been great in helping me doing those things and helping me along the way, finally putting the team together with Mike, as well, and the engineering group is great.

The car guys are amazing, so I think we're all in a pretty good place to start off the season on the correct foot hopefully.

Q. What's your excitement like to get to May, eventually to race in the 500?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I've been asked that quite a few times today, and quite honestly, it's the same excitement as I have for the first race and for all the other races that are to come. Everything is very new to me. I would not say the Indy 500 is the one thing that is the main thing on my mind.

As I say, it was the same in WEC when I was there. Le Mans was maybe the biggest event of the year, but it's not the main event in my opinion. I think every race in a season is important, so that's the way we approach it, and we take it as another weekend.

Q. What do you anticipate the biggest challenge of the transition being?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Oval racing. The challenges of it being so different and trying to understand what the high lines are, what the low lines are doing, what we can do in terms of aero disruptions from the front or the back. That's all stuff that is very new to me. But I'm very curious and interested in learning about that. The good thing is we have Graham on board, who has done a couple of these races in his lifetime, and therefore I can learn very much from him.

Q. Talking about that with ovals, there's a lot of knowledge inside of those walls at Rahal. You can do simulators. You can go back and watch film. What's been resonating to you that makes you feel like you're going to be ready for the race in Phoenix and at Indy?

MICK SCHUMACHER: In my life, I think there's always been a lot of tips and tricks and stuff around me, and I've kind of been, I think, getting better at understanding what really helps me. So I filter it out quite instantly.

But overall, I think in many cases, I have the Homestead test before Phoenix, so I will have a first understanding of what an oval is like to drive, even though it's going to be a low one I'll still have that experience beforehand, and then Phoenix is going to be great because it'll be with everybody out on track, so I'll get that understanding for how it is to drive in dirty air, for example.

Yeah, learning with Graham on that and from him will be

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good, and also having Louis's input on how his first year has been. Obviously he had experience from before in the INDY NXT season, but still, overall, I think we're in a good place also for me to get up to speed quite quickly.

Q. Mick, you've raced in front of European crowds, European companies, sponsors, media, everything. How much are you looking forward to now having American crowds, American sponsors, American TV, American everything now and the culture change, the racing culture change over here compared to what you experienced overseas?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I mean, I've raced in Miami, Austin --

Q. But full time.

MICK SCHUMACHER: Yeah, full time, okay. Yeah, excited for it. I know how Americans can be, and it's a great crowd to be in front. Really excited for that.

I think also FOX has been doing a great job in getting the stream out there and I think bringing a bit more of maybe action-packed highlights into YouTube or whatever which I've been watching a lot the last couple of months.

There's a lot of good things out there, and it's very fun, but I think more than the crowds and more than the broadcast and whatnot, I think it's also the team itself. It's so much passion that I feel when I'm talking to the guys in the team, and I think that's ultimately what also brought me over here is just to see how much fun they have doing these things and driving these cars and building them back together.

Yeah, ultimately how much they love racing.

Q. What's your level of nerves or excitement as you get into your first INDYCAR season and how you compare that to your first year in WEC, your first year in Formula 1, your first year in Formula 2, et cetera, et cetera?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I've aged since then. I've gotten a lot older. I feel like I'm in a much more grown-up place in some ways. Maybe the excitement is still there, but it's in a different way. It's maybe less excitement of yeah, I'm all for it, and it's more about a structured approach to it. I'm very excited about getting going, but I'm excited to also build a team around me and build my experiences.

Basically I'm going into the season knowing much more of what I want and how I want things to be, and I'm much more straightforward about that. So that's, I guess, very different to how my first year in F1 was, for example.

Therefore, yeah, the season I'm sure is going to be very different.

Q. Mick, Graham mentioned yesterday you guys went to dinner Monday or a few days ago. How important is it to come into an organization where there's a solid foundation for leadership, not just from Graham but from Bobby, from Jay Frye to Gavin Ward? How important is that to make that transition easier?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Yeah, I mean, it was great having dinner with Graham and being able to pick his brain a little bit on some of the question marks that I had. But also we spend so much time in meetings with Gavin recently, with Jay, hours of just talking about specifics that were in my mind.

It's good to come into an organization that knows what direction they want to go into, and I know in what direction I want to go into. I think if we're aligning all these things, we can definitely bring it to a very comfortable place.

I think we're all very much in the same boat in understanding that we have to work together to be up front, and that's where we want to be consistently. Once we are there, then the fighting can start.

Q. Mick, you brought your Formula 1 number here to INDYCAR. Talk about that number and why it's significant to you.

MICK SCHUMACHER: I mean, I don't know. When you find a number that works for you, I feel like it's quite easy to stay with it. I had 4 in previous -- when I won the championship in F3 I had the number 4 and then I had the number 7 which is very close to me because it's my dad's number in a way. I would not feel comfortable letting that one go. When it was available, I thought, okay, to myself, why not try and get it, and we did.

I'm very happy about it. I think it's good to see the number 47 back on a race car on a single seater, and I'll wear it proudly.

Q. How important is it to have a driver who has kind of that similar expectation level like Graham does on your team where he had a famous father, obviously you have a famous father who came before you. Is that a bonding moment for the two of you as teammates?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Yeah, but I think also without it, it would still be just as good. I think he's a great person. I really enjoyed chatting to him about racing but also about life.



I'm very excited to work with him.

Q. I just wanted to ask a little bit, obviously with your background, you've got engineers that have always been in your ear, but have you ever had spotters in your ear trying to tell you car high, car low, et cetera?

MICK SCHUMACHER: No, I haven't, so that's going to be a challenge and new. But I've always been a driver, I think, more than some others that loved information, so I always kind of pushed my engineers to talk to me as much as possible. So I guess that's going to be pretty similar.

I guess one of the points that I was very vocal to my team about was why don't we have a duel-way radio system where those things that your engineer or whoever needs to can reach you even if somebody is talking so I think that's something I'm quite keen on trying to figure out because we have the problem that if somebody talking to you, the other person on the team can't get a hold of you.

I think that's something where I come from that's very common that we have an open discussion even as we're driving. It's something we need to figure out.

Q. From a curiosity standpoint, we know that you had a couple of seasons in F1, a couple of seasons in WEC. How much are you craving stability at this point in your career?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I think in general, in my team and my circle, I'm looking at what options are the best for me at the moment. It seemed like in the years after F1, I wanted to stay in Europe and therefore WEC was a very attractive option.

I just thought that I could see a long-term future in that. I didn't after some time and preferred to do something else again.

F1 wasn't an option, and INDYCAR came up, and I think I'm very happy to be here now, having learned more about it and seen more about it. I think there's so many good things out here, and I think so many good things that aren't really being portrayed in Europe.

Hopefully with me coming here, these things will come over to Europe and we'll have more people joining and hopefully the broadcast will also go back to Germany.

Q. I kind of made the reference, I think it was yesterday, of it feels like we've got the 2020 Formula 2 class infiltrating INDYCAR because there's so many familiar faces from that class that you raced with. Did

you get a chance to talk with them? Did they impact in any way to catch your attention this way with INDYCAR?

MICK SCHUMACHER: No. I've had a couple of options with INDYCAR already quite early on where I just didn't pull in because I wanted to stay in Europe. It was very much a decision I had taken because I was interested in it. I think racing here in America is quite fun, but it's obviously good to come back and see familiar faces and people that I've been racing against since pretty much go-karts.

Also to get to know new people, people that I haven't raced against yet, and see what they're made of. Therefore I think, yeah, there's so many opportunities out there in INDYCAR right now that are looking to be very fun for me. I'm sure that I'll have a good time here.

Q. You mentioned oval racing is going to be your biggest challenge this year. Just curious to know how many laps or maybe even how many hours you've been driving already at Homestead in the simulator before it's going to get real for you there next week?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I've done a couple laps. I've done approximately two days of half a day each, so a day total. But obviously there's only so much you can do on a simulator. It just keeps going left. There's not much you can really learn from it, bumps and all that and the way the car behaves is quite difficult to replicate. But I'll have time to get through it and understand how it feels to drive an oval.

I think that in terms of preparation and also the way we approach the test is going to be quite good and specific to how we wanted to run and how the car should behave throughout Homestead so that we're best prepared for Phoenix, which is going to be the first official test.

Q. Do you have a favorite track maybe on the schedule, just based on maybe doing simulator laps or one that you're looking forward to the most?

MICK SCHUMACHER: Not based on simulator laps. I think just based on, let's say, closeness to the ranch, I would say Arlington is the one I'm looking the most forward to. It's also a new track for everybody, so I guess that kind of makes my life maybe not as hard.

But on the other hand, I think it's always going to be challenging. So yeah, I guess that one I'm looking forward to out of a maybe near home -- like mini-home race, if you want.

Q. You've raced on some iconic tracks around the

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world. Is there anything in the U.S. that you're really looking forward to on this calendar, not because it's close to home but because it's a very cool track?

MICK SCHUMACHER: I think I don't know all the tracks well enough to say that yet. I've seen a handful of them but not all of them, so I think it would be unfair to say, hey, I'm definitely going to take that one.

I've driven on the IMS road course, which was quite fun, and obviously there's a lot of history there, as well, with my dad. But yeah, I think it's going to be fun to go to all of them.

Also, I did quite a good session on the simulator on St. Pete, which was quite fun. It's pretty bumpy, so quite new to me to drive with so many bumps. But yeah, excited to go into the season, see all the tracks and see what the racing is going to be like.

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