

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Wednesday, January 28, 2026

Caio Collet

Press Conference



Q. You've had some time in the car a little bit. You're going to be at the Sebring test and obviously the open test. How much are you looking forward to getting going here?

CAIO COLLET: Yeah, a lot. I think it's a dream come true to be in INDYCAR. I think definitely spending all those years on championships in Europe and also coming here to the U.S. but now in such a competitive championship like INDYCAR is a dream come true, what every driver wants to achieve, so definitely really happy to be here, and also a bit anxious to start the season.

Q. Another Brazilian driver in INDYCAR. There's a long lineage there, a lot of history there, a lot of champions. Is it cool to wear the Brazilian flag in INDYCAR again?

CAIO COLLET: Yeah, for sure. It's a lot of proud to be representing Brazil. Like you said, a lot of good names that represented the country so well. A lot of wins, championships, Indy 500s. It's a country with a lot of history, and hopefully I can be the next one carrying the flag.

Q. When we talked two weeks ago you hadn't met AJ yet. Still the case?

CAIO COLLET: Yeah.

Q. Rookie season -- there's a big rookie class this year that is international with Dennis and Mick, obviously. Looks like we're going to have two new races, maybe a third. How do you prep INDYCAR-wise? That jump from INDY NXT to INDYCAR is a little bit different. Pit stops is a big thing, as well. What's your off-season prep been like as far as focusing on those timing things in INDYCAR that you may not have had in INDY NXT?

CAIO COLLET: Yeah, I think for sure it's a lot more preparation when you come to a race weekend in terms of strategy, in terms of planning the weekend. I think in INDY

NXT was very much FP1, FP2 qualifying, race and it's not like you need to do a lot of strategy on that.

I think INDYCAR is a lot more complex on that side. So for sure trying to learn a little bit from the team, watching previous races, what they did right, what they did wrong, and I think the team has a lot of data, a lot of experience, a lot of good guys behind to help me with that, but also I think when I come to the race weekend, I need to be a bit ready, and decision making will be something that I need to learn quickly, especially on race day with strategy and so on. Hopefully something that I will learn quickly and not make a lot of mistakes.

Q. AJ Foyt Racing has a relationship with Team Penske. How important is that as a rookie to kind of have that guidance?

CAIO COLLET: Yeah, very important, and something that will be really helpful throughout the whole year. Last year was the first year that they started the partnership and now continuing this year that will be something very nice for me. I don't have only one car that I can look. I have another three cars that are very good cars, so hopefully I can use that to my favor, and hopefully with the team we'll have a lot of data and a lot of stuff to look at during the weekends, so hopefully it will be something we can improve very quickly.

Q. I know when you tested for AJ Foyt you weren't quite sure if you were going to get this ride. Talk about the whole process of ending up here as an INDYCAR driver for AJ Foyt Racing.

CAIO COLLET: Yeah, it was a little bit complex for sure. It's not something that I do overnight. But I think my season at INDY NXT went pretty well, first of all, so obviously I needed some kind of results to be in INDYCAR, and I think we did that.

But not only that, we needed someone to open the doors like Larry did, and I think at the end of the season we were starting to search for an opportunity in INDYCAR, and we had a couple of options, but I think Foyt was definitely the one that stood out the most.



To finalize the deal took some time for sure, but together with Combitrans, they've been a sponsor with me that we've been together for two years now, so that really helped and made sure that the deal was done, and here we are.

Q. Caio, as any rookie does, you're going to be going for that Rookie of the Year this year. You raced against Dennis last year in NXT and he won that series. Going into the season, what do you think it'll take for you to be the best of those three rookies?

CAIO COLLET: Definitely consistency. It's what you need to win any championship or especially the rookie championship. I think the level this year is quite high. Dennis is someone that I've been racing since 2016 in go-karts, so I know him quite well, and obviously last year we had a pretty good battle all season long and have a lot of respect for each other.

Mick for sure is a driver that has a lot of experience and is very good and talented, so I think this year will be a nice battle between the three of us. Hopefully we can come out on top.

Q. Last year did you and David Malukas share a driver coach?

CAIO COLLET: Yeah, Luke was working with David, but he also worked with HMD. Sometimes when he was free, we could use him to help.

Q. How did that relationship evolve, and does that help a little bit that he was kind of helping with that car and here you're stepping into that role?

CAIO COLLET: Oh, for sure. I think he knows the people that worked with David before, and he knows the team quite well. Even last year, he was sometimes trying to help with information that he got from INDYCAR and trying to pass that to us and see if we could relate or could improve from that.

But this year he'll be staying at HMD, and I don't think we'll be working with David anymore. He'll be staying more at HMD. Obviously I will come to him with a couple of questions during the season, but he was someone that definitely helped I think both me and David.

Q. Santino called you one of the easiest drivers to work with. He just called you a sponge, and you've got good information so far; you're receptive to what he's taught you. Can you talk about that relationship, the early testing days so far, what you two can grow together as the season starts?

CAIO COLLET: Yeah, he's a really easy and outgoing guy, really friendly. The first test that we did together at Nashville, so my rookie orientation test, he was there to do some references, and I think on ovals he was one of the best guys on the grid. For me for sure I'm in a really good position that I'm next to him, and I think I can learn a lot from him. Hopefully I can learn as quickly as possible.

I think on the other side on the road and street courses, maybe I can push him and the team forward, and I think together we can do well and do a really good year together.

Q. You mentioned before the long Brazilian lineage in INDYCAR. Is there any particular historic driver in INDYCAR that you watched growing up, for example?

CAIO COLLET: I think I've watched both Helio and Tony. I think they were more my generation. I think Gil and Emerson, they were a little bit before me. But yeah, these two guys I've watched them racing for sure, and they were also there the year that I came to the U.S., so they are both still active here. Tony as a team owner as you guys know, and Helio, he's doing the 500. So he'll be one guy that I will be asking a lot of questions when it comes, but they are two guys that really stand out and did a lot for the country and for the sport.

Q. You spoke about the 500; tell me how much you're looking forward to finally being there at IMS.

CAIO COLLET: Yeah, it's a dream coming true, as well. I think I've been watching this race since I started moving forward in single seaters. It feels not real that I will be part of this race in May, but it's just trying to do the process right, just a whole month that prepares the whole race. There's a lot of things I need to do first before joining the grid, but yeah, just really happy to be here.

Q. I know it's kind of difficult as a rookie to set goals or expectations, but is there anything you want to achieve in 2026? Is Rookie of the Year a priority?

CAIO COLLET: Yeah, definitely a priority together with the team is to be the Rookie of the Year. As I said before, it's really tough, a lot of good competitions and two really good drivers, as well, that will be trying the same thing as me. But I think we have a really good chance to do that and a lot of potential.

Q. Obviously a couple of years ago you made the move to America, kind of growing up in Europe in your racing career, kind of a big move for you on the personal side. Now you're set where you are, how



validating does it feel that you've succeeded in your goal after such a big change in your life?

CAIO COLLET: Yeah, quite surreal, to be honest. I think when we did the change from Europe to the U.S., obviously the final goal was to reach INDYCAR, and now we did that. Extremely happy and proud of everything that we achieved. Obviously I didn't do it alone. I think there was a lot of people behind me, a lot of investors, supporters that helped to achieve this dream. It's just trying to go out there, do the best, and represent as best as I can.

Q. Would you elaborate a little bit more about television coverage in Brazil and what that means to your sponsors and what that means to grow INDYCAR globally, as well?

CAIO COLLET: Yeah, I think that was something that also helped the deal being done. Also television in Brazil, I think you guys know Band, they are coming back to broadcast INDYCAR. I think they were previously doing Formula 1 and now they are doing INDYCAR like back in the day, I think. 10 years ago they always did that. It's such a nice thing, I think, to have INDYCAR on open TV in Brazil, and I think it will help grow the sport in South America, Brazil especially, and I think it will be good regarding my sponsors and good for everyone.

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