

NTT INDY NXT SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, September 6, 2026

Nikita Johnson

Dominic Cape

Nicholas Cape

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are joined by the 2026 INDY NXT by Firestone champion and championship team. Congratulations to Nikita Johnson. Second-place finish today helps him win the 2026 championship. Eighth podium of the season. He becomes the youngest-ever INDY NXT champion as well. Also he's Rookie of the Year, all of which will be celebrated later tonight at the victory lap celebration. He completed all 656 laps of the competition. He was the only driver to do that in 2026.

Also joining us co-owners of the team, Nicolas and Dominic Cape. Their first INDY NXT by Firestone championship. 20th all time team to win.

Congratulations, guys. Nikita, your thoughts on winning an INDY NXT by Firestone championship?

NIKITA JOHNSON: Yeah, just been an incredible year. We've been one of the fastest everywhere we've gone to, by far the most consistent out of everyone, in my opinion.

Even if we weren't the fastest in practice, we always got there by qualifying, no matter what. We never let a bad first day dictate our weekend. We always came back from wherever we unloaded in FP1. I think that's what made us so strong.

When other teams, other drivers, they didn't have a good first practice, they couldn't come back for qualifying, right? I think that's what we just worked really good together, was the mentality that it's never over until it's over.

We just always pushed all year, no matter what. We always got there by qualifying on the race, no matter what. We always got good points. That's what helped us win this championship, was getting the good points on the days when others couldn't finish, right?

Consistency is key. I just can't thank the Cape boys

enough. They've always worked so hard all year. I mean, 110, 120 percent. Busted their butt all year to go and win this championship.

Even though it's an individual sport, at the same time it's not. I wouldn't be here without this whole team. Even everybody on Matteo's car, the 20 car, I can't thank them for all the help. Everybody is super committed this year. I've never seen a team like this. Just unbelievable this amount of support.

THE MODERATOR: Is it a little surreal?

NIKITA JOHNSON: It's crazy that I won in my rookie year, right? I'm the youngest in INDY NXT. I don't know about history, but that's pretty cool.

THE MODERATOR: Youngest ever to win a championship in INDY NXT by Firestone.

Cape brothers, congratulations on the championship.

NICHOLAS CAPE: I think people come into your life at certain points. Nikita came at the right time for us. We've been working hard for these four years, unbelievably tough times. Nikita came at the right time. He was ready, we were ready. We gave, I mean, 110%. He's from a lovely family, lovely lad. Everyone got behind him. He drew everybody on the team to him. It was a brilliant year. Hard to put into words.

Obviously we're ecstatic. Ecstatic for my brother, engineering. Incredible job this year, especially after the last year we had, Mid-Ohio. It's an amazing achievement all round.

THE MODERATOR: Dominic, let alone winning it with Nikita, just to move up to INDY NXT, getting comfortable in the series, maybe the transition, here you are sitting as a champion.

DOMINIC CAPE: It's taken a lot of Jack Daniels to get to this point. Some Miller Lites. We hung in there. Kept drinking, and good things happened, right (smiling)? There's going to be a lot more drunk tonight. Especially



... when all is said, we're done.®

Nikita's dad.

THE MODERATOR: They're a jovial bunch, so we'll open it up for questions.

Q. Nikita, obviously the scholarship comes with this championship. Do you have a plan on whose doors you start knocking on in the off-season or have you already fielded a few phone calls?

NIKITA JOHNSON: Not really sure. That's up to my agent, Michael Maroney. I'm just a driver. I'm out there driving.

This weekend I didn't think about signings, all this and that, championship points. All my competitors were worried about points, if they're going to be signed for next year. I came in this weekend just racing, just going to be the driver to beat, right?

Right now Michael hasn't told me anything. I'm guessing somebody called him, right? Just don't tell us until after we get the job done. This is priority number one, to win the championship. Now we'll go try to find the best seat for me next year. I'll have the best growth and getting a podium my rookie year would be amazing.

Q. We've had some young talent in this series before. Colton Herta was 16. Pato O'Ward won a championship at 18. What makes Nikita so good?

NICHOLAS CAPE: Yeah, I don't think he's young. Look at him, he's got a beard (smiling). He drives beyond his years. He's levelheaded. He brings the car home every time. It's hard to call him young, you know what I mean? He's got a lot of experience.

His dad did a fantastic job putting him into places where he needed to learn to build up his data driving. Absolutely magnificent job. Beyond his years. When you say he's young, it's only an age, not his mentality.

DOMINIC CAPE: Over the years we've tested pretty much all of those guys. Yeah, he was just good, focused, makes stuff happen. That's what you got to be like.

Q. In long-term is there any realistic scenario or possibility you will move up to INDYCAR? Being so successful here in the junior category, is there also maybe a possibility or a plan you set up a team in Europe?

DOMINIC CAPE: I have a pretty big piggybank at home. If somebody wants to fill it up, I'm all in (smiling).

NICHOLAS CAPE: Well, we start again, don't we? We start again next year. We give it another crack, right?

I just want to thank everybody on our team, the family and everything. Our boys did an amazing job, amazing job all year. You look at the laps he completed.

THE MODERATOR: All of them, by the way. Only driver to do that.

NICHOLAS CAPE: Yeah. It's absolutely phenomenal. Unbelievable team effort from our lads who are in the trenches every day working. Incredible job, every one of them.

Q. Nikita, do you think of a timeline where you could have ended up as a figure skater, hockey player, if your dad didn't put you in a go-kart at a young age?

NIKITA JOHNSON: Not really. If I was playing hockey, I'd probably still kick ass, honestly. I'd be short, but I'd get it done. I'd just go straight between their legs with the puck and score, honestly.

I don't know. I sometimes think about it, but not really. I'm happy with the sport I chose. I think it suits me. It's pretty fun to go try other sports and still be good. I guess no matter what sport I would have chosen as a kid, I would have been at least pretty good at it.

DOMINIC CAPE: I'm not sure I want to see him in a ballerina outfit.

NIKITA JOHNSON: I meant ice hockey, NHL.

Q. Over the off-season you separated from Andretti and started basically your own independent alliance with ECR. Talk about how significant this title is and the role that Nikita played.

NICHOLAS CAPE: Yeah, well, obviously that was an incredible, difficult decision to make, right, who leaves. For us, we're a bit different (smiling). We made a very difficult decision. We don't know what is on the other end of it, obviously.

When Nikita came, he committed to us not knowing anything, just knowing that we were going to do it ourselves. He came 100% committed just to want to be with us. That speaks volumes, right?

When you got somebody with his talent that wants to be with you, and we're starting a new venture, then Ed and Jay Howard, as well was involved.

DOMINIC CAPE: Ted.

NICHOLAS CAPE: Yeah. It was a scary proposition, but we were open to it, wanted to do it. We knew we had to do it for ourselves, be us, because we are a bit naughty. Look where we are now.

Q. Nikita, finishing every lap this season, how important was it to keep yourself out of harm's way?

NIKITA JOHNSON: Yeah, I knew what the points were pretty much. I studied them a lot. The only difference in points is really the top three. After that it kind of drops off by two points.

To try to go make a pass for seventh on the last lap when you know it's not there, take yourself out, instead of gaining two points, you lose whatever it was, 19, 20 points or more. That's the thing I knew. No matter what, if the car is a P8 car, I'm going to try to get P7. If I can't, I'll take the points home and give it another crack the next day or next weekend.

I knew as long as I was finishing, I'd be getting good points. Others would either have bad luck or drive themselves into a mistake and have a crash. I knew if I could just keep it on track and get the points, we'd be pretty set.

Q. When it comes to figuring out next season, whatever it may be, do you know if there's a certain timeline or are you open to anything?

NIKITA JOHNSON: Yeah, that will be off to my agent Michael Maroney. I'm going to be doing the IMSA Brickyard and Petit Le Mans. I'm focused on those two. Hopefully we can get our first few podiums in the GT car.

Yeah, I'm just going to go drive. Fish when I get home. Play a little bit of golf. I'll let everyone call Michael or Michael call them. I don't know how it's going to go. I'll let him handle it all, and my dad. I know they'll put me in the right position. I trust them.

Q. Nikita, you mentioned how calm you've been outwardly all season. How did you manage to keep your emotions in check throughout this title battle? When you crossed the line, what were some of the immediate feelings of getting this done?

NIKITA JOHNSON: Yeah, I mean, I'm a pretty chill person, right? I'm not crazy when something happens. A lot of people think I'm passion-less when I race, emotion-less. I wouldn't be racing if I didn't have a passion for it.

I'm really good at keeping my emotions regular and down.

All season long, no matter what happened, I knew we would get it the next race no matter what. I knew I had good support from all the Cape boys, my whole family, everyone around us supporting us. No matter what happened I knew I'd be in right hands and I had a shoulder to lean on.

Yeah, just chill. I think I was a lot better at dealing with my emotions than anyone else out there. That's what gave me the championship.

Q. Lap one, what was your view of the incident and how did you manage to avoid that?

NIKITA JOHNSON: Yeah, I'm not really sure exactly what happened. I mean, I saw someone get turned. I guess that was Josh. I already left a little bit of a gap on the start because I knew there's no point to get up on the rear wing and take my front wing off. There's too much risk there and no reward honestly. I gave it a little bit of a gap. I saw they were crashing and all that. I got on the brakes really hard, checked up, moved out of the way, avoided it.

I was really glad that nobody from behind hit me because I had to really slow down not to be involved. I guess I just missed it again. Being smart kept me out of it.

NICHOLAS CAPE: Cole Trickle. Days of Thunder (smiling).

Q. Nikita, out of all your races in your career, which one has been your most pinnacle moment that you've been in?

NIKITA JOHNSON: I'd say this one right here, seeing all my friends and family out here, the whole Cape team, their whole families. All the support really. All the support online from my friends back home, fans and everyone hitting me up and DMing me.

I think this was a really cool weekend. There was no pressure for me. Even though the championship was so tight, there was really no pressure on me. It was one of the most enjoyable weekends I ever had. I get to fight for the championship and I have no pressure. All my competitors are dealing with all the pressure of having to do this and that.

It was just kind of a surreal thing of, like I said, just fighting for the biggest championship of my career right now. I'm not feeling a thing.

Also St. Pete, my first win in INDY NXT was very, very memorable.

If anybody wants to give me free test days on any cars, I'm open to drive (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, guys.

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