

Indianapolis Motor Speedway Media Conference

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Mark Miles

J. Douglas Boles

Dr. Ed Racht

Press Conference



MARK MILES: I appreciate everybody joining us for the call today.

This is a day that we've long worked for and looked forward to. We're really delighted to be able to take this big step toward having the 104th running of the Indianapolis 500 race on August 23rd.

The plan we're making public today reflects our commitment to making the health of our fans, community, competitors our highest priority. The approval of the Marion County Board of Health and favorable comments by its director, Dr. Caine and by Dr. Box, the commissioner of the Indiana State Department of Health, I think reflects the quality and depth of our plan. We want to say we appreciate the collaboration we've had with these authorities.

The plan represents thousands of hours of work by our staff along with months of input by these local, state and other national experts.

We believe it's important we have a race, that we have this race, to set a high standard and example for how people can come together today under the right procedures.

We're reengineering the way we function in a new normal. In everything we do today, there are risks. But shutting down again creates detrimental health effects and affects the livelihood of Hoosiers as well.

We are proud to be moving forward. Some of the key steps we're taking include running the 500 on August 23rd with spectators at about 25% of capacity. We're going to distribute masks and hand sanitizer to all of our guests. We're going to require mandatory use of the facemask for everyone.

There will be temperature screenings for everyone who

comes onto the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and into the track. There will be distancing throughout the venue. There's much, much more which you can read about in the detailed nearly hundred-page plan that was developed in collaboration with national, state and local health experts. We want our media, our customers and all Hoosiers to see the approach we're taking based on expert advice.

It appears that many of you have also already reported one of today's headlines, that is the announcement that local broadcast delay of the race will be lifted this year. Under these unique circumstances, we felt it was the right thing to do.

On this call we also want you to hear from a medical expert and leader I've really come to respect and appreciate who has been guiding a major organization on the front lines of the fight against COVID-19.

Dr. Ed Racht is the chief medical officer of Global Medical Response. His direct experience with COVID-19 dates back to the very first cases in the United States, and he's worked on mitigation and response in every part of our country. He's lent his guidance and expertise in important ways to our planning process.

He's now going to walk us through the steps being taken at the Indy 500 with special attention to their effectiveness from a medical and clinical perspective.

Dr. Racht has summarized some of this in the COVID-19 Targeted Event Medical Strategic Plan that I think is linked to the materials you've received.

Dr. Racht, thank you for joining us.

DR. ED RACHT: Thank you. Thank you all for joining us on this call.

It's obviously a unique time in our history but also a unique time in medicine where medicine, the evolving science and practice regarding COVID, becomes very important to all of us, to communities, individual patients, and to how we get our lives back to what the new normal looks like.

What you'll see in the collective strategies, I should note these strategies are a result of a tremendous amount of work from health and safety experts within the

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organization, outside the organization, guidance, evolving guidance, as you all know, we learn more about this illness and its transmission day. There's a lot of agility in managing appropriately.

There is an art and science to everything in medicine. Sometimes the art is harder than the science. What you'll see in our guidance today is that the appropriate science, the things that we know will help minimize transmission of the COVID virus are included extensively in this plan.

Our organization was involved, it's hard to believe, six months ago when this started in the state of Washington with the first patient that was identified there and his transition through multiple states.

We are a FEMA partner of the deployments in New York, New Jersey. Much of the screening in airports, we've been partner with the feds, large organizations. We've learned a lot about what works in the art, what the science is, and how to translate that.

I want to bullet point what are important principles as we move forward. One is informed consent. People know or are learning, individual people, about COVID, its transmission and what they should do for protection. The organization has already begun with information to potential attendees, and for them to pay attention to their health.

If they are in a CDC-identified high-risk group, they should make a decision about attendance or consult their healthcare practitioner or provider.

As I said before, it's important to coordinate with local health authorities, epidemiologists, whose expertise, whose science is focused on identifying and managing the transmission of infectious diseases.

One of the most important components of this plan is decreased attendance. So the density of individuals in an outdoor venue, a large outdoor venue, is certainly something that will help to minimize transmission. We feel pretty strongly that the 25% range is a very effective approach.

The expectations, pre-event communication, you will wear a mask. We are taking this seriously. The good news is, when we all work together and we take those steps, it helps to make the event safe, and most importantly enjoyable for those that are there.

High-risk events. The organization has done a tremendous job - I would underline 'tremendous' - of identifying those events that have historically been high-risk. That means

those environments where individuals would be very in large, dense areas, in a smaller footprint, have been canceled. They're screening every day for everyone who comes into the event. It's a staged screening. There's temperature screening of every attendee. They're given a non-removable wristband to show they have been screened. If they are elevated they go to a second level. We have taken it one step further including an individual EMT who would include other assessment components of that. The temperature screening component limits and identifies potentially anyone who should not be moved in.

Face covering. We now know in science face coverings make a difference. Culturally we're all realizing that's an effective way to minimize transmission. We are going to be supportive, but we're going to pay attention, very similar to when you see something, say something. Culturally we want to start setting the stage that it is acceptable and we're all in this together. Our staff, the staff will be roving through the venue with that specifically.

Two things finally. Physical distancing, identifying signs, appropriate spacing, changing entrance structurally entrance, entrance and exits, have all been mapped out literally to the square foot, in the venue to minimize that potential for closeness.

Finally, ongoing messaging. It's a great opportunity not only to remind folks for the event, but it's our hope that this becomes something they will take forward, as all of us nationwide, and all these events continue, incorporate that in their daily practice.

We're comfortable at this stage. We will monitor every day and work collaboratively with our healthcare partners to make sure that we're making the right decisions and we're doing it in a timely fashion.

MARK MILES: Thanks, Dr. Racht. We appreciate that.

We've shared with you all on the phone the steps we're taking, which we think are quite comprehensive. There's another important topic we need to discuss, that is the steps our IMS guests must take to ensure everyone's health and safety.

A successful event is going to take the buy-in and support from our fans. We're confident we'll get it. As Hoosiers, and I think race fans here, have always looked out for each other.

Doug, you want to help us get our spectators ready to attend the event.

J. DOUGLAS BOLES: Thank you. Appreciate all the effort

you've given us, Dr. Racht, as we've navigated through a different time for the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

We sit here today planning on an Indianapolis 500 32 days from now. It will be the longest gap between Indianapolis 500s since we had our big gap in World War II. I know our fans are excited to get back to the Speedway and celebrate in this facility they so look forward to coming to.

Folks that come to the Indianapolis 500 know that it's more than just a race, the facility is more than just a facility. It is a 300-acre complex inside our gates that they feel very intimate when they're here. They know where they sit, where they park. There are traditions that happen every year. We're doing the best we can to help them have that similar feeling that makes the facility so special when they come here.

Like we really started doing into 2016 for the hundredth running, we're going to ask our fans to help us navigate through that. The last several years you have heard us say to be prepared, plan ahead, and be patient when you come here.

We're going to have a little bit of a twist on that this year. We're definitely going to want to have fans be prepared, but also to be smart and safe. That's going to require our fans to listen to us, listen to the advice of folks like Dr. Racht, and that begins with making sure we're taking care of each other.

When you get here, you will receive a facemask and hand sanitizer. We expect you to put that facemask on and wear it while you're inside the facility, with the exception of those times that you're eating or drinking. This is the biggest thing we can do as fans to ensure that the Indianapolis 500 and all of us do it in a responsible way.

Starting at the end of June we asked our customers to let us know if they wanted to come to the Indianapolis 500 this year and to tell us how many of the tickets that they wanted to use when they came here. That process went very smoothly. It's an indicator that our fans want this to happen and that our fans are going to listen and follow the procedures we set forth to make sure we can have this race.

One of the things we've encouraged folks to do, if you're over 65 or in a high-risk category, we are asking you to please consider taking this year off. If you're not feeling well the day of the race, please consider staying home.

When you get here, in addition to wearing your mask, we're going to ask you that respect distances of others. We will help you with regard to concession stands and restrooms

with the way the facility is marked so we can make sure in those high-traffic areas we're maintaining the proper distances.

When you're in your seats, you're going to notice that your seats are going to be distanced in a way they have not been here in the Indianapolis Motor Speedway before to make sure we are keeping you safe. Again, we're going to ask you to keep your masks on. Even though there may not be somebody sitting right next to you, we're going to ask that you wear that mask.

We've talked over the last several years of the importance of IMS app and IMS website, IMS.com/planahead. There's never been a year it's been more important than this year. We will continue from the moment this press conference ends through race day and throughout the race itself, communicating with you, our fans, on the things we need you to do to ensure we do this in a responsible fashion.

I get a chance to talk to 10 customers every night on my way home. I know how passionate our customers are for the 500. I know our customers want this to happen. I know our fans are going to participate. We look forward to operating the Indianapolis 500 this year with these restrictions and plans in place.

While we're certainly going to feel a lot different this year, a lot of the things will feel the same. It is the place we all plan on gathering one time a year. It is our opportunity to celebrate those 33 men and women who put everything on the line to get a chance to win at the Indianapolis 500, see their face on the Borg-Warner trophy, and hoist that glass of milk that's so much a part of the Indianapolis 500.

We're looking forward to a healthy, fun, fast race day. I can't believe it's just 32 days away. Practice opens in 20 days. We look forward to fans being here for practice and qualifying.

MARK MILES: Thanks, Doug.

Just to conclude before we take questions, by our perspective, the Indianapolis 500-mile race has been a global spectacle that has brought millions of people great joy for nearly 110 years, interrupted only twice by world wars. We think we're going to have one heck of a race on August 23rd. We're going to bring people, some in the venue, fewer than normal in the venue, many more on television, a lot of joy when they need it.

We're going to showcase a responsible and cautious way to host an event. We take that seriously. We'll continue to monitor our plan, make adjustments to the plan right through race day so that every possible precaution can be



in place.

Thank you all for your patience. We'll open it up for questions.

Q. Will fans be allowed for practice, qualifying, Carb Day? Any restrictions? How will they be seated?

J. DOUGLAS BOLES: The first thing, Dr. Racht touched on it, when you come to the facility any day, you will go through our screening process as you come in and receive that wristband. That's the first thing folks will notice. We are planning on practice and qualifying days to have our fans here.

Here in the next week or so the facility's team is going to begin marking our seats in areas where people can sit and where we're asking people not to sit so we can make sure they're distanced.

You know you don't have reserved seats, but you will be able to see where you can sit and where you can't. There will be areas we're pushing people to sit so we can make sure we're maintaining some sort of distance even during practice and qualifying days.

We're looking forward to having folks here for practice days and having folks here on qualifying, Carb Day as well.

MARK MILES: I saw what I thought was a little bit of a misunderstanding in some of the local media this morning.

What Doug said is absolutely correct. There will be sections that are not open on early days. On race day we're not closing sections. The entirety of the grandstands, all the mounds, the infield and the suites will be open. That gives us a greater ability to distance fans in the grandstands and around the venue. Even if it's 25% in total of the capacity, it doesn't mean we're only using 25%, one corner or some limited part of the facility.

Q. What about Gasoline Alley access to fans that maybe have already purchased the bronze badges? Will the garage area be open to the media during practice and qualifying?

J. DOUGLAS BOLES: Those customers with bronze and silver badges will have access to the appropriate locations on practice days and qualifying days. They will still get that access.

We have limited the number this year, so there will be fewer people in those spaces. For those customers that have that access, they will continue to get it.

We will make some adjustments on race day to the pit lane access in order to reduce the density inside pit lane and to give the teams an opportunity to really prepare and get set for the Indianapolis 500 on race day.

Q. There always seems to be that one guy who refuses to wear the mask no matter where you're at. When you get a crowd of 50,000, 60,000, there's probably going to be several of them. How will you enforce the mask policy? Would refusal of wearing the mask be grounds for them being evicted from the premises?

J. DOUGLAS BOLES: I touched on it a little bit. I think the very first thing we're going to do when we outlined that the masks will be required inside the grounds, we will continue between now and the first day we're open to message to our fans the importance of those masks.

As Dr. Racht mentioned, it is not without science behind it that tells us when you wear a mask it limits the spread of the disease. It's important to our ability to execute our practices, qualifying and race day.

We're going to communicate very heavily to folks leading up to the time when we're open, they will get communication when they walk in the gate. We will give them a mask so there's no excuse for not having one as they come in. We are going to have a level of progressive enforcement, is probably the easiest way to describe it. Our guest services folks, oftentimes known as yellow shirts, but we'll have a guest services team that will be moving throughout the grounds reminding people to wear those masks.

As Dr. Racht said we're hoping our fans will remind people as well. If it's appropriate, we are prepared to ask people to leave. I hope we don't have to do that. We definitely are prepared to do that if people aren't willing to comply about what we believe is a reasonable requirement.

DR. ED RACHT: Your question is a good one. I think there's a parallel dynamic which will really help us in the evolution of this illness.

The concepts of masks are becoming a little bit more accepted just culturally, in the political arena, in the science arena. Our hopes are that a lot of that trend by the time we move forward will be addressed in changes between individuals from a human behavioral standpoint.

The other component of this is that we see this as a good opportunity to remind, as we talked about before, that this is a long haul. This illness is a long haul. This is a great venue to see one of the reasons we can enjoy things like

this is because we enjoy it in a slightly different way that protects each other.

We're banking on making it positive, informative, but also reinforcing it as a group. This is a team sport in the stands between the spectators.

Q. At a much smaller venue, Iowa Speedway, there were spectators. The event was promoted by pretty much the same people that promote the Detroit Grand Prix. With that being used as a trial run how to take this to a bigger platform such as the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, it was a very good weekend. Everybody cooperated and the fans had a good time.

MARK MILES: I want to go back a little further and get to Iowa. The perspective we have is that this is now many, many weeks in process, particularly in doing the things to keep our competitors as healthy as possible.

We think NASCAR did a terrific job in developing the protocols for competitors that start before races, they're in place during races, and there's follow-up after races. They've shared all that with us. That's been kind of a collegial, collaborative process.

They've had, I don't know, 20 events or so at the NASCAR level. I think they've done just an excellent job in executing most of them without fans, but still the participants and how they're protected and the procedures for them are important as well.

We've now had six races at INDYCAR, the most recent of which were the doubleheaders in Iowa. Like you, I thought they did a great job. Fans wanted to be there. Fans did their part. There were circles chalked in some of the grass areas. For the most part fans sat in those circles with groups of people they'd come with. I just thought it was an excellent development.

All of this is development, right? It's the training of people, the training of ourselves, enhancing our ability to execute. We've got a couple more before we get to Indianapolis. I think we get better all the time at it.

I want to say I think in Indianapolis, the mayor's executive order requiring masks some time ago, has been helpful. I think it will ultimately help in controlling the spread of the virus. It's also, as Ed said, beginning to train our public not perfectly, but we're beginning to make progress and people are beginning to understand that it's important to them and it's sort of their responsibility.

I think it's all coming together in a helpful way.

Q. Any additional guidance for people with the bronze and silver badges this year in terms of different protocols or different things than they may have been used to in previous years?

J. DOUGLAS BOLES: The biggest thing we're going to absolutely require them to wear that mask. It's going to be one of those things, especially inside the garage and pit lane, that it has to be on at all times. There's probably not even a drinking or eating exception in that space. That's going to be the biggest thing I think people will feel.

We are shrinking the number of them that have been made available so there will definitely be less folks inside there.

Then my guess is the two places where there will be the biggest difference on qualifying days, for example, we're going to limit the number of people who have access to the front of the line where the cars go out so that we can make sure that's appropriately spaced on the south side of the Gasoline Alley break, if you will.

For those folks that have access to pit lane on race morning, the time will be reduced that they have, and nobody will have access to the racetrack except for essential personnel related to the race teams.

Q. This is addressed in the plan, but I wonder if you would elaborate. You have thousands of fans arriving at more or less the same time, exiting at the same time. How is ingress and egress going to be handled to facility social distancing?

MARK MILES: Again, it starts with messaging. The race is going to start later than in the past. We have a little bit more time to bring people in race morning.

When one gets to the beginning of a queue or what we call a lane which leads to a gate where they go through all the normal processes, including cooler and bag checks, ticket scanning, they will have the temperature scanning that has been discussed.

At the front of that line there will be what we call ground graphics. There will be the signs on the ground that designate where you should stand while in the queue to keep a distance from everybody else in the line, the people in front of you. That will just continue throughout. Whether it's in front of a restroom, a concession stand or a merchandise stand, everything will be marked. There will be signage everywhere.

We have I think about 30 new video boards. For all these purposes there will be very regular, explicit messaging about the things that people need to keep in mind while

they're here. That includes leaving.

Obviously we don't think it can be managed like church or a wedding. We do think we can ask people to use good sense, to take their time leaving, and to keep distance from other fans as best they can as they're leaving, all the while wearing masks.

Those are kind of the keys to it.

Q. The initial announcement of the plan mentions all this is subject to Marion County Health Department approval. What can still change?

MARK MILES: Whatever changes we will adjust the plan so that if there's any new learnings, science or art, as Dr. Racht put it, we'll incorporate that by day.

We're planning on doing it the way it is under the current circumstances. We'll do that while monitoring the healthcare metrics. We're staying in close touch with the city and state board of health. Ultimately we'll take their direction based on those metrics between now and race day.

Q. You're satisfied you have a green flag from them to go forward?

MARK MILES: Yeah, no, I think Dr. Caine's quote is explicit in terms of the plan itself, it is approved. We have a green flag. We expect to be able to do the race.

Q. You talked about working with NASCAR, talking to them. It seems in the races where they've had fans, their biggest issues have come late in the race, at the end of the race with fans rushing certain areas to try to get a look at drivers, the winning driver fist-pumping fans. They had a red flag, they had fans rush to the fence line. Anything you've planned to avoid those type of things?

J. DOUGLAS BOLES: We absolutely saw that.

First of all, our facility is a little bit unique. What you saw there in the incident you're discussing, the fence literally was on the racetrack so fans could get there and get close to a driver coming up to get his checkered flag, celebrate his victory.

In our facility there is a significant gap between the flag stand and the wall. There's a grass area, a fence, then a walkway, then a grandstand. That's one of the issues that I don't think we are going to see here that they had to deal with in some of those mile-and-a-half tracks that are built the way they are.

We are thinking through places where fans do tend to congregate. That's why I mentioned a minute ago about some restrictions related to qualifying and the access we allow for badge holders because we have had a lot of folks that want to get close. We've identified a few of those areas to make sure that we can eliminate that.

One of the things we've also done, one of the great things about the NTT INDYCAR Series and the Indianapolis 500 is the access to the drivers that fans have through a full-field autograph session at virtually every race. That's been an important part of our race.

For this year, we're not going to host those for the very reason you talked about. We don't want to put plans in a place where they feel like they have to push and shove to get advantage over another fan to get close to a racecar driver.

While we do believe that is an important part of your event, for this year we believe the best thing to do is cancel those.

We have addressed some of those situations that you highlight related to fans gathering to get access to a driver.

Q. Most motorsports, INDYCAR, NASCAR, are not testing. From a medical perspective, is that an issue? Or because of the different nature of the sport versus other sports, is it not?

DR. ED RACHT: A very perceptive question.

The entire spectrum of testing continues to evolve. Whether testing an asymptomatic population, meaning folks who are otherwise without symptoms, is effective and valuable across the board is still in debate. Here is why.

If I test you today, and the event is on Friday, I have all of your contacts during that time period where you could be exposed to someone and develop a COVID infection.

We've taken the approach, and I think it's a very sound approach, to say let's assume everyone everywhere is infected and let's protect ourselves. Let's create an environment that's safe to minimize transmission.

Medicine has been doing that for decades. It's called universal precautions. That's the mask, changing the physical components, et cetera, across the board.

At this point the science of testing continues to evolve. I suspect the answer down the road, next year, may be different as testing methodologies change. Right now we choose to protect all participants, anyone that comes into

the gates of the venue.

Q. Dr. Racht, there's so much unknown in all this obviously. It feels like what you're doing is a very public science experiment, and the subjects are 90,000 of us. What is the acceptable risk here?

DR. ED RACHT: As in everything, as an example, we were just having this discussion last night on my flight from Dallas to Indianapolis. That flight three weeks ago was almost empty. That flight yesterday was almost full.

I think getting back to the art and science, as we understand more about transmission, we understand more about the virus and the public and social components that minimize that transmission, we continue to move forward.

Your question is the same as schools reopening, the same as my grocery store staying open. 'Experiment' is not a word I would use. This is the application of some pretty strict criteria in a large population to minimize that transmission as we move forward across the board.

I'm glad you asked the question because we just this morning had a discussion that following the data, that everywhere it's getting better collecting data, so following the data pre-event, as Mark described, we're going to look at that stuff post-event as well to see what changes and what moves forward.

MARK MILES: I don't have anything to add to that.

DR. ED RACHT: I'd just add one other component that's comforting to my colleagues and I.

This is an outdoor venue. We know that the difference in transmission in an outdoor venue versus an indoor venue is fairly substantial. There is a degree of comfort in this venue that's totally different than a large-scale concert or something indoors. That's also helped to inform our decision-making process.

Q. With the secondary market tickets, when you send out tickets for this race, if folks do happen to put their tickets up for sale on a secondary market, what restrictions will be in place to ensure that they have four tickets that go up for sale, that those tickets aren't split up into groups of two and two which then would put groups of people that don't know each other sitting next to each other potentially race day?

J. DOUGLAS BOLES: I'm still trying to understand your question. You're asking if I had four tickets, I sold it on the secondary market, the resellers sold it to other people other than the groups of folks that are coming?

Q. Yes.

J. DOUGLAS BOLES: First of all, even if that happens, and it's likely it does, I don't think we will have an issue. Very, very rarely does somebody come and buy one ticket. Even if you sold your four tickets and the scalper sold two to you and two to Mark Miles, the way we're assigning our seats, those two people will be sitting together.

I don't think we'll have the situation or it would be very unlikely to have the situation where somebody was sitting, directly, next to someone they didn't know or didn't come with.

Q. I know this was set initially when you sent out the email to ticketholders back in late June. If folks did decide now they know all of the information about the plan that they decided they did not want to use the tickets they have now claimed, will there be any sort of refund policy in place for those folks or will they end up losing the money?

J. DOUGLAS BOLES: We're in this together as we said from the very beginning of this conversation in June, certainly today. 'In this together' means as a customer, if they look at the situation and they believe things have substantially changed, for them they'd like to take a credit for the 2021 Indianapolis 500 versus coming to this 2020 Indianapolis 500 the absolutely right thing to do is give them that credit.

We are encouraging people to continue to come. If they're uncomfortable, we're going to give them the credit for 2021.

Q. Doug, for practice and qualifying, what kind of crowds are you expecting for those days?

J. DOUGLAS BOLES: Great question. Honestly, I don't know the answer to that. Certainly the crowds for the Indianapolis 500 qualifying are significantly less than what we have for race day. I believe that will be the same situation.

The good news is on qualification day we open up more grandstand seats than we would have for a practice day. We have the ability to really space folks out if they're going to be here.

I don't think we'll have any issue maintaining. Actually it is probably very easy to maintain the safe distancing on those weekends.

We don't have a prediction yet on what qualifying numbers



will be.

Q. Do you have a max number? Presuming maybe there's a lot of demand for qualifying, how many would you cap it at?

J. DOUGLAS BOLES: I guess we cap it at 25% of the facility just because we have the ability to open the whole place up. We haven't had a situation like that in several years where we've had to worry about that. It's a hypothetical that I don't think we're going to have to deal with.

MARK MILES: I just want to leave us with this point. These are points that have really guided our thinking as we worked on this plan, made these decisions throughout.

The first is that this is a gigantic venue. We've always expressed in ways like you can put the Rose Bowl and Churchill Downs and Yankee Stadium and Wimbledon and the Vatican City all inside it. Another way to think about it is the mall in Washington, D.C. Two times the Washington mall. Think about the number of people there for various events including inaugurations. It is a massive place.

That with the fact we're going to limit capacity to 25%, the fact that it's outdoors, which all the science, I think I read from the governor, the state board of health, he can confirm this or kick me, in an outdoor environment the virus is 19 times less likely to spread than in indoor facilities. We're going to require masks, and we're not kidding.

All the other things that are in this plan we believe are responsible and we've tried to make it easy, frankly, for people who may decide, have already decided, may decide between now and August 23rd that they don't feel comfortable in here, they can make that decision and we'll treat them appropriately financially.

We feel good about where we are. We're in the countdown now. Things will continue to be refined. We're focused on delivering this plan and executing really, really well so things don't fall through the cracks. If anything, I think we'll be adding to it as the days elapse.

We want to thank you all for your participation and we look forward to talking whenever you have other questions.

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