

IndyCar Media Conference

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Jay Frye

Mark Kent

Art St. Cyr

Stefano DePonti

Lisa Boggs

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome, everyone. Thank you for joining. This is my debut on this end of the microphone.

Today we have a great collection of competitors, manufacturers. Of course, Jay Frye, the IndyCar president of competition and operations. The first person seated here is Lisa Boggs, director of Bridgestone Americas Motorsports. On the far end, Stefano De Ponti, CEO and GM of U.S. operations for Dallara. We have closest to me, Mark Kent, director of motorsports competition for Chevrolet and Cadillac. Last but not least, Art St. Cyr, the president of Honda Performance Development.

This being the first official weekend of the 2017 Verizon IndyCar Series, we have some great news to share with the group. I'll turn it over to Jay, and he can distribute the news today.

JAY FRYE: Good afternoon. We're very proud to announce all four of our manufacturing partners have committed to the sport's future and signed multi-year extensions. This is the foundation of our five-year plan we talked about. It is, in our opinion, unprecedented.

We as a group, along with our paddock, have come up with a five-year plan. Part of that plan was the freezing of the aero kits and in the next three years having a universal kit. We can't thank our partners enough.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Jay. We have a couple other points we want to make. We're coming off a year when six of the events reported record attendance, including the Indianapolis 500, in its hundredth running. Ticket renewal is very strong there. Of course, the TV broadcast numbers continue to improve, 55 percent over that period.

I wanted to have each of the manufacture reps speak to their company. We'll start with Lisa.



Talk about the importance of a multi-year commitment by Firestone to this endeavor.

LISA BOGGS: Absolutely. First, thank you all for coming down. I know it's a busy day. We really appreciate it as sponsors for us, and as manufacturers, that you're out here and supporting this event.

For Firestone, it is tremendous for us as a brand whose DNA is rooted in racing, particularly in IndyCar, to be able to look long-term with a wide lens and make plans along activation as well as engineering, and to really importantly be able to partner with everyone sitting at this table in IndyCar on what does the next five years, six years look like, to be part of that process.

That benefits us greatly. We can make plans and continue to leverage the sport. It is really a tremendous part of marketing, as I said, the activation, to engage consumers, to talk to them about our passenger tires, to really tell our story in a unique way.

This lens allows us to sit back and say, What do we want to do from here? Look at it, build on it year over year over year. That's great as a manufacturing company and a marketing company.

THE MODERATOR: I would point in today's announcement, we are not discussing or at least revealing manufacture terms. If they individually would like to speak to that on their own, they can certainly do that.

Let's go down to the end to Stefano. Last month your program was announced, a multi-year program. Speak to how much excitement there is both at the Indianapolis headquarters but also back in Italy.

STEFANO DE PONTI: Thank you. Good afternoon, everyone. I want to start, first of all, to thank Mark Miles, Jay Frye, all the people at IndyCar that allow Dallara the contract and partnership extension.

Secondly, is a great honor for me personally, for Dallara, too, to be seated with the great names, representatives from Honda, GM and Firestone.

Dallara basically is a small company that moved to the United States 20 years ago, thanks to IndyCar. Thanks to IndyCar basically we expanded our business, not only in the racing world, but IndyCar gave us the chance to establish an engineering company in

Speedway, Indiana, and develop even more business.

The importance to have this partnership and extension with IndyCar is basically an unlimited value for us. IndyCar is a legacy for Dallara, and it is in Dallara's DNA basically since 1997, when we started.

Together we accomplished a lot of tasks, a lot of goals. We obviously are fully committed. We are fully committed and it is our duty to do our best, to work with IndyCar, and with our partners, to promote the series, to enhance the races, and to make sure that our fans, which they are generating interest all over the world, not only U.S., but also in Europe, in particular in Italy. We have more followers of IndyCar for the spectacular races that we are putting together.

In conclusion, for us, is a great achievement. I really personally am grateful for what we were able to achieve with IndyCar for the extension. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: I'm not sure, but I think free coffee at Lino's is on the docket.

STEFANO DE PONTI: Anytime.

THE MODERATOR: Art, let's move to you. I mentioned to you a little bit ago about how we would have this announcement. Obviously, there were people who expected it. This has been, again, part of your DNA. Why the commitment, multi-year, from Honda?

ART ST. CYR: First of all, I want to thank IndyCar and everybody else up here to join in the celebration, I guess we could say, of talking about where open-wheel racing is going in North America.

We talked about the same DNA -- racing is in our DNA. We can actually say the same thing as Honda. If you think back to the founder, Soichiro Honda himself, he started a car company mainly so he could race. It's very important to Honda to race everywhere.

HPD was started in 1993 mainly to support open-wheel racing in North America. We have been in open-wheel racing in its various forms for 24 years consistently. We do that because we believe in the purity of what open-wheel racing represents in North America.

Our parent company, American Honda, believes in what open-wheel racing represents for our brand. We're very honored to be working with this great group of people to continue this far into the future.

This is something that you can almost expect from us because we're always in this. To have the stability we have right now is something we've never enjoyed before. I want to thank everyone for that. We're proud to be here.

THE MODERATOR: Mark, I've been in this for 30

years. I don't remember a time, at least when it was spoken, when there were so many multi-year deals in place.

Mark, let's speak to General Motors and Chevrolet, just how important this is to have the stability that everyone is looking for in this sport.

MARK KENT: We'd also like to thank Mark, Jay, everybody for this opportunity. We've talked a lot about DNA. Nobody's DNA goes deeper than Chevrolet's. There's actually a bust of our founder, Louis Chevrolet, in the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Over a hundred years ago, Louis, along with his brother, used the speedway as their proving ground. Racing has always been a part of Chevrolet's DNA. We're excited about the opportunity to continue participating in this sport, competing head-to-head with Honda, using Firestone tires, Dallara as a chassis. It's a great combination. Couldn't be sitting with a better group of people.

A lot of people do ask why we compete in IndyCar. There's a lot of reasons. On track it gives us the ability to continue to develop technologies that we use in a lot of our production cars. Talk about small displacement, turbo charging, direct injection, all great stuff we do in our production car. This arena gives us an opportunity to build better street cars from what we learn on the racetrack.

It always gives us a great opportunity at the racetrack to display a lot of our products and get our products in front of current and prospective customers to let them see what great cars Chevrolet truly makes and hopefully get them to put Chevrolet on their shopping list.

Finally, just the opportunity to run at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway is a great value for us to compete in the sport.

Like everybody else, we're very proud, very glad to be here, welcome the opportunity.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Mark. Thanks, everybody.

We'll open it up to a few questions here. In the coming weeks, before we get to Long Beach, we'll have the Full Steam Ahead Program, with regard to what the 2018 car looks like, some more pieces to the puzzle as we move forward.

Questions.

Q. (No microphone.)

ART ST. CYR: The framework for this extension started several years ago. It wasn't much of a step to extend this one. It didn't really require any effort. We knew what we wanted to do. There were some issues on our

corporate side that slowed us down from doing it originally. But now was the time to announce this.

Like I said, there really weren't a lot of changes for us.

JAY FRYE: It was very seamless. I think everybody up here has been part of this five-year plan we keep talking about, which is a collaboration of this entire group, as well as everybody in the paddock.

It was important we have a path, a destination of where we're going. As mentioned earlier, the plan in '19 will change things for '21, '22, '23. We're always looking that far out. Want to make sure everybody has bought into what we're doing next.

In '17, there were a bucketful of things that happened. In '18, the aero kit, the universal car and there will be other things that happen. Every year we'll repopulate the bucket. Every year we'll look out beyond the first change in '21. We're really excited about that. It's really a nice template we can use.

Q. Jay, you talked about the five-year plan. You've also talked a lot about trying to bring another manufacturer into the series. Do the manufacturer contract, like Chevy and Honda, do they lock into a five-year deal with all their teams, lock out another manufacturer, or do you have something in place that prevents them from doing that?

JAY FRYE: We're not necessarily privy to what they do with the teams. It's important to all of us to bring in another manufacturer. A lot of this five-year plan based on that being one of the goals and one of the elements. There's a natural progression in '19, a natural progression in '21, possibility in '20 for a new OEM to come in. We collectively are all working on that.

I don't perceive a hurdle being thrown up, an attempt at a hurdle, because they're partners and actively are trying to help us.

Q. You look like you're dying to tell us the length of the deal.

JAY FRYE: Multi-year.

Q. Could you at least tell us if they sync up, '22, they'll all be up together again?

THE MODERATOR: I'm not sure any of them are prepared to do that. I'll give you a chance, if anybody jumps in.

JAY FRYE: In terms of the extension. It's important to get the entire group up on the direction we're going and say they are extending because of it and support it.

THE MODERATOR: I think they're all individual deals, multi-year. How about that?

Q. Stefano, this is your 20th anniversary since you came into IndyCar in '97. Could you have foreseen

you'll still be here and have a long-term extension?
STEFANO DE PONTI: Thanks for the question.

Of course, you said it right. Dallara came here in 1997. That has marked the Dallara presence in North American motorsports. It was an important step.

Obviously the plant, facility, engineering center we built in Indianapolis was, for the most part of it, obviously to support our program here as a partner with IndyCar.

I personally wish, yes, that the extension will go beyond the set extension we have so far. We would like to be very, very clear, to be trustful and a supported partner of IndyCar as a manufacturer.

Obviously, as an engineering company, we like competition, of course. We welcome everything that IndyCar decides to do with us for the future.

At the end of the day, we want to be, and we are committed, to work with IndyCar for the benefit of the series. That would benefit all of us.

Q. Can we just get it on the record from both Chevy and Honda, that you would both welcome a manufacturer within IndyCar.

MARK KENT: Chevrolet's answer is yes. As Jay pointed out, as we've worked this multi-year plan, a lot of it has been around trying to get other manufacturers to join the series.

It's great competing against Honda. It would be also great to compete against others marketplace competitors.

ART ST. CYR: The same thing. Even when we were the sole supplier for six years in open-wheel racing, we actively were looking to get more people to compete. We want to compete with the other OEMs on the racetrack, as well.

We actively have offered support for new manufacturers to come in, give them a little bit of an understanding of what it takes to compete in this level of competition.

So, yes, officially.

JAY FRYE: One thing with the plan with the manufacturers is also new teams. That's part of this process. There's a couple things happening right now, but I think it can get bigger and better, more opportunities for others. That's part of that plan.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much for joining. This not only is our campaign of next, they are the past and the now. They'll be part of the future, as well. Thanks to Lisa, Mark, Art and Stefano. Thank you very much.