

# IndyCar Media Conference

Thursday May 18, 2017

## Jay Howard Ryan Hunter-Reay

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: It's good to have this guy back at the Speedway, period, and it's always good to end the day at the top of the time chart. Jay, tell us about your day. It looked busy out there.

JAY HOWARD: Yeah, It was really busy. It's kind of like a fairy tale. This is like a dream right now. I don't know if I'm going to wake up tomorrow and it's all gone. Where do I start? First of all, what an amazing group of people I've got behind me. Team One Cure. Tony Stewart Foundation and I was fortunate enough to have Tony here today. That was fantastic having him around. Lucas Oil, Jim Beam. There's a long list of people that I want to thank for being here. The Schmidt Peterson guys and Honda. By far, the most professional team and program that I've been a part of. They just plugged me right in and we got to work. I still can't believe we're top of the charts. Feels good.

THE MODERATOR: Tony give you a hard time today?

JAY HOWARD: Yeah. Always. He was happy. Everyone's really happy. It's like a dream start. We all had confidence coming into this, but this is obviously a very good start. We still have a lot of work to do. Hopefully we have a long race, a very racy race, based off of what I see.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Jay, how difficult has it been getting re-accustomed to the speed after having been out of a car for a bit of a while?**

JAY HOWARD: Yeah, surprisingly quite quickly. Just got back in the groove of things. Kind of like riding a bike, you know, you don't forget.

Definitely, you know, St. Louis was a big help for me, to go out at Gateway and do a few laps there, knock the rust off, just get used to those high speeds again.

Yeah, this place just as magical as it was last time I was here.

**Q. Jay, is it possible we see you a little bit more in IndyCars? Maybe you can explain how different is the car now in this new configuration compared to last time you raced an IndyCar? (Indiscernible) Tony Stewart?**

JAY HOWARD: Well, I mean, first of all, I'd love to be in IndyCar more, there's no doubt about that. We are working on it. We're hopeful. That's about all I can really kind of say right now. That's about as far as we got, so...

Hopefully I can just keep doing a good job. That's my job, is to keep doing stuff on track. We will see. And I would love to stay with the Schmidt Peterson group and Honda.

There's that. I'll cover the difference between the cars.

Very, very similar feeling when you're by yourself. Very much the same. There's not a lot of difference. Yeah, very, very similar. Once you get into the traffic, definitely feels like it's not as stable as the old car.

That's really all I got for you. The controls are very different. You know, obviously you have a clutch. Last time I drove this IndyCar we had three pedals, now there's only two.

I had mixed feedback from a lot of different people. Some people are, Oh, the car is so different, these dome skids. All sorts of crazy thoughts on how the car is so different.

I think it goes back to credit to the team. Maybe when they first got this car, there was some challenges with it. The Schmidt Peterson guys have done an amazing job with the car. For me to have the time out that I've had, slide in, be P1, it's pretty amazing.

So I was doing some work with the Tony Stewart Foundation. I'll keep it short. But basically got to know Joni, Bob and Pam. Pam is Tony's mother. I think they took a liking to me. I might be wrong.

We just all had this fantastic idea that I should be driving. So we started working on it. There's this program called One Cure. There's the Flint Animal Cancer Center out in Colorado, CSU University. We went to visit. It's an amazing facility.

The whole program is based around comparative oncology. Basically what comparative oncology is, the crossover between cancer in dogs, for example, and humans. So their whole slogan is: The cure to cancer could be walking right next to us.

Just the little bit that I got to experience being there,

very similar in terms of there's a team of people focused on a sick dog. The work they do is phenomenal. We want to get them some recognition. We want to support them. We're driving for something more than just getting my ugly mug on the Borg-Warner trophy.

We want to beat cancer. In the human trials, you're talking about 8, and some as long as 15 years, and not necessarily much success. In dogs, with their life span, you're talking two-year trials. So the speed at which they learn and develop the drugs and medication is pretty, pretty amazing, so...

We're seeing a lot of stuff cross over. The people at Flint Animal Cancer Center are helping people now, which is absolutely amazing, so...

**Q. The day he shows up, the day Tony shows up, you get the fast lap of the day.**

JAY HOWARD: I'm going to chain him up in the garage. He ain't going nowhere. He might think he's leaving, he ain't. He's going to get out to his car, he's got flat tires. I've already been out there taking care of all the tires. He's not escaping.

**Q. What does his presence do to elevate the game? How much time does he plan on being up here this month?**

JAY HOWARD: I told you, he ain't leaving.

I know he's got the little 500 that he's racing. Tony says he's retired. He's not retired. He loves racing.

Yeah, I don't know exactly Tony's schedule. But, you know, he has this presence. Everybody loves him. Well, I say 'everybody'. You know, we love him.

But, no, he just loves it. He's got a passion for racing. I'm sure everyone, including Sam, was probably really happy to see how the day ended up with Tony around. Yeah, like I say, I'm hoping I can chain him to the sink or something, not let him go anywhere.

**Q. Jay, I think you won the Formula 4 championship last year with a young guy called Cameron Das. Is this correct?**

JAY HOWARD: No, this is our first year in Formula 4. But the engineer that won the championship with Das last year is now with us. That's the only connection.

**Q. What's your plan for the young guys when you win the championship?**

JAY HOWARD: Yeah, you know, ultimately every parent and driver has their own ideas and vision of where they should and shouldn't go. But for us, Formula 4 is a perfect step from karting. Really where they should go is USF2000. It's a perfect step for them. That's where we'll push them. You never know, maybe we'll have a USF2000 team next year.

**Q. You said that the cars weren't super difficult for you to adjust to today, or just this year. I know there's a new body kit coming out next year with IndyCar. Do you think that will be the same case for you, it won't be difficult to adjust to that next year?**

JAY HOWARD: Yeah, that might be a little bit more tricky. Like I said, with these guys, they've had a bit of time with the car, and obviously done an exceptionally good job, getting the balance very, very good. As soon as I got in the car, you know, it was just small changes that we wanted to do.

You know, any time you introduce something new, like an aero kit, for sure there's a lot of work to be done. Not necessarily everything is done on a computer. Sometimes it's a little different on track. But we will see.

If I'm lucky enough to be driving with a new aero kit, I'll report back.

THE MODERATOR: Jay, thank you very much for coming in. Appreciate it.

JAY HOWARD: Appreciate it. Thanks, man.

THE MODERATOR: Ryan Hunter-Reay joins us. Ryan, I was pondering as you came in, there's a couple drivers who have been here for a number of years who I think have experienced the entire gamut of this facility. You've drank the milk, you've had the incredible times when you couldn't find the speed, you've dealt with the conditions. I mean, how does that affect you when you're taking a look at a week like this where the conditions have been a little extreme? We don't know about the weather.

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Yeah, it's been tough work, today I guess, but the past couple days. It's been tricky out there. We're definitely driving the cars a lot, I can tell you that. We're on edge. You never really know what the next lap is going to hold, what surprise is coming at the next corner with dirty air or a gust of wind or whatever.

We've done quite a bit of testing. We've tried a lot of things. We've kind of bounced around a bit. But certainly it's pretty difficult out there.

We'll see what the weather does over the next couple days. Hopefully we can get in some qualifying simulation runs on Fast Friday if the weather cooperates. But we're looking forward to the next page here tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. A new voice in the ear, instead of Michael it's Ray's. To have a different race strategist, even though that is what the engineer usually devises,**

**how do you see that working out for this race?**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Well, Ray has been in my ear for the past two years at all races, so it's business as usual.

**Q. How often do you hear from Michael when he's on your stand?**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Just when we're on the intercom talking and during practice and all that stuff. Sometimes he'll pipe up during qualifying or whatever. He's more bouncing around to different cars that need his attention, I guess. He's kind of been that, you know -- he's shifting from car to car at times and bouncing around.

I guess home base for him is the 28 car. Now he's on the 29 car full-time. You know, that can change next month to where he is. But since the beginning of 2016, Ray has been in my ears.

**Q. It's one thing to look up on top and see Jay's fast speed, that was 24th with no tow. All the Andretti cars were up around the top four or five.**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: We looked at the notes. I think it's either a 10-second or 8-second filter. We were pretty happy with our no tow, yeah.

**Q. Andretti, their speeds appear to be with no tow.**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: The cars are pretty quick. Do you know what that no tow report is based on? What filter it is? No gas?

Yeah, we're all pretty happy with the speed. It's going to be about getting the balance, the balance not going off through the run. That is the key to going fast here at Indy, it's to have a nice consistent run through the four laps. That's what we're focused on.

Did some trims today. It had my attention. It was pretty interesting out there, so we'll see. Tomorrow is going to be another one. I think the conditions might be a bit better tomorrow if it stays dry.

**Q. I take a look at the charts today, and the Honda people are strongly represented in the top half of the chart. Then the Chevy people, not quite so much until you get down to the bottom page. Would you say that the Honda people this year are completely satisfied with the package they brought?**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Looks like there's a lot more Hondas than Chevys out there. Am I getting something wrong?

**Q. I think there's 18 Hondas.**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: 18 Hondas, yeah.

So definitely I guess the majority. But, yeah, like last year, we were strong as well. I think it's similar to last year. It's great competition, you know. You have four Hondas, two Chevys, five Hondas, Chevy, Honda,

Chevy, Chevy, Honda, Honda, Chevy, Chevy. It's going to be a good battle, I think.

**Q. I don't think that Josef forgot how to drive suddenly in traffic. He obviously had a very scary moment out there. Did every driver pretty much, if they were pushing it a little bit, have scary moments?**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Absolutely. I'm not sure what happened with Newgarden. I can tell you in traffic, with the gusting wind and everything else, one lap you go through there, you feel like Superman. The next lap, all of a sudden it will surprise you. We're wheeling it big-time.

All you need is the wrong combination of a gust of wind and dirty air where the rear steps out, it can clock a little bit too far, you're around.

I'm not sure what happened with his car. Who knows. For all I know, something could have broke. It was very busy out there today. Like I said, I was wheeling it. I had some pretty good loose moments, as well.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Thank you. Appreciate it.