

# IndyCar Media Conference

Sunday June 4, 2017

## Takuma Sato

## Ryan Hunter-Reay

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'll get started. We are joined now for our Verizon IndyCar Series post qualifying press conference for race two of the Chevrolet Detroit Grand Prix presented by Lear.

Joined now by Ryan Hunter-Reay, who will be starting second in this afternoon's race, which matches his best career start here in Detroit. Ryan also finished 13th in yesterday's race one.

Ryan, obviously not the time that anybody wanted in group one today. With the weather, the potential for weather being what it is, you have to be happy to start towards the front.

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Yeah, it's nice to start towards the front. It's unfortunate we didn't get a run at it. That's why we like the knockout qualifying because everybody gets the same chance in the same group.

This morning, it was a case where group one only had the opportunity to run one or two laps on a set of tires. Some guys didn't even get to get a lap in after the green.

Yeah, it's nice to start up front. We really didn't have a shot at it, we didn't have a shot at pole. We'll take it and hopefully progress from there.

THE MODERATOR: Your teammates have been showing a lot of strength, especially coming off the 500, leading into this race. How does that momentum work as a unit with you?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Congrats to Taku on the pole. Certainly put a couple great laps together there. He's had quite a week. He's definitely riding high right now. Hopefully we can get one better than him today.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Ryan.

**Q. Honda has been dominating the past couple weeks. Andretti Autosport has been coming on. As the season has gone along, you started off struggling. Now you have gotten into a rhythm. How much confidence do you have now?**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Yeah, we've been pretty strong all year. We finished fourth at St. Pete after starting a lap down, almost a lap down. Contending for a win at

Long Beach. Contending for a win at the Indy 500. We just have a lot of sad sob stories to go with it, so...

Hopefully we can just put it together and just get some momentum. We finished third at Indy GP. It's just a matter of keeping momentum going. We haven't been able to do that for one reason or another.

**Q. Talk about the seven races, seven different winners. How much diversity right now is in IndyCar with Hondas winning, Chevrolets winning, different teams? How do you like the diversity of all the teams?**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: It's been an ultra-competitive series for quite a few years now. Now that the competition on the manufacturer's side is neck-and-neck, it's making for the tightest competition we've ever seen in IndyCar history.

Yeah, every day you got to bring your A game, and everything has to be perfect in order of capitalize. It's business as usual in the Verizon IndyCar Series that way.

**Q. How is the track? And is Ryden finally smiling for Becky's Instagram pictures?**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: He's super serious. That's for sure.

The track was pretty good. We were worried with the moisture it was going to be a little bit tricky there getting up too speed. But it was fine by the time we got out. That concrete dries pretty quick.

It's fine, just didn't get a chance to get everything up to temp, the brakes, the tires, all that stuff, just didn't have an opportunity for it.

All good there. But, yeah, the kiddos, getting home to see them tonight.

**Q. Ryan, obviously you've been through the Indy 500 to Detroit winners week before. Did Taku reach out for you for any advice?**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Yeah, I was texting him midweek, saying to enjoy every bit of it. I'll have to say I had a few more late-night appearances than he did because I had the Letterman show and things like that.

I just told him that it's crazy, it's hectic, but enjoy every moment of it because it's the best times of your life. You never know if you have another shot at an Indy

500 win.

So I think he's been really taking it all in and definitely we're all happy for him.

**Q. A lot of people talk about how tough it is to go from the month of May at Indianapolis to a doubleheader race. In your way, as good a car as you had last Sunday, is it good to get back on the horse to try to move on? That car looked like a winner.**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: I can get back on the horse every day, I'm not going to forget how good that car was. Two years in a row having a car that good and not capitalizing, not seeing it all through, is something I'll think about till I'm old and gray. But that's how it goes. That's how racing goes. It can be very rewarding and very cruel.

You just got to keep your head down and focus on preparing a car equal to that capability every week.

THE MODERATOR: Ryan, thank you for your time.

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Appreciate it.

THE MODERATOR: We will continue with our press conference. Joined by the pole winner for race two of the Chevrolet Detroit Grand Prix presented by Lear here at Belle Isle Park.

Takuma Sato won pole with a new track record of 1.13.6732 seconds. It is his sixth career pole. His first since here a few years ago in 2014 for race two at Belle Isle. Also pole 32 for the team. The first since their pole last year at Texas Motor Speedway, which was set by the No. 26 car.

Congratulations. You can't be that tired.

TAKUMA SATO: You know that. I was exhausted. I was knackered. The PR ladies did a fantastic job. New York tour, Texas tour the last couple days. But, you know, they gave me a good night's sleep the last three days. I'm fully backed up, pumped up. The adrenaline, as you can see, I'm happy as I was a week ago.

THE MODERATOR: The pole that you set, this new track record, not only was it good enough for pole, you set that fastest time ever here at Detroit. Take us through that lap and what went right. Your team has been very strong this weekend.

TAKUMA SATO: I mean, it's a tremendous team effort. I mean, No. 26 worked really well. It was (indiscernible) of course. I thank all the boys on 26, my engineer Garrett. We almost arguing in last night, upset about the little things this morning. We figured out together. I think was an absolutely team effort.

I want to thank to the teammate, Ryan had an incredible lap put together this morning in group one. He gave me a lot of information. That certainly helped me a lot. So it was absolutely team effort.

Going through my lap, I mean, I gave 100% everything. There was nothing left on the inches. I was nearly hit the wall twice. But I was happy. I was confident. It's absolutely team credit.

This is the best moment of my life. In terms of qualifying, oh, set the track record in this challenging track, it means a lot to me, and I'm very, very happy.

THE MODERATOR: Obviously the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and the track here are so different. It's hard to take anything from one to the other. Are you a believer in momentum? Do you feel your strong showed at Indianapolis Motor Speedway has bled through to this weekend?

TAKUMA SATO: I believe it. I think confidence is part of the sport. Really try to improve. You believe in yourself, believe the people who supporting, go together. You have to believe the car, too, just going to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, 230 miles per hour, to here 170, but still the wall, you talk about inches.

So it's a confidence is a good part. What an incredible strength from the Honda and HPD. They did tremendous job at the Speedway, of course, but not only the street course, set a track record, blowing off the old lap times. Honda's effort is incredible. So thanks, Honda.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Takuma.

**Q. What a week it's been for you. You've been to New York, went with the Cowboys, talked with Jayson Garrett. Describe what this week has been like for you.**

TAKUMA SATO: I don't know how I describe it. It was a great, crazy week. As I said, it's like 11 hours daytime media tour, three and a half hours sleep, every flight was midnight, over past midnight. You can't believe it. There is not a single moment that I just go and have a rest.

What an incredible achievement team did in 500. You go day-by-day. People gave me a lot of grateful cheering, and the feel about it, wow. That was an amazing moment.

But coming here, my teammate, also the people said, Indianapolis 500 winner is basically tiring coming to this event. Can't be 100%. Condition-wise, to keep up is very difficult. I was very, very carefully managed my condition. Also my voice is still on the way to recover.

But I'm happy. You know, yesterday was tough race for me. But really solid performance from the team.

Having a teammate on front row is definitely helping for the street course like this. We will see how we end up end of the day today, so...

**Q. Are you going to get to go back to Japan between Texas and Road America?**

TAKUMA SATO: I think, yes. After Texas, we are planning to go back to Japan and have a press conference over there.

**Q. How much do they have planned for you that week?**

TAKUMA SATO: Lots of planning right now. Another crazy weeks come up. But should be good fun.

**Q. I imagine to the city of Tokyo has got to be pretty big?**

TAKUMA SATO: I believe so, yes. I think we will have a good, fun time, as well as already it's having a great news and great hit in Tokyo as well as all Japan. As I said, Japan need a lot of support in terms of recovering. So hopefully we have a good days coming after Texas. Well, before Texas really, we have to consider this afternoon.

I mean, strategy is one thing. It looks like the weather can be little bit tricky. So hopefully we have no mistake. I don't need any good luck, just make sure there's no bad luck.

**Q. You're with a new team. It's been overshadowed by the win. When did you first start to gel with Ziggy? Was there any particular moment when you felt you were on the new wavelength?**

TAKUMA SATO: I have to remember lot of new names, of course since coming to new house.

Like Garrett, my engineer, we work together 2010, '11, with Jimmy Vasser's KV Racing. I know somebody who I absolutely trust, rely on. Ziggy, my manager Steve Fusek, is all good friend. We always bumping into each other at pit lane, talk about it. Ziggy is a good height with me. Eye-to-eye, very easy to talk. Fantastic guy.

Of course, rest of the members I never knowing before. But the boys been boys. All the paddock, the boys, they're the best guys, and ladies of course, working 100 commitment entire life. So I really respect. The boys are really, really super boys. So I love it.

**Q. Can you tell us any more about what Ryan told you specifically?**

TAKUMA SATO: Well, he said turn one and two is a little greasy -- not greasy. The green track, by surprise. Turn 13 and 12 was a lot more grip than he expected. The car was a little bit understeer. It's a little bit loose. Then three. We can see the tire pressures, we can see the trace in his steering, throttle, braking, telemetry data.

So the comment from him coming directly what the driver feels like, it is extremely important because you need to visualize before go. You obviously feel it out-lap, then first lap, then how the tires starting (indiscernible). Combine everything together. Then very next lap you basically can commit 100%.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations. Thank you very much.

TAKUMA SATO: Thank you very much.