

# IndyCar Media Conference

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**Mark Miles**

**Josef Newgarden**

**Jay Frye**

**Mark Reuss**

**Roger Penske**

**Henio Arcangeli Jr.**

**Mario Andretti**

2018 Press Conference

MARK MILES: Welcome, everybody, and thanks for being with us. I'm pretty sure I heard Roger Penske on the radio in that video saying push it, push it, and I'm sure the driver pushed it. Anyway, we're really glad you could be here with us today. Excited about the opportunity to be at the auto show here at the home of the Chevrolet Detroit Grand Prix, making it particularly appropriate.

I'm going to talk to you a little bit about our perspective on the growth of IndyCar the last few years, a couple of thoughts about moving forward, and we will have the treat of having our Verizon 2017 IndyCar champion Josef Newgarden join us, and he's going to walk us through his view of the new car, which constitutes really its public premier here today, and then we have a distinguished panel of experts who will take some questions and talk to us a little bit about their perspective about the future.

The past few years have been a story of growth of IndyCar. We had a way of thinking about it a few years ago, which was taking back the heart of racing, and I think we're making great strides in doing that, and we get a lot of feedback from our fans indicating that that's the case.

By all measures, our fan base is growing, whether it's about TV, earned media, online, our social conversations, exposure on television, for example, over the last few years is up 38 percent. Our audience has grown 38 percent, almost doubled on NBC Sports Network, and that's not something we take for granted today when there certainly are some headwinds for live sports on TV.

It's not just on the screen but also at our races. Here



at Belle Isle, for example, last year there was record attendance over their history that they were able to announce, a great crowd, great vibe at the track.

In Indianapolis, coming off the 100th a couple years ago, we've kept a lot of that growth, and so now our expectation is the base for attendance on race day at the Indianapolis 500-mile race is 300,000 people, over 400,000 for the period of May, and we expect that to continue to be strong and if anything to grow. Many of our tracks reported increased attendance at their races.

The championship schedule is really the foundation for this growth. The long-running events like St. Petersburg, Florida; Long Beach, California; Detroit; Toronto; Texas; Sonoma are the foundation for that. But we've also taken the opportunity to go back and add some tracks that our fans really care deeply about, and in a while we'll be back in Portland.

On the track the racing has been competitive. I think anybody who pays any attention to motorsports knows it's compelling sport, but it's also true that the way it works in terms of the championship has been compelling, and you see this slide, you can tell it says, for 12 straight years, the finale, the decision about who will be our champion, has come down to our very last race, and really just the last few laps of the year.

And this year we had the opportunity looking backwards to welcome and crown and celebrate a new Verizon IndyCar champion in Josef Newgarden, who you'll hear from in just a second. We've been talking about the arrival of this generation for some time, but now we can say they are here and are taking their place, and we think they give us enormous confidence for the ongoing growth and the popularity of IndyCar for years to come.

Looking forward, we are well into the process to make new media arrangements for the coverage of IndyCar Series beginning after the 2018 season, and I can just tell you today that we're quite optimistic that this will be an even stronger platform for more fans to take in IndyCar racing. We're looking forward to being able to make those announcements.

A sign of growth, and I think the vitality of the series is that we are welcoming four new team owners into the series this year, and these are not folks that are unfamiliar with us. They've been involved in racing.



They've been involved in Indy Lights, and they're going to add great competitive dynamics to our racing.

Part of that is that they've ordered between them about 12 new engines at Dallara, are feeling the effects of this new investment, and then there's the car itself. I feel guilty standing between you and it because we think it's gorgeous. We think it has really excited our fan base. This may be the public premier, but there's been a lot of talk, and we're having trouble finding a critic. It looks great, and I think as Josef will tell you, we believe that the changes that have been made will provide for great racing, more close, more passing, more exciting racing.

So we expect that to be great news for the ongoing growth of the series, and we're looking forward to seeing this beautiful car in action.

In order to talk about that, I think it's important that we bring Josef up here, but first we're going to show you one more video to give you a sense of what you can expect from this new car.

(Video shown.)

JOSEF NEWGARDEN: Thanks, everyone, for being here today. This is really a great opportunity for us to showcase this new car, and it's an honor for me to actually go through it with you. I'm one of the drivers. I get to drive this thing not on a daily basis but pretty often throughout the year, so I'm really lucky to do that.

For us, this is called the universal aero kit, so it's a new era for us. This kit is going to be shared by all the drivers in both manufacturers, Chevrolet and Honda. We're not going to have to worry as much about the aero design, but we're still going to have that engine competition between us and battling it out on the racetrack.

It's really the culmination of years of research of what we want to do with IndyCar going forward, and it's on the back of an extensive six-month testing program last year. So it's really been run through its paces. We've tried to check the boxes on everything you need to with this car to make sure it's going to function well and give us what we were looking for from a design standpoint.

IndyCar is really looking to deliver on big promises. As you can see, it's bolder, it's more daring, and really we believe it has improved aerodynamics that are going to help the racing product tremendously, so I'm looking forward to that probably the most.

There's quite a bit of engineering that's gone into the car. To me it looks more like an IndyCar should. You think about the '80s and '90s, the heyday of IndyCar racing, this is what you want to see from the product. We believe it's going to be faster. We believe it's going to be safer. It's going to provide better racing like

we've talked about.

What I want to do today is show you the car. I want to go through it from the driver's standpoint. I'm not an engineer, but I work with a lot of engineers and I should know about the engineering behind this car. It's part of my job.

If you start with the front wing, it's been recontoured, reshaped. There's going to be less reliance on the front wing than in years past, so you're really not going to have to rely on the airflow that we've had in the past. When a car gets in front of you, normally it affects the front wing, makes the car harder to drive. There's going to be less reliance on this front wing. It's a beautiful looking front wing, and it's going to have that same adjustability that we're going to need going track to track. If you think about IndyCar racing, we're the most diverse racing series on the planet; got to go to high downforce, low downforce configurations depending on the track. You're just going to have that great adjustability from the front wing.

And then as we walk to the middle here, the car has actually been lowered, so as you can see on the screen here, this is Scott Dixon in the speedway configuration. We've actually lowered the car in speedway configuration, so we've reconfigured the floor of the car, or the underwing we'll call it, so that we can get the car lowered. It actually makes 6 percent more downforce from the underwing.

The side pods have been moved forward, so they were really swept back in the past. We've brought those forward again. Looks more an IndyCar, and then you get the added benefit of safety with that, as well. There's more crushability here, so there's more that has to go through this side pod now to get to the driver, so we're really happy about that, not from an esthetic standpoint but also from a safety, and really that's the biggest safety improvement that we're going to get from this new aero package.

Now, as you see from the top on this photo, you can see the car has a Coke bottle shape, so the airflow has been improved on the way we attach the air to the back of the car and feed it to the underwing. The kind of common theme is powering the floor of this car. We want the floor to be the most powerful thing on it so we rely on that downforce and less on the wing. It's got a great Coke bottle shape, improved airflow to help that performance of the floor in all configurations.

As you can see here, too, we've got the tire ramp still. The tire ramp is really critical, actually. We've got to keep the drag low on this car if we want to meet our qualifying speed targets at Indianapolis. If you want to do speeds of 240, 245 miles per hour, you've got to have a low drag configuration. You've got to have a coefficient that works to get you those numbers. So this tire ramp is a little bit leaner, it's a little sleeker

looking, but it's still going to give us those drag numbers we're looking for to get the qualifying speeds at Indianapolis. So we're really happy about that.

Now as you get to sort of the back of the car, we've also got the engine cover. That's a big change from last year. The old engine covers were a lot higher, and it would actually feed the turbochargers through the roll hoop. So now that's completely gone; it's a lot lower, a lot sleeker. We're actually going to feed the turbochargers through the radiator inlets now, so it'll be feeding in this direction. You get the engine cover a lot lower and sleeker, really fits the proportions of the car a lot better. I think it makes the car a lot more beautiful, too, so just kind of fits what we're going for from a theming standpoint.

As you come to the back of the car, you can see this is the oval configuration of the aero kit. It's more about what's gone than what's new. There's no beam wicker, there's no bumper pods anymore. Those all added up to about 35 pounds of weight, so taking those off the car, it looks a lot better in my opinion. It looks like an IndyCar, and it's moved the weight distribution forward a little over a percent. So what that weight distribution change is actually going to do is actually going to make the car more predictable. It's a lot easier in my opinion to drive, in my opinion, from a predictability standpoint, and makes the car a little bit more nimble in situations, too, so it's just going to improve the racing, improve the feel of what the driver has behind the wheel, and we're really going to like that.

With the road course wing, same story as the front. Less reliant on the front wing. We want the floor to do the work for us, so when I'm racing behind a guy at 200 miles per hour, I can get as close to his bumper as possible. I want to be able to race him. I do not want the air to disrupt what I'm trying to do when I'm racing a guy. We really feel the wings on this car are going to help drive the direction to the underwing so we can race guys closer, have better passing, have better battles on the racetrack, and I think you're not going to get that anywhere else in an open-wheel championship around the world. The design has really been clear on what we're looking for. We want it to be an incredible-looking IndyCar. We want people to come back to the IndyCar Series and love what we're producing from an esthetic standpoint, but the message that we really want to push is that our racing product is going to be the best on the planet. Speaking as a driver, I don't think you're going to get a better race car out there to drive as far as an open-wheel car goes. You're really going to have a great racing product. You're really going to have a great racing product. You're really going to be able to race guys as close as possible.

I hope you love look, I hope you love the racing in 2018. Thanks for listening to me this morning, and I hope you guys enjoy the rest of the auto show.

KEVIN LEE: Thank you all for joining us today. On behalf of NBCSN and our friends at ABC and NBC, we cannot wait to get started. We are less than two months away from the opening of the IndyCar season. ABC will have that on March 11th, and then NBC then kicks off their coverage on April 7th. We've got a great panel to talk about the season in the new car. I know it's not technically a new car, but for all efforts, it is a new car, so we refer to it that way with the common aero kit.

Let's welcome our panelists up on the stage. First, the IndyCar president of competition and operations, Jay Frye; next, the executive vice president from General Motors, Mark Reuss. Legendary IndyCar owner and motorsport legend Roger Penske is here. He had a nice short trip here to join us. Welcome to the IndyCar family, from American Honda, Henio Arcangeli, Jr., is joining us. He doesn't need an introduction, we'll do it anyway, four-time IndyCar champion and 1969 Indianapolis 500 winner, motorsport legend Mario Andretti.

Jay, both Honda and Chevrolet have been fantastic partners for IndyCar for many years but also have expressed the desire for more competition. Might that attract more OEMs?

JAY FRYE: First of all, we'd like to thank Chevrolet and Honda for all their support. It's phenomenal. The winter of 2015 we started talking about the aero kits and the future and where we wanted to go collectively as a group. Simultaneously we started talking to some other OEM prospects, and based on all those conversations we really got to this point, so in March of '16 we come up with a vision of what it could look like. The vision was through collaboration of our OEM partners, our teams, our paddock, and the fans, so we're quite proud of where we ended up, and I think this will be the centerpiece of this five-year plan that we have in going forward.

KEVIN LEE: Looking forward to more competition and great racing. Mark Miles spoke about this, the television ratings are up, the attendance at track is up; how does that help Chevrolet grow its brand with IndyCar?

MARK REUSS: A few years ago when we sat down and put this engine program together again to get back into this sport, it was a little bit of a leap of faith, but I can tell you that the new crew here with Jay, C.J. and Mark have done a great job of growing the sport, and that's what we had hoped, and if you look at the buyers here that tune into this, 20 percent of those are millennium, the next gen. In that buyer set we've got about 20 percent higher opinion of Chevrolet in terms of reliability, durability and technology, and of course the twin turbo V6 is something that we take that technology like the fuel injection piece of that and the direct injection piece of that, we take it right into our

passenger cars and crossovers, so there's a great engineering technical exchange. There's a great fan base we reach, and it's in a place that's now growing again, and I couldn't be happier for American motorsports and open-wheel racing.

KEVIN LEE: You have a home event coming up. There's a race in Detroit, actually two races, the only double-header on the schedule. It's the week after the Indianapolis 500. Chevrolet is the title sponsor, the host. What does that event mean to Chevrolet and also to the city of Detroit at Belle Isle?

MARK REUSS: I'll tell you, when you go back to the crisis that the country and our company went through and you look at the birth of the Duel in Detroit during that time frame, I've got to tell you, that was a real part of teaching our company how to win again. So internally it means a ton, but it also brings a lot of money to the Belle Isle conservancy, and you can see that place year by year, race by race, turn into a place once again that is the pride of Detroit and of course our home office Terry Dolan and Jim Campbell drape the bowtie on the headquarters, which is always a great thing for us. Really no less than taught a lot of our company how to win again.

KEVIN LEE: We also have Roger Penske to thank for the IndyCar events here in Detroit, as well. Roger, you've talked before about the importance of consistent rules, cost containment. How does this common aero kit help in those areas?

ROGER PENSKE: When you think about costs, which obviously we're looking at that throughout all series today, I think the evolution of the aero kit has been terrific because we can take our existing chassis and put this aero kit on it and instead of spending 400,000 or 500,000 for a car, these kits are somewhere between 100,000 and 200,000, and it gives us the ability to go to the next step, the look at the cars. The drivability, I think Josef gave you a good update on the vehicle, but the opportunity to showcase the drivers now because the downforce was so high on the existing cars in '17 and before, this will give us a great opportunity. I know all the drivers that have tested it, both on the Honda side and the Chevy side, are giving us great reviews, so from a cost perspective, a competitive perspective, and I think the look of the car, it's going to be a home run.

KEVIN LEE: Sponsorship is critical for all motorsports, certainly for IndyCar. You announced a new partner coming back in Hitachi here over the week. What are you hearing from your partners as far as the growth of IndyCar, the momentum, and this new car? How is that going to impact things?

ROGER PENSKE: Well, I think the numbers that you saw today are obvious. Attendance is up. The interest for young people, we see the demographics now at

these races. I mean, it's just amazing. They're real events, super events in some of these cities like here and Toronto and Long Beach and certainly in St. Petersburg, but from our perspective we announced Hitachi as a sponsor that has come here early on because they like the technology. They can be part of the engine build and be part of that, which made a big difference. We see more people knocking on the door today that we have in the past, and I'm not sure that's the same all across motorsports.

I think today the market is strong for us, and with the flexibility of the 500-mile race certainly at Indianapolis, you have Pocono and then you have street races, permanent road courses, this is the flexibility that we want. It's not just one series, one oval. We get that flexibility.

And another thing is that the series isn't 36 races. We can go racing with a reasonable budget and we can do it for obviously much less, and I think that's tremendous, and I would hope that Jay listens to me today. Let's keep it at this number so we can keep costs down, you got it?

JAY FRYE: I always listen.

KEVIN LEE: Henio is new fairly recently to Honda, so welcome to the IndyCar family. Honda is involved in virtually every form of motor sport globally. How does its presence and its work at IndyCar help the Honda brand and what you're trying to do?

HENIO ARCANGELI JR: Thank you, and good morning. Let me begin by saying that Honda is passionate about racing as well as the IndyCar Series. In fact, Honda has had a continuous, uninterrupted involvement in American open-wheel racing since 1994, 24 years. At its heart, Honda is actually a racing company. If you go back and look at the founder of Honda, Mr. Honda, he built a racetrack in Japan, Suzuka, before he ever built a production automobile. So racing is very important to Honda, and the IndyCar Series is very important to our motorsports strategy.

KEVIN LEE: Honda has had good success at the Indy 500, winning three of the last four. What are the chances for 2018, kind of starting all over with common aero kits?

HENIO ARCANGELI JR: You know, we're very hopeful. Honda has been able to power 12 winners over the past -- since the Indy 500 was created, and the associates who are involved in our racing program, every year their No. 1 goal is to win the Indy 500, and this year is no different. We're very happy with the teams we are working with. We think we have fantastic drivers, so I think our chances are very good.

KEVIN LEE: We want another driver's perspective on this, quote, new car. Mario, as a driver, as an observer,

closely following what's going on, how do you think this is going to impact competition this year, and also what's your general level of enthusiasm for IndyCar as we move forward?

MARIO ANDRETTI: Well, I certainly don't lack enthusiasm, and I hear a lot of positives, and there is a negative in all this is I don't have a ride yet.

KEVIN LEE: Roger?

MARIO ANDRETTI: What's wrong with you guys? I drove for you, Roger. I'm only a little older, but you know what I mean?

ROGER PENSKE: I'll have a seat for you tomorrow, okay?

MARIO ANDRETTI: Now I feel better. But to answer your question, obviously kudos to IndyCar for really taking a big, big step definitely forward because we all know that since the inception of ground effects and the sophistication of aerodynamics, aerodynamics are always a blessing and a curse, a blessing because obviously you get the downforce that all the drivers love because you go quicker around the corners, and the curse is you're creating turbulence, you're paying the price. And there's always been this how do we get a balance, and it's been a forever argument as long as I know, and I think from what was learned in the past few years in the previous car, I think a big step is made now to achieve what all the drivers have been complaining about, and that is I just can't get close to the guy in front of me.

Let's face it, our audiences today are more sophisticated than ever, and they want more and more from us as far as the product, as far as action on the track, overtaking and so forth, and we have to give it to them because that's what we like to do, ultimately.

And I think this is the best way to achieve it. Like I said, this thing is beautiful as it is. It's just going back to what the pure open-wheel, single-seater should be. But the features here, by having more ground effect downforce and reducing the surface aerodynamics, which creates all of the turbulence, is a huge step forward. As I say, from here, I think we really have something to work with. And the beautiful part is also that more of a level playing field because there's a unit that was good across the board, but you always have to keep in mind the show itself and give the competitors a level playing field.

And I'll tell you what, this series -- even the veterans in our series are young enough to really be around a long time. I mean, look at Scott Dixon. I mean, he's coming up on all-time, breaking all-time records as far as performance, you know. And then you have young dudes like Josef behind us here, who comes on the scene strong as can be, is with a team now that's given

him the opportunity to win. Boom, he wins, wins a championship, and here we go. Now we have the American contingent competing, obviously, against the international arena, and that's the best of all worlds. We like that. There's a lot of pride that goes into that.

We have all of that going in this series, and I can't wait for the first race, quite honestly, and like I said, if I get a ride, then I'll be over the moon.

KEVIN LEE: And Dixon is gaining on you, so you need to space that gap.

MARIO ANDRETTI: I know, I know, I've got to get back in it. I've got to defend.

KEVIN LEE: As Mario mentioned, great competition, wide fields, depth. 21 different winners in IndyCar in the last six. Coming up on April 7th, there's an open test to the public in early February in Phoenix, as well. Thank you to those that watched worldwide on IndyCar.com and here in Detroit, and we'll see you soon at the racetrack.