

# IndyCar Media Conference

Thursday April 12, 2018

## Dennis Reinbold JR Hildebrand

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: As you all know, earlier today Dreyer & Reinbold Racing announced that JR Hildebrand would be piloting the No. 66 Chevrolet as the team's second entry in the 102nd Indianapolis 500 presented by PennGrade Motor Oil.

We have special guests on our call today, team owner Dennis Reinbold, and we hope to soon have JR Hildebrand, the driver, join us shortly.

Dennis, we'd like to welcome you to the call and congratulate you on today's announcement.

DENNIS REINBOLD: Thank you. We're very excited about it, look forward to the month of May.

THE MODERATOR: Dennis, obviously the Dreyer & Reinbold families have an extensive history at the Indianapolis 500. You're looking to add to that legacy this year, right?

DENNIS REINBOLD: Absolutely. At Dreyer & Reinbold we've had 37 cars start the Indy 500 over the past close to 20 years now. So we're looking forward to adding to that number, really going out there and trying to do whatever we can to win the race.

THE MODERATOR: I believe this will be the first time the team will be running a two-car effort since 2011. What kind of changes or what do you have to do logistically to make that happen?

DENNIS REINBOLD: We went out and over the off-season made the decision to ramp up our efforts to get two additional cars, so we have three total in our stable that we are able to run, so a backup car along with our 24 car primary and 66 car primary.

THE MODERATOR: As you were talking, it is a new car with the universal aero kit this year, so your team is having to do extra work on top of that to get all of the new equipment prepared, as well.

DENNIS REINBOLD: Yeah. There's a lot of work. Expanding from one car to two cars to run, I mean, you're talking about additional pit equipment, you're talking about additional wheel guns, radios, all kinds of things that you wouldn't necessarily think of right off the top of your head.



So there's a lot to it. We've been working pretty much all off-season on acquiring equipment and putting things together. Both of our cars have been painted at this stage, so I'm pretty excited about that. That always kind of indicates you're getting ready to start the road to the Speedway.

THE MODERATOR: I understand JR Hildebrand has joined us. Welcome.

JR HILDEBRAND: Thanks. Sorry for jumping on a little tardy there.

THE MODERATOR: No problem.

JR will be trying to qualify for his eighth Indianapolis 500 this year. This is kind of a reunion for you of sorts. This is where you started your Verizon IndyCar Series career, was with Dreyer & Reinbold Racing back in 2010. It's coming back home.

JR HILDEBRAND: Yeah, that's right. There have been a bunch of different times where Dennis and I have been talking about doing this in the past. I'm just really excited to be back.

I mean, obviously like you mentioned, my first call to the big leagues was from Dennis. We've obviously been in the same Chevy camp over the last few years out at Indy. We were always really impressed with the speed, just performance of the guys at Dreyer.

When I started working on getting this year figured out, it was an obvious phone call to make from my side. Yeah, I'm excited we were able to get it all put together.

THE MODERATOR: You talked about putting together this deal. Could you go through a little bit the deal, the sponsorship deal, with Salesforce, how that came together? Basically, they're a San Francisco based company which is where you're from in Sausalito. They have a huge presence in Indianapolis. Talk about how this all came together.

JR HILDEBRAND: Yeah, you mentioned they've got a huge presence in Indy. It's their second biggest employee base, to San Francisco. Obviously, everybody is aware I think of how big Salesforce is. I think they're probably right away the most used sponsor in the paddock from other teams in the paddock, to kick things off.

Yeah, it's been an exciting sort of road to get to this point with these guys. It all started with a conversation, or the converse was started last year, Marc Benioff, the CEO, swung by the track last year during qualifying weekend with his daughter Leah. They were in town I think to do the ribbon cutting on the Salesforce tower downtown. It happened to be qualifying weekend. They came out, checked everything out, whisked through the garage area. We were under rain delay at that time. They got to see a little bit of the nuts and bolts of what's going on.

I think just because of how significant a presence they have in Indy, you know, it's exciting from I think their perspective to sort of lean into their involvement in the community by doing this. Been having some great conversations with Marc. He's super fired up about it, ready to get back out.

It's been a fun thing to put together, exciting to be able to bring a big tech company in. Certainly being from my hometown, I got to go out there a few weeks ago, spend some time up on the top floor of Salesforce tower, downtown, overlooking my former stomping grounds.

It's been a lot of fun so far. I'm excited about the activation, everything they have planned for the month. We'll have a lot of fun with it.

THE MODERATOR: Great news for INDYCAR, as well.

Is there any significance to the number 66 for the car?

JR HILDEBRAND: Yeah, Dennis was kind enough to let me take a stab at number choice. I've run 66 a handful of times throughout my career. But even when I was a little kid racing go-karts, it was the first number that I kind of became enamored with from going to vintage races, seeing the Jim Hall's Chaparral. From me, it's the origination of why I've always liked the number.

Then obviously get to know over the years a little bit more about Indy history, Mark Donohue was obviously from a distance not sort of overlapping, but just reading The Unfair Advantage when I was a kid was really impactful for me. To know that was his Indy 500 winning number in 1972 has cemented 66 in my mind as one of the most awesome numbers you can run out there.

We'll have a little fun with it later on. But even the design choice for the number that we're going to run on the car this year has a little bit of a backstory to it. I decided it would be almost like sacrilege to use the Route 66 or the iconic Penske Donohue 66, but we found a new one to run which has a fun story.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take our first question.

**Q. JR, I understand the challenge is bigger this time representing a big company. What are your expectations for Indianapolis? Have you tested the new car already? Since the sponsor is from the Bay Area, do you think maybe you can also be able to get a ride for Sonoma Raceway at the end of the season?**

JR HILDEBRAND: Yeah, obviously I'm just excited about the sponsor. I don't personally feel any, like, added pressure working with these guys. They've been a lot of fun to work with. I think that will continue to just be how we roll through the month.

Who knows kind of how things shake out, but I think our focus certainly just front to back is our performance and kind of how everything rolls together for Indianapolis. If there's conversation to have about later in the year or down the road, then we'll have that at that point.

I think in terms of the new car, you asked if I've driven it yet. No, I have not. There's certainly some changes. I think the car at least in theory should be a little bit more similar to last year's package on the superspeedway than it is, say, short ovals like Phoenix or street courses or road courses.

We're looking forward to getting with the program and starting to make our way through it once we hit the track in May.

THE MODERATOR: Dennis, you and I talked offline before the call started. Talk about what you'd like to do with the open testing coming up at IMS at the end of this month.

DENNIS REINBOLD: Yeah, well, right now we're scheduled to run May 1st with Sage on the refresher day. We've asked and requested to also try to put JR in a car at some point in time just to get a shakedown. Right now the answer is no. I know everything is short in terms of parts and spares, but it's a brand-new car. Our two cars are brand-new cars, so we want to try to do anything we can to prepare and shake those down before we open up for practice.

We did talk about that. We put in the proper request to different people at Chevy as well as IMS. We're trying not to push or burden them or whatever, but we would like to try to test the car.

THE MODERATOR: You mentioned Sage. Sage Karam will be your teammate this year. You've raced against him in the past. What do you look forward to in having him as a teammate this season?

JR HILDEBRAND: Yeah, the month continues to get condensed a little bit in terms of the track time on the ovals. I think it will be really valuable to have him out there, having worked with the team and knowing what

the car has been like, what their car has been like over the last few seasons.

Obviously, I know from a competitor's perspective how good they've been and how competitive he's been. I think to start with it's really just great for me to have him around as a sort of benchmark, you know, for where the car is at. I don't see any reason why we can't start to click and really start to move the thing forward.

Given how good Dreyer has been, how good this program has been, just as a single-car organization over the last few years, my expectation is that bringing in an extra car, I've obviously had some good runs over that period with ECR, we can kind of continue to elevate the performance of the group as a whole.

THE MODERATOR: You both have worked with Chevrolet the past few years. Got to be a comforting feeling to go back in that familiarity with the people and the equipment that you're going to have there.

DENNIS REINBOLD: Yeah, the Chevy guys, we've worked with them for some time now. It is a very familiar relationship. We know the guys to call, they know who we are. They know we take this race very seriously, that we're here to win.

I will speak for Sage, saying he's very excited to have JR as a teammate. I think knowing the two guys over the course of their careers, I know how JR will work with another driver, and Sage as well.

I think it's going to fit really well, and we're excited to be back with Chevy again, hopefully, get them into Victory Lane this year.

JR HILDEBRAND: Like you mentioned, since they came into the series, they've basically been who I've raced with the whole time. It's good to know kind of how the whole process rolls along. It looks like they've definitely brought it thus far this year, getting a win last weekend. It will be as tightly fought as ever, I think. But we're definitely looking forward to being back as a part of the bowtie brigade.

**Q. With the announcement that Dreyer & Reinbold is the second car, there will be bumping at the Indianapolis 500 for the first time in a couple years. What does that mean for the health of the sport? It adds a little bit of stress to both of you, but what does it mean for the overall health of Indy car racing?**

JR HILDEBRAND: Any time you see car count going up, it's always a reflection of the sport kind of trending in the right direction. Indianapolis is obviously sort of a whole entity, the Speedway, the 500, a whole entity all itself in a lot of ways.

I think I can speak for our deal coming together, how seamless it sort of was, how excited everybody is to

get involved, certainly get the feeling being a part of it, being a part of the series, that it's trending the right way. I'm looking forward to a little bit -- as if qualifying isn't stressful enough, a little bit of extra tension built in, which ought to be fun. You can always feel that in the air on Pole Day. We'll see how it all shakes out.

THE MODERATOR: It looks like we have no further questions. At this time, gentlemen, I'd like to thank you both for your participation in today's call, wish you the best of luck come May.

DENNIS REINBOLD: Appreciate it.

JR HILDEBRAND: Thank you.