

IndyCar Media Conference

Friday May 25, 2018

Tony Kanaan

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We will get started with our final Verizon IndyCar Series post-practice press conference of the month of May. Joined now by Tony Kanaan, who was fastest in his No. 14 ABC Supply AJ Foyt Racing Chevrolet.

Tony, that's it; practice is over. That was the last chance to work on anything you might want to work on heading into the weekend. What did you guys run through? What were those final preparations like?

TONY KANAAN: Well, you give the engineers an extra hour, they take it all. If you look at our plan for this morning, I said to Eric, you know this is not a five-hour session, right, it's an hour session, so we're trying different things. I think this is the closest that we're going to get as far as weather for Sunday, so we tried to optimize that and run in the heat conditions and see what are we going to do.

But really, if you haven't figured it out by today, you're in trouble. So we just really went through some exercise, gave the boys some pit stops, refueling, trying to gauge your fuel mileage and so on. So this day is always really busy. It's really like -- I remember back in the days when we had to save the engine, and you couldn't do more than 10 laps to save it for the race. Nowadays, the engines are so good, Chevy does such a great job, that you can run full power all the way through. So then you tell the engineers that, we ran three sets of tires, almost more than 50 laps.

It's always busy. The crowd that comes in, it's busy to move, it's busy to sign autographs for everybody. Actually this is -- I told the rookie this morning, I said, today you're going to start experiencing the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, and I think he figured that out.

THE MODERATOR: When you get out of the car after the end of today's session, do you think about it at all, like okay, that's it, this is -- do you breathe a little bit?

TONY KANAAN: Yeah, actually I grabbed the guys after we ran and got the mechanics all together and said, look, the work is done, clean it, I think you guys need to rest, you guys did a great job, and yeah, that's it. Now it's just -- some of the fun part is going to begin with some dinners and the parade tomorrow, and then it will be go time.

THE MODERATOR: I'm sure it helps, too, that you qualified well, you're fairly happy with where you're starting and you feel like you're probably in a good place to start the race. Does that ease your mind a little bit?

TONY KANAAN: Yeah, I've been around a little bit too long. I've started first and I've started last, so I've been at both ends of the field. I'm always comfortable. I always know what I've got. That doesn't make me worry too much because you know what you've got. Everybody knows. If it goes right, we have a pretty good chance. And if we do everything okay, I think we can get there.

I try not to predict anything. I'm okay. I'm happy. I'm enjoying my family and friends that are here, enjoying this place that's a unique opportunity every time we've been here. Whatever happens on Sunday, it's going to be up to us to make it happen.

Q. The heat and the unpredictability, you guys really don't have a great sense of what kind of race you're going to see, so now it gets a lot hotter on Sunday. What are you thinking?

TONY KANAAN: It's concerning, but there's not a lot to think because nobody, nobody, none of us run at that type of heat. If it's going to be 90, we haven't had a single day here this month that we ran, so it's going to be really like -- I think if you talk to every driver you talk to, everybody is concerned because we're going to have to be doing a lot more work with your tools in the car. You guys are probably not familiar, but we have two bars, front and rear, and we have the weight jack and we have front wing, and I think it's going to be one of those races.

I remember in 2013 when I won, I haven't made a single change in that car in a single pit stop, not front wing, not tire pressures, nothing. I think we'll be doing -- every stop we'll be making a change here. And in the middle of the race you're going to think I'm awesome, and then it's going to get three degrees hotter, and you're going to go, where did that car go. Even this morning was the same thing; we went through that exercise, and the car was okay in the beginning, it was okay in the middle, and at the end the temperature started to get hotter and it was a completely different car, and we haven't done anything.

I think it's a good thing. Everybody is really worried. You can see the guys, everybody is on the edge. But

honestly, that's going to be probably more of a pure talent of the guys trying to -- how smart you're going to be with your tools, saving this, saving that, and every engineer making a good car for every driver and we're battle it out. It's uncomfortable, but I like to be in that place.

qualifying Sunday then. He said, yep. Okay, so those are the kind of days we have there, and it's awesome.

THE MODERATOR: Tony, thank you very much. Good luck on Sunday.

Q. You've run the gamut here from good luck to bad luck. I'm talking about race days. When you wake up on Sunday morning, what is the feeling like here knowing -- facing that kind of unknown?

TONY KANAAN: It can be a good day, it can be a very bad day. At the end of the day, you just have to be happy that you're part of it. But there is no feeling because you can't predict. Anything can happen. You've got to make sure that all I do is to make sure that I -- on my end, I won't make any mistakes and I will try to make the right moves, not to regret something later. Nothing you can do about it. You can't predict what's going to happen.

Q. You were talking about having to make adjustments during the race because of the weather; do you know with this being kind of a new car, do you know what the adjustments are going to do?

TONY KANAAN: Yeah. I mean, we've ran a lot of laps here this month that we went through the exercise. The thing is it's how much you're going to do, the amount of -- but yes, we do, definitely, for sure.

Q. Obviously you've spent a lot of time around AJ throughout your career, but this is your first time really racing for him here. I'm sure Chip got a lot of fanfare, but AJ gets perhaps the most --

TONY KANAAN: I don't think anybody has more friends than AJ here to be honest.

Q. Has it felt any different, especially here at Indy, being here with him?

TONY KANAAN: Oh, big time. I mean, I walked into the garage this morning, and I thought it was the grandstand because we had 400 people in there, and everybody is eating ice cream and hot dogs, and that's AJ. Everybody is an AJ fan here. I mean, I haven't -- anybody that approached me that wanted a picture said, hey, I'm AJ's friend; hey, I'm AJ's friend. I said, AJ, you have a lot of friends here. It's completely different, and it's fun. It's busy at times, but I'm having a blast.

I think one of my best stories, I think I told some of you yesterday, but after qualifying on Saturday, we qualified, we're out of the top nine, we're really barely made it, so we're 10th. I get out of the car and I'm expecting to run into AJ and he's going to tell me, let's go again, let's draw the time, let's go for the Fast Nine. He approaches me in the golf cart; I said, so, Boss? He's like, 1966, I was second, and I withdraw my time to requalify and I ended up on the other side of the fence in Turn 1. I said, okay, well, I guess we're