

IndyCar Media Conference

Friday September 14, 2018

Ed Carpenter Spencer Pigot

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by Spencer Pigot and also team owner Ed Carpenter.

Ed, we had some good news earlier this week that Spencer would be returning to the 21 car for the 2019 season. What are some things you've seen from him this year that led to that decision?

ED CARPENTER: This is obviously our third year working together. Spencer spent two years kind of as my partner in the 20 car with the road courses. This year heading into this season we gave him the opportunity to run full-time.

Over the course of his time with the team, we've believed in his potential, seen the development. I think all of us would have hoped that we would have seen some wins by now, Spencer included, but at the same time there's been still steady progression, especially when I look at the second half of this season, he's been running and racing really well, as he always has.

In this series, it's so competitive. There's not many guys you're going to go out and hire that can just win races. For us, it's important to try to develop that within the team. I still believe that Spencer has the potential and pedigree to win races, and ultimately championships. I think we've seen other guys that it just takes time to develop. We're trying to give him that time. Hopefully this next season will be the year that we get back in the winner's circle, if not this weekend.

THE MODERATOR: Spencer, you spent a lot of time in the Road to Indy Series, then knocked on the door constantly in the Verizon IndyCar Series, getting a number of opportunities, but finally piecing together your first full-time season with the team this year. How much has that consistency really helped with your growth as a driver?

SPENCER PIGOT: It's been great to finally do a full season of IndyCar. Obviously doing a few part-time seasons allowed me to learn a lot. The races are so different than what I did in the Road to Indy. Also having the consistency with Ed Carpenter Racing through those two part-time years, I think it definitely eased the transition and allowed us to have some really good races this year, and hopefully we can build on that for next season.

Definitely it's nice to have a second full season. Really nice to have the belief of the team behind me. Hopefully we can consistently be performing like we have been the second half of the season.

THE MODERATOR: You had a second-place finish at Iowa, then recently a string of strong finishes at Gateway and Portland. What stood out for you in the season? Was there a turning point that you can build on?

SPENCER PIGOT: Those races you just mentioned were high points. I think we've had some races that had a lot of good things, but sometimes it only takes one bad thing to totally ruin the race. That's happened a few times with different things, on my part, getting involved in accidents or whatever it has been.

For sure Iowa was nice. I think we had some strong runs at Road America, Portland, Gateway. We have a lot of positives to look back on this year. Like I said, hopefully the plan is to have those consistent throughout the season.

THE MODERATOR: Ed, you're always keeping an eye on the 20 entry from the standpoint of an owner and driver. What are some things we can expect to see heading into next year?

ED CARPENTER: It will be a similar situation to now. Contrary to some reports that have been out there about me just running Indy next year, that's not true. I'll be back for all the ovals. A little disappointed there's one less, but I'll take the five that I get. Hopefully we'll have that finalized soon. We've certainly really enjoyed having Jordan as part of the team, see a lot of potential in him.

Keeping Spencer was part of the continuity. I'm really hopeful that Jordan will be able to be back for a second season, as well, because I see a lot of potential in him. In a perfect world if we could continue building the team around the group we have now, I think that would be a really good situation for us. We're working hard to finalize the last sponsor pieces to get that done. Hopefully it will be sooner than later.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Ed or Spencer.

Q. Ed, in the past you just did the oval races. In the future, is there any possibility we'll see you racing

yourself on a road course?

ED CARPENTER: Probably not at this point. Houston 2013 was the last road course race I did. I mean, I wouldn't rule it out totally. I thought maybe I was going to be racing at Mid-Ohio last season when Spencer had a warmup accident. Thought he had broken his back. I was going to get thrown in without a warmup.

There may be a situation where I would have to get in if it was something like that. But I think that ship sailed and I'm focusing on the role that I'm in now, trying to also make the team as strong as consistent as we possibly can be to continue bettering ourselves as a group.

THE MODERATOR: We'll hope if it ever happens, it's not for that reason.

ED CARPENTER: Exactly.

Q. We saw in practice a lot of traction issues, especially up in seven. Is that different this year, something you experienced before in practice?

SPENCER PIGOT: I think that's something that is kind of a characteristic of this track. The rear tires go through so much stress here. You have turn seven, turn nine, turn 11, turn four, a lot of very heavy acceleration zones. They take a beating.

That's one thing that we're going to be trying to work on throughout practice, is trying to help the rear tires live as long as possible.

Q. Spencer, you are a true product of the Mazda Road to Indy. Talk about being able to represent the Road to Indy ladder program in that way.

SPENCER PIGOT: Yeah, obviously the Mazda Road to Indy as it's been called for many years was a big part of my junior career. For me it was the perfect place to be with the scholarship opportunities, being able to race on the same tracks that I'm now racing on in IndyCar. That was a big, big part of my career.

I think now we're seeing a lot of guys that have come up through the ranks in the race this weekend. We have a couple new Lights guys in. It's really neat to see people kind of following the same path that I did. Hopefully I'm not just the only one. I know there's a lot of people that have come through it. I think we'll see a lot of new faces and lots of Road to Indy alumni here in IndyCar in the next few years, as well.

Q. Ed, you mentioned about both Spencer and Jordan, you see a lot of potential. How do you feel compared to when you single-handedly owned a team to now?

ED CARPENTER: Yeah, I mean, that's ultimately what we're all working towards. Spencer spent two years in that role. Other than that we haven't had a ton of continuity. In a perfect world, I would like to see us running two cars full-time with two guys running for the

championship. We're just not quite there yet. Hopefully we will be soon. We'll just have to see how it plays out.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you very much.