

IndyCar Media Conference

Saturday March 9, 2019

Patricio O'Ward Trevor Carlin

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome to the media center the team principal of Carlin, Trevor Carlin, and to his right, the new driver signed to the team, Patricio O'Ward. The deal was announced on Thursday.

Patricio, you'll be driving in a total of 13 races, 12 as a second team car, along with a third entry for the Indianapolis 500 in May. You have to be very excited for the news that came out.

PATRICIO O'WARD: I'm beyond excited. I want to thank Andersen Promotions and Road to Indy because without this scholarship I wouldn't have a chance to be in the NTT IndyCar Series. That was definitely something that I look back on after all the circumstances that took place in February and I said, Thank God I won the championship.

I'm super, super excited. I think this is a really cool new challenge. Carlin is a new team last year, so this is their second year in the NTT IndyCar Series. They've proven to be winners. They're a very well-respected organization in Europe. I've always watched them in Formula 2 and other pretty prestigious categories. They've proven to be winners. They know the formula, they know how to win.

That's what we're here for. Someone that is in this sport to be in the back isn't here for the right reason. I'm really excited to start it off. I just want to drive, man. I haven't been in a car since Sonoma. I can't wait for my first test.

THE MODERATOR: Trevor, clearly all the success you've had in other categories around the world, what is it about this young man that drew you to him, wanted him to be part of your team?

TREVOR CARLIN: Part of the history with Carlin is we specialize in working with young drivers. I'm always looking for talent, being in Formula 4, Formula 3, Indy Lights. Thanks to our involvement in Indy Lights, it got us into the States. I'm looking at the young drivers.

I saw last year the fantastic battle with Patricio and Colton Herta. Colton Herta is an ex-Carlin driver from Europe. He had a young teammate, a kid called Lando Norris. I saw Colton and Lando Norris fighting tooth and nail. I said in 2015, Lando Norris will become a



Formula 1 driver and Colton Herta will be an INDYCAR driver. That's happened.

In the meantime, I've seen Patricio beat Colton. To my mind, it's a really simple analogy. Patricio is as good as Colton and Lando and is going to be a future champion. I'm super excited.

THE MODERATOR: This is your second season in the NTT IndyCar Series. How do you see the team developing and taking that next step forward that you want to take this season?

TREVOR CARLIN: 12 months ago we were just about to enter our first-ever Indy car race, only had a second car for a week. The whole team, nobody in our team had done (NTT) IndyCar (Series) before. We're 12 months down the road, a well-organized team. I think our presentation is very high. We've done everything necessary. What we haven't had is results. To get results, it's a package. Part of that package is the drivers.

Having Patricio onboard, we've done a load of testing with R.C. Enerson, who showed us there's more potential in the car. Of course, then what happens, our current drivers Max (Chilton) and Charlie (Kimball), they lift their game. The whole thing is starting to spiral upwards.

We're very pleased. Our next target is podiums, then we can get regular podiums, we'll fight for that elusive first win.

THE MODERATOR: Patricio, you wish you were racing here this weekend. Your first race will be the INDYCAR Classic at COTA in a couple of weeks. You mentioned the Road to Indy. Because all those series race on many of the same tracks, how is that going to help you as far as preparing for this season?

PATRICIO O'WARD: It's huge because let alone when a car is new to you, it's a pretty big task to kind of apply it to a track. Whenever you don't know the track, it's double hard tasks on you. It's really good to know the tracks.

The only ones I don't know are ovals. I know every single road course, either I did it in IMSA or Road to Indy, the Indy Lights car really gave me an idea of just a faster car around Barber, the high downforce tracks. Obviously, an Indy car is going to be a different beast.

It gives you an idea of what the track is like.

I think that's definitely huge whenever track time may seem like three sessions is more than we have in Indy Lights, but it goes by quick.

It is definitely a big advantage to actually know the tracks. I think I prepared myself quite well, the Indy Lights car prepared me. I think we showed it last year in Sonoma. Sonoma was a new car for me, a new track for me. I think we came out pretty strong.

I'm excited for the INDYCAR Classic. It's nice because it's close to Mexico, so that's kind of like my home race. I'm bummed I'm not here because I really enjoy racing here even though last year I had a little mishap.

This place is cool. Kind of like a little Monaco. I'm going to enjoy watching this weekend, just go full on speeding.

THE MODERATOR: We'd like to open it up for questions.

Q. Trevor, you've come up so much in the junior ranks, having an Indy Lights team, do you think that will help with the development of Pato? A lot of times an Indy Lights driver may end up on an experienced long-term INDYCAR team, they don't have a whole lot of opportunity to show what they can do.

TREVOR CARLIN: Part of the way our team works is we work as a unit, team and drivers. We're trying to help the drivers all the time. We're not one of those teams that say, There's a perfect car, you get in it and drive it. We work with the driver, nurture him, help with the video, the data. Yeah, our business model is training. We keep on doing it even when it's INDYCAR and Formula 2. No one is perfect in this sport. We just try to help these kids along the way.

Q. What number are you going to use?

PATRICIO O'WARD: The number will be announced in a few days or in a few weeks. We got in contact, when I got released, I started to look at options. I reached out to Trevor, then we got in contact. He had some open races. I didn't have anything. I said, Okay, let's go. Something nice really came up. We have almost a full season, which is really, really nice.

I think a lot of people weren't expecting it after all the circumstances that took place. So I think it's really cool news. It's really important to be with a team that believes in you, that supports you. It's a really competitive series. Whenever you don't have that little extra from everybody, you're going to be at the back. I'm sure they know I'm going to give it my 100% and I'm sure they're going to give me their all.

Q. Pato, one of the things that rookies traditionally struggle with is getting used to the red tires. One of

the things notable about you at Sonoma is you didn't have that struggle in terms of qualifying. You were having some struggles making them last during the racing. Is there anything that you can do to speed up your education on that? Will you be paying attention to what's going on with Charlie and Max this weekend?

PATRICIO O'WARD: I'm definitely listening in to what's going on. But it's really hard. Until you try it is when you really start getting adapted to it. The red tire does have a lot more grip than the black tire.

In Sonoma honestly, you basically just have to believe that the car is going to be able to do it. If it doesn't, you see what you can do to save it. It usually works.

While I was in Sonoma, I went up the hill, then in the fast corners, I had no idea how the car was gripping up, but it was working. I said, If it's working this much better here, it's going to work this much better everywhere else. Everywhere I went a lot deeper and faster, and it gripped up. I kind of had an idea of what the tire is like.

When it gives up, it's very different to the black tire. That was a little hard. That's why I had a little problem in Q2. It's hard. Whenever it's a new tire, it's really hard to get used to, especially when you just have one lap to do it. But it's nice to feel the grip.

Q. Is the Cooper tire that you got used to in junior formula, is that a bit more like the black tire?

PATRICIO O'WARD: Yes. The Cooper tire is way more like a black tire. It's more of a harder compound because the tires have to last a lot longer. But, yeah, the red one is not like anything I've tried before.

When I first drove them, I was pretty impressed with the tire. I mean, to me it was unreal what it was capable of doing. Yeah, I think the black tire is more of a characteristic like the Cooper because you have around two or three peak laps. The red tire, you go out, you have to be really nice with it. The first flying lap, at least in Sonoma, that was the first one. The next lap was at least half a second up. There's a very, very big difference.

Car setup kind of changes a little bit, as well. You kind of have to tune to it based on what track you're at. It's a pretty hard balance to find.

Q. You have a couple of races where you're not funded currently. Carlos Slim supports a lot of drivers in other series. Do you have a relationship with him in terms of getting some more money to fill in those gaps?

PATRICIO O'WARD: I have talked to him actually. I've talked to him a few times. As of now, nothing has come up. He's going to keep me posted if something comes up on his side. I'm hustling hard on my side.

But I feel like results are what ultimately give you the power to be able to have more of a leverage whenever you go to sponsors or whenever you want some help. I'm kind of relying on that right now.

Q. Trevor, talk about the relationship with McLaren for the 500, how you think that's going to help Patricio as a rookie, their experience, some of the technology they might be bringing to your program.

TREVOR CARLIN: I mean, the McLaren program, we're helping them as logistical and operational partner on this project. It's interesting. Our team is based very close to McLaren in the UK. We have a good relationship already. They're good guys.

They get into things at a very deep level. They have massive resource, a big company. Obviously, for them, this is a spec car, so a lot of the things they'd love to do they're not allowed to do. We're trying to help them understand what they can and can't do. I'm sure they'll be pushing the boundaries. Ultimately we will benefit from what they learn with Fernando.

It should be a win-win. We're giving them a baseline. Hopefully, they'll take it forward and we'll piggyback along that journey.

Q. How did that relationship come about?

TREVOR CARLIN: As I said, we're friends of McLaren. A lot of my friends work there. Mr. Chilton and my business partner is great friends with Zak Brown. Just works. Just connected.

Q. Talking about budgets, budgets are huge problems. Road to Indy is obviously a road to the top of the series. Given the problems you've had, Patricio, as a driver securing a drive, and Trevor with a team owner with a limited budget, do you not think there should be a better program in place with perhaps a seat being guaranteed for the next year for the winner of the Indy Lights?

PATRICIO O'WARD: I think the difference of Lights and (NTT) IndyCar (Series), it's a big step. It's a very, very big step in terms of budgets. The operation in an (NTT) IndyCar (Series) is a lot, a lot bigger than Indy Lights. In Indy Lights, you might have two mechanics, one engineer. Your teammates are all within there. In (NTT) IndyCar (Series), I haven't counted, but it's like 10 mechanics, engineers. The operation is so much bigger. I'm sure that's why the prices really go up.

The traveling is a lot heavier. I'm just thankful that I have those three races, at least something to showcase what you have in such a competitive series. We're trying to make the most out of it.

TREVOR CARLIN: Sort of from my side, I'm from Europe, European racing. Firstly, there's nothing like this Road to Indy, there's nothing like this in Europe. Even though it doesn't guarantee a full budget for

(NTT) IndyCar (Series), the fact they take you through the whole program, Indy Lights, (NTT) IndyCar (Series), is incredible in itself.

At the end of the day, we all know motor racing is expensive. It's foolish to expect someone else to pay for it. To get \$1 million for a seat is amazing.

Of course, the drivers and teams would like to have more of a prize fund, and perhaps as the championship grows, as it currently is, there might be a way to get an extra two or three hundred thousand dollars. If we get up to \$2 million, we make that next champion's life a little bit easier.

You can't argue with the amount of drivers that have come through the ladder now professionally racing in (NTT) IndyCar (Series). So the system does work, for sure.

Q. What is the value of the scholarship to get a foothold in the series?

PATRICIO O'WARD: It's huge because I think like Trevor said, there's nothing quite like it anywhere else. I feel like what makes this whole kind of ladder system so attractive to drivers is because they get at least a little hop into the next category to get a little chance. That's basically all you need to showcase what you have.

Obviously, then team owners and other teams are going to decide whether they want you or not. It's really nice to know there are some races guaranteed in the scholarship. That's what I think is best because you're not relying on what if something doesn't come up, if someone doesn't take me under their wing. You have guaranteed three races.

I think that's what kind of kept me calm actually whenever all this happened. That's what kept me calm whenever situations weren't looking the best.

It's nice to have that. It's really nice. I think the value of that is a lot because in those three races, one of them is the biggest race in the world, and the other ones you can really showcase I think what you have if you have a good team behind you.

Q. I don't know if 'fate' is the proper word, but do you feel like you were destined to end up with this team all along?

PATRICIO O'WARD: I think I've landed exactly where I need to be actually. I'm really, really excited. I'm really happy. Like I said, it's a team that knows how to win. It's just a matter of time where we start winning, we start getting poles, start getting podiums.

Like I said, this is why we are here. If we're here to be fifth and 10th, what are we doing here? It's way too much money to be throwing around.

I know Trevor is a winner. He likes winning. The whole team likes winning. I like winning. I think we're going to mesh quite well.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you.