

# NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

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## Mark Miles, CEO Hulman & Company Jay Frye, President - INDYCAR

INDYCAR Executives Media  
Availability

NOTE: The transcript below is from a media availability held by Mark Miles, CEO of Hulman & Company, the parent of INDYCAR, and INDYCAR president Jay Frye at the Honda Indy Grand Prix of Alabama at Barber Motorsports Park.

MARK MILES: Good morning, everybody. Sitting here, I realize this is the seventh or eighth time I've been at Barber, and we really have not stepped forward to make ourselves available, so we don't have a lot of news to make as far as I know, unless Jay has a surprise for us today, but we did want to just say hello and catch up and be available to you for any questions that might be on your minds.

I want to start by talking about for me, a seven-year relationship, Mr. (George) Barber, who created this fantastic facility we look forward to seeing every year and continue to be pleased that he's a huge proponent of INDYCAR being here. And then the folks at ZOOM Motorsports, Ronnie Bruno and Gene Hallman and George Dennis we think of as the highest level promoter on the NTT IndyCar Series. They're folks we trust, and I think the relationship is mutual, and they're innovative and they're constantly working to be better.

One of the things by the way we're trying to steal and take home to Indianapolis is the Workforce Development program that Honda sponsors and that the state is involved with, which if you get across the way and see is really a terrific community engagement thing that I'm sure makes a real difference to aspiring workforce, particularly in manufacturing. So they're an innovative group. The city of Birmingham continues to be supportive and encouraging, and I know how much that means to us and to ZOOM (Motorsports, event promoter), and as I mentioned, the state of Alabama I think is involved in the Workforce initiative. That's terrific.

10 years, and I guess I've been here for seven, we love INDYCAR coming here. We like it when it's dry. Looks like that's going to be the case this weekend. But it's just



such a great place. And early in the year, everybody is so enthusiastic. We feel like we're coming off two great events with St. Pete and COTA. The television ratings are up 34 percent when you look at those two viewership numbers versus the two first NBCSN or cable races the year before, and I think that's a credit to everything Jay and the teams do and the great job that NBC is doing in their first year of having the whole property as they think of approximate.

NTT you know about. You're now seeing it everywhere. We couldn't be more happy about that relationship. Hard to exaggerate the amount of work that goes into signing a deal like that, changing out all the branding, all the signage and more. And the first more that we're really proud of is the app. That's a lot of work. It doesn't necessarily go well, but that one has, and that's because of their technical people working with our timing and scoring and marketing people, and we're real proud of that and continue to improve, but I think they got it done on time and meeting our expectations.

Jay and his team and our tech team, our non-racing technology team, are working with them to kind of sort through all the things that could be priorities for ongoing development, from racing stuff to fan engagement stuff, and next week I think is one of the first times I'll have a chance to really look at a shorter list of ongoing technology developments that we think can help us grow the sport.

So we're really pleased. When we get closer to Indianapolis you'll see a lot more evidence of Speedway, our official fuel and convenience store sponsor. They're really going to hit it hard to promote everything in May and then to continue throughout the rest of the year. May is a whole 'nother story. About this much of my brain is focused on INDYCAR, and this much is May, but there's a lot of people at home who can't sleep who are working around the clock to make sure May is a success.

Anyway, those are just some of the highlights. We've made great progress in licensing our international media. There will be more news on that to come soon, but we're going to be in good shape and we're working hard to develop relationships like we have with NBC directly with our licensed media partners around the world.

So those are some of my comments on the commercial side of the sport. Jay, do you want to touch on anything

from a racing point of view?

JAY FRYE: I certainly think COTA was one of the better races that we've seen the last couple of years on a road course. That was pretty exciting. I think this weekend we'll see kind of the same type thing here. It's kind of funny, so far this weekend has looked like, if you remember last year at Mid-Ohio we had a lot of red flags, a lot of things going on during practice, and then the race starts and we end up going green the whole race. I think there could be a little bit of that going on this weekend.

We've got a really great depth of field here. One of the things we've worked really hard on, and we've talked about this five-year plan, which everybody -- two years ago at St. Petersburg there was eight teams and 21 cars. This year there were 12 teams and 24 cars. So that's something we've worked really hard on is recruiting new ownership, new blood to come into the sport. We're really excited about that. There should be a couple more coming hopefully the next year, year and a half, so we think we're going in the right direction. We've just got a lot of work to do, but we're going to keep after it.

MARK MILES: Let me make one more really quick comment. We've got a few new people joining our organization. Many of them you would have met. Mike (Zizzo) is in the back of the room. I know you know Mike or did before. SJ Luedtke has come in as the VP of marketing. I don't see her in this room, but she's all over the track, and couldn't be more pleased with her hitting the ground running. And Casey Lane will wave to you all. He's not working yet, he's auditing the course, but he's coming in just after Easter to be our chief revenue officer and to help us bring on more sponsors, suppliers and treat them well. Glad you're here.

**Q. Mark, in 2013 you came here for the open test and had your first drivers' meeting. You dealt with some fiery people in your previous job, (John McEnroe and (Jimmy) Connors and (Andre) Agassi and people like that. What was it like dealing with these people for the first time, because they can be pretty heated when they have a point that they want to make?**

MARK MILES: Yeah, for me personally a fun comparison, I don't want to throw tennis under the bus, but tennis players work for themselves. They hire and fire their coach. They don't have a team owner. They don't get where they are without being fiercely independent and competitive and often everybody is out to get them.

And so I often lamented kind of the lack of having everybody willing to do whatever they could imagine doing to grow the sport, and that doesn't mean they didn't to some extent, but the contrast for me from that first driver meeting here in 2013, thanks for reminding

me, is amazing. To the -- I heard a lot in the most constructive tone about when are you going to fix our television deal, we need to have a better television audience and a few other top-of-mind concerns that were already on our list. I have yet to come across an INDYCAR driver who I didn't enjoy working with and whose first priority was to figure out how to pull on the same oars to help grow the sport. They're smart, great guys, they're constructive, even though they're great competitors on the track.

**Q. Jay, this might be a better question for you. I think I heard that there's a plan to repave this track after the INDYCAR race this weekend. I was just wondering if you are aware of any changes to the track, not that there's anything wrong with the layout of the track, but I was just wondering if there's going to be some wider areas for passing, maybe the track isn't that wide in some places, and if you know anything.**

JAY FRYE: Well, it's been talked about, so we'll actively participate with them on what they're going to do or if they, in fact, do go forward with it. Obviously, this place is amazing. Everything they do, they want to do it the best, so we're very confident if they do go forward with that in 2020 it'll be very well done. There's no plan to do anything different. Part of what was happening last year was there's drainage, some things going on there that needs to be updated, but other than that, the facility and the racetrack is dry.

**Q. I've got a question for Mark Miles. With the NTT sponsorship, do you know if NTT willing to have a race back in Japan again? And what is the basic idea of INDYCAR now having a race outside of North America?**

MARK MILES: So on the second part, I think philosophically all of our Japanese partners would like to see us there, whether that's NTT or Bridgestone, Honda, obviously, and more. It's tough for us because generally speaking, we think the racing that's international, outside of North America, for the most part, we think it should be before the beginning of the championship. And that means January, February, probably February. Difficult in Japan to find a time when the climate works. But we'll keep thinking about that, and maybe there's some way to do some kind of an event that isn't necessarily a championship event that's every year a part of the series.

Our philosophy I just sort of mentioned about in terms of international expansion. We think we're fundamentally a North American series, but that there are a lot of choices for us to race in February in North America, especially in the States, and so I think that's an attractive time when it might be possible to race outside North America. So it's going to be one or two, and we have been actively looking for some time. We're trying to understand how to create a great value proposition and how to be in a place that won't be a one-off. If we do that, we wanted it to be part of the

tradition or to sustain a tradition or to start one. There are some places we can imagine being. Everything has to line up. Their economy has to be good. They have to put all the economics and sponsorship and the like together. But I think it'll happen eventually.

**Q. Jay, we've got the Advanced Frontal Protection device, I think the AFP, coming in May. What are the next steps, and how far along are you in those for the next phase of --**

JAY FRYE: Well, actually we feel really good about what the next phase is, and hopefully sometime in the next 30 to 45 days we'll be able to show it and disclose what the next part of that phase is. This was something that we were able to do immediately and quickly, and the teams have been phenomenal and it's taken a lot of work because of the timing of it to get it put on the cars. If you look at some of the cars here this weekend, you can see where it's actually at. It's the brackets on the cars. But the piece is not on the cars. We're excited about what we're doing and what the future is going to hold in the next phase, and again, we should have that hopefully to be announced shortly.

**Q. This question is for you, Jay: Can we expect an announcement on more engine manufacturers coming into our series soon?**

JAY FRYE: I hope so. How's that? No, it's something that there's a lot of enthusiasm, we talk to lots to them every day. A lot of what's going on with it is timing, right, because it's a huge commitment. They have to build engines. The ones that we're currently talking to want to build their own engines, so that's a key indicator when you talk to somebody about their commitment. It's just really a timing thing at this point. So we're sorting through that. One of the things -- we've got two great partners right now with Honda and Chevrolet and we're very fortunate for that and very proud of that. Part of what's going on is you talk about the five-year plan and the fields are getting bigger and the teams are coming in, at some point it's not going to become a luxury, it's going to become a necessity as we grow. We're not quite to that point yet, but we're getting close, so we're looking forward to who's next.

**Q. Pocono is losing a race weekend in 2020. They're going to do a NASCAR doubleheader to take their two NASCAR races. So does that create a growth opportunity for the INDYCAR race at Pocono?**

MARK MILES: I don't think that's something we've discussed yet with NASCAR or Pocono, so I frankly --

**Q. There's one less NASCAR weekend and now there's a double-header.**

MARK MILES: Yeah, Jay knows more about NASCAR scheduling plans than I do probably.

JAY FRYE: It might. They have less, so less creates different opportunity, yes.

**Q. Jay, would you be prepared to put back the introduction of the 2.4-liter engines in order to get another manufacturer in, and would Chevy and Honda go along with that idea?**

JAY FRYE: Right now everything is full speed ahead. But again, it depends on the timing of all this stuff. The 2.4 we're confident in everything we've got organized with that. Again, that was with the partnership of Chevrolet and Honda to come up with that platform, so it's -- right now it's '21 through '26. It can move either way I guess at this point still. Part of that will be the next OEM partner, what their input would be or how they would want to go about it. Obviously, Chevrolet and Honda are very keen to have another one come in, so if another one came in and it was a delay or some sort of different situation, anything like that could be possible.

**Q. What's been the response so far for NBC Gold and how that's gone over with fans? Obviously, this is a much different experience for INDYCAR fans.**

MARK MILES: Yeah, well, I think we didn't have a frame of reference to have a metric or peg in the wall, but I can tell you NBC seems genuinely pleased with it from a quantitative point of view, the number of subs. From a qualitative point of view, all the feedback we've gotten has been very positive. You know, someday we'd, of course, like to have live races on it, but that's not our agreement at the moment, and that's an NBC consideration. But it's kind of like the NTT app. I think the first thing was getting it out and having it work and having it help us well, and I think it's doing that.