

NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

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Press Conference

Bob Bryant

500 Festival

Dennis Reinbold

Owner, Dreyer & Reinbold Racing

Sage Karam

Dreyer & Reinbold Racing



of the largest half marathons in the world, and so it's a very significant run, very significant to Indiana. Over 85 percent of the runners are actually from Indiana. We've been able to leverage the value of the Indy 500 and the Indianapolis Motor Speedway to create really a world-class event, and now we're leveraging that event, so we can leverage the mini for something that can help us reach kids with really a message of fitness and health and walking and movement.

So we started four years ago with the mini-mini, so the 500 Festival mini-mini is a run that, as you explained, is all about kids. It's not a kids' fun run before an adult run, it's only kids that day, but they're going to have all the experiences that you have in the mini. So it's a miniature version of the mini. You're going to have timing in your bibs, you're going to have a shirt, a medal, you're going to have runner services, you're going to have pit stations out on the route, entertainment on the route and then a big family celebration zone at the end.

So it's very exciting for us. This is the mother ship for the 500 Festival, a 63-year-old community nonprofit organization, but really everything leads up to the Indy 500, and for us to actually have that event and to be able to promote that message to kids and encourage health and fitness and do it with a partnership, Dennis was a former 500 Festival board director, so he's very familiar with what question do and what our mission is, so we're very excited about that. Certainly excited to work with J.R. and Sage, who each bring some really unique perspective about working with kids and about how to get kids motivated to do things.

THE MODERATOR: Now the course. We say there's four, and it's from a half mile to two miles, and determined on age I would imagine?

BOB BRYANT: Yeah, determined on age but also ability, so people can choose different races. We actually had a seven-year old that ran the half marathon, that ran this mini this past weekend, so kind of depends on what their experience has been, but it's in half mile increments, and it really allows kids of all ages but all abilities, very much like the mini itself. We've got walkers, we've got runners, we've got elite athletes, so we have that same spirit about this, and we have the opportunity that this could become one of the largest youth specific runs in the world. We certainly have the venue to do that.

THE MODERATOR: We are getting ready for the Dreyer & Reinbold Racing announcement. We announced last week at the kickoff downtown where we had a car on display and a lot of exciting stuff going on. First time the 500 Festival has gotten involved with the race car. But last week Dreyer & Reinbold Racing announced a partnership with the 500 Festival that features the mini-mini event logo and tagline, "kids run here" on the 24 Dreyer & Reinbold WIX Filters Chevy driven by Sage Karam and the 48 Dreyer & Reinbold Salesforce Chevrolet driven by JR Hildebrand. Both Karam and Hildebrand will serve as ambassadors and spokespersons for the mini-mini. The mini-mini will have its fourth appearance here with children from 5 to 12 years old running around various courses here at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway on October 5, 2019.

Very similar for the kids as we just had a very successful 23rd edition of the One America mini marathon that actually ran around the oval. The various courses for the mini-mini are on the road course and part of the oval, and we'll get our people that are here right now, we have president and CEO of the 500 Festival, Bob Bryant, is here to speak. Also team owner of Dreyer & Reinbold Racing, who has entered 38 and qualified all 38 cars here at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway in the Indianapolis 500, Dennis Reinbold, and the driver of the 24 WIX Filters Chevrolet, Sage Karam. Sage has actually been quite involved with some youngsters in his hometown of Nazareth, Pennsylvania. We'll talk about that a little bit, as well.

Bob, let's start off with this mini-mini concept. It's been very successful so far, it's expanding, and you had a very successful weekend last week right here at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway with the mini marathon. Talk about last week and then coming in for the October 5th event.

BOB BRYANT: Sure, sounds good. The One America 500 Festival mini marathon and the 500 Festival Delta Dental 5K, really 43 years now that event has gone on, including a full lap around this track. It has become one

THE MODERATOR: And this was the first time that the 500 Festival has participated with some ID on a race car in the 500, as well.

BOB BRYANT: That's correct. We couldn't find anywhere in history where the festival has actually had a logo of the organization or any of our events actually on a car. So very exciting for us, for all of our 4,000-plus volunteers, our 33 board directors and certainly our staff and people in the community to see a community event directly connected with something happening on the track.

THE MODERATOR: That's fantastic. Congratulations on the program. We're looking forward to having the mini-mini and the decal on the side of the cars, as well. It should be fun.

Dennis, you've been -- 2000 to 2008 you were a board member for the 500. This all came together, you wanted to participate. Talk about how it came together. I know Sarah was involved and some other people and now it's an exciting adventure with the 500 Festival.

DENNIS REINBOLD: Yeah, exactly. Sarah Fisher reached out to me and said, you need to get in touch with Bob. She's a former driver of ours. I have to say that because she got mad at me last week when I failed to mention that. But Sarah is on the 500 Festival right now, and she's going to help by kind of completing and connecting the 500 Festival committee members to our team and bringing them around our garage and suite or whatever.

So we're excited to have that level of tie-in. Bob is right, it hasn't happened prior to this that there's been signage and participation with a racing team, and we're a local team, and my former ties to the 500 Festival committee, I'm just really excited about it.

So later, after the dust dies down from here, we will sponsor the mini-mini, and excited about that participation and the involvement there. Prior to that, we just spoke about we're going to do a sponsorship that we haven't announced yet and haven't finalized yet for the dirt track race, so we're excited about that, as well, and we'll tie that all together hopefully and get involvement from the festival committee and everyone involved.

It's just so much fun to be out here today. This is the first time I've come out to the track so far this year, and just driving through the gates every year just gets you goosebumps and everything else. So I'm excited about it and appreciate the 500 Festival for everything they do. I know very much what they do, and all the involvement in the community. It's just a great event. It's great for the city. Being from here and local, I just enjoy all these festivities. Pumped up to get going.

THE MODERATOR: Dennis, as many of you know, the

Dreyer & Reinbold connection with the Indianapolis 500 dates back to 1927 with Dennis's grandfather, Pop Dreyer, being a mechanic on the Duesenberg team. You said you used to ride your bicycle here. Even though you've been here quite a bit, do you get the same goosebumps when you come in this place?

DENNIS REINBOLD: Oh, absolutely. We would race around the church parking lot that was a nice oval, and we would all pick out who we wanted to be. It was always Mario or Big Al or Bobby or Rutherford or -- I was always Lloyd Ruby because my uncle was on his pit crew, and he was an underdog, and I always root for the underdog, which is why I root for me when we come here. So that's where we're at.

THE MODERATOR: Real quick, talk racing a little bit. You're a one-race effort, two cars. You were the only Indy-only team last year. You've got a couple more. But you have a team that goes all year preparing cars and working and a full-time team that gets ready for Sage's car and J.R.'s. Is it something that you just love to do, and you have enough sponsorship that you can have this kind of program?

DENNIS REINBOLD: Yeah, it's a passion, obviously, to come here and be able to prepare and put cars out on the grid and go through all of that. For me, I want to prepare and make sure we're ready to go on race day, which so far, knock on wood, we're seeming to be ahead of the game right now, and we're pretty well prepared and ready to go. We've had the same people for a long, long time, and so we have faith in each other and that we can produce a really, really good competitive product, and we've been competitive, and this guy is pretty quick. We're excited about Sage back again as well as J.R. back again by the same token.

THE MODERATOR: They seemed to work real well together last year when you had them back being teammates again.

SAGE KARAM: Yeah, we're just really different personalities. Like J.R. is just like more calm, and I feel like I bring the electricity to the garage. I think JR thinks before he talks, and I just talk.

THE MODERATOR: That's the athlete in you. Sage, talk about the connection with the mini-mini. Last year you helped your dad who's a wrestling coach and you were the coach of the smaller guys, and you worked with the young kids, and your girlfriend Abby is an elementary schoolteacher. You were just at their school the other day, and you have a good connection with the young people on that kind of thing that you work with them.

SAGE KARAM: Yeah, I usually help my dad as just like an assistant coach to him on the varsity side of high school wrestling, and then this year about halfway through, the coach of the junior high team got accepted

in the police academy, so they needed a coach, and they wanted to keep it in house, and they had to make it quick. So you know, Dad knows my schedule, knows I don't really do anything at home, and he said, Sage, can you do this, and we need you to do it, and I said, sure. So I ended up becoming head coach of a junior high team, and the first thing I said to him was I don't know how this is going to go, guys, because I've never had the responsibility of being a head coach. I'm sure I'll make mistakes, and I've got two jobs, to make you guys better men and women, and also to get you prepared for varsity wrestling. There's no better guy to get you prepared for what you're going to go through in those four years because I know how Dad works and he raised me for 24 years, so I know all the little tricks you get can get away with.

My girlfriend, yeah, she's a kindergarten teacher, so the other day I went to her class, and I was showing them my race suit and helmet, and I was their guest mystery reader they do every Friday, and I was supposed to read, but they got so into asking questions about the 500 and racing and everything like that that I ended up running out of time and not even being able to read the book.

She led it on pretty well. She had them watch the movie "Turbo" before I came in, so they got like a little idea of what the Indy 500 was, and then I came in for the ending of the movie, and you know, they're like four or five years old, so they were asking me if I know Turbo. I was like, yeah, yeah, I know Turbo. He's pretty good. He's fast.

THE MODERATOR: Yesterday Heather Carpenter had some fourth graders around and you talked to them and showed them your helmet. They have a lot of interesting questions at that age, don't they?

SAGE KARAM: Well, that's the thing. They have no filter, young kids, and whatever pops into their head, they just say. So yeah, there was definitely some funny questions. They were asking me about my suit, and they're all intrigued that it's fireproof, and they all ask if I'm like a fireman, and I'm like, no, I'm not, but I'm a race car driver. I'm a fireman for about 30 seconds if there is a fire, and then it's not so good.

They love that stuff, and the helmet, too. Every time I passed the helmet around to kids, they just put it on, and it's so funny when you see like a four-year-old kid put on a big helmet. They look like a little Bobblehead, and it's just like bigger than their body, and they can barely hold it up. To us the helmet is light, and over the years the helmets get lighter and lighter but it's still pretty heavy for a four-year-old.

THE MODERATOR: You grew up an athlete, played football and wrestled and all that. You've got to be fairly excited about what the festival is doing with the mini-mini where the 5 to 12 year olds are actually starting to

get athletically inclined at that age.

SAGE KARAM: Yeah, I think it's good to keep kids moving at that young age and get them out of the house, off of Fortnite and what may be out there nowadays and keep them going. I think that's the name of the game.

But yeah, it's definitely a cool event, the 500 Festival. I've been racing now this will be my sixth 500, and every year I come here you see the logo all over downtown because they're putting on so many cool events, and a lot of the events the drivers go to and do. You see it all around, and to actually see it on a car now is going to be pretty cool, and just hope we can perform to the best of our ability and do well for that.

Yeah, you know, I'm going to try and come out here for the mini-mini. I think that would be cool to be a part of. You probably won't see me running. The last time I tried to do a running race was in I think like 2014. I was up in Carmel, Indiana, I was doing a 5K, and my competitive spirit came out, and I decided -- well, I didn't train for it at all, one, and I just decided I was just going to try and sprint it, and I got about halfway, and I realized that I was not going to be able to sprint it, and I was leading, and then slowly started to fade away, and yeah, we had those -- the things on the shirt that track where you are and your time and everything, and I knew that, so I ripped it off and I crumbled it up and I threw it in the woods because I didn't want my time being online. They're probably still looking for me.

THE MODERATOR: Let's talk a little bit about this is -- you're 24 and this is your sixth 500. That's amazing. I remember when you were 18 and you had to do the prom here because you couldn't make it back to Nazareth. You talked the other day about your calmness coming here and how you feel confident coming in here with the team again, and you've been competitive. You have running sixth last year at lap 154. You've got to feel good about this event.

SAGE KARAM: Yeah, I do, I always feel good coming in, and I feel like every year I feel better than the year prior. Last year I felt really, really strong coming into the month, and I didn't think I could feel much more confident about how things were going to go, and even this year I feel more prepared, more mature mentally, and last year I just -- I had a rough year before May. I had to go through shoulder surgery, and I had to get through that, so my training kind of got put back a little bit. But when I came into May, I was ready to go.

And this year I've just been grinding away mentally, physically, and feel pretty good. You know, it is really cool to say that it's my sixth one, and I'm 24 years old. 24 years old this year, and car 24, hopefully it's a good omen, and it'll bring us some good luck. That's all we really -- we just need some luck on our side. We have the speed. I think historically you've seen that we don't

qualify in the first couple rows, but come race day, I think if you go around and you asked the guys on Carb Day who looks quick in race trim, I think a lot of the guys will say Dreyer & Reinbold cars look pretty good. We focus a lot on the race car and how it's going to perform on Sunday, and every year Dennis and his guys, they give me the best car I could ask for. We've just got to pretty much do what we did last year and have some luck, and if we do that, I mean, there was only less than 50 more laps and we were in the hunt to do that thing.

We get it to the end, I think we'll be good.

THE MODERATOR: Bob, real quick, on the mini-mini, number of competitors, obviously you have a huge number for the mini marathon, but what do you look at for the mini-mini as the number of competitors in that one?

BOB BRYANT: We've moved that event from August, when it could get pretty hot out here to October 5th. So we're in a really good date. We've had over a thousand kids participating in it and when you include family members and that kind of things, we can have 3,000 to 4,000 people out here at the track. Like I said, it has really an unlimited potential, so we could grow literally by the thousands, and I think with more awareness and certainly what this partnership will help us do, just the fact that kids can come out and run on the same track these guys are racing on, and they have an opportunity in each heat that depending on the outcome, since JR is not here, in October they might come and cross the same Brickyard finish line that Sage did in first and JR did in second. That's the hope.

THE MODERATOR: We would take that. The excitement of the kids and even the parents probably knowing what the Yard of Bricks means in telling the kids is probably pretty exciting, too.

BOB BRYANT: Oh, without a doubt, and here's the other thing. We talk about trying to create a culture of running and walking and movement and that type of achievement within Indiana. We've had over a million people from Indiana have run the One America Festival mini marathon, so over those 43 years, that's how significant that's been. And what you see now is really kids able to influence their parents. So we see kids have brought their parents to watch them in the mini-mini, and then they've encouraged them that they need to run in the Delta Dental 5K or the One America Mini the next year. So it's really working as much as we're trying to influence and motivate kids to be fit and active, they're actually now influencing their parents, as well.

It's just utilizing this venue and the partnership that we've long had, obviously, with Indianapolis Motor Speedway is a very significant movement particularly within the state of Indiana.

THE MODERATOR: I would think you have one of the most recognizable and most famous venues in the world and they're able to run on that. Everybody is excited, and then hopefully they'll move up to the mini marathon down the road, too.

BOB BRYANT: Absolutely.

Q. (No microphone.)

BOB BRYANT: Well, we've really done things year round. I mean, obviously the more significant events that you're aware of, the IPL 500 Festival parade and the 500 Festival memorial service presented by Rolls Royce and on and on, a lot of that has been geared around May, but actually from 1957 when the festival started, there were events that preceded by as much as three months prior. So we already have a miler series, so the 500 Festival miler series presented by Ortho Indy, that's a February, March and April run. We have a fundraising golf tournament that we do in September. So we actually have been doing things outside of May, it's just that's always the lead-up is kind of leading to the Indy 500, and it makes sense with our partnership with IMS we can work with them to do things different times of year.

Q. Dennis, are you working long-term to get a full program again in INDYCAR? And right now, what's your motorsports program outside of the Indy car world?

DENNIS REINBOLD: Thank you. We are trying to get back to full-time. We may have to do part-time to get there. But we're trying to grow the program, and we grew last year to two cars versus one, so that's definitely on our radar. We have to make it work out financially and every other aspect. But we do aspire to be more involved in IndyCar going forward. We believe in IndyCar very, very much. Chevrolet has been awesome to us, been a great partner. We're excited to have them.

And what was your second question? Oh, yeah, we're doing rallycross, and rallycross -- American rallycross, ARX 2 is what we're in. So we're got four rally cars and we'll run those -- we just did a test, what was it, a week ago?

SAGE KARAM: Yeah, it was the day after the test they had here, the open test.

DENNIS REINBOLD: Yeah, the two days after the open test, the 25th and 26th we did a test on the rallycross cars with six different drivers, and we'll be announcing more definite kind of plans on that coming up soon.

But that keeps us busy through the summer, keeps our guys occupied, busy, employed, however you want to look at it, and it's a fun and challenging series. We won the championship two years ago, finished second way

too often last year instead of winning, so we didn't win last year, but we'll fix that this year is the plan.

But one other thing I wanted to point out, when Sage said he wants to tell kids not to play Fortnite, I think the quote from you was something like, "Dude, I'm really worn out because I was up until 3:00 a.m. playing Fortnite." I think that was last year; am I right?

SAGE KARAM: Yeah, last year I was in a little Fortnite addiction, and then my accountant called me and said I was spending too much money on the game. So I ended up having to quit it.

But yeah, no, it was big for a while, and now they've -- in my opinion they've just made too many updates and it's gotten too complex and I haven't played for a little bit, so now I'm just kind of behind it.

DENNIS REINBOLD: So we're proud of Sage for being a Fortnite reformation guy and stepping up and telling kids that it's a bad idea.

Also, Dreyer & Reinbold did announce that we have one full-time driver, Cole Keatts, and then actually Sage is going to drive four events coming up in the rallycross this year starting at Mid-Ohio next month. So we've announced those and there's some other announcements coming after that.

Q. Dennis, not an issue this year, but there's been a lot of talk here recently about guaranteed spots for the Indy 500. As an Indy-only team, at least for now, what's your feeling on that, and how would it impact you in your desire or willingness to come to Indy if there wasn't -- if there were guaranteed spots for full-time teams?

DENNIS REINBOLD: Yeah, I have heard this question before, and I've got a really cocky answer. Do you want to hear it?

Q. Yeah.

DENNIS REINBOLD: It says they're scared of us, so whatever. I don't know, a lot of the same people that are for that were dead-set against it back in the day when it was proposed. I don't know. I don't look at it like it's that big a deal. I mean, we have to beat people to get in the race this year, so it's going to be the same going forward. I don't know. I don't think it's an issue.

Q. Dennis, I want to go back to your rallycross program. What kind of cars are you running, and did you get any work support? And the second question, as you maybe know, FIA announced that from 2022 onwards, rallycross will be run worldwide with electric cars. What's your opinion on that?

DENNIS REINBOLD: I think it's good. It's going to expand and evolve into electric. Currently IMG runs the series, they just kind of dipped their foot in the pool last year and are figuring it out right now. It should become

better and better. They have a lot of resources. They have a lot of concert venues that they will plug into the races and things like that. I think it's got some upside for sure.

Q. Dennis, with the one operation here you've had good success and some not so good success. What keeps fueling your passion to keep coming back here more and more?

DENNIS REINBOLD: Well, I've got to win this race. I mean, we need to win, and that's really it. That's the only reason we show up is to put the car in Victory Lane. We work all year-round to try to do that and try to improve and get better than we have been before.

A lot of times I'll sit there through the middle of the race and say, all the things that we worked on in the last year have piled up to this moment, and we're as prepared and ready to win this race as possible, and for whatever reason we haven't pulled that off quite as of yet. But here's to this being the year.

THE MODERATOR: And for a 24 year old it would be a nice present, huh?

SAGE KARAM: Sixth time's a charm.

Q. With regard to the mini-mini again, you did a great job of outlining the benefits that can follow from long-distance training. Are you doing anything to point out the risks, musculoskeletal risks, things like delayed menarche? Do you have a health partner that's working to improve the awareness of these things among the parents and the athletes?

BOB BRYANT: Yeah, certainly, so we have -- actually we're blessed, on our board of directors we have the CEOs of three of the largest health systems in Indiana. Franciscan Health is a partner on the mini marathon itself, and what's unique about the mini is we give a longer amount of time really of any run that size to finish, and we have over 6,000 people who will register to walk it. So it's not -- we've never been focused on what the finish times are and that sort of thing, but really just more of challenge to get out and get moving, so it's not always about from an elite or an avid perspective that it's always about the run itself.

Q. I was asking specifically about the mini-mini, what you have in place to address the needs of preteen children running.

BOB BRYANT: Well again, I can't answer that specifically. We certainly do have health partners that are part of that, and if you come out and experience the event, I think you'll see that it's not a highly competitive situation. It's really one -- and when you're talking about a half mile to two miles, most of the kids are competing in a half-mile or one-mile range, so it's also a fairly short duration. So it's really more about just the motivation to be out there and be active.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks very much for your time, and we'll see you starting next Tuesday when Sage and J.R. are on the racetrack. Thank you.