NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

Thursday May 16, 2019

Press Conference

David Byrd

Speaker1 Title

James Davison

Speaker2 Title

Bradley Miller

Speaker3 Title

THE MODERATOR: On my far left is David Byrd, president of Jonathan Byrd's Racing. In the middle, James Davison, driver of the No. 33 Dale Coyne Racing with Byrd and Belardi Honda. Closest to me is Bradley Miller, who is the founder of SpeedTech and the managing director of SAFE Antifreeze.

I'll turn it over to David Byrd for the announcement.

DAVID BYRD: Thank you for all that have come this morning, giving us your ear. We're excited to make an announcement of an additional sponsor for Jonathan Byrd Racing, then the Dale Coyne with Byrd and Belardi program here this month of May with James as the driver. This is a new associate sponsor, SAFE Antifreeze.

It's a very revolutionary product. We're excited to have them onboard. This is pretty much their global launch, really introducing the product to the world with this. Starting obviously with the month of May, and the Indy 500, going on from there, and Bradley has a tremendous background in motorsports. We're longtime friends and associates.

This innovation that he's developed is groundbreaking. I won't steal all is thunder, but ultimately it's one of those things that I can tell you it's going to save lives. So it's great to be a part of it, to make them part of the Jonathan Byrd's Racing family, give them an opportunity to share what's been created, what the innovation is, what the plan is, how it's going to impact our world and our environment, even our pets going forward.

With that I'll turn it over to Bradley to get into the background. I'll say it's great to have you here back at the Speedway, hope it's the first of many years to come.

BRADLEY MILLER: Thank you. I have to start thanking David's father. Jonathan was a friend. I started my career here in '85, the same year that Jonathan Byrd did. My career was slightly different. I was one of those team guys. We were in the CART Series. By the time we got to the Speedway, we turned into USAC for a month.

My first innovation was the manufacturer of the onboard computer. We manufactured the first generation EFI, data acquisition systems. Our second innovation, we manufactured the world's strongest titanium. We made the strongest titanium alloy in the world, strongest, lightest. We spent most of our time in Formula 1 with that product. It turned into nuts and bolts that held the chassis together. That was in the mid, early 2000s.

This is what we call our third innovation. We've manufactured the world's safest antifreeze. My message to you, the media, that in motorsports is that antifreeze has been in the industry for approximately a hundred years. So if you remember the Model A Ford back in 1931, we already had a chemical in those cars called ethylene glycol. Ethylene glycol has been in existence, and right now we're using almost a billion gallons globally a year of antifreeze. It's a little over 800 million gallons globally. It's a big value. Big chemical companies that are involved in it. Big auto manufacturers.

We're a small company. About four years ago we were working on an off-road racing program and we were having some corrosion issues. We were just trying to solve it for the Baja 1000. It wasn't a simple task, it was difficult, but we were able to solve it. What we didn't realize is we were doing something pretty unique because what we were doing was non-toxic. We didn't do anything with that innovation until a couple years ago. I started to think about it. I said, We need to do something with this. Let me research the antifreeze industry.

I started to research the antifreeze industry, everything I could read about the last hundred years. The first thing that overwhelmed me was the death, the amount of poisoning that's been happening. It's been from pets to wildlife, livestock, human. I mean, it's been across the board.

Our product started off non-toxic. I said, Let's be the company that manufactures the change. Let's change the whole industry if we can. So we believe that we've done that.

It's the motorsports industry that created the world's

safest antifreeze. We create a lot of the safety that ends up in the production vehicles. I don't think we get the credit for it as the industry should. So I want to tell the press today that it's the motorsports industry that has created the world's safest antifreeze, and we're very proud of that.

We're doing something a little unconventional. We're doing a kickstarter, a launch, for the product the month of May. So the month of May is very symbolic to me because I started my career here. I had mentors here, Herb Porter, Bruce Krauer (phonetic), men like Clint Bronner. I'm from Phoenix, Arizona. When I was a teenager, they listened to me. They listened to my ideas. I was mentored by some really great people, some real historic men. I had the benefit of the tradition of the month of May.

Anyway, I don't want to take a lot of your time this morning, but that's really a symbolic reason. We wanted to come here. I was excited to see just a few weeks ago David's reentry back to racing with some Sprint cars. I was quick to get on the phone. What are you doing? He said, I've got an IndyCar, too. I said, Okay, I'm coming. What do we got to do?

We put together a program and are so excited to hear about this young man, James Davison. Just excited to hear. I watched him lead some laps here a few years ago, just a talented young driver. I said, That's what we need.

Here is the really exciting thing. Australia is the leading country for safety in antifreeze. They've taken the lead. They've removed ethylene glycol from the mining industry. Now, Australia, the mining industry is one of their largest industries. If you're not familiar with that, a lot of the metals, bauxite, raw materials that we have for titanium, all come from Australia. A large mining truck carries 150 plus gallons, about 600 liters, of antifreeze. They've eliminated the ethylene glycol.

We're very excited about Australia. I'm excited about James, his talent. I've been watching him here at practice. Car looks fabulous. Can't say anything really more than that.

THE MODERATOR: James, perfect introduction. You grew up in Australia, but you've been a long time astute historian of this race in particular. What does it mean, adding SAFE Antifreeze to the program?

JAMES DAVISON: Look, it means a lot. We talk about Australia. It's obviously a country that is very far away from here. When you grow up having a dream, watching the Indy 500, all the names and sponsors, the people before you, I think you've got to have a lot of respect. Certainly I do with just history in general.

To actually be here, it's quite surreal really. It's my fifth 500, so it doesn't feel abnormal to be here. Still, when I really think about it, I'm living my wildest, far-fetched childhood dream. Certainly it's thanks to the two gentlemen beside me for obviously believing in me and supporting me, all the necessary stuff to get a racecar on the track. The commercial side is very important.

Yeah, with this product, to be honest, I've learnt mostly about it this morning. I just think that it's great that we can use motorsport as a platform to promote something that's good for the environment. Obviously motorsport is something that maybe isn't the best thing for the environment, but we're seeing things developing, like Formula E.

Obviously something like this is very convenient. It's something I certainly knew nothing about, but it makes absolute sense to be promoting this. I see the product has fantastic potential. Certainly aware that Australia is a very regulated industry. I think this SAFE Antifreeze coolant has a lot of potential in my home country. Anything I can do to help that, which probably winning the race would help, so the pressure's on (laughter), yeah, I'll certainly be happy to do so.

Very pleased to be supporting this initiative.

THE MODERATOR: Obviously the Indianapolis Motor Speedway was created more than a hundred years ago to help develop the technologies and things moving forward that would help the automobile industry around the globe. This is a perfect example of that.

David, what does it mean for SAFE Antifreeze to be part of the program?

DAVID BYRD: They're on the commercial side right now. This is the awareness campaign, a big kickoff. Bradley can speak to where it's being tested right now.

Our goal is certainly to start using it in our short track programs that we support, Silver Crown, Sprint cars, both centrally and out west. If we can, working closely with our partner, Dale Coyne, we can start using it here in IndyCar, as well, make that innovation come to life.

Obviously what is in the car is very important. Also what comes out of the car is equally important. Hopefully we can use that platform to not only educate but to create a better situation for performance.

THE MODERATOR: Bradley, if you want to talk about where it's being tested.

BRADLEY MILLER: Absolutely. It is about awareness. I want to bring the awareness, because it's a little bit hidden. It's inside your vehicle. Unless you've had a radiator fail or a lower hose fail, you see it leaking in your garage or on the side of the curb, you're not aware of the danger of it. You really don't realize how toxic this material is.

There isn't a chemical in your household, nothing that is as toxic as this material is. So 98% roughly is the amount of ethylene glycol that is consumed right now. There is propylene glycol. That's what our product is based on. That's the other 2%. That's what the mining trucks are using in Australia.

Again, we didn't invent that. The food industry has been using propylene glycol for almost 60 years. So the technology has existed for decades for the auto industry to convert and be non-toxic. That's what I really discovered in my research.

So what we did, what our company did, is we went and took every ingredient. For example, the colors. Antifreeze is based on all these colors. That's the antifreeze industry gaming the consumer slightly. The antifreeze used to be a universal product. Then they tried to make it make, model, year. Well, it's not.

We went to get FDA approved coloring, the same FDA approval that's used in the food we have for our coloring. There are some other ingredients. We just basically went to reduce the toxicity. We have a little more work to do, but our formulation we have right now is for a general purpose automotive diesel vehicle, ready to go, UTVs, motorcycles, that's what this product does. We will introduce in the summer a product that's for the class eight, the semi-truck over the road. This product is going to go approximately five years, 150,000 miles. The semi-truck over the road has to go a minimum of 600,000 miles to really be equal to an equivalent product. That is already developed. It's already finished. We just have to do some more testing on that.

There is a racing product. In asphalt racing, we can use no glycol, none, not propylene glycol, not ethylene glycol, because you can't get it off the racetrack. It's too slippery. We can clean oil, but we can't clean glycol.

We have a material called Safe Race Coolant, 100% water based. It has our non-toxic inhibitor, color. We are FIA compliant. That means for Formula 1, Moto GP, World Cup Rally, all of those series including IndyCar, we have to test with the manufacturers, Chevrolet, Honda, the different engine manufacturers. We're not testing with them yet. We're testing with a few in Formula 1. We're testing on the motorcycle, which is Moto GP, testing with most of them, I'll just say that, I won't say anything more than that. We're testing with a lot of the motorcycle manufacturers on the Supercross, Motocross arena. I used to own one of the Supercross teams for Factory Yamaha. That's a racing series I like, so I do a lot of testing in that.

Indy is where it's at. Indy 500, this is it. Mr. Hulman, he built the Mecca. This is Mecca to me, guys. This is May. The month of May only means one thing to me, it means the Speedway. We used to come here the last week of April and go home in June.

Obviously the format has changed through the years with the road race. To me it's still the same. It's still the month of May. It still means Indy. If he thinks he's living a lifelong dream, I've been doing it for 37 years. I wake up every day living out my dream.

Anyway, I'm glad to be a part of this racing team. David and I, we have some other interests. Sprint cars, we love dirt cars, asphalt, dirt. He likes to help young kids. I do, too. I like to help and support young drivers that aren't getting the opportunity. He sees the talent. We want to be supportive. It's pretty natural for us.

This is a commercial product that is available. We are doing our preproduction. We're using Kickstarter as our launching pad. Please go to the links that are provided. There was a video. It's on our website, SAFEAntifreeze.com. All of the social media SAFEAntifreeze. Whether you're on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, it's all the same. We're saying the same message.

We're not trying to give the industry a hard time. I'm not trying to pick anything. I'm saying, Guys, it's time. The other guys make safer products, but they're not really promoting it as much. We're only going to manufacture non-toxic. We're never, ever, ever going to manufacture anything with ethylene glycol. I want to make that statement extremely clear. There's no point in it.

The reason the food industry uses it and has used it for decades is because it's in your cosmetics, shampoo, deodorant. It's in every product you consume if you read the labels. They've been doping mice since the late '60s, and they're not dying. So they call it generally recognized as safe. If you see GRAS, that means generally recognized as safe. That's an FDA term. I don't want to get into all of that.

Thank you very much for having me.

THE MODERATOR: Glad you're here.

Before I open it up for questions. James, if you want to talk about your first couple days on track, how are things going?

JAMES DAVISON: Yeah, we had a challenging first day on Tuesday, which isn't uncommon for the one-off Indy entries, especially when you don't do the test. Everyone's building chemistry that day. You've always got some gremlins to sort out with radios, a few components on the car that aren't working the way they should.

Yeah, we did the refresher, then only 30 laps on Tuesday. Yeah, we were definitely not so competitive.

Really couldn't pass any cars or anything. The weather looked good, here it is again today.

Yesterday we had a fantastic day. Yeah, we were very racy, passed a lot of good cars. Not certainly at the Scott Dixon level, but we had an encouraging day. I think it's clear that we don't have one of the fastest cars, but we had a very good car in race trim.

We're going to find out later today when the whole field starts trimming some downforce out where we stand on outright car speed, which is obviously very important because it's well and good having a good racecar, but you have to earn your spot into the race this year. I'm fully aware that we could potentially be fighting to get in, as there's going to be probably six to ten guys fighting to get in.

It's certainly the most competitive year that I've seen. To think that I did a 226 yesterday, I was 25th on the speed charts, I mean, I haven't seen that. I remember coming here four years ago in the 19 Dale Coyne car, missed Monday and Tuesday practice, jumped in on the Wednesday, I was P4. It's just so much tighter this year. It's impressive.

Certainly it's been good to see the improvements in the aero kit. There's a lot of passing going on. Still it's tough to pass when you're back in the train and you have three plus cars in front of you. It gets tough.

There's been some positive improvements. Yeah, we just got to continue the momentum today. Yeah, I'm really enjoying it. Just got to keep it on the black stuff and out of the wall. It can get away from you so quickly around here. Those guys yesterday didn't know they were in trouble until they were backwards at 220 miles an hour.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.

Q. Mr. Bradley, is it also possible to buy your product in Europe, especially in Germany?
BRADLEY MILLER: Yes. The way we're doing the manufacturer and the distribution is also very unconventional to the auto industry. Let me explain.

I am a small company. My expertise is not filling and packing bottles of material. What I did is it sought out the world's leader in chemistry packaging filling. The reason I did is I wanted to find the most ethical, the most responsible company in the world that has a global footprint that can take my formulation. I basically use their bottles, then we use manufacturer our label to the right company, to the right specifications, EU, then the language. I found it.

I have a company that does the packaging. The company is named (indiscernible). They're a Canadian company, headquartered in Montreal. They have a global footprint. In Europe, they have Belgium, and we also have Russia, and we have China to manufacture the product, which are their facilities. So I have the same QA, the same QC, quality assurance, quality control. We're not dealing with different packing companies on different continents.

Here in North America I have seven locations above us in Canada that are capable. We'll be using one of them that's in Edmonton where we'll do the filling. Australia we have two locations. We have one in South Africa, one in Morocco and one in Brazil.

The key is also we didn't want to move our product in a container across an ocean because it adds manufactured costs. In the traditional automotive industry, with all the chemicals, there's multiple warehouse distributors. So the warehouse distributors all get a fairly large percentage of your profit.

I'm using Amazon. We are manufacturing the product, setting it in our public warehouse next door to Amazon, then we're shipping it directly to the customer. We're taking all that profit and spend it on advertising and to make people more aware of safety. If I have to do it on IndyCars to be aware of safety, I'll do it. However we have to do it, we're going to promote safety. We have to advertise.

It's difficult because the attention span of the average person right now is 17 seconds because of the phone that you're holding in your hand. We have to use social media, all of these means necessary. We need to advertise the product and we need the profit to do that.

But I still want to make it also affordable for the customer, so I'm eliminated a lot of the middle guy, and you can get it directly from us, shipped directly from Amazon. We'll have the Amazon store open on June 1st. It will have the product.

I don't want to use the word 'control' but I can make sure it's always the right price, that it's not marked up or something that's not acceptable. Anyway, that's a little different. But that wouldn't have been available 10 years ago because those distribution channels didn't exist.

So the European market, absolutely. Whichever one we see the demand for. If Australia is the demand first, we'll put it in there. If Europe, we'll be ready to go. I can have the formulation and have it in bottles in less than four days in any of those countries. All I have to do is really get the translations of our labels. That takes us the longest, artwork and translations into languages. But mechanically it's really a pretty easy process to put it into bottles.

Right now the company that I'm partnered with is bottling 495,000 gallons per day. That's 390,000 bottles per day. That's about 135 gallons per minute,

24/7, all the time. We're a customer in that. They are the most environmentally responsible company. I spent a lot of time traveling to visit different plants. They're the ones that they do not let anything pass out of that building that's not perfect. There's no VOCs coming out of it. They're very, very clean. They've been in business for 61 years, but they've been a really ethical company. We're very excited to have them onboard.

They're not a financial partner. They're just a business partner to help me with the bottling. So we actually injection mold, make the bottle at the beginning of the process. We start with plastic pellets. We injection mold the bottle. It enters into the line. It gets its label put on, filled, put in the box, then it's shrink wrapped on a pallet and picked up. It's a very fast motion.

Our first production run will be just under 10,000 gallons. In your mind, that's like two semi-trucks full. Our goal is to try to presell to get the awareness out, then we'll be manufacturing the 1st of June.

Q. You mentioned Formula 1. There is a market outside of America. Do you have also cooperation with road car manufacturers outside of America?
BRADLEY MILLER: We have a commercial interest. It takes us time to test with all the manufacturers. You have Volkswagen group, BMW, any of the European cars. They take quite a long time. I have other products I've introduced to them. They take a long time by the time they start the testing phase to get it to the production phase, absolutely.

This product is made for OE fill. But we're manufacturing it for you to pick up for your passenger car, your truck, UTV, motorcycle, Jeep, anything.

Q. How long does it take for you time-wise to develop this product?
BRADLEY MILLER: The formulation, the development of the product, just under four years.

Q. That's short.
BRADLEY MILLER: Well, what I said is a lot of the, the basic of the product already existed. Again, our product, the parts that we've added to it, are small. All the basic products have been there for decades, as far as making a safer product for OE.

The other chemical companies, they're the ones that have the production, but they haven't went that direction. I just went that direction fully.

Q. You said you're based in Phoenix, Arizona. Do you have a development facility, laboratory?
BRADLEY MILLER: I have more of a mechanical facility. I do metallurgy. On the chemistry side of it... I deal with the metallurgy. I told you about titanium. I'm one of the world's authorities on titanium. I was one of the people that worked on the strongest, lightest titanium.

A lot of the other companies look at it from a chemistry standpoint. It's really the same, but I'm looking at it from the brass, the copper, aluminum. What do we have to do to work with each material?

Lead is a big problem. When you have commercial over-the-road trucks, they have different metals in them than the production car. We have to deal with a totally different set of materials. Lead is a big problem still in large commercial trucks because they'll leach. You will actually leach the lead out into that. A passenger car, you don't have the lead. You're dealing with a lot of plastics.

There was one manufacturer that had a major recall on antifreeze. It was because of plastics. It was because of gaskets and things that weren't compatible. I don't even know all the details on that, I don't really care. That was their issue, not mine.

THE MODERATOR: David, one final question. We'd be remiss, the Byrd family legacy at this racetrack, you've been able to carry it on, I know you're very proud to be back here once again.

DAVID BYRD: Absolutely. When we qualify, I'll say 'when', it will be our 21st qualified entry here at the Speedway, our 34th anniversary of our first run here. Obviously the two big things we've done is set the track record back in '96 with Arie Luyendyk. Who knew that would stand for 23 years. Hopefully stands for a long time. Something to hang your hat on. There's a new winner every year, but there's not a new track record every year. Then the first double back in '94. My dad put that together.

Follow that legacy, do interesting things in motorsports, eventually be able to kiss the bricks, drink the milk, take a picture with the Borg-Warner and life would be complete.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you very much.