

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Wednesday January 22, 2020

**Media Conference Call with AJ Foyt Racing**

**Charlie Kimball**

**Larry Foyt**



MODERATOR: Welcome, everyone, to today's INDYCAR media conference call. Earlier today, AJ Foyt Racing announced that Charlie Kimball will race for the team in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES in 2020 with sponsorship from Kimball's longtime partner in Novo Nordisk for six races.

We're happy to be joined by Charlie Kimball and AJ Foyt Racing president Larry Foyt. Welcome to the call and congratulations on today's announcement.

Larry, today's news shows that AJ Foyt Racing has kind of hit the reset button for the team for 2020. What makes Charlie Kimball one of the key pieces you want to build the team around for this year?

LARRY FOYT: I think a lot of things really. Number one, obviously, like you said, we are in a bit of a reset coming off a tough year. So I really like the fact, when we started talking to Charlie and he was available, here's a guy with a lot of experience. I think Charlie's a technical driver. He showed he can win. He showed he can finish in the top ten in the championship. And those are just all the things that we want to build on.

So that's just a really good fit for us because we have some new engineers on board. So I think a guy coming in with Charlie's mindset and with what Charlie can do behind the wheel is exactly what we needed.

**Q. Charlie, last year you ran just seven races with Carlin, but you had some success in those few races that you did compete. Now you're back in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES full-time. How hungry did last year make you to come out this year and have some success?**

CHARLIE KIMBALL: I think that myself, I would not have survived -- and I'm not sure my marriage would have survived -- another year on a partial schedule because it was really tough on me last year watching in races when I wasn't in the car.

I think the consistency of being in the car every weekend allows me to stay in the rhythm. I noticed last year, when I was out of the car for a couple of races and I got back in, it took a moment or two to knock some of that rust off. My competitors, the other drivers in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES, weekend in, weekend

out, are in the car, and they're in that rhythm and that mode. The level of competition in INDYCAR is so high that any drawback, any moment it takes to get back up to speed puts you a long ways behind.

So I come into this year really excited, really appreciative of the opportunity to work with the Foyt name. A.J. Foyt is a racer at heart, and I see that culture that A.J. and Larry have built all the way through the team, and I think together we're going to work really hard to get back to where they as a team want to be and me as a driver want to be at every race.

**Q. And how special is it for you, Charlie, to do this with a company like Novo Nordisk, who have not only been your longtime backer -- I think this will be the 12th year they've been on your race cars -- but they also make the medicines you use to treat your diabetes?**

CHARLIE KIMBALL: It's incredible. The Race With Insulin program has allowed us to touch tens of thousands of people with diabetes and empower people to chase their dream, encourage people to get tested for prediabetes and understand what it means for them as people, and being an ambassador for the diabetes community at the racetrack is really fulfilling for me as a person and as a driver.

I can't thank Novo Nordisk enough for, as you said, their 12 years of support with me, starting all the way back in Indy Lights, and now they've been with me not only on my fire suit and helmet and race car at every race since, but every day since, every opportunity when I'm managing my blood glucose and taking my insulin, they are right there with me.

MODERATOR: Finally, for either you or Larry, what are the expectations for the No. 4 car this year? Obviously, competing and running up front has to be one of the keys for the team.

LARRY FOYT: I want to hear that from the driver. I'm going to let him go first.

CHARLIE KIMBALL: Appreciate that, Larry. My goal is to do everything I can, work with the team, and take A.J. Foyt Racing back to victory lane. It's been since 2013 when Takuma Sato won at Long Beach, I believe, was one of the last INDYCAR victories for A.J. Foyt Racing. My last INDYCAR victory was Mid-Ohio in 2013, and our goal is to get back running up front weekend in, weekend out, and figure out how we get

more consistent with being up front.

I think it's nice to have flash results and one good result here and there, but it's even more important that you run consistently in the top ten. So then you're running consistently in the top five. Once you're consistently in the top five, you're on the podium and fighting for race wins. And in my case, that's my goal. We're not there to finish second. I'm not there to finish second at any weekend, at any session, any lap.

LARRY FOYT: Yeah, I'll second that. I like exactly what he's saying. I think Charlie has come in and seen that the team -- for me, I just want -- I want all the effort we're putting in to start showing some results. Last year was such a tough year for us because the effort just wasn't equaling anything on the track that we were putting in, and that was very frustrating for everybody.

So this is just a great opportunity to say, hey, let's kind of hit the reset button. With Charlie coming in -- and like I said, I think he's going to do great stuff for our setups and be able to give great feedback, from everything I've heard of speaking with people who have worked with him in the past. I think that's going to be big for us to quickly just try to find those few tenths that we were missing last year. I think that's going to pay a lot of dividends for the team.

**Q. One for Charlie, one for Larry. Charlie, can you just talk a little bit about when you first brought Novo into racing, everybody wrote a story in every paper, everywhere we went, it was such a good story. You win a race, and you can talk about it. But how do you keep this program going, I guess is my question. To keep somebody for 12 years in any sport is pretty amazing, but is there -- what's the one hook, you think, that keeps them interested in this whole thing with you?**

CHARLIE KIMBALL: I think -- thanks for the question, Robin. It's great to hear from you and great to hear your voice sounding strong. I hope your health is doing great because we need you telling all the stories, and frankly telling all the stories of A.J. in the past so I know what to talk about with him when I'm talking with him at the racetrack.

But from my side, the relationship with Novo Nordisk, you talk about there being one hook, and I think the fact that this -- our relationship and partnership is so organic. It's a relationship that I see, I use every day, and telling that story to different audiences in different ways on different programming is really what has kept the partnership fresh. I think in all sports marketing properties, those relationships mature, and to be able to try and keep that relationship young, so to speak, is really valuable.

My diabetes management has evolved since I was diagnosed in 2007, and so telling that story has evolved as well, and we've been able to tell it in

different ways to different people to keep it fresh. You know, if I was talking to a young driver about building a long-term relationship with a partner in motorsports, I think that would be one of the keys is finding something that's organic and also something that continues to grow and evolve.

**Q. Just as a follow-up, you have all these changes in big corporations every year. Somebody comes in and says, why are we in race cars? Have you, in this 12-year period, has it been new people that you've had to talk to every year and say, hey, this is what we're doing. Let's keep this going. And have they seen the benefits of it?**

CHARLIE KIMBALL: I've been very fortunate through some corporate changes. I have some great relationships within the company, people that have been there since the first meeting I ever had with them that have moved into different roles within the company, even gone and spent time in Denmark at global headquarters. So there's an awareness of the program around the world really, and having those internal champions helps, but also I think the program itself tells its own story.

With empowering that diabetes community, Novo Nordisk is really a global health care company. They've launched a couple of initiatives, even at the beginning of 2020, that are designed to help patients, and telling my story really fits into their triple bottom line of empowering and taking care of the diabetes community and their patients within all their disease states.

**Q. Larry, one question for you. We talked a bunch this winter about who you're going to get to be engineers. You said something in your opening statement that's interesting -- a couple of tenths that you were missing last year. It's not like you're missing two or three seconds, it's just a few tenths. I think that kind of gets lost sometimes in that, when you're not being as competitive as you want to be, people write you off. But this series, like Charlie said, as competitive as it's become, and you've got everybody separated by two or three-tenths in 20 cars, can you talk about your engineering staff and who you've got and who's maybe lined up and what the plan is.**

LARRY FOYT: Sure. Thanks, Robin. Like you said, INDYCAR is so close. So even when you feel like you're on your back foot and you're really struggling, as we were in many places last year, sometimes you're not that far away. We definitely took some directions.

What's so tough about the INDYCAR SERIES is, once you get into the season, it's very tough to dig yourself out of a hole. It's not saying it can't be done. But you know the summer stretch that we have after Indianapolis and we're going back-to-back races, and it's hard to -- there's not a lot of testing at that time, and it's just very hard to dig yourself if you've gone down a wrong path.

We definitely feel like we headed down a wrong path last year, and the good thing is we've got guys coming in we've worked with before. Mike Colliver is going to be one of our engineers this year. Mike Pawlowski will be as well. Both guys that are coming from places that they've seen a lot, they know a lot. So I think we're going to be able to just kind of reset back to where we feel like is a good spot to then begin our development again.

So I don't think we're going to come out and set the world on fire. That's not what we're -- that would be great. We have a strategic plan of getting back to point zero and let's start building again from there. So that's the plan, and it's not that we think we're going to struggle like we did last year for sure. I'd be very disappointed if that's the case. I think the engineers are very reasonable guys that have a good plan, and we're going to go forward.

**Q. Larry, who will Charlie's engineer be for his NTT races?**

LARRY FOYT: That will be Mike Pawlowski.

**Q. Final question. When you think about how competitive you were just two years ago at Indy and how that just kind of -- it's not like -- you get the feeling sometimes it's so frustrating because you know just two years ago, it was Will Power, Ed Carpenter and Tony Kanaan were the three fastest guys by far at Indy, and Charlie has always run good at Indy, and I know that's the one race that A.J. really cares about. It just seems like there's a baseline there if you could just get back to it.**

LARRY FOYT: Sure. And I know a lot of you will say Indy is the only race that A.J. cares about. Yes and no. The Indy 500 for all of us, for every team, is the biggest race we go to, but he also does care about the other races. It's not just about the Indy 500 for us, but it is certainly very important, and I feel great about having Charlie. We know he gets around the speedway well, and that should be a really good chance for us to strengthen our team at the 500.

Yeah, like you said, just it doesn't take much in INDYCAR. We were very confident going back into the Speedway this year that we'd be strong, and we just weren't. Where other teams had gained a little bit, we hadn't gained as much. That's how tough INDYCAR is. Everybody is constantly gaining, and if you don't, you're going to fall behind very quickly.

**Q. Larry, and then we'll let Charlie tackle this, but we keep talking about goals. Can you pinpoint some concrete ones, number of top tens you're looking for, making second round qualifying. What does that look like on paper?**

LARRY FOYT: I think on the road course, second round qualifying is always a good goal to shoot for for a team in our situation, maybe a bit of a smaller team

that is working their way back up. I think definitely, if you can make that transfer, that's a good goal to have, and you always want to finish well. I'd love to see Charlie fighting for a top ten in the championship, which is tough because, if you look at the field of INDYCAR, you've got to beat some very good cars to get to that top ten point.

For me, that's a goal. I don't think it's unreasonable. I think it's a good challenge. That's what I'd like to see us shoot for.

**Q. Charlie, I know you want to lead every lap of every session, you said that earlier, but what's your realistic goal for the 2020 season?**

CHARLIE KIMBALL: I think I'm very much aligned with Larry, and I think that's part of the reason why the conversation this winter led us to this point was because A.J. Foyt Racing is looking to rebound a little bit and get back to some prior successes. From my side, the road and street circuit, if you qualify inside the top 12, making that second round of qualifying, and can race inside the top ten, it puts you in a position to finish with top five.

And I think on the ovals, coming into the month of May, ideally with opportunities that have been given over the last few years with the Bowtie on the engine cover and the work with technical partners, I think there's no reason we can't be talking about qualifying in the top 12, ideally the Fast Nine Shootout. Being a part of that hunt for pole on Sunday is definitely on my radar.

Then in 500 miles, everything's to play for, and I think that carries through. I'm looking forward to learning from A.J. about getting some stuff done around short ovals. I've never seen Richmond, so that's something very new for me, and I think it will be a great opportunity to work towards this year. But I think Larry and I have been aligned from our first conversation about the methodical approach it takes to create lasting progress.

**Q. Charlie, let me ask you this. Expectations are going to be, frankly -- not to be dismissive, but they're going to be fairly low for this season. People aren't going to expect you to be in the top six. Is that in any way freeing for you, and does it let you try some different things that you might not normally have wanted to do?**

CHARLIE KIMBALL: Well, I've long said that any expectation or pressure that I feel is greater internally than anything that exists externally. I really feel like I put a lot of pressure on myself to be successful, and if the expectation is there externally or not, it's irrelevant because that's secondary to the drive that I have and making sure that I take care of, firstly, A.J. Foyt Racing, secondly, my partners in Novo Nordisk.

**Q. Let me follow up. With this big reset going, do you feel like it's a time to go outside of the box, or**

**do you need to try to get back down to the very basics and just try to get those honed in?**

LARRY FOYT: I think everything starts with the basics. I think we went outside the box last year a little bit, and that's probably why we were in the situation we're in.

But I agree with you. I think the expectation isn't really high, and that's okay. I think that's a fine place for us to be in because it would be good to go out and surprise some people. If we can consistently show some speed and show we're headed in the right direction, I think it would be great for all of us and a great story. So I think that's a good situation for us to be in.

No, I think the basics are the most important to get down, especially when everything is so close and you have to make this car -- it's a lot harder to drive than it used to be with this different level of downforce. So I think letting the driver get the most out of his ability out of the car comes first. So I think if we can make good driving cars, then Charlie can do the job.

**Q. Question for Larry. Just wondering now, given the recent news that Fernando Alonso is now pretty much free to go wherever he chooses, I'm wondering, if at all, that factors into your plans for 2020? Whether he's being considered or if there's desire to bring him on board as well.**

LARRY FOYT: I've never met Fernando. Would love to meet him, but, no, I don't think so. I think we've got our own plans moving forward, so probably does not include Fernando.

**Q. It was mentioned, Charlie and Larry, that you guys were going to be running six races together. I assume the Indy 500 is going to be one of them. Are the other five mapped out, or will that be determined through the season?**

CHARLIE KIMBALL: It's actually -- the plan is for me -- well, at least I think the plan is, if I can read right, for me to be in the 4 car all season, and then there will be six races with primary colors, four Novo Nordisk. So I will be in the 4 car all year long. Right, Larry?

LARRY FOYT: That's the plan.

CHARLIE KIMBALL: That was my plan, so I wanted to make sure it's still Larry's plan.

**Q. That was probably my misunderstanding on that one. Has there been any work on settling down the 14 car?**

LARRY FOYT: Yes, that's a work in progress, and hopefully have some news coming out in the next few weeks on that.

**Q. Since this is a reset, Larry, having Charlie started with Ganassi (inaudible). Is that attractive to somebody that's sort of been through a rebuild or a new program before? Is that something kind of fun for you or attractive for you?**

LARRY FOYT: Steve, you're breaking up just a little bit. I think I got all of that. It's great having Scott Harner as part of our leadership with this team. He obviously has a lot of experience with Charlie and just has a ton of good things to say. I've met Charlie around the track, obviously raced against him. I know how hard he is wheel to wheel, and I've seen him with our cars. He's one of those guys that really is just a fighter out there on the racetrack.

It was great to have what you think seconded by someone who's actually worked with him. So when I obviously asked Scott about him, Scott had a lot of great things to say about Charlie. So that was something that definitely was exciting for me to hear for sure.

CHARLIE KIMBALL: From my side, I think, I enjoyed the challenge working and applying my experience from an operation that's been around for a lot of years in Chip Ganassi Racing, to someone like Carlin, who has a lot of racing experience but was new to INDYCAR, and be able to bring some of that INDYCAR experience to bear. I appreciated that challenge and being able to make an impact and see that impact, see that effort turn into results on the racetrack.

I mean, Larry talked earlier about finding a way for the effort we put in as a team to show dividends or bring dividends on the racetrack, and I think that was something that I enjoyed over the last year and a half, two years, and I'm excited to work with a team that I've seen and competed against for years now. It's nice to be on the other side of that fence in the paddock and be aligned with Larry and A.J.

**Q. You talked a little bit a couple minutes ago about how you felt like last year the team maybe got a little bit away in thinking outside the box too much and you wanted to get back to square one. Is there any reason, in reflecting how things went last year, you felt like things went that way? From a big team perspective, what will be your biggest focus in trying to achieve those goals you've set for 2020?**

LARRY FOYT: I think, obviously, a lot of people talk a lot about shock absorbers right now in INDYCAR. That's somewhere we did pretty extensive testing in that area last year, and thinking it was the right direction, but then as you look at it, maybe it's not. I read an article about maybe there were numbers wrong or something, speaking with our engineering group and all that. It wasn't really that.

It was just stuff that a lot of times we felt showed well in our off-track testing, and when we got to the track, it seemed like, when we tried it, that was the right way to go still. But then as the track rubbered up and things like that started to happen, all of a sudden, you're not where you need to be. And understanding the way that happens for race weekend is one of the really difficult parts of INDYCAR. I'm sure Charlie can talk to that.

The tracks change from session to session, and all of a sudden, you thought you were in a good place, and now you're behind a little bit.

So it's just all of that stuff together. We've been doing this a long time, so as your setups evolve, we don't feel like we're in a terrible place there, but we felt like maybe the way our setups were working with our dampers, that wasn't the right way, and I think that's an area where we try to get to a place where we feel like we know better and start working from there.

**Q. You talked a little bit about it already, but maybe a little bit more in-depth, with all the turnover that this off-season has seen with INDYCAR this year, what made you guys feel like Charlie was the perfect guy to add him to your team and kind of try to use him to, I guess, for both of you guys, this partnership helps you both to get back to where you guys want to be after a tough couple years?**

LARRY FOYT: I think the win-win was when we first spoke and he just really wanted to get back full-time. I think he's a guy who deserves to be full-time in the series and should be. I really felt like his drive matched with his experience was something that would really help the 4 car program right now. That's it. I think he being a technical driver, obviously comes from a great engineering family, that's going to help us develop our setups quickly to kind of get back to where we wanted to be, and that was exciting for me.

I just think talking to him and his mindset and knowing how driven he was to get back full-time and be competitive, I felt like it was going to be a win-win for us.

**Q. I just wanted to ask one more question. You said that you guys hope to have news on the 14 car in a couple weeks. Tony said, I think about a month ago, that you guys were really close to having him in some way in that 14 car in 2020. Are you certain that he will be part of the team this year, even if the number of races has not been decided yet?**

LARRY FOYT: Oh, I'm sure he will. We've been working together. I think we're getting everything buttoned up. Like I said, a couple weeks, I think that news will be ready to be coming out.

**Q. Good morning. My question is for Charlie Kimball. New team and also a new car. How do you test the new Aeroscreen car and everything? If you have, what's your impression of the new car?**

CHARLIE KIMBALL: Thanks for the question. I haven't had the opportunity to do an INDYCAR test with the Aeroscreen yet. Just being around the gym and talking to some of the guys who have been in the cockpit with it, I've heard really good things. I think my scheduled opportunity for me to get in the car with the Aeroscreen will be at the INDYCAR open test at Spring Training down at Circuit of the Americas in Austin in early February. So I'm looking forward to that.

From everything I've heard, it's something that takes maybe an insulation lap or two to get comfortable with, and after that, it's just back to work in an INDYCAR.

**Q. Charlie, congrats on the announcement today. I was just curious, in 2011 when you started with Ganassi, that was the first year they expanded from two to four cars, and then a couple years ago you got in, I think it was 18, with Carlin when they started. Now you've got to talk about a possible reset, rebuild with Foyt and moving up now. Can you rely on any of your past experiences from those first years with those teams as they were expanding going into this season?**

CHARLIE KIMBALL: I think so. I think all of my experience, if it's the first year as part of an extension at Chip Ganassi Racing or as an INDYCAR entrance with Carlin Racing, being able to rely on that experience is helpful for sure. But at the same time, A.J. Foyt Racing, one of the reasons I wanted to be a part of their program this year is they know what they're doing. They're winners. They're 500 winners. The team is founded and owned and started by the first four-time winner of the Indianapolis 500. That history just doesn't go away in a couple of less than ideal seasons.

So being able to work with their history and their abilities and hopefully bring some of my experience to bear as we work towards getting back to the results we want as a team is very important and something I'm really looking forward to.

**Q. And my follow-up question, I apologize to you guys that I already said this. Is there a brand for your sponsor for the six races? I know you've had like Fiasp a couple years ago and the FlexPen. Is there a certain brand they're going to want to promote for this season?**

LARRY FOYT: I think the branding is still working its way through some regulatory and compliance stuff. You can imagine with a regulated industry like pharmaceuticals, it takes a little bit of extra time. But having the support from Novo Nordisk and figuring out which brand makes sense -- as you've said, I've been fortunate enough to support all of the insulins I've used since we started our program in 2011 on my fire suits and race cars. So it's just a question of what makes the most sense for them.

MODERATOR: Seeing as we have no more questions for our guests, we will wrap up today's INDYCAR media conference call.