

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Press Conference

Jack Harvey

Meyer Shank Racing



Jack Harvey.

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the latest in a series of video news conferences with drivers from the NTT INDYCAR SERIES. We're pleased to be joined by Meyer Shank Racing's Jack Harvey.

Jack, you've never raced at Texas. How do you approach this weekend's race?

JACK HARVEY: Honestly, I guess no different than how we would try and do it whether we were in the situation or whether we weren't. We're trying to get to the sim. Obviously we now have, most of us, iRacing set up at home. I was able to do a little bit of work on that.

But honestly a lot of it's just been working with my engineer, my team remotely which has been interesting, weird, a bit unique. Still trying to carry on our preparation the best we can to have as good a weekend as possible in Texas.

THE MODERATOR: We were supposed to get started in March. It's June already now. With the extra time that you've had to think about things and prepare for the season, how anxious are you to get in the car and get started Saturday?

JACK HARVEY: Not anxious, just excited, mate, really. Me and Michael (Shank, team co-owner) were trying to find some of the positives throughout all this situation. One thing that Meyer Shank Racing team and myself have been used to the last few years is missing races and having gaps in the schedule. For us in a lot of ways, I'm not going to say it's normal, but the thing that was going to be new to us this year was doing every race on the schedule, which we are going to do. We're definitely used to having the gaps, last two years being only part-time, but now obviously that's changed.

I think the mentality of it, like I said to the guys as well, we really should be able to use this as a positive. Ultimately I think, not just for me, but for everybody on the team, everyone is excited to try to turn the page and get back to the racetrack. At the end of the day we're here to race. We want to do the best we can.

Excited, probably more excited now than how we felt in St. Pete in a lot of ways.

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

Q. It's real admirable how Michael Shank has been able to deal with this. This was going to be a season where there was a lot of personal investment to go full season. When you look back and see the support he's done for the employees and yourself, how do you describe all that?

JACK HARVEY: It's quite easy: it's just a reflection on Michael as an individual. Also his wife, MB, how they are as people, the morals that they try and live by are very simple but so rare and unique. Just how he is at the track is how he is away from the track.

You can tell that his team, or their team, as a couple, mean the world to them. They always treat everybody very fairly, with a lot of respect. As soon as all this came about, we never shy away from difficult conversations, but I'm just proud to be associated with Michael really. He's such a great guy. MB is such a lovely lady, too.

It's no surprise, mate, to see him behave this way, see them behave this way. It's just who they are. I think we actually should be extremely proud to be a part of that race team.

Q. You're a grad of the Indy Lights. That series will be taking a pause this year. When you heard that, what was your reaction? How devastating is that for anybody trying to climb the ladder, drive in INDYCAR?

JACK HARVEY: I was sad. I know everything that's going on is bigger than just motorsport and stuff like that, but it doesn't take away anything. You hear the news, you think, That just sucks for so many people. I got a lot of friends who are involved in Indy Lights, whether it's drivers, mechanics, team owners, team managers, whatever.

The thing is, people have to remember, this just doesn't affect drivers, it affects everybody on a race team. It absolutely sucks. It sucks for the guys that have worked so hard for so many years to be that close to INDYCAR, just keep progressing up the motorsport ladders. To finally feel like you're there, or at least all the off-season work, you're there ready for the season to start, suddenly that's taken away, it's a feeling that is so hard to describe.

You just feel for everybody who is involved. You know that everybody will have done their best to try and

prevent this from happening. The last thing anyone would want to do right now is see the series take a sabbatical for a year.

The first news, as soon as I saw it, I thought this absolutely sucks for everybody. One of the first things I thought about after that was they must have tried everything because nobody wanted to see that.

Q. How will you balance going into this race with as much as anyone unfamiliarity with this track while wanting to get off to a great start amongst a field of drivers that are getting back into the car for the first time and also are in their first race of the season?

JACK HARVEY: Yeah, I think there's so many unknowns really moving into Texas, which of course we wouldn't have chosen it to be this way, but still grateful we have the opportunity to go and try to figure it out.

It's the first time I'll have been there. It's the first time the team will have been there. It's going to be the first time that Andretti Autosport have been there with the canopy and the halo. I mean, you look at it that way, there's certainly a lot of unknowns, a lot of new things.

My personal approach is just to try and be a sponge in so many ways. I just want to try to absorb as much information and knowledge as I can quickly to leave the weekend and feel we've had a good weekend.

I don't know what that looks like in terms of a result yet. Me and Michael haven't gotten too heavily into that. It would be great to finish in these sets of positions. Yeah, I think we're all excited to get going.

Trying to balance being realistic with that hunger and that desire just to get the season off to a great start, naturally, like everybody, we want to get to the season and want to try to win, especially since it's been so long. We're all excited about it, all thinking about Texas.

I think there's going to have to be a moment where we all restrain ourselves and marry sensibility with risk. I'm not even sure if that's a word, I think I might have just made one (smiling).

Q. When you haven't been in the car very much at all since February, how much can you learn realistically from a testing session, just open practice run, 80 minutes? You get an extra 30 minutes not having run at Texas before. How much can you truly gain and learn out of that? How much of it is making sure what you have already put together is working properly?

JACK HARVEY: I think these are the moments where we are extremely grateful to have a great technical partnership with Andretti Technologies. They've been based at Texas for quite a few years now. Naturally we're hoping they go with a good baseline car because we'll be a recipient of that good baseline car.

I think that kind of answers that part of the question. I think it makes us grateful for the people we have around us and the partnerships we have in place.

In terms of how much we can take from a session like that, I mean, we're going to have to take a lot out of it. I think that's the mentality. On a normal weekend it could be difficult to really get through as much as you want to. It's the only track time we're going to have. Is it an hour, 80 minutes, whatever it is, of open practice, plus extra 30 minutes for the rookies. It's going to be everything we can get. We'll do our single-lap qualifying sessions then straight into the race.

It's not going to be a case of we want to get a lot out of it. We're going to have to go and get as much out of it as possible. At the end of the day we can find out how much we exactly took out of it.

The mentality of going there is to maximize as much as we can, be as realistic as we can, but also it's the same for everyone, so we really just have to go and do the best we can do.

Q. What about your personal safety? What precautions are being taken to prevent picking up this virus? Do you have to distance from your crew, that kind of thing?

JACK HARVEY: Yeah, mate, I mean, INDYCAR sent out some bullet points to follow by. Actually it's extensive. It's pretty intense. I think everybody is going to be screened. I think we're all wearing masks. We're all trying to socially distance the best we can.

In the midst of everyone being so excited to get back racing, personal safety and safety of individuals has been at the forefront I think of every decision. It's still at the forefront of every decision.

I'm confident with the guidelines that INDYCAR have put in place, the guidelines that both Meyer Shank Racing and Andretti Technologies have put in place, that we can still go and do everything we need to and be as safe as possible.

It's going to look a lot different than any other weekend we've done before. Probably be the most - not sure the word I'm looking for - cautious perhaps of all the year might be at Texas.

I think my own safety, I'm confident in the people around me, that they've put the best guidelines in place we could have right now.

Q. How much of this is a mental game? You have no time to prepare really. 24 minutes scrubbing tires. How hard is it going to be to put all that behind you and concentrate on the racecar?

JACK HARVEY: Yeah, it's going to be a lot, mate. Well, to me the mental side of it, there's no part of the safety

I'm really worried about in terms of social distancing and stuff like that. I get on extremely well with all the guys on the team, my engineers and mechanics, everybody. I know that we can liaise as normal as possible.

In terms of the mental approach, the on track that the focus has been on. There's just so much to learn in such a short time, and we haven't been in the car. There's just a lot of firsts. If we could have designed it this way, we probably wouldn't have designed this scenario. This probably would have been the last scenario we could have created.

However the overwhelming feeling still is we're grateful to be doing every race. If we weren't at Texas and everybody else was, we'd probably be sat in the corner sulking. So the positivity of it all is that we're just grateful to still be there having the headache of how we're going to approach this weekend, what does a good weekend look like.

It's going to be mentally draining, a super busy day for us, fly in Saturday morning, practice, qualify, race, fly out Saturday night. This is going to be one of those weekends when everything is said and done, in 15 or 20 years, we still all talk about how hard a day it was.

The overwhelming thing I have, I know I've repeated it already, it's going to be how grateful we were to get back to racing and being a part of the show.

Q. I spent quite a lot of time in the UK recently, lived in Sheffield. Being full-time in INDYCAR this year, are you excited to bring a new audience from within the UK to INDYCAR?

JACK HARVEY: That would be amazing. I think there's always been a good history of British drivers in motorsport in North America and in INDYCAR. If we were able to perhaps convert a few more fans from the UK to INDYCAR fans, I mean, I would love that.

I saw that my hometown is still under quite a bit of lockdown, but there's a few places that are looking at ways to have hosting parties, viewing parties, things like that. Definitely still feeling the support.

Hope it just continues to grow and grow and grow. I mean, that would just be the best-case scenario, mate. I think for me, for Max, having that pool of British people trying to watch the race would be amazing. Obviously more people hopefully that watch, the bigger it becomes and everything just kind of grows naturally with it.

I look to see an INDYCAR at the Goodwood Festival of Speed. I would put my name in that hat (laughter). I think that INDYCAR has such a fantastic product to try to sell to people, it's just trying to raise the awareness of it.

Hopefully with it obviously being on primetime in America, NBC, not too much else happening in Europe right now, hopefully people tune in to watch, they love it and keep watching throughout the rest of the season.

Q. With the announcement this morning with Indy Lights not running in 2020, it wasn't that long ago you were in Indy Lights, what do you make of the announcement? What is the impact on those drivers' growth this year?

JACK HARVEY: It's a big one. I mean, that's the cold reality of the situation. Both of my years in Indy Lights were very strategical, strategy orientated. We knew we wanted to win Indy Lights. We knew what the big picture was. The series was strong and stable at that time. Those two years are what allowed me to continue to progress.

Not having that is extremely tough because it's very late in the day. A lot of teams have already, when they do finally get racing, have drivers already sorted and sorted out. It's just one of those ones where there's so few opportunities to find out, what, the 1st of June, the first six months of the year have gone, first five months at least.

You're scrambling now, that's the reality, to try to salvage a season. In terms of development you have to either look at what's on Indy Lights level, take another year in Pro Mazda, do you look elsewhere, maybe some European racing at that same level.

It's tough. It's really tough. For example, you might have a sponsor who only wants you to race in North America, so going to Europe is out of the question. Might want to do Pro Mazda again.

Unusual year. I feel really sad and bad for the guys who have been working so hard coming into the Indy Lights year, either looking to progress their career, looking to try to win the championship to further their career. It's a really awful situation.

As I mentioned earlier, I have friends who are mechanics as well, engineers, team managers, team owners. That sting is felt by everybody. It's not just the drivers. At that point it's just the motorsport community, it's just hurting because of it.

Q. Is there anything that the teams could do to help out during the off period for Indy Lights, especially those who are really dependent on continuing on but without racing? Is there anything teams could do to help them?

JACK HARVEY: I mean, I guess it would depend on the team some. I think it's just such a difficult scenario. One that's obviously close to home would be Andretti Autosport, you'd like to see that they compete in so many categories across so many different types of motorsport that hopefully all of those people for a year could be redirected.

Yeah, it's the really sad truth of the situation we're in now, for drivers, for people frankly. Everybody spent their year working towards this goal. Whether it's from a career stance, financially, doesn't matter, everybody is in the same boat now. Everybody is scrambling. Everybody is going to be nervous.

It's a really, really difficult scenario for everybody to be in, no matter what your role on the team is. Of course you hope there's a way they can salvage something from the year. Yeah, not too familiar with those ins-and-outs of team hierarchy and structure and stuff like that.

My natural hope is obviously one of positivity as you never want to see anybody, whether it's driver, mechanic, anyone on the team, struggle or suffer in any way.

Q. Has the pandemic reenergized your hunger for the sport? Has the state of the world, the pandemic and protests, led you to believe we need racing and sports now than ever?

JACK HARVEY: Yeah, I think anything we can find to unite over, no matter what it is, is going to be something that pulls everybody together right now. I think it's something that we desperately need.

I think 2020 will go down as an odd year, sad year, hopefully one that the second half of the year maybe we'll salvage something out of it and we can look back at it and go, The bad at the start, good at the end. It will hopefully end up neutral because it's been such an unusual, bizarre, sad year for so many people in so many ways.

Not being able to go racing, to answer the first part of your question, never need to have that spark relit, but certainly kid in the candy shop kind of thing. I'm just excited to get back to the track, mate. I think people forget me and my girlfriend, we were in quarantine together and stuff like that. It's hard. I found it hard. It wasn't easy being stuck at home. It's not easy knowing other people are suffering. You're trying to keep all your stuff together. Ultimately there's so many emotions going on there, you know, I found it hard. I hated it. I wasn't good at it.

I did use the lockdown time to work on myself, not just staying fit, but mentally being in a good place. Perhaps some of the things that normally you don't get a chance to work on because you're so go, go, go. I actually got a chance to try to address and find good solutions for them.

Personally I feel extremely ready for the season to be starting. Physically I feel in better shape than what I was going to do in St. Pete. I think that's the truth. Mentally I feel 10 times better. Then if motorsport or sport is the thing that can help unite people, just to make current situations even 1% better, I would go to

Texas tomorrow. I would get on a flight now and I would go because it's just something that the world desperately needs, some unity right now.

Q. My question is, since you've never been to Texas, what do you do to prepare for a new racing at a different track?

JACK HARVEY: Yeah, did you watch any of the iRacing?

Q. Yes.

JACK HARVEY: Okay, so I've been on the iRacing again at Texas just trying to drive it, just trying to learn it. I rewatched last year's race again on TV, which was awesome by the way.

Honestly, to be honest with you, there's no big difference between that and a track you've been to because when we go to Indy road course, I'm going to do exactly the same thing: back on iRacing, relook at the race, data with the team. The preparation has just been kind of as normal. It's just going to be a big challenge because I've never been there before.

I'm up for the challenge.

THE MODERATOR: That is all the questions we have for you today, Jack. We appreciate you taking the time to talk to everybody. We wish you the best of luck Saturday at Texas.

JACK HARVEY: Excited to see the Premiership get started again so Liverpool can get that crown.