

IndyCar Media Days

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Sage Karam

Media Day Presser



THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Sage Karam. How great does it feel to be back in the IndyCar circuit?

SAGE KARAM: Yeah, no, it's cool. Obviously this year we got our Indy 500 deal done early. For me that was good to have a Christmas where you knew you were going to be driving something.

Obviously I'd like to be full-time. But it's difficult now to get all the funding together. Just taking it as we can day by day and hopefully I can get a couple more one-offs, unless something else opens up.

No, I'm really excited obviously to be a part of the biggest race in the world on May 29th. It's probably going to be the greatest day of our generation, anybody's generation really. Looking forward for that.

THE MODERATOR: Tell us about how the sponsorship that Dreyer & Reinbold and Gas Monkey came together.

SAGE KARAM: Gas Monkey Garage is based in Dallas, Texas. They have a show called 'FAST N' LOUD'. I was actually a fan of the show. I saw an episode about two weeks before I knew they were sponsoring a Pro Stock drag car. I'm thinking, Man, we have to get these guys in IndyCar Series, what are they doing wasting their money in drag racing?

Two weeks later I get a call from Dennis because we already had the deal done but he wouldn't tell me the sponsor until it was totally, totally done. He told me it was Gas Monkey Garage. I kind of like freaked out. Pretty cool sponsor. They build fast cars. I drive fast cars. Kind of One Love thing going on.

Went down there and visited them. They're cool guys. You're going to see them around probably the month of May. You can't miss them with their beards. You'll see Richard walking around with a beer in his hands. They're looking forward to this, I know that for sure.

They have an amazing fan outreach. I think it's going to be big for me, the team and IndyCar, as well.

THE MODERATOR: You tweeted something the other day, I think it says something that, I cannot wait to be an Indianapolis 500 champion. With the 100th running coming up this May, what would it mean to you to win

that?

SAGE KARAM: Yeah, so, growing up I've always kind of had two goals. It was to race the Indianapolis 500 my senior year of high school, and I did it, and it was to win the 100th Indianapolis 500. I believe I'm going to do it.

But, yeah, I got one last chance here to be the youngest winner in history. I look at it as third time's a charm. I'm looking forward to it.

To win it, I try to think about it every night, but I can't really think what it would be like after you win it because I really don't know how I'd handle it or anything. It would be one of those things that hits you. When it hits you, it's probably a pretty special, amazing thing.

It's just one of those things you think about every day, racing around here and winning. Until you do it, it just keeps you so hungry. That's why we respect this place so much, because of the history, the heritage, everything that we want from it, that it can give you in life if you succeed here.

THE MODERATOR: You referenced your age. Many of the younger drivers coming through here today, what does that mean to you to know you're one of the next generation of IndyCar Series drivers?

SAGE KARAM: I mean, it's good knowing that I'm one of the young up-and-comers because there's not a lot of us, only a handful of us that have gotten seat time. I just need some of the old guys to hang it up to give us more chances (laughter).

No, we're just playing the waiting game. That's it. I just remember coming to my first Indianapolis 500, it was in 2003, I believe. Seeing the cars was cool, hearing the cars was cool. When I saw them all come down the first time in rows of three, rolling through turn one, it was a pretty amazing thing.

I think that's what stuck the most with me, seeing them all on the first lap. That made such an impact on me. Now looking at it I'm one of those guys in one of those rows. There's a little kid in the bleachers that was five years old, six years old, whatever, he's getting

impacted the way I was, he wants to be racing me then. I'm out there racing guys that I used to watch on the couch with my dad, like Tony Kanaan, Scott Dixon. I had Dario help me out last year. He was one of my heroes.

It's a great thing when you race guys that you look up to. I hope one day these kids come up and I'm the old fart in the series and these kids are looking up to me.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Other than Indy, have you gotten any opportunities to race anything else this season?

SAGE KARAM: Yeah, I actually signed a factory Lexus deal to run in two-door. The car is not ready yet. We're making some modifications, going to get some testing done. We're hoping to be on the grid at Detroit or Laguna Seca. Should be running when it's done. Teammates with Scott Pruett. We had a relationship at Ganassi, ran the 24 hours, the eight hours at the Glen. We raced each other. Got second here actually. It's going to be fun.

I'm really looking forward to it. It's a factory deal. It's not something you come by but every now and then. It's going to be a learning experience for me and also just give me more laps, keep me sharp, learn how to develop a car better.

Q. If any opportunities come up to participate in an IndyCar race while you're racing the Lexus sports car, are you able to do that?

SAGE KARAM: The Lexus deal right now is my main priority. If there's any schedule conflicts, I'd go towards the Lexus. I think there's three races, so I can rule out I won't be at Pocono, Iowa or Sonoma. I think those three fall on a schedule date. It's a shame. Pocono is a home track for me, ran well there last year. Iowa, again, my podium last year. Two of my best tracks right out the door.

If it were up to me this year, if I can't get a full season in IndyCar, do a couple more street circuits and road courses. I think people think I'm more of an oval specialist. I don't think that's the case. I have shown speed, I just made some mistakes last year. I can bring the results in on those road and street circuits.

THE MODERATOR: Sage, thank you so much.

SAGE KARAM: Thanks, guys.