

# IndyCar Media Conference

Monday April 25, 2016

## Oriol Servia Will Marotti Sam Schmidt

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome, everyone, to today's IndyCar Media Conference Call. Over the weekend, Schmidt Peterson Motorsports had an announcement about the 100th running of the Indianapolis 500, and that was that veteran IndyCar competitor Oriol Servia will drive for the team in the race in the Schmidt Peterson with Marotti Racing Number 77 Honda. We're pleased to be joined by Oriol Servia and Will Marotti.

WILL MAROTTI: Good to be here. Thank you.

ORIOLE SERVIA: Hello, everyone.

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with you, Oriol. When last we saw you, it was at St. Petersburg filling in at Team Penske for Will Power. Now you have your own program for the month of May. How excited are you to get the chance to come back to Indianapolis for the 100th running of the Indianapolis 500?

ORIOLE SERVIA: You brought up a good point. It feels great to have a little more than one night to prepare to jump in a car.

Jokes aside, you know the Indy 500 is the race, is the one race we all want to win, is the most emblematic race on the planet, and if that wasn't enough, it happens to be the 100th anniversary. So I couldn't be more excited.

I had great races in the past at this little place, and it's coming at a point in my career that I feel the most prepared. So I couldn't be happier. I also couldn't be happier to join Sam's team and organization, who we actually shared the front row in 2011. I know they're going to give me probably the best shot I could have in a one-race entry program. So as I said, I couldn't be happier.

THE MODERATOR: You mentioned being more prepared than ever. How does a driver prepare himself to come back to Indianapolis when for some drivers it's



the only race they're going to be running? They're not doing the full season. Is it difficult to find chemistry for that effort?

ORIOLE SERVIA: Well, it actually is the one race that's probably the easiest to find chemistry because you're going to be there running many days, where you get to know the team many hours a day, on track, off track. There's going to be some rainy days, as there usually is in May in Indy, and those days we get to spend a lot of time with our engineers, mechanics.

Obviously, it's not as good as being a full season or many seasons with the team, but it's the closest thing because we end up spending more time probably in the month of May with the team than the rest of the season combined almost. So I'm not worried there.

And in terms of how do I prepare, it's just there's no magic, you know. You just have to have the seasons or the years that you've done that race, and you only learn by doing lots there, and I've been lucky to have been doing that race for almost a decade now. I've had, as I said, enough success that you learn from it, and I've been in many different teams, that you also take notes from how to approach each phase and each part of the race. So I don't know, I feel I'm definitely better than I've ever been.

I've been also preparing in a way, as some of you know, I wasn't full-time racing the last season and a half, involved in management of a team in another series. When I drove Justin Wilson's car in Sonoma, I realized, A, how much I miss driving and how much out of shape I was. So since September, October last year, I've been really working out and getting ready to jump behind the wheel again. In St. Pete, actually, I felt way better than I felt in Sonoma, and I've been training since. So I am ready.

I also know that there's some challenges in setting up the cars with the new kits and setting up a car is something that I've always enjoyed, and I'm looking forward to the whole thing. I cannot wait for May 16th to come and jump in the car for the first time in Indy.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Oriol.

Will, a lot of people in IndyCar may not be familiar with

your name, but, obviously, teaming with Schmidt Peterson Motorsports and Oriol Servia for the month of May is really the culmination of a lifelong dream for you.

WILL MAROTTI: Well, it really is. I've been a fan of IndyCar since I was a little boy and wanted to drive and went the typical route, went to driver's school and started doing typical stuff, but realized early into it I didn't have the funding, the backing, I was too young, didn't understand sponsorship. So I kind of put that dream on the shelf for a long, long time.

But I was inspired just before the race last year by someone else's story and went out to the race and just talked to some friends and said, what do you think? Is there a possibility we could pull this off? Everyone was so supportive, and I said, why not? Why not try it now? So we started about nine months ago trying to put something together, and I guess the baby was ready to be birthed this weekend. So we're pretty excited about it.

THE MODERATOR: So, obviously, Sam and Ric Peterson provided the race operations for the effort. Obviously, you started Marotti Racing. What does your organization bring to the program, and how does it fit?

WILL MAROTTI: It's a grassroots effort, and I'm under no delusions here. What we bring now is passion, enthusiasm, and some money. Our goal for this year was to kind of introduce the brand and get a footprint, really looking toward building for next year.

So the team's got some goals, and I've got some personal goals, and we see this as kind of the start of hopefully what will be many years to become a presence of Marotti Racing both in Indianapolis and other tracks, both in the paddock and hopefully within the larger IndyCar community.

So this is kind of a building year, and as I say, I'm under no delusions here. We're here to learn. We're here to learn as much as we possibly can. We were at Barber for the weekend, and it was a fantastic experience getting to meet both teams, the Hinchcliffe team and the Aleshin team, talking with the techs, talking with the team leaders. Spent a lot of time with Sam and Ric Peterson.

So it's just a phenomenal experience, and we couldn't be more grateful and more thankful to have landed with Schmidt Peterson. And then to have a driver of the caliber of Oriol Servia is just amazing. So we think the team's going to be very competitive. Looking forward to qualification, looking forward, obviously, to the race, and I think this is Oriol's year. So I'm really excited about it.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you, Will. Let's open it up for questions.

**Q. Will, can you tell us what the sponsorship -- can you announce the sponsors today, or will it be later on? Is it multiple sponsors? How's it going to work?**

WILL MAROTTI: There's multiple sponsors, and we will have probably a couple more announcements after this. I can tell you on our side we've got a local -- some local sponsorship that we're excited about, and they really helped us out. I mean, to put an effort like this together for the first time as a grassroots effort with really no experience and no background is virtually impossible, and I was told many times it's a million-to-one shot. So those are pretty good odds.

But we've got a large construction firm in the Indianapolis area called ABC. They are located in Indianapolis. They also have an office in Avon, Indiana. They've come to help us. And then a firearms concern called Carson Firearms in Terre Haute, Indiana, has been very helpful. We also have support from a fitness application called FITCOM. It's an application that helps people who are in the fitness business, trainers and fitness folks, help them manage and promote their businesses as well. So that's from our side right now.

We're not ready to speak about the other sponsors at the moment, but there will be more announcements coming and more sponsors coming as well.

**Q. Just to be sure, it's ABC like the alphabet?**

WILL MAROTTI: ABC, but not the ABC supplier with the Foyt company. I think actually ABC Roofing is the name of the company.

**Q. And for Oriol, you didn't return my phone call Saturday. I'm kind of hurt, but I kind of figured you knew why I was calling.**

ORIOLE SERVICIA: Well, Robin, you know that I always try to avoid your phone calls.

**Q. I know that. That's good.**

ORIOLE SERVICIA: No, farthest from the truth. The truth is, when you were calling me, I had not had the contract signed yet. I couldn't tell you anything. I didn't know. You knew more than me, as usual.

**Q. Let me ask you something. Tony Stewart always says -- everybody says to Tony Stewart, hey, are you going to go back and run Indy every year? He goes, hell, no. You've got no chance to be competitive at Indy. Hell, you ran fourth a few years ago, as a one-off for Rahal. You've always**

**run strong there. Do you feel like -- now you've got a team. You've got two teammates to feed off of. Do you feel like that's kind of not true? I mean, Townsend Bell has been running pretty strong for the last couple. Do you feel like there is a chance?**

ORIOLE SERVICIA: Oh, absolutely. I mean, I -- I don't know. Maybe if I wasn't active for ten years and tried to come back, maybe I wouldn't feel the same way, but actually, tell you something, like a couple years ago -- you know I'm close friends with Brian Vickers, and it was a season he wasn't driving full-time, and I actually got him convinced that the 500 is the one race that someone talented like he is and with oval experience and Indy experience, the 500 is the one race that, if you fit that profile, you could show up. And if you're running a good team with good teammates, you could actually have a shot at winning, like actually Kurt Busch proved a couple of years after.

So in my case, it's not just coming from a different type of racing, but actually this one, and you know how much I love it and Des dedicated to it. I know with the right equipment, I would have the same chances at winning than if I was there full-time because it's the one race you're there for many days. You get to learn the track well, the car, the team around you. So if the team puts a good effort behind it, meaning the crew, then you have as good of a chance as anyone.

**Q. Thank you, sir.**

ORIOLE SERVICIA: Don't you think?

THE MODERATOR: Before we prompt for more questions, we'll welcome in Sam Schmidt to the call.

Sam, welcome to the call. Just talk a little bit about the effort with Oriol and Will and bringing them aboard Schmidt Peterson motorsports.

SAM SCHMIDT: Thank you. Sorry about the background noise. I just got put in my chair and headed to baggage claim at Colorado Springs.

It's been a long time coming. Obviously, I have respected Oriol's performance in the 500 for many years when we've been against him. We've been working on trying to put this together for a long time. Thought we had it done a couple of times before this. Just pleased to have it done.

Our guys have approached this probably like every other team, as the biggest race we'll ever compete in, and we've been preparing the chassis since last October. Guys have been doing pit stop practice. In our opinion, it's not a simple one-off deal. We've approached the third car just like the other two and maximum preparation.

THE MODERATOR: Sam, how do you think Oriol fits in with James, obviously, a guy he's been teammates with before, but also with Mikhail and even with the guys you're bringing in to crew the car from the Lights side?

SAM SCHMIDT: I think it will be great. We'll be one team. There's no holding back. We're all under one roof now, and we'll continue to do so afterwards.

Got, obviously, a really experienced engineering staff with Allen McDonald, and we'll have Perschbacher and that whole group, maybe Snyder. We've added a lot of tools over the winter, simulation tools and extra engineering support. So I think, again, we've been preparing for this since last October, just trying to find the best driver to plug into the equation. I think Oriol will bring a lot of experience to the table.

We don't have to go through ROP or sort of reinvent the wheel there. He knows what he's doing. So I expect him to bring a lot to the table.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Sam.

While we're waiting for additional questions from the media, Oriol, I mentioned that you have been teammates with James before. Talk a little bit about running with him and what do you know about Mikhail?

ORIOLE SERVICIA: Yeah, it was a great season. It was his rookie year in 2011. We were both at Newman/Haas. Unfortunately, it was the last year for Newman/Haas, but we both, from second one, we worked together like we had worked many years before. We knew each other well from before. I actually always kept an eye on him when he was in Lights, and I knew he was talented and a great personality. So right away we clicked, and we were great from the first race. So I know we're going to hit the ground running in May.

And with Mikhail, I never worked with him, but I was driving in his rookie year against him, and I did have a great relationship with him. So I'm sure it will be a good third party to the effort.

**Q. Sam, it's long rumored that Brian Vickers was a guy you all were looking at as well for that seat. If you could, just touch on, A, if there was a deal already in place with Brian or if that had gotten sorted out, and, B, the decision to go with Oriol over Brian, did it weigh on experience? Or what was the defining factors in that?**

SAM SCHMIDT: I think -- I wouldn't say the media blew it out of proportion. There were a couple conversations, mainly stemming from me running into him at the Vegas Cup race. Talked to him, talked to his

people, talked to Mr. Hendrick, and ultimately, after real discussion, it just kind of got tabled because, A, there was some uncertainty as to when Tony was going to come back and just couldn't plan for it. And, B, it was mainly the lack of experience.

I think Brian was up to do it. I think he'd be a great talent to do it. But given that it is the 100th and the magnitude of everything, we really wanted to put the best foot forward we could in the third car and not have it be a distraction, but have it be a positive contribution for a result. I don't think we could have wound up with a better driver to fit that bill.

**Q. Oriol, who's your engineer going to be?**

ORIOLE SERVICIA: That question should be answered by Sam, but a name he brought up in an earlier discussion is a name that I did like. I don't know if that's going to be him. So I don't know if Sam can answer that.

SAM SCHMIDT: Yes, we're negotiating a little bit, I think. Oriol's got someone he's worked with before that we've worked with before, that would be a perfect storm, but he's just trying to clear his schedule. We have all the sports staff in place, and we really want to have somebody that will mix well with everybody. So, yes, it's still yet to be announced.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Seeing as there are no further questions for our guests, we will wrap up today's conference call. Congratulate Sam, Ric, Oriol and Will on the announcement, and thank them for their time.