

# IndyCar Media Conference

Friday May 13, 2016

## Jay Frye Michael Printup Scott Dixon Press Conference



thoughts when you got the call from Jay and the rest of the IndyCar staff?

MICHAEL PRINTUP: Friday night at 5:01, it was an awesome moment. I can tell you that. I was really excited to hear from Jay, and like he said, we had met earlier in Phoenix. I was out there on business, and Jay and I and Stephen sat down, and I have to say the same thing about his team. Jay and I took one or two phone calls over the weekend, we had a follow-up even Friday night at like 9:00 that night, we exchanged a couple emails Saturday and Sunday, and we didn't talk again for like another week because we handed it off, or week and a half. We handed it off to our teams, and the teams really put the deal together. Jay and I obviously were the cheerleaders and champions on both sides. I know that. But both our teams really are responsible for putting this together, so we couldn't be more proud.

This belongs at Watkins Glen International. Scott and I had a moment just prior to walking in here, it's so nice to see. It's so great to walk around here and feel the electricity here. Can't wait to do it again up in Watkins Glen, and like he said, it was just an awesome time working with Jay and the team, and we couldn't be happier. In less than two weeks putting together a major motorsports deal? I'd like anybody to beat that. I wouldn't want anybody to beat it, because Jay and I own it.

JAY FRYE: Yeah, do we look tired?

MICHAEL PRINTUP: We're pretty excited about it. Can't wait until September.

THE MODERATOR: So it's been a while since the IndyCar Series has been at Watkins Glen, since 2010. Since then the track has been repaved. What do you think that will add to the excitement of the race?

MICHAEL PRINTUP: That's a great question. Somebody else asked me that this morning and some other drivers had asked me prior. It's a little less than about a \$11 million repave. We took the track all the way down, in some sections all the way down to dirt and started from the bottom up. The track is the same. We had drivers testing on it this past week from IMSA, some of the NASCAR guys, but the IMSA guys all said

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everybody. Thank you so much for joining us for this very special announcement here at Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Also to everybody watching online on IndyCar.com. We are pleased to be making a very, very special announcement today. The Verizon IndyCar Series is announcing its return to Watkins Glen International on Labor Day Weekend of this year, September 1st through the 4th.

We'll start with Jay Frye, president of competition and operations for IndyCar, and we are also joined by Michael Printup, president of Watkins Glen International, and defending Verizon IndyCar Series champion Scott Dixon, who is a three-time winner at Watkins Glen International.

Jay, we'll start with you. Obviously with the circumstances, this deal came together quite quickly. What was the process for working with Watkins Glen to make sure this happens and also making sure it's a successful event for IndyCar?

JAY FRYE: Well, the process was pretty quick. We can't thank Michael and his whole staff at Watkins Glen for their yeoman-like effort the last couple weeks. We got the news a couple weeks ago that something was going on, and that might have been around 5:00, and by 5:01 I was talking to this gentleman on the phone, and from that it kind of led a life of its own.

It certainly was great interest on his behalf, great interest on our behalf. We were thinking more about 2017, but obviously we're a year ahead. All the rumors, all the enthusiasm that we saw from the rumors was going on was very, very high, so we couldn't be more pleased to go back to Watkins Glen. It's a great facility, great history, and again, we can't thank Michael and his staff enough for being willing to do this on such short notice. So far, so good.

THE MODERATOR: And Michael, from a track standpoint, can you elaborate on that process and your

it was all back the way it was supposed to be except there was a ton of grip. They had to rubber it in a couple days, but after that they said it was really awesome, so that's fantastic. I think putting all that together, we hope to see some record speeds.

Jay and his team promised me sunny weather, so that's already on the books, and we just can't wait to get Scott and the team there.

THE MODERATOR: Scott, a three-time winner at the track. What do you recall about those wins and the track in particular, the fans out at Watkins Glen International?

SCOTT DIXON: You know, definitely excited. I think if anybody asked me any event after the first time going to the Glen what my favorite track was, Indianapolis was a given one for the oval, but always referred to Watkins Glen. Yes, we've had a lot of success there, I think quite a few podiums, three wins, and I think I should have had a fourth there if I wasn't so silly and spun out under caution one year there.

But yeah, I love these old-school road courses that America has, and that is at the top of the list. I know not just myself but everybody amongst the drivers has been talking about it. They can't wait to get back there. They can't wait to hopefully schedule a test if we have any test days left to make it back to the Glen. But very excited across the board, and I hope the fans are, especially in their part of the world, and hopefully we're going to have a great showing, obviously good weather, and put on a fantastic show as I think with the repaving will definitely add to that.

**Q. One or two questions for Michael. One, the fact that there's been so much history and lineage from open wheel racing at Watkins Glen in the fall, the Formula 1 race, the U.S. Grand Prix, now IndyCar is going to be back in the fall date that they had I believe in 2005, how much does that just really seem to fit perfectly for you?**

MICHAEL PRINTUP: Yeah, I think that's part of the great schedule. The Formula 1 schedule is the first week of October, a little too late, so this September weekend, September is still a good racing month up in Watkins Glen in upstate New York. I think combining all that with all the tradition that Watkins Glen has, and you go all the way back to the late '40s when sports car racing started there to what we have today and what's materialized over there in the last 60-plus years, of course this company did not design that racetrack, but it's still turning out.

You just heard Scott, and I made a reference earlier, our boot is the Eau Rouge of racing in North America,

and it's just -- the Eau Rouge over in Europe, and it's just an awesome thing to have, and to have these guys come back there and experience that and I get to watch it sends chills. Since we opened up, I've had the chills come back already.

**Q. And is there any accommodation for the Boston ticket holders who may have tickets that they had previously purchased for that event?**

MICHAEL PRINTUP: Yeah, that hasn't been discussed with Jay or the team. I guess we'll have to address that post this meeting.

**Q. Michael, number one, you mentioned you have the biggest race at the moment, two NASCAR and IMSA. For open wheel is there any requirements to put some more safety standards on the track, guardrails and whatever is available? And question two, how many deals is it to run IndyCar in Watkins Glen?**

MICHAEL PRINTUP: On the first safety question, we added more -- some curbing on the driver's left top esses, driver's left exit boot, entry boot driver's left, all approved. Charlie Whiting passed us our Formula 1 inspection just about two months ago, so from a safety point of view, we've done that, we've added more catch fence, and we've added run-off into every corner. Not fully paved, the gravel is not fully completely paved. You can't do it in New York under environmental regulations, but we got a good chunk of it paved, so Scott and I were talking about that earlier, so Turn 8 was finished, Turn 10 has it, obviously the bus stop was already redone, I think just finished up for the last race there in 2010.

And I'm sorry, question two?

**Q. How many years is the deal for with IndyCar?**

MICHAEL PRINTUP: The current -- what we just succeeded in is good for this year, and our goal is to --

JAY FRYE: We did the best we could in two weeks.

MICHAEL PRINTUP: Yeah, two weeks, that was pretty phenomenal to get it done in less than two weeks, and the goal is for Jay and I and Stephen to continue these conversations. Let's watch the success, let's earn it. We know we both have to earn that all the way through. We know the competition is bar none the best at Watkins Glen, so Scott has got the easy job, just drive and win.

SCOTT DIXON: Wow, thanks.

JAY FRYE: I'd like to thank Stephen Starks, too, our vice president of promoter relations who was instrumental in helping get this done, too. He's also an

attorney, so the two weeks, condensed it a little bit, so thank you, Stephen.

**Q. Jay, Scott brought up the testing, and if there's going to be enough time for them to test. Will you extend the test, allow them to go out and test the track with the new surface?**

JAY FRYE: Yeah, part of it right now is the availability of the track. I know we're going to do a Firestone test there, a tire test at some point, and then if we can or can't get a full-field type open test, we'll have a promoter day on Thursday -- on Friday at Watkins Glen where we extend the time. So that's basically what was going to happen in Boston where we were going to have a promoter day on Friday where we extend the time, so we're working through the dates.

**Q. The road course is there --**

JAY FRYE: It's there, but they're very busy, which is really good, so they've got a lot of dates booked, so that's part of the issue.

**Q. Michael, what are your concerns about only three months to put this whole project together and promote it?**

MICHAEL PRINTUP: Well, we had a brief meeting this morning, and I do mean brief. It was 10, 15 minutes of brainstorming with our team. We're really fortunate.

First of all, I have to back up and thank our governor. Our governor was also instrumental, has been very supportive, the first governor in our recollection of owning that track to be instrumental in motorsports. We all want our governors in every municipality to support us, but our governor already called this morning and said when can we do a driver gig, when can we do a PR thing. That's huge, and I just called him this morning and he called back within an hour. His team called back within an hour. So that's awesome.

So we're on the right track. It's going to be a lot of fast promotions. We're going to be putting the plan together quickly, and then we'll get in market. That's the key, and we'll be out there.

I think the opportunity that we have is -- I know the opportunity that we have is we have a lot of racing. We have IMSA coming into June; our Cup drivers are coming in August. So our in-market advertising is there. We're just going to continue the program all the way through -- and I wouldn't be surprised if the governor steps up and helps us do that. He'll already do it with an appearance, but we'll see what else he can do in helping us promote it.

**Q. Michael, how is Labor Day Weekend a much**

**better ticket selling point for fans than the 4th of July weekend, which as we saw the last couple times we were there was very tough to try to get a crowd out there on 4th of July weekend?**

MICHAEL PRINTUP: Yeah, that was tough. I was never a fan, though I wasn't in charge when it came, of 4th of July. You have eight weeks to plan your family events, and everybody knows September -- it just didn't work. I definitely see that from a fan attendance and a corporate backing. September being the last weekend, kids are back in college, so we've got all that. This is going to be our first major race since IndyCar did it back in the mid-2000s, and then we have college back. So we have Cornell right up the street, we've got University of Buffalo. We've got some big schools, Rochester. We've got hundreds of thousands of students now that we can also integrate into the sport because they're in school. So I think that's another major marketing advantage that we've never had before with IndyCar or not exploited, so we're going to exploit that, so I think September fits in just perfect with this date.

**Q. Scott, when the drivers see that 16-race schedule, you guys want to race every race, obviously. When the race goes away in Boston, is there some relief amongst you guys to see another race come in and complete that 16-race schedule?**

SCOTT DIXON: Especially when it's Watkins Glen, yeah. I think everybody -- well, I've probably been a little more happy than some of the others about it, but yeah, you know, I think none of us want to see what happened, but I think this is the best outcome. It's all very positive. It's a place that IndyCar were obviously talking about going back to, a market that I think is an area that we need to be in, and we know that there's great fans in upstate New York. It's been proven before. I think the state helps. Everything about this is very positive.

You know, the drivers' feelings for another -- to go back to a track like this that we've raced at before but also such a special place with history and then also a really fun track to race and drive, and this place always creates fantastic racing, too. Everything is positive about it.

**Q. Jay, what happened with Boston? And is that forever gone or to be revisited?**

JAY FRYE: I think there was just a lot of things that didn't fall into place. I think it was maybe more difficult. I think there was a lot of different entities involved, so at the end of the day, is it gone forever? I'm not sure. Obviously we're here today to talk about Watkins Glen, and one of the things with the Glen that we thought was very important, this wasn't just about replacing that event, this was about replacing it with the right event,

and we think Watkins Glen is the right event. We're also talking about 2017 and beyond, so this just accelerated that process. So we're really excited about what's going on there.

In regards to Boston, is it over for good? I would say maybe not. There might be some other options there that make it simpler to go back there. That's something to be looked at.

**Q. Michael, you traditionally have had a Ferrari meeting on the Labor Day Weekend. How do you reconcile that with this?**

MICHAEL PRINTUP: You know, Stephen and I were chatting earlier, or a bunch of us were talking earlier about how you let your stakeholders involve in a process like this and at the same time trying to keep it ultra confidential because we hadn't negotiated and signed a contract, which we just did over an hour ago, so that was kind of awesome.

I called them. They're ready to join the weekend. They just want to make sure they get enough track time. Jay and his team, where they'd usually had 24 to 26 hours of track time on a weekend that they have had forever, and then they also have a community event that's part of the sticking point on this that Corning incorporated back, so they bring all their Ferraris downtown Corning, again, for a nice community event. So we think it's a great addition. We just want to make sure Ferrari understands that.

We're just trying to balance the schedule. Ferrari is completely in the loop, and then hopefully we can finish out, kind of renegotiating that aspect, and Ferrari gets to join a great sanctioning body for a great weekend of racing, so I think the opportunity is there.

**Q. Jay, there are also a number of other series that were slated to be on the Boston weekend, Indy Lights, I think the Lamborghini series, there might be another one. What would be the status of other series on the Watkins Glen weekend?**

JAY FRYE: Indy Lights will be joining us at the Glen, so that's for sure. We've locked that in. Like Michael said, we're going through the schedule to make it all work, and so far I think we've come up with a pretty good one, but Indy Lights will definitely be part of it, the weekend.

**Q. When would you work toward like a commercial announcement for the race, like a title sponsor, presenting sponsor?**

JAY FRYE: Oh, I don't know. We did this in two weeks, so I guess within the next couple weeks. It won't take long. We'll be good.

**Q. Scott, since they're going to Watkins Glen and you mentioned you're very excited to be going back there, but it's going to be a lot different with the repave and with the new car and everything. Obviously you're excited right now, but are there any other concerns with how the car will probably perform on the -- obviously it's really preliminary, but are you having any thoughts right there on the speeds of the car or how you think it might perform or maybe just get a driver's input on how you feel like the new car will perform on the new fresh pavement and the track as a whole?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, a little bit of unknown, I think, with that. Typically with new seal, it's just a lot quicker, and hopefully I get included in the Firestone test over there, which might give me a little look-in on that. But yeah, I think with all the improvements that they've done, safety, I think with the run-offs especially, it's a very fast circuit.

I think right now with the adjustability that we have with the current car, you might see a pretty good mix of high and low downforce. It's a track in the past that our team trimmed out a lot, and in the race it paid off big time. We'll have to see how that plays out. But I think as far as speeds are going to be up with the current car. It's been six years since we've been here, so they're going to be up a lot. And then with the safety improvements, you know, all of us love to hear that.

**Q. Michael, you said earlier that Charlie Whiting did the track inspection. Does it mean in principle you can run a Formula 1 event in the future?**

MICHAEL PRINTUP: No, Charlie -- that's our grade 2, so it's everything but Formula 1, so it's the grade 2 license that Charlie does. Charlie comes every three years to certify our racetrack for all international drivers so they can still compete and race, but it's also safety inspection. So that's what that inspection is for.