

IndyCar Media Conference

Sunday June 12, 2016

Eddie Gossage

Jay Frye

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for sticking around this afternoon, everyone. With us is TMS president Eddie Gossage and IndyCar Series president Jay Frye.

I'll turn it over to Eddie.

EDDIE GOSSAGE: Appreciate you guys hanging in there with us. Appreciate all of your patience.

After a lot of consultation this afternoon, and it was quite a meeting of people, everybody was on their phones up there calling all the right folks, including a lot of teams for their input. What we're going to do is resume this race Saturday night, August 27th. Jay is going to get into some of the particulars of how you resume a race.

I will tell you it's one day only. It will be a practice session, an autograph session with all the drivers up on the concourse under the grandstands, then the race.

Felt like that was the best way to best serve all the fans. The lightning is still going on out there. We maybe could have hung around, tried to get it dry tonight, get enough to run it halfway, but that's not right. We wanted to give the fans a race today.

So that's the plan. Jay can get into some of the reasons why it probably wasn't wise to come back tomorrow and how we're going to resume the race.

JAY FRYE: We certainly want to come back and have an entire race, a full race. The fans here of Texas, our fans, the people at TMS do a great job.

So what we'll do, as per our rule book, I'm not sure to pull out the specific rule off the top of my head, we'll start the race where we stopped. We'll come in, have a practice. Like Eddie said, we'll do an autograph session, continue the race from where we left off with the intent of getting the entire race in for our fans and the fans at Texas Motor Speedway.

This is a little unique. Hasn't happened for a while.



We do a lot of unique things here. We're looking forward to coming back August 27th.

EDDIE GOSSAGE: It is an unprecedented situation. IndyCar broached, What do you think about coming back later? Let's start looking for a time and way to do that. I thought it was a great idea to give the fans their money's worth, trying to think what else were the considerations.

It was pretty much unanimous from the teams, that they'd like to complete the race.

JAY FRYE: Yes.

EDDIE GOSSAGE: Hinch texted, I think we should pick up where we stopped. There was wink, wink, Emojis.

JAY FRYE: His wink, wink worked because it's in the rule book, so we're good to go.

THE MODERATOR: With that we'll open it up to questions.

Q. I don't know if the Olympics will be over by then. Will it be back on NBC Sports Network?

JAY FRYE: We're working on that right now. We're confident it will be live that night. The Olympics are over then. We have to work through some details.

Obviously a lot of this just happened a little bit ago. We're confident we'll be on live broadcast that night, yes.

EDDIE GOSSAGE: I should have said up front, we probably can't answer every question because there are some matters to work through still for a variety of things you probably haven't even thought about.

Bottom line is we're going to work together and get there and have us a race on August 27th.

Q. Jay, I don't know if you can speak to this, but are we sure that Hinchcliffe is the leader? Hunter-Reay's team believes it has the lead. Do you know if anything is in discussion yet about who is the race leader?

JAY FRYE: Hinchcliffe is the race leader. We went through that. I think there was some question mark

about whether he was the leader or a lap down to him. That was the piece. Ryan was passing to make sure he was on the lead lap, not a lap down, not for the lead.

Q. Jay, just to make sure I understand properly, did the rule book give you any wiggle room of an entirely new race in August or was it hard and fast you must pick up where it was left off?

JAY FRYE: It's very specific that we need to pick it up from where we left off.

EDDIE GOSSAGE: Doing this off the top of my head here, I think as most of you know, we have one of the most fan-friendly ticket policies in all of sports. The policy is your ticket for any event that is postponed due to weather is good for any event of equal or lesser value for the next year.

So obviously that means that the tickets that you had for yesterday were honored today. They'll be honored on the 27th. If you choose not to use them, because we are now into rain delay, it's good for any other ticket value of same or lesser value for the next year as of August 27th.

Q. Do we know if this race will be a night race or a day race yet or is that to be decided?

EDDIE GOSSAGE: 7 p.m. green flag. It may be 7:15-ish. It may be minutes after, but there will be a night race Saturday evening.

Q. Could either of you explain or detail some of the challenges you had in drying the track this morning after some of the rain overnight.

EDDIE GOSSAGE: Well, I'll be honest, Jay and I were talking about it on the way over here. I'm going to address it. I don't think we've been on the same page with that particular matter. That's just a communication thing between us.

We're both professional peers and personal friends. We felt like the track was ready at 10:30. IndyCar, as best we understood, they pulled the jet trucks off the track. They were, as we understood, pleased. All of a sudden we looked up right around 1:00, apparently they found an issue that they felt needed to be addressed in turn two.

But there was no communication. We didn't know anything about it. So frustrating, but we're going to work that out. It's just one of those things. It may be our fault, it may be their fault. Let's just say it's our fault.

JAY FRYE: Both our faults.

EDDIE GOSSAGE: We're good.

JAY FRYE: Ultimately, if everything would have played out, we might have got to halfway. Again, we wouldn't have completed the event. This would have happened. That's not our intention. Our intention is to complete all of our events, which obviously coming back in August, we'll have a much better shot to do that.

EDDIE GOSSAGE: As far as Graham is concerned, I love Graham. I'm sure as soon as he said the silly things he said, he wished he'd had them back.

I tutor him a lot. You guys may not know about this. I tutored Graham a lot on how to drive an IndyCar back when I was driving and winning races all over the place.

He respects that. He comes to me and asks, Eddie, what do you do in this situation? I tell him.

I know back when he was running one of the biggest speedways in the world, he has a lot of experience. I go to him and ask him, Graham, what do you do in this situation? He advises me well.

Just one of those things today. I'm sure if he ever thought about coming back here again, he'll apologize for that apology remark.

Am I making my point? I love Graham.

Q. Eddie, this is kind of the second race, the April race obviously had some weather or rain issues. Is there anything the track can do weather-wise, or the weather gods aren't smiling on you this year?

EDDIE GOSSAGE: I think we're going through a rough patch, first of all. A number of things have contributed. The truth is, since November, after the November Cup race, we put in yet another set of French drains along the front straightaway where we had an issue that occurred last November.

We run cameras through the French drains that we have to see, because they've been there now for 13, maybe 16 years. None of the French drains are collapsed. None of them are full of sediment, things like that. They're all running. It's a variety of things.

Man, I'm just going to get myself in trouble.

Racecar drivers like old asphalt, right? That's what you always hear. Well, old asphalt becomes old because it oxidizes, and because over time the fines and the smaller aggregate that makes up asphalt comes out. That has been accelerated by the use of the Air Titan.

If you think about it, you're blowing tremendous amounts of air into the surface. It has to come back

out. As it does, it's going to pull the little bitty tiny fines and aggregate up out of the asphalt. The result is you have a more porous asphalt.

We didn't have any weepers. This is where you're going to go, What the hell are you talking about? You saw this and that. Jay and I were talking about it on the way around here.

When the track was redone, and I want to say it was 2000 or 2001, there's concrete underneath the asphalt. Concrete is porous. It was put there as a drainage mat underneath the asphalt. It feeds the French drain system all the way around.

On top of that are three layers of asphalt that starts with a very coarse aggregate, then a little bit finer aggregate, then the finish level has a little bit finer still aggregate.

A weeper to us has to come from underneath up. What you're finding is in that upper level, that top level, now that it's become porous with time, oxidization, and we believe the use of the Air Titan, that when it rains, we got an inch of rain between noon and 4:45 yesterday, something like that, you guys were here, an inch of rain. Well, that upper level gets saturated. It holds it in there.

What you saw, if it were more sealed off on top, it wouldn't get into it. Does that make sense, how I'm explaining this? This is why it's hard to explain in 140 characters in a tweet to everybody what's going on.

So the question is, Do you want to repave and seal it off, or do you deal with it? The answer is, every racecar driver, without exception, tells you, Don't repave.

We're just being dealt a tough hand by nature. I know it's a real long explanation. Does that make sense to you guys, what I'm saying? I could draw a picture, because I do that kind of crap. Does that make sense?

That didn't answer your question much, but you're going to have a really good quote now, except the 140-character thing, because that's how we communicate now.

Q. You've had a couple events now that have been postponed or delayed. Fort Worth isn't known for its tropical rain. How unlucky do you feel you've had this run of bad luck? How hard does this impact your bottom line for an event like this?

EDDIE GOSSAGE: It doesn't help your bottom line. It's frustrating. There will probably be a nice little happy Christmas in the Gossage household this year.

This is the nature of things when you do this sport. Our company, big, strong, healthy company, we carry on. We'll be fine. I'm not worried about that. It's just you hate to see this happen. You want to do the best for your fans. That's who all of us work for, including you. That's who we want to please.

Man, it's frustrating to us. But what can you do? You cannot beat Mother Nature.

Q. Jay, being that we will be restarting on lap 72, what is the status of allowing Conor Daly and Josef Newgarden to resume the race?

JAY FRYE: They'll have the opportunity to do that, just like they would if they would have been here. But they'll be 35 laps or whatever they're down. We're going to work through that to see how it would work. I don't see any way how they could continue.

That's one of the things we talked about, putting all this together real quickly, do you take the car home as it is? How do they fix that? They'll be given an opportunity somehow, though. Not sure of the details yet.

Q. Is there an update on Josef Newgarden's condition?

JAY FRYE: The most recent update I got was that it's forthcoming.

In that regard, I'll just say, the car did a great job. The SAFER barriers, thanks to TMS, did a great job. All that part of this element was really good, so... He's banged up but he's going to be okay.

Q. Jay, I don't know if this falls under your bailiwick, but the crowd didn't look good here Saturday night. Now you've had this frustrating weekend. Any concern about losing the enthusiasm of the ticket-buying base in this area?

JAY FRYE: No. That's why we want to come back. We want to give them an opportunity to come back out. You look at Saturday, it rained, there was a lot of rain all day. Then we had the night, it started raining again. We stayed here as late as we could to try to get the track dry. The humidity caught up with us and all that type stuff. Then we get here today, it's a day later, people can come back or not.

If we organize it right and come back on a specific night, we think we'll have a great crowd.

Like Eddie was talking about, the expense side, this is a big expense for us, too, to come back. The teams got to come back. Everybody has got to come back. We want to do this for our fans. We want to finish this event.

EDDIE GOSSAGE: Everybody loses on this deal, unfortunately. You know, last night it's raining all over. We sold a lot more tickets than we scanned in. I wouldn't have come out here except I was paid to be here last night. Probably today, too. I needed to go to church. Clearly I needed to go to church today, so...

Q. Can't there also be an unintended benefit in that we'll be coming back to Texas with only two or three races left to determine the championship? Knowing what a promotional flair you have, I'm sure you'll play that up.

EDDIE GOSSAGE: The only real issue that's come between us today is I thought the finale made all the sense in the world.

But he said, It's Sears Point, Sonoma. I said, You're right. If it was an ISC track, maybe we'd fight about it. But it's a brother.

I'm just kidding. Yes, of course, we have moments to sell tickets to last night's race. We're going to take advantage of it. You got to see the deal I get on Robosaurus now.

We thought we could have dried the track pretty quick last night, too.

Q. Eddie, I know you don't have it all put together. About the promotion thing, you're promoting two-thirds of a race. It's got to be tough. You mentioned the autograph session. Concert, any of that kind of stuff jump into your head?

EDDIE GOSSAGE: Yes, they'll jump into your head, but then you start putting a pencil to it.

Jay said, Let's do an autograph session. Great. That gives the fans more than they bargained for than when they bought the ticket to begin with. Makes for a fuller day.

They're going to get a practice session. They're going to get autographs, the rest of the race. We're going to see what else we can come up with to make it a big event.

The good Lord tells us we're not supposed to be envious, that's a sin. We're all sinners. I'm very envious of Carb Day, Community Day at Indianapolis. I go up there and look at it, How can we do something like this? It's such a great day. It's got such a great feel.

That may be a day we can take advantage of that and try to create that kind of thing where you come out and there's a lot to do, a lot to see, and you're going to see a great race.

It sure looked like we were having a great race up until the red flag. I think they got the cars trimmed out from what I've seen so far, something we talked a lot about. We were hopefully going to have us a real sizzler right down to the finish. That's what we want.

Q. The racing looked pretty good from my standpoint. Jay, did you agree?

JAY FRYE: Yeah, absolutely. We obviously made a conscious effort to come out here to test, as a group. I think we had 16 cars out here. So a lot we learned from the test we were able to apply. I think today it showed. We might have to do a few more things, but I think we're getting close.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, gentlemen.

EDDIE GOSSAGE: Thank you, guys, for your patience. We'll be right back here and see all of you on August 27th.

JAY FRYE: Thank you.