

IndyCar Media Conference

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Luca Filippi

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We're joined now by Luca Filippi.

Luca, welcome back. How are things coming back, adjusting to Dale Coyne Racing, being back in a car this weekend?

LUCA FILIPPI: Everything has been quite smooth and simple, as obviously last race with Dale was just a couple of months ago. I wasn't for so long away from the car and from IndyCar.

But it feels like forever actually because it's hard to see everybody else racing, and you're being at home. But it's good to be back, very good to be back.

THE MODERATOR: Last year on the streets of Toronto, basically the best result you can get for a team, a 1-2 finish. Take us through that weekend and if you think you'll continue that strength here this weekend.

LUCA FILIPPI: Yeah, Toronto's always been very good for me. Last year, yeah, my first podium. I had a strong race. All weekend from practice to qualifying, then the race was very good.

Even the year before with Rahal, I was very competitive. I was running in the top five. So fortunately this is a place I like. I feel comfortable. It's very challenging. It's not easy at all. But I enjoy these type of street courses.

Last year it was the sort of weekend that from the very beginning everything was fine, the car was working well. We just have to maximize the package. I think the result was honestly deserved because we were competitive all day and all weekend.

This year obviously it is a bit difficult, a bit different because I didn't race in Detroit obviously. I get a car that is not exactly the car that I built for myself. I'm trying and get it more suitable for me and more drivable.

Also the circuit has changed a little. So what we know was working here in the past may be a little different for this year what we need.

We are working. But I think the gap to the leaders is not so big. I think we know where to improve. I'm really looking forward to practice two because I want to see if we can really improve and get a strong result.

I'm not here, honestly speaking, just to participate and trying to aim for a potential top 10. I want to do very well. I'm motivated. I'm pumped up. I want to really fight to the front.

I know it's difficult. There are many, many fast guys and fast teams out there. But we here to try and do a good job.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Luca.

Q. One of the areas where you excelled earlier this year was on red tires in qualifying. What do you think helped the qualifying runs?

LUCA FILIPPI: So obviously on street courses, the extra grip you find from the tires is what give you the opportunity to qualify well. On these sort of courses, sometimes qualifying can be crucial.

So I really focused on trying and work the tire well when it gets to have the new tire run. I think I've been doing tire testing for a long time now. Tire testing I feel is kind of my speciality. For the red tires, they really suits my driving. I can try and maximize the mechanical grip they give to the car.

Also I think what we're trying to improve with our car, with Dale, is a bit of mechanical grip. So on the blacks, that small issue becomes a little bigger, while on the reds, it gets better for the new tire run.

But then, because we have a bit of lack of mechanical grip towards the end of the run, it could get worse again. So basically this is where we have to improve. If we can do that, we can become even stronger on the reds and be more competitive on the blacks.

Q. A lot of drivers talk about from week-to-week it being a new slate, a clean slate, you can't rely too much on how you did the week before. With that in mind, you finished last year here second place. I know it's a new race. You're motivated from that, I'm assuming?

LUCA FILIPPI: Yeah, of course. It builds confidence,

for sure, having a good record in a race weekend for the year after. I get here and I am confident I can drive well on this course. I know some of the tricks around here.

Yes, it is important. Sometimes when you are not P1 or you are not in the top three, it's hard to tell what's wrong because it could be you, it could be the car, it could be anything, the engine, the aerodynamics. It's hard.

But if you feel you're strong, if you're comfortable with the circuit, at least you have one thing that you know that should be okay, and you can focus on the rest.

I mean, we always work on our driving. We try and look at the data, try and understand where we can improve from the driving style point of view. But this is one of the places where I feel comfortable. If we can get the car as I want, we can do very well.

Q. You've been out of the car for about two months now. How difficult is it to get back in? How quickly do you get back into a rhythm?

LUCA FILIPPI: So it's not difficult because, being honest, I guess we are at a certain level that we cannot afford not to be strong enough not to get up to speed quickly. It is not a problem. Since the very begin, you know what to do, you have to be close to the limit. For sure, we don't have so much rush because with three practice sessions, we have plenty of time to get up to speed.

But I'm personally quite used to not having a place that is signed and secured for the season. So I'm used to this situation. I know if I want to keep doing this, I have to be on top of it from the very begin.

I can't afford to lose any time. But I think we are all trained now, especially in these days, where there are not so much testing, and everything is so expensive, that if you lose time, at the same time you are wasting the money involved in the program.

I think one of the key points to be a successful racing driver is to be really quick in order to get up to speed, don't waste time, don't waste tires, don't waste your time. I really worked a lot on myself. I think this is one of my strong points.

Q. I recall a year ago you were just about to become a father. How is that going?

LUCA FILIPPI: Yeah, my daughter turned one year old just the day before yesterday. (Indiscernible) the day I flew to Toronto, so I feel great. My wife is pregnant again, so is a lot of excitement going on from this point of view. I'm really grateful and really happy and thankful, yeah.

Q. When you have a race weekend like you did last year where the car seemingly rolls off the truck the way you want it, you're fast in practice, qualifying, finish well in the race, where compared to a weekend perhaps like you're going to have this weekend where things might be a little bit more challenging leading up to the good result, is a good result a good result, or is it more rewarding when you have to work for it a little harder and work with your team together?

LUCA FILIPPI: It's hard to tell. In this particular case, in case of a good result, it would be more rewarding because obviously racing here, it wasn't granted. I actually had to work a lot. Thank IMPCO and ComfortPro for giving me the opportunity to be here again and confirm what we've done last year. IMPCO has been my partner since four years now and is a Canadian company based in Toronto.

If I can have a strong weekend with not so much preparation and without a secure program, it would mean a lot obviously.

Last year this result, it came after a learning curve and basically an improving performance since the very first race with Carpenter. We're getting better and better every race. This was kind of the peak of that curve. It was kind of a natural result that came after hard work.

In this case, we have to rush everything a little more. But we are capable to do it because at the end of the day these cars are more or less the same for everybody. The Honda kit is working fine, especially on the street courses, I guess. We can make it work.

I think we just have to focus on what we have to do. Sometimes is very easy to kind of take the wrong way, then from there is difficult to get back on the track. But from this point of view, if we now make the right choices for practice two, I think we are looking good for tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you and good luck. We appreciate you coming in.

LUCA FILIPPI: Thank you. I'm very happy to be back and see you all.