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SEPTEMBER 2007

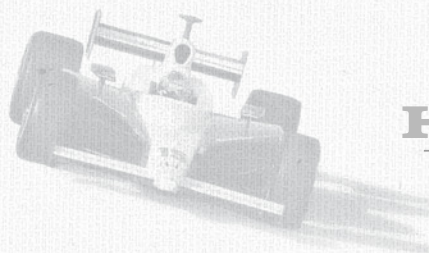
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Helio Castroneves digs Spiderman and tennis...and he has a sweet tooth

(Left) Sam Hornish Jr. and Dario Franchitti battle at Richmond International Raceway. (Above) Tomas Scheckter gets ready to race at Mid-Ohio

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Dan Suresky/LAT

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Dixon surges

Triple win puts Kiwi in thick of title fight

(Above) Scott Dixon celebrates his win at Mid-Ohio. (Above right) Dixon (9) may have won, but Dario Franchitti (27) was right behind him, making it hard for Dixon to cut much into Franchitti's points lead

After Target Chip Ganassi Racing's Scott Dixon went three-for-three in terms of IndyCar Series wins in the month of July, you'd think the Kiwi would have launched himself way out front in the standings. But Indianapolis 500 winner and points leader Dario Franchitti was right behind in second place in two of those three races (Nashville and Mid-Ohio), and he finished third in the other (Watkins Glen). In other words, the Andretti Green Racing driver has been able to minimize Dixon's impact on his quest for the title.

"That's the problem with Dario," Dixon said after Mid-Ohio. "He's just so consistent. When we're winning, he's in the top three. It would have been nice if he would have had a fourth or fifth today and we could have really closed in."

"We're closing in on this championship. We've got five races to go now, and we'll see what we can do."

Franchitti, for his part, makes no bones about the fact that the championship battle will almost certainly go right down to the final checkered flag of the season at Chicagoland as

he tries to fend off Dixon's charge.

"We're losing it somewhere. I know it's going to be a fight until the end for the championship, but I wasn't expecting anything else. We'll just keep pushing the Canadian Club car each week and we'll work on it."

Whether 2003 series champion Dixon winds up hoisting the big trophy for the second time or the veteran Franchitti brings home his first major open-wheel title, one thing is for certain: History will come to regard the 2007 IndyCar Series season as a true classic.



Michael L. Levitt

Ryan Hunter-Reay joins Rahal Letterman



Dan Suresky/LAT

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www.indycar.com

Just before the Honda 200 at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course on July 20-22, Rahal Letterman Racing replaced Jeff Simmons in the No. 17 Ethanol entry with Ryan Hunter-Reay. Simmons had driven the car for 25 starts since moving into the seat after Paul Dana's death at Homestead in March 2006.

"We have made important strides in our IndyCar [Series] program this year and we feel like this is something that we needed to do to maintain that pattern of improvement and growth," said Rahal Letterman Racing co-owner Bobby Rahal. "Jeff stepped into a difficult situation last season and did a lot for our team and our sponsors, but we feel at this time that this is the right move for the long-term future of Rahal Letterman Racing."

Hunter-Reay got off to a good start, qualifying 10th and finishing seventh in his IndyCar Series debut. He will be in the seat for the remainder of the season, and contend for Rookie of the Year honors.

"I'm so happy to come back," said Hunter-Reay. "It's been a crazy couple of days; a last-

minute deal. I understand the team is in an awkward position with it. I'm thrilled about it, though you never want to replace someone. But that's the business side of it.

"I look to take the opportunity to run with it."

Hunter-Reay began his career by winning six national karting championships before moving into the Skip Barber program, where he was Rookie of the Year in the Barber Dodge Pro Series in 2000. He moved to Toyota Atlantic competition in 2002, and led the series with three race wins and three poles. He became the first American rookie in 20 years to win a CART race with a victory in Australia in 2003, then set a series record by leading all 250 laps in a 2004 victory at The Milwaukee Mile. However, he hadn't raced an open-wheel car since the end of 2005.

"The [IndyCar Series] car is great," he said. "It went past my expectations of what I thought the car would feel like on this track. I didn't expect it to roll through the middle of the corners the way it did; I didn't expect it to corner the way it does. The car is quite impressive."



Dan Wheldon and Milka Duno learn how Hondas are made during a visit to one of the automaker's plants in Ohio

HONDA UP CLOSE

Three groups of IndyCar Series drivers visited Ohio Honda automobile and motorcycle manufacturing plants in Marysville, Anna and East Liberty before the round at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course to get an up-close look at the technologically sophisticated facilities.

The visits also allowed Honda associates and their families opportunities to get up close with the stars of the IndyCar Series during autograph and photo sessions. Honda was the title sponsor of the inaugural IndyCar Series race at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course in addition to being the engine supplier to the series.

Recently, Honda earned the title of America's "2007 Greenest Automaker" from the Union of Concerned Scientists for the fourth consecutive time. The award is given by the UCS on a biennial basis to the company with the lowest overall production of smog-forming emissions and global warming emissions (primarily CO₂) in its U.S. automobile fleet.

MUTOH MOVES UP

Japan's Hideki Mutoh, the Indy Pro Series driver who won the first race of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway road course doubleheader and is second in the points, will get a chance to prove himself in the IndyCar Series at the season finale at Chicagoland Speedway on Sept. 9.

Super Aguri Panther Racing will be fielding a third Dallara/Honda wearing the No. 60 and sponsored by Japan's Formula Dream racing series for the 24-year-old, who has seven other top fives this season in addition to the win on Indy's road course.

"I'm very happy and excited about this opportunity to race for Super Aguri Panther Racing in the IndyCar Series," says Mutoh. "I have learned a lot this season in the Indy Pro Series and want to do well at Chicagoland. I have to thank John Barnes, Aguri Suzuki, the Honda Formula Dream Project and everybody at Super Aguri Panther Racing for giving me this chance – it has been a goal of mine since I arrived in the United States. I also look forward to working with Vitor [Meira] and Kosuke [Matsuura], who have been a big help to me as I adjust to this style of racing."



Paul Webb/LAT

DOPPLER EFFECT



Inside Line

Jeff Olson, Senior Writer

Forgive the unbridled enthusiasm, but this is good stuff. *Very good stuff.* This is what we should wish for every season. A classic duel between two classic racers.

At this point in time (post-Mid-Ohio), Dario Franchitti is 24 points ahead of Scott Dixon in the battle for the 2007 IndyCar Series championship. By the time you read this, that number likely will be different, but the drama will be the same.

Consider for a moment just how good these two have been. Franchitti, the 34-year-old Scotsman who stamped his legacy in May with a deserving victory at Indianapolis, has finished on the podium in nine of the last 10 races. Again, forgive the gee-whiz, but *nine of the last 10*. Meanwhile, Dixon, the 27-year-old New Zealander who was a grizzled veteran at the sight of his first tricycle, has won three consecutive races to pull within a few points of Franchitti.

So this is timeless sports drama. This is Prost vs. Senna, Borg vs. McEnroe, Bird vs. Magic. Two highly accomplished, classically gifted pros and two highly skilled teams going face to face and toe to toe. It will eventually go to the judges, after which the two exhausted fighters will hug in the center of the ring.

That's not hyperbole. It really is that good.

Not only is it good drama, it's good copy. During the Indy 500 in May, while chasing a feature story about Dixon's early start, I ran across the delightful story of his embarrassing introduction to race fans in Australia and New Zealand. Just 13 at the time and granted a

special license to compete against drivers twice his age, Dixon was competing in a popular touring-car series. In his first nationally televised race, his Nissan flipped.

As he crawled from the heap, race fans got to see his secret: A pink floral cushion was duct-taped to his rear end.

Wait, there's more. "I was crying," Dixon said, smiling broadly at the thought, then enjoying the reaction of listeners. "Yeah, I know," he said. "It was all over the press back home. I still get teased about it when I go back."

Unable to keep such a gem to myself, I relayed the story to Franchitti. When I arrived at the floral cushion part, he laughed heartily. When I arrived at the tears, his eyes widened. "No way!" he said



Dario Franchitti congratulates Scott Dixon after Dixon's win at The Glen. If only Dario knew what was coming....

in mock horror. "He was crying?" Again, more hearty laughter. I have a feeling Dixon heard about the cushion/tears story from more than one driver that day, and I'm willing to wager that more than one reminded him that there's no crying in racing.

Nobody is crying these days. This duel between two of the best is worthy only of admiration. And our unbridled enthusiasm.

VIDEO EXTRA

THE SCUFFLE AT THE GLEN From the first on-track contact to the end

SCUFFLE AT THE GLEN

Post-race incident draws penalties and apologies

(Above) Watch the video of the incident at Watkins Glen, from the first on-track contact to the interviews after the race. (Right) It all started with an on-track incident between Hornish Jr. (6) and Kanaan

A pair of on-track confrontations between Tony Kanaan and Sam Hornish Jr. at Watkins Glen escalated into post-race shoving between their respective teams and guests, resulting in fines, probations and suspensions.

The series of events began when Hornish and Kanaan made contact in Turn 6 early in the race as the Team Penske driver attempted to pass the Andretti Green Racing driver. Kanaan's car left the ground briefly and ran wide, leaving Hornish to take the position. As Hornish pulled into the pits at the end of the cool-down lap after the race, Kanaan drove up alongside and swerved into him. The pair then parked, exited their cars and began a heated verbal exchange, and just when it seemed over, Kanaan walked back toward Hornish, only to be shoved by his rival's father, Sam. Eventually Anthony Fedele, a guest of AGR, got into a shoving match with the elder Hornish, knocking the latter to the ground while some team members from both sides began to have at it before league officials managed to disperse the group.

Kanaan and Hornish were fined an undisclosed amount of money, while their teams were each fined \$25,000. Hornish Sr. was suspended from pit lane for one race, while Fedele's hard card and

credential privileges were suspended indefinitely. Finally, the teams, drivers and Hornish Sr. were placed on probation until Dec. 31.

"When I came into the cool-down lap, and I kind of chopped him, it was just to send him a message, not to make what they did happen," Kanaan said of the post-race conflict with Hornish. "He got out of the car and started saying things to me that I did not really like. I wasn't even out of my car yet, and here we go."

"I don't know what the right thing is to say,"

Hornish said. "It was an unfortunate incident. I'm not surprised that he was at least thinking about something. But it was unfortunate that it all played out the way it did."

At Nashville the following week, Kanaan and Hornish Jr. discussed the incident and made amends.

"He apologized for coming at me like that and we had a nice conversation," said Kanaan. "He mentioned that we have been racing for five years together and we never had a touch. Everything is cool."



Dan Street/LAT



Ron McQueensy/IMS Photo

Art for charity's sake

IndyCar Series drivers Sarah Fisher, Sam Hornish Jr., Dan Wheldon, Vitor Meira and Kosuke Matsuura, as well as Indy Pro Series driver Andrew Prendeville, participated in a glassblowing workshop prior to the Corning Twin 100/Camping World Watkins Glen Grand Prix race weekend at Watkins Glen International.

The glass ornaments and paperweights the drivers created with help from Hands-On Glass studio owner Rodi Rovner were later auctioned off, with the proceeds benefiting the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

"Anything we can do to raise money for charity is a good thing," says Wheldon.

"It was cool," adds Prendeville. "In my family, my brother and sister are the artistic ones. I don't think I have a shred of art in me, unless you consider driving an art."



Maria Grady/LAT

Castroneves turns first laps at Belle Isle

Helio Castroneves sampled the updated street circuit on Detroit's Belle Isle in anticipation of the Labor Day Weekend IndyCar Series/American Le Mans Series doubleheader. It was the first time in six years that a contemporary racing car rocketed over the island's roads. Castroneves won the last two open-wheel races held there in 2000 and '01.

"The course is similar to what I remember but there's a new surface, new concrete and the corners are wider which

should make for more exciting racing," the Team Penske driver said. "There are some areas of the course that are bumpy, but you expect that in a street circuit, and they plan to work on some of that before the race. It's a very unique racetrack and everything here looks great. Coming back to Detroit and Belle Isle brought back some nice memories."



MÜNTER JOINS SCHMIDT TEAM FOR KENTUCKY, CHICAGO

Leilani Münter will make her Indy Pro Series debut Aug. 11 at Kentucky Speedway in the No. 57 SMART Papers/Lucas Oil car prepared by Sam Schmidt Motorsports. Münter, who passed her rookie test at Kentucky in May, also will compete in the season finale at the Chicagoland Speedway on Sept. 9.

"Racing in the Indy Pro Series is a big step in my career," says Münter, who began racing stock cars in 2001. "I am deeply appreciative to Sam Schmidt for giving me the chance to drive for a championship team and to SMART Papers for becoming my primary sponsor in the series."

Münter joins series points leader Alex Lloyd, Logan Gomez and Ryan Justice in the Sam Schmidt Motorsports stable. The team has won two of the last three driver's championships and has 20 race wins.

"Leilani has honed her skills and gained sufficient confidence to be competitive in the Indy Pro Series immediately," says team owner Sam Schmidt.



The IndyCar Series attracted a good crowd at Michigan International Speedway in 2006, but 2007 may be the last race there

Michigan race off the table for 2008?

For the first time since 1968, it appears Michigan International Speedway will not host a major-league open-wheel race next year, with the track dropping the IndyCar Series due to scheduling complications.

Track officials agreed last October to shift the Firestone Indy 400 from July to August at the request of the IndyCar Series, in what MIS President Roger Curtis says he made clear was a "one-year scenario for us." Yet continuing complications, including the new race at Mid-Ohio, forced the series to hold to its request for an August date at MIS, which the track considers too close to its second NASCAR Nextel Cup event to be viable for the long term.

The IndyCar Series will still race in Michigan with the event at Detroit's Belle Isle.

Paul Webb/LAT



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Latest from the league



MARCO'S ROUGH AND TUMBLE YEAR

As if Marco Andretti hadn't had enough troubles this year, he may have earned himself a record he would rather not possess. After his flip down the backstretch at the Indianapolis 500 after contact with Dan Wheldon and his rollover at the start of the Honda 200 at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, Andretti might be the first IndyCar Series driver to be upside down twice in the same season. More troubling for the season as a whole is the fact that it was his seventh DNF of the year so far.



FANS PACK MID-OHIO

If there was one clear thing after the Honda 200 at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, it was that fans were glad to have the IndyCar Series in Ohio. They showed up in huge numbers, covering every piece of prime viewing real estate.

In view from the top of the Keyhole (Turn 2) was a sea of colorful tents in the valley, while motorcoaches and trailers ringed the course. Hospitality tents and vendor kiosks filled the infield. An hour before the IndyCar Series race, a path for cars to be rolled to pit lane was clogged with fans snapping photos and on the lookout for drivers. When the green flag fell, every grandstand was filled and spectator mound covered.

"When we came here for the test day last month, there were a lot of excited fans and the people who were here were intense," noted Danica Patrick. "They know about racing here, they are educated, they follow it and the fan base is excited about having [the IndyCar Series] back at Mid-Ohio."

Talk it over

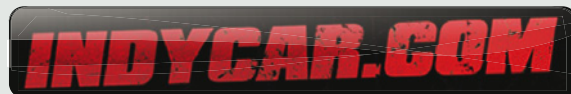
What would auto racing be without passionate fans with an opinion? On indycar.com, your voice is heard – around the world – through Talkback and Let It Out.

The forums are part of the IndyCar Community section of the official Web site of the Indy Racing League, allowing fans to respond to topics within stories on the IndyCar Series and Indy Pro Series sites and start their own threads.

On each event page of the Schedule section, fans also can post advice for first-timers, such as the best camping spots at racetracks, easy in and out routes and the location of the nearest grocery store for essentials.

The commentary features are only a few of the interactive sections of indycar.com, where you also can design a driver's helmet, print coloring pages, submit photos and videos from race events, and write a blog about your race experience.

Check it out, and bring your opinions.



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COMING SEPT. 26! The IndyCar Series Season Review 2007

The championship is going down to the wire, and you'll only find all the details in one place – the IndyCar Series Season Review 2007. Get every detail of the road to the title and how the champ did the job. Don't miss it!



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2007 IndyCar Series so far...



Iowa Corn Indy 250

Iowa Speedway, Iowa, June 24
250 laps/218.75 miles

presented by
ethanol

- Pole winner Scott Dixon leads the field into Turn 1, but it's there that teammate Dan Wheldon spins and crashes with Tomas Scheckter, costing the former more than 100 laps behind the wall for repairs and putting the latter out of the race.
- On the restart, Dixon pits from the lead with steering problems. He loses 70 laps to repairs.
- Helio Castroneves spins exiting the pits on lap 74, and 12 laps later, Tony Kanaan spins in Turn 1, taking innocent bystander Jeff Simmons and himself out of the race. On the lap 100 restart following that incident, Danica Patrick loses control while being sandwiched by the Vision Racing cars of Ed Carpenter and A.J. Foyt IV. Patrick, Foyt, Sam Hornish Jr. and Kosuke Matsuura are all collected and out on the spot, while Carpenter is able to limp back to the pits and eventually finish sixth.
- The luckless Vitor Meira, who has led 71 laps and is running third behind the two remaining AGR entries of Dario Franchitti and Marco Andretti, exits the race on lap 216 after the left front suspension collapses when he slows to enter pit road.
- Knowing how hard it is to pass on the outside, Franchitti hugs the inside line, leaving Andretti to settle for second, which is still his best finish of the season thus far. Scott Sharp, delighted to have survived the treacherous conditions, comes home third. Franchitti now leads the point standings.

DRIVER	TEAM	CAR-ENGINE
Dario Franchitti	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda
Marco Andretti	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda
Scott Sharp	Rahal Letterman Racing	Dallara-Honda
Buddy Rice	Dreyer & Reinbold Racing	Dallara-Honda
Darren Manning	A.J. Foyt Enterprises	Dallara-Honda

Pole winner: Scott Dixon 182.360mph

She said it: "It looked like a matter of everyone squeezing down with nowhere to go. It sucks. It is a cold day and the tires are really hard and everyone is having problems on the restart because we don't have enough temps in the tires. Unfortunately, it looks like this is just a lost race." **Danica Patrick** on the chain-reaction crash that took her and three others out of the race.



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SunTrust Indy Challenge

Richmond International Raceway, Va., June 30
250 laps/187.5 miles

presented by
XM

- Points leader Dario Franchitti leads the field to the green after qualifying was rained out. Sam Hornish Jr.'s night starts in the worst possible way as he spins into the infield grass before even crossing the starting line.
- Tony Kanaan beats Franchitti out of the pits on lap 64, but the Scotsman retakes the lead shortly thereafter.
- Milka Duno retires from the race on lap 79, citing an arm injury suffered in a practice crash a day earlier. Jeff Simmons hits the wall on lap 153, ending his race.
- Franchitti relinquishes the lead for the second and final time when he pits on lap 160, handing first place to Helio Castroneves for that lap. In the end, Franchitti winds up leading a series-record 242 of the 250 laps.
- Kosuke Matsuura crashes out on lap 236. Hornish, in an attempt to get one of his laps back, passes second-place Scott Dixon late in the race but is unable to get around Franchitti.
- Franchitti takes the checkers 0.419sec ahead of Dixon. Dan Wheldon rebounds from his disastrous Iowa race to finish behind his teammate in third. Franchitti stretches his points lead to 65 markers over new second-place man Dixon.

DRIVER	TEAM	CAR-ENGINE
Dario Franchitti	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda
Scott Dixon	Target Chip Ganassi Racing	Dallara-Honda
Dan Wheldon	Target Chip Ganassi Racing	Dallara-Honda
Tony Kanaan	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda
Buddy Rice	Dreyer & Reinbold Racing	Dallara-Honda

Pole winner: Dario Franchitti (Qualifying rained out, grid determined by points)

He said it: "Sam was trying to pass the leader with 20 laps to go, and he was three laps down. I don't see a reason for it. He ruined that part of the race for us." **Scott Dixon**, on having Sam Hornish Jr. between him and leader Dario Franchitti



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Camping World Watkins Glen Grand Prix

Watkins Glen International Raceway, N.Y., July 8
60 laps/204 miles

- Helio Castroneves leads the field to the green flag for the third straight year after setting the track record in qualifying. Second-place starter Scott Dixon and the rest of the field set off in pursuit.
- Disaster strikes leader Castroneves on lap 20 as he loses control exiting Turn 11, slamming into the tire barrier and ending his day. No sooner does the race resume with Dixon leading than A.J. Foyt IV spins and stalls in Turn 8, bringing out another caution.
- Tony Kanaan and Sam Hornish Jr., battling for position on lap 29, make contact in Turn 6. Both are able to continue, but the incident will cause tempers to flare after the race. Four laps later, leader Vitor Meira coasts to a stop in the Esses, out of fuel, and Dan Wheldon inherits first position. The full-course yellow is thrown once more so Meira can be towed back to the pits.
- Dixon retakes the lead with 18 laps to go, leading all of those for a race total of 23 en route to his third straight victory at the Glen. Hornish comes home second, 6.259sec back, for his career best road course finish, while points leader Dario Franchitti rounds out the top three.
- Fourth-place finisher Kanaan cuts off Hornish as the two enter the pits on the cool-down lap. Both drivers park, climb out of their cars, and begin arguing. It eventually evolves into a scuffle that involves Hornish's father, team members and guests.

DRIVER	TEAM	CAR-ENGINE
Scott Dixon	Target Chip Ganassi Racing	Dallara-Honda
Sam Hornish Jr.	Team Penske	Dallara-Honda
Dario Franchitti	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda
Tony Kanaan	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda
Marco Andretti	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda

Pole winner: Helio Castroneves 134.622mph

He said it: "It feels like today was my first decent race and the first race I was able to enjoy since the start of the season. I crashed in the last practice session yesterday and damaged the rear part of the car, but my crew fixed it by the qualifying session so I was able to start from 11th. I really wanted to do well today for Super Aguri Panther guys, so I just kept pushing." **Kosuke Matsuura**



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WATKINS GLEN
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Firestone Indy 200

Nashville Superspeedway, Tenn., July 15
200 laps/266 miles

- Polesitter Scott Dixon leads from the drop of the green. The race was postponed from the night before due to rain.
- Tony Kanaan spins and hits the wall exiting Turn 2 on lap 37, making him the first car out of the race. He had just passed Sarah Fisher, and the incident drops him from third to fourth in the point standings.
- First- and second-place runners Dario Franchitti and Dan Wheldon get bottled up behind lapped traffic on lap 89, allowing third place Dixon to catch and pass both down the backstretch in a daring three-wide move on the inside.
- After finishing in the top five in two of the last three races, Buddy Rice parks the No. 15 machine on lap 166 due to handling problems.
- Jeff Simmons spins off the apron and onto the track when entering pit lane with 11 laps to go. Kosuke Matsuura crashes out of the race trying to avoid him, bringing out the caution.
- Despite the field being bunched up, no one has anything for Dixon, who cruises to his second consecutive win at Nashville and second consecutive of the season, 2.24sec clear of championship rival Franchitti. Danica Patrick ties her career best finish in third.

DRIVER	TEAM	CAR-ENGINE
Scott Dixon	Target Chip Ganassi Racing	Dallara-Honda
Dario Franchitti	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda
Danica Patrick	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda
Sam Hornish Jr.	Team Penske	Dallara-Honda
Marco Andretti	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda

Pole winner: Scott Dixon 204.414mph

He said it: "It's tough because we were running our fastest laps toward the end of the race. I think the green track really changed the complexion of the event this afternoon; if we had run last night I think the race would've been much tighter." **Sam Hornish Jr.**



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Honda 200 at Mid-Ohio

Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, Ohio, July 22
85 laps/191.25 miles

presented by
Westfield
Insurance

- Helio Castroneves, extending his streak of winning the pole at every road/street course race this season, leads the field to the start with Danica Patrick alongside. Patrick's teammates Tony Kanaan and Marco Andretti fill row two, while second and first in points Scott Dixon and Dario Franchitti make up row three.
- AGR's impressive qualifying performance goes out the window in the first corner, as Patrick bobbles and runs off track. Kanaan, in an attempt to avoid hitting his teammate, spins sideways and drives toward the inside of the corner exit; unfortunately, that's where another teammate, Andretti, is driving, trying to avoid the melee. Andretti and Kanaan touch wheels, launching the No. 26 car into a roll. Patrick and Kanaan are able to continue, but Andretti is done.
- On the restart, it was Castroneves followed by Dixon and Franchitti.
- Sam Hornish Jr. spins off course at Turn 1 on lap 47, bringing out a full course yellow. The 2006 series champion goes on to finish 14th, one lap down.
- Vitor Meira becomes the second and final car out of the race on lap 54 with mechanical issues.
- Dixon, who is celebrating his 27th birthday, inherits the lead from Franchitti on lap 76 when the points leader pits for fuel. Dixon leads the final nine laps to take his third consecutive win.

DRIVER	TEAM	CAR-ENGINE
Scott Dixon	Target Chip Ganassi Racing	Dallara-Honda
Dario Franchitti	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda
Helio Castroneves	Team Penske	Dallara-Honda
Tony Kanaan	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda
Danica Patrick	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda

Pole winner: Helio Castroneves 121.620mph

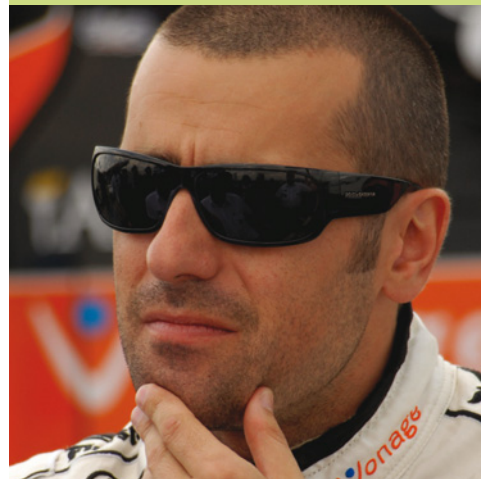
He said it: "We all can't fit through there. It's a bummer when people act that way on starts and things just get crazy. This isn't the first time. I tried the outside and that was not going to work because I thought Danica was off the track so I wanted to get all the way over to the right to avoid contact. It's a bummer for the NYSE team because we had a race-winning car." **Marco Andretti**



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Blow by blow



Driver standings after 12 of 17 races

Rank	Driver	Points
1	Dario Franchitti	474
2	Scott Dixon	450
3	Tony Kanaan	363
4	Dan Wheldon	357
5	Sam Hornish Jr.	345
6	Helio Castroneves	323
7	Danica Patrick	297
8	Scott Sharp	284
9	Tomas Scheckter	255
10	Vitor Meira	253
11	Buddy Rice	245
12	Marco Andretti	239
13	Darren Manning	238
14	Ed Carpenter	216
15	Jeff Simmons	201
16	Sarah Fisher	200
17	A.J. Foyt IV	199
18	Kosuke Matsuura	189
19	Milka Duno	69
20	Alex Barron	41

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NO MORE MR. GRUFF GUY

Scott Dixon is a changed man, and part of the blame falls on his fiancée, Emma. So, who better to coax the juicy quotes from him....

Interview moderated by Jeff Olson • Photo by Roderick Trestrail

Long one of the most intriguing and enigmatic characters in the IndyCar Series, Scott Dixon hasn't been himself lately. He's actually been *smiling*. Incessantly.

Normally, Dixon, the 27-year-old New Zealander whose life has been all about racing since childhood, is intense and reserved. He's always been friendly and engaging to those who know him, but he's also been guarded in his approach publicly. Until recently, he didn't smile much or let many people in. The perception was that he was too serious and too grim.

Not this year. Throughout the 2007 season, Dixon has been spotted being at ease. Not just happy, but downright giddy. Smiling, talking, laughing. Completely comfortable.

Knowing the reason behind the new, content Scott Dixon – his fiancée, Emma Davies – we asked her to interview the formerly dour driver just prior to Watkins Glen and see what

makes him tick. No questions were considered out of line, but the theme was simple: *Who is this smiling guy and what has he done with Scott Dixon?*

Emma: Scott, you're second in the point standings right now; but, unfortunately, quite a few points behind. Do you still think you have a realistic chance to win the championship?

Scott: We are lots behind at the moment, which is very tough, considering that we've got four road courses left, and Dario is very strong on those. Personally, I think we've got a great shot and we can still win the championship. I don't like to say this, but I think Dario is due for some bad luck. The bad races that he's had – like Texas and St. Pete – the series helped him out. He still gained good points. Not that I wish bad luck on him, but I hope some of it heads out his way because we've had plenty of it. ▶

(Main) The 2003 IndyCar Series champion faces his toughest interviewer yet...the woman he's going to marry. **(Below)** On his way to the hat trick at Watkins Glen in July

DIXON'S STATS @
www.indycar.com



LAT MIDWEST





Paul Webb/LAT

Emma: What have you been happy with, and unhappy with, so far this season?

Scott: I've been happy with our consistency. We've had three fourths and four seconds and two races where we didn't pick up any points. The consistency has been good, but for me, second place is the first loser.

Emma: How difficult was it to finish second at Indianapolis?

Scott: It's a great race to be involved in with the festivities and all, especially living in Indianapolis, but if you don't win it, it seems incomplete. It's nice to see the town change and embrace it, and it's nice to see your friends and family come into town to watch it, but to come up short is frustrating. Coming up short by one spot makes it even harder, especially for the conditions we had this year. It was a bit of a blowup.

Emma: I know you're friends with a lot of the drivers, but which ones do you really admire on the track?

Scott: Dario and TK I get on with really well on the track. I've had my issues with my own teammate and with Sam (Hornish), but that's just competition. It comes your way and goes your way. It's difficult because everybody is so competitive.

Emma: Whose driving style is similar to yours?

Scott: Dario is similar in that he's quiet and out of the spotlight yet he still comes up with great results. I admire TK and Helio because they're so on it and aggressive at all times.

Emma: I keep hearing about this "Iceman." Where did this nickname come from and why are you called the Iceman?

Scott: Iceman came from a PR guy I had. It came from the year I won the Indy Lights championship. I've always been kind of quiet, and some people think I'm moody and pissed off all the time, but I'm just quiet and shy. He actually gave me two names: Iceman and Phantom. Phantom was because he used to

"I'm with a great team and have a great fiancée. I can't complain"

Scott Dixon

organize PR events for me and I'd never turn up. The Phantom still pops up occasionally....

Emma: I hear you've been smiling a lot more in the past year or so, and people feel as if you're more approachable and comfortable at the track. Why is that?

Scott: I don't know. I'm just a lot happier in life, more relaxed. I'm with a great team and have a great fiancée. I feel good at the moment. I can't complain.



Emma: What is the most embarrassing moment in your life – and be honest, because don't forget I know the answer to this.

Scott: Do we have to tell that story?

Emma: Well, we can censor it. Do you not want to tell it?

Scott: I don't mind. OK. I was on a test about a year ago....

Emma: You really might want to censor this...

Scott: ...Emma packed my bag and somehow a pair of her underwear made it into my bag....

Emma: I have no idea how that happened.

Scott: ...Emma was in London, so I took a picture of myself wearing her underwear and e-mailed it to her. Unfortunately, Emma wasn't the only one to see it. She used the computer at her parents' house, and her mother opened the photo and saw it. That's probably the most embarrassing thing that ever happened to me in my life. Obviously, [the underwear]

were quite small. They didn't fit very well.

Emma: He was so angry with me. He wasn't even joking about it. He was so mad.

Scott: Eventually I found it quite funny.

Emma: It somehow turned into a screensaver. For some reason, my mom couldn't get it off the computer screen. She was horrified.

Moderator: So has anyone else seen the photo?

Emma: Just my mother. And maybe my sister. For the record, you will not be getting that photo for this story....

Moderator: Oh, come on. Please?

Emma: We would, but it's been deleted (wink). It's a great photo.

Scott: It was pretty funny.

Emma: OK, other than me, food and water, what could you not live without?

Scott: Racing. It's all I've ever done.

(Top) Consistency may help win championships, but a second at Indy is not what Dixon wanted. (Above) Celebrating the win with Emma and parents Glenys and Ron at Nashville

Emma: What makes you nervous away from racing?

Scott: Questions like this. Big public speaking events, especially when I go back home. I get more nervous when I do big events at home because people might know me a little better.

Emma: What is your favorite breakfast, lunch and dinner?

Scott: My favorite breakfast would be crepes. I'd have to have Mexican and I'd have to have sushi.

Emma: We're having a dinner party and you can invite four guests. Who would you invite?

Scott: I'd have to invite you or I'd be in trouble.

Emma: Yes, you would.

Scott: Ayrton Senna. He could give me some driving tips, and he was a fantastic guy. Dave Chappelle, because he's a funny SOB, and Anthony Hopkins. He's my favorite actor, and he pulls off the Kiwi accent pretty well in his movie, *The World's Fastest Indian*.

Emma: When was the last time you read a book and what was it?

Scott: I last read a book a couple of months ago. It was Mark Ellis' *Crossing the Line*.

Emma: Are you a book reader?

Scott: I'm not much of a book reader. I'm really more of a magazine guy, and I like to watch DVDs. Mark is a guy I've met a few times. He was a rugby player for the All Blacks in New Zealand, and he does a lot of TV. He's pretty funny. I've been on a couple of his shows. His book is really a good read. To understand some of it, you'd probably have to be from New Zealand or Australia.

Emma: If you could do anything with your life outside of racing, what would you do?

Scott: I think I'd probably be involved in some type of athletics.

Emma: Hey! You said you'd be in a boy band! You're such a liar! (Laughing.)

Scott: Can you imagine me being in a boy band? My teammate possibly could be. I don't think I could. ■

the final four

It will take a well-rounded driver to master the diversity of circuits at season's end

Words by Dave Lewandowski • Photo by Robert Laberge/Getty Images



Scott Dixon draws parallels between the current IndyCar Series championship chase he's deeply involved in and the final four events of the 2003 season – the physical and mental preparation for each race, the sizing up opponents and opportunities, and spending that extra 10 minutes with your race engineer to potentially unearth a winning strategy.

Then the Target Chip Ganassi Racing driver pauses midsentence when the X factors cross paths with his recollections. Whereas the final four events of '03 were contested on ovals – from the one-mile Nazareth Speedway to the two-mile California Speedway – this year two road/street venues complement speedfests on the 1.5-mile Kentucky and Chicagoland high-banked ovals.

Consecutive weekends – 80 laps on the physically demanding natural-terrain Infineon Raceway course and 90 laps on a refurbished Detroit Belle Isle street circuit – bisect the ovals, adding intrigue for fans and challenges/opportunities for the multiple contenders. It's playing out like the Indy Racing League intended when last summer it was arranging the stars and moons for the 17-race schedule.

"It will be challenging, no doubt," says Indy Pro Series driver coach Rick Mears, a three-time national champion who knows a thing or two about pressure-packed title chases on a variety of racetracks. "There are tracks that could trip up a contender if they have an off day, or help someone in the [championship] race."

It's the second time in series history that road/street races have played into the final four. In 2005, Dan Wheldon's points lead wasn't necessarily secure after an 18th place in the inaugural race at Infineon Raceway (he held a 97-point advantage over Sam Hornish Jr. after Pikes Peak the previous week). Wheldon was able to hold his ground with a victory at Chicagoland and clinched the title with a fifth place in the series' debut at Watkins Glen International.

The venue lineup has been altered from '05 and new personalities have joined the expedition. But the constant is performance on both ovals and courses that include numerous right-hand turns. None of the contenders hold a decided advantage on any of the racing surfaces

PHOTO GALLERY
key moments of the
season so far
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Michael L. Levitz/LAT



Dan Strech/LAT

(Sam Hornish Jr. and Wheldon do have two wins each at Chicagoland, and Hornish has packed in two wins at Kentucky by virtue of his longevity).

But this is guaranteed in the hunt: The master of the quartet will reap the most rewards at the season-ending banquet Sept. 11 in Indianapolis.

"In '03, it was totally hard out," says Dixon, whose runner-up finishes in the final three races secured the title by 18 points over Penske Racing's hard-charging Gil de Ferran. "We had an extremely fast car, but had a lot of problems with reliability and we crashed in a couple of races. But we never had the issue of speed, so we always tried to go out and win. I remember races like St. Louis. We were miles ahead and had a gearbox problem, and the same at ▶

(Main) Anything is possible, but it certainly appears that the title fight will come down to Scott Dixon and Dario Franchitti. **(Top right)** The IndyCar Series will bring racing back to the streets of Belle Isle in Detroit before the series' finale takes place at Chicagoland Speedway **(above right)**, two very different circuits

"It will be challenging. There are tracks that could trip up a contender if they have an off day"

Rick Mears



Dan Sorecky/LAT

“Each race poses different threats and provides different opportunities”

Sam Hornish Jr.



Paul Weisby/LAT

Nazareth and Phoenix. It was just so many races that we had a good shot at winning.

“That was a different year. This year the cars are very reliable, everybody is very consistent. So if you have a bad race it takes a toll. We just have to keep applying the pressure.”

Consistency on all four surfaces is important, but drivers are cognizant that the quickest route to the \$1 million championship bonus is via race victories, which are worth 50 points each. Add three points for most laps led, and it’s a tidy sum that’s difficult to overcome.

In last year’s push, Hornish left Michigan International Speedway trailing Team Penske teammate Helio Castroneves by eight points after a water pump issue relegated the reigning Indianapolis 500 champion to 19th place. A victory from the front row two weeks later at Kentucky Speedway was the catalyst to his unprecedented third series crown.

The final push for the title begins on the 1.5-mile Kentucky Speedway (above), where three-wide racing is common, before switching to the rolling and twisting Infineon Raceway (top)

“Last year, we lost the points lead at Michigan and it wasn’t looking real good for us,” Hornish says. “We went into Kentucky thinking, ‘This is where we’re going to win or lose the championship.’ We were able to not only run good all day long, but also win the race and lead the most laps, which brought us right back into the points lead. Then when we went to [Infineon] and it was all about maintaining, not making a mistake and giving ourselves an opportunity to fight for the championship at the last race at Chicago.”

Hornish reached his goals, finishing ninth at Infineon and running third to Wheldon’s first at Chicago to claim the season-long race on the first tiebreaker (four victories to two) after they were equal in points.

“Each one of those races we went into with a different mentality,” Hornish says. “If we’re in a fight for the championship this year, we’re going

to have that same kind of mentality. Each one poses different threats and provides different opportunities for success.”

Castroneves finished two points off the ‘06 pace and Dixon 15, which illustrates the mastery (and a dose of luck) required in the final four lineup. Dixon closed with runner-up positions at Kentucky and Chicago and a fourth at Infineon, but the damage from a 16th place at Infineon was too much to overcome. Even falling three spots from his pole start at Infineon robbed Dixon of valuable points.

“A mistake is going to cost you dearly,” says Dixon, who notes that drivers prefer to be out front – in individual events and the season race – rather than being the pursuer. “You have to be consistent, but you have to go in there with the mind-set of winning the race. You have to try to get back to the points lead anytime you can.”

Consistency throughout the season so far ▶

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rewarded Dario Franchitti and the No. 27 Canadian Club crew with a perch atop the standings. Seventh place in the opener at Homestead-Miami Speedway, in which a chunk of debris penetrated the floorboard of his Dallara chassis to create a nice view of the asphalt under the lights, has been his low point through 12 of 17 rounds. The high, of course, has been victory in the rain-interrupted 91st Indianapolis 500. He added consecutive victories on the short tracks of Iowa Speedway and Richmond International Raceway to compound his advantage.

Heading into the stretch run, there's a fine line that plays into a race driver's psyche – not looking too far ahead but salivating at tracks where history has been on their side.

"You have to take them individually because they are different," Franchitti says of the schedule that plays out over five weekends. "I don't think you can afford to be weak in any one. That's the tough thing. Belle Isle, I have a lot of experience on and [Infineon] I have the same as everyone else. Chicago, I've only raced on twice (without favorable results).

"Kentucky is more of a handling track, where Chicago is just out and out speed. [Infineon] is a peculiar road course with all the elevation changes; it's very physical. Detroit is a typical



Jonathan Ferrey/Getty Images

Sam Hornish Jr. won at Kentucky and held steady at Infineon before a third place at Chicago sealed his third title in 2006



Michael L. Levitz/LAT

street course and I'm looking forward to going back there."

Hornish, with his four victories between Kentucky and Chicago, in mid-July was calculating point possibilities from continued success at those facilities.

"Anytime you go to a place that you've had success in the past, you always are excited to go back," he says. "Kentucky and Chicago are totally different because of banking and smoothness of the tracks. Kentucky always seems to be pretty hot and the track is bumpy, which makes it a different setup from Chicago. That track is super-smooth, which creates a lot of opportunities for two- and three-wide racing. [Infineon] is one of the more physical tracks that we'll run at all year long. You have fewer opportunities to pass there than what you do at Watkins Glen and St. Petersburg.

"Of all the races we'll run all year long, [Infineon is] one of the most important track-position races we'll run. I've never been to Belle Isle; Helio has been super-strong there [winning

the last two races]. That should play into Team Penske's favor. Of all the non-oval courses that we do, it seems I run better on the street courses than I have on permanent road courses.

"I look forward to the disparity of the different tracks that we run."

Andretti Green Racing's Tony Kanaan, who recorded 15 consecutive top-five finishes en route to the 2004 IndyCar Series title, also appreciates the diversity that has seeped into the final four. He's especially happy with the Infineon (2005 victory) and Belle Isle (1999 Indy car racing victory) dates. But it won't – "it can't" – affect his approach this year.

"My mentality is the same as every year: let's go for the championship and win as many races as we can to make this team win a championship," Kanaan says. "If it's not me, then Dario.

"I think anybody in the top six in the championship can't afford to do anything wrong. It's going to be minimizing the mistakes and whoever has the strongest car those four races will win the championship." ■

BACK AND FORTH

Preparing cars for widely different tracks in a short time span is a challenge for teams

Approximate miles traveled by team transporters between the final four events of the IndyCar Series season: 5000.

Miles put on Firestone Firehawks of IndyCar Series' Honda-powered Dallaras in those races: 972.

Logistics and preparation will play large roles in the championship chase as the series shifts from Kentucky Speedway to the natural-terrain Infineon Raceway course in Sonoma, Calif., to Detroit's Belle Isle street course and, finally, to Chicagoland Speedway. That's four events in the span of five weeks to close the 17-event schedule.

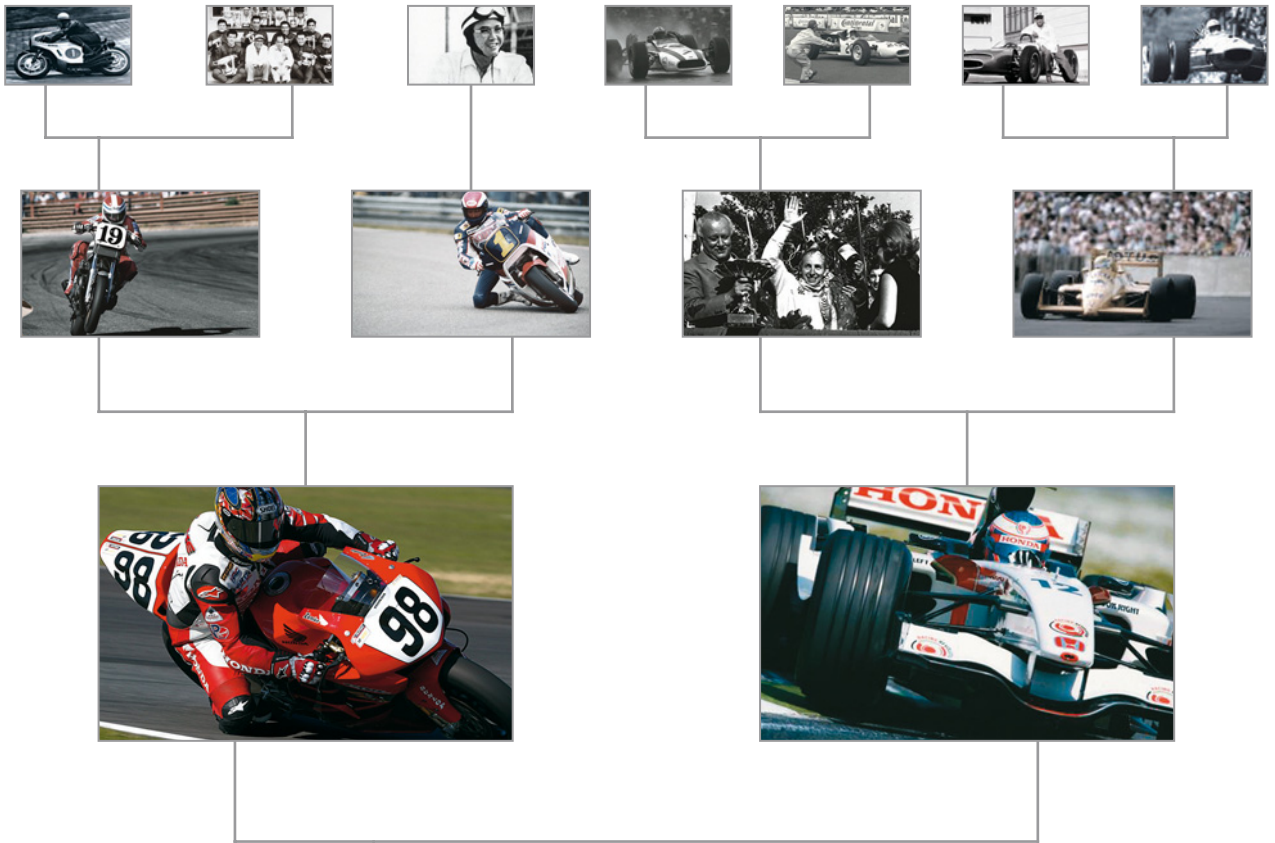
"We plan ahead and prepare ovals cars for Kentucky and then we do back-to-back road course events. That certainly helps us," says Target Chip Ganassi Racing team manager Barry Wanser. "Then you have the time to prepare [an oval car] for the last race of the year at Chicagoland."

With so much on the line, nothing can be left to chance. Compounding the demands on crews is conversion of oval to road course packages (if the same chassis is used) twice, which is about a six-hour process.

"It's definitely going to be tough getting back from Sonoma and having only one day to prepare the cars for Detroit," Wanser says. "We don't reduce the service we perform on the cars based on the back-to-back events. All of the preventive maintenance for the next event will still get done, but it will get done on one day instead of two or three days with no time off."

The impact on drivers isn't as pronounced, though their physical and mental preparations and numerous engineering meetings are time-consuming. Once acclimated to the surroundings, their goal is to put the car in Victory Circle.

"One thing is you don't want to have is any mishaps because that could throw off the whole car-build sequence, and you want all the guys focused 100 percent on doing the best job they can at the track," says Andretti Green Racing's Dario Franchitti. "We don't want any unnecessary distractions."



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NEW FOCUS

Danica Patrick is rising to the challenge with Andretti Green Racing

Words by Richard S. James • Main photo by Brian Konoske

High expectations can be a real motivator; but they also can drag you down when the presumptions and results don't quite match. It all depends on how one responds to pressure.

Danica Patrick certainly faced high expectations when Andretti Green Racing announced she would be joining the *über* team and drivers Marco Andretti, Dario Franchitti and Tony Kanaan for the 2007 season after two years with Rahal Letterman. Groomed by team owner Bobby Rahal after she finished second in the famed Formula Ford Festival at Brands Hatch in England, she showed promise in her 2005 rookie year in the IndyCar Series. Stellar

performances in her first Indianapolis 500, where she led 19 laps before finishing fourth, and in scoring three poles that year made a lot of people notice. Then she faced a bit of a sophomore slump.

The move to AGR was hailed by her fans as the opportunity to really show what she's capable of. It was also met by her critics as the final proof that she's nothing more than a marketing tool based on her beauty, not her talent behind the wheel. Talk about pressure....

Apparently, Patrick responds well to pressure. While she's still seeking that first victory in the IndyCar Series (as this is written, at least), her results on track indicate that it's

not long in coming. A couple of thirds and a surprise qualifying performance at Mid-Ohio – second, ahead of all her teammates – have many people taking a fresh look at the 25-year-old racer. A good deal of the credit goes to her teammates and crew at AGR and the way they work as a unit.

"We've been mixing it up in the front, definitely more than last year," says Patrick. "It's a very supportive team, and that's why you see so many of us drivers up front at the same time – because of how well we work together and how hard we work behind the scenes."

Some of that work includes help with setup; one of the benefits of a multi-car team is more ►



PHOTO GALLERY
Danica's season
highlights so far
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Dan Streck/LAT

data to work with. Several times this year, AGR drivers, especially two-time 2007 winner Kanaan and IndyCar Series points leader Franchitti, have stepped into different cars to help set them up. However, Patrick notes that she's received a big education at AGR on the technical side of racing.

"The best part of AGR is having resources from all perspectives and all angles to help you. I have learned the most about engineering and the car and just the technical aspect of it – much more than I ever knew before. That's going to help in the days when I'm not going to have teammates to rely on for the exact changes we should be making."

Newfound technical expertise aside, her results this year are likely the product of her new team's efforts to strengthen her as a racer.

"They're a team that has pushed me from so many different aspects of driving that I never really put a lot of effort into before," she explains. "That's what I think is helping me finish better, because I'm more well rounded from all angles. That's helping me in specifics, too, because I'm pushing every single second that I'm in the car, and that's something that I can't say I always did before."

That showed in her results at Texas, where she nearly pushed Kanaan around Sam Hornish Jr. for the win, leaving Kanaan practically gushing with enthusiasm about her performance after the race. She followed that with another third-place finish at Nashville before surprising almost everyone, possibly including herself, at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, where she made it into the Firestone Fast Six in qualifying, ending up second on the grid and finishing fifth after a first-turn bobble. That result seems

to refute her opinion about one of her self-recognized shortcomings.

"The thing I need to improve on the most is to get the best out of the car on the road course. I seem to do all right in race conditions. Whatever I do in the car is consistent throughout the weekend. Whether there are new tires on the car, whether it's full of fuel or empty, it's the same. It can't be like that. If you can do something with the car when it's full of fuel and it's moving all over the place, then you should be able to do more with it in optimal conditions."

(Above) Patrick may have surprised herself with her performance at Mid-Ohio, her best yet on an IndyCar Series road course. (Below) One of AGR's strengths is the willingness between teammates to share ideas

That's one area where she says she thinks her teammates will be able to help. And while she's certainly been getting a lot of help in improving her results this season, she notes it's hardly a one-way street. AGR's fortunes have turned around remarkably in 2007, and while Patrick isn't the sole, or even biggest, reason for that reversal, her presence certainly hasn't hurt the team that has earned five victories this season.

"You have to earn respect and you have to be a team player to start with for sure, and put yourself out there because you're the new



Paul Webby/LAT



“You have to earn respect and you have to be a team player”

Danica Patrick



Paul Webb/LAT

LAT Midwest

person. But Mike [team co-owner Michael Andretti] wouldn't have asked me to drive for the team if he didn't think I was going to be a good fit, and he said that from the beginning. I think I'm already starting off in a place that will mesh with the drivers who are already there. I think he also saw a good dynamic with drivers who are more veteran and had been there a lot longer, and then drivers who were younger...you know, little fireballs who just needed a little guidance, so I think he's got a good mix," she says.

"The main objective and point to Andretti Green Racing is that there are drivers who get along, drivers who mesh well, and are similar in characteristics, because it's a very close-knit team," she continues. "You talk a lot, you tell each other about your car a lot, you spend a lot of time together off track. Ultimately, the most important thing is that you have fun and you respect each other and know that there's a little bit of giving and taking within the team when you work so closely, and I think that really pays off when you see how

(Above left) Patrick is always in demand for autographs, and her merchandise trailer does big business. (Above right) She backed up her solid run at Texas with a third at Nashville

well we are doing, and there's always a couple of cars up front."

She freely admits that one of the main things she has brought to the team is sponsorship; the Motorola deal brought some significant money to the team, and race teams need money. She is, after all, a marketer's dream with her looks, her talent and, although she's not the only one, being a woman in a still largely male-dominated sport. The driver ranked seventh in the standings at the end of July probably appears in more advertising than the rest of the IndyCar Series drivers combined – Peak Antifreeze, Tissot watches, AirTran, Go Daddy.com and others have featured her in campaigns.

Money and marketing are nice, but what matters in racing are results. Now the good results are starting to come, and come more regularly. (Her short-haired teammates, Kanaan and Franchitti, are already plotting how to shear her long black hair when she wins – "I would cry for five years straight," she says). It appears she and AGR are a nice fit.

"I have been pushing myself in areas where I wasn't really pushing or thinking about a lot in recent years," Patrick says. "I've mostly been focusing on trying to do an ultimate lap, and forgetting about all the rest of the stuff that plays a huge part in winning races and finishing up front. It means a lot to have guys like Marco and TK and Dario and the whole team – engineers, owners, everything – completely believe in you. Those are guys who have won tons of races and they've seen good drivers come through, so that's a big confidence booster when you have people around you who don't doubt you for a second." ■



Jeff Blocham/LAT

Patrick celebrates on the podium at the Formula Ford Festival in 2000

DANICA PATRICK'S CAREER AT A GLANCE

Danica Patrick says she took up racing in 1992 at age 10 because her younger sister, Brooke, wanted to try it. Brooke gave it up a short time later, but it sent Danica on a journey that would lead to the Indianapolis 500.

After winning several karting championships, she headed to England to compete in the Formula Vauxhall Championship. She finished ninth in the series in 1999 and switched to Formula Ford the next year, truly setting her course for the big time.

By finishing second at the prestigious Formula Ford Festival at Brands Hatch in 2000, she made the American racing world take notice. Two years later she was signed with Team Rahal and on her way to the Toyota Atlantic Championship. She had five top-five finishes in that series in 2003 to finish sixth in the championship, and then doubled her top-five finishes, won a pole and had one second-place finish the next year on her way to third in the championship points.

She made her IndyCar Series debut with Rahal Letterman Racing in 2005, winning the Bombardier Rookie of the Year after finishing 12th in the point standings. She led the Indianapolis 500 and scored three pole positions in her rookie year.

ANGELS IN ORANGE

Roderick Trestrail follows the Delphi Safety Team around Nashville Superspeedway, camera at the ready

Despite the advances in safety over the years, racing is still a dangerous sport. Smack a wall at upward of 200mph, and there's a real chance for injury; even if the driver is fine, it's going to make a hell of a mess. Fortunately for the IndyCar Series drivers, there's a team of professionals ready to assist an injured driver, or clean up the inevitable debris.

They have been present for every IndyCar Series race since the start of the Indy Racing League. The Delphi Safety Team, a group of 45 safety personnel based in Indianapolis, is the bunch dressed in those spiffy orange firesuits. On any given race weekend, approximately 20 members – two trauma doctors, 12 firefighters, five paramedics, and one coordinator – are staffing a race. Team

members have an average of 20 years of experience in their respective field.

"Every time one of our safety vehicles approaches an accident, there is usually close to 100 years of combined experience inside that truck. During an incident, our goal is to be by the driver's side in less than 30 seconds," says Dave Brown, track safety coordinator for the sanctioning Indy Racing League. ▶





“During an incident, our goal is to be at the driver’s side in less than 30 seconds”

Dave Brown



The team members position themselves in four vehicles located at various points around the track for each session. Located inside Command One, Brown works alongside Dr. Terry Trammell, an orthopedic surgeon and expert on motorsports injuries. Before coming to work for the IndyCar Series, Trammell served as Medical Director and consultant for CART from 1984-'95; he was also the consultant for orthopedic injuries at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway from 1982-'95.

At Nashville Superspeedway, the Delphi Team has the support of 60 additional local emergency medical personnel. A local track safety coordinator is positioned high above the track in the race operations room. In Nashville, this man is Jim Norman, a firefighter with more than 30 years on the job. During practice sessions and the race he will direct traffic for all fire trucks, tow trucks, ambulances and safety vehicles.

Command One is a Honda Pilot equipped with a dashboard warning light system to

alert them when track conditions change. The vehicle also has a wireless laptop computer, life-saving medical equipment, XM Satellite Radio, visor-mounted TV monitors, a satellite TV receiver and dual-facing cameras that capture footage of the accident and rescue effort. This footage can then be sent to trauma personnel waiting in the infield care center. The other vehicles are Honda Ridgelines outfitted with the same warning lights and cameras, plus a Holmatro hydraulic spreader and cutter, a DeWalt 24-volt reciprocating saw, a vehicle diaper to trap leaking fluids, extinguishers filled with Cold Fire (a recipe specifically designed for ethanol fires) and oil dry (a fine powder designed to absorb fluids). All four vehicles can tow cars from the track.

The Delphi Safety Team follows a rigorous, meticulously planned schedule. For Nashville, they arrive at the track by 9 a.m. Thursday – the day before any official practice sessions – and the first safety meeting of the weekend

(Above left) Dave Brown monitors the track from Command One. That vehicle not only carries one of the best docs in the business in Dr. Terry Trammell (above right), but also is very well equipped with life-saving equipment, radios, computers and cameras. (Top right) Mike Yates examines the pieces from Milka Duno's testing crash

begins 30 minutes later. From there the team splits up to begin preparing the safety vehicles and checking the radios. Team leaders Dave Brown and Mike Yates will supervise the two-seater rides given from 10-12. A quick lunch followed by data analysis of other crashes will keep the guys busy until 2, when it's time to go back to the two-seater rides.

IndyCar Series rookie Milka Duno has her own test session today; unfortunately, she crashes in Turn 4 and slides down the straightaway coming to a stop before the start/finish line. The team responds to her accident the same way they would for race day: Duno is transported via ambulance to the infield hospital while the crew removes the car and clears the track of debris. The good news is that she is uninjured; the bad news is that she will not be racing this weekend. Mike Yates then heads back to her garage to photograph the vehicle's damage that will later be analyzed to determine if and how any safety measures may be improved.



Friday starts with another safety meeting at 7:30 a.m., led by Brown and Yates, to brief all of the local safety personnel of IndyCar Series procedures regarding on-track fires, how to help an injured driver, and how to remove a vehicle from the track. After the conclusion of this hour-long meeting, the team will prepare the trucks to be in position for the first practice session at 10 a.m. When this session ends at noon, they will sweep and inspect the track for debris. The team takes a brief lunch and then heads back into position for the start of the second practice. After practice, they will refuel trucks and analyze more accident data before qualifications that end at 6:15.

At noon on race day, the team will begin checking the safety vehicles, the equipment and radios for the race scheduled to start at 6:30 p.m. They begin sweeping the track and inspecting safety barriers. At 3 p.m. they will be in position for the Indy Pro Series race. After that 77-lap race ends, the team heads back out to the track for a final sweep

and inspection. They are back in position shortly after the cars are placed on the grid at 5:30. Unfortunately, the rain begins to come down as the drivers prepare to strap into their cars. All attempts to dry the track, including circulating all the safety vehicles, prove to be futile and the race is rescheduled for Sunday at noon.

(Above) The trio of Honda Ridgeline safety trucks are equipped with everything needed to respond to – or clean up after – an incident

The postponed race proves to be what the Delphi Safety Team always wishes for: a clean, fast race with no major accidents.

At the end of the race, the team prepares to depart Nashville – place the vehicles on the transporter, return their radios, change out of the firesuits and head to the Smyrna airport. Two days in the office, and it's off to Mid-Ohio. ■



NOT SO QUIET

Although the Nashville race was fairly uneventful, with only a couple of minor incidents to which the Delphi Safety Team needed to respond, the following race at Mid-Ohio began with a bang. Marco Andretti rolled after contact with a spinning Tony Kanaan; but the Delphi Safety Team, with the help of local emergency personnel and SCCA corner workers, got him back on his wheels.

DINNER DATE

Panther teammates Kosuke Matsuura and Vitor Meira sample some sushi

Words by Jeff Olson • Photos by Steve Swope

Dinner is about to be served, but Kosuke Matsuura has other ideas. He's searching through his cell phone for a photo. On a recent drive, he passed a large transporter painted with the "Girls Gone Wild" logo. The perfect sponsor, he jokes, finding the photograph and showing it to his dinner guests. It emits a run of jokes and laughter, and Matsuura, as usual, is the life of the party.

His teammate, Vitor Meira, has joined Matsuura for dinner at Sakura, an Indianapolis sushi restaurant, and Matsuura is showing Meira the finer points of Japanese cuisine. The two are frequent dinner and workout companions, taking their alliance beyond the doors of Panther Racing headquarters in Indianapolis. Cultural differences aside – Meira is Brazilian, Matsuura Japanese – they've become good friends, turning their mutual interest in racing into a camaraderie that extends beyond the racetrack.

"We don't necessarily have the same interests," Meira says. "Kosuke likes golf, watches and tanning. I like to train. But we still manage to share a bond and hang out together. We're both interested in the same thing – racing – and we relate to each other because of that."

Meira teases Matsuura about his golfing prowess and his penchant for winning bets on the golf course. "Everybody is his ATM," Meira jokes, before turning to Matsuura. "[Darren] Manning is your ATM. A.J. [Foyt IV] is your ATM." Matsuura laughs, "A.J. is my ATM."

The question, then – do teammates really hang out together? – has been answered as the sushi arrives.

Together, they visit the gym regularly,



fraternize at the shop almost daily during the season, and – as they do on this summer evening in Indianapolis – get together for dinner.

"We hang out together four or five days a week," Meira says. "It's mainly at the shop and working out, but we also go to restaurants. I tend to spend more time biking and doing things like that, and he spends time golfing. We spend time together when we can. We go out to eat Japanese food, especially during the winter. Where we spend time the most is working and dinner."

Matsuura echoes Meira's observation on their downtime activities. Meira's passion is working



out – running, cycling, swimming. He's even mentioned that in retirement he'd like to attempt to become a professional triathlete. Meanwhile, golf is Matsuura's obsession, and he gets away for a round whenever he can spare the time during the season.

"When the season starts, it's difficult to find time," Matsuura says. "Vitor doesn't play golf at all, and you need someone to play golf with. So if I can find someone, I'll play. During the season, I'll go to the shop and chat with my engineer and hang out with the guys, then maybe do some karting and go home and hang out at the pool and maybe go tanning."

(Top left) Welcome to my world, says Kosuke Matsuura to Panther Racing teammate Vitor Meira before checking out the menu (left). They ignore common advice to never see how your food is prepared (above)

"He's big on tanning," Meira says, comparing arms with his teammate. "He's darker than me." Matsuura instructs Meira on the identities of the various types of sushi on the plate in front of him. Tuna, yellowtail, snapper, Japanese amberjack, salmon, shrimp. Most stateside interpretations of sushi are Americanized, Matsuura says, much like American versions of Mexican food. Not too spicy, not too exotic. But this version meets his approval.

Both drivers live in Indianapolis but travel home at times during the off-season. However, Meira and Matsuura spend extensive time during the off-season in Indianapolis. ▶

"We hang out four or five days a week"

Vitor Meira



“What I do is not work. I don’t feel the need for a hobby”

Vitor Meira

“I was thinking the other day that I need a hobby,” Meira says. “I really don’t have a hobby, something I really like to do. I like video games, like the Formula 1 game, but that’s off and on. Indianapolis isn’t really the place for it, but I’d love to try windsurfing. It’s really hard on the upper body. I’d have to learn, and you can’t really get windsurfing lessons in Indianapolis.”

Matsuura chuckles as Meira continues. “You can’t really take out an ad that says, ‘Hobby wanted.’”

He pauses. He really doesn’t need a hobby,



Meira seems to get on with the chopsticks fairly well...something he learned from his teammate? (Top right) The Panther pair enjoy a laugh at the track – a common theme with the duo

LAT Midwest

since he’s already got one. It’s racing.

“What I do here is not work,” Meira says to Matsuura’s agreement. “This is my hobby, my full-time hobby. I don’t wake up in the morning and say, ‘Ugh, I have to go to work.’ I don’t feel the need for a hobby because I’m consumed by my job. The job is entertaining enough that the need for a hobby isn’t there.”

With the hectic racing schedule, is there time during the season to have a social life?

“The team spends more time in the shop during the season, so they have no social life during the season,” Meira says. “But when the

season ends, they have their families and friends there and they have some social life. At that time, we’re basically by ourselves because our families and friends are in another country. That’s the only reason that we have less of a social life than the other guys on the team. They spend more time working on things at the shop than we do.

“When we hang out in the transporter or in the gym, we’re having fun. We’re really enjoying ourselves. The best times I have are in the gym when I’m working out with Kosuke and Hideki [Mutoh, Panther’s Indy Pro Series driver].”

Matsuura goes back to the cell phone and finds a photo of himself and Meira at the gym. Matsuura is wearing a T-shirt that reads “I (heart) Vitor.” Meira laughs at Matsuura’s reaction. The shirts were printed for Meira’s fan club, but Panther team members wanted them. Matsuura found one and surprised his teammate by wearing it during a workout.

“We have a lot of fun,” Meira says. “That’s why when people ask us what we do in our down time to have fun, I’m like, ‘We have fun while we’re racing.’ When we’re not racing, we just stay quiet. It’s not like I can say, ‘We go jet-skiing and golfing and running.’ We have fun doing this.”

As the sushi disappears, the subject returns to golf. Matsuura’s game has earned a reputation around the IndyCar Series, and he’s one of the league’s more popular golfing partners. “I golf a lot with Darren Manning and Tomas Scheckter and A.J. Foyt IV,” Matsuura says. “I golf a lot with the Japanese media, too. When I go back to Japan, I golf with my friends there, but here in the United States, I golf mostly with those people.”

Just how good is Matsuura on the golf course? “I don’t know,” he says, smiling bashfully. “I don’t have a handicap, actually. I’m a very poor golfer.”

Meira bursts into laughter. “He’s a shark,” he says. “He’s trying to get people to play golf with him so he can take their money.”

“I’m no good,” Matsuura says. “Slice, hook ... my shots go everywhere.”

Meira can’t contain his amusement. “Don’t listen to him,” he says. “He’s good.”

Dinner nearly finished, the subject returns to downtime and hobbies...and home. “What I miss is the sun and the beach,” Meira says.

Why not live in Miami like fellow Brazilians Tony Kanaan and Helio Castroneves?

“I’ve considered it, but I don’t know if it’s time yet,” Meira says. “Theoretically, it’s healthier to live where your team is. On the other hand, you have to be ready to drive and be in as good a shape as possible. Being relaxed and having the sun and the outdoors to work out in is ideal, but it also helps to be at the shop as much as possible. I think staying with the team is better.”

Matsuura nods in agreement. The sushi was spectacular, the conversation light and easy.

“I hope we’re not boring dinner guests,” Meira says.

Hardly, my friend. Hardly. ■

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fishSTORY

Teammates Tomas Scheckter and Ed Carpenter spend a day on the water

Words by Dave Lewandowski • Photos by Steve Swope

no one is more startled than Tomas Scheckter when he feels several tugs on the line and gets a glimpse of a silvery body breaking the surface of the placid water.

"Ed, I've caught something!" exclaims Scheckter, who is casting from the bow of his signature MasterCraft X Series ski boat.

"Tom, I think it's a marlin or maybe a barracuda," Ed Carpenter replies in jest from his perch on the stern. "Fight it...don't lose it."

Scheckter cautiously reels in the prize and attempts to remove the plastic worm lure as the largemouth bass frantically flops around on the vinyl seat. Holding it aloft with one hand, Scheckter asks in all seriousness, "What do you think...six pounds, maybe eight?"

"At least," Carpenter says in mock admiration. "He really put up a fight, but you were better."

An independent analysis later estimates a catch of 3lbs., but at this moment an impressed Scheckter thinks it's suitable for mounting. "By Friday, it will be a 20-pounder," Carpenter says out of earshot as his Vision Racing teammate releases the fish.

A few hours of boating are a respite for the drivers of the Nos. 2 and 20 cars during a five-week midsummer grind of the IndyCar Series season. In between hectic race weekends are engineering meetings, physical training regimens, family responsibilities and projects, and just catching up with the mundane (mail, bills, correspondence) that slice into down time.

Jumping into Geist Reservoir – a shallow body of water larger than a pond but not quite a lake that is literally in Scheckter's backyard – the drivers improvise a cardio workout by treading water for 10 minutes. All the while, they're engaged in conversation, dissecting their efforts and results from 24 hours earlier in the Firestone Indy 200 at Nashville Superspeedway.

Both the banter and race talk flow easily under the central Indiana sun. An hour earlier, Carpenter had picked up a radio-controlled helicopter off the kitchen counter and a dialogue ensued about the skill and hazards of flying the gizmo indoors. The conversation evolved into news about a deluxe baby stroller

the Carpenters purchased online that will be put to use this fall.

Theirs is a relationship that transcends racing, though from February to September it dominates conversation. Mutually beneficial, they surmise, is growing Vision Racing's competitiveness in the IndyCar Series.

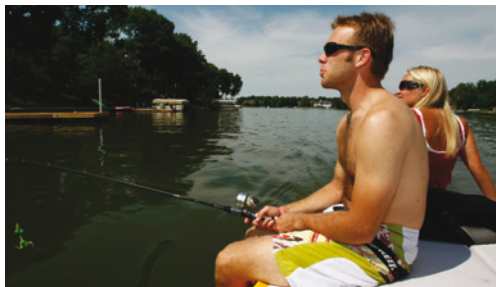
"My relationship with Ed has built a lot over the time we've been here," says Scheckter, who's in his second season driving for the three-car team. "Just us sitting in the water discussing stuff, we have a good understanding of what each other needs in the car, what the team needs. We speak very openly about everything. It's definitely a help because we both think in the same direction.

"A.J. [Foyt IV, whose ski boat is housed next to Scheckter's] has come on board this year. He was a friend of ours before, but I suppose he still needs a little bit more time to build a relationship like the one that Ed and I have together."

The backdrop this afternoon is the tranquil reservoir surrounded by million-dollar homes, but it could be the game room in Scheckter's home, a sushi bar or the transporter at the track. Racing is one conduit for the lad from Speedway, Ind., who contested quarter-midgets and the South African whose father, Jody, was the 1979 Formula 1 champion.

"I'm OK with him on the racetrack, though I wouldn't have a lot of confidence on a wakeboard with him pulling me," Carpenter jokes. "It actually makes the relationship a lot easier when you get ▶





(Below) A day on the water in Tomas Scheckter's Mastercraft X ski boat proved relaxing for Scheckter (left) and teammate Ed Carpenter. (Left) A broken tow rope left some time for fishing





along with somebody and enjoy spending time with them versus some teammates who have to force it to get chemistry together. When your likes and dislikes are similar to begin with, it makes it a lot easier to get the chemistry and the confidence in each other going.

"There are a lot of things we share. We're similar in age (26), we like the same things in race cars, my wife and his girlfriend get along really well. All around, it's been a good relationship."

It works though their demeanors are north and south. It's unlikely that Scheckter's sofa cushion gets warm before he's up doing something else. Carpenter, when he can squeeze it in, "likes to sit on the couch and play video games like the next person," according to his wife, Heather.

"I like to be active," says Scheckter, who acknowledges a highly tuned competitive streak that complements his activity level. "It's part of my fishing behavior, too...keep casting. I think all the drivers are born with a certain amount of competitiveness or we wouldn't be risking as much as we are out there. Anything we do; if you cycle in a group ride you want to cycle good. If you're playing table tennis or tennis you want to do well.

"That's just what we're born with and allows us to push further and further. When sometimes we think we are at the limit in a race car, we can push a little harder. That is part of the makeup that allows us to do that."

Scheckter pushed into the IndyCar Series with Eddie Cheever Jr.'s team in 2002, recording one victory and a rookie-record three pole starts. He moved to Target Chip Ganassi Racing in 2003 for a full season, and then spent two years with Panther Racing. His last victory came in June 2005 at Texas Motor Speedway.

Carpenter's time with Red Bull Cheever Racing also was short-lived after rising from the Indy Pro Series in 2003. He became the first

(Above) Nothing like a dip in the water to cool off on a warm day. (Top) Heather Carpenter (left) and Scheckter's girlfriend, Alicia Zacharkiewicz, relax while the boys swim

driver for start-up Vision Racing, owned by his stepfather Tony George and mother Laura and Patrick Dempsey, in 2005.

"Both of us were at Cheever (Racing), though at different times, but we share a lot of the same experiences," Carpenter says. "That helps us relate a little bit as well."

Both have had nominal success this season, but not nearly enough. They are working together to satiate their lust.

"I realize more now what a team needs than I ever did before," Scheckter says. "I've seen it grow a little bit, but it's so complicated and so much goes into making a quick race car, and team - getting personnel working well together, which aspects are you lacking, etc. I think sometimes when you're in a Ganassi car or a Panther car, when we had Chevy, you just don't realize. You just got in and you were quick and that was it.

"Now me and Ed are always thinking not only about our driving but also what we're lacking on the team, what can we do to improve it. That's where our minds are working hard."

The focus is on improvement for the remainder of the season, which will set the stage for 2008.

"As a driver, sometimes I think those guys take for granted what they have," Carpenter says of the consistent contenders. "In this type of racing, you're only as good as your team, and that's why the relationships, chemistry and communication are so important because the only way you're going to get better is working together. It's hard for one person - driver, engineer - to make the team better.

"I think we have that, but it's a slow process. Penske and Ganassi have been in business for a long time and in their histories they've had their down times. The speed and times we're fighting for used to be tenths of a second and now they are hundredths. You just have to keep working hard, work together as a team and stay focused on the objectives." ■

Ed the Carpenter

The Vision Racing driver enjoys fixing up houses

Jumping into the investment property market with tool belt securely tightened, Ed Carpenter has the perfect surname.

Those fixer-uppers require any and all trade skills accumulated since he embarked on rehabilitating a family home in Speedway, Ind., a few years ago. If only the walls of that residence, at times occupied by A.J. Foyt and Roger McCluskey over the years, could talk.

"I wanted to remodel my house I bought after I graduated from college," said Carpenter, who has since moved to roomier digs in Indianapolis. "It was trial and error. My best friend's dad used to own a lumber company and they built their own homes. I learned a lot from him and his family.

"That first house is just something I enjoyed and everywhere I've gone I've gotten into a little bit bigger of a project and learned how to do something new. It's a lot of work and stressful at times; but most of the time I enjoy it, especially when you see the end result of something you've done with your own hands."

When Tomas Scheckter visited his Vision Racing teammate on a job site recently, he was promptly given a nail gun and orders. No. 1 on the list might have been to avoid serious injury.

"[Using] the nail gun was the decent part, but I would not have the patience to do [remodeling]," says Scheckter, whose hands-on tinkering is more along the lines of motorbikes and four-wheelers. "It's a lot harder than people think, and Ed does a fantastic job."

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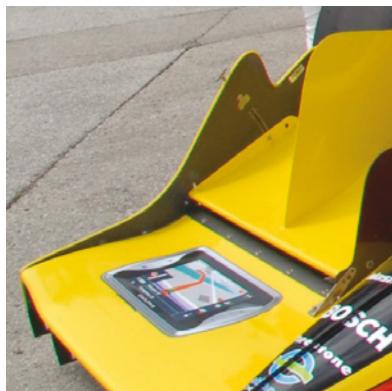
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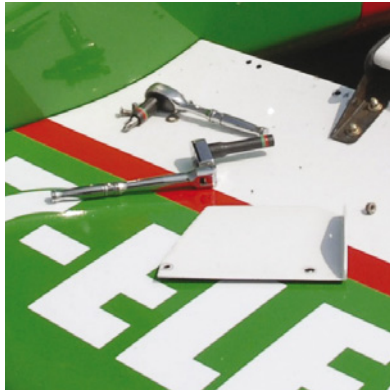
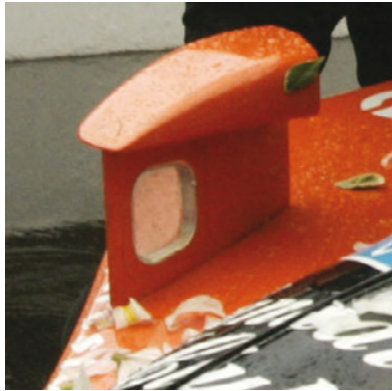
In racing this close, teams turn to aerodynamics to find every little edge



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Words by Richard S. James • Photos by LAT





At any given moment that a race car is on the track, hundreds of things are going on with that car. Its height relative to the track is changing constantly. Tires are spinning at different rates and moving up and down not only relative to the chassis but also relative to each other. The throttle is on, off or somewhere in between. The steering wheel is at 6.36 degrees, now 5.23 degrees, back to 6.41 degrees. All in a fraction of the blink of an eye, and that doesn't even take into account the movement inside the engine or the thousands of calculations performed each second by the electronics.

Most every movement on an IndyCar Series

competition vehicle can be, and is, measured and recorded hundreds of times a second by sophisticated data acquisition systems. Individual wheel speeds, throttle position, steering angle, velocity, g-forces and shock travel are some of the things measured, and that data, along with the feedback from the driver, all go into the engineering decisions made by the team in an attempt to make the car go faster.

What's nearly impossible to measure on track, however, is downforce and drag. Those are the two main components of race car aerodynamics, and one is the engineer's

friend, the other his enemy. Ever since Smokey Yunick slapped a sprint car wing on Jim Rathmann's Watson roadster at Indianapolis Motor Speedway in 1962, engineers have been trying to balance the two. The wing on Rathmann's car allowed significantly faster cornering speeds, but produced so much drag that the lap times actually increased. It may have had the opposite effect of that intended, but it did set auto racing on an irreversible course that now makes wind tunnel testing *de rigueur* in any form of major-league auto racing.

However, what IndyCar Series teams are ▶

looking for in the wind tunnel isn't the next major advancement such as the moveable wing on Jim Hall's Chaparral 2C, nor the suspension-mounted aerofoil on the Chaparral 2E, nor the ground effects pioneered on the Lotus 78 F1 car. No, because the rules are so stringent and the range of what the teams can change so narrow, they are seeking only small gains. But those small gains can make the difference between winning and losing, pole or midpack at 220mph.

"Normally on ovals, we have a minimum flap angle on the rear wing and we have a minimum mandated wicker that goes on the rear wing," explains Les Mactaggart, senior technical director for the IndyCar Series. "We set the minimums, and the teams can play with the whole package as long as they don't go below the minimum settings. On short ovals and road courses, certainly on a road course and road courses, certainly on a road course, we don't specify any wing angle at all. That's completely free for development; the same with wickers.

"They also have specific areas on the car that they can develop, like the design of the front flaps are completely open within specific dimensional parameters. There's a lot of adjustability for them, really. Mirrors are an open area for development. We set dimensional parameters in terms of maximum height, maximum width and length, but within those parameters the design is free."

So, basically – within dimensions set forth by the sanctioning body – the teams are allowed to use alternate mirrors, use different wing endplates, add vertical elements to the front wings on road courses, change radiator inlets and exits and change wing angles and Gurney flaps. In the big picture, it's not much. But several not much can translate into something substantial.

"There's probably a 3mph split on a typical grid, between the pole and the guys in the back, and there are an awful lot of details that make up that three or four miles per hour," says



Michael L. Levitt/LAT

“There are a lot of details that make up that three or four miles per hour”

Julian Robertson

(Above) The differences between cars are subtle, but they're there if you look. (Below) Aerodynamics is a touchy subject and teams do their best to keep wing settings a secret

Julian Robertson, engineer for Target Chip Ganassi Racing. "A change that makes two tenths of a mile per hour is something you keep on the car. Obviously, there's mechanical stuff you can do to the car as well. Mechanical stuff gives you speed and aerodynamic stuff gives you speed. You have to work on the whole package."

To the fan walking through the garage area, the mirror housings are probably the most obvious area of development, with almost every team using its own design. The mirror is a

small part on the car, but because the drivers are so low in the cockpit, the mirror needs to be up high – up in the airflow – to be of any use. However, whether there are significant gains to be found in alternate mirror housings and other bits depends on whom you ask.

"I think what the teams play with is psychological," says Sam Garrett, U.S. technical liaison for Dallara Automobili, the constructor that supplies the chassis for the series. "If you find something that works – in the setup, in the ride height – at the same time you put a different piece on the car, you get people wondering: Is it because of that piece?"

"The only way to make a huge gain with mirrors is to take them off the car," he continues. "The shape of one mirror over another is a relatively small gain." That's an idea that Robertson will agree with, to a point.

"They're a big deal in that you need the whole package to go together," Robertson explains. "Individually, if you changed a mirror for another mirror, it would be an almost imperceptible difference in general. But if you've got a mirror combined with a radiator exit, combined with an undertray Gurney [flap] and a front wing endplate, that package can ▶



Paul Webb/LAT



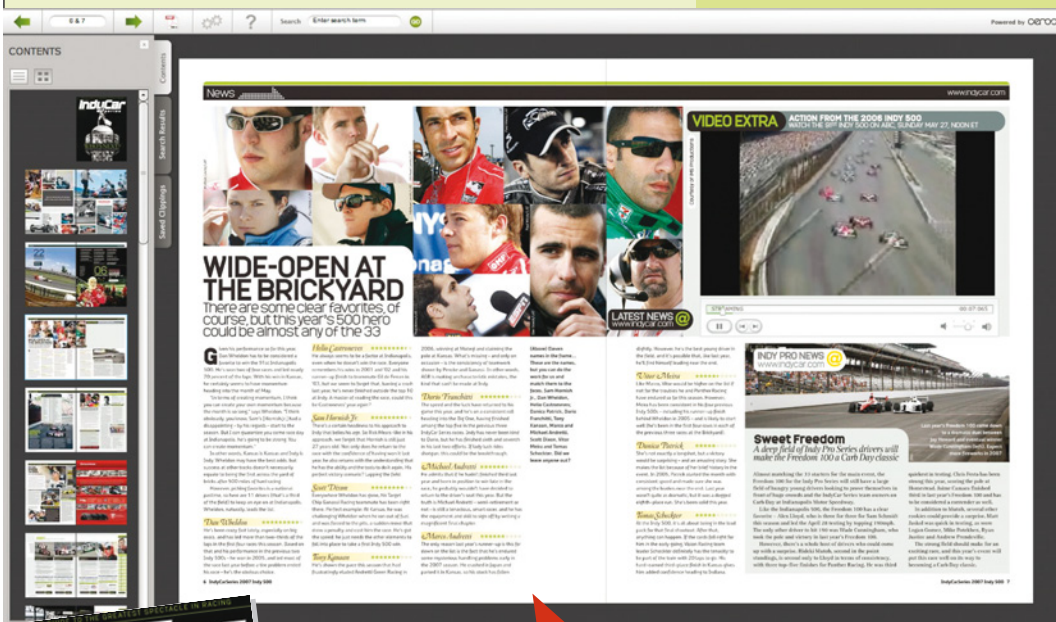
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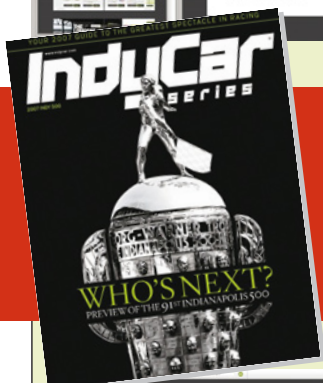
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“With the power out of the equation, that makes the aero more important”

Larry Foyt

start to add up to a significant difference. And when you're racing, if you've got a mile an hour on another car, you can dominate.”

To drive home the whole package point, Robertson notes that teams can change wheelbase at the front of the car. If a team changes that, the shape of the front wing endplate also needs to change. That change affects the airflow going into the undertray and into the radiators, which then affects which radiator exits you need. Now you have an idea why aerodynamics is one of the hardest-to-grasp areas of race car setup.

It's not just the multi-car, well-funded teams that are researching aerodynamics, either. While teams like Penske, Ganassi and Andretti Green may be doing more research into airflow, the other teams recognize how critical it can be as well.

“We did go into the wind tunnel a few times this year – probably not to the scale that other teams have done, and the full piece development they have done,” says Larry Foyt, team director for A.J. Foyt Racing. “I think it has shown in our performance gain and there's more to do. We'll be back [in the wind tunnel] some more over the winter and try to get going even better.”

It might be simpler on the series and the teams to place more restrictions in the rules so that alternate aerodynamic bits are removed from the equation. That, however, would go against the IndyCar Series' ideals, notes Mactaggart.

“The whole philosophy is to try, from a performance aspect, to make the teams with fewer resources, to give them at least the ability to run competitively with the guys who have more resources, but not restrict it to a spec series.” he says. Of course, there is one aspect of the car that is spec – the Honda engine, which all teams are running. And if you can't get more power, the engineers have to find a way to make equal power meet less resistance in order to gain an advantage.

“You've got your handling and your aero and your horsepower to go fast,” says Foyt. “With the horsepower kind of out of the equation, it makes the aero all that much more important.” ■



Chris McGrath/Getty Images

The wings on an IndyCar Series racer are moving enough air and compressing it to squeeze water vapor out of the atmosphere

SHAPED BY THE WIND

Why a Dallara looks like a Dallara

The basic shape of an IndyCar Series racer is determined by the rules – dimensions are spelled out, the series sets certain parameters for certain races, and the end result is a basic shape that is familiar to fans of formula car racing worldwide. However, beyond that, there are reasons that the Dallara IR2 has a unique shape, and much of that has to do with the

fact that the car will be spending a lot of its time at around 200mph and making it push the air aside most efficiently at those speeds.

“There's one thing that's a little unique about this car, it's a pullrod front suspension,” says Sam Garrett, Dallara Automobili U.S. technical liaison. “While respecting all the minimum dimensions of the chassis, we ended up without the dampers sitting on top of the tub and the cowling that goes over the dampers.”

“The shape was determined in the wind tunnel based on the rules we had to work around and the aerodynamic targets we wanted to meet. We found that the pullrod was a lower-drag configuration than the pushrod.” A pullrod suspension mounts the springs and dampers on the bottom of the nose and acts under tension; a pushrod suspension has the springs and dampers on top and acts under compression.

Because of the company's experience in the series, the engineers knew how much downforce they needed for the drivers to keep their foot on the floor at most of the tracks. So the object in designing this generation car, pressed into service in 2003, was to reduce drag as much as possible while generating those minimum levels of downforce.

“You have to design less drag into the car from the beginning,” says Garrett. “It's very difficult to put things on the car to get less drag; it's easy to put stuff on there that gives you more downforce, but very difficult to take away drag. So the shape has evolved over time to get less and less drag while maintaining a reasonable level of downforce.”

The result, he concedes, isn't necessarily the prettiest thing to look at, but beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

“It's not always the most aesthetically pleasing car, but it's the most efficient design we could come up with,” he says. “People are not going to buy our car because it looks nice. They're going to go with the fastest car.”



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THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FENCE

*IndyCar Series drivers enjoy some extracurricular activities –
but no extra credit is given*

Words by Richard S. James • Photos by Michael Levitt/LAT



The versatile, all-around driver is both legendary, and also considered by many to be something of an anachronism in this day and age. The A.J. Foyts who would run anything with wheels on any weekend at any track are largely behind us, and it's unlikely you'll see a driver win the Indianapolis 500, the Daytona 500, the 24 Hours of Le Mans and the 12 Hours of Sebring in his career. Or Indy, a Formula 1 World Championship and the Daytona 500, as Mario Andretti did.

Sure, while some drivers in recent years have attempted the famed Memorial Day weekend double – the Indy 500 and the Coca Cola 600 NASCAR race at Charlotte in the same day – it's fairly unusual to see an IndyCar Series driver sneak in a race at Knoxville or Lime Rock Park on the off weekend between Milwaukee and Texas.

However, come off-season, when a driver

gets that itch only seat time will scratch, there are some options, and many drivers will use those options both as entertainment and to keep their reflexes sharp. Half the IndyCar Series regulars competed in this year's Rolex 24 at Daytona sports car race. Scott Dixon and Dan Wheldon ran up front with third driver Memo Rojas before a crash took them out of contention, denying the pair a repeat of their 2006 victory with Casey Mears (the sister Chip Ganassi with Felix Sabates entry of Scott Pruett, Salvador Duran and Juan Pablo Montoya won the 2007 race). Milka Duno and Darren Manning were part of the squad that finished second.

For many drivers, competing in diverse series is an adventure; for others, it's a return to their roots; and, for some, it might be a glimpse into their future. But the age-old question remains: ▶

“They’re both very fast and have a lot of downforce. I was amazed with the speeds the ALMS car would do”

Tony Kanaan



Tony Kanaan sees both sides now after sampling – and winning in – the Acura ARX-01 at Sebring in addition to his regular gig in the IndyCar Series



LATV/South

(Above) Sam Hornish Jr. has tried the NASCAR Busch Series several times. (Right) Kanaan, Dario Franchitti and Bryan Herta at Sebring. (Opposite) The Ganassi car shared by Dixon and Wheldon at Daytona



Is the grass greener and tastier on the other side of the fence, or just different?

Tony Kanaan certainly found some things to like about the Andretti Green Racing Acura ARX-01 he drove to victory in the 12 Hours of Sebring P2 class – second overall – with his IndyCar Series teammate Dario Franchitti and Bryan Herta, who switched from the IndyCar Series to the American Le Mans Series for 2007.

"The way they corner is very similar," he says when comparing the Indy and ALMS cars. "They're both very fast and have a lot of downforce. I was amazed with the speeds that the ALMS car would do through the corners. It's such a good car and has such a good aero package that it would corner so quick, I was impressed – maybe even sometimes quicker than our Indy cars. It has power steering, which makes our life much easier; it has paddle shifting which makes our life much easier. It's a very heavy car; speedwise, obviously you feel a lot more down the straightaways in the Indy car, but in the corners, I would say I felt more Gs at Sebring in the ALMS car."

Kanaan says it's nice to race without the responsibility that he has in the IndyCar Series, where he needs to do well in nearly every race to win a championship for himself and the team. He adds that it's especially nice to win a big race like the 12 Hours of Sebring with his two best friends. But the off-season extracurricular activities – he regularly runs his kart back in Brazil, including a 500-mile endurance race that he's won several times with drivers such as Rubens Barrichello, Christian Fittipaldi, Felipe Massa and Wheldon – also serve another purpose for him: keeping his reflexes up to snuff and his racing muscles strong.

"You can never get the kind of workout that you do in a race car at a gym," he explains. "It keeps your reflexes sharp. It's not the same car, but you're still turning left and right and making a lot of effort, and doing the movements that you would do in your own race car. Karting is the best workout I've found for a race car driver."

At Sebring, Helio Castroneves finished third in the P2 class behind Kanaan, driving a Porsche RS

"It really has been nice to try something different"

Sam Hornish Jr.

Spyder with Timo Bernhard and Romain Dumas. The trio logged only seven fewer laps over the 12 hours than the Andretti Green Acura. He echoes many of Kanaan's thoughts on the ALMS sports cars vs. the IndyCar Series machines.

"It is an incredible race car," says Castroneves. "For the simple fact that it has so much downforce, but at the same time, the technology in the car is just amazing. You have power steering, paddle shift and traction control. You have so many things you can play with, it's impressive. The car, as fast as you go through the corner, it keeps going faster and faster, it has so much grip. That's why I enjoyed it so much the first time I drove it in Sebring. Hopefully I'll have more opportunities."

For Dixon, running the Rolex 24 at Daytona was more about the event than the car; he even mentions that the other Grand-Am races aren't as much fun as racing for 24 hours around Daytona International Speedway.

"When you go there, it's an actual event," he says. "It's more like indoor go-karting. It's very relaxed, there's a great bunch of guys who work there and it's a different mindset. That's why I enjoy it away from IndyCar racing.

"To drive, it's totally different as well. It's got a lot of roll; it's heavier and not as much power. They're fun in their own way – probably because you can tap a little bit."

Sam Hornish Jr. drove in the 24-hour race as well, partnered with Castroneves, Oswaldo Negri Jr. and Mark Patterson in a Michael Shank Racing machine. But the other extracurricular activity he's been engaged in is the one attracting more attention and fueling speculation about his future. Hornish has joined Penske Racing's stock car operation for several events, and he's not limiting it to the

off-season, but spending some off weekends in between IndyCar Series races running NASCAR Busch and ARCA REMAX cars as well.

"It's a new challenge," Hornish explains. "It's real similar to the kind of feelings I had when we started running the road courses in the IndyCar Series. It still is a challenge, but now I'm at the point that I feel like we're capable of winning. That's fun, having that next little thing that you're working at, trying to make yourself better and better. It really has been nice, for me anyhow, to have that opportunity to try something different."

Hornish's best result this year in the Busch Series has been a fifth-place start and 15th-place finish at Atlanta Motor Speedway in March. His next attempt will be Aug. 18 at Michigan, two weeks after running there in his Penske IndyCar Series racer. He's found more success in an ARCA REMAX Series outing, where he finished second at Michigan after starting on pole.

Because he has raced stock cars on many of the same tracks that he has raced in the IndyCar Series, he is in a rather unique position to compare the two.

"You look at them and see how much they look different, and that's about how much they are different," he says. "It sounds bad, but an IndyCar is like driving a Corvette, the stock car is like driving a minivan. Going top speed and trying to make a corner, it's difficult in either one of them. The stock car is not as quick to change directions and sometimes that gets you in trouble.

"When you go to a place like Richmond or Phoenix, any of the short tracks, it's the same lines," he adds. "But at Chicago or Texas, it's a lot different. We're going flat-out in the IndyCars, but you're actually lifting and braking in the stock cars, running a much different line."

Hornish admits he's a little more comfortable sitting in the stock car, because he has more room to move, although he misses the open sky above and being able to see the front tires. However, he also says he's not as comfortable driving the stock car as he is an open-wheeler, just from his lack of experience.

Hornish and the others all express a desire to try more of the extracurricular activities they've been indulging in; they are racers after all, and anything with four wheels, an engine and a steering wheel is attractive if they can make it go faster than the other contraptions. For his part, Hornish would like to try the Daytona 500 and the Brickyard 400 NASCAR races. Castroneves would certainly like to try some more events in the ALMS car. Kanaan says he'd like to race the 24 Hours of Le Mans and someday race a Formula 1 car (he's tested Honda's F1 car, but hasn't raced it), not to mention defend his victory at Sebring.

So, is the grass really greener on the other side of the fence? For these drivers, at this point in their careers, the answer is no. But the different flavor is a nice change now and then. ■

A VERY DIFFERENT 500-MILER Dorothy, I don't think we're in Indy anymore

If you want to find IndyCar Series drivers at a race during the off-season, the Rolex 24 at Daytona and the 12 Hours of Sebring aren't bad places to look. But the 500 Milhas da Granja Viana might be even better.

The what? It's a 500-mile kart race for charity at the

Kartodromo Granja Viana in Cotia, São Paulo State, Brazil.

The track is owned by the Giaffone family – a name made familiar to American race fans by Felipe Giaffone, who won the IndyCar Series race at

Kentucky Speedway

in 2002. It also attracts worldwide stars of racing – especially Brazilians – including Formula 1, IndyCar Series and other famous drivers from all over the world.

An example: In 2004, Tony Kanaan, Dan Wheldon and Giaffone teamed with Formula 1 star Rubens Barrichello to win the race over a team that included Helio Castroneves, Gil de Ferran and Vitor Meira. Kanaan, Wheldon and company also won in 2005 and finished second last year. In fact, Kanaan has won this race six times.

"It's always a very good competitive race," said Wheldon at last year's event. "You get to race against people you don't normally get to race against, like Rubens Barrichello and Felipe Massa. It's a good way to fill in that void in the off-season."

So, as racing ends and the weather turns chilly in the Northern Hemisphere, consider experiencing the springtime weather in Brazil and catching one of the biggest all-star kart races in the world.



Richard S. James



Virnelis Nunes

Kentucky Speedway

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CORNFIELD OF DREAMS

IndyCar Series drivers had a real challenge in mastering the new Iowa Speedway

Words by Jeff Olson • Photos by Chris McGrath/Getty Images



When Dario Franchitti first heard that the IndyCar Series would be racing in Iowa, he articulated what many of his colleagues were thinking.

"Why Iowa?" he said. "Then I heard the statistic that Iowa has the second-most racetracks per capita in the nation behind only Pennsylvania, and it made sense. You've got all these fans who are into racing, and they know *everything* about it. They're enthusiastic and knowledgeable, the stands are full, and the racetrack is really well put together. At that point, what more can you ask for?"

Helio Castroneves, who arrived several days before the June 24 Iowa Corn Indy 250 at Iowa Speedway, stayed in a downtown Des Moines

hotel and had significant interaction with local fans. He came away surprised and impressed. "They even knew how to pronounce my name," Castroneves gushed. "It's almost like they'd been practicing it."

When drivers and teams give the inaugural Iowa race its first marks, they begin with the fan interaction. The grandstands were overflowing – officials estimated the crowd at 35,000 – even after the track added more seats. Fans in the infield formed long lines waiting for drivers' meetings to end, and one driver even pointed out that coverage of the Indy Pro Series race on Saturday appeared on the front page of the sports section of *The Des Moines Register*.

"When was the last time you saw a Pro Series

A standing-room-only crowd greeted the IndyCar Series in its first race at Iowa Speedway, but it was a learning experience for all involved

race at the top of the front page of a newspaper's sports section?" the driver mused.

The answer, of course, is never.

Such was the reaction to the first Iowa Corn Indy 250 at Iowa Speedway, a brand-new seven-eighths-mile oval in Newton, Iowa. The fan response was overwhelming and encouraging, but drivers weren't altogether thrilled with the aesthetics of their performance. Truthfully, they say, it wasn't pretty. Seven of the 19 starters crashed out of the race, including Tony Kanaan, Sam Hornish Jr. and Danica Patrick.

The problems stemmed from two distinct issues: 1) The new track was so good and so fast that drivers were able to keep their foot on the floorboard without lifting, and 2) the weather





Chris McGrath/Getty Images



LAT Midwest

(Above) Iowa Speedway blurred the lines between short oval and superspeedway, and the wrong setup made side-by-side racing difficult at best. (Left) Dario Franchitti survived in front to claim the big ethanol pump trophy

“The stands are full...what more could you ask for?”

Dario Franchitti

forecast was far off from the actual conditions that emerged on race day, creating a lack of grip that caused five key contenders to spin.

Kanaan, whose Firestone test was a key component in the development of the tire used at Iowa, said the trouble with traction wasn't Firestone's fault, but a function of weather. During the test, he had plenty of grip. When he came back, he had none.

“We came back to the same track and went, ‘Where the hell did it go?’” Kanaan said. “Weather-wise, we expected one thing and got another. I did a tire test there and came out of the place thinking, ‘This is going to be very tough.’ It was going to be tough physically, in tire wear, and on the car. We found a good tire. You didn't see a single car having a tire problem aside from us crashing because we had no overall grip, but that wasn't because of the tire. The weather made that happen.”

Forecasts called for race-day temperatures in the lower 90s, but the actual temperature was nearly 20 degrees cooler. As a result, Castroneves spun on cold tires while leaving the pits, Kanaan crashed after a restart on the 86th lap, and several cars tangled on the 100th lap. Franchitti won over Andretti Green Racing teammate Marco Andretti, but it was far from an

easy drive through the countryside.

“Because we knew cold tires would be a problem, we set my car up for the start and restarts,” Franchitti said. “That was the upside. The downside was that it was difficult to get temperature in the tires. We figured out a way to do that. The upside was we could run the things for two stints and not even think about them. Tire life was phenomenal.”

Perhaps more critical in the minds of drivers was the approach to aerodynamics at the tiny track. A full-downforce short-oval wing package was used, but drivers said an intermediate wing might be more effective in the future. Less downforce would require drivers to lift in the turns, which, the theory goes, would allow side-by-side racing and more frequent passing.

“After his test at Iowa, Tony said to me, ‘We can run one, two, three or four lanes, but we're not going to run side by side,’” Franchitti said. “The problem comes from us showing up there with short-oval specs in place for the cars. Going back next year, they'll look at a more intermediate spec of wing.”

In other words, the track is so fast – Scott Dixon's pole speed was a jaw-dropping 182.360mph – that its behavior is more superspeedway than short track.



"Everyone took it as a short oval, but it's a superspeedway," Kanaan said. "That's why it happened the way it did. We had the car set up for a superspeedway on a track that was less than a mile. Nobody was expecting restarts like that. On a superspeedway, you're flat-out right away. We were flat-out the whole time during the race at Iowa, but on a restart you couldn't do that. We took restarts for granted. We approached them as if we were on a superspeedway, forgetting that we were on a seven-eighths-mile track. That's what got me, and that's what got them."

If drivers were forced, through less downforce, to let up on the throttle on the entry to turns, the second line would be race-friendly. A greater discrepancy in speeds would emerge, resulting in more side-by-side action.

"The first thing you need to be doing on a short oval is using the track," Franchitti said. "Entering high, apexing, and coming off again, like Richmond. If we come back to Iowa with a little less wing, that will help everybody, along with a little softer tire. Firestone can make whatever kind of tire we want; they've done it for years. They can make the fastest tire you want, or they can make a safe tire. They're so good at making exactly what you want or need."

In qualifying, the entire field was separated

by just one-tenth of a second. That equates to about 17 feet of distance, meaning two-wide racing would be nearly impossible.

"I think the series needs to go back with an intermediate wing package. The cars were so close because we're all running wide open. As soon as you attempt to go outside and use that extra 10 or 20 feet of track, you can forget it. You can't make up that ground when everyone is going the same speed because they're flat."

It's possible, of course, that drivers are overly critical of themselves and the product they put on track at Iowa. The reaction afterward was just as strong as it was before, they said, leading them to believe the overflow crowd was more understanding and forgiving of a blemished product than the drivers themselves.

"While we didn't think it was an awesome race, I didn't sense that from the fans," Kanaan said. "Fans like close racing, and we raced as close as we could race. We couldn't pass, but most of the fans were new to this, and they'd never seen cars running that close to each other for 250 laps. Sometimes fans go to racetracks to see cars crash; they like that. I'm not saying they want to see people get hurt, but sometimes crashes add to the entertainment value of a race. If that's the case, then we gave it to them." ■

BIG CROWD, BIG HEADACHES

Huge turnout makes one big traffic jam

While a standing-room-only crowd of more than 35,000 jammed into Iowa Speedway, many ticket holders were jammed in traffic.

The loudest complaint after the race came from fans caught in traffic congestion on Interstate 80 and county roads surrounding the new racetrack. Some fans reported leaving Des Moines – normally a quick, 30-minute drive – at 9:30 a.m. and not arriving at the track until after the race began at 1 p.m.

Rain that fell before the race was partially to blame, leaving surrounding grass parking lots too muddy for parking. Track officials promised to be more efficient with parking in the future.

"If it's something we can control, we want to be better," said Craig Armstrong, Iowa Speedway's general manager. "I can guarantee you, the next time we have a big event like this, we will be better. Significantly better."

In part, the problem was created by the volume of cars. Normally, the largest crowds for sporting events in Iowa are for Iowa and Iowa State football games. The IndyCar Series race was the first major event at the new speedway, and speedway officials and the 200 traffic workers had trouble getting cars on the grounds quickly.

"We should be thinking outside the box to put on a world-class event," Iowan Mark Klein posted on the www.indycar.com forum. "Instead we just look like Idiots Out Walking Around."

A SHORT (TRACK) HISTORY LESSON

Today it's Richmond and Iowa; then it was Langhorne and DuQuoin

Words by Ben Blake • Photos by IMS

In modern IndyCar Series parlance, a short track is anything less than a 1.33-mile superspeedway. Go back a few decades, however, and the same drivers who raced at Indianapolis Motor Speedway could be found on all manner of quarter-, half- and three-quarter-mile dirt and paved ovals. You name it, and they raced on it. America's racing legends – A.J. Foyt, Mario Andretti, Johnny Rutherford, and the Unsers – raced anything anywhere, on dirt quarter-miles to the Indy 500 and everything in between. These men, in their time, were giants.

Harder to decipher is the history of the tracks. NASCAR stock car racing originated on clay half-miles in the Southeast, but facsimile "stock" cars – the factory cars from, say, Ford and Studebaker – tried out at the Speedway in the 1930s.

That leaves a fascinating history of racing on tracks from Southern California to New

England – everything from the dirt mile at Sacramento, Calif., to banked half-miles at Winchester and Salem, Ind., to fairgrounds miles at DuQuoin and Springfield, Ill., to purpose-built tracks at Williams Grove, Pa., Trenton, N.J., and Langhorne, Pa.

In many cases (notably the fairgrounds miles), the tracks were flat, dirt tracks designed with horse racing in mind; these were adapted to car racing shortly before and after World War II. No one talked of wing angles or corner radius in those days; the idea was for a brave driver and a smart mechanic to make a car turn.

Gradually, cars and tracks evolved. In the 1940s, '50s and into the '60s, the idea was to run front-engine roadsters in varying formulas – midgets, sprints and champ cars.

"For a long time in American motorsports, the quarter-miles were midget tracks, half-miles were for sprints, and miles and bigger

(Main) Roger McCluskey on his way to victory at the half-mile Terre Haute clay oval. (Opposite) The modern-day version of an IndyCar Series short track, the three-quarter-mile Richmond International Raceway

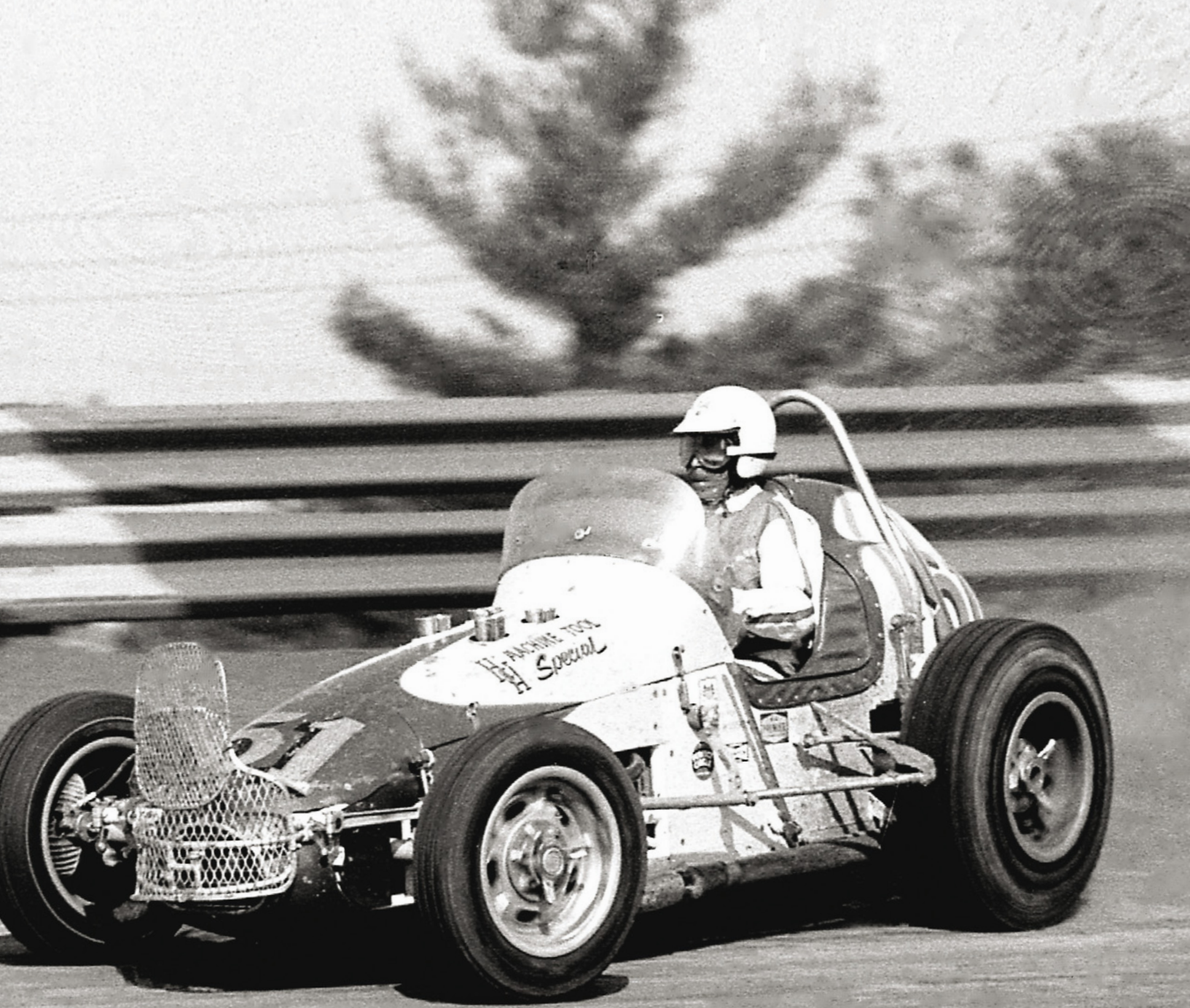
were for champ cars," says Dick Jordan, who for 40 years has supervised statistics and history for USAC. "That was kind of the breakdown."

That brings us to the present-day "short" track, the speedways such as Richmond and Iowa. Richmond has been on the IndyCar Series calendar for seven years and has shown reasonable success, even in running in the middle of stock car country. The new Iowa track made its debut this year. Richmond is 0.75 miles; Iowa is 0.875. The Milwaukee Mile doesn't quite meet the traditional definition of a short track, but it's not a superspeedway, either.

Phoenix and Pikes Peak also have appeared on the schedule.

Richmond, in a way, has become the IndyCar Series' short-course playground. The track, formerly a half-mile oval at the Virginia State Fairgrounds, prospered with stock cars into the late 1960s, when it first was paved.

In 1988, the track again was recast, with



up-to-date garages, grandstands and amenities – gone were the days of the dirt infields, scaffold grandstands, and primitive retaining walls. The raceway was expanded to the current configuration and now is fully up to modern standards.

One of the first tests for the new track came in the mid-'90s. For a couple of years, promoter Paul Sawyer brought aboard the USAC Silver Crown and sprint cars, with drivers such as Jack Hewitt, Tony Stewart, and so on. These were the immediate ancestors of present-day IndyCar Series racing, which commenced in 1996.

"He made all this happen," Johnny Rutherford says of Sawyer. "He had a dream that turned out to be this kind of track – it's probably underneath this track right now, right under this place.

"We [IndyCar Series] needed races, and he wanted us to run here. After that, it was like a

live hand grenade thrown on the ground. You'll see what happens when it goes off."

Rutherford, a three-time Indy 500 winner, has retired from driving. In his day, the Texan raced just about every kind of track.

"My first big-track race was at Indianapolis in '62, at the fairgrounds, in the Hulman



Jamie Squire/Getty Images

Hundred," he recalls. "I ran at Trenton, on the dirt at Phoenix, Sacramento. I won the pole the last dirt race at Langhorne.

"Springfield and DuQuoin were good tracks. We'd call [the dirt] black gumbo because it used to rain just before we got there. Springfield was the first mile dirt track I ever drove around flat-footed, without lifting."

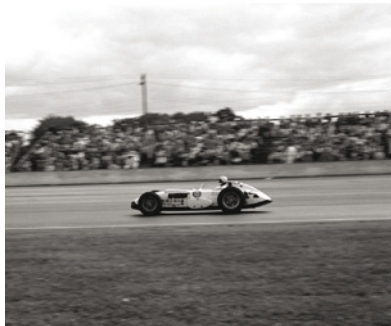
Rutherford went on to win the USAC Triple Crown in 1978, claiming trophies at the three big champ car ovals – Indianapolis, Michigan and Pocono. That was at the time of the USAC split, which begat CART.

Several factors strained the old short tracks and dirt ovals. First, the old calcium chloride treatment used for years to treat dirt surfaces was outlawed. Promoters then faced increasing difficulty in prepping a dirt site for racing.

The Milwaukee oval, in business since 1902, was paved in 1950. The Trenton and ▶

“We called the dirt black gumbo because it used to rain”

Johnny Rutherford



Phoenix tracks were paved in the early 1960s. Langhorne, a perfect-circle mile, was paved in 1964, and then was closed down in 1970, becoming the site of a suburban Philadelphia shopping mall.

Second was the advent of the rear-engine champ cars, which began with Colin Chapman's cars at Indy in 1964. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, the old roadsters had been pushed aside in favor of rear-engine cars.

"When they went away from the champ dirt cars, they had two separate championships," Rutherford says. "The original intent was to create a new championship series, but because of the expense, you had two different factions.

"The guys who liked to run the dirt bought champ dirt cars. The guys who ran the pavement ran the Indy 500 and had pavement cars. If the car owners were serious, and most of them were, they had a dirt car and a pavement car and hired a driver for each."

"It's not like it is today," Jordan recollects. "The roadsters [Indy cars] never would perform on the short tracks. It was the wheelbase more

than anything. They weren't really built for shorter tracks.

"There was nothing in between. There wasn't any construction on [new] tracks."

That brings us to the new species of driver. In the 1960s and '70s, fellows such as Andretti, Foyt and Rutherford could and would race anything from midgets to champ cars, on everything from dirt half-miles to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway to road courses at Riverside, Watkins Glen and Mid-Ohio.

With the increasing popularity of rear-engine cars and European road specialists, the golden days of superstar drivers racing on any kind of track came to a close. The IndyCar Series calendar features road races and big, NASCAR-type speedways such as the 1.5-mile tracks at Texas, Kansas and Kentucky.

Even the short tracks aren't really short tracks – the dirt mile and half-mile ovals that populated open-wheel racing in the classic era. Why, USAC even has developed a big-track sprint-car series, with semi-fendered cars.

(Above) The start of the 1958 Hoosier 100 at the Indiana State Fairgrounds. (Top right) Bob Veith drives his Kurtis-Offy to second place at the Milwaukee Mile in 1958, eight years after it had been paved. (Above right, l to r) Rodger Ward, Eddie Sachs and A.J. Foyt hang out at Springfield in 1959. (Below) Foyt and Len Sutton at the 1959 Hoosier 100

Even the nomenclature has changed. "Obviously, with the European upbringing, there have not been the different dirt ovals," says Dan Wheldon, winner of Richmond's SunTrust Indy Challenge in 2004.

"For me, the closest thing – and you'll say not close at all – there's Indianapolis with the history, Mario, A.J. That's why I like going there. At the other end of the spectrum there's also Watkins Glen, which for a European guy has a lot of history.

"Richmond? This is probably the hardest [of the current short tracks]. The turn radius is very tight. It's short, but you're not flat-out around here. It just depends on the car. To be quite frank, it sucks when you don't have a good race car."

In historical perspective, the modern-day short tracks are a cross between what was and what could be. "These three-quarter and seven-eighths tracks, they're not that old," Jordan insists. "Richmond is one of the older ones.

"There's nothing more exciting than seeing [IndyCar Series cars] on this size track. It's like flying an F-15 inside a stadium." ■





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In the old days, baseball had doubleheaders where one ticket was good for two games, usually on a Sunday. But as player salaries increased and team owners discovered more revenue was needed to pay for high-priced athletes, this practice has long since passed.

But with the Indy Pro Series, half of the races this season – all the road courses except Mid-Ohio – are doubleheader weekends, where teams qualify on Friday, compete in the first race on Saturday then come back for the finale on Sunday morning. Two-for-the-price-of-one, if you will.

A European-style qualifying format is used to give cars more time on the track to set the grid for the first race. The second-race grid, in a process implemented before the Indianapolis road course doubleheader, is determined by the finishing order of the first race where the winner does a blind draw after the race to determine whether 0, 4, 6 or 8 cars are inverted for the start of the second race. (Previously the top six were inverted.) The rest of the field starts where they finished in the first race.

The doubleheaders were implemented in 2006 to give competitors more races while keeping down costs.

"I think it's a good thing in general," says Alex Lloyd, who won both rounds in St. Petersburg. "It's good to have more races and, cost-wise, it keeps it down to where we can combine two races in one weekend instead of traveling to more places. It provides more excitement for everyone watching.

"The reverse grid can sometimes be a difficult one. We found in the second race at Indy, a guy who makes a mistake at the beginning of the first race can be gifted a chance at victory. You get punished for doing well and that's the sore part of it.

"But it makes for an interesting race weekend where a lot can happen. You can gain a lot of points or you can lose a lot of points."

In this season's first doubleheader, Lloyd found two different ways to win at St. Petersburg. He started on the pole and won the Saturday race before starting sixth on Sunday and driving to another checkered flag.

"The great thing is we have started from the front row with a qualifying session and have won the race or finished second," Lloyd says. "One of the good things about starting from the back is it's a way of showing the IndyCar Series teams what you can do. Not only can we run up front and run quickly and pull away, we can also start back in seventh or eighth position and come to the front. We can race, race harder and pass more people."

While winning the first race can set the tone for a successful weekend, the second race also allows teams a chance to salvage a bad weekend. For instance, Phil Giebler went from ▶



"It's good to have more races and, cost-wise, it keeps it down"

Alex Lloyd



SEEING

The Indy Pro Series two-race weekends give drivers another chance to win – or for things to go all wrong

DOUBLE

Words by Bruce Martin



In the first of two Indy Pro Series races at Watkins Glen, Alex Lloyd couldn't get past Wade Cunningham (27); but the doubleheader gave him a second chance.... Lloyd (opposite) won both races at St. Pete.

24th to seventh and Jaime Camara from 23rd to eighth at St. Petersburg. Jonathan Klein went from 19th to seventh at the Liberty Challenge at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway on the weekend of the United States Grand Prix.

"At St. Pete, it gave me the opportunity to make some more points up and have a good race," says Cunningham, the 2005 series champion. "We ended up finishing second and that helped us and we left not feeling so miserable. If you win the first race and don't win the second one, it leaves a sour taste in your mouth; but it's the same for everyone. It gives you an opportunity to make the most of having a good car all weekend."

Cunningham enjoys the extra seat time and the ability to go into battle on the racetrack twice in as many days, but admitted it's different than anything he's experienced in racing before.

"It's a little bit strange," he says. "When you start racing cars you are used to one race per race weekend and you put all your effort into that one. All race weekend you work toward the last event, which is the race. There is a little bit of psychology in it where you put all your effort into the first race as well. Hopefully, we'll have two good races on the same weekend."

The doubleheader concept is also a creative challenge for the engineer and crew. It gives

prepare the same. It's a little more work because we have to change a few more components on the road courses with brakes; but the crew guys like it better than being away from home another weekend."

Perschbacher says he believes with the cars being so identical, it's hard to pass; by jumbling the lineup for the second race, it gives fans a chance for a little more excitement in the second event.

Perschbacher works in conjunction with chief mechanic John Worth. While Perschbacher comes up with the right setup, Worth and his three-man crew prepare the car for the back-to-back races.

"We get everything prepared at the shop and will spend a couple days doing that so when we get to the track, we'll do fine-tuning and whatever adjustments the driver needs," Worth explains. "That's the first few sessions. In the race, we do our normal race prep, which is three or four hours before the race. Between races, we'll clean the radiators and adjust what we missed in the first race, so it's not too much time on the second day.

"That helps you learn the intricacies of the car to make sure you get things right. You have a second chance on your doubleheaders, but you try to learn it where you don't make mistakes the first time before you go out and



THRASH TIME

When the first race goes bad

With two races in as many days, the Indy Pro Series doubleheaders can be quite challenging for a team that crashes or has mechanical failure in the first race and a limited amount of time to repair the car for the second race.

When Phil Giebler drove off course at the start of the St. Petersburg race this season, Mike Colliver was in charge of getting the car repaired for the next day.

"He was on the front row at St. Pete for the first race," Colliver recalled. "He was fast all weekend. It was a really horrible start. We were on the outside, they threw the green early and he got shuffled back a little bit, someone got a huge run, got into the back of him and bent the right-rear suspension. The repair was pretty straightforward. Then going into the next morning, we had a little warmup before the second race so we could shake the thing down.

"We knew starting at the back it would be tough to pass so we went to a more aggressive brake package knowing he would have to come up through the field. That was probably the biggest thing we did overnight. He knew it would stop on a dime."

But as Giebler prepared to start the second race, another unexpected problem developed.

"He was happy with the car in the final warmup but the crazy thing is we go out there and on the parade lap he doesn't have second gear," Colliver said. "If we had second gear, he could have gotten back up to third or fourth.

"There were just enough full-course yellows to where we could salvage a pretty good result." Giebler started 24th and finished seventh, managing a decent result for what could have been a poor weekend.

For a team that doesn't have damage in a race and isn't making a setup change, typically all that needs to be replaced are brake rotors and pads for the second race. Generally, the parts are inspected and bolted back together to make sure they are OK.

"We plan ahead to make sure nothing is mileage out between the two races," says Panther Racing engineer Blair Perschbacher. "We'll debrief and talk about the gears and the understeer. I'll look at the data and decide to make changes. Then the guys will replace the brakes and rotors."

Hideki Mutoh won the first Liberty Challenge race; but then he had to start eighth for race two



Andrew Ferraro/LAT

them a chance to try new things and an opportunity to take the data from the first race and apply it to race number two.

"It's fun from an engineering standpoint because you get another shot at it," says Blair Perschbacher, the engineer for Panther Racing. "The driver can get out of the car and say, 'We could have done this better or done that better,' so you get another shot at another race. For the crew guys, it's not too bad. They

run the second time. It teaches you to try to do things right."

The value of the doubleheader concept has been undeniable for the drivers and teams that compete in the series, according to Playa del Racing engineer/team manager Mike Colliver.

"It wouldn't bother me if we did doubleheaders at every road course we go to," he says. ■

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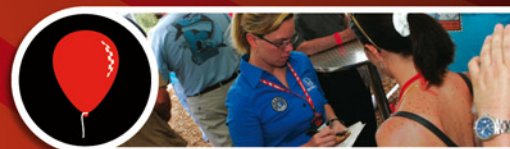
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2007 Indy Pro Series so far...



Iowa 100

Iowa Speedway

June 23, 115 laps/100 miles

- Wade Cunningham leads the field to the green flag as Jaime Camara spins through the infield grass and rejoins the race. The caution does not come out for that incident, but it does on lap 6 when Jon Brownson spins and hits the inside wall.
- Sean Guthrie joins Alex Lloyd to battle for the race lead. The battle rages on even after the yellow for Camara brushing the Turn 4 SAFER Barrier. Unfortunately, Guthrie's promising run comes to an abrupt end on lap 79 when he spins exiting Turn 4 and slams into the pit wall.
- The race restarts after Guthrie's accident on lap 92, but just one lap later the yellow is back out when Stephen Simpson hits the SAFER barrier exiting Turn 4, collecting Jonathan Klein who, in turn, makes contact with Andrew Prendeville, who spins through the grass but is able to continue.
- Lloyd passes Cunningham for the win on lap 106, the final margin of victory being 0.3927sec. It is Lloyd's eighth career Indy Pro Series win, a new series record.

DRIVER	TEAM
Alex Lloyd	Sam Schmidt Motorsports
Wade Cunningham	AFS Racing/Andretti Green Racing
Hideki Mutoh	Panther Racing
Ryan Justice	Sam Schmidt Motorsports
Robbie Pecorari	Team KMA

Pole winner: Wade Cunningham, 1:16.306mph

He said it: "With 10 laps to go I was so pumped up. I knew this was the time if we were going to win the race, this was the time to get it done. Up until then I had been patient and I thought there might be a gap going into Turn 1 but I didn't want to show that too soon knowing that he could defend that. I left it until the very last minute and saw it as my chance, got it down there and he gave me just enough room." **Alex Lloyd**



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Corning Twin 100 1

Watkins Glen International Raceway

July 7, 29 laps/97.73 miles

- Wade Cunningham, despite crashing in the second qualifying session, still starts on pole, having set the fastest time in the first session. At the end of the first lap, Cunningham leads second-place Hideki Mutoh by half a second, but the margin is erased on lap 2 when the caution comes out for Ryan Justice's crash in the Inner Loop.
- The race restarts on lap 4, but only five more laps are completed before the caution comes back out when Chris Festa spins and hits the guardrail in Turn 2. The race resumes on lap 12.
- On lap 13, Phil Giebler passes Alex Lloyd for third entering Turn 1, but points leader Lloyd returns the favor on the next lap. Also on lap 14, Bobby Wilson outrakes Daniel Herrington entering the Inner Loop to take fifth place.
- Cunningham takes the checkered flag, having led all 29 laps from pole, 0.0758sec ahead of Mutoh. Lloyd rounds out the top three.

DRIVER	TEAM
Wade Cunningham	AFS Racing/Andretti Green Racing
Hideki Mutoh	Panther Racing
Alex Lloyd	Sam Schmidt Motorsports
Phil Giebler	Playa Del Racing
Bobby Wilson	Brian Stewart Racing

Pole winner: Wade Cunningham, 1:25.406mph

He said it: "I was right behind Wade [Cunningham]. And I tried to pass him as he came every lap. But I couldn't make it. And the last lap I got close to him. So I tried again, but it didn't happen. I still have tomorrow, so I'll go for it." **Hideki Mutoh**



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Corning Twin 100 2

Watkins Glen International Raceway

July 8, 29 laps/97.73 miles

- Daniel Herrington, who finished sixth in Race 1, starts on pole by virtue of the inversion. Bobby Wilson spins off in Turn 1 but rejoins at the tail. Herrington goes on to lead the first three laps, the first of his Indy Pro Series career.
- On lap 4, Alex Lloyd passes Herrington for the lead in Turn 3. That same lap, the full-course caution comes out when Jon Brownson hits the tire barriers on the exit of the Inner Loop. When the race restarts on lap 7, Lloyd is leading Herrington and Wade Cunningham, while Joey Scarallo spins in Turn 1 but is able to continue. Cunningham soon finds his way around Herrington, but Lloyd continues to pull away.
- Arie Luyendyk Jr. and Ryan Justice both pull into the pits on lap 26 with mechanical issues. Justice's team reports the problem is electronics failure.
- Lloyd beats Cunningham to the flag by 4.719sec. Herrington holds on to finish a career-best third, while Richard Antinucci picks up his career-best result in fifth.

DRIVER	TEAM
Alex Lloyd	Sam Schmidt Motorsports
Wade Cunningham	AFS Racing/Andretti Green Racing
Daniel Herrington	SpeedWorks
Phil Giebler	Playa Del Racing
Richard Antinucci	Cheever Racing

Pole Winner: Daniel Herrington, determined by previous race and inversion

He said it: "We were so much quicker than the majority of the field, with the exception of Alex [Lloyd]. On the restart, Alex had a gap and it took me a lap to get around Daniel (Herrington). He just had that second buffer like I did yesterday and he controlled the race. I think I got within half a second. During the middle part of the race, my tires started degrading and I couldn't hold that pace anymore." **Wade Cunningham**



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Sunbelt Rentals 100

Nashville Superspeedway
July 14, 77 laps/100 miles

- Points leader Alex Lloyd, who earned his first pole since Milwaukee last year, leads the field from the green after the first start attempt was aborted due to poor alignment of the rows. Unfortunately, the field only makes it to Turn 4 before the yellow comes out for a huge pileup involving Joey Scarallo, Andrew Prendeville, Marc Williams, Mike Potekhen and Tom Wieringa.
- After a long cleanup, the race resumes on lap 12 with Lloyd leading, but Wade Cunningham passes him going into Turn 1. Lloyd returns the favor two laps later, and Robbie Pecorari demotes Cunningham to third soon after.
- Pecorari slips past Lloyd to take the lead on lap 32 as the duo works through lapped traffic. Sean Guthrie pits three laps later with a damaged front wing. On lap 43, Williams, having rejoined the race on lap 20, spins through the infield grass at the exit of Turn 2, bringing out another caution.
- Lloyd passes Pecorari for the lead coming off Turn 4 on lap 49, but it all goes wrong for Lloyd on lap 65 when he runs over debris from the accident involving Brad Jaeger and Al Unser III, damaging the nosecone. Pecorari retakes the lead as Lloyd pits for repairs.
- Pecorari takes his first Indy Pro Series win ahead of Logan Gomez, who earned his career-best finish after passing Cunningham on the last lap. Jaime Camara dropped Cunningham to fourth as the latter's engine was misfiring badly.

DRIVER	TEAM
Robbie Pecorari	Team KMA
Logan Gomez	Sam Schmidt Motorsports
Jaime Camara	Andretti Green Racing
Wade Cunningham	AFS Racing/Andretti Green Racing
Jonathan Klein	Team Moore Racing

Pole winner: Alex Lloyd, 181.841 mph

He said it: "As soon as the last yellow came out, I saw the debris coming down the track. I went to avoid, but (Alex Lloyd) hit it pretty hard. We hit a piece of it, but luckily the car stayed together." Robbie Pecorari



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Mid-Ohio 100

Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course
July 22, 40 laps/90.3 miles

- Alex Lloyd shows the way as the field takes the green flag down the backstretch, a procedure unique to this event. Stephen Simpson runs second, but is passed by Richard Antinucci on lap 6.
- Tom Wieringa exits the race on lap 13. His crew says the cause is a mechanical failure in the gearbox. Antinucci takes the lead from Lloyd entering Turn 4 three laps later to lead his first laps in Indy Pro Series competition.
- The first and only caution of the race comes out on lap 22 when Jonathan Klein goes off track in Turn 8 and rejoins with a punctured left-rear tire. At the restart on lap 23, Lloyd slows going down the frontstretch and pulls off-track in Turn 1. His crew reports he has a gearbox issue. Wade Cunningham assumes second behind Antinucci.
- Daniel Herrington spins off track at Turn 1, but the race is able to stay green. Antinucci claims his first career win and the first Indy Pro Series win for Cheever Racing. Cunningham takes the flag 0.959sec behind, while Simpson holds on for a career-best third place.

DRIVER	TEAM
Richard Antinucci	Cheever Racing
Wade Cunningham	AFS Racing/Andretti Green Racing
Stephen Simpson	Kenn Hardley Racing
Andrew Prendeville	RLR Andersen Racing
Hideki Mutoh	Panther Racing

Pole winner: Alex Lloyd, 110.188mph

He said it: "We were very progressive, getting faster and faster. I was worried after the restart. We struggled a bit compared to (Wade) Cunningham. I think he had higher tire pressures, which allowed him to be set up quicker. But we were there all weekend, and we finally won one." Richard Antinucci



LEXINGTON, OHIO

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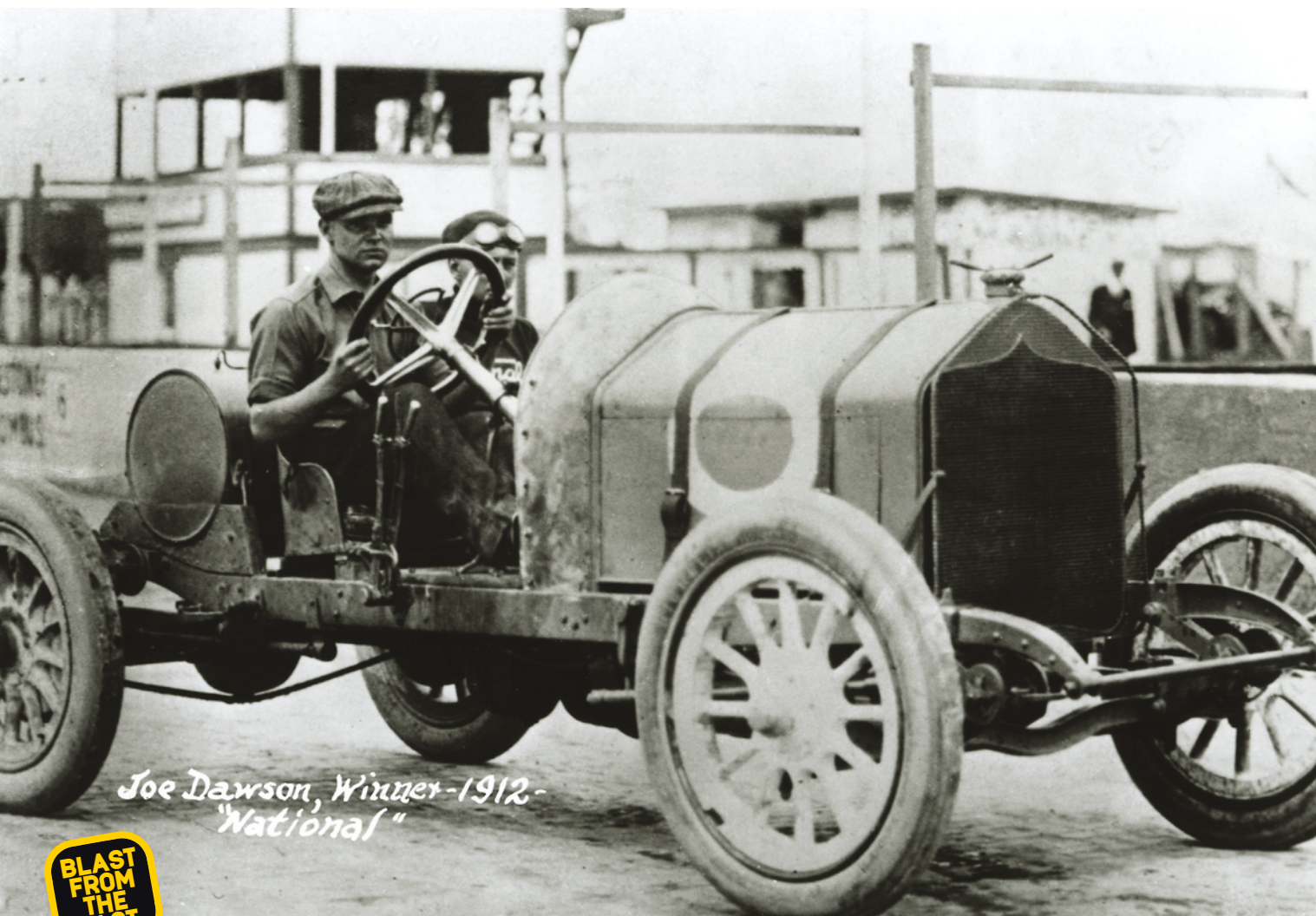
Blow by blow



Driver standings after 12 of 16 races

Rank	Driver	Points
1	Alex Lloyd	508
2	Hideki Mutoh	397
3	Wade Cunningham	342
4	Bobby Wilson	320
5	Jaime Camara	290
6	Robbie Pecorari	265
7	Mike Potekhen	264
8	Chris Festa	242
9	Logan Gomez	241
10	Stephen Simpson	241
11	Jonathan Klein	239
12	Andrew Prendeville	223
13	Ryan Justice	195
14	Sean Guthrie	183
15	Richard Antinucci	182
16	Brad Jaeger	177
17	Joey Scarallo	174
18	Ken Losch	169
19	Jon Brownson	136
20	Phil Giebler	129

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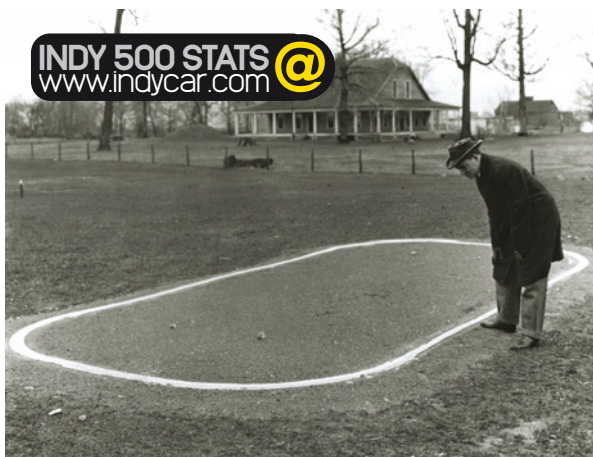
The original Motor City

There's a reason the Speedway is in Indianapolis

In September, the IndyCar Series will make its first appearance in Detroit, aka Motor City. However, Detroit wasn't always the center of automotive production, and the history of the automobile in America goes some way to explaining why auto racing's most famous racetrack is located not in Detroit, nor anywhere else in Michigan, but a little less than 300 miles to the southwest in Indianapolis.

At the turn of the 20th century, in the automobile's infancy, it was by no means a foregone conclusion that Michigan would become the de facto home of the American

INDY 500 STATS @
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automobile industry. In fact, both Indianapolis and Cleveland were vying for the right to be called Motor City USA. From 1896 to 1937, some 65 different vehicles were produced around Indianapolis – second to Cleveland's 82.

Some of the finest automobiles produced at the time were manufactured in Indianapolis, including the famed Duesenberg, Stutz, Lafayette, Marmon, National, Overland

(Top) The second car to win the Indianapolis 500, Joe Dawson's National, was built in Indy. (Above) Driver Lewis Stang looks over the layout of the future track

and Waverly Electric makes. Indianapolis inventors are also credited with the first internal combustion engine (Charles H. Black, whose invention proved impractical because its ignition required a kerosene torch), four-wheel brakes, overhead camshafts and safety glass windshields.

Given the city's place in the automotive world in the early 1900s, it only made sense that Carl Fisher, one of the original partners in the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, when looking for a place to build an automotive testing facility and proving ground, chose 320 acres on the outskirts of his hometown.

It was also appropriate that the first 500-mile automobile race at the new brick-paved 2.5-mile rectangular oval was won by Ray Harroun in a Marmon Wasp. Indianapolis manufacturers National and Duesenberg also figured prominently in Indy 500 races into the 1930s.

So, when the IndyCar Series races at Belle Isle in Detroit, it's only fitting to remember that both the automotive industry and the racing world have much of their roots in Indianapolis.

If I were President of the United States...

"I would probably banish all weapons, because if no one had weapons we couldn't really hurt each other."
Danica Patrick



Dan Strebeck/LAT

Marco Andretti, what's your fantasy race scenario?

"I'd have to say a modern-day F1 car, maybe a Ferrari, at Monaco. If I'm driving a Ferrari, then I'd want to race Michael Schumacher; but I wouldn't want to race him straight away. I'd have to do a lot of testing first."

What do you wish you could do, and what can you do that no one knows you can?

"I would like to play soccer really well. I mean, I can play soccer, but I'd like to play it really well. People may not know that I can cook pretty good. I did a sushi course for two weeks, so I can prepare some of those dishes and make them look appetizing."

Vitor Meira

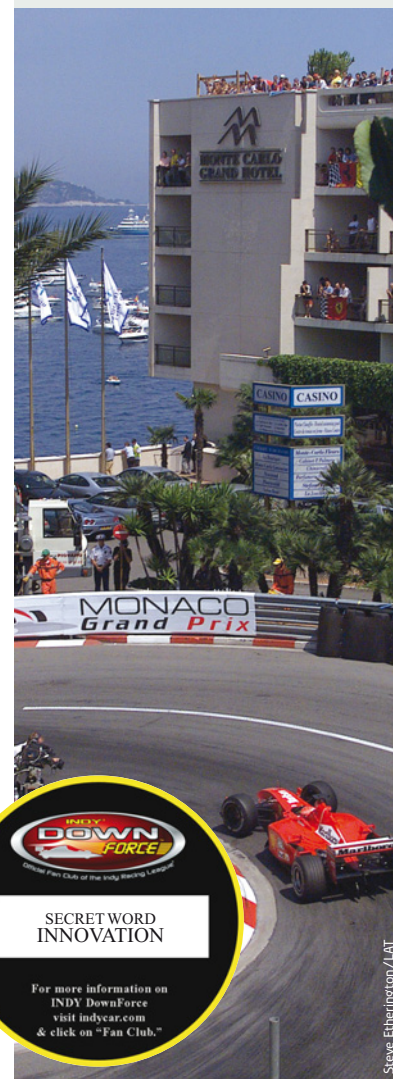


DARREN MANNING, YOUR COUNTRYMAN DAVID BECKHAM HAS COME TO AMERICA... WHY SHOULD AMERICANS CARE ABOUT SOCCER OR HOW BECKS CAN BEND IT?



Stephen Dunne/Getty Images

"He's in the top five superstar soccer players in the world. He's the equivalent of a Schumacher or Alonso or Raikkonen or Hamilton in motorsports, and Major League Soccer in America didn't have one of those superstar players – until now. The English Premiership has, Spain has, Italy has, and America needs that. He'll be the Michael Schumacher of American soccer. Some people say he's a bit one-footed, but I'd be happy to have his left foot as my main foot. He's just so good with his right. He's definitely in the top five of his generation."



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Steve Etherington/LAT

Favorite musician

I like Jon Bon Jovi. I think it's a good mix, because the guy's been, for so many years, rock 'n' roll, and he continues to be successful, like Bono, like Madonna. You have to recognize, it's been more than 20 years, to be changing from one era to another. I think he's changing to the country side to keep moving forward.

Favorite Book

The Bible

Favorite waste of time

Watching TV.

Jamie Squire/Getty Images

**Favorite TV show**

I enjoy *Deal or No Deal*; and *Dancing with the Stars*. Kind of different. When I'm home, I like to watch movies. When I'm not at home, I like to watch those programs, from Monday to Friday, like the *The Big Idea with Donnie Deutsch*. It's another one that I enjoy, because it's pretty interesting.

Favorite Movie

I like comedy. *Hitch*, with Will Smith – that's a hilarious movie. And *Spiderman*...I wonder why (laughing).

Favorite Gadget

My PSP [PlayStation Portable]. When I'm on the plane, or waiting in the airports, that's the perfect gadget...time goes by fast.

Favorite Sport

Tennis.

Favorite racquet

Völkl. That's what I have.

Favorite tennis player

[Roger] Federer. He's incredible. On the women's side, the Williams sisters [Venus and Serena] are just so powerful, it's amazing to see how good they are.

Favorite indulgence

Every afternoon I need to have a dessert.

Favorite food

I like Sushi. I can eat it anytime. I like California roll.

Favorite place

I like to stay home, but I like the beach in Brazil. The Brazilian beaches are incredible.

Favorite IndyCar Series city

Each place I'm trying to find the good things about it. St. Petersburg is just a fantastic atmosphere; the beach, you can walk to the track. Indianapolis, you spend most of the month, so you try to find all the good places. Even Nashville, it's a great place, because the hotel is awesome. I don't have one favorite place. Do I have to say one?

Favorite racetrack

I have to say Indianapolis. The place has been very good to me.

Favorite fence to climb

Indianapolis. It's the best fence so far. I need to try Nashville, and then you ask me that question again.

Racing idol

For me, Ayrton Senna, was the biggest in my time. He inspired me to work hard.

Favorite trophy

My first one, Detroit Belle Isle 2000.

Favorite road car

I like my Lamborghini Gallardo. But I wish I had the courage to spend the kind of money to buy a Bugatti Veyron. That would be good.

Helio Castroneves'

favorite things
He likes Spiderman, tennis and having dessert in the afternoon



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