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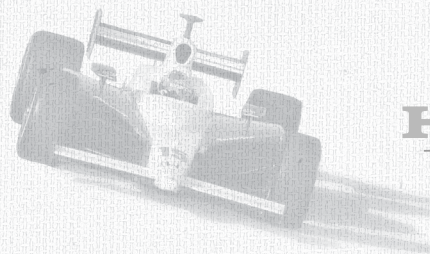
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Scott Sharp climbs into his car at Detroit; although that wasn't a great race for him, he did have his moments in 2007, as did Danica Patrick (right)



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VIDEO EXTRA

LAST LAPS AT CHICAGOLAND

Watch Franchitti win the race and the championship

REVERSAL OF FORTUNE

Championship comes down to the final corner

The battle for the IndyCar Series championship, as it so often does, went down to the final race this season. Going into the finale at Chicagoland, Indy 500 winner Dario Franchitti had a slim three-point lead over 2003 series champ Scott Dixon, while Franchitti's teammate, friend and 2004 champ Tony Kanaan was in third. However, Kanaan would need both Dixon and Franchitti to have bad luck on race day to have a shot at the title.

Franchitti gave his odds a boost by winning the pole on Saturday, but the car's handling wasn't where he wanted it to be early in the race. Kanaan also found trouble when a cut right-rear tire forced him to pit.

For much of the day, the Penske cars of Sam Hornish Jr. and Helio Castroneves and the Ganassi cars of Dixon and Dan Wheldon ran up front in two-by-two formation, creating a wall between Franchitti and the race lead. But the Scot was getting better fuel mileage than any of the front four, and once the Penske pair stopped for a splash-and-go and Wheldon ran into gearbox trouble, it was down to just him and Dixon.

And when Danica Patrick's spin entering the pits with seven laps to go brought out the yellow, both championship protagonists, now the only two cars on the lead lap, opted to stay out, hoping the slow laps behind the pace car would let them save enough ethanol to get to the end.

When the race went green with two to go, Franchitti had a couple looks to the outside of Dixon, but to no avail. Rounding Turn 3 on the final lap, it seemed like the Kiwi had the race and his second championship sewn up; but then his car suddenly slowed, out of fuel, and the quick-thinking Franchitti jerked the Canadian Club machine around the outside, narrowly missing the now-coasting Dixon, and on to the checkered flag and the championship.

"We came down that backstretch and I was drafting him trying to get a slingshot," said Dario. "Just as I pulled out I saw him slow down and I almost hit the back of him as I was going out. It was some good fuel saving and some great strategy from my boys on the Canadian Club Team and the whole Andretti Green Team. They are the best team in the world."

A roller coaster of a finish to a roller coaster of a season in more ways than one.

Indy Pro Series top rookie shines in IndyCar Series debut

Hideki Mutoh may not have been a household name in this country when he joined Panther Racing's Indy Pro Series team in 2007, but the series champion knew plenty about the 24-year-old Tokyo native who would become the 2007 series

Rookie of the Year.

"We had raced against each other back in England," said Indy Pro Series champion Alex Lloyd. "When people heard his name they may not have known of him, but I said that guy is going to be quick."

Mutoh impressed in his IndyCar Series debut at Chicagoland Speedway. He qualified 13th and stayed out of trouble all

day, maintaining a respectable pace to bring home a solid eighth place at the finish along with turning the fastest race lap.

"I am very happy to win the Indy Pro Series Rookie of the Year honor," Mutoh said. "It was one of my goals coming into this season. But my big accomplishment was winning the race at Kentucky Speedway for my first oval victory."



SEEMS LIKE OLD TIMES

After some big changes with the introduction of three new circuits in 2007, the '08 IndyCar Series schedule will look very familiar. With the exception of Michigan International Speedway's absence, the schedule is nearly identical to last season's in terms of tracks and the order.

The 2008 season begins as in '07, with a night race at Homestead-Miami Speedway on March 29.

The 92nd Indianapolis 500 has its usual Memorial Day weekend spot on May 25.

The only appreciable change is that Kentucky moves a little earlier in August, creating a couple of gaps that allow the teams to recover from a five-week run in June and July, and prepare for the three-race final push. The finale will be at Chicagoland Speedway on Sept. 7.

Iowa Speedway
packed 'em in for its
IndyCar Series debut.
The track returns to
the 2008 schedule
on June 22



2008 INDYCAR SERIES SCHEDULE

Homestead-Miami Speedway*	Sat., March 29
St. Petersburg	Sun., April 6
Twin Ring Motegi	Sat., April 19
Kansas Speedway	Sun., April 27
92nd Indianapolis 500	Sun., May 25
The Milwaukee Mile	Sun., June 1
Texas Motor Speedway*	Sat., June 7
Iowa Speedway	Sun., June 22
Richmond International Raceway*	Sat., June 28
Watkins Glen International	Sun., July 6
Nashville Superspeedway*	Sat., July 12
Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course	Sun., July 20
Kentucky Speedway*	Sat., Aug. 9
Infineon Raceway	Sun., Aug. 24
Detroit Belle Isle	Sun., Aug. 31
Chicagoland Speedway	Sun., Sept. 7

* Night race

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Dan Stryck/LAT

DOPPLER EFFECT



Inside Line

Jeff Olson, Senior Writer

ENOUGH EXCITEMENT

Final turn, final race, final drops of ethanol. Any more excitement and all of us would have needed a hug.

Just when it appeared as if Scott Dixon was going to win the championship duel with Dario Franchitti, the story did a 180 with a full twist. Just when it appeared as if we had a clear winner, it turned out to be the other guy. Just when it appeared as if this was thoroughly exciting, it doubled down and became an instant classic.

Now that we've had a chance to breathe and the IndyCar Series championship can be dissected and observed closely, we discover just how close and just how dramatic it truly was. Not just the last race, but also the last two months. It involved great racing, wild crashes, fighting, feuding, bitterness...everything but a marching band - wait, saw one at Detroit - and tailgaters - oops, saw some at Chicagoland.

To get a grip on the tension and drama of the 2007 season, a quick look back is needed. The abbreviated version of Dario vs. Dixon reads something like this:

- In July, Dixon wins at Watkins Glen and suddenly throws himself into what had been Franchitti's runaway championship. Before that, Franchitti had won at Iowa and Richmond to stretch his lead to 65 points.
- A week later, Dixon wins again at Nashville as Franchitti finishes second. Dixon then wins at Mid-Ohio, with Franchitti again on his tail, and the lead is down to 24 points.

"The problem we've got right now is we're looking for perfection," Franchitti said after the Mid-Ohio race. "We need perfection. I'm being critical of myself and my guys, but we need that perfection in order to win the championship."

- Then came the flip at Michigan. Franchitti sails upside-down and lands on Dixon. If it weren't so bizarre and frightening, you'd think someone made it up.

- Then Dixon finishes second at Kentucky while Franchitti finishes eighth. The margin? Eight points. The game? Very much on.

- A week later at Infineon Raceway, Franchitti and teammate Marco Andretti collide while Franchitti is leading. Dixon wins and takes control of the points.

- Then the story reaches its climax. While



Dario Franchitti and Scott Dixon gave everything on the track, leaving the rivalry behind off it.

running together at Detroit, Dixon and Franchitti collide. The critical moment in the season is a rather difficult piece of footwork: Franchitti keeps his engine fired during the melee and receives a push from corner workers to finish two positions ahead of Dixon, whose engine dies.

- At Chicago, it comes down to the last turn of the last lap, when Dixon's car shudders as it runs dry and Franchitti motors by.

Afterward, as he addresses reporters, Franchitti turns everything on its head and asks a question of the questioners. "Was that enough excitement for you?"

Here's the abbreviated answer: Yes. A thousand times yes.

VIDEO EXTRA

HELIO CASTRONEVES PRACTICES HIS MOVES
Watch him prepare for *Dancing with the Stars*

CASTRONEVES' SMOOTH MOVES
Helio joins cast of ABC's popular dancing reality show

Helio Castroneves may have done a little dancing with teammate Sam Hornish Jr. during much of the Peak Antifreeze 300 at Chicagoland Speedway, the season finale for the IndyCar Series, but a few days later he switched to a much more attractive partner (sorry, Sam) and fancy footwork of a different sort as he began practicing for his run on ABC's *Dancing with the Stars*.

"I have to say that I did not expect to be there, but Apolo [Anton Ohno, the Olympic speed skater and celebrity winner on the show last season] and I were talking at Indy," says Castroneves. "Three hours before the Indy

500, he was asking me if I would like to be on *Dancing with the Stars*. I was like, 'Do I have to answer right now?'

"Two days later the producers started calling. I had a lot of mixed feelings. I thought, 'Great!' But then I thought, 'I'm going to be dancing, I'm not going to be racing.' I'm going to go and try to have as much fun as I can, and just enjoy it."

Castroneves joins 11 other celebrity cast members, including singers Melanie Brown and Wayne Newton, Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban, boxer Floyd Mayweather Jr. and actresses Jennie Garth and Jane Seymour. He

will be partnered with Julianne Hough, Ohno's partner last season.

"I hope a lot of people vote for me; but if I can't go forward, I'm going to try to learn the waltz as much as I can then try to use it in my wedding," Castroneves laughs.

Hough got a taste of Castroneves' world when she took a ride in the IndyCar Series two-seater at Chicagoland. "I was laughing the whole time. It was incredible. The G forces in some of those turns, I was pushed to the side. When can I do it again?" she says.

Dancing with the Stars kicks off with a 90-minute performance episode at 8 p.m. (ET) Sept. 24 featuring the female celebrities. Castroneves and the other male stars will showcase their moves Sept. 25 (8-9:30 p.m. ET). One couple's fate will be determined Sept. 26.

SWEET HOME ALABAMA

The IndyCar Series will have the chance to get a jump start on 2008 during an open test at Barber Motorsports Park near Birmingham, Ala., on Oct. 12. In addition to the open test, the Indy Racing League will be evaluating some components that might be used in 2008, including paddle

The scenic Barber Motorsports Park in Alabama will host an IndyCar Series test Oct. 12. Pack a really big can of bug spray

shifters and steering assist (see story on page 10). The test at Barber will be open to the public, with details to follow.



Denis L. Tanney/LAT

More testing will occur at Iowa Speedway earlier in October, where four cars from Target Chip Ganassi Racing and Andretti Green Racing will help develop a suitable aerodynamics package for the 0.88-mile track. In the IndyCar Series first visit to the facility back in June, side-by-side racing proved difficult as the track was faster than expected.

The usual January and February testing sessions will take place as the teams prepare for the 2008 championship, although dates and venues have not been finalized.

Firestone

Photography by Michael L. Levitt/LAT

Tale of the tire

Reading the Firestone tires used in the IndyCar Series can reveal how a car is handling and whether the tire is the right compound for the job

Tires talk. They will tell you all sorts of things if you understand the language.

Fortunately, Firestone engineers speak tire. They understand how to read what is written in the rubber, what the temperatures and inflation pressures are trying to say. It's why every time a car comes into the pits during practice, even as the team's crew swarms over the car, Firestone engineers are dodging and working through the rest of the activity to get temperatures and take a look at the tires.

"We measure three temperatures per tire, 12 overall, at the outside, center and inside of each tire," explains Firestone engineer Dale Harrigle. "We rely on the teams to check the inflation pressure. We look at the worn appearance of the tire, how the rubber appears – is it a smooth surface? Is it a grainy surface? Graining looks like a used pencil eraser. We quickly summarize all of the temperature and inflation pressure data and provide a copy to the team engineers."

All that information tells the engineers – both from Firestone and the teams – what the car is doing and how it's handling, and if the compounds are appropriate.

"We want the tires to be warmer than 160 degrees and cooler than 215–220 on average. If the tires are too cold, it means we're not soft enough – too hard and we have no grip. If the tires are too hot, they're probably too soft, and then we run the risk of blistering and other issues. So we're really looking to stay within the window where the tire works best.

"The teams use our temperature data to get a sense of what the car is doing, how the handling balance is," Harrigle continues. "On an oval, if a car is pushing, the right-front tire is generally

hotter than the rears. If a car is loose, the rears are generally hotter than the fronts. Also on an oval, we can look at temperature splits side to side. It's very important to get the left tires working as much as you can. Obviously, on the left-hand turns, the weight transfers to the right and the right-side tires do most of the work; so getting the left side of the car to work effectively is the key to getting good grip, good wear and good performance in the race."

It's a symbiotic relationship between the Firestone engineers and team engineers, the free flow of information back and forth helping both camps put a better product on track. The teams end up with more competitive cars, and Firestone doesn't have to worry about a tire failure due to an improper setup.

"We work very closely with the team engineers," says Harrigle. "If we see temperatures we don't like, for example, we may work with the engineer to reduce camber in a certain position, or reduce pressure in a particular tire. We watch inflation pressures very carefully on the ovals, because of the stresses placed on the tires, and keep the teams within our narrow window. We've been with these teams for a lot of years and we have a good working relationship with all of them."

The other thing on which Firestone engineers keep an eye is wear, Harrigle notes. On an oval, the right-rear tire takes the brunt of the force, and therefore wears out fastest; that's the one at which the engineers take a special look.

"We like it when the race comes down to cars needing fuel with 15 or 20 laps to go, and they put fuel in the car and don't change tires," he says. "To us, that means we've done a good job." ■



Dennis Ashlocky/Firestone Racing

Firestone Racing's Ryan Sandlin takes a temperature reading on Sarah Fisher's car

A ROLLING STONE

The Indy Racing League will gather no moss while planning for the future



Infineon Raceway is the IndyCar Series' only West Coast venue now, but that may change

More races, more teams, new cars and new safety initiatives are on tap for the IndyCar Series' future according to the Indy Racing League's leaders.

In a state-of-the-league-type address during the Detroit Indy Grand Prix weekend, Brian Barnhart, president of the racing and operations division, and Terry Angstadt, president of the commercial division, laid out the Indy Racing League's plan for the future for both the IndyCar Series and Indy Pro Series.

While the series' 2008 schedule is expected to remain at 17 races (see page 7), Angstadt said the league sees its schedule growing to 20 races, noting the West Coast is a priority. Races in Mexico and Canada are a possibility, he said, and the idea of a separate international schedule during the off-season is receiving consideration as well.

"We have received numerous inquiries about taking the series overseas," said Angstadt, "and while it remains a work in development, we do see an opportunity to expand our business with a limited international schedule shortly after our domestic championship concludes."

One thing that will change next year is all races will be broadcast in high definition, first used for the IndyCar Series in the ABC broadcast of the 91st Indianapolis 500 this past May.

Looking further into the future, a new, wider tub with better head protection will be introduced, possibly as early as 2009, going from 19in. wide to 21in. to aid in driver extraction. That tub, Barnhart said, will form the nucleus of a new car that could make its debut a few years later.



IndyCar Series drivers may have paddle shifters on the wheel next year

FUTURE TECH

With an eye on safer cars and better competition, the Indy Racing League is testing several new bits for its car over the winter. Some of these may be implemented as soon as the 2008 season.

Indy Racing League President of the Racing and Operations Division Brian Barnhart said that a test in mid-October would look at several possible technical items, including a steering-assist device and paddle shifting, for which many IndyCar Series drivers have expressed a desire. Barnhart said paddle shifting can result in both a safer car – no gearshift for the driver to hit in the cockpit – and reduced costs, even though the initial price per car would be around \$25,000.

New seats are being developed with the help of the Delphi Safety Team and League medical and technical staff, Barnhart said. "Via Delphi's testing facilities, we continue to test the new seat configuration on our cars, including different materials, angles and seat belt configurations," he said.

Other items to be tested in the off-season include a new 7mm-thick, anti-intrusion panel made of 21 layers of Zylon (a material used in body armor, and specified for this use by the FIA) that is bonded to the chassis, and a more efficient sound reduction system.

MO' MONEY, MO' MONEY

In order to attract some new players in the IndyCar Series and help ensure the survival of some of the series' stalwart smaller – at least in terms of budget – teams, the Indy Racing League is working on a new revenue-sharing plan.

Although details are still being finalized at press time, the basic idea is to guarantee each team a lump sum for each car that runs the entire season. The amount will depend on the number of races, but will not be affected by the number of teams. Race purses, with the exception of the Indianapolis 500, would be eliminated. For Indy, the winner's share would go up significantly, bettering the record \$1.761 million Buddy Rice received in 2004 by a long shot.

"I think it's going to be an exciting plan that's going to really stabilize the teams and attract new ones to the IndyCar Series in the future," said Brian Barnhart when he revealed the existence, but no details, of the plan in Detroit.

The new plan would shift payouts from the series top teams down the grid, hopefully making the IndyCar Series more attractive to new team owners. The move might require some driver contracts to be renegotiated, however, because some stipulate a share of race winnings.



The Indy Racing League's new revenue-sharing plan may help some smaller teams such as Dreyer & Reinbold

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INDY PRO NEWS @
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Adam Andretti (below, with father Aldo) will race in the Indy Pro Series full time in 2008



ANDRETTI V. UNSER: ROUND THREE

Two of racing's most famous families continue to push new talent into the pipeline, and the Indy Pro Series will include an Andretti and an Unser full time next year.

Adam Andretti, the 28-year-old nephew of Mario Andretti and second cousin of IndyCar Series driver Marco Andretti, will be racing with financial backing from Brunton Vineyards and the Rev It Up Racing apparel company. Andretti made his debut at the 2007 finale in Chicagoland, where he looked set for a top-10 finish before brushing the Turn 4 SAFER Barrier on lap 34. Andretti will also be a competitor on the FOX reality series *All American Rookie*.

Meanwhile, Al Unser III, the 24-year-old son of two-time Indianapolis 500 winner Al Unser Jr. and grandson of four-time winner Al Unser Sr., is set to contest the full 2008 Indy Pro Series schedule in



Playa Del Racing's No. 21 car with sponsorship from Ethos forEARTH fuel reformulators.

"I want to win on all types of circuits - oval, roads, short ovals," Unser III said. "Mainly I just want to be a contender in every race and be consistent, not crash the car. We have to be consistent, and that's what I'm preparing for this winter to be at my best and give it my all. The Indy 500 has always been in my sights, and now it's even closer."

See It Again

Live streaming video of all IndyCar Series and Indy Pro Series practice and qualifying sessions plus Indy Pro Series races was hugely popular this season. It'll return for 2008, with enhancements to the viewer experience.

In the meantime, re-live the 2007 IndyCar Series season by purchasing complete race video packages for on-demand viewing. All 17 races are available, starting at \$3.99 per event. What could be better on a winter evening than to curl up with a bowl of popcorn and watch the exciting championship duel between Dario Franchitti and Scott Dixon at Chicagoland Speedway?

Check indycar.com or mediazone.com/channel/racing/ for the library of races and how to download.

The race video library complements driver interviews, news conferences and editions of *The Fast Life* available in the Multimedia section of indycar.com. With each piece, viewers can share with friends via e-mail, rate the highlight piece and leave a comment. Just another example of how indycar.com is the most interactive motorsports Web site available.



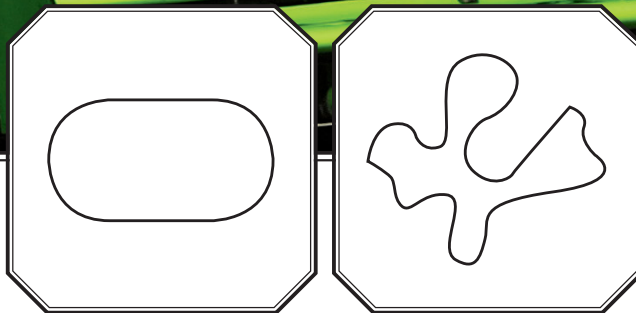
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Paul Webby/LAT

COMING DEC. 17!
The mid-winter update special digital issue

There's much more to come as the teams and drivers prepare for the coming year, and the off-season is anything but quiet. Our special mid-winter digital issue takes you behind the scenes, digests the season past and previews 2008



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VIDEO EXTRA

GO DADDY GIRL DANICA PATRICK AT INFINEON
Giving a ride around the track to queasy passengers

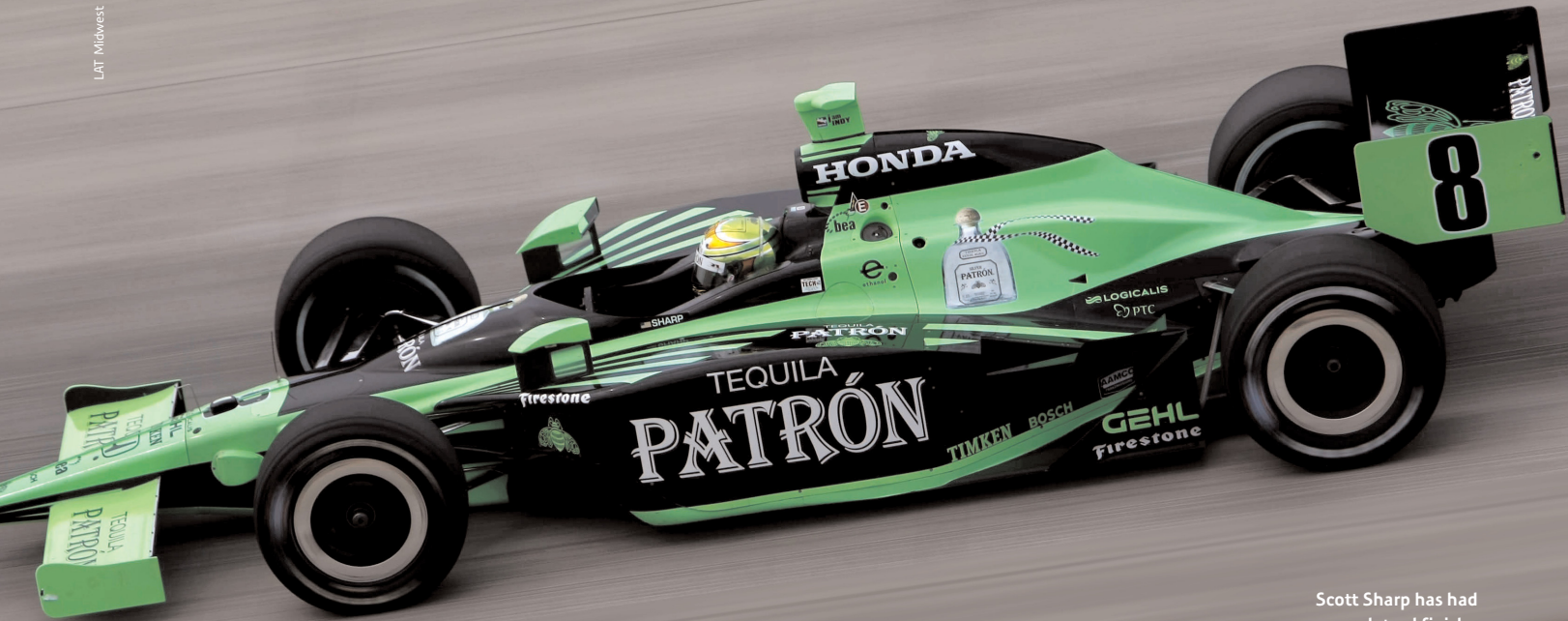
IndyCar Series star Danica Patrick takes Kevin Rose and Alex Albrecht from DiggNation on a little drive around Infineon Raceway. Kevin and Alex were at the track to film their wildly popular video podcast, DiggNation (www.diggnation.com) as guests of their sponsor, www.GoDaddy.com



Danica Patrick runs through the concrete canyons of Detroit's Belle Isle, where she finished second



LAT Midwest



Scott Sharp has had several good finishes this year, plus a pole at Texas. He finished fifth at Chicagoland

Watch the highlights from the IndyCar Series season finale at Chicagoland Speedway, with Patron Rahal Letterman Racing driver Scott Sharp giving his take on the action as the championship fight goes down to the wire

VIDEO EXTRA

PATRÓN DRIVER SCOTT SHARP ON CHICAGOLAND
Watch highlights and get Scott's take on the finale



2007 IndyCar Series wrap-up



Dan Strech/LAT

Firestone Indy 400

Michigan International Speedway, Mich., Aug. 5
200 laps/400 miles

- Points leader Dario Franchitti, having earned his first pole of 2007 (he started first at Richmond after qualifying was rained out), leads Sam Hornish Jr. and the rest of the field to the green, which waves along with the yellow well after the scheduled time due to a rain delay. Franchitti's championship rival, Scott Dixon, starts seventh. The yellow is withdrawn on lap 2.
- Vitor Meira and Helio Castroneves collide on the frontstretch and hit the outside wall on lap 58. Both cars come to rest at the entrance to Turn 1, out of the race.
- Sarah Fisher spins into the Turn 2 SAFER Barrier after an apparent mechanical failure on lap 83, bringing out the yellow flag. Darren Manning smacks the Turn 4 SAFER Barrier on lap 113. Both drivers are unhurt, but both are out of the race.
- It's the big one on lap 143: Franchitti and Dan Wheldon make contact on the backstretch. Franchitti's car spins across the nose of Wheldon's and becomes airborne, tumbling through the air before landing upside down atop the front of Dixon's car. Hornish and all three Vision Racing entries (Tomas Scheckter, A.J. Foyt IV and Ed Carpenter) are also collected in the melee. Remarkably, no one is hurt and, perhaps more remarkably, Dixon and Hornish are able to complete more laps after repairs, improving their finishing positions.
- The race finally resumes on lap 171 with Scott Sharp leading. Tony Kanaan takes the lead from him two laps later, followed by AGR teammates Marco Andretti and Danica Patrick, who is forced to relinquish third-place with just 14 laps to go to change a leaking right-rear tire.
- Kanaan takes his third win of the season, 0.0595sec ahead of Andretti. Sharp hangs on for third, tying his best result of the season, and Kosuke Matsuura ties his career best finish in fourth.

DRIVER	TEAM	
Tony Kanaan	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda
Marco Andretti	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda
Scott Sharp	Rahal Letterman Racing	Dallara-Honda
Kosuke Matsuura	Super Aguri Panther Racing	Dallara-Honda
Buddy Rice	Dreyer & Reinbold Racing	Dallara-Honda

Pole winner: Dario Franchitti 218.308mph

He said it: "I tried to get past Dario [Franchitti], he just ended up on top of me. The Target team did a great job getting the car back together so we could get back out there and finish ahead of Dario. It keeps the points the same as they were coming in, so it's like this race never happened." **Scott Dixon**



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RACE HIGHLIGHTS MICHIGAN [CLICK HERE](#)



Paul Webby/LAT

Meijer Indy 300

Kentucky Speedway, Ky., Aug. 11
200 laps/300 miles

presented by
Coca-Cola

- Tony Kanaan follows up his win at Michigan last week by winning the pole over teammate and points leader Dario Franchitti. Title rival Scott Dixon starts fourth.
- On lap 36, third-place driver Sam Hornish Jr. gets loose exiting Turn 2 and spins. Dan Wheldon, trying to thread the needle between Hornish and the outside wall, spins across the track, into the infield and hits the inside wall. Both cars are damaged, but Wheldon eventually returns after repairs to complete one more lap, moving ahead of Hornish in the finishing order.
- Franchitti takes the lead after pit stops during the caution for the Hornish-Wheldon incident, and leads Kanaan until the second round of pit stops, this time coming under green flag conditions.
- Entering the pits for his final stop of the day, Franchitti runs wide and clips the pylon marking the start of the pit road speed limit, damaging his front wing in the process. Danica Patrick, who entered the pits with Franchitti, spins in Turn 2 in her haste to rejoin the fray, stalls the car and brings out the caution. Once the engine is refired she speeds around the track back toward the pits, only to have the flat-spotted right-rear tire burst in Turn 2, sending her spinning into the wall, out of the race and barely missing a Delphi Safety Team vehicle.
- A.J. Foyt IV leads the field to the restart with 10 to go, but is unable to hold off Kanaan and Dixon, who finish first and second, respectively. Foyt does hold on for a career-best third place.
- After crossing the finish line, Franchitti, unaware the race is over, runs over the back of the slowing Kosuke Matsuura, sending the point leader skyward for the second time in a week before slamming the Turn 1 SAFER Barrier gearbox-first. Both drivers are unhurt.

DRIVER	TEAM	
Tony Kanaan	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda
Scott Dixon	Target Chip Ganassi Racing	Dallara-Honda
A.J. Foyt IV	Vision Racing	Dallara-Honda
Marco Andretti	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda
Tomas Scheckter	Vision Racing	Dallara-Honda

Pole winner: Tony Kanaan 218.086mph

He said it: "After the checker I let off, and [Dario Franchitti] didn't see me, and he hit me. When we were getting into the safety car, he said, 'My fault.' He understood what exactly happened and he apologized to me about that. The race is over so there is nothing more we can do." **Kosuke Matsuura**



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RACE HIGHLIGHTS KENTUCKY [CLICK HERE](#)



Dan Strech/LAT

Motorola Indy 300

Infineon Raceway, Calif., Aug. 26
80 laps/180.8 miles

- Points leader Dario Franchitti leads the field to green for the third time this season. Teammate Danica Patrick starts alongside, while another Andretti Green Racing driver, Marco Andretti, makes contact with Ryan Hunter-Reay in Turn 2, causing damage that puts the Rahal Letterman Racing car and driver out of the race five laps later.
- Sarah Fisher is officially out of the race on lap 31 with gearbox troubles. It is her second DNF in the last three races, a stat made all the more disappointing considering she had back-to-back top 10s at Texas and Iowa earlier in the season.
- Franchitti regains the lead following both the first and second rounds of green flag pit stops, but disaster would strike following the third round of stops as he and Andretti, who was exiting the pits, make contact in Turn 2, sending the third-generation driver backward into the tire barrier and out of the race and causing damage to the left-front corner of Franchitti's car.
- When the race restarts on lap 72 following the removal of Andretti's car, second in points Scott Dixon makes quick work of Franchitti, and Helio Castroneves follows him around the wounded No. 27 car shortly thereafter.
- The full-course yellow is back out on lap 74 when Scott Sharp, who is having brake issues, makes contact with A.J. Foyt IV. The race resumes two laps later, but Castroneves has to settle for second behind Dixon, who makes it a perfect three-for-three on permanent road courses in 2007. Franchitti is able to hold on for third, due in part to teammate Tony Kanaan's controversial decision to defend him from behind.

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

Pole winner: Dario Franchitti 107.951 mph

He said it: "I had to protect Dario as much as I could over the final few laps. The guy has done a lot for me over the years and I was thinking about the team. Motor racing is a very selfish sport but I'm proud of what I did today in the Team 7-Eleven car. It wasn't going to change anything for me to be second, third or fourth. I want this team to win the championship and I'm pretty sure Dario will. It's a little setback but we've still got two races to go." **Tony Kanaan**



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RACE HIGHLIGHTS INFINEON [CLICK HERE](#)



Detroit Indy Grand Prix presented by Firestone

The Raceway at Belle Isle, Mich., Sept. 2
89 laps/184.23 miles

- Helio Castroneves, having taken his fourth pole out of the five on road and street courses this season, leads the three championship contenders (Dario Franchitti, Scott Dixon and Tony Kanaan) to the green flag for the first open-wheel race on Belle Isle in six years.
- Ed Carpenter stalls on the escape road in Turn 8 on lap 27, drawing a full-course yellow. On the restart, Sam Hornish Jr. and Sarah Fisher collide entering Turn 1, taking Vitor Meira, Darren Manning and Danica Patrick with them. Manning and Patrick are able to continue, and Hornish eventually rejoins the race, but Meira and Fisher are out.
- Franchitti, who assumed the lead shortly before the yellow for Carpenter due to pit stops, leads Kanaan and Dixon when the race finally resumes on lap 38. But the yellow is back out nine laps later when Patrick and Scott Sharp collide in Turn 8. Patrick's car seems fine, but Sharp's has damage to the suspension. After pit stops, it's Buddy Rice who leads.
- Castroneves attempts to pass Tomas Scheckter under braking for Turn 1 on lap 67 but instead hits the South African, who appeared to be taking his normal line through the corner, sending both cars into the tire barrier and out of the race.
- As Series officials announce the race will be shortened from the scheduled 90 laps due to the two-hour 10-minute time limit, the order is Kanaan, Rice, Dixon and Franchitti. On lap 88 Dixon attempts to pass Rice in Turn 13 but the two make contact, sending Rice into the tire barrier and Dixon into a spin, the latter collecting Franchitti. Patrick is able to weave her way through the mayhem and into a career-best second-place finish, as Kanaan takes the victory under yellow. Franchitti is soon restarted and nurses his car across the line to take sixth.

DRIVER	TEAM	
Tony Kanaan	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda
Danica Patrick	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda
Dan Wheldon	Target Chip Ganassi Racing	Dallara-Honda
Darren Manning	A.J. Foyt Enterprises	Dallara-Honda
Kosuke Matsuura	Super Aguri Panther Racing	Dallara-Honda

Pole winner: Helio Castroneves 103.401 mph

He said it: "It's just unfortunate what happened out there. Obviously, I'm not happy with today's result, but I guess it's just one of those racing deals." **Hello Castroneves** on his collision with Tomas Scheckter



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RACE HIGHLIGHTS DETROIT [CLICK HERE](#)



Peak Antifreeze Indy 300

Chicagoland Speedway, Ill., Sept. 9
200 laps/300 miles

- Dario Franchitti, starts the last weekend of his title hunt in the best possible way by winning pole as outgoing champion Sam Hornish Jr. rolls off alongside. Franchitti's main championship rival, Scott Dixon, starts sixth.
- Outside polesitter Hornish takes the lead from Franchitti going down the backstretch on lap 1. By lap 5 Team Penske teammate Helio Castroneves is into second, and the duo will go on to lead a combined 146 of the 200 laps.
- Tony Kanaan is forced to pit on lap 18 to change a flat right rear tire. He will remain off-sequence for the rest of the afternoon, all but eliminating his already outside shot at the championship.
- Marco Andretti's disappointing sophomore season comes to an end on lap 35 when an apparent mechanical failure sends him into a spin, and he makes hard contact with the Turn 4 SAFER Barrier. He is taken to a local hospital for neck pains but has no serious injuries.
- The Penske cars would pit together on lap 86, handing the lead to Dixon. But Vitor Meira spins and hits the Turn 4 SAFER Barrier just as Dixon and Danica Patrick are in the pits. The resultant yellow stays out for 14 laps while crews repair the SAFER Barrier. Dixon and Franchitti both pit to top off on fuel.
- Patrick spins entering the pits for her last stop on lap 193, bringing out a yellow. Dixon and second-place Franchitti both stay out to try and make it to the end on the fuel they have.
- Following the lap 197 restart, Franchitti doesn't seem to have enough speed to overtake Dixon. But on the final lap, Dixon slows between Turn 3 and Turn 4, out of fuel. Franchitti pulls to the outside of the Kiwi just in time to avoid disaster, and the Scotsman takes the win and the IndyCar Series championship in dramatic fashion. Dixon coasts across the finish line for second, the rest of the field having gotten caught one lap down due to the last caution.

DRIVER	TEAM	
Dario Franchitti	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda
Scott Dixon	Target Chip Ganassi Racing	Dallara-Honda
Sam Hornish Jr.	Team Penske	Dallara-Honda
Helio Castroneves	Team Penske	Dallara-Honda
Scott Sharp	Rahal Letterman Racing	Dallara-Honda

Pole winner: Dario Franchitti 214.646mph

He said it: "All year, even with a 65-point lead, I kept saying it's going to be close. Comes down to Scott [Dixon] and me last corner, last lap. That pretty much sums up the year." **Dario Franchitti**



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Blow by blow



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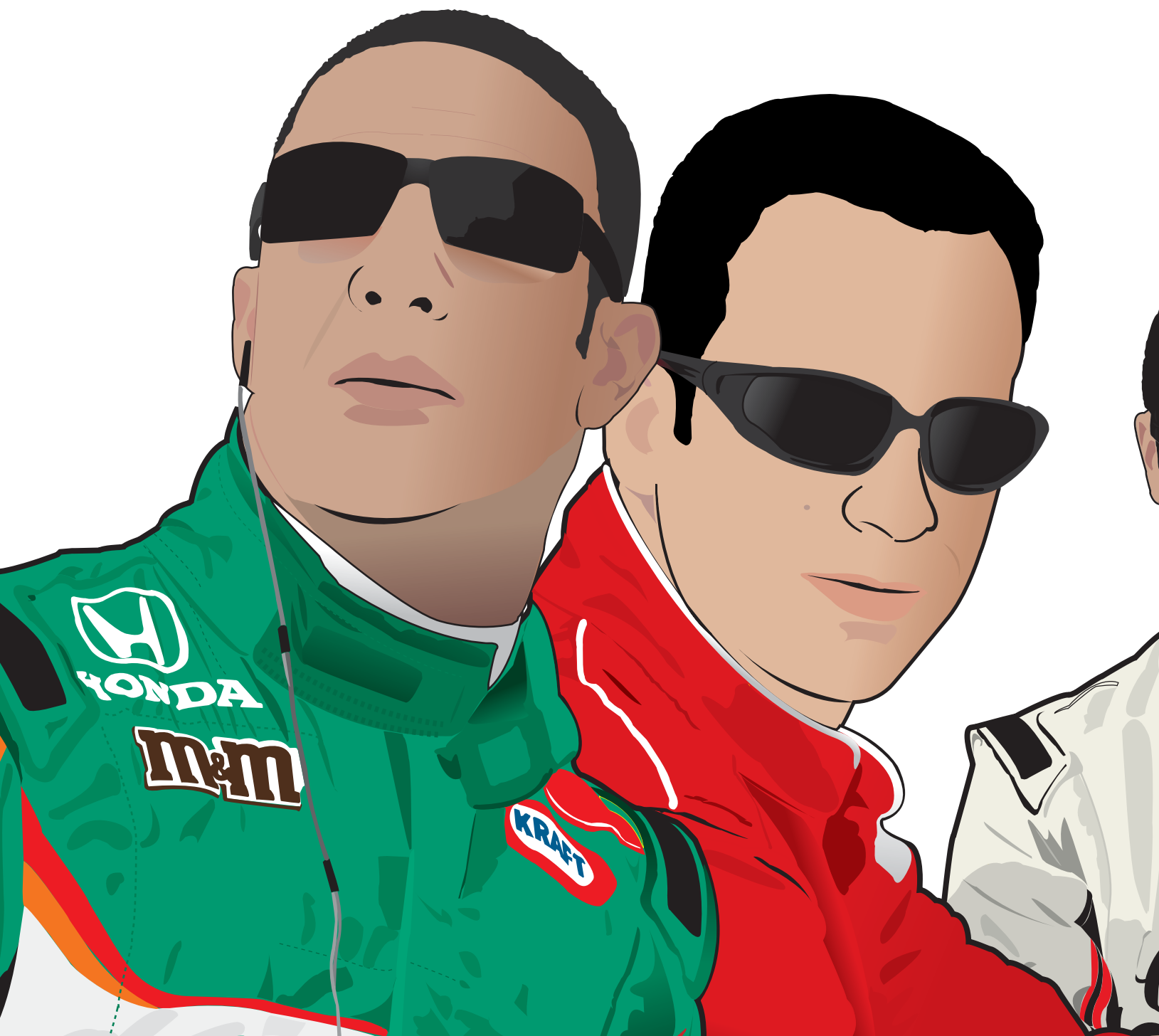
Driver standings after 17 of 17 races

Rank	Driver	Points
1	Dario Franchitti	637
2	Scott Dixon	624
3	Tony Kanaan	576
4	Dan Wheldon	466
5	Sam Hornish Jr.	465
6	Helio Castroneves	446
7	Danica Patrick	424
8	Scott Sharp	412
9	Buddy Rice	360
10	Tomas Scheckter	357
11	Marco Andretti	350
12	Vitor Meira	334
13	Darren Manning	332
14	A.J. Foyt IV	315
15	Ed Carpenter	309
16	Kosuke Matsuura	303
17	Sarah Fisher	275
18	Jeff Simmons	201
19	Ryan Hunter-Reay [R]	119
20	Milka Duno [R]	96

Illustrations by Martin Peel

POWER OF 10

The points don't always tell the true tale of a driver's season, where less-than-top-flight equipment or a little bad luck can overshadow real accomplishment and talent. So, with the help of the IndyCar Series drivers and our own experts, we present our top-10 rankings for the 2007 season. Feel free to disagree...



HONORABLE MENTIONS

Darren Manning returned to the series to give A.J. Foyt Racing a couple of top-five finishes and 13th in the standings. Ryan Hunter-Reay took a seat at Rahal Letterman in July, claimed the Bombardier Learjet Rookie of the Year, and made the Firestone Fast Six qualifying at Detroit in his fifth IndyCar Series race. Finally, although he ran only one race, it was a heck of a one-off: Ryan Briscoe proved he still has what it takes at Indy.

10 SCOTT SHARP

TEAM RAHAL LETTERMAN RACING
POINTS POSITION EIGHTH

As the senior statesman of the IndyCar Series, Scott Sharp shows no sign of backing off and seems to have a renewed commitment with his new team and sponsor. There was the pole at Texas, and third-place finishes at Iowa and Michigan to go along with eight other top-10 finishes. Inexplicably, the two-time Trans-Am champ's big weakness this season has been on the road courses, with best finishes of 11th at St. Pete, Mid-Ohio and Detroit.

9 TOMAS SCHECKTER

TEAM VISION RACING
POINTS POSITION 10TH

Vision Racing's best hope for a victory, Tomas Scheckter showed his usual speed, but also his impulsiveness in 2007. That impulsiveness cost him some better finishes, but he still managed nine top-10 finishes and 10th in the standings. Rumor has him heading to a seat in one of the top teams next year to show what he can do.

8 BUDDY RICE

TEAM DREYER & REINBOLD RACING
POINTS POSITION NINTH

The former Indy 500 champion had a slow start with his new team – it was Texas before Buddy Rice scored better than a 10th-place finish. But after that, he was out of the top 10 only a few times. Thanks to

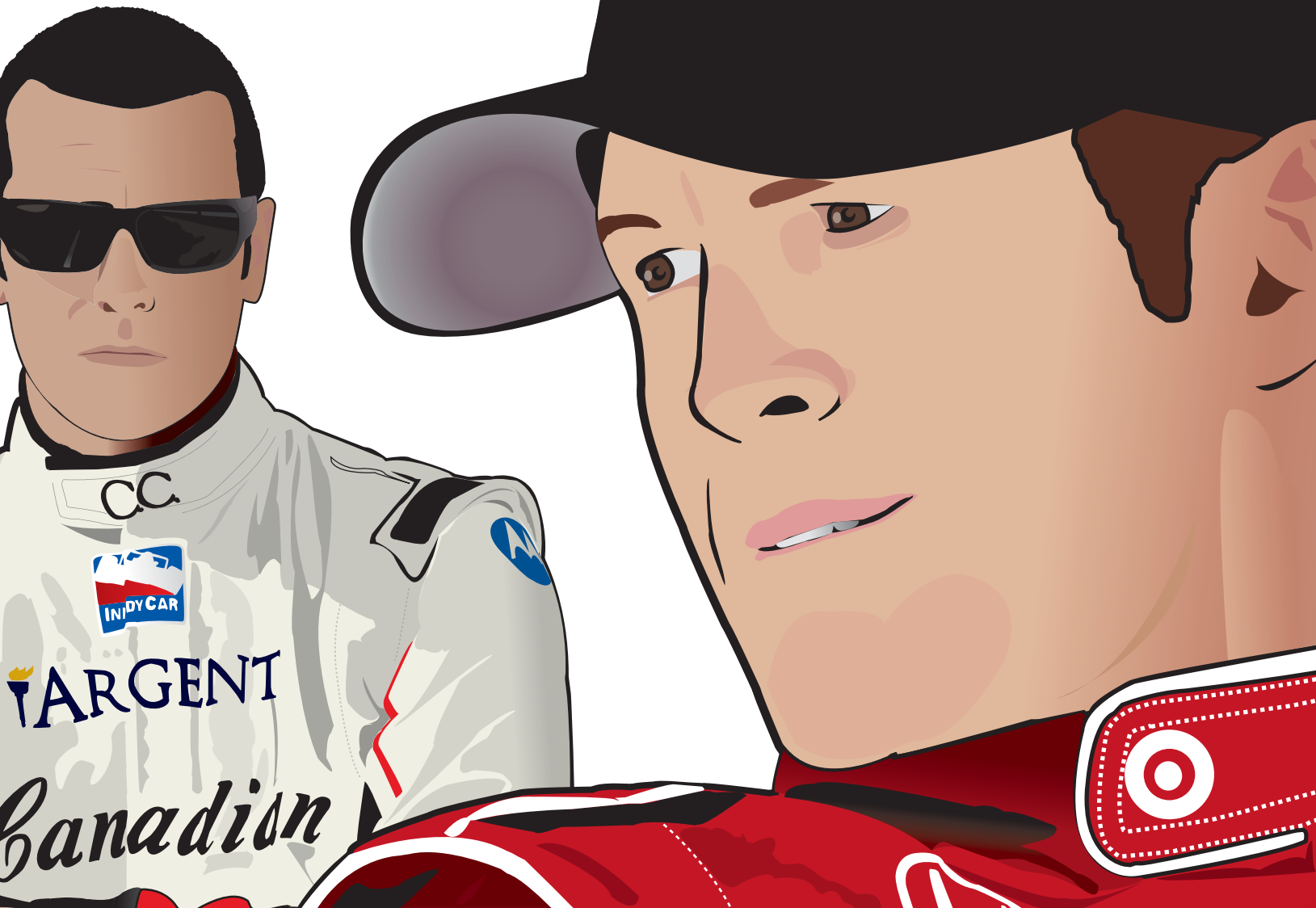
pit strategy, he led a few races, and was able to run with the big dogs when he was there.

7 DANICA PATRICK

TEAM ANDRETTI GREEN RACING
POINTS POSITION SEVENTH

The world expected Danica Patrick to win a race this year with Andretti Green; she didn't fulfill the prophecies, but came darn close, running up front again at Indy and coming up with thirds at Texas and Nashville and a second at Detroit. She earned praise from her teammates and stepped up on the road courses, qualifying second at Mid-Ohio and Infineon. Look for victory in 2008.

No, it's not a rock group, it's pop art stars (left to right) Tony Kanaan, Helio Castroneves, Dario Franchitti and Scott Dixon – the top four in our 2007 driver rankings



6 DAN WHELDON

TEAM TARGET CHIP GANASSI RACING
POINTS POSITION FOURTH; WINS 2

Dan Wheldon may have finished fourth in the points, but he's sixth in our rating. It may be unfair to judge Wheldon's season based on the unfulfilled promise of his great pre-Indianapolis 500 performance, winning at Homestead and Kansas; but it sure fell apart, beginning at Indy where he tangled with Marco Andretti late in the race. Wheldon has especially struggled on the road courses this year, while his teammate excelled.

5 SAM HORNISH JR.

TEAM TEAM PENSKE
POINTS POSITION FIFTH; WINS ONE

From four wins and the title in 2006 to a single win in 2007, Sam Hornish Jr. has experienced a deceleration, if not a complete reversal, of fortune. Part of it may be whatever is going on at Team Penske these days that has left them scrounging for victory scraps under the Ganassi and Andretti Green table. The dominant win at Texas saved what might have been a so-so season.

4 HELIO CASTRONEVES

TEAM TEAM PENSKE
POINTS POSITION SIXTH; WINS ONE

It's too bad qualifying doesn't count for more, or seven-time polesitter Helio Castroneves might be in a better position in the points. Unfortunately, he couldn't convert more of those first-place starts into first-place finishes. Some of that was beyond his control, such as the wing failure at Milwaukee that ruined an almost-certain victory. Still, we expected more out of Castroneves and Team Penske this year.

3 TONY KANAAN

TEAM ANDRETTI GREEN RACING
POINTS POSITION THIRD; WINS FIVE

It would have been easy for Tony Kanaan to get discouraged after watching his dominance in the Indianapolis 500 come to naught; but the Brazilian put his head down and won the next weekend at Milwaukee, then three more times after some had counted him out of the title fight. Had it not been for a few errors such as his early exits at Iowa and Nashville, he might have repeated his 2004 championship. Extra props to Kanaan for being a team player.

1 = SCOTT DIXON

TEAM TARGET CHIP GANASSI RACING
POINTS POSITION SECOND; WINS FOUR

Scott Dixon had about as good a season as possible without winning the championship. He strung together three straight wins, including defending at Watkins Glen and Nashville, and won every natural-terrain road course event. Poor finishes were usually the result of getting caught in someone else's accident. In almost any other year, he would be champ.

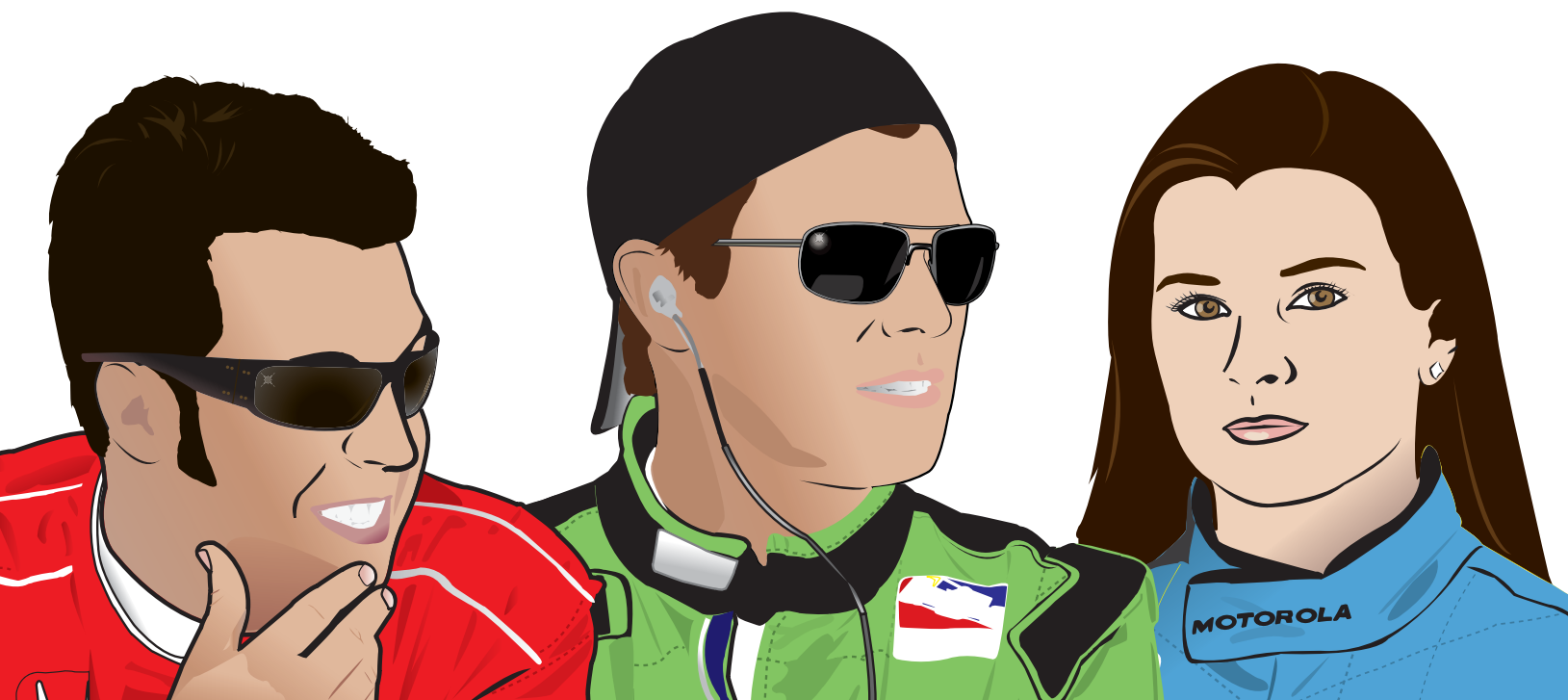
1 = DARIO FRANCHITTI

TEAM ANDRETTI GREEN RACING
POINTS POSITION FIRST; WINS FOUR

The only reason 2007 IndyCar Series champion Dario Franchitti isn't alone at the top is he made it harder on himself than it needed to be. With the Indianapolis 500 victory and wins at Iowa, Richmond and Chicago, plus being right on Dixon's six when he wasn't winning, Franchitti should have been able to cruise at Chicago. However, a few mistakes conspired to make the finale do-or-die. Still, a championship is a championship, and Dario did it. ■



Mugging for the artist are, clockwise from top right, Buddy Rice, Dan Wheldon, Tomas Scheckter, Danica Patrick, Scott Sharp and Sam Hornish Jr., who fill slots six to 10 in our rankings



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Marco Andretti - 20 Years old
Youngest Indy Car Winner

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Dario's championship
season highlights
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Two days after clinching the title in Chicago, with the weight finally lifted from his shoulders, Dario Franchitti poses for *IndyCar Series* magazine. Mission accomplished



LIGHT OF REDEMPTION

The emotion of Dario Franchitti's 2007 IndyCar Series championship is wrapped in a lost friend, a lost title, a flood of bad breaks – and, finally, sweet redemption

Words by Jeff Olson Photo by Michael Levitt/LAT

The drama was so intense, a cat fell out of a window. Literally. Dario Franchitti didn't win the IndyCar Series championship until the final turn of the final race of the season, when Scott Dixon's car suddenly ran out of fuel and Franchitti passed him for the win. When it happened, one of Franchitti's cousins, watching the race on television, yelled so loudly that his cat fell out of a window.

Close. Very close. Cat-out-of-the-window close. Franchitti and Dixon came into the final race at Chicagoland Speedway separated by just three points, and they were running side by side for the final laps. A race and a championship were in the balance. Drama on top of drama.

"The drama adds to that elation, definitely," Franchitti says. "With one lap to go, I was thinking, 'Man, this is going to be tough. I'm going to have to get such a good run here

down the backstretch to get him. It's going to be tough.' For it to work out the way it did made the emotion that much stronger."

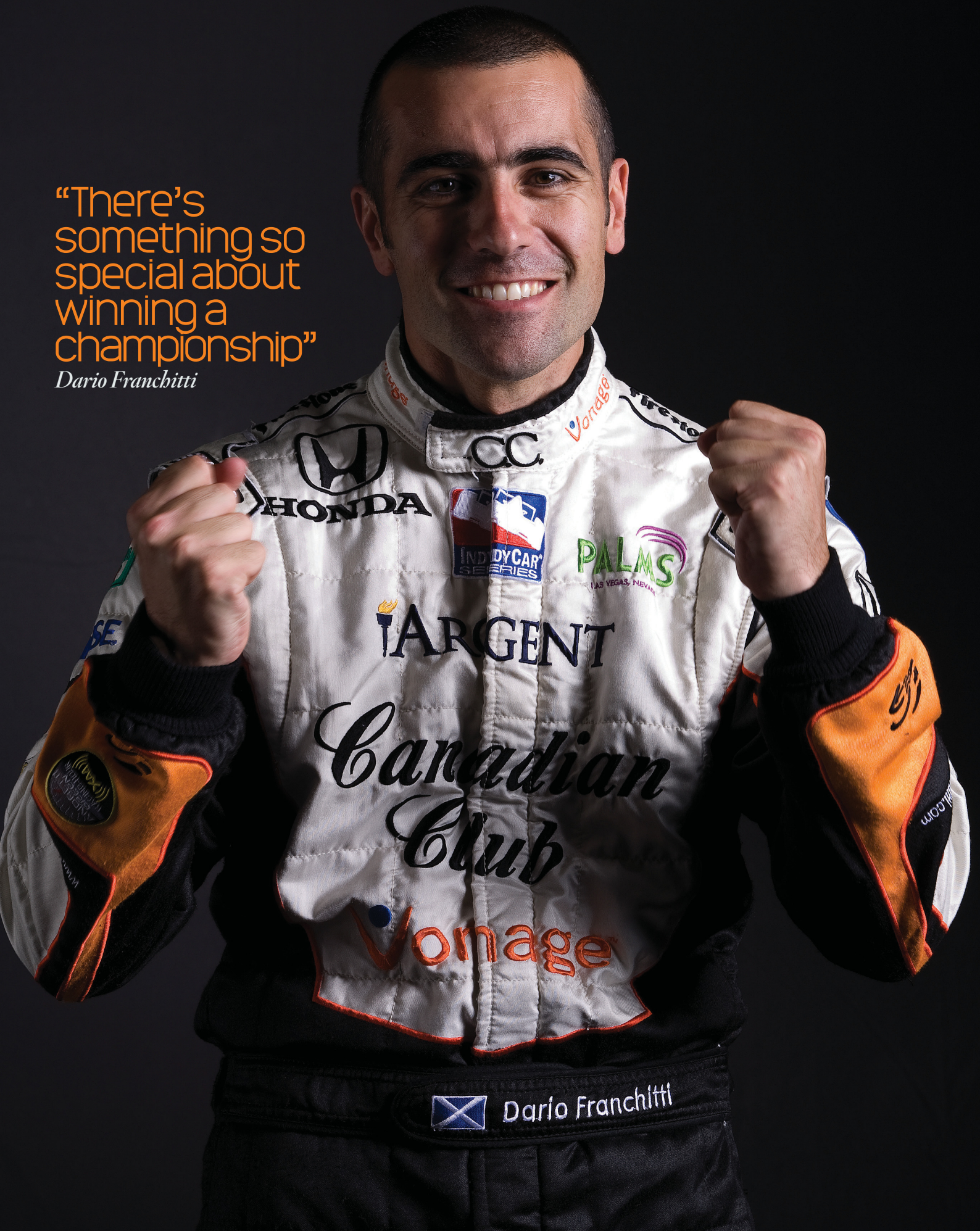
The drama of the race wasn't the only element at play. Franchitti's career works into the production, too. His other shot at a major championship – the CART title in 1999 – went down to a tiebreaker after the season finale at California Speedway. He lost the championship to Juan Pablo Montoya based on race wins.

The depressing circumstances continued in 2004, when Franchitti first joined the IndyCar Series. He missed much of the season because of injuries sustained in a motorcycle accident. Once healthy, he was solid in '05, but attracted a strange run of bad luck and missed opportunities, finishing fourth in the final standings.

This year, the negative vibe faded and Franchitti put the gilding on his racing resume

“There’s
something so
special about
winning a
championship”

Dario Franchitti



with a victory in the Indianapolis 500 in May and an extraordinarily dramatic championship. What made that Indy win extra special was that Franchitti had matched the feat of his racing hero, fellow Scot Jim Clark, who'd triumphed at the Brickyard in 1965.

For Clark, committed to Formula 1 with Team Lotus, his five forays to Indy were yearly one-offs (the odd detour to Milwaukee aside). For Franchitti, the Indy 500 win was the springboard for his championship charge.

"The 500 is the pinnacle so far, definitely," Franchitti says with a pause, "but there's something so special about a championship. It's 17 rounds. It's ups and downs. The focus that it takes from me and every single member of my team – from the engineers and the mechanics and the guys in the wind tunnel and every other person – just the focus to carry this off is amazing. The



Dave Filiedmag/LAT

focus from my teammates is amazing as well."

His closest competitor understands that notion. "To be honest, if it was anybody but me, I wanted to see him win it," Dixon says. "He's had to deal with a lot of stuff, and he's dealt with it very well. He doesn't let things get to him, and he's done a superb job."

More than anything, that unflappable nature kept Franchitti in it. The final month of the season was a bear: He crashed in each of the four races leading up to the Chicago finale, including well-publicized flips at Michigan and Kentucky. He understands how fickle the game is; how, like it did for Dixon, the championship can come down to a few ounces of ethanol.

"The other day when we were practicing pit stops, one of the guys dropped a nut," Franchitti explains. "I remember thinking at the time that it was how I lost the '99 championship – a guy on the team lost a wheel nut during a pit stop. That just shows you that we're all in this together. I'm just a link in the chain."

Indeed, teamwork was Franchitti's ally. Strategist John Anderson, engineer Allan McDonald and chief mechanic Jeff Gahn led a group that was spotless down the stretch, providing immaculately prepared cars, flawless stops and spot-on calls.

"If you watch racing, you probably get fed

Jim Clark, winner of the 1965 Indy 500 (above left), has always been an inspiration to fellow Scotsman Dario Franchitti. After matching his hero's accomplishment this year, Franchitti went on to lift the IndyCar Series title at a nail-biting Chicago finale (above right)

up listening to drivers thank their guys," Franchitti says. "But you know what? That's such a big part of our sport. I drove a car last year that wasn't fast enough to win races. That wasn't my guys' fault or my engineers' fault. It was because we didn't have the budget to do it. We transferred that budget, made the cars better, and everyone else stepped up their game, and here we are. It shows what a team sport this is."

Dixon knows what Franchitti means. He finished the season with a rush, winning three consecutive races during one stretch and putting immense pressure on Franchitti until the last drop.

"Scott and I can both look back and pick out races we shouldn't have struggled with," Franchitti says. "If I hadn't gotten together with Marco (Andretti) in Sonoma, or Tony (Kanaan) at St. Pete, it all might have been different. There are always ifs and buts. Scott can look at Iowa and

collecting his thoughts. Then a group of safety workers congratulated the new champ.

"I said, 'Good to see you guys. The car is actually the right way around and has four wheels on it today,'" Franchitti laughs. "They said, 'How did you like this car compared to Kentucky or Michigan?' I said, 'This is actually the Kentucky car.' They were amazed. That was a time to take stock a little bit and think of what we had achieved. It was nice to have that minute just to compose myself."

He also remembered somebody who's never too far from his thoughts. "I was thinking about a couple of friends of mine and what they might think of this whole thing," he says, trying to control his emotions.

One of those friends, of course, was Greg Moore, who was killed in an accident at California Speedway in 1999.

"I can't believe it's been eight years," he says. "I don't really think about the '99 championship as a championship; I only think about that as Greg not being here. The morning before the Chicago race, I thought, 'Hey, I've been in this situation before.' Once I got in the car, I was able to focus and do the job."

Another person on his mind was his dad, George Franchitti, a



Paul Weasby/LAT

Detroit and wonder what might have been."

Franchitti had similar questions about himself in 2005. The car was strong, the potential was obvious – the positive results were lacking. He won twice, but mechanical problems and accidents cost him in other races.

"At the beginning, a championship didn't seem to be in the cards," says Franchitti. "If you go back to '05, we were the quickest car, but something would always go wrong. For example, at St. Pete, we were in a different zip code, but the fuel tank vent was in upside down. We still almost won the race. There were a lot of times in '05 where it just didn't happen."

Perhaps the failure prepared Franchitti for the eventual success, and the attention it garnered. Much of the final race weekend attention centered on his future plans. After winning the title, he maintains that his career is ascending.

"This is a peak," Franchitti explains. "I suppose it depends on what I do next year. If I stay here, then I've got to scale that mountain again. If I go do something else, then I've got another peak to go after."

The meaning of this mountain could be seen in Franchitti's immediate reaction after the race. Flush with emotion, he stopped the car, climbed out and knelt for a moment,

popular fixture at his son's races who once described his role in Dario's career as "chief cook and bottle washer." When interviewed on national TV after the race, George was nearly speechless. It was, his son and others joked, probably the only time that's ever happened.

"He was there when I won my first championship when I was 10 years old," Franchitti says. "When I saw my dad, I just about lost it. He's been there in the good days and the bad days. He just said, 'Great race.' It was very emotional. It's funny, too. When we did the family photo after the race, he wasn't there. We called his cell phone and he was putting my helmet away. So when he came back up to the podium, all the photographers cheered. Everybody knows my dad."

Then, of course, there was Kanaan, Franchitti's longtime pal and teammate. Winner of the title in 2004, Kanaan was in the chase into the final race this year; but if he couldn't win it, he wanted his friend to do it. When they embraced after the race, they were a mess of emotions.

"Sometimes, TK's so good at putting things into words," Franchitti says. "It's been hard for me to put this into words, but there are a lot of words that he and I seem to share the use of."

Add one more word: Champion. ■



RYAN'S STATS @
www.indycar.com

SECOND CHANCES

Ryan Hunter-Reay came into the IndyCar Series late in the season, but made a quick impact

Words by Bruce Martin • Photo by Paul Webb/LAT



Dan Strebeck/LAT

Ryan Hunter-Reay was able to make a big impression in a limited period of time. Considering that Hunter-Reay did not compete in his first IndyCar Series race until July 22 at Mid-Ohio, winning the Bombardier Learjet Rookie of the Year Award in just six races – a record – is quite an achievement.

"I didn't see that one coming for sure," says Hunter-Reay. "When I started out my year I didn't see an IndyCar Series rookie campaign going, but it is great, a great opportunity and a great place to be."

"We accomplished more in six races than I ever thought would be possible when I joined the team. This is a great team, with a bright future. I see the Rookie of the Year award as not so much a great honor for me, but more as a symbol of what we accomplished as a team this season."

Hunter-Reay began the year without a full-time ride in any series as he split time running in the Grand-Am Rolex Series in the No. 91 Lowe's Pontiac and testing a NASCAR Car of Tomorrow for his girlfriend's brother, Robby Gordon. However, Hunter-Reay's real passion was in high-speed, open-wheel race cars. He drove in the Champ Car Series for several teams and set a single-race series record when he led all 250 laps at The Milwaukee Mile in 2004.

Hunter-Reay had a promising future; but, suddenly, his opportunities vanished. He was offered an IndyCar Series test with Target Chip Ganassi Racing, but some of his Champ Car advisors talked him out of it.

"They told me if I stayed in Champ Car I would be secure for a number of years," he says. "At the time that seemed like the opportunity, but it was the wrong decision, for sure."

He got a phone call from IndyCar Series

team owner Bobby Rahal, who wanted to get the ethanol-sponsored entry up to speed after Jeff Simmons was involved in a series of crashes and early exits.

"It's huge to pick up the phone and hear, 'Hey Ryan, it's Bobby Rahal,'" Hunter-Reay says. "You sit up in your seat when you hear that. I was hired to up the game of the program and bring it to the next level. My job at the same time was to go fast and impress, but I had to bring the car home. They couldn't afford to keep having the car come back damaged."

The No. 17 car is an important entry to the IndyCar Series because it is backed by the ethanol industry, which is leading the way in alternative fuels in the United States. All cars in the series run on ethanol.

"It's a huge honor for me to be a part of a big movement like that," Hunter-Reay says. "It has huge potential and the more they put their word out through avenues like this, the more it's going to pay off for them. I want to help bring that to reality."

Hunter-Reay not only finished races, he also finished well. A seventh in his debut at Mid-Ohio was backed up with a sixth at Michigan. Although he had a string of poor finishes – two mechanical DNFs – he rallied to end the season strong with a seventh at Chicagoland to clinch the rookie honors.

With the rookie title in hand, Hunter-Reay is already looking forward to achieving another one of his goals – competing in the Indy 500.

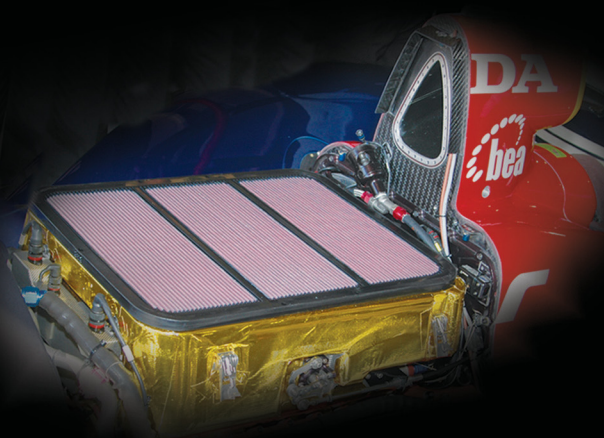
"That's huge," he says. "I showed up at Mid-Ohio and thought, 'This is the same series that races in the Indy 500,' and I can't wait to get there. It's been a goal of mine to do that for a long time."

"Now, I have a chance to do that." ■



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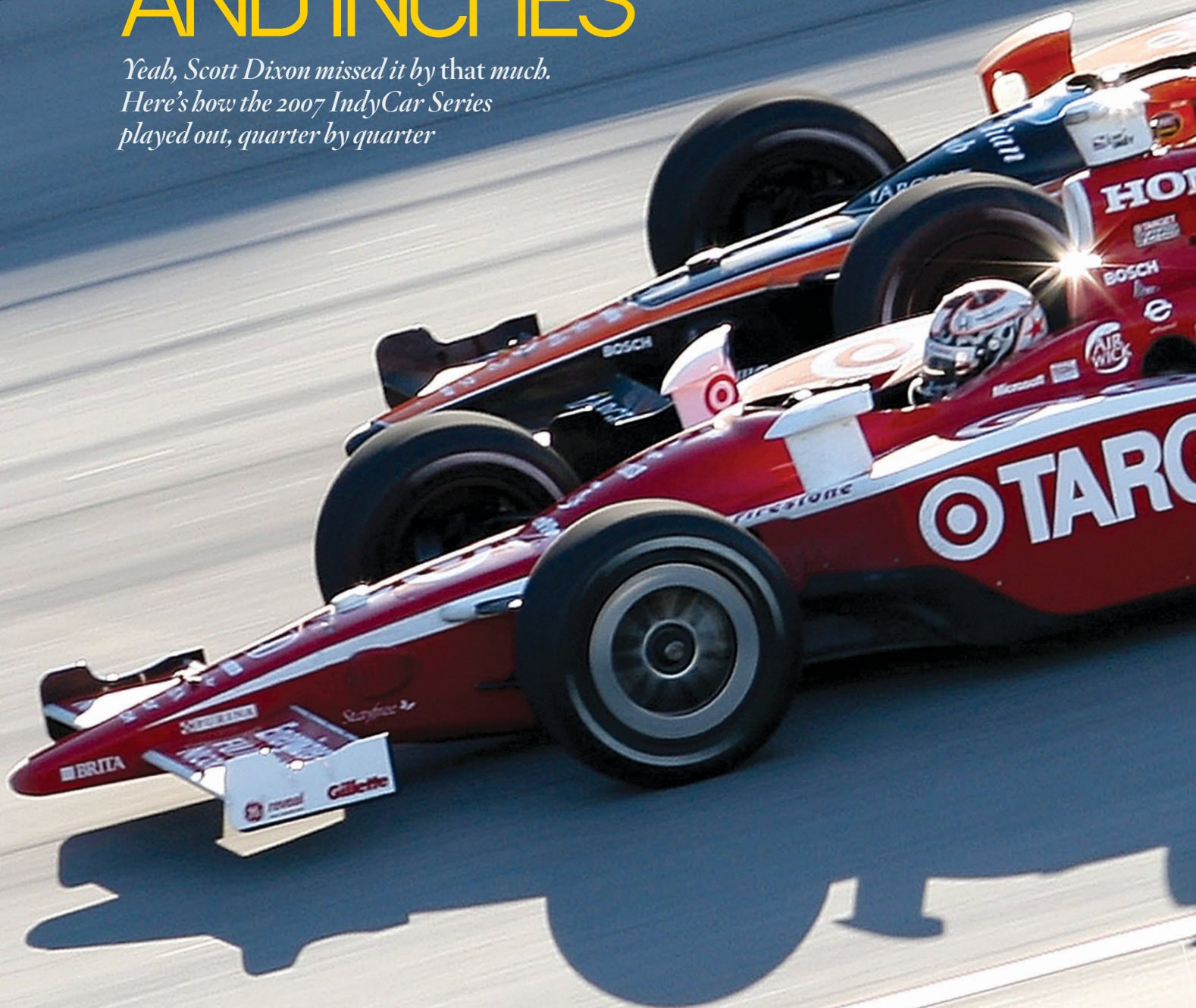
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Words by Richard S. James • Photo by Jamie Squire/Getty Images

FOURTH AND INCHES

*Yeah, Scott Dixon missed it by that much.
Here's how the 2007 IndyCar Series
played out, quarter by quarter*





VIDEO EXTRA
 Watch Franchitti's
 year-end speech
[CLICK HERE](#)

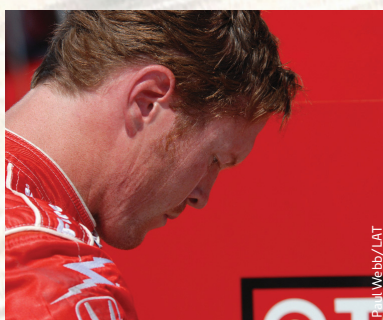
VIDEO EXTRA
 Watch Dixon's
 year-end speech
[CLICK HERE](#)

In football box scores, scoring by quarter is always featured, just as the scoring by inning in baseball or scoring by half in college basketball or whatever period by which any given sport is divided. At first, it seems rather pointless; the only score that really matters is the one with the "F" next to it. Everything else is statistics.

However, statistics such as scoring by quarter can provide a little insight into the ebb and flow, who has the momentum and when. While the "periods" in the 2007 IndyCar Series might seem to be each actual race, it just so happens that it breaks up nicely into quarters. Call Chicagoland, the final race, overtime.

Of course, that race came down to a duel between the two championship contenders and a few drops of ethanol when Scott Dixon ran out of fuel with half a lap to go and watched Dario Franchitti run to the race win and the title. But after the first quarter of the 2007 season, few could have predicted an outcome like that.

(Main) It all came down to the final two laps of the season at Chicagoland Speedway. When the dust settled, Dario Franchitti (right, top) was elated, Scott Dixon was left to rue what might have been (bottom left)



FIRST QUARTER: HOMESTEAD, ST. PETE, MOTEGI AND KANSAS

TOP SCORER: DAN WHELDON

For the first four races of the IndyCar Series, the focus is on building momentum toward the series' biggest single event, the Indianapolis 500. Although those races obviously play a part in the championship, the title race is almost an afterthought at that point.

The clear winner of the quarter was Dan Wheldon. He opened it with a victory at Homestead, and closed it with a win at Kansas, making him the odds makers' favorite going into the month of May and the Indianapolis 500. In between, Tony Kanaan won at Motegi and Helio Castroneves took his only win of 2007 in St. Petersburg.

"Winning Homestead was a great way to start the season, especially to be so dominant," says Wheldon, before noting that he also enjoyed Motegi, where he finished second. "The car was fantastic. We had some radio problems that upset the rhythm of our race a

little bit and hindered our pit strategy, but the car was absolutely fantastic and I really enjoyed that race."

Kanaan certainly looked like a contender in the early part of the season, and indeed turned out to be, although at times during the season he could have easily been counted out.

For Dixon and Franchitti, it was a period of searching for form. Dixon scored a couple of seconds and a pair of fourths, a pattern that continued for a while, much to his frustration. Franchitti, on the other hand, was improving his finishing position every race, starting with a seventh at Homestead. Perhaps what happened next was inevitable given Franchitti's pattern, but going into Indianapolis, Wheldon was solidly in the lead by 27 points over his Target Chip Ganassi Racing teammate, Dixon.

SECOND QUARTER: INDY, MILWAUKEE, TEXAS AND IOWA

TOP SCORER: DARIO FRANCHITTI

Often an Indianapolis 500 victory has set the stage for a title run, the last two years being good examples. For Franchitti, winning a wild, rain-interrupted and shortened 91st Indianapolis 500 – his first win since the season finale in 2005 – certainly gave him a boost.

"Indy is the biggest race in the world, one of the top three for sure," Franchitti says. "To win that...since I've been in Indy cars, that's been the big goal. The feelings were extraordinary. At that point, when I'm at Indianapolis for the month, I don't think about the championship, I just think about Indianapolis. You're just so focused on that one race. With the rain delay, the emotion of thinking we'd finished fifth, the cut tire, it was just a fantastic day. Full of ups and downs, but it ended the right way, at least for me."

Notes IndyCar Series pace car driver Johnny Rutherford, himself a three-time 500 winner



Gavin Lawrence/Getty Images

(Above) Helio Castroneves was the main man when it came to qualifying, but was able to climb only one fence this year, at St. Petersburg. (Below) The drama-filled Indy 500 propelled Franchitti into the title hunt

and an open-wheel champion: "It started the chase to the points lead, so it all kind of began, as always, around Indianapolis and what happens there."

Castroneves and teammate Sam Hornish Jr. certainly looked formidable at Indy, with Castroneves claiming the pole in the final minutes of pole day to bump Franchitti off the top of the pylon. Both were charging at the end, and could have certainly been contenders had the race run the full 200 laps.

For Dixon, it was another second-place finish. His teammate, however, discovered that just as momentum can be created at the Speedway, it can be broken there as well.

"One of the biggest lows of my career was Indianapolis," says the 2005 winner and IndyCar Series champion. "To start the month so dominant, especially the first three days, you would expect the month to continue along that route. But the biggest frustration for me was the fact that we have no grasp, no rhyme or reason to why we suddenly lost pace, and we still don't. For me, that race is the be-all and end-all, and to be so disappointing there has not been good." In fact, he never regained top form after that.

Tony Kanaan could be forgiven had his disappointment at Indy derailed his season. Leading when the first rain shower hit, he might have easily been declared the winner. When the race restarted, he continued to dominate until an unfortunate series of events left him in 12th.

"The momentum led up to Indy really well," says Kanaan. "I won one race before Indianapolis and then I won Milwaukee. Although I was very happy that Dario had won the race...I don't think I felt it until we got to Iowa. Winning Milwaukee was a good comeback, and at Texas I finished second, but when we got to Iowa, it really started to bug me, what happened to me in Indy."

Kanaan may have enjoyed the Milwaukee Mile, but for Castroneves it was a different story. He scored another of his seven 2007 poles and dominated until his rear wing collapsed, sending him spinning into the wall. Kanaan took over and won the race with Franchitti carrying his Indy momentum to a second-place finish. Dixon finished fourth, the sixth race in which he'd finished there or two spots better.

At Texas Motor Speedway, Kanaan was again pursuing a Team Penske car for most of the race, but this time it was Hornish. Even with Danica Patrick trying to provide a push to her teammate, Kanaan had no real challenge for the 2006 champion. Franchitti finished fourth in a line of Andretti Green Racing cars,

"We have no rhyme or reason to why we suddenly lost pace"

Dan Wheldon



Dan R. Boyd/LAT

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“It’s been a year where we’ve been pushing everything to the limit”

Tony Kanaan

PHOTO GALLERY
FACES OF VICTORY:
THE CELEBRATIONS
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and was helped in his title fight when a wheel came off A.J. Foyt IV's car, starting a chain reaction that eliminated Castroneves, Wheldon and Dixon.

The IndyCar Series' first visit to the new Iowa Speedway confounded a lot of teams. The track was faster than expected and race day dawned about 20 degrees cooler than forecast. It was a day of frustration for many, and eight of the top 10 drivers in the point standings either crashed or had mechanical difficulties. Franchitti wasn't among them.

"We thought Iowa out," Franchitti explains. "We thought the issue of the tire temperatures, the start and the restarts, through. Maybe it wasn't the fastest car, but it was really fast on the start and restarts, and it was stable. It allowed me to make up positions there. That, and my guys in the pits; we didn't take tires on the last stop and that was a great call. The whole thing just clicked."

Franchitti's energy from his Indy win was surging, and he took his second victory of 2007. He now had a significant lead in the points – 51 over Kanaan, with Dixon one more point behind – thanks to a strong second quarter, and carried that momentum into the third.

THIRD QUARTER: RICHMOND, WATKINS GLEN, NASHVILLE AND MID-OHIO

TOP SCORER: SCOTT DIXON

"We went to Richmond and the car was good, and I was in the groove," Franchitti says of race nine of the 2007 season. "That was a great night. When you're racing against teams

It was a double celebration at Detroit's Belle Isle, where Tony Kanaan marked his fifth victory of the season and Danica Patrick scored her best finish yet, a second

and drivers at this level...to have a night like that, they're few and far between, so that felt really good."

It's a good thing Franchitti had a good ride at Richmond International Raceway. No one but Dixon had won an IndyCar Series race at Watkins Glen, and it wasn't going to change this time.

"Dixon was a very consistent guy all season long, never had any trouble," remarks Castroneves. "It took a long time for him to start winning, but once he started, he couldn't stop."

Dixon not only won at The Glen – although his victory was overshadowed by the pit lane confrontation between Kanaan and Hornish, who finished second – he followed it up with a repeat victory in the rain-delayed Nashville Superspeedway race and he's now the only man to have won an IndyCar Series race at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course.

"The string of three that we had at Watkins, Nashville and Mid-Ohio was very good," says Dixon. "I think we had strong cars all those places and we didn't win out of luck."

The trouble for Dixon was that although he was gaining ground on Franchitti, it wasn't much. Dixon may have had the first-place points three times, but Franchitti had a third and two seconds. Dixon won the quarter handily, but Franchitti kept the score close.

After a disappointing second quarter, Kanaan had reasonable races in this stretch, with one glaring exception: spinning all on his own into the wall at Nashville. That was the second time it happened to him – the first was at Iowa.

"It's been a different year for me," he says. "I've never been through a season where I've crashed twice from my own mistakes. People kind of wonder what's wrong with you. Marco said to me, 'It's not that I'm glad that happened, TK, but now I know you're human.' People are not used to me making mistakes. I guess it's been a year we've been pushing everything to the limit."

FOURTH QUARTER: MICHIGAN, KENTUCKY, INFINEON AND DETROIT

TOP SCORER: TONY KANAAN

It wasn't until the fourth quarter that things really began to shake up, and things began to go very wrong for Franchitti. Just as the IndyCar Series headed toward the finish of its season, the race tightened up in a hurry.

In a wild Michigan International Speedway race that had 23 lead changes among nine drivers, polesitter Franchitti was battling with Wheldon when the two touched. Franchitti's car slid across the bow of Wheldon's machine and took off, flying 10–15 feet in the air and bouncing in front of Dixon before skidding across the top of the No. 9 car. The incident also took out Tomas Scheckter and his Vision Racing teammate Ed Carpenter. No one was hurt, and Dixon was able to get his car fixed so he gained some points; but it was essentially a wash.

Oh...and the winner in Michigan? Kanaan.

He did it again at Kentucky Speedway. In a season of runs, Kanaan was beginning one of his own.

"I kind of made the mistake of counting Tony out of the championship," says Franchitti with a wry smile. "He didn't say anything to me, he just went out and won a couple of races and got back in it. I learned my lesson there."

Aside from Kanaan winning, there was another similarity to Michigan – Franchitti took another flight, this time after the checker. Not realizing the race was over, he ran up on the back of slowing Kosuke Matsuura and launched into the air, flying backward into the SAFER Barrier. Again unhurt, Franchitti had already suffered a blow in the race. First he ran wide while challenging Dixon for second; then he came into the pits too fast and hit the pit lane speed-limit pylon, breaking his front wing. An eighth-place finish to Dixon's second meant he lost a big chunk of his points cushion.

"Kentucky was a missed opportunity, and I'm talking about before the accident," says Franchitti. "I was running for second with Scott and for some reason we ran wide in Turn 3, and we still don't know why; it just took off."

Things got worse at Infineon Raceway. Franchitti dominated until the last round of pit stops. As he came into Turn 2, he tried to pass teammate Marco Andretti, who had just exited the pits. The two touched; Andretti's day was done, his father and Andretti Green co-owner Michael Andretti was angry, and Franchitti's front wing was broken. He couldn't hold off

Dixon for long, nor Castroneves. The next car to pass him would be teammate Kanaan, but rather than push his friend farther down the order, Kanaan made sure no one else was going to, either. Despite the Brazilian's efforts on behalf of his teammate, Dixon held the points lead for the first time in 2007.

"I was kind of surprised when Tony was the blocker," says IMS Radio announcer Bob Jenkins. "He played a factor in who finished behind him, when it should have been get yourself to the front and see how many points you can earn for the championship."

Kanaan bounced back at Detroit, winning while Franchitti and Dixon tangled again. Patrick finished second, her best finish to date and third podium of the season.

Kanaan was into overtime with a shot, albeit a slim one, at the championship. After a tough second and third quarters, he dominated the fourth to put himself back in the hunt.

OT: CHICAGOLAND

Three slim points, practically a dead heat, separated Franchitti and Dixon and moved the game into overtime. In the end, pit strategy played the key; only Franchitti and Dixon had a chance to make it to the end without a stop in the last few laps. Kanaan was already out of luck having suffered a cut tire early in the race.

The season came down to a two-lap shootout

between the title contenders. Franchitti got a run on Dixon at the restart, but couldn't get by. He was setting up a last-gasp slingshot move on the final lap when Dixon's empty Honda engine sputtered, nearly collecting Franchitti as he slowed. In the blink of an eye, the title changed hands from the New Zealander to the Scot.

"Most of the race I was just sitting there, I couldn't do anything," says Franchitti. "We came down the backstretch, I was drafting him and was trying to get a slingshot when he slowed down."

It came down to more than that, of course. Consistency was the name of the game. Both drivers only DNF'd one race.

"I think if you look at Dario and myself and the amount of points we have, and the consistency – and even Tony – you'd think that would be an outright championship right there," says the runner-up. "I think with the results we've had, we'd expect to be in a totally different situation."

"We've been there in the top three, weekend in and weekend out," says Kanaan. "If it's not me, it's Dario, and if it's not Dario, it's Dixon. You can't sneeze without someone passing you. You've got to keep it focused, and you can't afford to make a single mistake. And, in a way, I think it's making all of us much better drivers."

If that's the case, it's going to make the time until the next game pretty hard to wait out. ■

It was an ugly July for Dario Franchitti, starting with this flip after tangling with Dan Wheldon at Michigan. He followed it up by going upside down at Kentucky as well

VIDEO EXTRA

FLIGHT 27 TO MICHIGAN

Watch Dario Franchitti's flip and the aftermath at Michigan

2007 IndyCar Series by the numbers

RACE BY RACE

Driver	Team	Homestead	St. Petersburg	Motegi	Kansas	Indianapolis	Milwaukee	Texas	Iowa	Richmond	Watkins Glen	Nashville	Mid-Ohio	Michigan	Kentucky	Infiniteon	Detroit	Chicago	
1. Dario Franchitti	Andretti Green Racing (D-H)	7	5	3	2	1	2	4	1*	1P*	3	2	2	13P*	8	3*	6*	1P	637
2. Scott Dixon	Target Chip Ganassi Racing (D-H)	2	2	4	4	2	4	12	10P	2	1*	1P*	1	10	2	1	8	2	624
3. Tony Kanaan	Andretti Green Racing (D-H)	5	3	1	15	12*	1	2	16	4	4	18	4	1	1P*	4	1	6	576
4. Dan Wheldon	Target Chip Ganassi Racing (D-H)	1P*	9	2*	1*	22	3	15	11	3	7	8	10	12	17	7	3	13	466
5. Sam Hornish Jr.	Team Penske (D-H)	3	7	5	6	4	9	1*	14	15	2	4	14	9	18	5	12	3*	465
6. Helio Castroneves	Team Penske (D-H)	9	1P*	7P	3	3P	16P*	16	8	11	18P	6	3P*	17	9	2	14P	4	446
7. Danica Patrick	Andretti Green Racing (D-H)	14	8	11	7	8	8	3	13	6	11	3	5	7	16	6	2	11	424
8. Scott Sharp	Rahal Letterman Racing (D-H)	12	11	6	13	6	6	7	3	8	14	7	11	3	6	14	11	5	412
9. Buddy Rice	Dreyer & Reinbold Racing (D-H)	10	10	10	20	25	18	8	4	5	6	17	8	5	12	11	7	9	360
10. Tomas Scheckter	Vision Racing (D-H)	8	6	9	5	7	17	14	19	7	13	11	9	11	5	8	13	20	357
11. Marco Andretti	Andretti Green Racing (D-H)	20	4	16	19	24	15	19	2	12	5	5	18	2	4	16	17	22	350
12. Vitor Meira	Delphi Panther Racing (D-H)	4	16	17	8	10	5	5	9	9	17	10	17	18	10	9	15	18	334
13. Darren Manning	A.J. Foyt Enterprises (D-H)	13	12	12	11	20	11	13	5	14	9	9	6	15	13	12	4	21	332
14. A.J. Foyt IV	Vision Racing (D-H)	18	13	13	9	14	13	17	12	13	15	12	13	8	3	15	9	10	315
15. Ed Carpenter	Vision Racing (D-H)	6	18	15	17	17	7	18	6	10	12	13	16	14	7	13	10	16	309
16. Kosuke Matsuura	Super Aguri Panther Racing (D-H)	16	17	18	18	16	12	9	15	17	8	16	12	4	11	10	5	17	303
17. Sarah Fisher	Dreyer & Reinbold Racing (D-H)	11	15	14	12	18	14	10	7	16	16	15	15	16	14	17	16	12	275
18. Jeff Simmons	Rahal Letterman Racing (D-H)	17	14	8	10	11	10	6	17	18	10	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	201
19. Ryan Hunter-Reay ^[R]	Rahal Letterman Racing (D-H)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	6	15	18	18	7	119
20. Milka Duno ^[R]	SAMAX Motorsport (D-H)	-	-	-	14	31	-	11	18	19	-	-	-	19	-	-	-	15	96
21. Marty Roth	Dussault/Roth Racing (D-H)	15	-	-	21	28	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	53
22. Alex Barron	CURB/Agajanian/Beck Motorsports (D-H)	19	-	-	16	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	41
23. Jon Herb	Racing Professionals (D-H)	-	-	-	-	32	-	20	-	-	-	-	20	-	-	-	-	-	34
24. Ryan Briscoe	Luczo Dragon Racing (D-H)	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	30
25. Hideki Mutoh ^[R]	Super Aguri Panther Racing (D-H)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	24

* Laps led bonus / P denotes polesitter / Italics denotes not running at finish / R denotes rookie / ■ Rookie of the Year / D = Dallara, P = Panoz, H = Honda

Race wins

Top-five finishes

Laps led

Races led

DRIVER

- 1 Tony Kanaan 5
- 2= Dario Franchitti 4
- 2= Scott Dixon 4
- 4 Dan Wheldon 2
- 5= Sam Hornish Jr. 1
- 5= Helio Castroneves 1

DRIVER

- 1= Dario Franchitti 13
- 1= Scott Dixon 13
- 3 Tony Kanaan 12
- 4 Sam Hornish Jr. 8
- 5= Dan Wheldon 6
- 5= Helio Castroneves 6
- 5= Marco Andretti 6
- 8 Danica Patrick 4

DRIVER

- 1 Dario Franchitti 718
- 2 Dan Wheldon 605
- 3 Helio Castroneves 478
- 4 Tony Kanaan 347
- 5 Scott Dixon 285
- 6 Sam Hornish Jr. 255
- 7 Vitor Meira 85
- 8 Buddy Rice 49
- 9 Marco Andretti 43
- 10 Danica Patrick 17

DRIVER

- 1 Scott Dixon 13
- 2 Tony Kanaan 12
- 3= Dario Franchitti 10
- 3= Dan Wheldon 10
- 5 Helio Castroneves 9
- 6 Marco Andretti 6
- 7 Sam Hornish Jr. 5
- 8= Danica Patrick 4
- 8= Vitor Meira 4

SUPER GRID

Based on the average qualifying position for drivers making multiple starts

Renderings by Mike Peters/petersmotorsports.com



Buddy Rice had a decent season for Dreyer & Reinbold, eighth in the number of laps led; Vision Racing has yet to tap into its full potential; and Penske found itself the best of the rest in the title chase. The numbers on these pages tell the tale

MORE STATS @
www.indycar.com



Michael L. Levitz/LAT



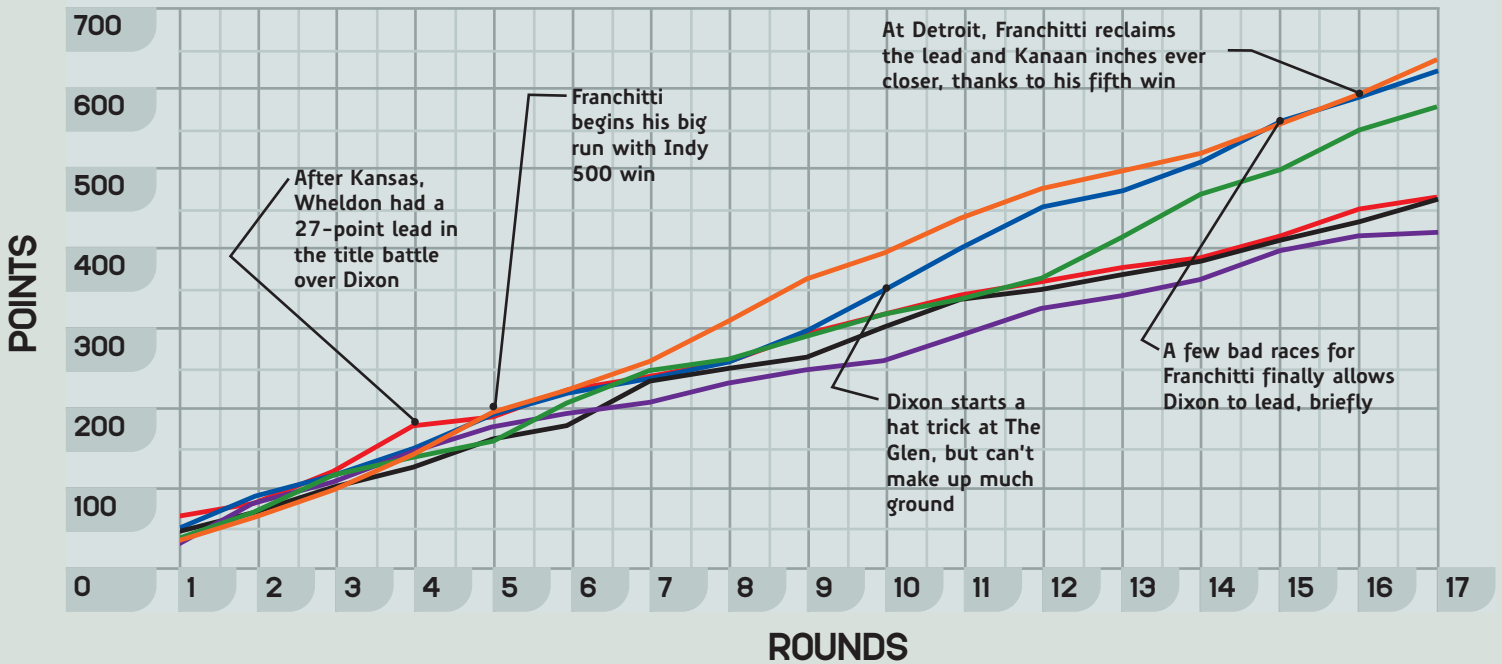
Paul Wehby/LAT



Dan Strech/LAT

THE CHASE FOR THE TITLE

FRANCHITTI DIXON KANAAN WHELDON HORNISH CASTRONEVES



Poles

DRIVER	POINTS
1 Helio Castroneves	7
2 Dario Franchitti	4
3= Tony Kanaan	2
3= Scott Dixon	2
5= Dan Wheldon	1
5= Scott Sharp	1

Winnings

DRIVER	POINTS
1 Dario Franchitti	\$3,007,583
2 Scott Dixon	\$2,152,417
3 Tony Kanaan	\$1,754,269
4 Helio Castroneves	\$1,659,603
5 Dan Wheldon	\$1,336,855
6 Sam Hornish	\$1,323,789
7 Scott Sharp	\$1,212,505
8 Danica Patrick	\$1,182,055
9 Marco Andretti	\$1,063,051
10 Tomas Scheckter	\$1,059,905



Tyler Barrick/LAT

The street courses were rough and tumble, hard-fought battles that changed a few fortunes, as Danica Patrick (7) and Scott Sharp (8) found out

11 Scott Sharp 10.941	13 Jeff Simmons 12.909	15 Ed Carpenter 13.353	17 Kosuke Matsuura 13.765	19 Sarah Fisher 16.588	21 Milka Duno 21.143
12 Vitor Meira 12.059	14 Darren Manning 12.941	16 Buddy Rice 13.529	18 A.J. Foyt IV 14.176	20 Jon Herb 20.333	22 Marty Roth 21.25



SIGNS OF SUCCESS

Winning an IndyCar Series championship these days requires diversity. With the mix of superspeedways, short ovals and road/street courses, a driver can't win by being top of the heap on only one type of track, and it's interesting to see how well the drivers did in each genre of track. So, in what has become a tradition, we've added up the totals and we present the aces of the twist 'n' turn road courses, 'round and 'round shorttracks and pedal-to-the-metal superspeedways.

TWIST 'N' TURNS

THE ROAD COURSES

For the second time in as many seasons, Ganassi Racing's **Scott Dixon** gets the crown for king of the road (courses, that is). Following a strong second on the streets of St. Petersburg, the Kiwi retained his title as the only driver who has won in IndyCar Series competition at Watkins Glen by taking his third straight victory at the legendary circuit. Dixon then crossed the finish line first at the series' first visit to Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, and was able to pounce when Andretti Green Racing stumbled at Infineon to make it three-for-three on the permanent road courses. An eighth-place finish stemming from the late-race pileup at Belle Isle was disappointing, but hardly enough to hand the road course title to second-place man Tony Kanaan.

SCOTT'S STATS...

St. Petersburg	2nd
Watkins Glen	1st
Mid-Ohio	1st
Infineon	1st
Belle Isle	8th
Total points	217
(Runner-up, Tony Kanaan 181 pts)	

'ROUND AND 'ROUND

THE SHORT TRACKS

Dario Franchitti is a runaway winner of 2007's short-track triple crown, due in no small part to his clean, focused driving style on the tight, one-mile or shorter ovals. After coming second to Andretti Green Racing teammate (and short-track runner-up) Tony Kanaan at Milwaukee, the Scot survived the treacherous low-grip conditions caused by chilly weather at the new Iowa Speedway to take first, and followed that performance the next week by stomping the field at Richmond, leading a series-record number of laps on his way to the win.

DARIO'S DOSSIER...

Milwaukee	2nd
Iowa	1st
Richmond	1st
Total points	146
(Runner-up, Tony Kanaan 96 pts)	

PEDAL TO THE METAL

THE SUPERSPEEDWAYS

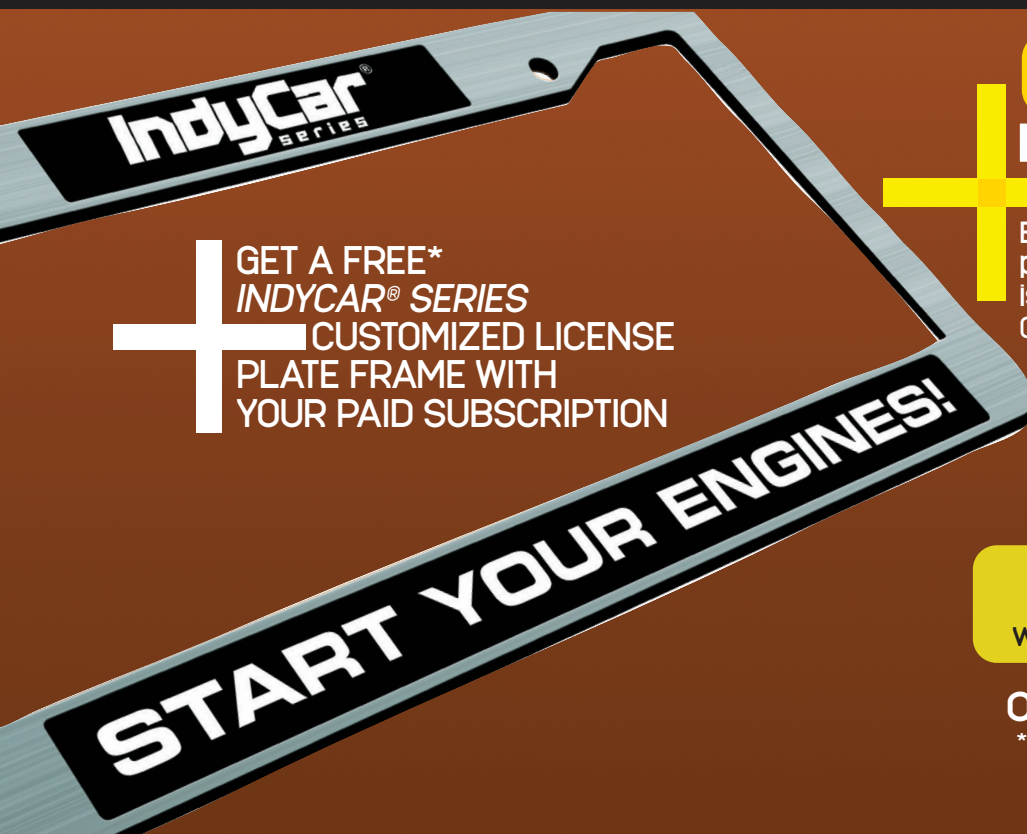
Overall champ **Dario Franchitti** also comes top in the superspeedway rankings as well, but only just. His emotional wins at the Indy 500 and the title-deciding finale at Chicagoland were bolstered by top fives at Motegi, Kansas, Texas and Nashville. But some not-so-good finishes at Michigan and Kentucky (Flight 27 had rough landings at both tracks) meant that Scott Dixon was only two points in arrears when all was said and done.

DATA FOR DARIO...

Homestead	7th
Motegi	3rd
Kansas	2nd
Indianapolis	1st
Texas	4th
Nashville	2nd
Michigan	13th
Kentucky	8th
Chicagoland	1st
Total Points	317
(Runner-Up, Scott Dixon 315 pts)	

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DETROIT TIGER

He could be kicking back on his yacht, playing with his race team or just enjoying a life of leisure; but Roger Penske can't sit still


PHOTO GALLERY

Roger Penske's
winning tradition

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Pausing in front of the well-known Scott fountain on Detroit's Belle Isle, Roger Penske was basking in the success of the revived Detroit Grand Prix



Downtown Detroit is beautiful. No, that's not a misprint. Walk down Woodward Avenue from Campus Martius Park to Grand Circus Park and on to Comerica Park. Marvel at the buildings, clean, stately and majestic. Enjoy the greenery, the fresh air of revitalization. This is not your father's Detroit. This is Detroit 2007. A new, thriving metropolis.

At the center of it are an auto race and an auto magnate. Belle Isle, the downtown island on the Detroit River, is the rejuvenated site of an open-wheel race that had been missing for six years. Behind the resurgence of the IndyCar Series event is Roger Penske, the billionaire entrepreneur who says he owes his success to the Motor City.

"We all like to give things back," Penske explains. "I came to Detroit in the early '70s with an automotive background. I have a reason to thank General Motors and other automotive businesses based in Detroit for supporting my business. It takes the private sector in cities like Detroit to help pull together when areas lose a lot of their economic capability. We had two million

people in Detroit at the height of the American auto-manufacturing boom. Today we have less than a million. We have a big infrastructure here. It requires a renaissance in terms of business."

That's what's happening in Detroit. Amid the talk of a faltering automotive industry is a city redefining itself. Lofts, condos and apartments are springing up in and around the downtown area. The Tigers and Lions play in shiny new ballparks on the northern edge of downtown. Sparkling casinos can be found on both sides of the river. Detroit is healthy, clean and thriving, and the Detroit Belle Isle Indy Grand Prix is a major player in that revival.

And it all began from a simple idea: power-washing the sidewalks after Super Bowl XL and the World Series in 2006.

"The Belle Isle race was a byproduct of the Super Bowl," Penske says. "I was the host committee chairman. Following the Super Bowl, I committed to the city council that we would develop initiatives that would be positive to the city. The first initiative was to clean downtown, so we engaged 50

people from Goodwill every day to help clean the city streets. We washed every bus shelter every night. We had a team of people power-washing the sidewalks. That created a lot of interest and support from the local community. The city looked good, and people noticed."

From there, Penske took his plan to resurrect the Belle Isle race to Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick and the Detroit City Council. "We needed some other type of event that would create a positive feel for the city," Penske says. "I said, 'We've got one of the great potential tracks in the country with Belle Isle if it had the right infrastructure changed and built to support racing.'"

The Downtown Detroit Partnership, a non-profit organization, assumed the promotion and rebuilding of the track. Bud Denker of Penske Corp. became chairman of the event. Gary Baise, who helped build California Speedway and Nazareth Speedway, joined the group. The goals were two-fold: to put on a world-class race while rebuilding Belle Isle. ▶



Firestone



"We've created an environment where people can have fun again" *Roger Penske*



"We're bringing the race back to the city for the purpose of giving back to Belle Isle," Denker says. "We've invested \$10 million, and it's going to make a difference for our city and our region. Our focus has been raising awareness, getting the track ready from an operational standpoint and then raising the money that we need to make the thing happen. On the sponsorship side, we're very pleased, especially with the fact we have some great sponsors lined up with long-term commitments, which helps us fund the whole program."

The most pressing issue was transportation: Before, only two buses could be on the island simultaneously during the race. At September's event, 13 buses were on the island at all times, constantly moving the crowd on and off. The group also built a 600,000 square-foot concrete paddock that doubles as a parking lot the other 51 weekends of the year. Overall, Penske and the Downtown Detroit Partnership invested \$10 million to improve the island and prepare it for the race.

"We went to Belle Isle and determined we needed to build a paddock," says Penske. "Tony George and Brian Barnhart flew in and took a look at our ideas and gave us some good input. After getting a positive vote from the city council and the mayor, we were off to the races. This is something we're putting back into the city. When people come here

and see what we've been able to do, they'll be pleased."

The group tore down dead trees, refurbished the island's central building – an historic casino built in 1907 – and paved the way for future improvements to the island.

"It's a completely different environment," Penske says. "The entire paddock is on cement now. We have probably 70 chalets – big corporate hospitality – at the fountain. We've redone the casino, which is the media center. We've had sponsors like Firestone who have committed and built a playground for the children just as a matter of interest."

In recent years, Belle Isle had fallen into disrepair, a refuge for homeless and criminal activity. It had enormous potential, but, like much of 1980s and '90s Detroit, had become worn and decrepit. Penske wondered why it couldn't be what it once was: a grand place for family gatherings and entertainment.

"Many families in Detroit use the island as a place for gatherings," he says. "The casino probably has 200 to 300 weddings a year. We took out the dead trees and raised the vistas and took out the old park benches. We've created an environment where people can have fun again."

Not to mention race teams. Penske's involvement in the promotional side of racing comes on the heels of another IndyCar Series team – Andretti Green Racing – promoting the Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, which had

its third run in April. Race teams, it turns out, have a unique perspective on promotion.

"Racing people understand what the competitors want and they understand what sponsors want," says Penske, whose Penske Motorsports, Inc., used to own racetracks from Pennsylvania to California before selling the business to the International Speedway Corporation. "They also understand what fans want. I give Andretti Green a lot of credit for the job they've done in St. Petersburg. We had a number of the key Detroit city officials come to St. Petersburg this year to understand what it means to have a race in the city. People who haven't been there and touched it and felt it don't have any idea what it's really all about."

Truth is, Roger Penske didn't need to revive Belle Isle or its race, which has a five-year contract with the city. Listed as the planet's 382nd richest man by Forbes, he could have taken some time on his yacht or ski resort or doing anything but putting on a race. Instead, he got involved and became a key mover in the renaissance of Detroit.

"I wanted to be part of this," Penske declared. "Certainly our company and all of the people in Penske Corp. are supporting these events pro bono because we think it's the right thing to do. I get a lot of good feelings from this. It's like building a race car and having it win. That's how I look at this race."

Good analogy. Not only has the car been built, but it's well on its way to winning. ■

(Opposite) Detroit is Penske's home and the Detroit Indy Grand Prix on the Raceway at Belle Isle is one way he tries to give back to the city that has helped make his fortune. (Top) Away from Detroit, pit lane is his natural habitat, especially at Indianapolis

STRANGE DAYS

Last year a rookie sensation, Marco Andretti experienced a sophomore slump of epic proportions this season. Now he attempts to regroup for 2008 and turn his luck around

Words by Jeff Olson • Photos by Darrell Ingham/Getty Images

Almost before the race had started, Marco Andretti was hanging upside down, covered with chunks of sod and mud, his first race at Mid-Ohio turned on its head. It was the second time in eight races that a car under his control had flipped upside down, and yet another race lost to circumstances beyond his control. In one frightening moment in July, his entire sophomore season in the IndyCar Series found its defining moment, and it was not pleasant or clean or anything like it should have been. It was muddy and unexpected and, at times, violent.

Still, Andretti learned something from the flip at Mid-Ohio and the rest of his difficult 2007 season. Racing is a crazy game, filled with happenings you don't expect and can't predict. On occasion, what should have been a spray of champagne is instead a trip to the infield care center. On occasion, racing makes no sense whatsoever.

"Sometimes you just have to learn to accept that there is no rhyme or reason to any of this," Andretti declares. "Sometimes it's just a matter of circumstance, and nothing you do to prepare or plan can prevent it. Sometimes bad things happen, and they happen to everybody. You just have to accept that and understand it and keep moving forward."

Moving forward means preparing for next season, a task that's already at hand for the 20-year-old son of Michael Andretti and grandson of Mario Andretti. Even before the 2007 season

had ended, the youngest Andretti planned and arranged for the 2008 season, his third in the No. 26 Andretti Green Racing Dallara-Honda.

"I'm at a point right now where I can't wait for next year," Andretti says. "I'm just glad this year is over with. I couldn't get out of my own way in the beginning of the season, and it never got much better. It didn't matter what I did off track to stay focused. As soon as things didn't go right, I started questioning everything. 'What am I doing?' That's when you're out of it."

Good example: Andretti had the fastest lap in practice for the June race around the Richmond oval, but qualifying was rained out. As a result, he started back in the pack and finished 12th.

"I won't bore you with the details of each bad race," Andretti says with a grin, "but it seems like it was one thing after another."

He may not provide details of each strange circumstance, but the statistics will. Andretti crashed six times in 17 races, including upside-down excursions at Indianapolis and Mid-Ohio. Two other crashes were deemed severe – a slam into the inside wall at Motegi that bruised an arm, and a crunching blow at Chicago that left Andretti with a sore neck.

The other crashes – including tangles with AGR teammates in two races – left Andretti wondering about his ability and whether he would ever expand upon his triumphant rookie season. Plainly, he began to doubt himself.





MARCO'S STATS @
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"As soon as you start questioning yourself, that's when stuff never goes right," Andretti explains. "That's where I was out. I can't save my life. It seems like I can't do anything right. When we race, we're well within the top five, but then something bad happens. Either something breaks or I crash."

And crash he did. At Twin Ring Motegi, Andretti sustained the first significant crash on an oval. The lesson was painful. "I shouldn't have been thinking that Tony Kanaan was going to lap me," he said. "I should have been thinking, 'OK, here's Scott Dixon for third.' Even though I was about to get lapped, I was racing Dixon for third. Instead, I'm concerned with staying on the lead lap. Stuff like that has been my mistake. That's what I can learn from."

At Mid-Ohio, Andretti qualified fourth and was looking forward to a solid effort. Suddenly, in the first turn on the first lap, he was staring at mud and grass.

(Above) Upside down for the second time in a season, Marco Andretti's start to the Mid-Ohio race was representative of his year. However, the son of Michael and grandson of Mario (below) believes 2008 will be better

"I was on my head before I knew it," he said. "That's my season, right there. It was out of my control, a lot of it. I learned more this season than I have my whole career, just because of adversity. That's the hardest thing about any profession, I think, is to learn how to overcome adversity. I'm definitely learning how to do that. It can only make me stronger."

For a time, there was a brief reprieve. During a seven-race stretch at midseason, Andretti scored more points than all but three drivers – Dario Franchitti, Dixon and Kanaan – providing optimism for 2008. "I can't wait until next year," Andretti reaffirms. "I can't wait to get going. If some luck swings my way, we're going to be right there."

Luck is often the most difficult aspect to understand about racing. It makes no sense. Sometimes it's just a crapshoot.

"That's the part you have to understand," Andretti says. "When it's your fault, that's

when you have to try to figure out what you did wrong and how to improve. But when you're on your head in Turn 1, it's like, what are you going to do? How do you make yourself better after that?"

The most frustrating moment? The entire season. It began with some DNFs in which Andretti parked an ill-handling race car. It slid downhill from there.

"It started out from day one at Homestead," Andretti explains. "From there, it just snowballed. To have to park one of these cars is just ridiculous. It was miserable to start the year that way. We were very aggressive on the setup, and it bit us. From then on, it got worse. The only thing that kept my head in it was that something different happened every time. When something would happen, I would make sure I'd do everything in my power to make certain it didn't happen again, but then something else would happen."

So next year is a do-over, a fresh shot to turn things right side up. "It's good just to clear my mind and start over, but half of me wants to keep racing," Andretti says. "You're only as good as your last race, so I can't wait to get the next one going."

In all the madness, Andretti found a few moments of success and clarity. He finished second to AGR teammate Franchitti at Iowa and second to another teammate, Kanaan, at Michigan.

"I'm not sure there was a high, but a couple of runner-up finishes probably would have to be considered the high in the season I've had. It's been a long, tough year."

And a long, fruitful learning experience. ■

"I was on my head before I knew it. That's my season, right there"

Marco Andretti





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FAST TRACK TO THE FUTURE

If this is what the IndyCar Series of 2011 looks like, sign us up

Words by Richard S. James • Main illustration by Daniel Kim/Art Center College of Design

Imagine you're attending the 95th running of the Indianapolis 500 in May of 2011, the 100th anniversary of the first race. As the pre-race activities begin, blimps representing each team float into Indianapolis Motor Speedway, alighting on a raised platform where the drivers exit the blimps and their cars await, having risen to the stage from below.

On Carb Day, you watched practice from trackside. No, not just trackside, but a few feet from cars screaming by at more than 230mph, with nothing obstructing your view and only glass in between you and your heroes.

As you watch the race, the cars change configuration based on speed, perhaps even change color according to their position. When the car pits, crew members in uniforms that

(Above) One vision of the IndyCar Series' future is elements to make wheel tangling a thing of the past. (Right) The Art Center students put no limits on their ideas, including team blimps that fly into the track to deposit drivers. (Far right) Indy Racing League founder and CEO Tony George looks over a concept

reflect their jobs and integrate the tools of the their duties attack the car while the engineers and team managers watch from the top of their two-story pit stalls. Or maybe you have a completely different perspective as one of the 33 people invited to participate in the Virtual 500, having won local and regional competitions in realistic simulators. You're racing against the drivers in the race, along with the other virtual racers. If you win, you might get a test with an IndyCar Series team.

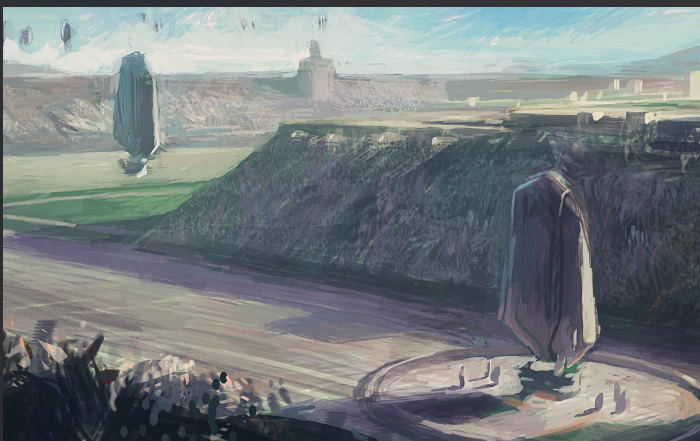
These are just a few concepts visualized by Art Center College of Design students during the summer term of 2007. Twenty-four students – four teams of six – in transportation, product, environmental and illustration/entertainment design disciplines participated

in a Funded Educational Project by the Indy Racing League to envision the IndyCar Series of 2011. They traveled to the 91st running of the 500 in May to kick off the project and get a feel for it. What they envisioned went way beyond what the IndyCar Series machine of the future might look like. They not only came up with car ideas, but also concepts for marketing the series and the Indianapolis 500, and ways to enhance the fan experience.

"During the spring term, we had an Acura-sponsored project, and the Honda people invited Tony George and his team to come out to see what's going on here," says Stewart Reed, chair of the Transportation Design department at the Art Center. "In Tony's own words, he was just amazed at the level of the Art Center. ▶



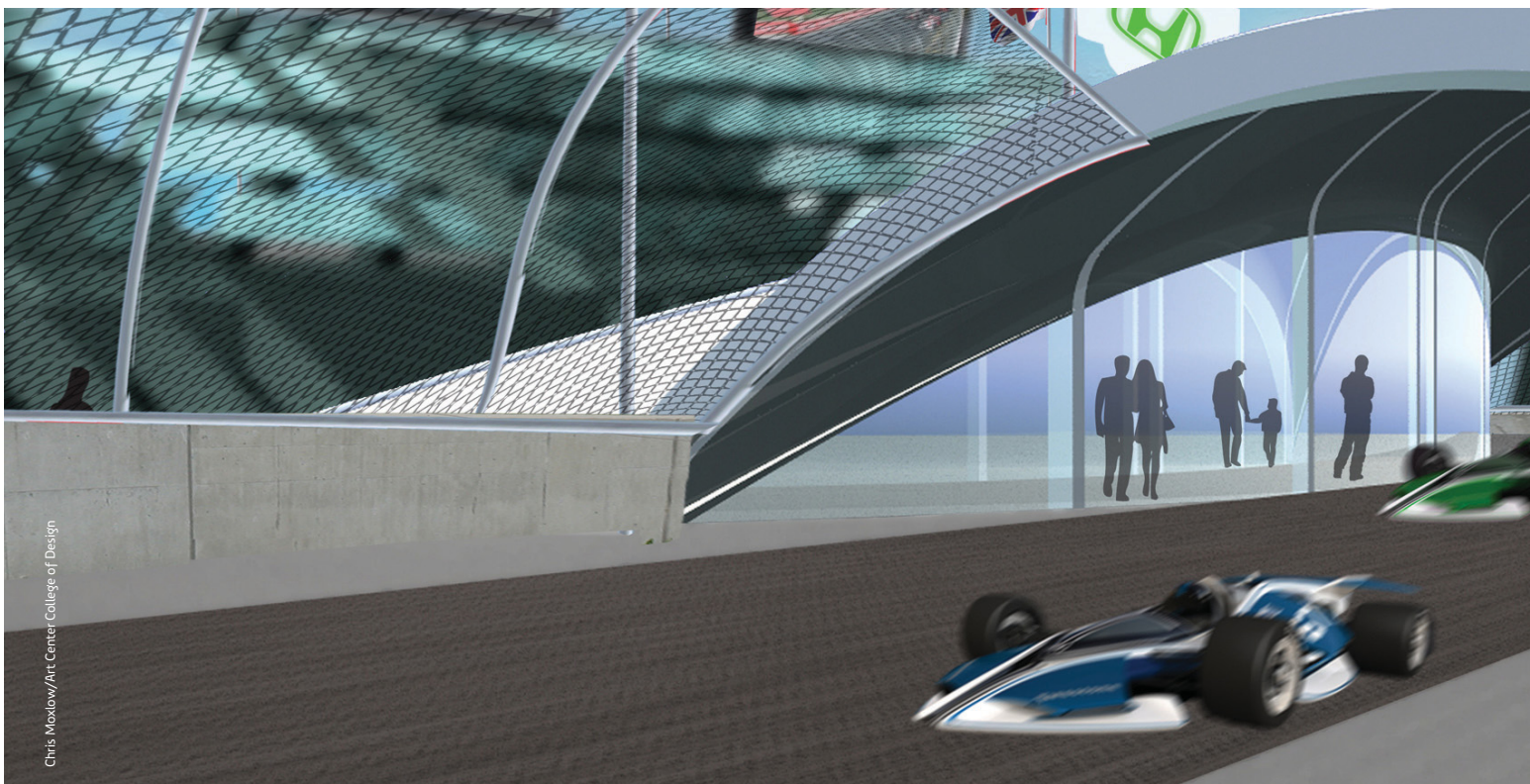
PHOTO GALLERY
More IndyCar 2011
concept designs
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Justin Pichetrungsri/Art Center College of Design



Richard S. James



Chris Moxlow/Art Center College of Design

Discussions quickly ensued, could we do a project for IndyCar? We quickly thought that through, and decided that if we did it – because the whole Indy experience is really more than just a car – it should really be a trans-disciplinary project with a group of students who think about environments and space, who think about entertainment, who think about products and branding, along with the car.”

The results ranged from the vaguely familiar to the fanciful, from things that could be implemented in a few months to concepts that aren't yet possible. And although some of the ideas may seem mere flights of fancy, those in attendance were pleased with what they saw.

“There was no preconceived image of what to expect,” says Robert Clarke, president of Honda Performance Development. “What we got was a lot of thought-provoking ideas, concepts, beyond the car itself – basically, IndyCar Series racing as a whole. From the logo to how we conduct the races, to the architecture of the facilities, everything. So I think it's causing everyone involved to think, and that's exactly what I hoped the project would generate, thinking about the possibilities of what it could be, beyond what it is today. I believe the project has already accomplished that.

“We have a dream that the series will be hugely popular in the future; but our belief is, with what we have today, we're not going to get there; and thinking in an evolutionary thought process of the typical kinds of tweaks and changes that you see to these cars from generation to generation is not enough to get there. It's got to make a quantum leap, and it needs its own identity. An Indy car needs to be an Indy car, which is nothing like a Formula 1 car or a Champ Car or a GP2 car, whatever. It should also evoke an emotional response, something you can love and want to be attached to.”

One team of students envisioned a transparent tunnel for fans to get close (above), while another rethought safety gear (below)



Edwin Darden/Art Center College of Design

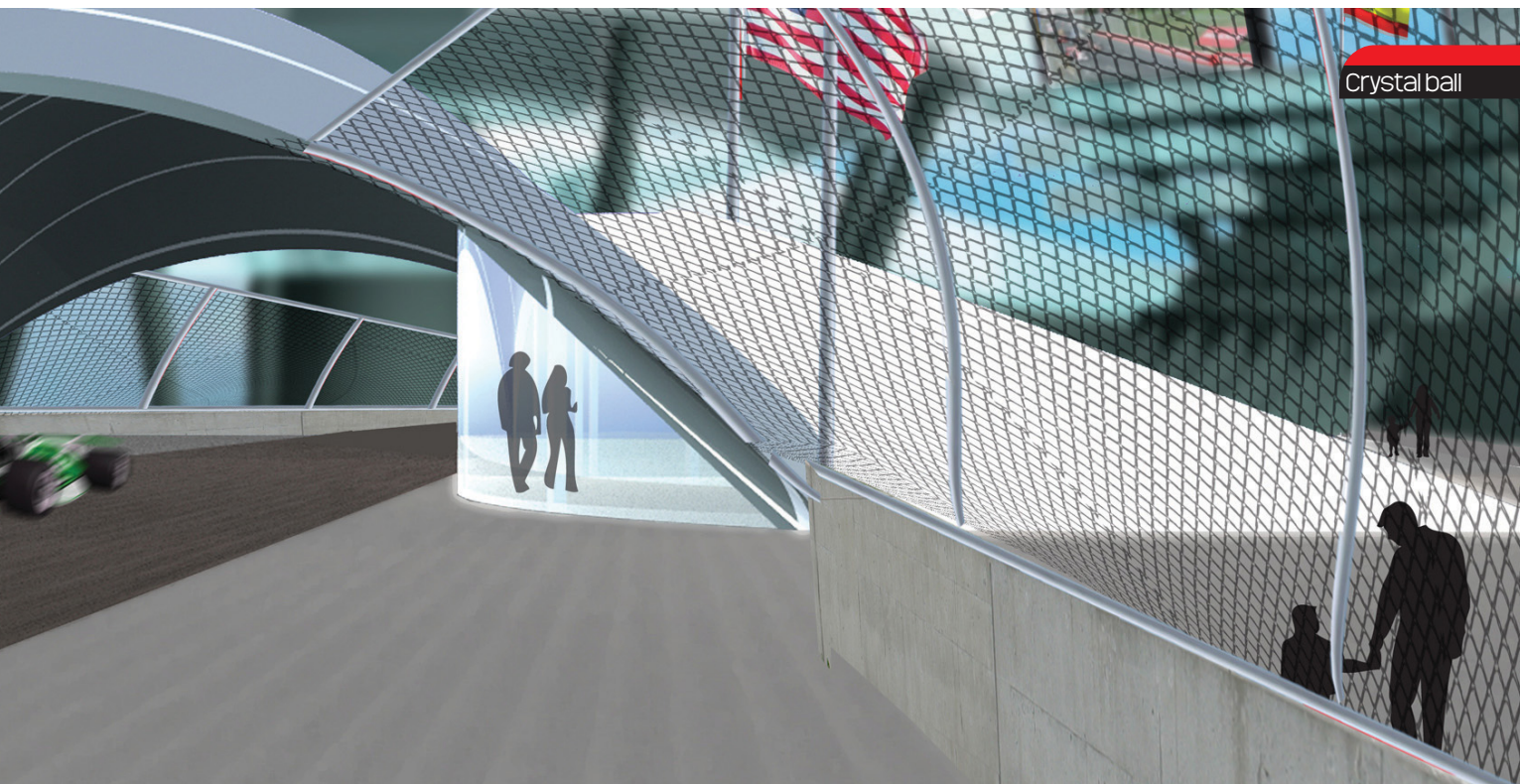
One of the more fanciful ideas was Ron Bijlsma's. Bijlsma, who describes himself as a lifelong race fan and says that his interest in cars is mainly in those that have numbers on them (and he wanted to be Formula 1 designer Adrian Newey, except for the math and physics), came up with a concept that is much like two MotoGP bikes with a cockpit in between, that actually leans into the turns like a motorcycle.

“I was looking for a different dynamic, even though I like the dynamic the way it is now,” says Bijlsma. “The dynamics of open-wheel racing all over the world are the same. The IRL has a chance to change the dynamic, the body language of the car. That's how I came up with the idea of a car that actually tilts like a MotoGP bike, which I think will show that a car is on or over the limit more easily than an F1 car or the current IndyCar Series car. That's how I came up with the skinny tires, because without the skinny tires, you can't tilt.

“From there, the styling grew and it became pretty outrageous, with hub engines and things like that. I was sort of challenged by being able to explain it engineering-wise. That's why the styling brought it back a little closer than far out.”

Kimberly Wu's design was a little more familiar, a modern take on a classic shape, with an open nose and no front wings. Her team focused on the hero aspect of racers and not only included the cars, but a new protective suit that featured armor in addition to fire protection, and attached to the car.

“Our concept comes from heroes and superheroes,” she explains. “My design is based on the iconic nature of those superheroes such as Superman or Batman, and I wanted to create that same kind of icon for the IndyCar Series. So the form is kind of nostalgic, in that it takes from what was great about Indy in its glory days and adds a modern approach. It also takes



from superheroes, and how they transform from ordinary to extraordinary. So as the vehicle speeds up and passes other cars, it goes through a transformation. The rear wing panels expand, the car changes in color, and you see this superhero at Indy."

Wu, who sees her future working in one of the automotive manufacturer's California design studios, says she had never seen the Indianapolis 500 before this year's event. The excitement of the race was what inspired the team to generate the Indy Heroes concept.

What may eventually come of the concepts for cars, marketing, fan experiences, logos and the like remains to be seen. The Indy Racing League might implement some or none of it. But it seems clear that everyone liked what they saw.

"It absolutely exceeded our expectations," says Terry Angstadt, the Indy Racing League's president of its commercial division. "I think when you get into something this conceptual, you think it will be great to reinforce our position as leaders in technology and innovation. It will send a great message, whatever comes out of it. But when you see real products or ideas that you think you can develop, that's icing on the cake."

Notes Indy Racing League founder and CEO Tony George: "We had an opportunity to think about what the next 100 years of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway might look like. I think a lot of good ideas will come from this and we'll have to see what kind of practical applications they will have, not only to the car but also to the whole IndyCar Series experience itself. The way we consume entertainment these days, it's changing, and these students, I think, represent the fan we hope to attract. I think they have an appreciation of what it is and what can be done for the future." ■

FUNCTION FOLLOWS FORM

The concepts that Art Center College of Design students came up with ranged from the conventional to the far out, and while they are just concepts, some of them may have real-world applications.

"It's exciting to have a younger eye that may not be as close to [the series] as we are take a look at it and give an interpretation of where we need to go," says Brian Barnhart, the Indy Racing League's president of racing and operations. "I think the difficulty might be in the real-world application of some of them, but all of them have certain merits and certain aspects that could be applied to what we're trying to do and where we're trying to go."

"There's a lot of gems in here, a lot of great ideas I hope to try and move toward taking a look at practical applications for them," says Indy Racing League founder and CEO Tony George. "We may have a couple of cars here. Maybe we'll have the

car for the next five or six years, and a car for the six years after that."

While no one car grabbed those who viewed the presentation as being the car of the future, most agreed that there may be bits and pieces from several cars that could be incorporated into the next generation of race car.

Speaking strictly aesthetically, Terry Angstadt, president of the Indy Racing League's commercial division, liked what he saw. "I think there were four cars in my mind, interesting aspects of four different cars, that might be able to be engineered and incorporated into our next-generation car. There was one that actually still maintained the integrity of open wheels, but had elements around the wheels, so maybe you could touch and not have some of the [crash] situations we've seen recently – we've looked at that for a while. There was one with some very close ground effects and a split rear wing idea that I thought was fascinating," Angstadt says.

Whether any of these aspects can be engineered will be seen; but there do seem to be possibilities in the bunch.

Jenna Kim/Art Center College of Design



Words by Dave Lewandowski • Photo by Phil Abbott / LAT



THE ART OF THE PICK

How the IndyCar Series aces use traffic to their advantage



The hint of a smile slowly follows a shrug when Scott Dixon is petitioned to recount the drama weeks earlier at Nashville Superspeedway that ultimately led to his second consecutive victory on the oval.

The situation: On lap 89 of 200, with front-running Dario Franchitti and Dan Wheldon working traffic entering Turn 3, Dixon's No. 9 Target Chip Ganassi Racing Honda-powered Dallara uses the smidgen of draft off Franchitti's car to dart underneath both and claim the lead.

Lucky? Aggressive? Opportunistic? Sure, all occasionally come into play at the diverse ovals and street/road courses in the IndyCar Series. In this instance – and more often than not in similar situations – track management and a car capable of handling the task allowed Dixon to attempt the bold move.

"Looking ahead and trying to plan for it are important," says Dixon, who used a three-race July winning streak to climb securely into championship contention. "The most important is how your car handles in traffic. At Nashville in that circumstance, our car was pretty good in traffic while the other guys seemed to get a little looser than what we were.

"Before that pass, going into Turn 1, I could see quite clearly ahead that there were a lot of cars and it was going to be a bit of a scramble. Everyone sort of just got bottled up there with lapped traffic. I eased it into [Turn] 1 and got a good run going through 2 and then down the back straight. I didn't think [Franchitti and Wheldon] were going to slow down that much when they were in traffic. It so happened that they split one person, then I went on the inside of both of them three-wide going into 3, which is not always a good situation.

"Dan [on the high side] probably didn't even know I was there, and Dario luckily gave me room. It was pretty hairy there for a few seconds, but it worked."

There you have Art of the Pick 101, or using traffic on an oval to your advantage.

"To use it to your advantage, you always have to plan ahead," Dixon says. "You have to try to pass them on the straights and hopefully when the guy behind you gets to traffic it's the middle of the corner and it's going to take a lot longer for him to get through. By then, you're a second ahead."

Delphi Panther Racing's Vitor Meira points to knowing your competitors' traits and the racetrack as tools to create and take advantage of opportunities, which are filed under B (for background) in his memory.

"Each track requires a different strategy," Meira says. "Chicago, for example, wide track and traffic is always going to stay inside. Always. So the guy running in front of you is going to have to move up [to get around traffic]. At the point he moves up, you come inside trying to make the pass before he gets to the traffic so you can squeeze him to pass traffic. You're using traffic to shorten the track while still using his draft.

"At Nashville, you can't make it two-wide. So what you have to do is time it right like Scott did. The guys in front of you are going to have to slow down to pass the slower cars. The first guy [Franchitti] slowed down and then the second guy [Wheldon] slowed down and Scott just came with momentum."

The same holds true for not allowing traffic to work to your detriment, whether you're the pacesetter or running fifth and fighting not to go down a lap.

"Defending is hard," Dixon says. "I think in this series you don't have any chance to defend by yourself. As the leader with traffic, the biggest thing you have to do is try to put as many cars between you as you can."

Adds three-time IndyCar Series champion Sam Hornish Jr.: "To either defend against the pick or use it to your advantage, you have to have the same thing and that's a good-handling car. And you have to be focused on what's going on ahead of you more so ▶

VIDEO EXTRA
Scott Dixon's third-to-first Nashville pass
CLICK HERE

As Helio Castroneves (3) and Dario Franchitti (27) come up on lapped traffic, will one of them be able to use it to disadvantage the other?



Dan Streck/LAT

WHEN YOU ARE THE TRAFFIC

Quick quiz: You're about to be overtaken for the third time by the leader two-thirds of the way through the 200-lap race on the Chicagoland Speedway oval. Is your response at 215-plus mph to: (A) yield or (B) make him work for it?

"You're going to move over and let those guys at the front finish racing clean," Dreyer & Reinbold Racing's Buddy Rice suggests. "Some people don't do that and stay in the mix to the end. At some point, you will be in the same position and you don't want them doing it back to you. People don't forget. All these guys get along, but at the end of the day, after being in the heat of the battle, you're not going to forget what's happened to you in the past." Sage advice, though protocol is situational when you're the traffic in the IndyCar Series. For instance, going a lap down toward the start of the race is completely different.

"If I'm the first car to lose a lap, I try to go as fast as I can – not impeding the progress of the car that is trying to lap me – and hold my position as much as I can," Delphi Panther Racing's Vitor Meira says. "Make him work for it because a yellow can come at any time and I can recoup a whole lap.

"But if I've been lapped, I just give him room because the fight is over. You want to be correct because you want people to be correct with you."



Michael Levitz/LAT

On road courses, traffic can be an even bigger issue, as once you get by someone, it may take your pursuer a full lap to do the same

than what's right behind you."

Achieving a car setup conducive to running competitively both in traffic and out front is a primer to passing. In some races, drivers continually have to work on the car's balance until they hit that sweet spot. Other times, understeer or oversteer are a constant companion with little recourse but to hold on and remain out of harm's way. Occasionally, the car's balance is perfect for the conditions. Of course, that can change lap to lap.

"The big thing as far as the pick goes is you have to have a car that is handling well before you can do that," Hornish says. "The more comfortable you are in the car, the

farther ahead you can watch. If you have a bad car, you're looking right off the nose of your car trying to figure out how do I keep from hitting the wall vs. how to work this? Obviously, I've been in spots where you get really comfortable with where the car is running and you kind of watch the people ahead of you, where the traffic is and what they need to do. Then you play your hand."

Road courses require longer set-up time to make a pass, unless a competitor makes a self-induced or forced error. That's part of the game on the multiple twists and turns.

"You have to apply as much pressure as possible and as soon as they mess up take advantage of it," says Dixon, who swept the three permanent road courses this season. "It depends on the guy you're following a lot of the time. There are guys you know you can

pressure a little more, they generally will give it up pretty quickly. But everybody knows exactly what each other is doing, especially on the road courses, so at this stage it makes it very difficult."

Ryan Hunter-Reay agreed with Meira that knowledge is power – knowledge to recognize opportunities that traffic presents and how to deter opponents from nipping at your rear wing.

"The ovals in the IndyCar Series are an experience game because you have to know what you can do with that car in traffic," says the driver of the No. 17 Team Ethanol car, a former Champ Car World Series driver. "The Champ Cars couldn't run that close to each other. These cars can run a lot closer. You need to have the experience to know if you can keep your foot in it when it gets really deep." ■

"It was pretty hairy there for a few seconds, but it worked"

Scott Dixon



THE DIGITAL 500

Race drivers pretend to be other race car drivers while competing in the new Indianapolis 500 Legends game

Darren Manning is somewhere to driver's left of Turn 1 at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, attempting to avoid a massive crash in front of him that sent cars, wheels and other bits all over the track.

He doesn't quite make it.

"The grass seemed like a good idea," he remarks to A.J. Foyt IV, who had tried to avoid the same accident a few moments before, with better results.

They could try it again if they choose, taking the wheel...err, controller...in their hands, pressing the throttle button and giving it another go.

Controller? Throttle button? No, this isn't the Indianapolis 500 of some distant future with radically different cars than we know today. This is actually Indy of 1961, brought back to life with 21st century technology. Manning and Foyt are playing Destineer Studio's Indianapolis 500 Legends game for the Nintendo Wii game console, intended for release in time for holiday shopping (it will also be available for the Nintendo DS portable system). It allows would-be racers (or now-racers, in this case) to drive the Indianapolis 500 in the time period from 1961 to 1971, and race as or against legendary drivers such as A.J. Foyt, Parnelli Jones, Jim Clark or Dan Gurney.

Manning, driver of the A.J. Foyt Racing No. 14 in the IndyCar Series, now has the opportunity to race against his boss, or pretend to be him.

"Now I'll be able to figure out what A.J.'s going on about all the time when he's talking to me about his cars," Manning says.

As a means to bring the excitement of the Indianapolis 500 into the living room, however, wouldn't it make sense to feature today's cars and drivers who are going well over 220mph? Wouldn't it be better to have recognizable names such as Dario Franchitti and Sam Hornish Jr. instead of Eddie Sachs? Racing fans probably know Franchitti and Hornish; a few may even recognize Sachs. But just about anybody who ever heard of racing knows the names Foyt and Mario Andretti.

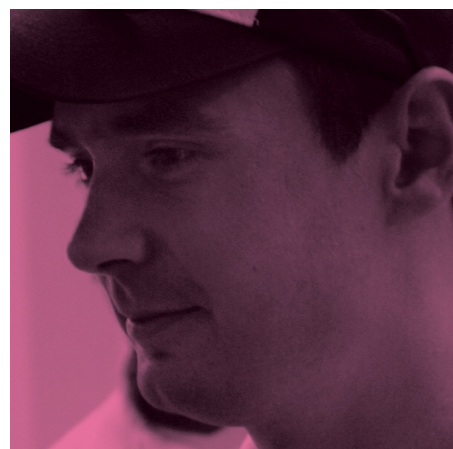
"We chose the 1961 to 1971 time period because most of the drivers everybody knows, who are household names, are from that time," says Chris Lundeen, the game's producer and a self-described open-wheel fan. "But there's also a lot of innovation that came from that time period. From the front-engine roadsters to the introduction of the rear-engine cars with independent suspension, and a couple of years we had the turbine cars. I can't name another racing series where all that happened in the span of a decade. And toward the end of that decade you saw the wings and the aerodynamics come into play."

So the game includes everything from Foyt's 1961 Travis/Offy to Jim Hurtubise's 1963 Kurtis/Novi to Parnelli Jones' 1967 Granatelli/Pratt & Whitney turbine car to Dan Gurney's 1969 Eagle/Weslake-Ford. The game's builders even recorded some of the engines at Indianapolis Motor Speedway, such as Offenhausers and the turbines, to add a little realism.

But it's not just the cars where attention to detail was paid. As the cars changed during that decade, so did the Speedway, and every change is reflected in the game. Drive in 1961, and you're on bricks all the way down the front stretch. In later years you're running on asphalt. Change years and watch the grandstands change, the new scoring pylons go up. Between that and the other features in the game, it's not just entertainment; it's a history lesson.

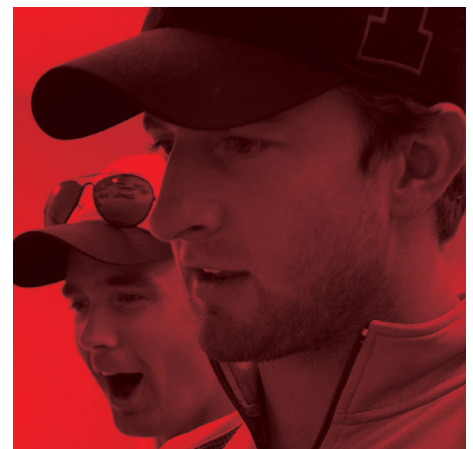
"It's really neat that they did this," says Sarah Fisher, driver of the No. 5 car for Dreyer & Reinbold Racing. "It's cool that they're elaborating on the history of the Speedway and the history of the folks who ran there. And to even have the full straightaway in bricks is pretty neat."

Aside from recording engine sounds and Tom Carnegie's voice, Lundeen says he worked with IMS historian Donald Davidson and Bob Clidinst Jr. to get things right. Clidinst, the son of a legendary Indy mechanic, worked in numerous capacities around the Speedway, including as a mechanic himself. ▶





IndyCar Series drivers (top, left to right) Sarah Fisher, A.J. Foyt IV and Darren Manning try their hand at the Indianapolis 500 Legends game



VIDEO EXTRA

INDIANAPOLIS 500 LEGENDS
Watch the trailer for the new game

handing out Bowe's Seal Fast samples and eventually working in the media department keeping statistics. Clidinst was very active in everything at the Speedway in the '60s.

However, his real contribution came from the detailed drawings he made of the race cars. He took exact measurements, and even took a job with Monogram Models. Those drawings and measurements proved critical to re-creating the race cars for the Indianapolis 500 Legends game.

The history – photographs and video from the time period are also included – is a great feature, but what's important with a video game is how it plays. First, a note about the Nintendo Wii: the controller is wireless, and motion sensitive. That means to turn the car in the game, you tilt the controller. There are also steering wheel attachments for the controller for that added bit of realism. The controller makes choosing a year and type of game the most difficult part of playing.

"The steering is not as sensitive as a lot of the video games, and that makes it fun to drive for someone who doesn't play a lot of video games," Fisher says. Adds Manning: "It's difficult to get a steering wheel to react properly; but the control there works pretty well."

Players have an option of racing 10 laps or the full 200. There are even pit stops, where you have to use the controller to knock off the spinners and replace the wheel, along with keep the refueling hose in place. Spill too much



"Now I'll be able to figure out what A.J.'s going on about all the time"
Darren Manning

The Indianapolis 500 Legends game is controlled with the wireless Wii controller, which is turned just like a steering wheel to "drive" the car

fuel, and you'll have to grab the fire extinguisher to put out the flames.

There's also mission mode, where you try to avoid accidents, or recreate famous duels such as the 1961 Sachs-Foyt duel, where Foyt was able to keep his light-on-fuel – thanks to a broken fueling rig – Trevis/Offy ahead of Sachs' Ewing/Offy after Sachs had to make a late pit stop for a tire. You can also try to get a top qualifying time in Parnelli Jones' STP turbine.

"It's pretty good, very realistic," says Manning. "It looked like Indy, I think especially if you get it on a big screen. Racing games are difficult to get the graphics right, because you're passing by everything so quickly, I guess; but that seems pretty good."

For A.J. Foyt IV, driver of Vision Racing's No. 22 Dallara-Honda, although he's driven his grandfather's 1977 Coyote-Foyt/Ford Indy 500 winner at the Speedway, he expects it to be a real treat to drive some of the cars in the game.

"The game was really awesome. It seems kind of tough – you actually have to steer the car," he says.

"The cars look the same, and it's cool to see all the old drivers out there. It's going to be cool to be my grandfather and race against them." ■

CHECK ENGINE LIGHT ON? BRAKE NOISE? "I GOT A GUY"

Sarah Fisher
IndyCar® Series Driver



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The rise in Vitor Meira's heart rate corresponds with his smile disappearing. The catalyst? Being buckled into the rear seat of an FA-18 Hornet for a demonstration flight with the U.S. Navy Blue Angels.

Seconds later, instructions from the steady voice of one pilot, Maj. Nathan Miller, to another allow for Meira's acclimation to the canopied environment and orientation with the multiple information screens in the cockpit. Now he can fully experience the joy ride at Mach 1.

That he did, returning to terra firma 40 minutes later, sweat-soaked as if he'd put in an hour of cardio at the gym, and eagerly willing to go up again. "That was hard, but it was so cool," Meira says, before inviting Maj. Miller to ride in the back seat of an Indy

Racing Experience car when their 2008 schedules coincide. "We don't have video screens in our cars, though," Meira adds.

Meira draws parallels between the cockpit of the No. 4 Delphi Panther Racing Dallara-Honda and the computer-driven FA-18 Hornet. Both have an alphabet soup of buttons, switches and sensors to aid the individual at the controls. Whereas avionics override pilot input, IndyCar Series drivers have a number of tools at their disposal – inside and out of the car – to improve performance.

In real time via radio telemetry, engineers interpret data collected from more than 25 sensors on the chassis. Those sensors report everything from tire pressure, to fuel economy tailored to the racetrack, to steering angle entering turns. They relay information to the

driver, who in turn provides the aspect of the "feel" of the car. From the seat, the steering wheel provides additional information via LED readouts and, at the slight push of a button, the cross-weight of the bow can be adjusted.

Sometimes, it's information overload. "Just tell me what I need to know," three-time IndyCar Series champion Sam Hornish Jr. says he occasionally thinks aloud.


With the race strategist and spotter in the driver's ear, telling him or her everything from the need to use the weight-jacker to eliminate pushing, to who's running inches off their right-rear wing, can the driver fully concentrate on the primary missions of speed, passing and winning?

"The brain is just like a computer," Meira says. "The more programs you open, the

INFORMATION OVERLOAD

Drivers must concentrate on winning while being inundated with technical data

Words by Dave Lewandowski • Photos by Michael Levitt / LAT • Manipulation by Ree Tucker



“The more things you’re thinking about, the slower it’s going to process”

Vitor Meira

slower it will get. It's the same with your brain. The more things you're thinking about, the slower it's going to process. All the information that the car gives the driver and the engineers, you can't process while you are on the track, so you have to choose what information is going to be to your advantage so you can go faster.

“On an oval, all you have to worry about is your line and the guy ahead of you. On a road course, you have to worry about braking with the right modulations, when to downshift, when to turn in. And you have to think individually about every turn. Mainly, I watch revs and where I'm changing the gears. If the revs are correct during the change, the faster I'm going.”

The busyness during competition was

initially jarring to Ryan Hunter-Reay, who climbed into the No. 17 Team Ethanol car for Rahal Letterman Racing at the challenging Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course in late July – the 12th event of the season.

“In the lower formulas it's go-go-go, a sprint race situation,” he says. “In the bigger cars, you really have a lot of information to process. If you're not ready to process it on a lap-to-lap basis, it can catch you up.”

“First and foremost, you have to be on point driving. You can't miss a beat, can't miss an apex while you're thinking about some of that stuff. When I'm trying to push out there and keep other cars behind me, I'm going to have the team telling me to save a little bit of ethanol. I have to stay on point with quick laps and I have to tell ▶

them at the end of a stint what I need from the car, whether I need a turn of front wing or whatever.

"You have to do so many things to make a race go your way: tuning your car as the race goes on; saving ethanol while you can save it, and not give up so much time that you're unable to gain it back in the pits. Plus, you have to make sure everything is perfect in the pit lane and not miss a shift. It's tough to stay mentally on point for that long, cover all those topics and be on top of all those issues for the entire race distance.

"People outside of racing don't really get that. They see a steering wheel and pedals."

Marco Andretti had attended Indy car racing events in which his father, Michael, competed for many years, before joining the Indy Pro Series and graduating to the IndyCar Series in 2006. Even though he was familiar with the systems and received tutoring, Andretti was discovering a complex world at 220mph.

"In the different formulas, all you had was the steering wheel," Andretti says. "Now, all of a sudden, you have different components to work with, but only stuff

to help you. There are adjustments to make in the car. If the car isn't balanced, you can help dial it in. You can help the tires last longer with a roll bar or weight-jacker adjustment.

"It is a lot of work figuring out the buttons on the steering wheel. In Formula 1 there was a 28-page manual on how to use the steering wheel," adds Marco, who tested a Honda F1 car over last winter. "After a season and going to all the circuits, it gets easier. You can handle it better."

For 2008, the sanctioning Indy Racing League is expected to replace the sequential gear shifter to the driver's right thigh with paddle shifters on the steering wheel – another thing to learn.

"But it's like anything else; as you train for it you get used to it," Hunter-Reay says. "It's like a fighter pilot with all his instruments: The first time you sit in it, it would be overwhelming looking at everything you have to do. Experience isn't everything in these cars just to be fast over a lap, but to be fast over a race distance, massive experience is needed. I'm still learning." ■

(Right) Marco Andretti and Kyle Moyer discuss strategy – more info to carry in a driver's brain... (Below) Vitor Meira's steering wheel isn't short of buttons and knobs, but all have a very specific purpose

DRIVER VS. COMPUTER

Telemetry can tell an engineer many things, except what a driver feels

Marco Andretti literally trusts Kyle Moyer with his life in the high-speed and high-stakes IndyCar Series. So it's beneficial that the driver and the race strategist for Andretti Green Racing get along famously. They've quickly built a balance of input that is focused on improving the No. 26 before and during a race.

"When it comes to car balance, he'll



Paul Webby/LAT

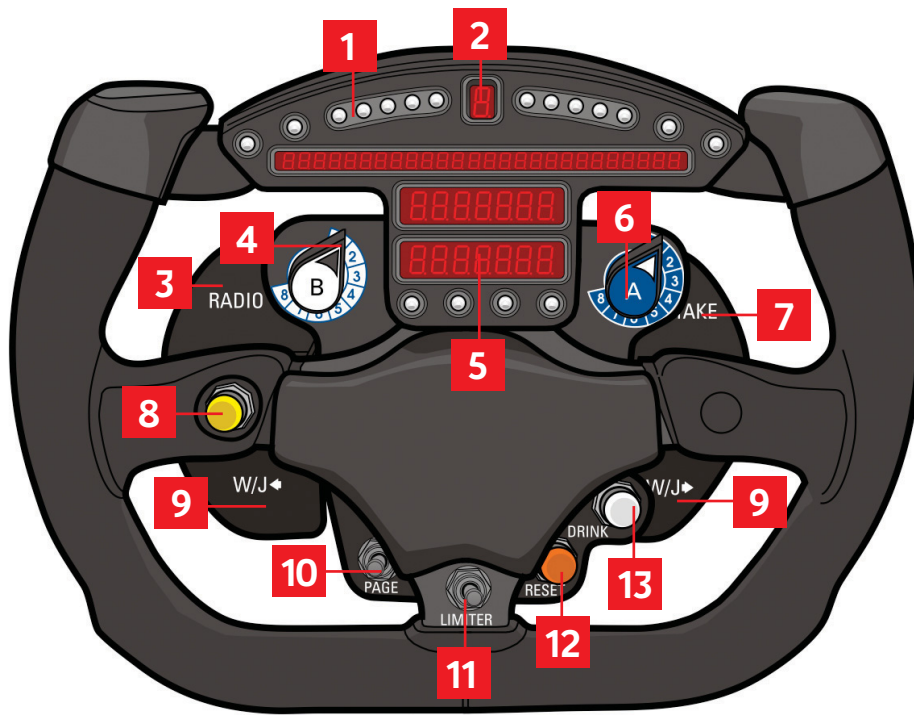
suggest something on the radio. But maybe he'll only see the understeer on the steering tracer," Andretti says, referencing telemetry data on the monitor in front of Moyer. "He'll say, 'Do something to help the understeer,' but the reason I didn't was because of it being loose on the exit. I know what I'm feeling and what I want.

"He'll tell me on the radio the miles per gallon we need to get, or he just says we need to do a bit better. I know what I did in each corner that lap and I know what I have to do to be better. He won me my only race at Sonoma because of fuel. I have so much trust in him, I can just do my thing and drive."

Computer data can't replace the human element in an IndyCar Series car. Early in the inaugural race at Iowa Speedway in June, polesitter Scott Dixon's car developed a steering problem that the driver couldn't rectify and that wasn't picked up by any of the multitude of sensors.

"The [race engineer and strategist] obviously don't know what I'm feeling and they say, 'OK, we're getting ready for a restart [after a lap 1 incident],'" Dixon says. "And I'm saying, 'There's no way we can restart. We're going to go straight into the wall.' So there is a point where you just have to ignore them and bring it in.

"A lot of information comes from you. You have to tell them what you feel because they're going to try to make it better."



THE WHEEL 1] RPM LIGHTS 2] GEAR INDICATOR 3] RADIO PULL-TO-TALK LEVER 4] ELECTRONIC SAFE SETTINGS 5] Pi DASH. Can display lap count, times, temperatures and mileage 6] FUEL TRIM OPTIONS 7] OVERTAKE LEVER. Makes fuel mixture full rich 8] PIT SPEED LIMITER 9] WEIGHT JACKER 10] Pi DASH PAGE SCROLL 11] REV LIMITER 12] RESET. Resets fuel reading 13] DRINK BUTTON

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FOCUS ON THE 500

Alex Lloyd, Indy Pro Series championship title in hand, is ready to step up and chase the dream of an IndyCar Series career and the Indianapolis 500

Words by Bruce Martin Photo by Michael Levitt/LAT

When Alex Lloyd was growing up on the Isle of Man, a tiny island nation nestled between Great Britain and Ireland, he was compared to another famous resident who used to live on its shores.

"Nigel Mansell lived there during his Formula 1 career and then he moved off the island," says Lloyd, the 2007 Indy Pro Series champion. "It helped when I was looking for sponsorship in the earlier parts of my career because Nigel Mansell was from the Isle of Man. Newspapers tried to publicize me as the next Nigel Mansell. I never actually got to meet him, but my next-door neighbor worked for him so we got to hear a lot of stories.

"Nigel had always been one of my heroes growing up. When he came over to America it was an eye-opener to everyone involved in Formula 1 and that really made me focus a lot on America, which is part of the reason why I had this desire to race in America myself."

The young driver who was born in Manchester, England, competed with another famous Formula 1 driver, current rookie sensation Lewis Hamilton, who is battling for the F1 world title. But Lloyd's career took a different

path, one that led him to the Indy Pro Series and to the brink of an IndyCar Series ride.

After an impressive initial season in 2006, Lloyd had a record-smashing season that culminated with his victory at Infineon Raceway in August when he scored a record eighth win and clinched the 2007 championship. Along the way, Lloyd also captured records for most wins to start the season and most consecutive victories with five.

"To come away from this year taking all the big records that we possibly can, that means a lot to me," Lloyd says.

"Since starting in the Pro Series last year my career has jumped up to a whole new level. The series has enabled me to achieve what I had the potential of achieving in previous years, but wasn't able to show. It's a strange feeling knowing it's the end of my Indy Pro Series career, but certainly a very great one knowing that in the nearly two full years of competition I've achieved everything I could possibly have achieved."

After his spectacular start, not even a run of bad luck that began in July could halt Lloyd's championship charge. It only delayed the inevitable because Lloyd came to the

United States focused on his dream of advancing to the IndyCar Series and one day winning the Indy 500.

He appears to be right on target.

"I knew this was the make-or-break year for my career," Lloyd reflects. "I had to win the championship and win it in a dominant fashion. When you know you have that sort of expectation going in and that is the only way you are going to get into the IndyCar Series next year, there is a lot of pressure on you. When it was done, we had won the championship, we had won Indy, I felt a huge weight off my shoulders."

He tested with Target/Chip Ganassi Racing at Sebring in August and there is genuine interest among IndyCar Series teams, likely leading to a seat for next season.

Add to that his wife is due to deliver the couple's first child – a daughter named Ava Grace – and it's been a year to remember for young Lloyd.

"There has to be a point where it will plateau but I'm enjoying all the good things that have happened at the moment and trying to ride the wave for as long as I possibly can." ■



PHOTO GALLERY
Alex Lloyd's
amazing season
[CLICK HERE](#)

2007 Indy Pro Series wrap-up



Paul Weiby/LAT

Kentucky 100

Kentucky Speedway
Aug. 11, 67 laps/100 miles

- Hideki Mutoh, who broke the Indy Pro Series track record en route to his second career pole, leads points leader Alex Lloyd and the rest of the field (including series debutant Leilani Münter in fifth) to the green flag of the first night race in series history.
- Joey Scarallo gets loose in Turn 4, slides up the track and hits the SAFER Barrier, bringing out the first caution of the night.
- Ryan Justice gets loose on lap 40 due to a flat tire resulting from contact with Chris Festa, clipping teammate Münter (who had run in the top 10 for much of the day) and sending her into the Turn 2 wall. Bobby Wilson and Andrew Prendeville are also taken out of the race in the incident.
- Mutoh comes out with the lead after a three-wide battle with Lloyd and Wade Cunningham down the backstretch, and holds off Lloyd by just 0.1023sec to claim his second career win. The Japanese rookie consolidates his second position in the standings and is now 98 markers behind Lloyd with just three rounds left in the season.

DRIVER • TEAM

Hideki Mutoh • Panther Racing
Alex Lloyd • Sam Schmidt Motorsports
Wade Cunningham • AFS Racing
Chris Festa • Chip Ganassi Racing
Jaime Camara • Andretti Green Racing

Pole winner: Hideki Mutoh 191.276mph

He said it: "I'm really excited. I have been looking forward to winning an oval race. I'm really happy. I have to thank the team. They gave me a great race car." Hideki Mutoh



Dan Stryck/LAT

Carneros 100

Infineon Raceway
Aug. 25, 30 laps/69 miles

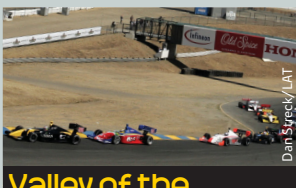
- Richard Antinucci leads the field to the green, but it's points leader Alex Lloyd who leads on the exit of Turn 1. Micky Gilbert spins in Turn 2 and takes Wade Cunningham with him, but both are able to rejoin the race and there is no caution.
- There is a caution, however, when Bobby Wilson, J.R. Hildebrand and Robbie Pecorari collide in Turn 11, scattering debris in the process. Wilson and Pecorari are able to return to the race, but Hildebrand's car is too damaged to continue.
- Hideki Mutoh and Jaime Camara make contact in Turn 11 on lap 17. Camara continues but Mutoh is stalled out on course, bringing out another full-course caution.
- Lloyd leads Antinucci to the checker by nearly one second to take his record eighth win of the season and, in the process, the Indy Pro Series Championship. Mike Potekhen rounds out the top three.

DRIVER • TEAM

Alex Lloyd • Sam Schmidt Motorsports
Richard Antinucci • Cheever Racing
Mike Potekhen • Apex Racing
Stephen Simpson • Kenn Hardley Racing
Jaime Camara • Andretti Green Racing

Pole winner: Richard Antinucci 100.639mph

He said it: "It's been an amazing day. We really wanted to win the championship by winning the race. That was the way we wanted to do it. We had a big lead, but we didn't want to fall behind and win it through the fact that we just had a big lead from the beginning of the season. We wanted to show that we were dominant from the beginning and finish that way as well." Alex Lloyd



Dan Stryck/LAT

Valley of the Moon 100

Infineon Raceway
Aug. 26, 30 laps/69 miles

- Ryan Justice starts first after the top eight finishers of yesterday's race are inverted; but it was the winner of that race and newly crowned champion Alex Lloyd who steals everyone's attention by failing to roll off on the pace laps due to fuel pressure issues. The crew eventually gets the car started, but the car stalls in Turn 1 on lap 1 and is out of the race. Also out is Robbie Pecorari, who makes contact with Bobby Wilson in Turn 11 on lap 1.
- J.R. Hildebrand retires from the race on lap 9 due to wrist discomfort, possibly an effect of his crash with Wilson and Pecorari the previous day.
- After starting seventh, Antinucci knives his way through the field, working his way up to fifth by lap 3, third by lap 9 and finally passing Justice for the lead on lap 19.
- Antinucci takes the win, his second in the last three starts, by a margin of 1.74sec over Justice. It is Justice's best career finish, as is third place for Andrew Prendeville.

DRIVER • TEAM

Richard Antinucci • Cheever Racing
Ryan Justice • Sam Schmidt Motorsports
Andrew Prendeville • RLR/Andersen Racing
Logan Gomez • Sam Schmidt Motorsports
Stephen Simpson • Kenn Hardley Racing

Pole winner: Ryan Justice (inversion of top 8 finishers of previous race)

He said it: "[Richard] is a very talented driver. He's old enough to know he has to build a group around him and he's done that. Every race he's gone to, he's gotten better and better. Everyone asks me if I've given him advice. He's one of those drivers you don't have to give any advice. Very impressive and I'm very proud." Eddie Cheever, Richard Antinucci's car owner and uncle



Dan Stryck/LAT

Chicagoland 100

Chicagoland Speedway
Sept. 9, 67 laps/100 miles

- Series champion Alex Lloyd leads Wade Cunningham and the rest of the field to the green, but Leilani Münter spins in Turn 2 one lap later, tagging the inside wall and damaging her rear wing. During the yellow, Andrew Prendeville pulls into the pits and out of the race with engine problems.
- The race resumes, but a big crash occurs in Turn 4 on lap 15. Cunningham and Chris Festa get together and the latter spins, collecting Jaime Camara in the process. Both drivers are uninjured but are done for the season, and Cunningham is forced to pit for a new nosecone.
- Adam Andretti, nephew of Mario and cousin of Michael, brushes the SAFER Barrier in Turn 4 on lap 34, bringing out the fourth caution of the day in this, his series debut.
- Logan Gomez takes the lead from Lloyd on lap 42, but the fifth caution comes two laps later when Cunningham and Travis Gregg collide entering Turn 3, causing Cunningham's car to flip. Fortunately, neither he nor Gregg are hurt.
- Lloyd challenges Gomez in the closing laps, including one last-ditch effort coming to the checkered flag. But Lloyd comes up 0.0005sec short, the closest finish in Indy Racing League history. It is also the first win for Gomez, whose previous best was second at Nashville in July.

DRIVER • TEAM

Logan Gomez • Sam Schmidt Motorsports
Alex Lloyd • Sam Schmidt Motorsports
Robbie Pecorari • Team KMA
Bobby Wilson • Brian Stewart Racing
Mike Potekhen • Apex Racing

Pole winner: Alex Lloyd 190.133mph

He said it: "It feels great. Alex had a great run out there as well as us. I think that Sam Schmidt Motorsports was the class of the field today. It's great to go out with a win at the end of the year." Logan Gomez



Blow by blow



Driver standings after 16 of 16 races

Rank	Driver	Points
1	Alex Lloyd	652
2	Hideki Mutoh	481
3	Wade Cunningham	423
4	Bobby Wilson	393
5	Mike Potekhen	379
6	Jaime Camara	373
7	Logan Gomez	368
8	Robbie Pecorari	344
9	Stephen Simpson	340
10	Chris Festa	313
11	Andrew Prendeville	306
12	Jonathan Klein	304
13	Ryan Justice	276
14	Sean Guthrie	274
15	Richard Antinucci	273
16	Brad Jaeger	260
17	Ken Losch	239
18	Joey Scarallo	184
19	Jon Brownson	171
20	Phil Giebler	163

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Party with other members and maybe even a driver or two. Sarah Fisher stopped by an INDY DownForce event in Miami to sign autographs before the race.



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BLAST FROM THE PAST

Dave Friedman/LAT

Great Scot, version 1.0

Back in 1965, Dario Franchitti's hero, Jim Clark, was also a double champion

When a man dedicates a room in his house to a legend, going so far as to match the color of bathroom tile to his hero's helmet, you know there's got to be a pretty significant connection.

Now, Dario Franchitti shares much more with Jim Clark than hailing from the same country, Scotland, and a common profession. Earlier this year, Franchitti earned the right to have his face on the Borg-Warner Trophy with Clark's. And now he can also claim a major open-wheel championship, as his idol did.

Although Clark's titles came in Formula 1, in 1963 and '65, he, like Franchitti, won one of them in the same year that he won the Indianapolis 500. The '65 championship is

especially notable because he had to skip the Monaco Grand Prix to compete at Indy, making him the only person to win the World Drivers' Championship and the 500 in the same year.

It was Clark's third try at the Brickyard. In 1963, he and Dan Gurney introduced rear-engined cars to the Speedway, a pair of Lotus-Fords from Colin Chapman. Clark qualified on the second row and finished behind winner Parnelli Jones, earning Rookie of the Year. Only oil leaking from Jones' Watson-Offy kept the Scot from winning. That performance garnered Clark and "those funny cars" a lot of attention, and began the decline of the roadster era.

Clark returned in 1964 and won the pole, only to retire after a tire failure damaged the Lotus' suspension. Then in '65, he started second and went on to become the first person to win the 500 in a rear-engined racer. He competed in the race two more times, finishing second in '66 and retiring in '67.

Clark's racing appearances in the U.S. weren't limited to Indianapolis. His first victory in Indy car competition came at the Milwaukee 200 in 1963. He even tried NASCAR, running a Holman-Moody Ford Galaxie in a Grand National



Dave Friedman/LAT

When Jim Clark won the Indy 500 in 1965 (top), it marked a complete change in the game. He had to miss a Formula 1 race to do it, but still won the World Championship

race at North Carolina Speedway in Rockingham, where he finished 30th with a blown engine. Then there were three U.S. Grand Prix at Watkins Glen victories, in 1962, '66 and '67.

Clark died while participating in a Formula 2 race at Hockenheim, Germany, on April 7, 1968. But his memory lives on with the latest Scottish champion.



Walt Kuhn/LAT

If I were President of the United States...

“Trying to draw a parallel to what we do in running this series compared to holding the position of President – the most powerful position in the world – is so incredibly different that I couldn’t imagine where to begin. There are so many issues to deal with it would be impossible to prioritize and say, ‘This one has to be first.’ I have the utmost respect for anyone who is willing to take on that position and deal with the pressures associated with it.”

–Indy Racing League President of Competition Brian Barnhart

SWEET 'N' HOT

Brad Forth won the Indy Racing League Chili Cookoff at Chicagoland, which raised money for the IRL Ministry and IRL Kids. Here's the recipe, invented by his mother 35 years ago at Mosport:



MUM'S CANADIAN BROWN SUGAR CHILI

- 2 lbs ground beef
- 2 large onions, chopped and sautéed
- 3 large cans brown beans
- 3 tbsps. white vinegar
- 3 tbsps. brown sugar
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. pepper (or to taste)
- 1/4 lb butter

Sauté onions in butter over med/low heat until well-cooked and caramelized. Reduce heat if necessary to prevent burning. Empty beans into a large pot, add the caramelized onions and set over low heat. Brown the beef and add it to the bean/onion mix. Add the vinegar and the brown sugar, salt and pepper. Bring to a simmer for 15 minutes and turn off. Do not cover. Cool and refrigerate overnight (makes 5 gallons).

What driver would you most like to take a ride with, and where?

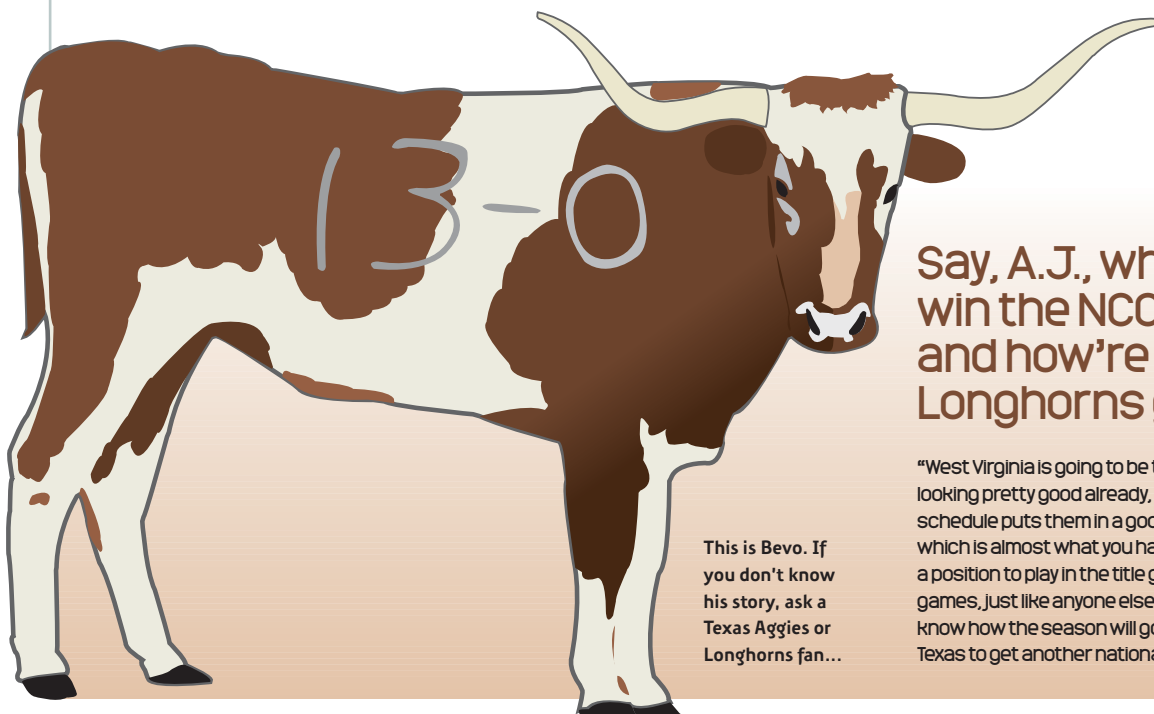


by Ferraro/LAT

“Michael Schumacher. I think that he’s the best. And he’s the best overall in all sports, his history and approach is top of the line. I’d like to go anywhere with him that we could compare racing data, because there aren’t many drivers who I could get that type of information from.” – **Kosuke Matsuura**

SECRET WORD HORSEPOWER

For more information on INDY DownForce visit indycar.com & click on “Fan Club.”



This is Bevo. If you don't know his story, ask a Texas Aggies or Longhorns fan...

Say, A.J., who’s going to win the NCCA football title, and how’re your Texas Longhorns going to do?

“West Virginia is going to be tough. I think LSU and USC are looking pretty good already, but I also feel like the Longhorn’s schedule puts them in a good position to maybe run the table, which is almost what you have to do anymore to put yourself in a position to play in the title game. We’ve got some tough games, just like anyone else, but I like our chances. You never know how the season will go, but I am going to be pulling for Texas to get another national championship.” – **A.J. Foyt IV**

Favorite country musician

Clay Walker and George Strait are really the ones I like.

Favorite rock 'n' roll song

I Can't Drive 55 by Sammy Hagar.

Favorite sport

Racing has been my love sport all my life, and it'll be that way until I die.

Favorite road car

Whatever is around. I drive pickups more than anything. I got a GT40; I got stopped running 165[mph] in it when they delivered it to me. But I was just cuttin' up a little bit.

Favorite driver

You've got some good young race drivers, some of them who stand out, but I've never had a favorite driver. I've never been a hero worshipper.

Favorite indulgence

I guess one of my favorites would be food. I love ice cream. I like the Blue Bell® Homemade Vanilla, because you can make a Coca-Cola® float or a hot fudge sundae with it.

Favorite food

Since I can afford it, where I used to not, steak.

Favorite place

I enjoy Texas; I was born and raised there. But I like anywhere they sell good steaks.

Favorite ranch chore

Getting on my bulldozer and clearing land. I really enjoy it because people can't bother me. That's the best hobby I got.

Favorite livestock

I don't think one's any better than another. I just enjoy animals.

Favorite IndyCar Series city

Indianapolis. It's a great city. I've spent a lot of time there, and if I wasn't living in Houston, Texas, I'd probably like to live there.

Favorite track

Indianapolis Motor Speedway. I've won a lot of money there.

Favorite trophy

The Indy 500's my favorite. I've got Le Mans, I've got Daytona, I've got Sebring, but I'd say the Indy 500's my favorite trophy. The first one, especially, and the fourth one, being the first one to win it four times.

Favorite race car

It's really hard. I guess all of them at one time or another were my favorite, it would be hard to pick one over the other. I guess the one that we built and had my own motor in it that we won Indy with for the fourth time, the Coyote with the A.J. Foyt V8 Ford in it.

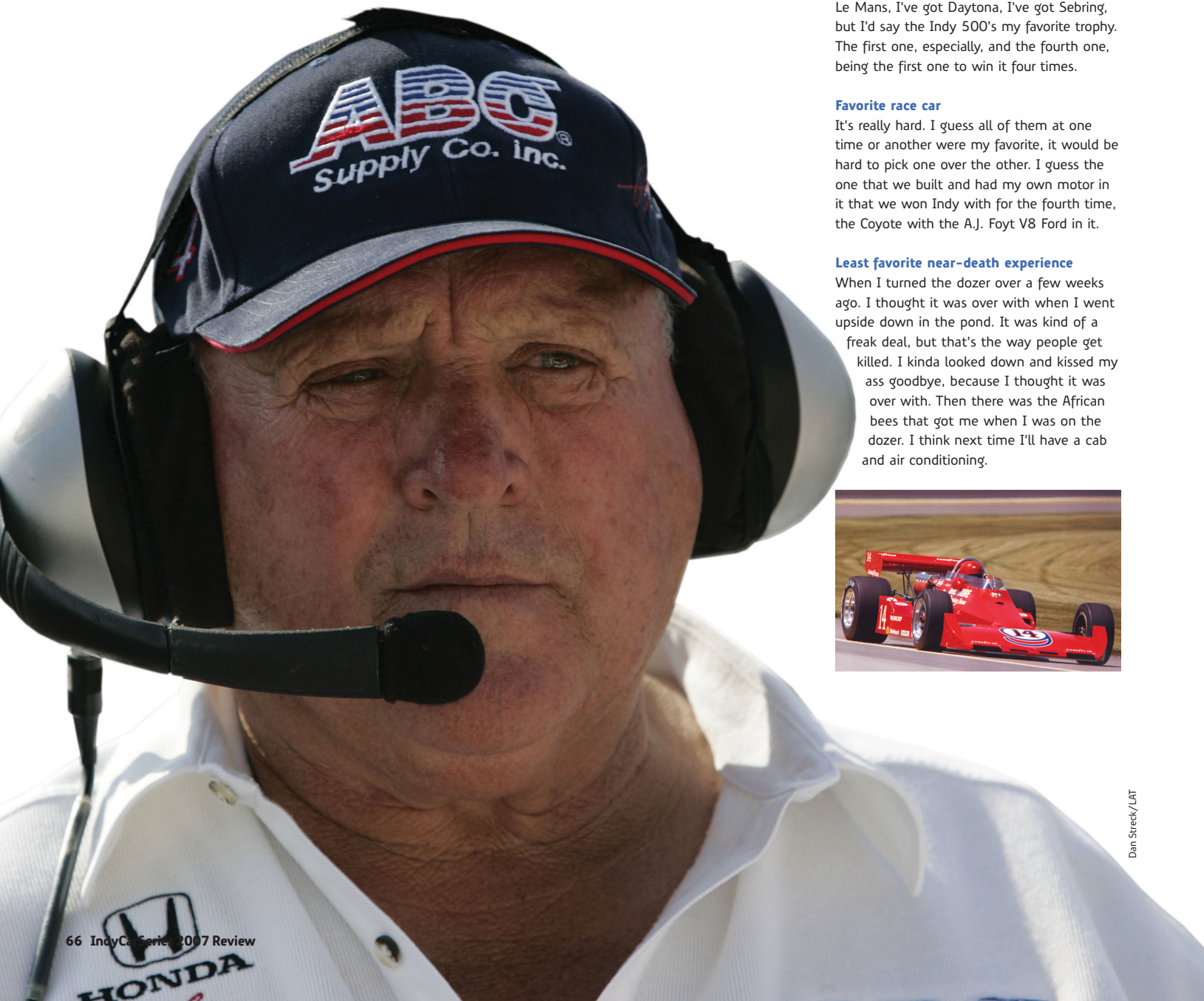
Least favorite near-death experience

When I turned the dozer over a few weeks ago. I thought it was over with when I went upside down in the pond. It was kind of a freak deal, but that's the way people get killed. I kinda looked down and kissed my ass goodbye, because I thought it was over with. Then there was the African bees that got me when I was on the dozer. I think next time I'll have a cab and air conditioning.



A.J. Foyt's favorite things

For Super Tex, everything is super about Texas, including the ice cream



Dan Streck/LAT

RITMO

RITMO MUNDO



Helio Castroneves - 2001/2002 Indy 500® Champion,
Milka Duno - Indy 500® 2007 Rookie, Dan Wheldon - 2005 Indy 500® Champion



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