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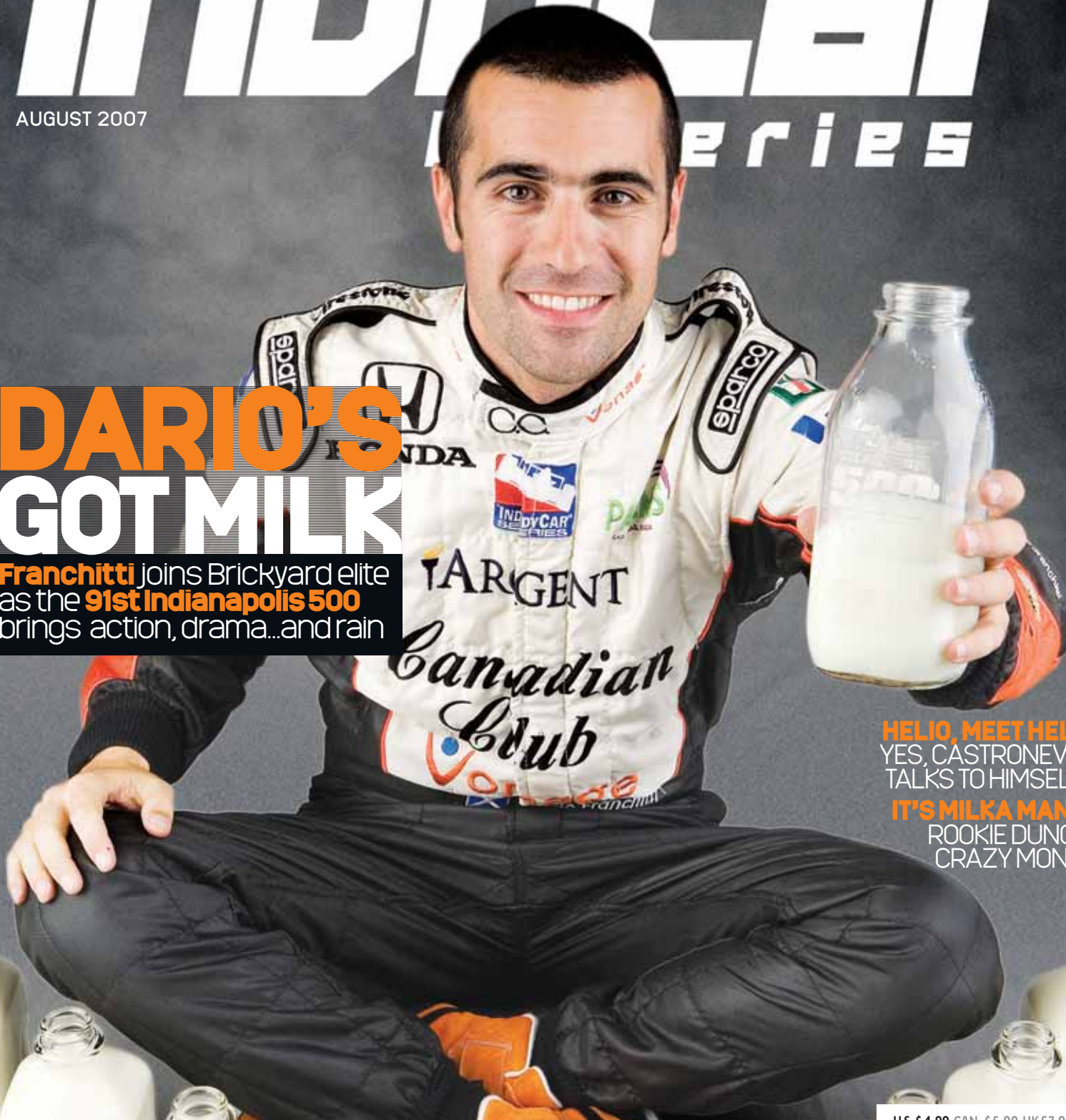
INDYCAR SERIES

AUGUST 2007



DARIO'S GOT MILK

Franchitti joins Brickyard elite as the **91st Indianapolis 500** brings action, drama...and rain



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INTERRUPTED

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HOT TEXAS NIGHTS

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(Left) The Indy 500 field is all in during a caution period early in the race. (Right) Danica Patrick trades a hot race car for hot TV lights after her series-high finish at the Texas Motor Speedway

PaulWebb/LAT

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Confident or just giddy over his Indy 500 win? Dario Franchitti is in control as the season nears halfway

Harry How/Getty Images

LATEST NEWS @ www.indycar.com

Franchitti's Indy win fuels title push

...but the race for the championship remains close among six drivers

Coming into the 91st Indianapolis 500, Dario Franchitti was as hot as a driver nobody noticed could be. Scoring a third at Motegi and then a second in Kansas – adding to a seventh and fifth in the first two races – Franchitti was almost destined to win at the Brickyard.

Had his season ended there, he might have been perfectly happy. But he carried that momentum out of Indiana to finish second at Milwaukee and fourth at Texas – and led the point standings for the first time in his IndyCar Series career, thanks in large part to his consistency.

"You can't have an off weekend," says Franchitti. "Anytime throughout the season you can't afford any mistakes. If you do make a mistake, it's important to recover quickly."

He's hardly alone at the top of the standings, however. Only 27 points separated the top five after Texas, and one race could push any of them to the top. Franchitti's Andretti Green Racing teammate, Tony Kanaan, was second, 12 points behind Franchitti's 253. Kanaan has

wins at Motegi and Milwaukee. Another driver who should know about consistency is Target Chip Ganassi Racing's Scott Dixon, who held third in the standings after Texas, despite not yet scoring a victory this season.

Dixon's teammate, Dan Wheldon, was considered the favorite going into Indy on the strength of two 2007 victories, but his results since Kansas are only highlighted by a third at Milwaukee, and he'd slipped to fourth in the standings after Texas. Right behind him was Sam Hornish Jr. The defending champion for Penske Racing finally scored his first win of the season in the Lone Star State – his first since Kentucky last August.



Castroneves scored the pole at Indy and remains solidly in the title hunt

Dan R. Boyd/LAT

Three races, many heroes

The Indianapolis 500 doesn't only celebrate the race winner

Despite the date being May 27 – Dario Franchitti's car number – it wasn't just the Scot's day at the 91st Indianapolis 500. He may have earned his place on the Borg-Warner Trophy, \$1.6 million and a pie on the head courtesy of teammate and prankster Tony Kanaan, but others claimed a share of the spoils as well.

This year's Indy 500 was really a race in three parts. The first was Pole Day, where Helio Castroneves knocked Franchitti off the pole in the closing minutes at a 225.817mph four-lap average, and survived a last-gasp assault by Kanaan (see Kanaan's take on Pole Day on page 26). The second part was the race's first half, dominated by Kanaan, who only saw it go all wrong in the last few laps of the restart, before rain stopped the race for the second time. You know the outcome of the third part.

Phil Giebler claimed the Rookie of the Year award over Milka Duno. Giebler survived 106 laps before crashing, Duno only 65. For the full story on the race, turn to page 12.



IMS Photo

Only at the Indy 500 do you find two legends the likes of A.J. Foyt and Richard Petty – perhaps two of the greatest drivers in their respective forms of auto racing – chatting it up on pit lane in the minutes leading up to the green flag



Lesley Ann Miller/LAT

FLAWLESS PERFORMANCE

Honda Indy V8 acquits itself nicely during the Month of May

With the stresses placed on engines at Indianapolis Motor Speedway, plus a new fuel and engine configuration, one might have expected more than a few blown engines during the Month of May.

However, despite an increase in displacement of 0.5 liters for the Honda Indy V8 and the switch to 100 percent fuel-grade ethanol for its fuel, there were no spectacular engine failures at Indianapolis Motor Speedway in practice, qualifying or the race, and only a few engines changed during the month. That mirrors predictions by Honda Performance Development that changes for 2007 would improve reliability and engine life.

• Check out racing.honda.com

Few Honda engines were changed at Indy during the three weeks of the Indianapolis 500 – and none went pop come race day

DOPPLER EFFECT



Inside Line

Jeff Olson, Senior Writer

My buddy Steve called the day after the Indy 500, sounding kind of sullen. “Man, that was a letdown,” he said, as if still waiting for the remaining 34 laps.

Sentiments like Steve’s were heard more than once in the days following the 91st Indianapolis 500, that somehow the race was disappointing, that it would have been nice to see it go the distance, or that maybe it should have ended during the first rain. That it was somehow incomplete, or that Dario Franchitti didn’t deserve it.

Allow me to disagree. Vehemently.

The fact that weather became a dynamic – truthfully, it was *the* dynamic – only made this version of the Indy 500 better. Weather is always an element at Indy, though not always as obviously as it was this time. Whether it’s heat, cold, wind, humidity, sunshine or clouds, the conditions always play into the race. The best teams know this and plan for it, and win because of their preparation for the conditions.

To argue that the race was somehow incomplete – or worse still, boring – because it ended short is to miss the point entirely. The thrill of this race was the rain itself; the drama was in the Doppler. I tried to convince Steve that what he thought ruined the race only made it more interesting and sensational. Everyone knew it was going to rain, but nobody knew *when* it was going to rain.

I told Steve he should see my notes. He wouldn’t be able to decipher them, since they made little sense even to me, but they would show him the anxiety of the race’s final hour. In the waning laps, when

every race strategist in the pits knew rain was within the Indianapolis city limits, I scratched pen to paper as if attempting to subdue the notepad. I would have been better off drawing pictures.

In spite of the approaching storm, it didn’t become clear that the race belonged to Franchitti until the final crash. Had rain held off for another 10 laps – or if the race hadn’t been interrupted by the last two crashes – then perhaps the outcome would have been different. Clearly the folks at Penske thought so. Both Helio Castroneves and Sam Hornish Jr. were in position if the race had gone a few more laps and Franchitti had been forced to pit.

But it didn’t work out that way.

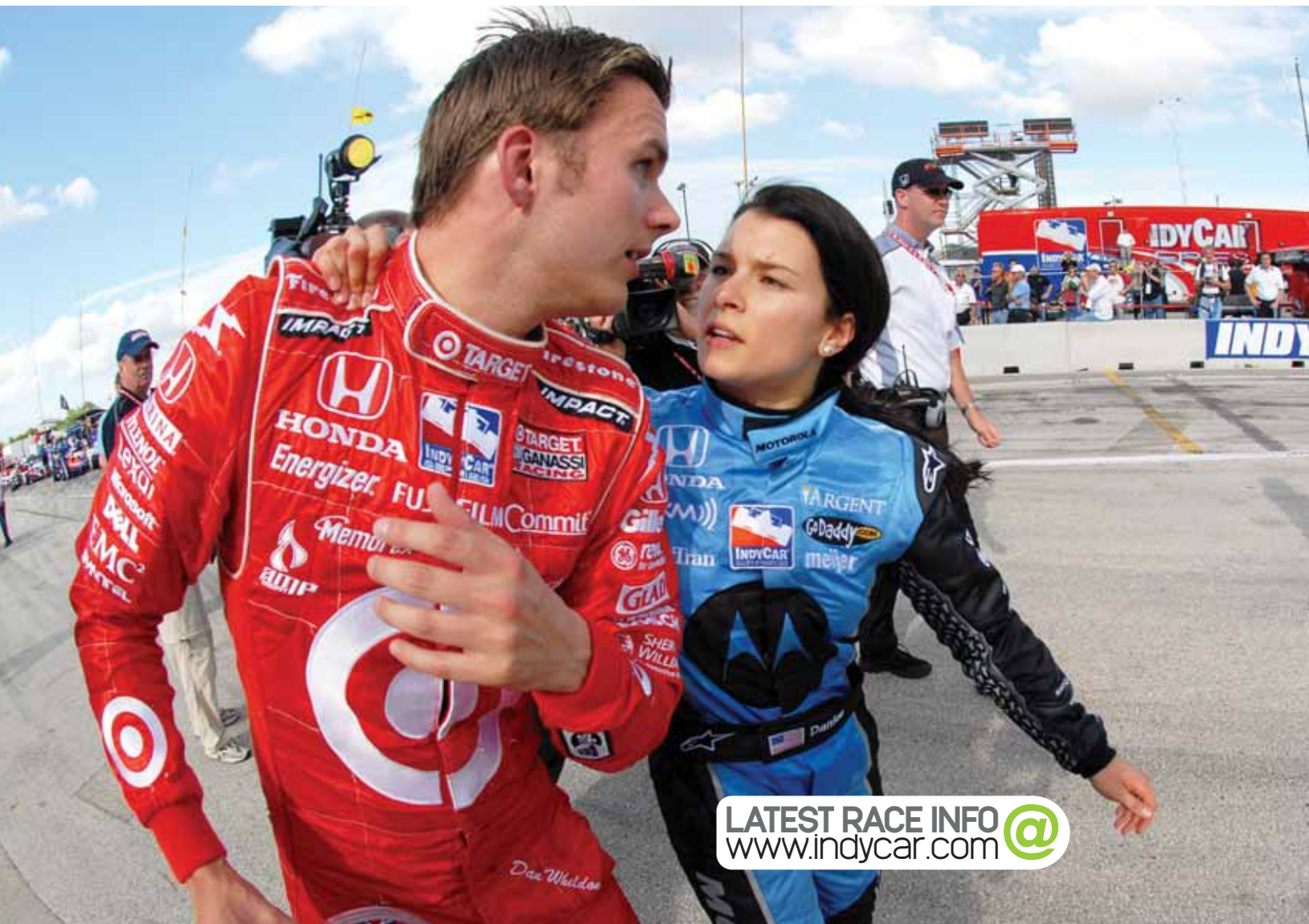


Dan Streck/LAT

One of the Andretti Green Racing crew members for Tony Kanaan keeps an eye on the sky during the Indy 500

Instead, Franchitti’s group, led by John Anderson, executed a winning strategy by staying on top of the weather and the circumstances. They played the spectacle better than the rest, and for that they received what was rightfully theirs. They mastered all aspects of this event, weather included, and for that they deserve a rousing *bravo*.

If I could read my notes, I’d tell them exactly how they did it.



LATEST RACE INFO @
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Confrontation and celebration

Danica Patrick had lows and highs in early June at Milwaukee and Texas

It began as contact on the Milwaukee Mile, probably just one of those racin' deals. It escalated into a post-race clash that became the major marketing point for the Texas Motor Speedway event a week later. The climax was Danica Patrick's best finish in an IndyCar Series race yet, a third-place finish in Fort Worth, behind teammate Tony Kanaan and winner Sam Hornish Jr.

Patrick was coming through the field after starting 17th, and had just dispatched Dario Franchitti and was going after Dan Wheldon. The two cars touched, and Patrick spun into the grass

with a bent suspension arm. She confronted Wheldon after the incident, prompting Texas Motor Speedway President Eddie Gossage to bill his race as "The Rumble at the Speedway," starring Patrick and Wheldon as the protagonists.

"She's just being Danica," said Wheldon after the Milwaukee incident. "She'll be fine when she calms down. She's messing with the wrong person if she wants to get feisty. I'm a lot tougher than she is on track."

At Texas, though, Patrick had the last laugh, starting sixth and finishing on the podium, better than Wheldon on both

counts. Wheldon qualified 10th and was caught up in the multi-car chain reaction that began when A.J. Foyt IV lost a wheel in the closing stages of the race.

"It was really a matter of time," said Patrick. "I think we've had fast cars throughout the season, and it was a matter of getting more on the same page with my engineer and just having everything come together."

Kanaan, hoping for a push from his fellow Andretti Green racer, Patrick, to help him get around Hornish, had high praise for his new-for-2007 teammate.

"I think she did a hell of a job. I told her, 'It's coming,'" Kanaan said with a grin, referring to Patrick's initial victory. "She knows exactly what I was talking about. We all know it and we can't wait to shave her head."

Listen here, you! Danica Patrick confronts Dan Wheldon after the two tangled at Milwaukee. She followed it up at Texas with her best finish so far after fueling paddock chatter for the week in between

Paul Webb/LAT



After watching his son Marco (right) tumble, Michael Andretti retired from driving again

Michael retires again as Marco struggles

Andrettis share a tough May

Following an Indy 500 in which the only bright spot was one of his cars winning as he finished 13th and his son had a frightening crash, Michael Andretti has said he plans no further attempts on that elusive first win at the Brickyard.

"Right now I have no thought of coming back," Andretti said. "I would be very surprised if my feelings changed. I'm glad I did it - it was all good - but I was going crazy this month." Andretti said that the duties of running the team were just too demanding to entertain the idea of getting behind the wheel again.

Meanwhile, Marco Andretti's struggles continued beyond Indy with more DNFs at Milwaukee and Texas. Marco has finished only a single race this year, the Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg.



IMS Photo

Showing the moves that made him famous, George Foreman will add a little punch to Panther

Panther's heavyweight partner

George Foreman joins team as a co-owner

George Foreman and his sons have joined Panther Racing as co-owners of the two-time IndyCar Series champion team.

Foreman, former heavyweight boxing champion and an ordained minister, is best known these days for his George Foreman Grill line. He joins multi-owner Panther Racing, currently running Vitor Meira and Kosuke Matsuura.

"From our first meeting, I've been impressed with John Barnes and the entire Panther Racing organization," said Foreman. "This is a very hard-working team that we admire."

Meira said he experienced a little awe when he got the news: "All I could say was 'Wow' when John told me who our newest team owner was. There are many common threads between Panther and George Foreman. We are going to accomplish great things together."



IMS Photo

IndyCar Series: Hi, Ohio

Before the IndyCar Series teams and drivers had a weekend off prior to their inaugural trip to Iowa Speedway, they visited another track that is new to the series for 2007, Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, for some testing.

Dario Franchitti set the quick time at 1 m7.6667sec around the 2.258-mile, 13-turn circuit.

"When you take the horsepower into consideration, I think [the times] were very impressive," said Franchitti. "And I think there is more to come. You'll see us even quicker when we qualify."

Team Penske's Helio Castroneves was 0.1004sec back. Franchitti's teammate, Marco Andretti, was third quickest; Dreyer & Reinbold Racing's Buddy Rice was fourth, followed by Target Chip Ganassi Racing's Scott Dixon.

Ed Carpenter (above), who posted the most laps during the test in preparation for the July 22 Honda 200 at Mid-Ohio presented by Westfield Insurance, said he expects a good race.

"It's not extremely physical but, at the same time, it keeps you busy," Carpenter said. "There's always a lot going on. It's going to be a good course."



IMS Photo

Alex Lloyd (7) dominated the first third of the Indy Pro Series season, including a win at the Freedom 100

THE QUICK, IMMOVABLE OBJECT

Alex Lloyd has seemed unstoppable in the Indy Pro Series this season, winning the first five races, a record. Not only that, he became the first driver to win on both the Indianapolis Motor Speedway oval and road course when he won the Freedom 100 on Carb Day, May 25.

"Since I found out after St. Petersburg that this was a possibility, I tried to play it down a bit, not get carried away with it," said Lloyd after winning the Freedom 100. "But inside it meant a huge amount to me to try and get this. It's something that nobody

else has done before. From all the greats, nobody has achieved this. So I've really worked very hard for this."

Lloyd had won previously on the road course during last year's prelude to the U.S. Grand Prix. Although he won at Milwaukee after Indy, he couldn't keep his streak going and took his first losses of the season, ironically, on the Indy road course during the USGP weekend in June.

Instead, those victories went to Panther Racing's Hideki Mutoh, his first win, and Bobby Wilson, driving for Brian Stewart Racing.

Lloyd still has a gargantuan lead in the point standings, though, with 340 points after the Indy road course double-header weekend, 104 ahead of Mutoh and 133 ahead of Wilson.



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Art Center students conceive the IndyCar Series of the future

Student project looks at cars and more for 2011

Is the past the future? Let's see what the Art Center students dream up...

With its eyes on the future both on and off the racetrack, the Indy Racing League has partnered with Pasadena, Calif.-based Art Center College of Design for a funded educational project called "IndyCar 2011."

The project is designed to challenge students in the school's Transportation Design, Environmental Design, Product Design and Illustration/Entertainment Design departments to imagine the future of the IndyCar Series. Students will have the opportunity to design a hallmark IndyCar Series car of the future. They will also be asked to consider a variety of facets in the world of racing, from fan experiences and entertainment at the track to real-time motion simulators and video games – and beyond.

"At the center of this project is a concept IndyCar Series car of the future; but we have also given the students at Art Center free reign to look at our sport as a whole," says Terry Angstadt, president, commercial division for the Indy Racing League. "Be it fan experiences or entertainment, we look forward to the concept possibilities brought to us by the students at Art Center."

To better understand the world of IndyCar Series racing, students and faculty attended the 91st Indianapolis 500.

"Open-wheel racing offers the purest expression of man-machine interaction," says Stewart Reed, chair, Transportation Design and leader of the project. "All the principles of vehicle architecture – high-performance safety, aerodynamics and powertrain – are in their raw form, offering students an incredible challenge to work within those constraints."

Robert Clarke, president of Honda Performance Development, introduced the IndyCar Series to the Art Center and a contingent of IndyCar Series officials visited the college.

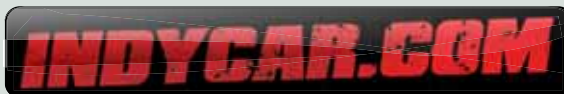
High-speed greetings

Maybe it's an uncle's birthday or an impending holiday and you can't find the "right" greeting card. Well, let your mouse do the walking at indycar.com. There is a wide selection of IndyCards – from historic (Jim Clark's Indy 500-winning car and Parnelli Jones' Turbine) to the current season (all your favorite drivers) – that you can personalize and e-mail.

There's even a template for you to design an IndyCard and have it displayed on the official Web site of the Indy Racing League. Check out the options at <http://www.indycar.com/community/indycard/>

Indycar.com was the first sports Web site to create a "Community," which includes more than a dozen interactive components that empower viewers to participate through user-generated content.

● Every IndyCar Series and Indy Pro Series practice and qualifying session will be broadcast on IndyCast, with Indy Pro Series races shown live. IndyCast supports Windows and Mac platforms and can be accessed through the indycar.com homepage.



Lesley Ann Miller/LAT

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COMING AUG. 15! The IndyCar Series heats up on its summer swing

Blink and you'll miss a ton of action as the IndyCar Series' boys – and girls – of summer slug it out with barely time to pause for breath. If it happens, or it's going to happen, you'll read about it in *IndyCar Series* magazine. Don't miss it!



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Words by Richard S. James Main Photo by Dan R. Boyd/LAT

A DRAMA IN TWO ACTS

The rain-interrupted 91st Indianapolis 500 had the makings of a great play – conflict, tragedy, subplots and plenty of pathos



PHOTO GALLERY
2007 Indy 500
highlights reel
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The trouble with outdoor stages is they're at the mercy of the weather. The curtain nearly rose late on the 91st running of the Indianapolis 500 due to rain. But the rain stopped about three hours before the 1 p.m. Eastern race start, and the race began under overcast, but rainless, skies. That wouldn't last.

ACT 1, SCENE 1: The green flag

SETTING: Indianapolis Motor Speedway, Indianapolis, Ind., May 27, 2007. Four F-22 Raptors have streaked through a cloudy sky; the crowd, in Jim Nabors' absence, has sung Back Home Again in Indiana; the balloons have been released; and Mari Hulman George has given the command to start engines.

(Stage left, the director shouts, "Where's Helio?" Polesitter Helio Castroneves has missed his curtain call after his Penske Racing

Dallara-Honda has stalled on the grid. The crew gets it started and he quickly resumes his proper place on stage.)

At the drop of the green, it's immediately a battle between Castroneves and Tony Kanaan in the Andretti Green Racing No. 11 entry. The two switch places several times until lap 11, when a full-course caution is thrown for debris in Turn 3. The entire field hits pit lane when it opens two laps later.

Castroneves leads at the restart, followed by Kanaan, Castroneves' Penske teammate Sam Hornish Jr., Target Chip Ganassi Racing's Dan Wheldon and third starter Dario Franchitti in the No. 27 AGR machine.

Castroneves and Kanaan continue their battle, and continue to alternate positions until Kanaan begins to drop down the order slightly.

Kanaan is left out not only to assume the lead, but also to be in proper position when the rain arrives...



LAT Midwest

ACT 1, SCENE 2: Enter Marco

SETTING: Indianapolis Motor Speedway. The fresh-faced youngster is making a charge, aiming to show that last year's result was no fluke.

Last year's surprise second-place finisher and near-winner, Marco Andretti, makes his presence known in the No. 26 AGR Dallara-Honda at around 45 miles in. On lap 35 he passes Hornish for second behind Castroneves. Two laps later, Roberto Moreno becomes the first casualty when he makes contact with the SAFER Barrier in Turn 1. He's transported to Methodist Hospital complaining of back pain, which was later diagnosed as a contusion, and is soon released.

The pit stops during the ensuing yellow are good news for Marco, but bad news for Castroneves. Marco comes off pit road in the lead, while Castroneves receives no fuel, thanks to a malfunctioning dead man's valve on the fuel rig. Two more stops drop the two-time winner well down the scoring pylon.

Scott Dixon is quick out of the Target Chip Ganassi pit stall, and takes up residence behind Andretti. Dixon stalks his prey for a few laps after the lap 44 restart, taking the lead on lap 47. He won't have long to enjoy it, though, because Jon Herb crashes on lap 52, prompting another hectic round of pit stops.

For almost everyone except Kanaan, that is.

(Opposite) Tony Kanaan and teammate Marco Andretti battle on a restart, just before the rain called a halt to the action for a few hours. (Above) Buddy Rice, Darren Manning and A.J. Foyt IV share an umbrella and discussion during the rain delay

TK, Jeff Simmons (Rahal Letterman Racing) and Buddy Rice (Dreyer & Reinbold Racing) stay out. Kanaan is left out not only to assume the lead, but also to be in proper position when the rain, almost certainly heading in the direction of Indianapolis Motor Speedway and not far away, arrives. It's definitely a sound strategy, if the timing had only been a little more accurate.

(Herewith we employ the literary technique known as "foreshadowing." With rain looming and the opportunity to let Kanaan circulate in the lead, surely the team would keep the same strategy when the situation presented itself again. Surely.)

This round of stops is somewhat eventful. Davey Hamilton loses a tire as he leaves his stall. Milka Duno, the celebrated rookie who has made it up to 22nd, is cited with a stop-and-go for speeding in pit lane.

The restart is short-lived, and Kanaan is out front from the time the green waves on lap 60 until the caution on lap 66, when Duno's day goes from bad to worse against the Turn 1 wall. Now Kanaan heads to the pits, along with Marco Andretti and Wheldon.

ACT 1, SCENE 3: Franchitti to the fore

SETTING: Indianapolis Motor Speedway, during a stop-and-start race scheduled for 500 miles. ▶

The angular-jawed Scot who had been the hero for most of Pole Day is reasserting himself.

Dixon leads the field to the green flag on lap 71, followed by Hornish and Franchitti. Displaying the speed that held the No. 1 starting spot until the final minutes of Pole Day, Franchitti quickly moves past Dixon after Hornish has pushed Dixon back to second. Three laps later, Franchitti is in the lead and holding it solidly until he has to pit on lap 86.

When the field has cycled through pit lane, Kanaan is once again in the lead, followed by Marco. At this point, the race is experiencing its longest run of caution-free racing. Cue the yellow – this time for John Andretti, who slides into the wall in Turn 2.

As the race passes the 100-lap mark and becomes official a lap later, the entire field rolls down pit lane for fuel and tires. Marco leads the group back onto the track, followed by Kanaan and their teammate Danica Patrick in the No. 7 AGR Dallara-Honda. Patrick has gotten there the hard way, including an aggressive move on Wheldon that he won't forget. As the field circulates under yellow, Marco, the son of Michael and grandson of Mario, leads the 1000th lap by an Andretti in the Indianapolis 500.

It is a short-lived lead, however, because almost as soon as the green flag waves on lap 107, Kanaan dispatches Marco to second. And almost as soon as that happens, the second rookie in the race, Phil Giebler, is the victim of the fifth single-car accident. First comes the yellow; a few laps later the rain begins to fall.

Kanaan leads an AGR one-two-three as the moisture soaks the track. The race is official with 111 laps complete. Will Kanaan be declared the winner? Will Marco finish second again? Will

Patrick score her best finish yet in an IndyCar Series race? Stay tuned.

(CURTAIN FALLS.) INTERMISSION

Please enjoy a snack and refreshing beverage under our grandstands while our Indianapolis 500 players dress and rehearse their lines for Act 2. The intermission will last approximately three hours.

ACT 2, SCENE 1: Kanaan in control

SETTING: *A dry, but overcast Indianapolis Motor Speedway. The curtain rises with the remaining race cars being pushed to the grid. The racers, refreshed and anxious, prepare to battle once again. The tension is palpable as drivers wonder how much time they have to accomplish the task.*

(Director: "Places, everybody!")

Before the green flag even waves, Franchitti's effort takes a turn for what appears to be the worse. A cut tire incurred in the waning moments of the first act needs replacing, and he goes into the pits to replace it. It is an almost unnoticed incident, but it proves a pivotal point in the drama. He is joined on pit road by Dixon, Scott Sharp, Ryan Briscoe and Darren Manning.

When the green flag waves, Marco quickly shows Kanaan that he can play the same game, and takes the lead that Kanaan had stolen just before the red flag. Kanaan takes it back a short time later and leading lady Patrick follows him.

Almost as if the drivers realize they haven't much time to star, they began to reel off the laps quite quickly and uninterrupted; the restart marks the beginning of the longest period of green flag racing yet.

CATCH EVERY 2007 INDYCAR SERIES RACE ON ABC OR ESPN



Dan R. Boyd/LAT

(Above) Maybe not the way he wanted to win, but Dario Franchitti celebrates his Indy 500 victory in a downpour

ACT 2, SCENE 2: The flying Scotsman

SETTING: *Indianapolis Motor Speedway as what little light existed on a gray day begins to fade. What had been a staccato pattern of yellow and green had turned into a long run of fast laps.*

Quietly, surely, quickly he came. Dario Franchitti was moving rapidly through the field. By the time the leaders began the next round of pit stops on lap 136, he was among them, and as Hornish, then Kanaan, Castroneves and Patrick and then finally Wheldon pit, Franchitti is once again in the lead, where he stays until he pits six laps after his leading teammates. He is able to stay out longer thanks to the cut tire that forced him to fuel before the restart.

The green flag racing lasts until lap 151, when Kanaan leads Hornish and Marty Roth crashes in Turn 1, setting off a chain of events that will apparently derail destiny for one driver who had almost seemed assured of victory and push another into the history books.



Phil Giebler named the top rookie of the race

Phil Giebler had a tough row to hoe entering the 91st Indianapolis 500. Both a rookie and a one-off making his first start in the IndyCar Series, he had 13 Indy Pro Series races with one win under his belt. The team with which he had made two St. Petersburg starts in IPS, Playa Del Racing, wanted to enter the Indy 500, and they chose Giebler as one of the drivers.

As a Bump Day qualifier, Giebler started in the 33rd spot. He ran a steady, if unspectacular, race until he crashed his Ethos Fuel Reformulators Panoz-Honda on lap 107. However, he completed 41 more laps than the only other rookie in the field, Milka Duno, and thus earned the Rookie of the Year award and the \$25,000 bonus that goes with it.

"We were out there on cold tires, and I went into Turn 1, and the cars in front of me checked up, so I had to brake as well," said Giebler. "I think we learned a lot and hopefully we can find the funding for some more races this season."

Giebler wasn't the only bright spot for Playa Del Racing. His teammate and fellow one-off, Jaques Lazier, was in the top five on Carb Day, ran strong until he crashed late in the race, and even led a couple of laps as the field rotated through pit stops.



A top five for Team Sputnik

Almost flying under the radar, IndyCar Series veteran Ryan Briscoe, currently plying his trade in the American Le Mans Series, scored an impressive finish for Team Sputnik.

Can't find that team in the results? Oh, yeah...that was just one name used in the IMS garage for the Penske satellite (get it?) squad, formally known as Symantec Luczo Dragon Racing.

Whatever name you use, it was a spectacular effort from a one-off team, even one run by Roger Penske's son, Jay, in conjunction with Stephen Luczo. The car was also leased from Team Penske, and Briscoe drives the Team Penske Porsche RS Spyder in the ALMS. Talk about a family reunion. Briscoe even finished fifth, right behind Penske regulars Helio Castroneves and Sam Hornish Jr.

"It's a huge team effort," said Briscoe. "We came in at the last minute to do this race. My pit crew guys had every single pit stop absolutely perfect. Absolutely amazing."



Consolation for Michael's final ride

It was Michael Andretti's last shot and, in the end, all he did was extend the record for number of laps led at the Indy

500 without a win. He came out of retirement from the driver's seat last year to race with his son Marco, and finished third, while his rookie progeny finished second and won Rookie of the Year. This year, his consolation prize was winning the race as a car owner, even as he finished 13th in the Motorola/Jim Beam Dallara-Honda.

"I really thought there was going to be a lot more out of today," he said. "It was just a day that nothing worked. I think we had an OK car - it's just I got mixed up in the back and I could never get it to the front."

Still, he was able to visit Victory Lane as a team owner, the second time in three years (the first was with Dan Wheldon in 2005). There has to be some satisfaction there.

"We're very happy today that Dario was able to get it. I'm so very happy for him personally. He deserves it. He's been such a big part of Andretti Green Racing since day one. He's helped build it to where it is today."

ACT 2, SCENE 3: The exciting, yet anticlimactic, climax

SETTING: *The cars are circulating slowly for the first time in 45 laps. The sky is getting darker, and the rain is almost surely coming.*

Only 14 laps after his last stop, leader Kanaan pits under the yellow, a move somewhat surprising that would prove fateful. Hornish, Patrick, Castroneves and most of the rest of the field join him. However, Franchitti, Dixon, Briscoe and Sharp - the drivers off the normal pit stop sequence who took fuel and tires just before the restart - stay out.

Had Kanaan not pitted, he wouldn't have been shuffled fairly far back in the order. He wouldn't have been behind Jaques Lazier - who had run an impressive race up until that point - when Lazier hit the wall on the restart. And Kanaan wouldn't have spun avoiding Lazier and flattened a tire as he came to rest at the entry of pit road. Such are the twists of fate.

Of course, Kanaan and his crew wouldn't have known that no more full laps would run under green, nor could they have known exactly when the rain would come. Who would have guessed that after Lazier's accident, half a lap after the restart on lap 162, Marco Andretti and

Wheldon would come together on the backstretch, sending Andretti into a violent flip and starting a chain reaction that also removed Buddy Rice and Ed Carpenter (but leave all uninjured)? Who would have known that before that accident was cleaned up, the rain would come again, and the race would be over?

The crew of Franchitti's No. 27 knew.

JOHN ANDERSON (Andretti Green Racing team manager): "The rain's eight blocks away."

DARIO: "C'mon!"

Franchitti rolls under the checkered flag, passing his teammate's battered car on the wrecker headed into the garage. He's barely able to see through the driving rain, but enough, he says, to see the cheering crowd that remains in the grandstands until the end.

The TV cameras train on his famous actress wife, jumping for joy and soaking wet as he rolls into the garage that will serve as victory circle. The wreath, the Borg-Warner Trophy and the best-tasting milk that will ever pass his lips are waiting. ■

(CURTAIN FALLS.)

91st Indianapolis 500 results

	DRIVER	TEAM	CAR-ENGINE
1.	Dario Franchitti	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda
2.	Scott Dixon	Target Chip Ganassi Racing	Dallara-Honda
3.	Helio Castroneves	Team Penske	Dallara-Honda
4.	Sam Hornish Jr.	Team Penske	Dallara-Honda
5.	Ryan Briscoe	Syantec Luczo Dragon Racing	Dallara-Honda
6.	Scott Sharp	Patrón Sharp Rahal Letterman Racing	Dallara-Honda
7.	Tomas Scheckter	Vision Racing	Dallara-Honda
8.	Danica Patrick	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda
9.	Davey Hamilton	HP Vision Racing	Dallara-Honda
10.	Vitor Meira	Delphi Panther Racing	Dallara-Honda

Pole winner: Helio Castroneves 225.817mph

Rookie of the Year: Phil Giebler



FULL RACE RESULTS @
www.indycar.com

Marco Andretti was not only fighting for the lead at times, he also provided the most spectacular moment when he touched wheels with Dan Wheldon and flipped

2007 IndyCar Series so far...

(Below left) Milwaukee belonged to Helio Castroneves until a wing failure let Tony Kanaan have the win. (Below) Sam Hornish Jr. celebrates his first victory of 2007 at Texas Motor Speedway



Dan Strecky/LAT



LAT Photograph

Blow by blow



Dan Strecky/LAT

ABC Supply/A.J. Foyt 225 Presented by Time Warner Cable

Milwaukee Mile, Wis., June 3
225 laps/225 miles

- The early part of the race is almost a repeat of Indy, with polesitter Helio Castroneves battling against Tony Kanaan.
- When a caution for debris comes out, the majority of the field pits on lap 25, but Buddy Rice stays out, leading a race for the first time since Watkins Glen last year. He keeps the lead until he pits on lap 64.
- The race's second caution comes on lap 89, when Danica Patrick and Dan Wheldon have slight contact in Turn 1. Patrick confronts Wheldon after the race, leading to what would become the promotional theme for the next race, at Texas Motor Speedway.
- Castroneves appears unstoppable until lap 201, when his rear wing collapses and he hits the outside, and then inside, walls, giving Kanaan the lead. Castroneves' Penske teammate, Sam Hornish Jr., later experiences a similar wing failure.
- Kanaan leads Dario Franchitti to an Andretti Green Racing one-two. It is Kanaan's second victory of the season and second consecutive at Milwaukee.

DRIVER	TEAM	CAR-ENGINE
1. Tony Kanaan	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda
2. Dario Franchitti	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda
3. Dan Wheldon	Target Chip Ganassi Racing	Dallara-Honda
4. Scott Dixon	Target Chip Ganassi Racing	Dallara-Honda
5. Vitor Meira	Delphi Panther Racing	Dallara-Honda

Pole winner: Helio Castroneves 171.071mph

He said it: "It's pretty strange that this happened to either one of us, let alone both of us. It's the kind of thing that almost never happens." **Sam Hornish Jr.** on the Penskes' wing failures.



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www.indycar.com

RACE HIGHLIGHTS
MILWAUKEE
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Bombardier Learjet 550

Texas Motor Speedway, Texas, June 9
228 laps/342 miles

- Scott Sharp claims his first pole since 2001 and improves by 10 places his best starting position of the season when he knocks Sam Hornish Jr. off the top of the qualifying board.
- Sharp fades quickly, leaving Hornish to dominate most of the race, pursued usually by Tony Kanaan.
- Dan Wheldon takes the lead when everyone pits during a lap 47 caution caused by Jon Herb spinning. He maintains the lead for 28 laps before Hornish begins challenging him.
- Tomas Scheckter and Marco Andretti make slight contact on lap 87, sending Scheckter spinning into the infield.
- Andretti's run of bad luck continues as he pulls out of the race after 140 laps with mechanical troubles.
- Hornish keeps a healthy lead most of the time until lap 197, when a multi-car accident takes out many of the top cars. A.J. Foyt IV loses a tire, setting off a chain reaction that takes out Wheldon, Helio Castroneves, Ed Carpenter, Scott Dixon and Darren Manning.
- Kanaan makes a stunning move through the spinning cars – the in-car replay on the big screens elicits ooohs and aaahs galore from the spectators.
- From there it is a fight between Hornish and Kanaan, with Danica Patrick trying to support her teammate. Hornish takes his first victory of the year, and Patrick scores her best IndyCar Series finish to date.

DRIVER	TEAM	CAR-ENGINE
1. Sam Hornish Jr.	Team Penske	Dallara-Honda
2. Tony Kanaan	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda
3. Danica Patrick	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda
4. Dario Franchitti	Andretti Green Racing	Dallara-Honda
5. Vitor Meira	Panther Racing	Dallara-Honda

Pole winner: Scott Sharp, 215.260mph

He said it: "We are professionals, it's not *Days of Thunder* out there, you don't drive through accidents." **Ed Carpenter**



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RACE HIGHLIGHTS
TEXAS
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Driver standings after 7 of 17 races

Rank	Driver	Points
1	Dario Franchitti	253
2	Tony Kanaan	241
3	Scott Dixon	234
4	Dan Wheldon	233
5	Sam Hornish Jr.	226
6	Helio Castroneves	202
7	Danica Patrick	168
8	Scott Sharp	164
9	Vitor Meira	163
10	Tomas Scheckter	159
11	Jeff Simmons	140
12	Darren Manning	120
13	Ed Carpenter	119
14	Buddy Rice	118
15	Sarah Fisher	116
16	A.J. Foyt IV	114
17	Marco Andretti	109
18	Kosuke Matsuura	105
19	Milka Duno	45

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“WE’VE COME A LONG WAY”

When a father and son share a dream, sacrifice, determination, setbacks and luck are all part of the journey to make that dream come true. This is Dario and George Franchitti’s journey so far

Words by Jeff Olson



They share admiration; that much is certain from simple observation. It’s in the way Dario Franchitti looks at his dad, and the way George Franchitti returns that look. It also was in the way Dario thanked his father at the banquet following the 91st Indianapolis 500, a moment that stopped just short of tears.

One look tells you Dario is George’s pride and joy. Another look tells you George is the reason Dario is here. Both are grateful, and both are basking in the glow of victory, the culmination of a long journey that began on a small motorcycle and included a second mortgage and a timely hole in one.

We sat down with Dario and George Franchitti a few days after the Indy 500, to catch up on their journey so far.

George, when did you realize Dario had what it took to advance further in racing?

George: He had his first motorbike when he was just a few years old. I showed him what to do with it – how to accelerate and brake – and he just drove off. He straightaway had balance and control of it.



(Above left) With the preparation handled by father George, Dario Franchitti won two Scottish and two British karting championships between 1984-'88. (Left) The long road and hard work took them to Indy (above), and paid off with the dream prize – Dario's victory in the 91st Indianapolis 500

“Dad was your typical racing dad in karts. He was feeling the pressure. As soon as I went to cars, he let it go”

Dario Franchitti

Michael said something similar about Marco, that at a very young age he was skilled at all sorts of motorized toys.

George: It's the same with waterskiing. Throw him in the water and he'd pop right back up. Anything at all, he could work it, like his first go-kart...

Dario: We need to get that back.

George: We bought him his first race kart – an old one, just so he could go and run around in it and teach himself what was going on. We cut the oil down so it wouldn't oil up, thinking he would be going slow. But two laps into it, he was running flat-out onto the straight. He seized the engine. We went and bought a new kart for him after that, and in the first race he was in, he went and won it. He beat [David] Coulthard.

Dario: David was in a different class. I didn't beat DC. He won his class, and I won mine.

George: Yeah, but still...

Did you ever race against him later?

Dario: Yeah, in the World Championships we did, and then once or twice more. Not a great deal. He was two years ahead, and (Allan) McNish was two years ahead of that.

From there it advanced to higher levels, but it took a great deal from your dad to get there. Walk us through what you went through and what you saw him go through.

Dario: I don't think he'll ever tell you what he went through, to be honest. He hasn't really told me, either, but I have half an idea. Unless they're fabulously wealthy, there are two

things any father of a racer goes through: One is the time commitment, and the other is the financial commitment. There were times when we didn't have the money, did we?

George: We did it ourselves, basically.

Dario: Dad was my mechanic and...

George: Chief cook and bottle washer.

Dario: He did everything. We had a couple of friends of Dad's who would come along as mechanics. He'd drive down to the race – sometimes it was a two-hour drive, sometimes it was an eight-hour drive – and then we'd race. Dad would mechanic over the weekends, and then we'd turn around and drive home. I'd go to school on Monday, and Dad would go straight to his work, having driven all night.

At the banquet, you addressed your dad, saying, “We've come a long way.” That was an emotional moment. It was obvious how much it meant to you. If you had a chance to tell him in a more intimate setting, what would you say?

Dario: I'm always going to keep that between just me and him, or with him and my mom and my brother and my sister. Between the four of



them, they gave up tremendous amounts. That's why I was able to follow my dream. When time allows, we'll go back to Scotland and sit around the kitchen table and talk about it. Any family that made the sacrifices my family made...

...When I went into my first year racing in cars, Dad went to Mom and said he was going to re-mortgage the house so we can pay for it. Mom went, 'Ookay,' or words to that effect.

George: (Laughs)

Dario: She allowed him to do it anyway. And, we have come a long way. There are a lot of people who have helped me throughout my career, but none more so than Mom, Dad, Marino and Carla.

Was the second mortgage the key turning point in your career?

Dario: (Nods) How are you going to get on the ladder without that kind of commitment?



(Above) A proud father and winning son reflect on the route that brought them where they are today

We had that one year, didn't we? I was incredibly lucky. I drove for the two David Leslies – father and son – who had run McNish and Coulthard before. They knew the situation we were in, and they were incredibly understanding. We went out and won the championship that first year. At the end of the year, we'd won the championship, and we were thinking, "OK, what now? This is it. There's no second step. We've done everything we can." Then in walks Jackie [Stewart]. He said, "I'll find the money. You drive the car. You can pay me back when you win some money." That was the next step.

The interesting thing, before we made that transition from karts to cars, Dad was definitely your typical racing dad in karts. He was feeling the pressure and wanted results. As soon as I went to cars, he let it go. Even if it was a bad race, he never said anything. I remember him saying things like, "Hey, you



(Main) Dario Franchitti floats into Victory Circle on the crest of a wave – literally. (Above) Race day wasn't the first time his dad, George, had something to cheer about that week. (Below) Some earlier trophies



Darrell Lingham/Getty Images

The omens were good

If you're not superstitious, maybe this will change your mind

Four days before the Indianapolis 500, George Franchitti dropped a perfect tee shot into the hole on No. 7 at the Brickyard Crossing, the golf course that runs inside and outside of Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Immediately, he called his son Dario, who in turn called everyone who knew George. Within minutes, everyone at the speedway knew what had happened.

"I called everyone and said, 'You're not going to believe this,'" Dario remembers. "Then the jungle drums started and people were coming to the bus and saying, 'What's George's phone number? I hear he just got a hole in one.' It was so funny. I told Michael [Andretti], and he said, 'I hope your dad hasn't used up all the luck for the month.'"

Apparently not. Dario won the race, and the Franchittis were left to wonder if the two feats were related. Both were exceedingly difficult: George's shot landed on a green that's difficult to hit, on a windy day that knocked most shots into a huge gully circling the green, while Dario's win came in a race that had no logical conclusion.

"It's one of the hardest par-3s I've ever played," George says. "Every time I come to that hole, I worry. If you look at it, it's hard enough just to get a ball on the green, let alone a hole in one. It was a pure, straight shot. After I hit it, I looked at it and said, 'That's a good shot.'"

But did the shot affect the race? We'll never know, but George has his suspicions.

"I tend not to believe in superstitions," he smiles. "But after everything that's happened, I'm not so sure."

"I would go to school Monday morning, and Dad would go straight to work having driven all night"

Dario Franchitti



Marina Franchitti

did a really good job today." One time when I crashed, he said, "That wasn't so good today." That was as much as he would say. It was an amazing transformation. He just handed me off to other people. I certainly don't mean that in a bad way. It was now their responsibility.

That's got to be incredibly difficult for a parent to do, especially when you've been the driving force behind his career. To let someone else take over must have been hard.

George: It was difficult, but you have to. He was with a professional team, and they knew better than me. They know what's right, so I just left it at that. It was better than me trying to tell them how to set up racing cars.

Dario: I know dads that, even at this stage, can't let go. He did.

Obviously it's the greatest moment in Dario's life, but is it the greatest moment in yours?

George: Yes it is. Being so close before, I could only imagine what it would be like to actually win it. Like in '99, when things happened. That was probably one of the worst days of my life. When you're so close to something and don't get it, when you finally do it's special.

Has Dario always been this way? He has a cool way about him, a very polished style.

George: He's always been the same. I would get into arguments when he was in karts, and Dario would be the one to say, "Dad, you can control yourself."

All drivers have a certain racing personality, but Dario has always seemed to be the one to out-think the others on the racetrack. Has he always had that?

George: Always. He was in control at all times.

Dario: I would disagree a little bit. I think Tony Kanaan is the smartest guy I've raced against. TK is very smart. You can never underestimate his smarts when he's out there. He's just a smart dude.

Have you had a chance to tell him how proud you are?

George: Yes. I told him he did a good job, as usual. I always tell him he's done a good job, even if it's a bad result.

Dario: That was a such a good day.

George: Yes it was. ■



Photos by IMS

When you win the Indy 500, you're in demand. Scott Dixon told Dario Franchitti after the race: "By Friday, you'll realize you race for free. This is the week you earn your money..."

ON TOUR...



1 Tuesday, May 29. The private jet from Indianapolis lands in New York for the first day of the whirlwind Victory Tour.

2 Dario, a die-hard Glasgow Celtic soccer club supporter, meets up with New York-based Celtic fans to celebrate the team's Scottish Cup and League double – clinched on the same weekend as his own triumph.

3 On to the next interview, New York's *Daily News Live!*

4 Day 2: Another day of interviews, now in Texas, before heading to Minute Maid Park in Houston to throw out the ceremonial first pitch.

5 An Indy 500 winner is skilled at wearing many, many hats...

6 Day 3: More "air" time on the way to Chicago, and a moment to catch up with the latest news – and find out who won the big race.

7 "Yes, it's been great fun, and I promise I'll be home soon... Oh, no I won't. I've just remembered, we're racing at Milwaukee this weekend."



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Following a hero

Humble, gracious and fast, 1965 winner Jim Clark was the first Scot to win at the Brickyard – and a hero and role model for the second, Dario Franchitti

Shortly before the 91st running of the Indianapolis 500, a well-known auto racing journalist circulated a photo of the start of the 49th running of the Indianapolis 500 among some of the participants in this year's race. Not surprisingly, Dario Franchitti was one of the few able to identify many of the key figures in that historic image. After all, in addition to his considerable talents as a race driver, the Scotsman has long been known as a student of the sport, one with a keen sense of its history and a healthy respect for its traditions.

It was fitting then that, on May 27, Franchitti added his name to the historic list of Indianapolis 500 winners, and participated in one of the sport's most hallowed traditions by gulping down a bottle of milk while standing in his victorious Andretti Green Racing Dallara-Honda. Doubly fitting, in fact, for the first driver he had recognized in that photo of the 1965 Indianapolis 500 was race winner – and fellow Scot – Jimmy Clark.

The fact that he had become the first Scotsman to win the Indianapolis 500 since Clark was not lost on Franchitti.

"I think he's a hero for any Scottish driver, and really one of the best drivers in the world ever," says Franchitti of Clark. "That was one of the reasons I was so pissed I didn't win in '05. I was so upset because it was 40 years since Jimmy Clark had won it.

"It all kind of made sense when I turned around and looked at the trophy today and saw some of the names on it. Then I was in awe, I really was, to see the great names that are on there, and also recall some of the great guys who *should* be on there. It's a humbling experience, put it that way."

Not that Dario Franchitti wasn't humble to begin with. For along with his other attributes, he is widely regarded as one of racing's good guys; as considerate and unassuming off the track as he is competitive – but fair – on it.

"I've seen Dario race over the years and he can be as ruthless and tenacious as anyone I've ever seen," says Mario Andretti. "He can win on anything – oval, speedway, road course, street circuit. I don't know if there's many better than him on a street circuit, where you need that delicate feel. He's a technical driver and yet he's as ferocious as he needs to be.

(Above) It's Sunday, May 23, 1965, and it's just starting to dawn on Jimmy Clark that he's the winner of the 49th Indianapolis 500. (Right) Team Lotus founder Colin Chapman, who designed and built Clark's winning car, poses with his driver the following day



"I was a rookie, but he talked to me as an equal. I thought 'What a good man' "

Mario Andretti



The other Dario

Italian-born, English-raised, Dario Resta was the third non-American to win at Indy. The fourth, some 49 years later, was Jimmy Clark....

Sure, you know that Dario Franchitti is the second Scot, after Jimmy Clark in 1965, to win the Indianapolis 500. But did you know that he's also the second Dario, after Dario Resta in 1916?

Resta was born in Italy, but raised in England from the age of two. His early racing career in Europe got him noticed by Alphonse Kaufman, who brought him Stateside in 1915.

That first year racing Kaufman's imported Peugeots in America, Resta won the U.S. Grand Prix in San Francisco and the prestigious Vanderbilt Cup, but had to settle for second in his first Indy 500 after a dogfight with Ralph DePalma's Mercedes was interrupted by a puncture and pit stop.

A year later, with the Great War raging in Europe and many auto manufacturers diverting resources to the war effort, the smallest ever Indy 500 field – just 30 cars – assembled for a race scheduled for just 300 miles.

DePalma was a no-show after a row over start money, so Resta, who started fourth, battled polesitter Johnny Aitken until a dropped valve halted Aitken's similar Peugeot after 69 of 120 laps. After that, Resta had it pretty much all his own way, heading home Wilbur d'Alene's Duesenberg and pocketing \$12,000 for his labors.

Resta made a third and final Indy start in 1923, qualifying third in a Packard, and non-finishing with head gasket problems. He continued to race in Europe, but was killed in a land speed record attempt at Brooklands in 1924. He was 40.

"But as a person he is so kind, so mellow and considerate. You think, 'How can he be such an aggressive racer when he has that demeanor out of the cockpit?' You know what? Try racing against him! That's the beauty of the guy. That's why everybody likes him and why everybody felt so good for him when he won.

"I mean, there I am watching what happened to Marco on the last lap...but once I knew he was OK and it sunk in that Clark had won, it brightened me up. I thought, 'You know what? A good guy won today.'"

And in those respects that, ultimately, matter so much more than a common heritage – a fundamental decency married to a fiercely competitive nature – Franchitti is a mirror image of the Scot whose likeness preceded his on the Borg-Warner Trophy by some four decades.

"When I first met Jim I was in awe," says Andretti, who earned Indianapolis 500 Rookie of the Year honors the day Clark won the race. "I was a rookie at Indy and he was totally established as a World Champion. I was surprised how easy it was to chat with him. He didn't look down to me as just a

A.J. Foyt (1) and Parnelli Jones (98) tried hard to hang on to Jim Clark (82) in the 1965 Indy 500. Foyt retired his Lotus from second place, with Jones inheriting the position, but finishing two laps down on the winner. Clark's Lotus 38 was the first rear-engined car to win at the Brickyard

beginner, he talked to me as his equal. Immediately I thought, 'What a good man.' And you can absolutely parallel that with Dario. 'What a good guy.'"

His father, George, and his erstwhile mentor, Jackie Stewart, get a lot of credit for that, but it was another racer who, sadly, never had a chance to compete in the Indianapolis 500 who supplied the finishing touches to Franchitti's character. That would be a driver who hailed not from Edinburgh, Berwickshire or West Dunbartonshire, but Maple Ridge, British Columbia.

"There's one thing, you go out on the track and you race each other very hard," says Franchitti. "A good friend of mine, Greg [Moore], taught us that. We'd go out, race each other as close and hard as we possibly could, then afterward go and have some fun. We seem to manage that quite well in the paddock as a whole, but we certainly manage it here within our team. Yeah, it's a good atmosphere to go racing in."

With his likeness poised to join those of Clark, Andretti and all the other Indy 500 winners on the Borg-Warner Trophy, Franchitti

will have to find a special place in his trophy case for the "Baby Borg" replica that's been awarded to every race winner since 1988. It's just one of the interior decorating decisions he and wife Ashley Judd face in their ongoing efforts to restore an old farmhouse in Scotland. Another key decision is already made, namely the deep blue of the tile in the room they're devoting to Clark.

"It's the only time I ever went and picked out tile," laughs Franchitti. "I had to get the tile to match (Clark's) helmet – and that's a tough blue to find!"

Pity the next Scotsman who wins the Indy 500 and has to search for tile matching the colors on Franchitti's helmet, which pays homage to his dual heritage with the red, white and green of Italy swirling around the blue and white of Scotland's Saint Andrew's cross.

Then again, if he or she is a student of history and knows how well Franchitti carried on Jim Clark's legacy – on and off the track – that search will be an honor. ■

PHOTO GALLERY
TK IN THE INDY 500,
THE STORY SO FAR
[CLICK HERE](#)

So close and yet...

The golf cart races through the paddock, one of dozens of small, motorized buggies that transport people from A to B at Indianapolis Motor Speedway. But this one is faster than the rest, or perhaps it just seems faster because of the driver. Tony Kanaan wields a mean golf cart, and he isn't afraid to take on anyone – teammates, race officials, even Al Unser himself.

Unser, his cart full of passengers, approaches Kanaan's cart from the opposite direction just outside the Firestone office on the main drag in Gasoline Alley. The two drivers grin at each other from a distance, then point the noses of their carts into a head-on collision formation and floor it. At the last second, they swerve to miss, stand on the brake pedals, face each other and laugh like 10-year-old boys.

"I let you have that one, kid," Unser says, chuckling. "Next time you won't be so lucky."

"I never got to race against you and I never will," Kanaan says. "This is as close as I'm going to get, so I better make it good."

It's difficult to tell who enjoys it more: Unser, the four-time Indy 500 winner whose legend carries enormous weight among current drivers, or Kanaan, the extroverted Brazilian who has taken to Indy like a kid to candy. Unser is thrilled when current drivers give his accomplishments respect, and Kanaan is thrilled to be giving a hero his due. "What he did here was truly amazing," Kanaan says reverently as he drives away.

This is just the start of Tony Kanaan's month of May, and he let *IndyCar Series* magazine ride along for the first five days. From the first day of practice through his exhilarating attempt to win the pole position, Kanaan granted us inside access. We followed him through the pits and garages and witnessed the fun and fury of preparations for the 91st Indianapolis 500. What we saw was complicated, entertaining, intense and dramatic.

And thoroughly TK.



Paul Webb/LAT

Practice makes perfect?

Not all is fun and games. Kanaan is in his second day of practice, and he's not happy. The No. 11 Andretti Green Racing Dallara-Honda isn't properly balanced, and he wants changes to the front end, and the front end only. He argues with engineer Eric Cowdin, Kanaan's mechanical better half since the days when Kanaan first arrived in the U.S. with Indy Lights in the early 1990s.

"Don't touch the rear of the car," Kanaan demands over the radio while sitting in the pits. "There's nothing wrong with the rear. It only needs adjustments on the front end."

"Tony, I can't balance it without making changes to both ends," Cowdin says quietly.

Kanaan continues the argument, but Cowdin patiently wins out. Kanaan then tries several variations of Cowdin's adjustments. After one, he stops in the pits and radios back, matter-of-factly simmering. "I'm not going back out on the track with this car the way it is now," he says.

Cowdin is Kanaan's Dr. Phil, the one who knows what he's thinking before he thinks it. It's Cowdin's responsibility to calm Kanaan when his temper boils over; earlier this season, during a test at Homestead, Cowdin chased after a fuming Kanaan as he stomped away from the AGR pit having slammed his HANS device against the pit wall. Cowdin reassured and quieted Kanaan and coaxed him back into the car within five minutes. ▶

IndyCar Series magazine went behind the lines as Tony Kanaan prepared for the other race at Indianapolis – the one for the pole. It proved a closely run thing for TK...

(Left) During the Month of May Tony Kanaan had fun sharing his golf cart skills. (Main) But when it's time to get out there and perform, TK's all business, so don't disturb him while he psyches himself up

Words by Jeff Olson • Main photo by LAT Photographic





"It's just the way I am," Kanaan says. "Sometimes I say things I don't mean, and sometimes I throw tantrums, but it's just my way. I have to release my anger or else it festers. Once I let it out and get over it, I'm fine."

Alternative career

The following day, Kanaan is signing autographs at the fence behind his pit, part of his routine after each practice session. As Kanaan leaves on his golf cart, someone calls out his name. He stops, and an elderly woman approaches, holding a hat. Somehow Kanaan missed her. He apologizes profusely while signing the hat, then continues to apologize to nobody in particular while driving away. "I felt so bad for her," he says, actually meaning it.

He turns the corner and heads straight into

binder begins to fall from a shelf above and behind McDonald's head. Kanaan points at it, mouth agape, as McDonald turns to catch it just before it can hit him on the head. Kanaan is laughing hysterically. He wiggles his fingers, illustrating his telekinetic powers. "I'm serious," he says in a wizardly voice. "You better do what I say."

For all of his complexities – the temper, the seriousness, the passion, the humor – Kanaan is the soul of AGR. He's the one everybody wants around, the one who lightens the mood but knows when to be solemn. Franchitti is the old pro, the smooth one, and Marco Andretti and Danica Patrick are the prodigies, but Kanaan is the life of the AGR party.

Later, he's still flush from laughter. "I haven't had that much fun in days," Kanaan says to a friend. "Did you know I had magical powers?"

He doesn't like the way things are between them, but he's not going to be the first to act.

(Below left) Between them, Dario Franchitti, Tony Kanaan and Helio Castroneves packed Pole Day with incredible drama and suspense with TK's last-gasp gamble for pole only just failing to pay off. (Bottom) Watch out! IndyCar Series magazine's man on the inside, Jeff Olson, braves TK's magic powers

After the press conference, Kanaan is greeted at the AGR garages by hoopla he doesn't quite understand but enjoys nonetheless. To a man, the crew members from all five AGR cars greet him as if he'd just won the pole. Team manager Kyle Moyer is particularly animated, using a somewhat blue euphemism to describe his joy. "I didn't win anything," Kanaan says sheepishly. "But it's important to these guys."

A friend steps in and says simply, "That was great drama. Great drama."

Kanaan knows it was, but he won't admit it. "Thanks, my friend," is all he says.

A fitting description of Tony Kanaan himself. Great drama. Even if he won't admit it. ■



Paul Webb/LAT



Paul Webb/LAT

Gasoline Alley and its surrounding fans. Cries of "TK" fill the air. Kanaan spots one of the Alley Cats, a group of fans that stand in the same corner near the entrance to the garages. "You're not wearing the hat," Kanaan shouts to the man as he drives by. "I'll have it tomorrow," the fan promises. "You better!" Kanaan taunts.

The previous day, Kanaan had given the fan an autographed hat. "They stand there every day, all day long, and drink beer," Kanaan says with a gleam. "I want that job."

Special powers

In the AGR garages, Kanaan engages in a lighthearted discussion with Allen McDonald, the engineer for Dario Franchitti. Surrounded by computers and notebooks, Kanaan teases McDonald: "I'm telling you, man, you better listen to me." Just then, as if on cue, a looseleaf

Going for it

It's qualifying day, and Kanaan is getting in the zone. As his car approaches tech for his first attempt, he squats with his back against pit wall, eyes closed, and meditates briefly. Once clear, he climbs into the car and gets ready to go. He knocks off a nice one, four laps at an average of 224.618mph, but Franchitti knocks him off the pole moments later. Kanaan revels in it, then teases his friend throughout the afternoon, a trick that will be turned against him in two weeks when he's leading the race during a three-hour rain delay.

Late in the session, Helio Castroneves bumps Franchitti from the pole. With minutes left, Kanaan withdraws his front-row position and takes one last shot at the pole. It's white-knuckle theater; for the first three laps, Kanaan's times are good enough to beat Castroneves, but on the last lap it all falls apart.

Kanaan congratulates members of Castroneves' team, then shakes hands with Castroneves. The gesture is significant, since the two longtime friends haven't spoken in months, the result of a feud that evolved from the last race of the previous season.

"There's so much love and hate between us," Kanaan says during the press conference. Later, he clarifies. "We're so much alike," Kanaan says. "We're both too stubborn to make the first move." He says it sadly and defiantly.

A winning friendship

Come rain or shine, TK and Dario share emotions

Less than a week after winning the Indianapolis 500, Dario Franchitti tried to temper his friend's unspoken disappointment about the race. Just before they strapped in at Milwaukee, Franchitti told Tony Kanaan he was going to win.

"I said, 'What are you doing, giving it to me already because you won the 500?'" Kanaan recalls with a laugh. "He said, 'No, trust me. I'll be there.' And he was."

Kanaan led most of the Indy 500 – 83 of 166 laps, to be precise – but finished 12th as Franchitti won. At Milwaukee, the roles were reversed. Kanaan won as Franchitti finished second, and, just as Kanaan had greeted Franchitti at Indy, the 500 winner was among the first to get to TK at Milwaukee.

"It's such a special relationship as friends, that who wins doesn't matter," Kanaan says. "I've never cried when I won, and he made me cry when he won Indy. But I wasn't crying because I lost the race."

After Indy, Franchitti was thrilled and heartbroken all at once. After the post-race interviews, he returned to his motor coach in the infield, only to have Kanaan knock on the door. The two had a heart-to-heart. Kanaan's message was simple. *Don't cry for me. You earned it.* Franchitti was stunned. "He was sitting right in front of me, and I could hardly look at him," he says. Such is the friendship between the two.

As for Kanaan's frustrating relationship with the Indy 500? He'll be back, and he's confident that one day he'll conquer it.

"You have to wait another year and just come back and do what you can do," he says. "This is why this is Indianapolis. How many other guys (fall short)? Look at my boss (Michael Andretti). This was probably his last try, and he didn't get it. He raced over 20 years. It is what it is, so let's move on and see what can happen."

(Above) Kanaan's strong bond with Franchitti works for both in racing's highs and lows



Paul Webb/LAT



LEGENDS ARRIVE FIRST.

WHEN DARIO FRANCHITTI CROSSED THE FINISH LINE FIRST AT THE 91ST INDIANAPOLIS 500, HE JOINED THE RANKS OF MANY CHAMPIONS BEFORE HIM.

IN RECOGNITION OF HIS SUPERB WIN, AND IN CELEBRATION OF THE UPCOMING 45TH ANNIVERSARY OF LEARJET, BOMBARDIER IS PROUD TO HAVE PROVIDED DARIO FRANCHITTI ROUND TRIP TRANSPORTATION TO THE LEARJET 550 RACE AT THE TEXAS MOTOR SPEEDWAY ABOARD THE AIRCRAFT THAT DEFINES THE FAST TRACK TO SUCCESS, THE LEGENDARY LEARJET.

CONGRATULATIONS DARIO. WE LOOK FORWARD TO MORE STELLAR PERFORMANCES ON YOUR JOURNEY TO BECOMING A LEGEND.

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SPEEDWAY SCENE

"The crowd's as much a part of what makes the Indy 500 so special as the guys in the cars. There's what? Maybe 350,000 people in the Speedway on Race Day, and just about every one of them is standing when it goes green. This place, this day blows me away. Epic!"

When he was a kid growing up in Indianapolis, Roderick Trestrail spent many a sun-drenched day at the Brickyard (funny how he doesn't remember the rainy, cold ones). Later, he moved to Nashville, Tenn., to live the dream as a professional photographer in Music City. But when the chance came to revisit his old stomping ground, he was there like a shot. Our brief? Shoot whatever grabs you. So here's Trestrail's personal take on May 27, 2007, the 91st Indianapolis 500-Mile Race

Words and thoughts by Roderick Trestrail

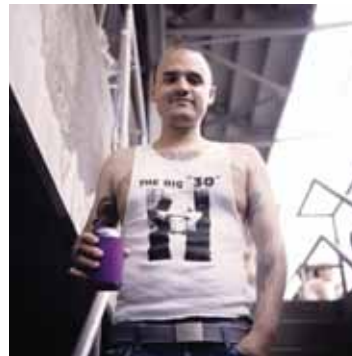




"I loved this guy's passion – yeah, and his style. During the rain delay, I saw him again. He'd buttoned up his shirt and was huddled under a tiny, black umbrella, but he wasn't going anywhere – even if they didn't get the race in the books until the next Sunday... A true fan."



"By the dawn's early light... It's stupid o'clock in the morning and the Panther Racing boys are already hard at work on those last-minute preparations. The calm before the storm."



"My friend Dean. It was his 30th birthday on the day of the race. It's good to know the Indy 500 – and a few cold ones, too – got him through one of those, er, 'difficult' milestones."



"Creepy, but I dig it. It's a Firestone promo telling you to buckle up your baby in the car, which is obviously very sound advice. But the little fella still reminds me of Chucky..."



"This T-shirt made me smile. Tom Carnegie - what a total legend that guy is. I love that people are so connected to the heritage and the history of the place. 'And heeeeeeee's on it!'"



"Same as when I was a kid, I still get that surge of excitement when I start seeing signs for the track. I love that the track is such a part of its urban surroundings, yet so detached and incongruous, too."



"Big respect to Roger Penske! The race start's not so far away, but when a fan handed him her cell and asked him to have a word with some member of her family who couldn't make it, The Captain obliged."



"This is in the media center. Sam Hornish Jr. is doing his umpteenth TV interview of the month. He'll be talking to goodness knows how many thousands of people, yet he looks so isolated and alone in that glass cube."



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*There are many facets to the multitalented
Helio Castroneves, and they're apparent
even when he's talking to himself*

DIFFERENT ANGLES



Words by Jeff Olson • Main photo by Michael Levitt/LAT • Image manipulation magic by Ree Tucker



Like that famous drawing of human geometry by Leonardo da Vinci, there are a lot of different angles to Team Penske's Helio Castroneves. Outside of the car, there's the happy-go-lucky guy with a word and a toothy smile for everybody; inside it, there's a multifaceted, tough, but scrupulously fair racer, who's a master of road courses *and* superspeedways – just check out his win at St. Pete and his stunning pole run for the 91st Indianapolis 500 for proof of that versatility.

Those different angles set us thinking: Let's get Helio to interview himself, as a chance to explore those different angles from...well, a different angle.

A little deceit was in order, so we sent our man Olson to find out from him what questions he'd like to ask *another race-car driver* – Helio as journalist, inquisitor and psychologist – and the dude took the bait.

After he'd meticulously prepared his list of questions, we let him in on the secret that he was the other driver. "Yep, you're asking the questions, and you're supplying the answers – and you'll know if you're fibbing, so tell the truth to yourself..." ("You dog!" he cried in mock horror when we told him he'd been punk'd.)

So there you have it; Helio interviews Helio. Ready, Helio? Then take it away, er, Helio...

How did you get involved in racing and what kind of interest do you have in racing, Helio?

Well, Helio, my dad had a stock-car team in Brazil, and that's what brought me into racing. I wasn't very good in school – and I didn't care much about school – but I found racing a nice way to travel and have a good time. I fell in love with the sport. I couldn't wait for Saturday and Sunday. As soon as Monday came, I was ready for the next weekend to get there. I was bitten by the racing bug.



Dan Strecker/LAT

"Today's race car driver has to be flexible and professional"

Helio Castroneves

Why did you make it your career?

Because I love it. To drive cars is my passion. That's what I enjoy most, trying to succeed at every challenge.

What would be the perfect description of a race-car driver to you?

Today's race-car driver has to be flexible and professional. The important thing is the race and the results, but he also has to be loyal to fans and sponsors. I would say that would be the ideal for any racer and team or any future sponsor.

What kind of tracks do you enjoy most and why? Short tracks? Big ovals? Road courses?

I like them all. I like the big tracks because of the speed and precision. I love the road and street courses because they require all of the skills – braking, shifting, steering. And I love the short ovals because of the action and tight quarters. Indianapolis is a very challenging big oval. Detroit was my first win, and it's a very difficult street course. And Richmond is a very tiny place. When you have a good car, it's a fun place to race. And I know I'm going to like Iowa.

How intensely do you work to become a better driver and what tools do you need to become a better driver?

Everybody is very similar in terms of being physical. Everybody is in shape. It's not like in the past, where guys would drink and smoke right up until the day of the race and then get in the car. It's so competitive now and the equipment is so similar that a small difference in the racers can make a huge difference on the track. I always have that in my mind. If I can get myself ready and make myself capable of winning the race, then I'm already halfway there. If I have good equipment and engine and team, then I have the combination to make it happen. I always push myself to make sure I'm properly prepared. ▶

(ABOVE) Helio Castroneves battles with Dan Wheldon. A fierce racer on the track, he's the consummate professional out of the car – even while interviewing himself (LEFT)



Castroneves isn't only at home on the speedways – witness his pole and third-place finish at the 2007 Indy 500, a race he's won twice – but also on road courses like the streets of St. Pete, where he notched up consecutive victories with his win this year

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“The driver is the main tool on the team to get everybody in a good rhythm”

Helio Castroneves

(Left) Castroneves celebrates winning the pole for the 91st Indianapolis 500. But he knows that the driver is only one part of the complex team equation



Darrell Ingham/Getty Images

Mike Di Novo/LAT

Hey, I'm really good at this, aren't I?

Jeff Olson: *Would you like to trade jobs? Sure!*

JO: *You'll have to take a huge pay cut Really? Oh, never mind...*

JO: *Then keep talking Where were we?*

JO: *You were asking yourself about tools...*

Oh, yeah... OK, this is me as the Helio answering the questions once again: As for the tools, a driver is not alone. He needs to be able to give everybody on his team a good productive environment for racing. One person is able to do that, and that's the driver. The driver is the main tool on the team to get everybody in a good rhythm. If the driver doesn't talk or respect or emphasize the team, you won't have success. Even if you win at first, you're going to be in trouble. You spend so much time with those people. You need to respect their space, but at the same time you need to be able to motivate them by letting them know you're involved. If you're into it, then they're into it. The guys know if you're loafing. You have to pump them up by being involved, and that, in turn, gets you pumped up. You feed off each other.

Are you a hotel guy or a motorcoach guy?
Hotels.

JO: *Will any cheap chain do?*
Good hotels. (Laughs) Very good hotels.

Would you rather fly to the race first-class or drive a nice car?

Even if I have to drive a long distance, if it's a nice car, I'll drive it. It's the best way. It might take longer, but you'll get there.

Water or Gatorade?

(Looks at his bottle of Gatorade) I don't know why I even asked that question. Gatorade.

"Dancing with the Stars" or "Grey's Anatomy"?
"Dancing with the Stars."

JO: *Do you have any plans to be on "Dancing with the Stars"?*

If they ask me, sure. I know samba.

Sweet or salty?

Sweet. Big-time sweet.

JO: *You're really good at this, man Really?*

JO: *Of course. Are there any other questions you'd like to ask yourself now that you know whom you're interviewing?*

Yes. How did you get to be so good-looking? (Laughs and switches off the tape recorder.)

And with that, still chuckling to himself, he's away to the Team Penske hauler, ready to suit up and boot up and put his Dallara-Honda on pole for the A.J. Foyt 225 at the Milwaukee Mile. From journalist to racer in one seamless move. As we said, a man of many angles... ■

Keep smiling

Through the long weeks at Indy and into the intense summer swing where the IndyCar Series title is won or lost, Helio Castroneves kept smiling – but it must have been hard sometimes.

Pole for the Indianapolis 500 – his second Indy pole, and his third 2007 pole in four races – boded well for a shot at a third Indy 500 win. But an early refueling glitch, plus the weather disruptions, meant the Team Penske driver had to settle for third, despite having a car that he described as “a rocket ship” in the later laps. On to Milwaukee...

The flat, one-mile oval hadn't been kind to Castroneves in the past, but his fourth pole of the season wasn't a bad start to the two-day show.

The smile was expectant. “This year is going to be a good year for us here,” he said. “Hopefully, we're going to collect a lot of points.”

In the race, he was making it look easy, until a sudden rear wing failure on lap 201 pitched his car into the pit wall, with Castroneves a disbelieving passenger. Game over.

The smile was rueful. “I had the race won,” he said. “I'm not exactly sure what went wrong, but I just have to laugh it off. It's amazing that I have such bad luck at this place. Now we just have to forget about this and move on to Texas.”

So, on to Texas...

Fifth in qualifying on the high-banked 1.5-mile track, no worries. But on lap 197 of 228, after keeping out of trouble for so much of the night, Castroneves arrived on the scene of a still unfolding multicar accident and was taken out. Two races, two DNFs.

The smile was...maybe wavering slightly. “You can't let this stuff worry you. The big guy up there has the plan,” he noted, pointing to the skies.

Milka's Whirlwind

Words by Bruce Martin
Main photos by Darrell Ingham/Getty Images



Milka Duno's Indianapolis 500 debut came just a few short weeks after her first miles in an IndyCar Series car. Her race finished early, but she was a massive hit with the fans, and she's determined to come back in 2008. Here's her Indy diary...

When Milka Duno arrived at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway for her first Indy 500, it was the start of a month of "Milka Mania" and some memorable highs – yes, and lows – for the Venezuelan.

Although her results didn't ultimately match the attention she received, the 35-year-old was a hugely popular addition to the IndyCar Series.

"The fans liked me because I have only one face," Duno says. "The face I have for my fans is the same face I have for my team and for my family. I think the fans feel that."

Making the race was quite an accomplishment for Duno, a sports car driver who has five master's degrees and can speak several languages. She brought a different flair to the Month of May and, for the first time in Indianapolis 500 history, there were three female drivers in the starting field of 33.

So let's take a look at Duno's Diary as she recalls the month-long path that took her to racing in the 91st Indianapolis 500.

April 19: Passing the test

Her road to Indy actually begins on a cold day at Kansas Speedway in early April. That's when she has to pass her IndyCar Series rookie test before she will be allowed to compete in the April 29 race at the 1.5-mile oval.

"The rookie test was very hard, because I had one practice before and then the rookie test," she says. "There was a lot of pressure, and it was so cold and rainy. We waited for a window for it to get above 55 degrees. But we completed the test in one day, so it was good."

Like any newcomer, Duno is smart to absorb the advice from her engineers, as well as fellow drivers and former racing stars.

"I took full advantage of people who had a lot of experience helping me," she explains. "I talked to Rick Mears, Johnny Rutherford, Pancho Carter, Brian Barnhart and Al Unser."

April 29: The Kansas cyclone

In her first IndyCar Series race, Duno starts 21st but stayed out of trouble to finish 14th in the Kansas Lottery 300 at Kansas Speedway.

"I am a person who doesn't let anybody or anything discourage me," she says. "If they tell me I only have one practice, the rookie test and then the race, then that's what I do."

"When I started the race, I had a big understeer and it was difficult keeping behind another car. But at the first stop, they adjusted my car and I was flat-out all the way around."

April 30-May 2: Quick pit stop

After successfully finishing her first IndyCar

(Above) A pensive Milka Duno prepares to go out on track. Her first sight of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway left her in awe. (Above inset) Duno spends time with some of her new army of fans

Series race, Duno makes a quick trip home to Miami to get her personal belongings before leaving for an entire month at Indianapolis.

May 6-7: Indy ROP

Before any first-time driver can attempt to qualify for the Indianapolis 500, they must pass the four phases of the Rookie Orientation Program (ROP), which culminate in lapping the track at speeds of 210mph-plus. Duno completes the four-phase test on May 6.

"The first impression of Indy was a big shock for me because it was such a huge, fast track with four tough corners," she says. "But my team and I had such determination that we wanted to be in Indy. We improved through each phase of the test. I remember my engineer, Steve Challis, and my spotter, Pancho Carter, would ask me, 'Are you ready for the next one?' Yes, of course."

Duno uses the second day of ROP as an extra practice session, working on her racing lines and trying to improve her speed.

May 8: Practice begins

When all the cars take to the Speedway, Duno discovers what kind of tornado is created by the turbulence from the other cars.

"It was very difficult because you have to



PHOTO GALLERY
MILKA MANIA AT
THE INDY 500
[CLICK HERE](#)

“The first impression of Indy was a big shock for me, because it was such a huge, fast track”

Milka Duno

learn about how to drive in traffic at speed,” Duno says, “and it’s hard to stay behind a car because you only have one line in the corners. Anyway, mostly we tried not to run behind another car because we were looking for a qualifying setup.”

May 11: Too fast Friday...

“Fast Friday” is a bit too fast for Duno, who loses control of her car entering the first turn, spinning and backing it into the wall. She’s OK, but the car suffers damage to the rear.

“It was very tough, because we had the car the way we wanted it to be for qualifying,” she says. “I lost it so quickly because I entered Turn 1 really high. My team had worked so hard, and now we couldn’t qualify in the first weekend. But they did a fantastic job to repair it.”

May 16-18: Second week blues

The track is closed on Monday and Tuesday following the first two days of qualifying, but Duno’s back on track Wednesday. She knows she’ll have to get back up to speed to make the race on the final weekend of time trials.

“When we went back out, the car wasn’t good when we were practicing with all the cars,” Duno says. “My engineer changed everything and for Thursday we had a better

car, plus I had recovered my confidence after the crash. On Saturday morning, we did a few laps and did 21 8s, 21 9s, so the car was ready for qualifying.”

May 19: Making the race

Duno is ready to make her attempt at something she’d always dreamed of, and that’s qualifying for her first Indianapolis 500.

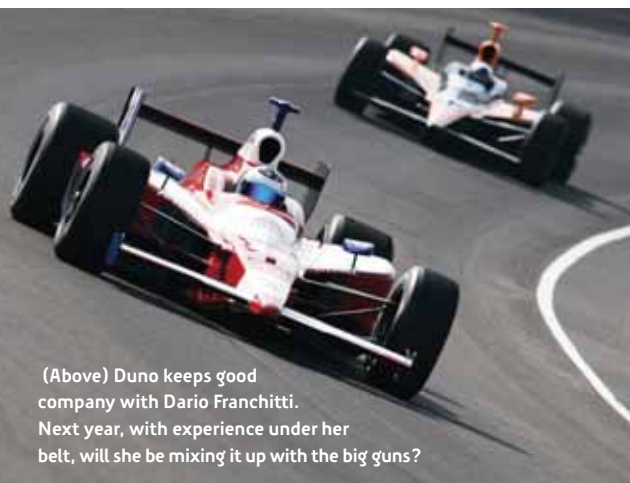
“On Saturday afternoon, the first in line for qualifying was me,” Duno says. “I qualified and, after the pressure and the problems, I was so happy at that moment. Sunday’s Bump Day was stressful, though, because we had to be ready to go if somebody knocked us out. I was able to finally relax after 6 p.m.

“To celebrate, all of my guys went to dinner. We were in the race and we’d shown how we could recover from setbacks.”

May 21: The Big Apple

Making the Indianapolis 500 includes a trip to New York for a photo shoot in Times Square.

“That was very special because only the 33 drivers who qualified for the race were able to go to New York,” Duno says. “I was feeling special; I was part of the group. Many fans recognized me and congratulated me for making the Indy 500.” ▶



(Above) Duno keeps good company with Dario Franchitti. Next year, with experience under her belt, will she be mixing it up with the big guns?

Dan Strech/LAT



LAT Photographic

May 25: Carburetion Day

With one final one-hour practice session before the start of the race, Duno and the other 32 drivers make their final preparations.

"It was rough, because my car was not right when I was running with all the other cars," Duno says. "But the engineers made changes and in the race, it was a very good car."

May 26: Drivers' meeting/ parade

Duno takes part in two Indy 500 traditions – the public drivers' meeting followed by the 500 Festival Parade through downtown.

"I received my ring for making the race and that was a special moment," Duno says. "After that, the parade was great, with so many people, so many fans with Venezuelan and American flags. I had big emotions when I saw all that."

"I'm the first Venezuelan to qualify for Indy. It was something really special for my country. The biggest sport in my country is baseball, but maybe I started a new tradition?"

May 27: The race

Duno doesn't recall what time she finally wakes up on the morning of her first Indy 500 because she's awakened so many times through the night.

"I didn't sleep so well because the big day was coming," Duno says. "I was tense and I was thinking and thinking about the race. I would sleep a little then wake up again. But once I was awake and ready, I blocked out the nervous tension and I was ready for the start of the race."

"It was amazing to see the fans and to hear the national anthem, and it was great when Mari Hulman George said, 'Ladies and gentlemen, start your engines.' The moment was coming, three laps to warm the tires and



Maria W. Grady/LAT



Robert Laberge/Getty Images

on the third lap it was green.

"I knew, because many drivers told me, to take care the first few laps because of the turbulence. Yes, the turbulence was bad, and you have to move outside or inside of the car in front to find downforce. But when the field started to separate by lap three, it got better."

Duno is making forward progress, but a mistake on pit road gives her a penalty.

"The first pit stop of the race, I came in 22nd and left the pits in 17th, but I got a penalty for speeding," she says. "We didn't understand why. They told me to let every car pass. I looked in my mirrors and saw how many cars were behind me and I was like, 'Why? It was so hard to pass these cars and now everybody has to pass me.' But those are the rules."

Duno is passing cars and enjoying her first Indy 500 – until it comes to a sudden end on lap 66, when she crashed in the first turn wall.

"In Turn 1 a driver passed me just at the last moment, close to when I was turning and he was slowing down too much," Duno says. "I let off the accelerator, and when I did that, I lost

all my aerodynamics. If I hadn't let off at that moment, I would have crashed the other two cars. It was just a bad moment.

"When you crash at Indy it happens so quickly, and I was very sad. I tried to control the car to the last moment, but it's so difficult there. When I got out, the people were cheering. I said hello to everybody in the stands, but I was so sad. I had done so well up to that point."

"Many people had followed me – in my country, Latin America and the United States. Then, this crash and I didn't have the opportunity to show them what I could do. The car was great, and I could have had a strong result."

"I stayed and watched the rest of the race, but I was still sad all day and all night. I went to my motor home, took a shower and went to sleep."

But with time to think it over and regroup, Duno is going away with a lot more positives than negatives, and is already thinking about the 92nd Indianapolis 500.

"I am so anxious for the next Indy 500," she smiles, "because now I know more, I know the track, I know what to do. I can't wait!" ■

(Top) Milka Duno has nothing but praise for her team, and how it worked wonders to get her car back on track after a crash in practice. (Above left) The drivers gather before the start of the 91st Indy 500. (Above right) Duno's debut ended with this crash, but she's already looking forward to 2008

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

A **QUICK** PHYSICS LESSON

Why can't the drivers of the IndyCar Series corner just as fast as they blast down the straightaways? It all comes down to friction, and some guy called Newton



Buddy Rice guns his Dreyer & Reinbold Dallara-Honda around the high banks of Texas Motor Speedway. Ultimately, regardless of his skills behind the wheel, the laws of physics determine how much speed he can carry through a turn



Donald Maralle/Getty Images

There's a favorite expression among racing instructors in reference to the way a driver should travel through a corner: "In slow, out fast." There's a lesser-known corollary to that saying that goes something like, "In fast, out backwards."

Those tiny tidbits of racing wisdom are basically a way of saying you have to slow down for a turn, and do it the right way, to be fast around a race circuit. What they don't explain is why. Why do you have to slow down for a turn? Why does the car slow down in a turn even if the driver doesn't make a formal request for it to do so? The answer may seem like one of those "duh" things – especially to anyone who has tried to take a street corner too fast and had an ugly meeting with a curb. But there really is more to it than that, as IndyCar Series drivers and engineers explain.

"It comes down to the laws of physics," says Dreyer & Reinbold Racing's Buddy Rice, who claims three wins in the IndyCar Series, including the 2004 Indianapolis 500. "If you go into a turn, there are G-force loads that load the tire, and that tire only has so much grip. As you turn, that slows the thing down, it's causing friction. Anytime you have friction, no matter what it is, it's going to slow you down."

That's why, even when the driver's foot is to the floor, a car slows down in the turns on an oval. And at all the ovals on the IndyCar Series circuit – that's 12 of the 17 races – the go pedal is on the stop full time if the car is handling properly. It's also why the car is set up so that the driver has to input as little steering as possible to make it around the track.

"It's a function of scrub," explains Bill Pappas, engineer for Panther Racing's Vitor Meira. "As soon as you turn the wheels at these racetracks, the car is going to slow down.

"It comes down to the laws of physics. Anytime you have friction, no matter what it is, it's going to slow you down"

Buddy Rice



Dan Streack/LAT

We don't have enough horsepower to overcome putting slip angle in the tire, so it will just naturally slow down because of that scrub. So we're constantly trying to minimize how much he turns the wheel in the corners so we can minimize how much he slows down in the corners."

Meira estimates that, at a high-banked track like Texas Motor Speedway, a properly set-up car would go around the turns all by itself at somewhere between 150 and 180mph. Up until that point, the driver does not input any steering. That is achieved through several means outside of the design of the track and how much banking it has, including camber, stagger and the weight jacker, notes Pappas.

"We use things like cross weights to get the car to turn, dynamically getting the weight to transfer from the left front to the right rear," he says. "When you go into a corner, you get weight transfer from the right front to the left rear. Then you have to turn that load, get it to turn the corner. So we set the car up statically

When Buddy Rice (above) talks about the art and science of taking a race car through a corner, you listen. After all, the guy won the Indy 500 in 2004 (top), so he definitely knows his stuff

to where we have this diagonal, left-front/right rear, and we play with spring splits and anti-roll bars to multiply that number, so as the car rolls into a corner, we're transferring weight to the right rear, which tends to turn the car a little bit then loads the left front."

However well the car turns and with however little input from the driver, there is still a limit. Finding that limit can be tricky, and it's what separates IndyCar Series drivers from the rest of the population.

"It just comes down to knowledge and your butt," says Rice. "There are some guys who are more sensitive than others, but everybody's got their own way and how they feel stuff and that's what it comes down to."

On an oval, finding the limit by stepping over it usually leads to disaster. On a road course, you have the luxury of crossing the line with less disastrous consequences. Getting a car to turn a corner is also a different prospect, and it's where actually slowing down before the driver reaches the corner comes into play. ▶

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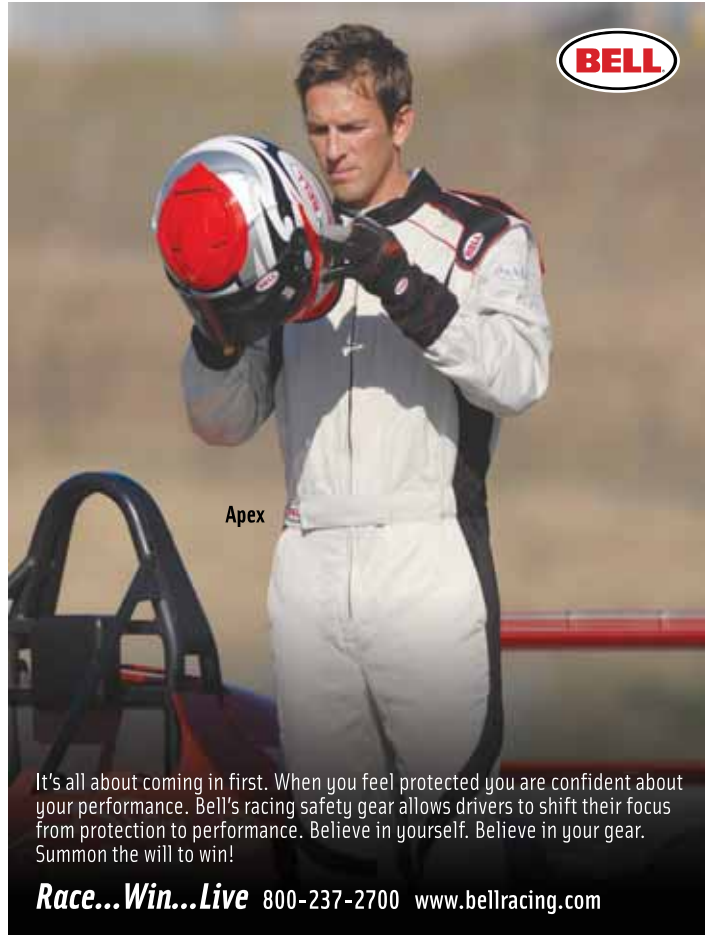
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Inside the friction circle

Here's the part where we start using terms like lateral acceleration. Ready for this?

(Below) Getting a car to turn on a road course means overcoming Newton's First Law of Motion – that's the one about inertia

"The tire is everything when it comes to how a car makes it around the track," says Panther Racing engineer Bill Pappas. By that, he means the friction available to the driver to make the car do what he or she wants it to do. And the relationship of that grip – which on most road courses is rarely in a single direction – to the limits of the tire is described by the friction circle.

"The friction circle is basically inline acceleration vs. lateral acceleration and there's an envelope at which you want to be right on the edge to maximize the tire's performance," Pappas explains. "When you exceed it one direction or the other, you get wheelspin [or brake lockup] or you exceed the lateral end of the envelope and you don't generate any more lateral Gs and you have to slow down to get back inside that envelope."

The friction circle is basically an illustration that shows that as the forces on a tire increase in one direction, they must decrease in the other. As lateral acceleration increases, longitudinal

acceleration in either direction – acceleration or braking – must decrease accordingly, or the limits of the tire will be exceeded. But, as Meira says, there is a way to increase the limits.

"That's where downforce comes in. It increases the friction," he says.

"Downforce is increasing the vertical loads on the tires so they can move that friction circle out a bit farther," Pappas elaborates. "You can pull a little bit more Gs, more load goes through the tires to the ground, which gives you more grip, which means you can go a little bit quicker through the corners. It increases the total grip package."

Darrell Ingham/Getty Images



"You have all the weight and limited friction on the ground with the tires that can take only so much of the weight," says Meira. "The weight will always want to go straight; it doesn't want to turn. It's all about trying to make that mass turn. What limits you is how much friction – grip – is on the surface, on the contact patch. That's the trade – how much grip you have and how much weight you're trying to move around. When the force of the weight is more than the force of the grip is the fine line. That's when you have to slow down."

Think Newton's First Law of Motion, often referred to as the Law of Inertia: "Every object in a state of uniform motion tends to remain in that state of motion unless an external force is applied to it." The car is going straight, you want it to change direction; the only force available to make that happen is the friction of the tires. When the desire of the mass of the car to go straight is greater than the force of the friction available to change direction, the car will continue to go straight, or at least straighter than the driver would like. The only thing a driver can change in that situation – apart from how smoothly the force is applied – is

"A weight will always want to go straight; it doesn't want to turn. It's all about trying to make that mass turn"

Vitor Meira

Paul Webb/LAT



(Above) Vitor Meira and his engineer Bill Pappas (back to camera) fight physics, as well as the other racers out there on track

the inertia of the car. He can't reduce the mass, so he must reduce the velocity.

"The tire is designed to work at a certain angle," says Pappas. The tire is designed to generate lateral force, and lateral force is what turns the car. Once you exceed that angle, those loads, it no longer generates those lateral forces, so you need to slow down to regain that lateral grip to turn the corner."

Unlike on an oval, there are limited things an engineer can do to make a car turn on a road

course, since the car must go both left and right. The driver has a lot of choices to make regarding how he or she approaches a particular corner, but the intention is almost always the same – get back on the power as early as possible so you can carry as much speed down the following straight.

"In these types of cars, it's all about getting on the power early and having the car hooked up," says Rice. "The sooner you can get to the power, the better off you're going to be." ■

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IN TUNE WITH A.J.

Not everyone strikes the right chord with A.J. Foyt. But the guy who won him the '99 Indy 500, Kenny Brack, and his newest driver, Darren Manning, are both in key with Super Tex

Words by Andy Hallbery • Main photo by Michael Levitt/LAT

AJ. Foyt doesn't suffer fools gladly. Why should he? He's been there, done that, and has the super-sized trophy collection to prove it. Many have driven for his Foyt Enterprises operation, but few have earned his respect in the way that a couple of pesky "furriners," Sweden's Kenny Brack and England's Darren Manning, have.

Brack, winner of the 1999 Indianapolis 500 with Foyt, has since swapped his helmet for a Gibson guitar and the world of rock'n'roll with his band, *Brack*, while Manning is part-way through his first season with Super Tex and has already put his No. 14 car into places the team could only dream about in recent years.

So why do Brack and Manning tick the boxes for Foyt? Simply put, it seems the three of them are cut from the same cloth.

"A.J. and I hit it off right from the start,"

non-driver – and narrowly missed out on a second championship. Brack was hot property on the racing scene and moved on for 2000. But he retains a respect and a friendship with Foyt that will never diminish – from either side.

"I started with A.J., before moving on to bigger organizations," says Brack. "But the time I spent with him was invaluable. I learned a lot, and we were very successful together, which is always a good combination! The great thing for me now is that I'm still good friends with A.J. Every time I go to Texas I go and see him. I regard him as a close friend, even though I haven't driven for him for seven years. And, Darren, I think you'll do the same."

Manning smiles. "Yeah, I can really see that. We struck up a relationship when I first got to the IndyCar Series – and I wasn't even driving for him! I probably spent just as much time in

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Darrell Ingham/Getty Images

Not so different? Big, brash Super Tex (left) and his new signing, Englishman Darren Manning, might seem an unlikely combination, but the pair have a natural chemistry that's already working well

says Manning. "Even before I was driving for him, he saw that I was a guy with a similar sort of upbringing to him – and the same with Kenny as well. I didn't have any money, but I'd do anything to go racing, sleeping in the back of cars and so on. I think he sees all that as the basic grounding for a driver who's going to be more determined than most."

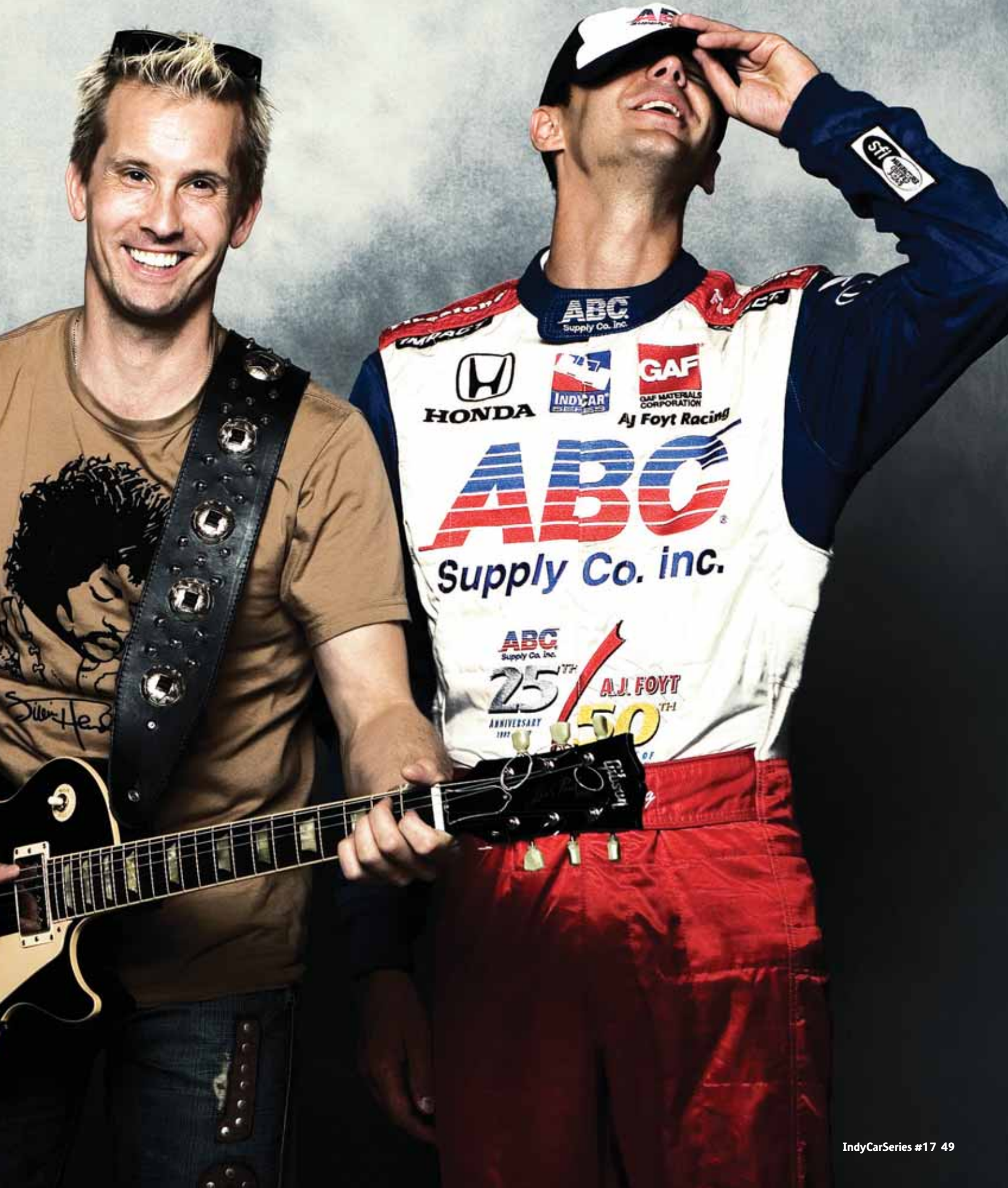
Brack nods in agreement, and adds, "A.J. respects drivers who really go after it. As soon as he gets that feeling from you, then he's cool with you. He *knows* you can't win every race, but he still *wants* to win every race, and you've got to show him that you want that too."

Brack did win two very important things for his boss. In 1998, the pairing won the IndyCar Series title. A year later, he took A.J. to Indy's Victory Lane for the fifth time – his first as a

his garage with Anthony (A.J. IV), Larry and A.J. as I did with Chip Ganassi. I've kind of gone the other way from Kenny. I guess we both got to a point in our careers where it was time to switch to another way of doing things. He went big. I went small. For me, it was my time to get back on the horse, if you like, and be in a small team relationship like this, and to hopefully achieve what Kenny did with A.J."

The conversation turns to A.J.'s perceived personality, and the *real* A.J. that both now know. They swap stories, and times without number answer each other with the word "exactly!" They are peas from the same pod, and it's no great leap to believe that A.J. can see himself, his determination, drive and desire in them both. So, what's it like to be compared to one of the world's greatest racing names? ►

"Good evening, Indianapolis!!!" Brack (left) has been there, done it with A.J. Foyt, and is now living out his rock'n'roll dreams. Manning's the new guy, but has a lot in common with A.J. and Brack when it comes to racing





The No. 14 car has struggled in recent seasons, but Manning and Foyt are learning to work together for a common cause – getting it back to the sharp end of the field

Lesley Ann Miller/LAT

“There’s no doubt that I drive faster and with more confidence when I have a smile on my face”

Darren Manning

Manning toys with the thought, then suddenly laughs out loud.

“For me, it’s just me being myself, and being honest,” he explains. “A.J.’s a very honest guy, and there’s no BS. I’m big on telling the truth, and he respects that. If you don’t know something, and you say you don’t know, that’s better than bluffing. On a technical level, it just took the first few times in the car and the first few debriefs to ‘scale’ how I’d talk to him. Like how my ‘bit’ of understeer compared to his ‘bit’ of understeer – what levels they were at – and how I relate to him what I feel and want from the car. It’s just me being myself. It’s ideal.”

Brack interjects: “He explains things. And when you tell him the things you know, he uses that knowledge. He’s got a lot to teach, because he’s done it for a long time. You’ve got to be able to listen as well as talk.”

Manning instantly agrees. “He’s got a lot to say, but also he wants to listen to the driver. Kenny obviously had a lot of experience when he went to him, and it’s the same with me. It’s a case of working out how to get the best out of each other.”

When the pair are asked to name A.J.’s positive strength within the team, both go for – without hesitation – his sense of humor.

Brack: “When I look back, racing at this level was, and is, a very serious business. But A.J. is always only five seconds away from laughter! He’s definitely made a lot of memorable moments in my career.”

“Exactly!” interjects Manning (see what we mean?). “He’s always very light-hearted, and you don’t think that of this big ol’ Texan, A.J. Foyt! At one of my first tests, I was just about



Vincent LaForet/Allsport

Shut up, A.J.!

When Kenny Brack took the green flag for the 1999 Indianapolis 500, it seemed like just another day at the office for him.

“Yeah, I remember thinking that it was just a normal race,” he recalls.

“Obviously, we’d been preparing for it for a long time, but as far as getting in the car, and just going out there and racing, it felt like situation normal for me.”

500 miles later, he was sharing the milk with his team owner, A.J. Foyt, in Victory Circle, but admits, “At the time I didn’t understand what it meant to win it. When I look back, the biggest thing now, and the biggest surprise, is how much it has turned out to mean to me.”

While it may not have sunk in with the Swede on the day, the gravitas of it all hit team owner and four-time winner A.J. Foyt on lap 199. Brack recalls it with a laugh.

“A.J. came on the radio screaming that we had won when I crossed the finish line to begin the last lap! He was shouting ‘We won, we won!’ and I said ‘Shut up, A.J.!’ It’s not over yet! There’s still a lap to go. I didn’t want to jinx it. I knew how fickle those cars could be... All of a sudden they blow up on you, and you’re not winning, even though you look like you are with a lap to go.

“But we made it. A.J. was very, very happy, and all the team were for that matter. He gave me one helluva bear hug in Victory Lane. We’d worked really hard for that win. I didn’t leave a stone unturned. I walked the track, I knew every bump and crack, everything about the place, and I think that the team got that positive energy from me too. It was really like it was meant to be.

“When you start explaining, ‘I’m a race car driver,’ people don’t always understand. But when you tell them, ‘I won the Indy 500,’ that’s all you need to say. That really means something to me. It’s like in Europe if you say you won the soccer World Cup, or here in America you say you won the Super Bowl. That’s what it means.”

A.J. swigs the milk for a fifth time... For Brack, Indy ‘99 was just another race – as his hat says, “Next race, Texas” – until it started to sink in

to go out and I stalled it. Immediately he came on the radio and said, ‘So it’s amateur hour now, is it?’”

But as Manning points out, that laughter isn’t indicative of a lack of seriousness and drive on the part of Foyt and his team.

“There’s no doubt that I drive faster and with more confidence when I have a smile on my face,” he says, “and that’s what I have this year. The toughest years have been when I haven’t been in an enjoyable environment. I’m not saying it’s right or wrong, just that there are different ways to go racing. There are the big organizations with armies of mechanics and engineers, but there’s also a very competitive way to go racing like A.J. does it. The team’s like a family with some big aspirations, and that’s how I work best. At St. Petersburg [where Manning ran in the top three until crashing out], there was really no reason with a bit more testing that we couldn’t have won that race...”

“That really was a helluva performance,” adds Brack.

“At Indy, we were knocking on the door of the top 10 in qualifying with a pretty safe car,” Manning continues. “There’s an extra Penske, an extra Andretti Green Racing entry, and to see we were on the coattails of those guys – the next best car out there – is a great testament. As I say, with performances like that, and with the tracks ahead of us, we could win a race this year!”

KB: “If you *do* win a race, you know you’re going to have to dress up like a rock ‘n’ roller and come on stage with us...”

DM: “I’ll look after your groupies! I’ll come to the gig, but you won’t get me on stage...”

KB: “It’s been done before. Bryan Herta came and sang with us.”

DM: “OK, maybe. As long as it’s something I can scream – some punk rock. You really don’t want me singing, trust me.”

With that, the pair say their goodbyes and head off – Brack to prepare for his next show with his band; Manning to find A.J., no doubt to share a few laughs and morsels from the interview, but also to swap ideas on how to put that No.14 even closer to the front of the field. It’s fun racing for A.J., but it’s *serious* fun. ■

● Find more on A.J. Foyt’s 50 years at Indy at www.indycar.com/community/foyt/

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Words by Dave Lewandowski
Main photos by Dan Streck/LAT and Paul Webb/LAT

Tomas Scheckter needs space and time. Two hours before every IndyCar Series race, the Vision Racing driver seeks multiple minutes in a fortress of solitude to mentally and physically prepare for the intense competition on the racetrack. He'll visualize each turn and shift, and review the myriad details that could mean the difference between Victory Lane and being parked on pit lane.

"I like to have some time by myself to stretch and get into a zone," Scheckter says.

Much like stick and ball sport athletes, race car drivers allow their subconscious to go on auto pilot. They are in tune with their inner self and tune out their environment. They are not thinking about who's in the game, but are actually "in" the game. They are fully concentrated on their work – calm, alert and lucid – and trust their abilities.

They are in "the zone."

"I like to be quiet, not have many people around, which is bad because some people you

are completed. As the field approaches the green flag, their instincts take control.

"I've read some psychology books on different ways of getting yourself upbeat or downbeat depending on where you need to be," Scheckter says. "If I know I need to get on it now, I sort of pump myself up and say, 'Go, go, go' to get myself in the best position. Then I look at the car in front and ask myself how am I going to get by?"

Imparts Rahal Letterman Racing's Jeff Simmons: "You've thought through before that day where you're starting and what you want to do in the race. You think about those things briefly on the parade laps. That's when you get pumped up and all your senses get active. You can't help it because you'll be going from 80mph to 200mph with the whole field all around you. You become instinctual and reactive going into that first corner.

"Because we've all done it so many times, our minds take over. You have to be so alert

All around them it's noise, excitement and chaos, but the drivers of the IndyCar Series need to focus on the race ahead. So how do they get into their own space?

RACEFACE

may be friendly with or have invited to the race, you don't give them much attention because you are in that zone," Scheckter said of the single-mindedness he experiences just before climbing into his four-wheeled rocket. "I think when you really get into a zone, it's like you're ready to go fight. People can speak to you but it's like you're not really there."

IndyCar Series drivers put on their race faces in different ways, but all reach a level where focus, determination and intuition intersect before the green flag flies. Scheckter gets there by seeking some shade, stretching and listening to a variety of music in the minutes before drivers are called to the starting grid.

Andretti Green Racing's Tony Kanaan notes that a brief pre-race ESPN interview, skydivers, fireworks and even a slightly off-key national anthem rendition are welcome distractions.

"I don't have to concentrate then," the two-time race winner this season says. "For me, it's a distraction I want to have because you can never predict what's going to happen in the race. I use it as a way to relax. As much as you want to predict what will happen, you have no control over it, so I would rather not think about it."

Drivers quickly switch gears on the parade laps when cursory systems and radio checks

"It's like you're ready to fight. People can speak to you, but it's like you're not really there"

Tomas Scheckter

because so many things can go wrong at the start of a race."

Before climbing in his Sam Schmidt Motorsports car for the 91st Indianapolis 500 on May 27, Buddy Lazier sorted out the short- and long-term strategies respective to his 22nd starting position and the 2.5-mile ribbon of asphalt. Aware of his surroundings, and who was an immediate threat to his car's longevity, the 1996 500-Mile Race winner repeated "patience, patience" that was born from experience.

"I've started in the top five and the last five, and I think I've had a number of starts around



Dan Streck/LAT

20th to 24th," the 2000 IndyCar Series champion says. "At the start of the race, it's like a giant vacuum. There isn't any air to create downforce, and it's a mistake-rich environment. So it either happens in front of you or behind you, and you really need to be on your toes.

"There's the race to get to the final race – the shootout at the end – and that's what you really need to pay attention to."

After the race, it isn't necessarily as easy to transition out of the zone as it was sliding into it. The time went by quickly – sometimes too quickly if taken out or a mechanical issue ▶

(Left) When the helmet goes on, the drivers of the IndyCar Series are in their own private space. For some, this switch into "the zone" can be instant; for others, it's a longer process. (Above) Sam Hornish Jr. puts his race face on



develops early in the race – because the experience was almost surreal.

"You're on such an adrenaline high that you almost get depressed a little when you leave the track that night," Scheckter says. "Mentally, you're trying to adjust to thinking, 'OK, I'm not in a race car; I'm in a line at Starbucks.'"

Their finishing position impacts a driver's decompression, too. Win, and the adrenaline levels remain high through the Victory Lane celebration and obligatory media sessions. Anything less is usually rewound and replayed – sometimes too often. But because of the compact IndyCar Series schedule, which this summer includes 10 races in 12 weekends, moving on is imperative.

"If you finish second but you felt you were ready to win it, then it really takes time," newly crowned Indianapolis 500 champion Dario Franchitti says. "If you're disappointed in any way, sometimes it can take weeks to get over. In Marco [Andretti's] case after Indy in 2006, a year.

"There's a lot of that. St. Pete for instance. It took a long time for me to get over what happened between Tony [Kanaan] and me early in the race (when the teammates' cars made contact in a corner). I just kept replaying, 'What if, what if, what if?' Some weeks it's worse than others. You always look back and say, 'OK, what can I learn from it?' You learn it and move on.



Garvin Lawrence/Getty Images

"You're on such an adrenaline high that you almost get depressed when you leave the track"

Tomas Scheckter

"But sometimes," he shrugs, "mistakes or situations just grab you and won't let go."

The June 3 race at The Milwaukee Mile, in which Helio Castroneves started from the pole and appeared to be on the way to his second victory of the season before a structural malfunction deflated his run, will stick with the two-time Indy 500 title holder for awhile. Still, barely an hour afterward, the broad smile returned.

"I always wake up the next day at six o'clock in the morning thinking about the race," he says. "If it's good, obviously it's a great job. If it wasn't so good, it's the worst nightmare. You have to learn to deal with it, turn the page and go to the next one."

That's exactly what the Team Penske driver did at Texas Motor Speedway six days later. The Bombardier Learjet 550k presented another opportunity.

"I try not to get too bothered about it because what happened in the past is already done, so I try not to suffer," says Kanaan, a veteran of many IndyCar Series battles. "The schedule has helped me this year to think about it because you finish one and you have to go to another. Then it all starts again – the preparation, the mental focus – before the race.

"The butterfly in my stomach is a feeling that I think when I retire I will really miss because it's a wonderful feeling to have." ■



(Main) With the world watching, Danica Patrick prepares. (Above right) Helio Castroneves climbs the fence at St. Pete. Afterward, the come down – literally – begins. (Right) Tony Kanaan is hugged by Dan Wheldon at Milwaukee – but does Wheldon realize TK's had that same sweaty race suit on all weekend?

Dan Streack/LAT



Routine Business

Superstitions and rituals can be part of the prep

Indianapolis 500 champion Dario Franchitti notes how it "just wouldn't feel right" if he didn't work through a race dress rehearsal.

"I do get dressed in the same order," the 2007 Indy 500 winner says. "There's a certain amount of superstition behind that, but there's also a calming effect. Some drivers are definitely more superstitious than others."

Helio Castroneves and Tony Kanaan are in that category. They've both ascribed to the lucky underwear theory during their careers, and Castroneves continues to kiss his Team Penske Dallara chassis as a thank you after events.

"I wear my lucky underwear and some gloves that I've already won a race with," says Kanaan, who took that to something of an extreme at The Milwaukee Mile just a few weeks ago.

Last year, because of a dry cleaning mix-up, Kanaan had a lone firesuit for the

entire race weekend. He won. So he adhered to the lucky suit premise – with a warning appreciated by teammates and crew – and won again.

"I've done that. I'm over that. Once upon a time, I said let me try this underwear again," scoffs Castroneves, who acknowledges "putting on my right glove first, then stepping in my right shoe, and so on."

Such superstitions – though most drivers prefer to call them routines or even rituals – have been as much a part of auto racing as long-*verboden* green paint schemes and eating peanuts at the track. Entering the car from the left side is the most prevalent (maybe practical) routine.

"I get in the car the same way because it's a way of not only getting me ready for the race, but also the guys because they know they are doing the same thing all the time," Franchitti adds. "It gives everyone a calming effect."

A.J. Foyt Racing's Darren Manning is the antithesis of all that.

"Just to not have rituals is my ritual," he says bluntly.

VISION'S FAB FOUR

It seems bigger equals better for Vision Racing. After its impressive four-car assault on the Indy 500, is it ready to make the leap to the IndyCar Series winner's circle?

Words by Jeff Olson • Main Photo Michael Levitt/LAT





Tomas Scheckter likens his previous personality to a character played by Will Ferrell in *Old School*. Whenever the party bug bit him, Ferrell's character reverted to the ways of his fraternity nickname, Frank the Tank, leading to an infamous scene in which the Tank, a little too full of beer, went streaking.

Not likely to happen, Scheckter says, at least until the season ends.

"You won't see Tomas the Tank anymore," he says with a grin. "This year, I'm a behaving boy. There's no misbehaving by Tomas. He's been hard-working. Tomas the Tank is going to stay away until the end of the season. I'm getting results, and I want to do a good job. I just want to focus on what's important. You'll see guys going out all the time, but I'm lying low. I'm working out and staying focused."

Scheckter's new resolve relates to the growing success of his team. In its third year, Vision Racing is bigger and better than ever, and beginning to close the gap on the IndyCar Series' elite teams. While yet to win a race, Vision is nearing its goal. Scheckter and teammates Ed Carpenter and A.J. Foyt IV have broken into the top 10 eight times in the first seven races this season, and everyone involved feels victory is just around a few more corners.

"The biggest thing we have to continue to work at is consistency," said Larry Curry, Vision's team manager. "We need to continue to work on having all three cars good, more along the line of a team like Andretti Green Racing. When one of their guys is good, all of their guys are good. We have to get better at that."

It's no coincidence that AGR is on the minds of the people at Vision, which is co-owned by Indy Racing League chief executive officer Tony George, his wife, Laura, and actor Patrick Dempsey. With the addition of Foyt this season, the team has expanded from two cars to three. AGR, a four-car team, expanded to five cars for the Indianapolis 500 and controlled the race, eventually winning with Dario Franchitti.

Vision, which added Davey Hamilton to a fourth car at Indy, also had strong results, placing all four cars among the top 17, with Scheckter seventh and Hamilton ninth. The expansion worked, insiders say, because the team hired the right people.

"The key thing is that the chemistry is right between everybody," Carpenter said. "You can grow a team, but sometimes you might lose

"I've focused on what this means to me, and that's winning races"

Tomas Scheckter



Dan Streick/LAT

that chemistry in the process. We've grown and kept the chemistry. Everybody enjoys working with each other. If you're in the right situation, it's an excellent thing. You see what AGR has done, and we're just trying to do our thing along the same line."

One of the most significant benefits of adding cars is the extra information gleaned during tests and practice sessions. Many IndyCar Series events are two-day shows, meaning practice time is limited. On top of that, the pre-race warmup is gone, further limiting the amount of data teams acquire.

"I get three times the data that I would with a one-car team," Curry says. "In one hour, I get three hours of information. That absolutely helps move us forward. But to take advantage of that, we need to become more consistent."

Part of that consistency involves repetition. The three Vision drivers say they'll only get better as time goes on. With each passing lap, the team is learning more and applying more of that knowledge to what's already in the book.

"Tomas and Ed and I are giving as much information as we can in order to make each car ►

(Main) The Beatles knew a thing or two about the group chemistry that's needed to achieve success. That's why Vision Racing's own "Fab Four" were more than happy to recreate the famous cover photo from the band's two greatest hits collections. (Above) Tomas Scheckter, who admits to a more focused approach, is setting the pace at Vision Racing



means to me, and that's winning races. I think I've been driving the best I ever have this year."

The new Tomas – the one who's taken over from Tomas the Tank – hasn't stopped having fun, nor has Vision Racing become overly serious in its quest for a win. During his downtime in the weeks of preparation for the Indianapolis 500, Scheckter could be found relaxing in a hot tub next to his motor home, a destination for all the cool people in a portable city of race drivers.

But something was tempering Tomas and his fun-loving ways. For one thing, the hot tub was parked between two large electrical boxes, so no splashing was allowed. "There were signs on the electrical boxes that said, 'Do Not Touch, Could Cause Death,'" Scheckter recalled with a chuckle. "That kept everyone under control."

Other things – like the potential for success – are keeping Tomas the Tank under wraps. ■

(Left) Where Vision wants to be – at the front of the train. This is Scheckter in the Indy 500.

(Below) Davey Hamilton catches up with old rivals Al Unser Jr. and a now retired Arie Luyendyk. The 2001 Indy 500 – Hamilton's most recent until this year – saw all three racing together



“We’ve grown, and kept the chemistry. If you’re in the right situation, it’s an excellent thing”

Ed Carpenter

better,” Foyt said. “I think you’re seeing the results of that on the racetrack. After every practice session, we talk about what we have to do to get our cars better. We work very well as a team. Everything is very open.”

The team’s strength is in its car preparation. Even though it’s just in its third year, Vision rarely encounters a mechanical breakdown – a critical trait when practice time is limited.

“Our cars are very reliable,” Curry says. “We don’t seem to have issues in practice sessions that take time away from us. We’re not having mechanical problems in races. If somebody said, ‘Larry, do you believe you can win a race this year?’ I’d have to say that I believe we can.”

Everyone at Vision believes that, but they are also realistic. The next step – beating the AGRs, Penskes and Ganassis of the series – is much more difficult than simply being competitive with them. “For sure we’re capable of winning, but we still need a little more,” Scheckter says. “We need maybe one or two more steps before we have a legitimate shot at winning.”

Where, then, should they expect the first win? Short tracks like Iowa and Richmond seem ideal, as does a 1.5-mile oval like Chicagoland, which is nearly identical to Kansas

Speedway, where Scheckter finished fifth, Foyt ninth and Carpenter raced among the leaders before crashing.

“Certain racetracks lend themselves to good race cars,” Curry says. “It isn’t about having the most efficient car aerodynamically or where you have to spend money on wind tunnels and testing. Some tracks are just good old-fashioned racetracks, and that’s where I think we have a shot.”

Either way, team leaders – which also include chief engineer David Cripps, race engineer Matt Curry and crew chief Keven Kukulewicz – are confident that the first race win is pending.

“No doubt,” Carpenter said. “I had a car at Kansas that was capable of winning. Last year, Tomas finished third at Milwaukee, and we’re way ahead of where we were then. Any one of us could win a race one of these weekends.”

That explains Scheckter’s new persona. In his six seasons in the series, he’s been known for a lot of things; the ability to focus was not at the top of that list. Now, off to a consistent, solid start to the season, his mind is solely on the task at hand. “I just really put my head down this year and tried to work every angle possible,” he says. “I’ve focused on what this

Back in the saddle

Davey Hamilton is a classic example of never giving up

A few days before the Indianapolis 500, Davey Hamilton was asked about his typical pre-race routine. The question made him pause for thought.

“It’s been so long since I’ve raced, I don’t know what to do,” he said. “I guess all I have to do is make sure I get out of bed on time and get to the track before the race starts.”

He accomplished that much and more. Hamilton, who hadn’t raced since 2001 because of severe foot and ankle injuries, not only started the 91st Indy 500, but also finished ninth in the No. 02 Vision Racing Dallara-Honda. Considering the circumstances, it was an astonishing result.

“The injuries took me away for so long,” Hamilton says. “Once I finally was healthy enough to do it, it was difficult to get back in the game. I’d been gone for so long that it was hard to find sponsors who were willing to do it. Nobody knew if I could do it or not.”

Rightfully so. The injuries Hamilton sustained in a crash six years ago at Texas Motor Speedway were so severe that doctors thought they might have to amputate Hamilton’s feet. He endured more than 20 surgical procedures after the accident, including skin grafts from his back, and parts of his feet have no feeling.

Hamilton continued to undergo training related to his feet during the month of May, and told his team members to push him until he told them to back off. He never told them to back off.

“I told them to push, push, push,” Hamilton says. “I’m the one who had to decide when they’d pushed too much. I logged as many laps as I could get.”

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

Sarah Fisher
IndyCar® Series Driver

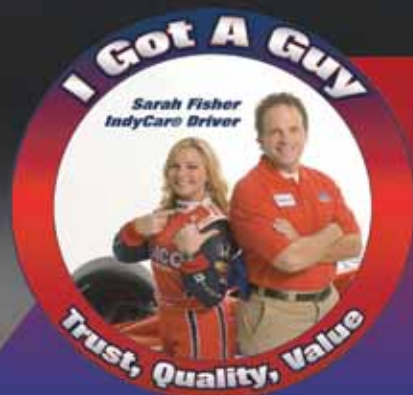


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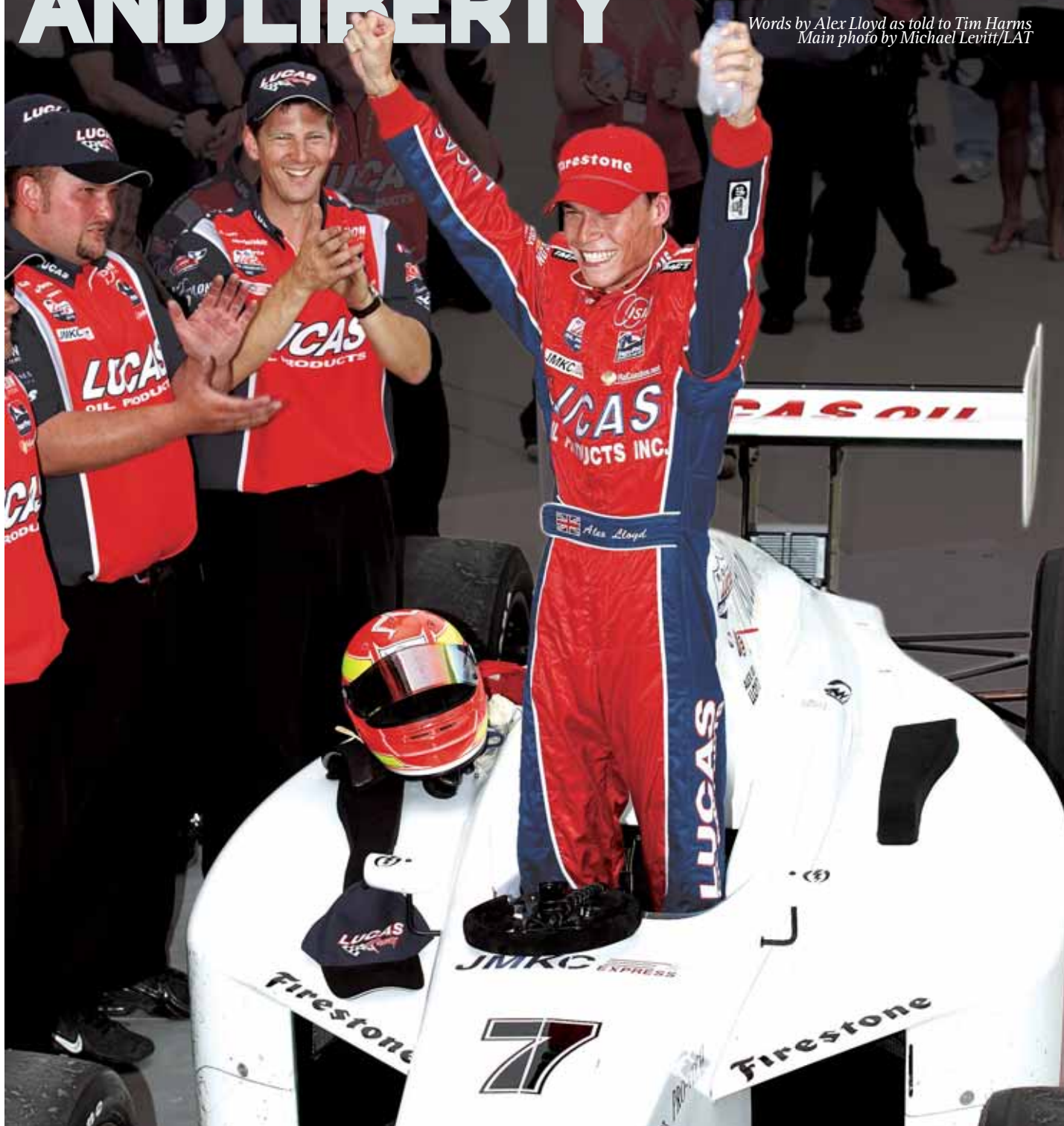
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PURSUING FREEDOM AND LIBERTY

In the space of three weeks, the young guns of the Indy Pro Series fight it out on the Indianapolis Motor Speedway's oval and its road course. Alex Lloyd, who won on the oval, tells us about the experience

*Words by Alex Lloyd as told to Tim Harms
Main photo by Michael Levitt/LAT*





IM/S Photo

Indy. Mention that name in motorsports circles and one thing comes to mind: the Indianapolis 500. It's true that the Speedway has expanded over the years to include a Formula 1 race and a NASCAR event, but even as one of the guys who drives in the only series that competes at the Speedway twice, Indy is still all about the oval and the 500. In fact, for the Liberty Challenge, where we race on the road course during the U.S. Grand Prix weekend, it feels like we're at a completely different venue.

Indy is not at all what I expected. I'd heard a lot about it in England. Obviously, I followed the 500 as a motorsports fan, but I just didn't get a true feeling for the place. I guess when you're on the other side of the world, you don't get the emotion and the feeling that Indianapolis brings. When I came here for the first time for the Freedom 100 in 2006, I was blown away when I walked down Gasoline Alley. I remember nervously walking into the pits, seeing the huge crowd and thinking, "This is unbelievable." Since then it's exceeded all my expectations by such a long way.

I never realized just how big it was until I was there. When you watch the Indy 500, you're thinking, "This is so far above any other race I've ever been to. I've been to the Monaco Grand Prix, which is the biggest one on the Formula 1 calendar for sure, but the 500 just wipes the floor with the Monaco GP. The moment I realized how special it all is, I knew I wanted to be around it for as long as I possibly

could. For me, the 500 is the absolute ultimate. Since I came over here, my career path and my ideas changed, and I aimed straight for Indy cars, not just for the 500, but for the IndyCar Series as well.

I finished fifth in last year's Freedom 100, the Indy Pro Series race that runs on Carb Day on the oval, but I was never really in contention. The Sam Schmidt Motorsports team, which I race for this season, lost that race on the final lap, so we set ourselves two goals at the beginning of the season: The first one on the list was to win the Freedom 100, and the second one was to win the championship.

The championship is something that goes on for the whole season. You can have a race or two that go badly and it still doesn't mean you're out of the picture. But for the Freedom 100, if something goes wrong in the race, that's your chance gone. It's one of those weekends where everything has to come together and click.

When I come into a situation like that, there's a lot of extra pressure. Normally, that extra pressure does me good, and I usually perform well when I put some on myself. But the Freedom 100 is our Indy 500, so we've got that pressure building up on us for seven whole weeks since the last race. For me, it felt like I had a ton of weight on my shoulders heading into the weekend. But for the Liberty Challenge, it was a little different, because we were racing two weeks before it, so it felt more

"The Freedom 100 is our Indy 500. It felt like I had a ton of weight on my shoulders heading into it"

Alex Lloyd

(Above) Alex Lloyd leads the way in the Freedom 100, the Indy Pro Series' big day on the oval at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. (Left) He held on for the win, adding to his Liberty Challenge victory of 2006

like a normal race on the calendar.

For the Liberty Challenge, you come here with a totally different mindset, as if it's a completely different venue – as if it's not Indianapolis, but it's just another track somewhere on the calendar. Even though we overlap in a few places, it's an entirely separate mentality that you have.

My initial thought was, "It's going to be really weird to go there having raced on the oval," but it's not that strange once you're out on the track. The weirdest thing was when we had the Open Test here last year, pulling out of the garages and turning right, which is strange because you're so used to going left.

There's really a totally different atmosphere at the track too. With the Formula 1 circus having basically taken over the paddock, and everything blocked off, I almost felt like I wasn't with F1. I was walking around after our session and saw them on the big screen. You can hear them going around, but you don't quite feel like you're there with them. With the 500, it feels much more like, "This is it. We're ▶



Dan Strech/LAT



IMS Photo

Hideki hits a first homer

Mutoh breaks through in front of his mentor

When 15 rookies took the green flag at Homestead-Miami Speedway to start the 2007 season, no one knew which ones would prove themselves capable of running at the front and which ones wouldn't cut it. The uncertainty is compounded in the Indy Pro Series by the fact that many of the young drivers haven't competed on ovals in the past.

One rookie who jumped to the forefront was Panther Racing's Hideki Mutoh. The 24-year-old, who claimed a Formula Dream championship in 2003 and competed in Formula Nippon last year, was the highest-finishing newcomer in that race, coming home third. He went on to second- and fourth-place finishes on the streets of St. Petersburg and a fifth at the Freedom 100 at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. He, like everyone else though, was chasing Alex Lloyd.

Mutoh's fortunes may have changed when the series returned to Indianapolis for the doubleheader event on the road course June 16-17. He topped the speed chart in practice and qualifying, before proceeding to lead all 18 laps of Race 1 en route to his first victory in the No. 55 Panther Racing entry.

"It's been frustrating to be so close to winning, but not being able to win," Mutoh said. "So this first victory has given me a lot of confidence."

Another confidence builder: being greeted in Victory Lane by Aguri Suzuki, a former Formula 1 driver from Japan who owns the Super Aguri F1 team.

"It was almost the first time I'd seen Aguri this year," Mutoh said. "So when I saw him at victory circle I was surprised, but it was a great surprise. One of the Japanese media told me that when he'd told Aguri that I got the pole position he was very excited, so I was happy that he cared about my results. But, when he came to congratulate me at victory circle, it truly made me feel that I got accepted by Aguri's Super Aguri team. It was a fantastic feeling."

here racing with the 500, this is a seriously big place to be racing." With the Liberty Challenge, you don't get quite that sensation until you get on the track and see the crowd around the course.

By the way, compared to the Indy 500, watching F1 cars on the road course is almost a different sport. You've got an IndyCar Series car going 225mph on the oval, and then you look at the F1 cars with their incredible braking and turning. Both are amazing in their own way, but it's a very different thing.

Once you get past all of the things that set Indy apart – the history, the pressure, the crowds, all of that – you just have to go out and race, which takes a completely different mentality as well.

In the Freedom 100, patience is a big thing. You've got a long 40-lap race, and there's plenty of overtaking that can be done on these ovals, so you have that mentality of, "Let's make sure we're there with the leaders at the end of the race so we have a shot at it."

In the Liberty Challenge, which is just 18 laps of the road course, you're going into it thinking, "I really need to get a good start." The first corner is very important. You can't win it at the first corner, but it really helps. If you're on the pole and can stay ahead at the first corner, that's great, because overtaking is a lot harder on a road course than it is on the oval, so it's very important to be up front. Sure, you might make up a few places, but in a short race like this, if you qualify poorly or have a bad start, it's going to be very difficult to pull it all back in such a short space and time. So there's certainly more emphasis on coming out of the box a lot harder at the Liberty than at the Freedom, where you can draft with people and get yourself in position for the last few laps.

The strategy paid off for me. I won at Indy on the road course last year, but there's nothing to describe the feeling of taking the checkers on the oval during Carb Day of the Indy 500 and putting the car in Victory Lane.



IMS Photo

(Top) You can sense the pressure on him as Lloyd gets ready to race. (Above) At the Freedom 100, cars turn left out of Gasoline Alley to get on track. At the Liberty Challenge, with the road course running clockwise, they take a right out onto the quick stuff

Every single time I go to Indy – racing, not racing, or even if I'm there to spectate – I get goosebumps driving through the tunnel. I'd heard people say that and thought, "Rubbish, they're exaggerating. Maybe on Race Day..." But they're not. It's a very powerful feeling and one that I couldn't put into words. But when I crossed the finish line in the Freedom 100, that feeling was magnified and I just felt completely overawed by the whole experience. This is certainly the biggest thing that's happened in my career. The next big thing is winning at the 500, and that's going to be my aim for the next few years. ■

Freedom 100

Indianapolis Motor Speedway
May 25, 40 laps/100 miles



- Alex Lloyd moves immediately on polesitter Ken Losch to take the lead as a caution is thrown for debris in Turn 3 on the first lap.
- Also at the start, Wade Cunningham and Mike Potekhen make contact. Cunningham is penalized for jumping the start.
- Losch drops out on lap 9 with gearbox problems.
- Chris Festa and Andrew Prendeville battle hard for second in the last third of the race; Prendeville falls behind Jaime Camara at the end.
- The race ends under yellow due to moisture on the track, with Lloyd in the lead.

DRIVER	TEAM
1. Alex Lloyd	Sam Schmidt Motorsports
2. Chris Festa	CGR Indy Pro Series
3. Jaime Camara	Andretti Green Racing
4. Andrew Prendeville	RLR/Andersen Racing
5. Hideki Mutoh	Panther Racing

Pole winner: Ken Losch, 188.231 mph

Road Runner 100

Milwaukee Mile
June 2, 100 laps/100 miles



- Alex Lloyd leads from the pole, but it is a short green; a multi-car accident starts in Turn 2 when Hideki Mutoh spins, and also involves Andrew Prendeville, Jaime Camara, Robbie Pecorari, Chris Festa and Logan Gomez.
- At the restart, Lloyd retains the point, while Mike Potekhen passes Jonathan Klein for second; but another yellow for spinning Jon Brownson keeps the field from completing a full green lap again.
- Ken Losch fails to finish his second race in a row when he spins in Turn 2 on lap 83.
- Lloyd takes his record fifth straight win of the season, having taken the spoils in every event so far.

DRIVER	TEAM
1. Alex Lloyd	Sam Schmidt Motorsports
2. Mike Potekhen	Apex Racing
3. Jonathan Klein	Team Moore Racing
4. Sean Guthrie	Guthrie Racing
5. Bobby Wilson	Brian Stewart Racing

Pole winner: Alex Lloyd, 146.077 mph

Liberty Challenge 1

Indianapolis Motor Speedway
June 16, 18 laps/46.89 miles



- Hideki Mutoh scores the pole and leads all 18 laps.
- In his first loss of the year, Alex Lloyd starts and finishes second.
- With the leaders pulling away, an intense battle develops in the next group. Jaime Camara moves from fifth to third and Wade Cunningham picks up four positions to finish in fourth place.
- After the race, Mutoh draws the number eight, meaning the top eight positions will be inverted for the second race.

DRIVER	TEAM
1. Hideki Mutoh	Panther Racing
2. Alex Lloyd	Sam Schmidt Motorsports
3. Jaime Camara	Andretti Green Racing
4. Wade Cunningham	AFS Racing
5. Stephen Simpson	Kenn Hardley Racing

Pole winner: Hideki Mutoh, 1m 25.281sec

Liberty Challenge 2

Indianapolis Motor Speedway
June 17, 18 laps/46.89 miles



- Ryan Justice starts on pole by virtue of finishing eighth in the first race.
- Bobby Wilson passes Justice on Turn 1 of the opening lap for a lead that he won't relinquish.
- The first two finishers in the previous race, Hideki Mutoh and Alex Lloyd, start eighth and seventh, respectively, due to the inversion, but move through the field to finish third and second – Lloyd's second-consecutive second-place finish.
- Justice's fourth-place finish is a career best.

DRIVER	TEAM
1. Bobby Wilson	Brian Stewart Racing
2. Alex Lloyd	Sam Schmidt Motorsports
3. Hideki Mutoh	Panther Racing
4. Ryan Justice	Sam Schmidt Motorsports
5. Jaime Camara	Andretti Green Racing

Pole winner: Ryan Justice, determined by previous race and inversion

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Rank	Driver	Points	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23																					
1	Alex Lloyd	340	Mike Potekhen	165	Jonathan Klein	145	Wade Cunningham	134	Stephen Simpson	134	Robbie Pecorari	132	Logan Gomez	122	Andrew Prendeville	121	Sean Guthrie	110	Joey Scarallo	109	Ryan Justice	107	Jon Brownson	103	Brad Jaeger	97	Ken Losch	95	Tom Wieringa	82	Richard Antinucci	76	Micky Gilbert	72	CR	70	Phil Giebler	65			
2	Hideki Mutoh	236	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23																							
3	Bobby Wilson	207	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23																								
4	Jaime Camara	176	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23																									
5	Chris Festa	167	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23																										



INDY 500 STATS @
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Indy Interrupted

BLAST FROM THE PAST

The 91st 500 wasn't the first hit by rain

For a time it looked like Tony Kanaan had won the 2007 Indianapolis 500. The Brazilian got the drop on Andretti Green Racing teammate Marco Andretti on a lap 108 restart and steamed into the lead.

He was still there four laps later when the heavens opened and the race was red flagged, meaning he'd be declared the winner if the race wasn't restarted, for the rules require 101 of 200 scheduled laps to be run for the race to be official.

It was not to be, of course. After a delay of nearly three hours, the race was restarted, only for the rains to return in earnest on lap 166, sealing victory for Dario Franchitti.

Franchitti isn't the first driver to splash his way to glory in the Indianapolis 500. Frank Lockhart (1926), Johnnie Parsons ('50), Gordon Johncock ('73), Bobby Unser ('75),

Johnny Rutherford ('76) and Buddy Rice (2004) all owe at least a smidgen of debt to Mother Nature for some propitious precipitation. Add Wilbur Shaw to that list as well, for the third of his three Indianapolis 500 wins came in a 1940 race that saw the final 50 laps run under caution due to rain.

Nor was this the first Indianapolis 500 interrupted by rain and run in separate segments. When it comes to interruptions, the 1973 Indianapolis 500 stands alone. In the days before the race ran on the final Sunday in May, it began on Monday, May 28 – Memorial Day – with a colossal, multicar crash. Rain came in by the time the wreckage had been cleared, so the event was postponed to Tuesday. They only got as far as the second pace lap on Tuesday before the rains returned, and it wasn't until Wednesday, May 30, that the race was run...only to be red flagged (and declared official) by rain on lap 133.

Of those other rain-interrupted races, the 1926 event was halted by a shower after 76 laps, then restarted, only to be stopped for good after 160 laps. In '67, competitors only got in 18 laps before the Memorial Day rain came in, then completed the remaining 182

(Above) It's the 1926 Indy 500, and those puddles tell the story. The race was stopped after 76 laps, restarted, then stopped for good after 160, with Frank Lockhart winning. (Right) Gordon Johncock finally gets to celebrate in 1973



laps the next day. And in 2004 – as in '26 and '07 – the race was red flagged for rain twice, first on lap 28, then a final time on lap 180.

Of all the previous rain-hit events, only the 2001 Indianapolis 500 had gone past half distance – to lap 155, in fact – when rain caused a red flag. Helio Castroneves was leading at the time and, happily for him, when the race restarted 16 minutes later, he was still leading when the checkered flag flew at the conclusion of lap 200. Which, of course, means Kanaan has the rather dubious distinction of being the first and, so far, only driver to "win" and lose the Indianapolis 500 on the same day...



If I were President of the United States...

"I would invest capital dollars into alternate fuel sources such as ethanol, thus relieving our dependence on foreign oil"

Sarah Fisher



Donald Miralle/Getty Images

A.J. IV'S HOOPS HEROES



"I'm a huge Michael Jordan fan. I have a signed poster on my wall in Indianapolis, and a basketball, picture and jersey all signed, too. I've always been a big fan, all the way back to his days at North Carolina. He always was the man who you *wanted* to have the ball under pressure. He'd either create something for the game winner or he'd hit the game winner. He's just *the man* and I respect him a ton. The present NBA is nothing like it was back in Jordan's day. Right now, I'd say **LeBron James** takes control of the game when he needs to, but he just doesn't have the pressure shot to win games like my man MJ."

Road tripl

Scott Dixon, you've got an eight-hour car journey ahead. Who do you want along for the ride, what are you traveling in, and who's doing all the driving?

"First would be my lovely fiancée (Emma Davies, below). She can talk for Britain, so if the radio breaks there'll be no long silences. Ayrton Senna, too, because he's the man and he could give me some driving tips. Lastly, Dave Chappel, because he's a funny SOB. We'd drive a yellow short bus, because it looked like fun on the movie *Road Trip*. Then we'd have room for Steve Stifler (aka Sean William Scott) to drive us."



Robert Laberge/Getty Images

MOVIES: THE SEQUEL

It's the summer of the sequel, with *Spiderman*, *Shrek*, and those *Oceans 13* guys, to name a few, fighting it out at the box office. But which sequels does movie buff Sam Hornish Jr. (er, that's him above) think should *never* have been made?

"Probably half the scary movies that get a sequel. I'll ask myself 'Why?' But I guess you have to look at it like they're all kind of bad in a good way. If there's just one redeeming line from the movie that makes it OK, you'll probably watch it again."

"There are a lot of movies that shouldn't have been made, but I still like parts of them, like *Freddie vs. Jason*. It's like, 'OK, we've had 82 sequels of this, and we're still trying to hang on by a thread, but it's gotten so bad that we're going to throw both of them together and see what happens.' But I watched the whole thing, and probably would watch it again if it was on TV. Would I buy it? No."

"But I'll stand a sequel a lot better than I will a remake. Like *Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*. I love Johnny Depp, but you can't beat Gene Wilder in that movie."



Scott Sharp's favorite things

He's all about the water, and the lifestyle that goes with it



IMS Photo

Favorite musician

Jack Johnson. I feel fortunate to spend a lot of my days in South Florida in shorts, a T-shirt and flip flops, and that music goes real well with that.

Favorite Book

The Day After Tomorrow.

Favorite TV show

That's *Entourage*. I just think it's great. I think it's hilarious, and it's real world. It's a very creative show.

Favorite place

My favorite city is New York City, but I wouldn't choose that for a vacation spot. It's too high energy for that. Favorite vacation spot would probably be one of the Caribbean islands – someplace where cell phones don't work and you don't wear a watch.

Favorite IndyCar Series city

Even though I live in Florida, it would have to be St. Pete. That's a really neat side of the state I never usually get to go to.

Favorite gadget

My BlackBerry, much to my wife's chagrin.

Favorite sport

College football. Favorite team: Gators – as I say, I live in Florida now – plus, I like Notre Dame.

Favorite waste of time

Playing *NCAA College Football* for, like, three hours, and having very sore thumbs.

Favorite activity with the kids

I turned my son into a total video game junkie. I love playing video games together. But living where I do, I'm all about the water. I love the water; it's such a big part of my life. So boating or going to the beach with my family – it doesn't get any more relaxing than that.

Favorite indulgence

A glass of Gran Patrón Platinum and a cigar.

Favorite way to enjoy Patrón...

It's changing a lot lately. XO Café, which is Patrón's coffee liqueur. Half that and half Gran Patrón Platinum on the rocks. Killer drink.

Favorite food

Sushi. I like the fatty tuna. It just melts in your mouth.

Favorite track

My favorite track is Indianapolis. There's nothing on that level.

Favorite trophy

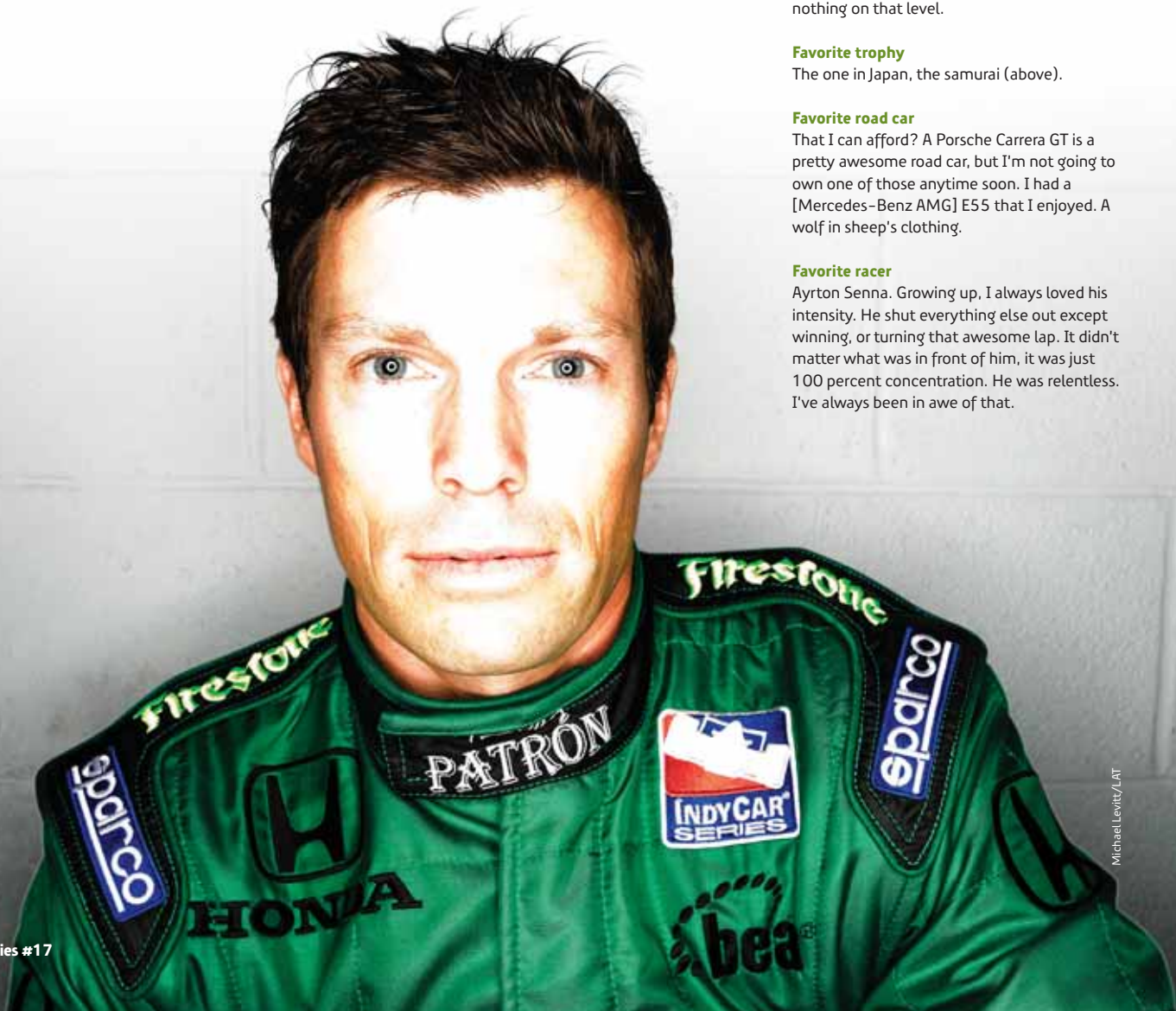
The one in Japan, the samurai (above).

Favorite road car

That I can afford? A Porsche Carrera GT is a pretty awesome road car, but I'm not going to own one of those anytime soon. I had a [Mercedes-Benz AMG] E55 that I enjoyed. A wolf in sheep's clothing.

Favorite racer

Ayrton Senna. Growing up, I always loved his intensity. He shut everything else out except winning, or turning that awesome lap. It didn't matter what was in front of him, it was just 100 percent concentration. He was relentless. I've always been in awe of that.



Michael Levitz/LAT

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