



# 2019 Open-Wheels.com 500 Mile Race

## Press Conference

Wednesday, October 16, 2019

### Christopher Demeritt

Driver, No. 144 Broken Aero with Indy 500 Group Honda

**MODERATOR:** We are here with Christopher Demeritt, driver of the No. 144 Broken Aero with Indy 500 Group Honda. Chris, how did it feel to get back out on the 2.5-mile oval at Indianapolis and put in some laps in preparation of next month's race?

**DEMERITT:** It's always good to get a few more laps in than I had. For better or worse, I didn't get burned out this year - I actually couldn't do the iRacing (Indianapolis) 500 this year. I had some prior commitments, but it's always fun getting back in the car - and I haven't gotten completely used to this car. I'm way more used to the (Dallara) DW-12 at Indy. So getting used to this car is a little bit of fun. But yeah, it's always good to just put down some laps and try to get used to some things. The intensity will ramp up as we get closer to the event, but right now it's still just having fun.

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**MODERATOR:** What, are some things you are still trying to work on and refine in the Dallara IR-18 IndyCar that you maybe had a better handle on in the Dallara DW-12?

**DEMERITT:** I don't know if it's so much as trying to refine things about driving the car - I'm so used to the muscle memory and quirks that I've picked up in the DW-12 when I raced it for three or four years. I noticed this especially when I was doing some back-to-back testing (recently) in the DW-12 and IR-18 to figure out what chassis we wanted to run. Just how much different the kind of the line that you have to take in qualifying while racing each car. For the DW-12, you kind of need to get close to the wall and arc (the car) in more, whereas with the IR-18 you can kind of cut the exit and entry a little bit more and

it'll be fine. The tires are also a bit different - the IR-18 seems to stick a little bit easier. But other than that it's pretty much the same kind of stuff. It's just the really minor stuff that you really have to focus on at Indy that kind of pops up and makes the cars feel a whole bunch different.

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**MODERATOR:** You have been on-track during today's testing, what have you observed so far - talking about the performance of the IR-18 versus the other chassis.

**DEMERITT:** Definitely seems to me that the IR-18 has the advantage. Something else that I actually noticed is that back when we were using the DW-12 in official (series competition), the track temperature used to be about 10 degrees colder. So any times we were looking at back then are (not relevant).

The car is automatically a little bit slower because as that track gets hotter, you're overheating the tires a little bit more - and the tires don't like when they get overheated. The IR-18 just seems like you can use more of the tire and put a little bit more aero into it. I'm not sure exactly what the combination is, but it seems to stick in the corners a little bit easier. You don't have to try to trim it out to get some straight line speed because it seems to already have it more so than the DW-12.

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MODERATOR: What about this event, the Open-Wheels 500, has gotten you excited to participate?

DEMERITT: I think it's a different combination of things. I think that the level of detail and preparation that's going into it is definitely a key. The prizes are always pretty nice - that's always a good motivator. I honestly really like the format of the qualifying into the race. There seems to be a lot of things going on behind the scenes to make sure that the race is a success.

Also, can we officially recognize this event as the 'Tanner 500,' is that something we can do?

TJW: That's definitely been out there a little bit. If that wants to go around the circles, then that's okay. That's been a nice title for it. In the Team Talent Discord, I'm known as Tanner J Andretti given my luck in the iRacing Indy 500. So as long as it is not the 'Tanner J Andretti 500' then I'm okay with that.

Over at Broken Aero we have exclusively talked about this event as the 'Tanner 500.'

TJW: I do appreciate that. You guys have been really supportive of the event right from the get go and, that's something that isn't taken lightly by me. I've been flattered by the way that the community as a whole is has taken to it, and to see some of the established drivers that are interested in the event that makes me feel good about it. That's kind of motivation to keep it going, so I appreciate you guys kind of buying into it.

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MODERATOR: You mentioned how today is more of a 'shaking the rust off' session, but what are some things between now and Opening Day on November 3 that you and your team will be looking to work on?

DEMERITT: Pretty much just ramping up into what will eventually happen before the race. Doing qualifying sessions back-to-back-to-back just to try to get a few more hundreds or thousandths out of the car - especially qualifying trim, at least.

Then we'll do some race runs behind other cars. We will get in a group and practice handling the draft for the entire run while trying to see if we can make the car a little bit faster - but also make sure that that the car isn't worse in the draft so at the end of the run you can make still make passes. It's kind of the same things throughout the entire time, just the intensity gets turned up as you get closer to the event.

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MODERATOR: Chris, you are working with a great group of experienced and talented drivers for this year's event. How do you all work off of each other and extract what you need to perform?

DEMERITT: Honestly just practicing a bunch seems to be the best way for me - especially purposely putting ourselves in different positions. For example, (when) we are doing race pace testing, (making sure) that the same person isn't in the lead or the same person isn't following every time, just to kind of switch it up. And there's no problem with different drivers going in slightly different directions with setup, but it helps everyone's kind of on the same page.

The differences are more so about - if any - just starting wing angles, and that can also depend on where they are starting in the field, but you can always make those adjustments in the race as well.