



MEDIA DAY PRE-RACE DRIVER QUOTES

P1. YANG OU (No. 23 Snake Pit Dallara IR-18 Chevrolet): “So far we have done all our runnings with lower track temps, and we just started working on the race setup this week. So even though we are on pole, I don't think that we are the favorites in race conditions. I think that Demeritt, Wilson, and their respective teammates have much better cars for the race than us. But we will of course go out and give it our best.”

On reuniting with teammates at Snake Pit: “It was definitely a nice experience to come back to my old teammates and get pole with them. Tim, Niles and Joe are very accomplished IndyCar drivers on iRacing and I've known them for a decade, so it was great to represent them and put our car at the front. But I would have been satisfied as long as we made the field. My goal is just to have fun, so to me, results are not that important.”

P2. WILSON NETO (No. 407 Interlagos Motorsport Dallara IR-18 Honda): “As per my tests throughout the week, a track with an increased temperature might be an opportunity for my team. The car seems to be reasonably stable with some speed all over a complete fuel run - it will be all about managing the tires, looking after them very carefully. I would be happy with a top-three (finish) at the end of the race. I got two top-fives in top splits in the past two years, with very slow and unstable cars. I think my car for this month has evolved a little bit, which brings me confidence to try a better result this time by.”

P3. JOHN HAJEK-DOGGETT (No. 33 Team Talent Dallara IR-18 Honda): “I think the track temps represent an additional challenge from both angles -- I don't expect any setup to have very much grip in traffic once the tires start to fall off, so I think this will be a "driver's race" to an even greater extent than a typical '500.' That said, even the best driver in the world can't keep up if they're sliding everywhere on overheated tires, so having a balanced setup tuned for the conditions is undoubtedly key as well.

On his expectations for a result on Sunday: “Not replicating the 1982 Kevin "Coogan" Cogan start! But in all seriousness, personally it's the same goal I've had since my first iRacing 500 in 2017 but have yet to achieve -- just getting through all 200 laps without incident. From a Team Talent perspective, between a substantial car engineering effort and 30% of cars in the field - including top-tier 500 drivers like Josh, Jeff, and Austin - I'd be disappointed to not see at least one Team Talent driver on the podium when all is said and done.”

P4. MICHELE COSTANTINI (No. 66 Apex Racing Team with Indy 500 Group Dallara IR-18 Honda): “We feel like our car behaves well in traffic so we think we are in a good position in terms of that, but of course we have very little idea about how much other teams improved their race setup from May, so I'm really looking forward to how the race shapes up on Sunday. Considering my starting position, the goal is to cross the yard of bricks first. It will take an extremely unlucky race for me to be happy about any result other than the win. Of course anything can happen in these races - in past year's I've always been unlucky with the timing of certain cautions, but I feel like with the high level of the grid for this event, that is less likely to happen, which, I think, will give me a better shot to be in the positions that count at the right time.”

P5. HENRY BENNETT (No. 007 Powerslide Motorsports Dallara IR-18 Honda): On the expected hot track temperatures: “It's a headache, and (I) think it is for everyone since the race will likely have swings in temperature from hot to hotter. It's a threat to everyone as the aero configuration you choose for race will be a gamble. I hope to finish in the top 33, fingers crossed. Seriously though, anything outside the top-10 will be disappointing - and a top-five or podium will be great, but of course the main aim is the win.”

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P6. JEFF DRAKE (No. 4 Team Talent Dallara IR-18 Chevrolet): “The higher track temps will definitely help the team. We saw in the iRacing Indy 500 this year that grip over the long run is at a premium, so making the car work at all stages of the race is key. The car we have can lead, follow, stay inside, or outside. It’s one of the best I’ve ever driven around Indy.”

On his expectations in a finish: “It’s a cliché, but I am just there to win. I’ve been fortunate enough to finish third in a previous ‘500,’ and while it was nice for about an hour following the race, that’s it. No one remembers third. You don’t get a trophy, no invites to special events, and you just become a footnote in the record books. Third was a good run, but it’s exactly that - good. I’m more grateful for the learning experience from that race than the actual finish, and hope to take those lessons into victory lane on Sunday.”

P8. BRADLEY WALTERS (No. 56 Sadi Sim Autosport Dallara IR-18 Honda): On whether or not racing in hot conditions is an opportunity or a threat: “I’d like to say opportunity, but that would imply we think we have something great for hot track. Mechanically, I think we have a good balance, but we have been struggling a bit in dirty air. What I saw (Thursday) night seemed that, where we looked to be in trouble in cooler track temps compared to other teams, the hotter temps seems to bring us a bit more even in the mix. I’m optimistic and would definitely champion hot track (conditions). Right now, I think it’s a benefit for us, but not a game changer. We have work to do.

On expectations for a race finish: “I’d like to maintain mid-pack all race. I’d be happy in the P10-15 range for the bulk of the race. If we do that, a top-10 is really the main goal. Doable. Top-five or better is never out of the question, but it’s a strong field. We always go into these expecting to be able to be a ‘threat’ in that top-10 range. And if you can be there all race, you can be in the mix at the end.”

P9. CHRISTOPHER DEMERITT (No. 144 Broken Aero with Indy 500 Group Dallara IR-18 Honda): On racing in hotter track temperatures in week two versus week one: “It’s definitely thrown a bit of an unknown into the equation. It really makes the divide between having a car that’s fast by itself and a car that can follow well in traffic a lot wider so what we pick is generally what we’re stuck with for the entire race. I’d like to think it’s an opportunity, but it adds a big strategic unknown for the weekend.

On his expectations for a result: “The big goal is always a race win, but that doesn’t mean I’ll necessarily be disappointed walking away without a win. As long as I make good strategy calls throughout and the car is strong, I’ll be relatively happy. A lot will happen in those 500 miles though, so it’s hard to set expectations - especially with the unknown strategy due to the higher track temperature seen this week.”

P10. LOGAN SIMMONS (No. 21 Iconic Motorsports Dallara IR-18 Honda): On racing with hotter track temperatures: “It just comes with the territory of racing. I’d say it really doesn’t change either way... hot just means we are all in the same boat of having a hard time passing. I’m starting top-10, (so) I would hope to maintain my position and not fall back.”

P13. LIAM QUINN (No. 44 Team Talent Dallara IR-18 Chevrolet): “I think the extra track temp plays into our strengths - our race setup philosophy is all about being able to run whatever line we need to run in any situation that calls for it. I will say though that beyond a certain point, excessive track temperatures in this car start to hark back to the racing we saw with the previous model (DW12) in which the driver stands out ahead of the setup.” On his expectations for a Sunday finish: “I would hope that every driver’s answer is to win. I have to admit though, a win for any of our guys at Team Talent would be 98% as good as a personal win!”

P14. JOE BRANCH (No. 28 Ludicrous Speed Dallara IR-18 Chevrolet): “I think we are pretty good over the course of a run. I’d be pleased with a top-10, but not thinking about anything but winning.”

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P15. ADAM BLOCKER (No. 74 Powerslide Motorsports Dallara IR-18 Honda): On whether or not the hot track temperatures are an opportunity or a threat: "I think it is a little of both. There is a threat that we will miss the optimal balance for the conditions in terms of efficiency, stability, and overall downforce level. But, I think there will also be an opportunity for us to profit off of other teams missing that optimal balance."

On his goals for Sunday: "The goal is always to win, but ultimately I'll be happy with my own performance as a driver if I am challenging for the win and did all in my power to win. Ultimately it takes some things going in your favor to win an Indy 500, or any race for that matter, so if I am a strong contender and just don't quite get things to fall my way and finish top-five, I'll be happy with that. Likewise, I could be displeased with 2nd if I feel like I should have won."

P16. TIM DOYLE (No. 55 Snake Pit Dallara IR-18 Chevrolet): "The increased track temperatures have really caught us off guard. For a while we weren't sure what they will be but after discovering how it's going to be for the race we are guessing what strategy will be best and then how to achieve the results we want based on that. Hopefully Yang and Niles are able to hit on something that gives us a nice balance of speed and tire wear, as well as driveability. On Sunday (for the race), I'm hoping for nothing less than a top-three. Hopefully Yang, Joe, and I can sweep the podium, but I know that's wishful thinking with the talent throughout the field. It's looking to be one of the strongest Indy 500's in terms of competition that I've been a part of!"

P18. DYLAN FRECKELTON (No. 313 Independent Dallara IR-18 Honda): "The higher temperatures have definitely affected the behavior of the car, and I'm not as happy with it as I would be with a colder track temp. I still have a couple of things to try though and looking at the practice times compared to the times being run in the official series, I think everyone's in the same boat. For the race I think the aim is to just stay out of trouble and on the lead lap - maybe take an opportunity to try something with strategy - but mostly just try and be somewhere near the sharp end in the last 30 laps or so. Depending on how it unfolds, I think a top-10 is an achievable target and in a field of such high quality I'd be pretty thrilled with that."

P19. RILEY THOMPSON (No. 58 Total Downforce Racing with Team Talent Dallara IR-18 Chevrolet): "I think the increased (track) temperature will bode well for the set - it was great in May compared to others, so I think we already started off with a good chance. When it comes to the end (of the race), I think I'll be going for a top-five after how May went as well; I feel very confident in the car and think it should respond very well throughout the race."

P20. CHRIS STOFER (No. 13 Powerslide Motorsports Dallara IR-18 Chevrolet): "Honestly I have a couple of the best minds on the service, in my opinion, on my team in Adam and Henry. They are wizards with setups and we have been working this week to figure out the best setup for our car come race day. I have to give them all the credit when it comes to what we roll off the truck on Sunday and I feel more than confident that we will be competitive with the increased temperature in the forecast. So to answer your question more pointedly, I see it as an opportunity. As far as a result on Sunday, I would like to say only winning would please me but with the talent in this field whoever ends up winning will have earned it. Overall I would be happy with a top 5 by the end of the day and feel that is a job well done. That doesn't mean I'm going to roll over though. Everyone out there Sunday is going for the win and I'm no different. I try to not over think things like this because so much can happen. Come race day when that green flag flies it doesn't matter where you qualified, the only thing that matters is where you finish. There can only be one winner and I know our team will do everything in our power to be there at the end."

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P21. ZACHARY CAMPBELL (No. 2 Apex Racing Team with Indy 500 Group Dallara IR-18 Chevrolet): On hot track conditions being an opportunity or a threat: "I think it's a bit of both. Obviously the increased track temp changed our way we were going to test things this week, and so we had to prioritize some things, but I think our race setup was already suited to hotter conditions better than most other teams, so it wasn't a massive detriment at all."

On an expected finishing result: "Hell, I think finishing is a good start! I know I'm up for Rookie of the Year too, and it would be a good bonus but it's not something I'm focused on by any means. Even though I may be a rookie, I've at least been around the block in the iRacing IndyCar community, and although it would be nice to get that title in this inaugural running, I've got 30 other guys besides Logan and Hugo I need to be focused on competing with first. I think pleasing myself would be to just drive well and finish where I think I should. It's a 500-mile race and really just making it to the end and being happy with everything I left out on track would be pleasing enough."

P23. ROB POWERS (No. 47 Kinetic Racing with Team Talent Dallara IR-18 Honda): On the hot track conditions: "I think it's definitely an opportunity for the Team Talent guys. We've been testing many different sets, variations and ideas for all different weather predictions. That preparedness should allow us all to have a set we feel confident in what it will do through the whole race."

On his expected result: "This is only my fourth Indy 500 and my luck hasn't been great in the other three. I'm still a relative newcomer, so my goal is to bring the car home in one piece and not make mental mistakes. If I can accomplish both of those, a top-15 is possible despite the crazy high skill level of drivers in this race."

P24. SIMON BRIANT (No. 22 Sadi Sim Autosport Dallara IR-18 Honda): "I think an increase in track temp is an opportunity to try new things different from the regular Open Series that we run. It also means we will have some great strategy calls on the day with less pack racing and tire management with fall-off. Setting up the car to be good in the heat has been a goal of ours since early October, so I think we are on the right track. With this competitive of a field, a top-10 will be great – (and) a top-5 would be fantastic. I think the goal will be to not think too much about final position until 40 or 30 laps to go and just progress forward as we can."

P25. JOHN DOWNING (No. 20 Sadi Sim Autosport Dallara IR-18 Honda): "We (Sadi Sim Autosport) see the track temps as an opportunity. Not only in setup but also in patience and skill... A top-five (finish) is my goal. That maybe is unrealistic with this field, and considering that I am old man. (Laughter). I'd be okay with a top-10."

P26. DAKOTA DICIENZO (No. 43 Total Downforce Racing with Team Talent Dallara IR-18 Chevrolet): "We have been practicing with our set non-stop on the high temperature track. We know what to expect come race time. I believe everyone will have be in the same boat from past experiences. I think the hot weather gives us an advantage."

On a race result goal: "My first goal would be to complete the race. (In) my past Indy 500 (starts), I have either crashed or got a top-10. My second goal would be to come (home) top-15. Sure, it's the same payout as P33, but for me it would be an achievement as lots of the drivers in this weekend's field are really good."

P27. MATT PAWELSKI (No. 75 Indy 500 Group with Broken Aero/ART Dallara IR-18 Honda): "I think it's an opportunity (in the higher track temperatures). I think we proved in May that our set can stay solid for the long term. I'm still trying to get my feet under me and figure out how to keep the right-side tires on it, so for me it could be a problem but we'll see. I'd like to be in the top 10-12 (by race finish). I think starting 28th means I should aim for a good run and let the chips fall. When I won (the iRacing Indianapolis 500) in 2016, I raced as a tail-end Charlie, and it worked out in the end so who knows about this time. But ideally, I just run well and make it to the end."

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P30. BRENDAN LICHTENBERG (No. 10 Broken Aero Dallara IR-18 Honda): In response to the hotter track temperatures at IMS in week two: "I feel pretty confident with the circumstances presented to us and we have a lot of options available to us. We've come out really strong, obviously, with Brandon's victory in May and other performances as a team, so I think it's something that us as a team and other teams will be able to manage just fine."

On an expected finishing result: "Ultimately, victory would be the most satisfying, but there are 32 other drivers that will have that opportunity. It's not about what you've accomplished before, it's always about who is the best driver on that given race day. I will be content overall if I know I drove to the best of my ability which was how I felt back in May."

P31. HUGO OLSSON (No. 39 Independent Dallara IR-18 Honda): "Since I am pretty new to iRacing and do not have that much experience, I am just trying to dial in my setup. My race in May was not that great and I learned a lot from it. The goal for this race is to become the Rookie of the Year and move up as far as I can on Sunday."

P32. SILVIO SANCHEZ (No. 407 Corinthians Rally Team Dallara IR-18 Chevrolet): Regarding the high track temperatures expected for Sunday: "Obviously it's an opportunity to make adjustments that save more tires at this extremely high temperature, but it will always be dangerous for everyone as anyone behind a group of two or three cars will be in constant danger of bumping into the wall when cornering."

On his race finish expectations: "I believe I have a good car, but not the best, so for me a great result would be to be in leader lap when the last yellow flag appears, then everything can happen."

P33. ANDREW WOOD (No. 32 Team Talent Dallara IR-18 Chevrolet): "We at Team Talent have been working really hard on a set that helps the car drive well in hot temperatures as we expect the forecast to be very hot on Sunday. I think it's an opportunity for us to change our mindset a bit and think more about how we protect the car for a long race rather than go all out in cooler conditions. It's definitely going to be a race of survival and who makes the best setup."

Expectations for a race finish: "Well, of course winning would be fantastic, but there are so many good drivers in this race that a win or a podium seems almost impossible. I'd be satisfied with a top-20, but I will be hoping to get in to the top-10."