

A Press Conference With:

**BARRY GREEN
DARIO FRANCHITTI**

T.E. McHALE: Good afternoon to everyone. Welcome to the **CART Media Teleconference**. Thanks to all of you for taking the time to be with us today.

I'd like to open this afternoon by turning the call over to **Team KOOL Green** owner **Barry Green** who would like to make a very special announcement.

BARRY GREEN: Thanks **T.E.** and thank you everyone for being with us. I am actually calling you from **Klein Tools Headquarters** here in **Chicago** and a very exciting announcement for me and for **Team KOOL Green** as we have just signed a new two-year contract with **Dario Franchitti**.

So it's really exciting news for us. We've built up a tremendous relationship with **Dario**. He's done a tremendous job for our team and I think all of our partners **KOOL**, **Klein Tools**, **Honda**, **Firestone** are all very, very excited about extending this relationship. So really good news for us. **We've** got plenty of races left in this season to have a go at the **Championship** this year; then two more exciting years to follow. Thank you.

T.E. McHALE: Thank you, **Barry**, and congratulations to you and **Dario** and everyone at **Team KOOL Green**.

Some quick background on **Dario** before we begin taking questions. He's in his fifth **FedEx Championship Series** season and his fourth with **Team KOOL Green**. In 1999 he finished runner-up to **Juan Montoya** of **Target/Chip Ganassi Racing** in the closest **FedEx Championship Series Championship** in history, which **Montoya** won on the tie-breaker of most race victories when the two finished the season with exactly 212 **Championship** points.

Dario also finished third in the 1998 **FedEx Championship Series Championship** during his inaugural season with **Team KOOL Green**. He owns seven race victories including one this season at **Cleveland** and 10 career pole positions in **FedEx Championship Series** competition.

Dario claimed his first career **FedEx Championship Series** victory at **Road America**,

site of this weekend's **Motorola 220** in 1998. He is also the defending pole sitter there and holds the track qualifying record of 145.924 miles per hour established last year.

Dario enters this weekend's **Motorola 220** ranked fourth in the **FedEx Championship Series Championship** with 81 points.

The **Motorola 220**, **Round 14** of the **FedEx Championship Series**, will be televised live on **ESPN** this **Sunday, August 19th** beginning at 1:00 **P.M.** eastern time.

With that, we'll open it up to questions for **Dario** or **Barry**.

Q. *Dario, when you came over here just talk about how long you thought you might be here, maybe a two-year deal head back to **Formula 1** and just how this thing has evolved and what you are looking at for the future?*

DARIO FRANCHITTI: How are you doing, first of all, **Robin**?

Q. *Good.*

DARIO FRANCHITTI: I didn't really know how long I would be over here. In the case of the first season with **Hogan Racing**, if I did a good job then we would see what would happen at that point. Then **Barry** and I did our deal together. And I really didn't know, you know, what was going to happen. Basically what's happened is I have been enjoying myself over here, enjoying the racing, so I am still here.

I am really happy with the team. I love working with **Barry** and so that's one of the reasons I am still here. It is a great bunch of guys. And to have such a long-term relationship, I think you have to have that enjoyment and you have to first -- one of the biggest things is they give me a chance to win races and championships.

Q. *Following up, was it the kind of thing though that you thought: Well, I will come here and get some experience, did -- what did you think you were going to find when you came here? Did you expect it to be as competitive as you found it to be or I guess maybe what your expectations were when I came here.*

DARIO FRANCHITTI: I didn't really have too many expectations. It's was a big change around for me because I had been driving a touring car in **Germany** and then to come over here and drive a **Champ Car** it was a huge change

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so I really didn't know what to expect. I didn't have any really preconceived ideas. I thought it would be reasonably competitive. It just seems to become more so every year and a bit more difficult. So that certainly keeps me honest and provides a challenge every year.

Q. *Can you just discuss a little bit the factors involved in what led you to decide that the best thing for you was to stay here a couple of more years?*

DARIO FRANCHITTI: Well, the first thing, you know, I have to do what makes me happy first of all, and this season I have had one of the most enjoyable that I have ever had, racing anything from when I started racing go-karts. That was the first thing really. That was the **No. 1** decision - what was going to make me happy. What's going to provide, you know, a chance to win races, the chance to win championships. The guys can do that, and that was the main decision.

Formula 1 is something that I still look at and think about, but as I say, it's very important for me to be at -- whatever I am doing to be happy and be competitive. Team **KOOL Green** and **Barry** and everybody else on the team provided that chance. I am happy to be extending the agreement for another couple of years.

Q. *Was this something where talks have been in the works for a while with you and Barry, say, I'd like to work something out, stay here a couple more years? Can you just kind of talk about the dynamics of what kind of brought this together?*

DARIO FRANCHITTI: It was basically, you know, there wasn't any -- I guess some people came up and talked to my agent or whatever talked to **Julian**, but my plan was always to stay with **Team KOOL Green**. I think maybe **Barry**, it would be better to talk with him about that. Because **Julian** and **Barry** negotiated everything. It was from my side relatively painless. I suppose writing the check for **Barry** was the hard part. But it was all very painless. I know **Barry**. I trust him, and it was easy. It was, you know, just a continuation really of a great relationship.

Q. *Barry, I am wondering Barry where you stand in terms of trying to bring your whole operation to Indy for the 500 next year.*

BARRY GREEN: Well, that's something we can look at in the near future here, **Steve**. My goal was -- my challenge was to keep the team as it is now; keep **Team KOOL Green** with **Paul** and with **Dario** and I have achieved that. And I am

really excited. Today this was a big hurdle for me and I didn't want to break up the team. The team has had tremendous, I think, understanding for each other. We work extremely hard. We've been fast at almost every single race. Yes, we would like to have won a few more races than we've won this year, but we've been fast and we've worked hard and we've had a lot of fun along the way. And that's important to everyone because it's a tough schedule.

We definitely will look at the **Indy 500**. I say look at it -- as I said, my primary goal is to have a competitive **CART** team and to win the **CART Championship**. That is the primary goal.

We'll look. We'll wait and see what the schedule looks like for **CART** for next year and then look at the **Indy 500** as a secondary job.

Q. *You have heard what Barry said about the Indy 500. I am wondering what your feelings are about going back next year?*

DARIO FRANCHITTI: For me it wouldn't be a sort of going back. It would be going there for the first time. I have never experienced 500 so it's really a case of, you know, it's **Barry's** decision. If **Barry** says, hey, we're going to do the 500 then I will be excited to go there and compete in the race. But right now, as **Barry** says, my **No. 1** priority right now is to try and win **Road America** this weekend. From that point on try and win the **FedEx Championship** this season. That's what I am trying to do. Then everything is secondary behind that right now.

Q. *Dario, talk about your relationship with Paul and how you two have really worked together as a team?*

DARIO FRANCHITTI: Paul and I have worked together from the very first test we did really. Obviously we've had our moments on the track when we've been fighting for position, a couple of times we've had contact, taken each other out. But we have a good respect for each other and we get on well. That's very important, first of all. I think we trust each other. We know we're both out there to beat each other but at the same time we're trying to get both cars up at the front and working together, that's the best way to do that. Having **Michael** as a technical partner is also helping in that process. It is also great to have a teammate like **PT**. First of all, he's a good guy and that's very important.

Q. *Talk about Elkhart Lake, your expectations, what the track is like for you?*

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DARIO FRANCHITTI: It's a track that I love. I think it's certainly my favorite to drive on the whole calendar. It just a marvelous place to go racing. I think it really suits the **Champ Cars**. They are really in one of their natural environments so you can really attack that course and have a lot of fun there. It is just a wonderful place.

As for expectations I really don't know. I am going to go out there and try do my best job and see what we can do. Obviously we qualified on the pole last year but that's for the history books. It's all about this weekend and doing the best job we can.

Q. Why do you seem to like road courses better than ovals; is that a fair statement, first of all?

DARIO FRANCHITTI: I think I enjoy driving road courses as my first -- what I am used to, what I came from. But as far as saying more successful -- certainly I have won more races, but as for performancewise this season, we've been stronger on ovals than we've had on certain road courses due to circumstances, unfortunately, out of the control of myself and the team we haven't had the results yet. Performancewise we've been, I would think, as strong if not stronger than anybody.

Q. After the intelligent move to renew the contract with Barry, I would like an honest answer about what do you think of today's situation with Formula 1?

DARIO FRANCHITTI: In what way do you mean?

Q. Regarding in general - bad, good, no good?

DARIO FRANCHITTI: No, I think from a driver's point of view it's very difficult because you have to be in one of two teams. Maybe three teams now to have a chance of winning races. So from that point of view it is difficult. But I think it's still a very good show. I still watch a lot as a fan. But it's very difficult from the outside to comment on the situation but that's just my observations from the outside.

Q. After the first year of curiosity for the return of Formula 1 in the United States, do you think this year will be the same, we'll have the same success?

DARIO FRANCHITTI: I have no idea. I really don't know.

Q. I wonder if could you rate Dario as far as pure driving talent.

BARRY GREEN: Well, that's hard. I think to be fair. I can only compare him with drivers that I have worked with and I have been lucky enough to be with some great drivers. A lot of people have asked how **Dario** does compare with drivers that I have worked with. I think **Villeneuve** is a very fair comparison because they approach their job in very, very much the same manner. They expect the cars to be absolutely perfect. They work hard themselves, both **Jacques** and **Dario** worked extremely hard. Jacques worked extremely hard himself and **Dario** works extremely hard on getting the car to how he needs it, and when they do get that car perfect, look out, because they are the fastest on the track.

I think **Jacques** was lucky enough to and good enough to win an oval. The only surprise I have got with **Dario** is that he hasn't won an oval yet. But that's not because he hasn't been fast enough. He had had some great drives on ovals. A couple situations where we've had contact or pitstop problems and **Dario** has driven back to the front. He had had some tremendous drives on the oval.

I think - and I have said this before - that I think **Dario Franchitti** is faster on the ovals than **Jacques Villeneuve** was. So I put **Dario** way up there. I put **Paul Tracy** way up there. I put **Michael Andretti** up there. I am very lucky to have these three guys on my team.

Q. Dario, 13th race of the season here at Road America this weekend, you are just 23 points behind Kenny Brack, no points last week for you at Mid-Ohio. Is it the point in the season now where you just can't afford to leave a venue without scoring any points? Is the pressure really increased at this point in the season?

DARIO FRANCHITTI: I think any race during the season is like that. You can't afford to leave anyplace without points. Unfortunately sometimes you do. I think seeing that happen this year to everybody without exception, whether they are fighting for the **Championship** or whatever. It is just one of those things. It's annoying when mistakes are made. For me it's more annoying when I make the mistake. So I was pretty upset after the weekend because I made that mistake. But hopefully lifts up our head. There's enough races enough points left. We have a good chance of challenging for this **Championship**. So that's what I am looking forward to.

Q. Last year, traditionally Road America, those who start outside the first couple of rows

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haven't fared too well. I guess **Paul** last year being the exception especially the way his car shut off and he got it going again. Is this a track, you know, is there a lot of opportunities in the past, make some headway, should you be unable to qualify in the first couple of rows or if you are back in the pack is it that much of a tougher climb?

DARIO FRANCHITTI: It's a tough climb, any race is difficult from the back of the pack. This is a difficult place to pass actually up at **Road America** which makes **Paul's** achievement last year all the more remarkable. When you consider he didn't have any help from the yellow flags, so I think he did an exceptional job last year. But it is always handy to qualify up in the front car row. Every time I am in a qualifying session I am out there to try and stick the thing on pole position to make the race that bit easier.

Q. If you were a fan attending **Road America** what corner would you prefer to watch the **CART** race from and why?

DARIO FRANCHITTI: During testing I have been around the track and I have looked at different corners. I would say go to a variety of different places. Down into turn 5 is just awesome. Canada corner is terrific. Watching the cars come out under the bridge into the last corner is -- the whole place is breathtaking to watch. It looks as exciting from outside as it is from the inside of the cars. It is a great venue.

Q. Dario, the early forecast right now is the possibility of rain for this coming weekend. What is **Road America** like to drive in the rain? Is it difficult?

DARIO FRANCHITTI: Last thing I can remember driving up there the first race up there in 1997. Yeah, it's pretty difficult getting under the trees there, it's pretty slick. What tends to happen is that it dries out in certain places and under the trees it is going to remain wet; when it's a wet track and a drying track is when it really becomes difficult.

But it's **Road America**, it is a challenge in any conditions.

Q. Rockingham, you were there, just like to get your impressions of it, and there has been talk that the ticket sales were not what they were want them to be at this point. Is your sense that the **British** fans wait for the last minute to buy tickets or do you think it is just a matter of maybe doing a little heavier marketing?

DARIO FRANCHITTI: I think first of all, I think it is a terrific facility. The progress they have

made since I was last there in **March** is unbelievable. The place looks great. As far as ticket sales and stuff, I really don't know anything about that. I have read stuff in the press as well, but I think if you believe everything you read in the press, you know, there's certain things that are written that maybe aren't true, but I don't know. I have to say I think they are doing good job and I am sure the fans -- I don't know when they buy their ticket or whatever, but I think anybody I have spoken to is -- they are all going to show up and I think it is going to be quite a good crowd and be a good atmosphere.

Q. Dario, I wondered psychologically how this positions you? Were you going through a period of wondering where your career was going to lead? Does this announcement give you some sort of resolve confidence to move forward for some duration of time?

DARIO FRANCHITTI: No, I don't think it really makes any difference to me in that regard at all. I think you know, it was just -- that's not something that I really worry about too much. I am only really interested in with my job and basically do the best I can at any given race. And you know, as far as direction, I was pretty -- I was confident, as I said, I was very happy, especially after last season which was incredibly difficult, I need to recharge my batteries which I did over the winter and I came back for the start of this season feeling -- I had a whole new enthusiasm again for getting out there and driving the car. I think that's continued also throughout the season. That was one of the reasons as I said I have been having a great time working with the team this year again and it's just -- for me it is a great thing to be staying there for a couple -- another couple of seasons.

Q. Dario, going into **Road America**, can you give us a lap?

DARIO FRANCHITTI: I'd rather not actually if you don't mind. I tend not to do that.

Q. Going back to spring training 1997, your first time there, you and I talked at the baseball game and your perspective of **CART** then and now, how much of **CART** then do you see yourself now?

DARIO FRANCHITTI: A lot has happened since then. (**Laughs**) really. At that point everything was unknown. I didn't know people. I didn't know anybody in the paddock. I didn't -- watched racing on **TV** but I wasn't a part of it.

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Everything was strange and new. Now, you know, obviously in the paddock I feel -- I know a lot of people in the paddock. I have a lot of great friends there. I think I understand -- everything is a bit more familiar now. But still surprises you. The one thing is that, you know, in races -- when the race starts you can never -- experience only counts so much because two races are never the same.

Q. It's going to be nice to see you around for a couple more years. I guess you are happy that Vancouver is on the schedule for three more years?

DARIO FRANCHITTI: Absolutely. Yeah, that was good news. I love racing out there in **B.C.** It's awesome. For all sorts of reasons. It's one of the places I really enjoy coming to.

Q. Do you approach it like another race? I am thinking partially about what happened last year and not winning the race?

DARIO FRANCHITTI: Last year was frustrating. That's putting it mildly with what happened.

But yeah, obviously **Vancouver** has a special feeling, special feeling going out there with it being **Greg's** hometown and stuff. There's always -- for me there's a different feeling there. Certainly there was going out there last year, I get to hang out with **Rick** and **Donna** and the family and all those guys. It's definitely a special place from that point of view because it was **Greg's** hometown. A lot of great memories from **Vancouver**.

Q. What is the design on your helmet? What does that symbolize?

DARIO FRANCHITTI: It's got the **Scottish** flag on top with the colors of the **Italian** flag running through the sides. The **Italian** flag obviously runs up and down but we took a bit of an artistic license and incorporated the colors in it. Troy does a great job painting it and just makes little additions here and there to make it a bit more pleasing and a bit more sort of funky. And on the back it has a small **Greg Moore** sticker.

Q. Congratulations on the new contract. Can you expand a little bit on what makes you as a driver happy to be here in the U.S. and drive in CART other than just winning and being competitive, any other factors involved in that?

DARIO FRANCHITTI: I think that the relationship between people is very important, the people on the team, for instance, I think you have to be comfortable, first of all, I am sitting next to

Barry here, but, you know, you have to be the boss guy first of all. There has to be a level of trust there. I think we've always had that. But last season when things were pretty difficult on occasion **Barry** didn't lose any sort of faith and was -- never questioned me; never said hey, you are not doing your job right here; just keep doing what you are doing, you will be fine. That was key, just the people on the team, everybody from team manager, **Kyle Moyer**, to my engineer, **Iain Watt**, my mechanics, my crew, the truck drivers, it's just a great bunch of people. And first of all, that makes me happy, makes me happy to hang out with those people. I enjoy working with him. I enjoy winning races with them and hopefully at some point I will get the pleasure of winning a **Championship** together with those people. That's what makes me happy. I enjoy the atmosphere in the paddock with all of the drivers, that's a great thing as well. But winning is very, very important to me. But there's more to it than that.

Q. Barry, you have got the entire team back together again next year. Are the contracts with Klein and your other sponsors long-term or are they on, say, a two-year basis?

BARRY GREEN: We can't discuss too many details about the contracts, but having just signed **Dario**, everything is -- it's as long-term as it can be in motor racing and I am very pleased right now. We've added **Michael** to the group this year to -- feeling that if we had three strong drivers, three strong teams working together we would do well. I think we've done very well. We've been very, very fast in every race. We've not seen the wins that we wanted, but we've been fast. So we're not about to panic. But I think that just continuing to build on this relationship, we've got to be very, very strong again next year. With the partners I have, with **Firestone** and of course, **Honda**, I feel that I am certainly really excited about next season.

Q. You certainly have a headstart on a lot of people from next season getting all of this out of the way early?

BARRY GREEN: Thank you, that's important too. Not only important that the drivers feel good and comfortable. Certainly makes me relaxed a little bit more. But there's always work for us to do and there's always work for us to do as far as reaching out to the fans, but I think that it's good for all my employees. They can sit back knowing that we've got three great drivers lined up for next year with sponsors to support them. **We**

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try and bring it forward as far as we can because, believe me, it's not a lot of fun coming down to the 11th hour there trying to get it all done. I have been there. I have done that. This is the better way and we're real real pleased.

Q. *Barry, talk a little bit about the contract; is the deal optioned? Does Dario have the option if he gets an opportunity across the ocean would he of that option to take a look at it?*

DARIO FRANCHITTI: No, again, I can't talk about too many details, but as long as we've got a team and sponsors and a building to house those race cars in place, we've got **Dario**. So that's the extent of it.

Q. *Just a quick one for Dario. We were just kind of wondering was the pit board person at Mid-Ohio a little bit of the distraction when you made that mistake?*

DARIO FRANCHITTI: Absolutely not.

Q. *Dario, I keep -- what I am trying to -- I was reading the latest Auto Sport with the story about you in there. You and he are good buddies. I was standing with him at Fontana a couple of years ago. He was like -- just -- I mean he could not believe it. He was just blown away by the whole thing. In that story you are talking about -- Montoya had some quotes too saying that Formula 1 is still -- some of the guys still have -- they look down a little bit on CART. Yet you know you guys both said, hey, until you try it, don't -- you don't really -- the four disciplines that you have got to run, and I just wondered if you looked at the thing as being pretty equal -- it must be pretty equal in your mind, I mean, to keep staying here?*

DARIO FRANCHITTI: Yeah, of course it is equal. I think, you know, you look at a guy who can drive a **Champ Car** quickly and can get in a **Formula 1** car. Okay you look at **Zanardi**, you look at the car **Zanardi** was in, it was not a good car. You look at **Jacques**. Jacques got a great car, was on the pace straight away. You look at **Juan**, he got in a good car, and on pace straight away. That's the difference. You are as good as your car. That counts in **Champ Cars** too but there's a lot more equality through the equipment.

But I think, you know, you look at **Montoya**, **Montoya** was quick here. He goes over there, he's quick there too. You brought **Schumacher** here, yeah, he'd be quick here too. I think when you get the **Eddie Irvines** of this world spouting out about what's this and that in a **Champ Car**, the guy never had been in a race, never mind, sat in a car so I don't know how he can say that.

He should really concentrate on driving his car right first before he should comment on our series. But yeah, I think both **Championships** are highly competitive. I would say ours is by far more competitive than **Formula 1** and they are both different but they are both great shows.

BARRY GREEN: I think to add to that, **Jacques** saying it is not as competitive as now -- **CART** is not as competitive now as it was when he was here is just absolutely a load of rubbish because I would say it is many, many, many more times competitive when **Jacques** -- than when **Jacques** was here. You just look at our qualifying grids and how hard it is to win. So you know, I think to see **Juan** go over there and do such a good job. Dario -- (inaudible) it is pretty hard with him over here, you know, equaled the **Championship** in points; lost because he just didn't have quite so many wins but they had some great battles. It is all about teams and personnel and being comfortable and you see good drivers go this way; you see good drivers go that way. I'd say they are both great series and I love to watch **Formula 1** and I love to be involved with **CART**.

Q. *The proof in the pudding is that they keep using CART to either send people over here or pull people back. Obviously the owners in Formula 1 obviously have some high regard for it.*

DARIO FRANCHITTI: Yeah, I think they do. I think if you look at some of the guys particularly like a **Frank Williams** a guy who is one -- if not the most respected team owner out there, I mean certainly from my point of view he is anyway, **Formula 1** he is a guy -- he is incredibly intelligent and a great guy and he has obviously a tremendous admiration for this series and he's picked a lot of his drivers and different people and I think has **Barry** said, they are using this -- they are bringing people over from **CART** and stuff and using it and at the same time I think if you watch on **Sunday** night most of them are watching on **TV** and watching our races because they are so exciting.

I think the days are gone when **CART** is a feature series for **Formula 1**. I think **CART** is a great series in it own right.

T.E. McHALE: I just want to deliver a couple of statistics that amplify the point that were just being made. 8 different winners in 12 events so far this season, but the telling statistic in my mind is really that we've had 18 different drivers finish on the podium already this year and that's barely midway through the season and actually we had 18 by the midway point. So I think that goes a

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long way toward telling you how competitive the **FedEx Championship Series** is.

I guess we'll wrap it up for the afternoon. We want to thank **Barry Green** and **Dario Franchitti** for being with us. Gentlemen, thanks. Congratulations. Best of luck at **Road America** and through the rest of the season and the seasons to come.

DARIO FRANCHITTI: Thanks, guys.

BARRY GREEN: Thank you.

T.E. McHALE: Thanks to all of you who took the time to join us this afternoon and we'll talk to you next week.

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7