

# DRIVERS TRY THE TRACK

## VERIZON INDYCAR SERIES: APRIL 1-2, 2016



IndyCar drivers took to the track at Phoenix International Raceway during February, as they began preparing for open wheel racing under the lights during the Phoenix Grand Prix on Saturday night, April 2, 2016. Here's what they had to say:

**On coming back to Phoenix...** "It's great to be back in Phoenix. The last time we raced here was in 2006. Look at this weather—it's awesome. Phoenix actually was my first visit in America when I came to test for Tasman Motorsports in 1995, so I really enjoy it here." **HÉLIO CASTRONEVES**, driver of the No. 3 Hitachi Team Penske Chevrolet

**On the track...** "The grip around Phoenix is really high. It's a pretty serious track. You have to be very committed with this Indy car around here. We are flat out running 180 down the front straightaway. Pretty high commitment. If you're not on the thing standing on the gas, it's going to be hard to do a lap time around here that's competitive. That's the first thing I noticed, when we haven't been in the car for three or four months in the off season, you get here for the test session and it really throws you in the deep end. To get back into an Indy car for the first time, you always feel quick after a winter break, but I think this place kind of extenuated that speed a little bit. People are going to see some speed and some serious lap times. For Phoenix specifically, you're going to be under 20 seconds for qualifying and probably right at 20 for the race. I don't think you're going to get anything better than the Indy car." **JOSEF NEWGARDEN**, driver of the No. 21 Ed Carpenter Racing Chevrolet

• "Let me tell you, we are going around out on 20 seconds on the splits and wow, it's fast. And we're just testing. I guarantee you when we start really putting the right things together, this is really going to be an amazing place. To go around 20 seconds in a mile here, it's pretty fast. It feels great. The new change probably helped a little bit to go even faster, because in the past, Turn 1 used to be a little bit sharper, and now the outside is open. So it's kind of cool, and man, this is great." **HÉLIO CASTRONEVES**

**On Phoenix setting up for the Indy 500...** "It's nice, actually, because it's the first time we're

going to have an oval before going to Indy. I think that's going to definitely be a plus, just to get in the groove of racing in an oval. The first time we've been doing it, it's been at Indy, so it takes a long time to get comfortable. So leaving here, it's definitely going to be a plus." **JUAN PABLO MONTOYA**, driver of the No. 2 Verizon Team Penske Chevrolet

• "Before we were coming here, we weren't running any ovals before Indy, so I see it as a good thing. It's a little different now, but traditionally over the years, a lot of people used to come test here to get ready for Indy. For a race setup, historically they have been very similar mechanically from here to Indy. We'll see if that translates still, but it's still a great tune-up." **ED CARPENTER**, driver of the No. 20 Fuzzy's Vodka Ed Carpenter Racing Chevrolet

**On racing under the lights...** "I think it is even more spectacular at night. You get to see the sparks coming out from the race car, you get to see cars going faster because the air is more dense at night. So it's actually better for us and it's cooler, so it's better for the fans as well." **SIMON PAGENAUD**, driver of the No. 22 Team Penske Chevrolet

**On what first time fans can expect...** "We are very accessible to the fans. We have autograph sessions, and fans are allowed in the paddock. It's important to be fan friendly. It's important for the fans to walk through the paddock, see the drivers, go to autograph sessions, check out the cars. That's what IndyCar is all about." **WILL POWER**, driver of the No. 12 Verizon Team Penske Chevrolet

• "What people don't realize is that we have a phenomenal product, phenomenal race. The technology—we're talking about going around 180-185 mph on the straightaway. On the corner speed, it's about 177 mph, so we only lose like 3 mph in the corner, so that shows how fast we are going at this place. Those wings that you see on our cars are just like airplane wings, except upside down, so when you're going faster it pushes the car into the ground to create more grip. That's why when you see people kind of behind each other lose a little bit of the downforce, but then you have to find a way to pass, so it's going to be exciting. It's going to be fun. Trust me, it's going to be amazing." **HÉLIO CASTRONEVES** ■

(Top) Josef Newgarden, driver of the No. 21 Ed Carpenter Racing Chevrolet.  
(Bottom) Hélio Castroneves, driver of the No. 3 Hitachi Team Penske Chevrolet.