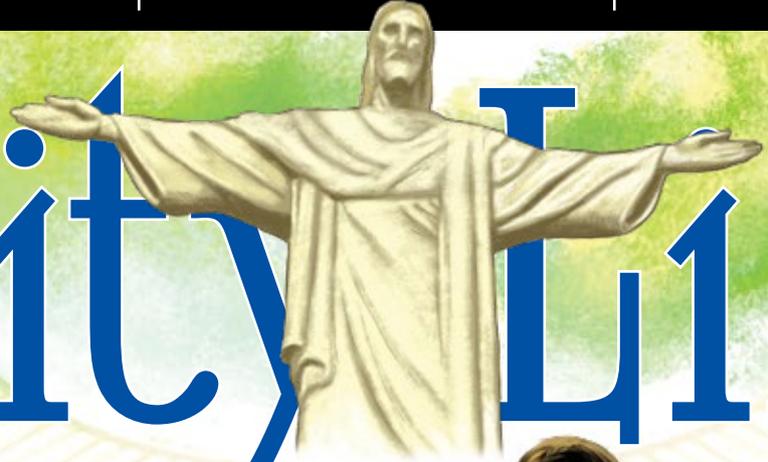


JAMES HINCHCLIFFE:
THE NEXT INDYCAR CHAMP? P. 38

GARDENING ADVICE
FROM LOCAL EXPERTS P. 48

THE LATEST NEWS ON
MACKENZIE VAUGHAN HOSPITAL P. 42

CityLife



THE ULTIMATE WORLD CUP GUIDE

THE TEAMS. THE PLAYERS. THE STORY.

Publication Mail Agreement 40026675

PLUS

**PATIO PARTY ESSENTIALS & SIZZLING SUMMER
RECIPES TO KICK OFF THE SEASON**

June/July 2014 \$4.95
Display in Fashion/Lifestyle
until Aug 19



CANADA'S BRIGHTEST RACING STAR IS POISED TO CONQUER INDYCAR. BUT IN A STRUGGLING SERIES AND WITH THE WORLD WATCHING, CAN JAMES HINCHCLIFFE MAKE 2014 HIS YEAR? Written By Michael Hill

LIFE IN THE FAST LANE



James Hinchcliffe must be running on fumes. In a trailer on a side street just north of Toronto City Hall, the Canadian IndyCar driver fields questions about his racing career while trying to grab a few bites of lunch before wrapping up day one of a two-day commercial shoot for Honda. Last night he was at an event in Indianapolis for Flat 12 Bierwerks, the American craft brewery that makes the James Hinchcliffe-inspired Hinchtown Hammer Down beer. He was on a flight well before dawn and only landed in Toronto about six hours ago. The rest of this chilly May morning was spent in a Civic SI, running through take after take as the film crew pushed to beat the looming rain. He'll be flying back to Indianapolis in little over 24 hours before departing for New Orleans for simulator practise. "If he has more than two nights in one place, it's a record," Hinchcliffe's sister and personal assistant Rebecca explained earlier from behind the scenes. But for the man who's been touted as the new face and potential saviour of IndyCar, this is just business as usual.

The gentle patter of rain on the trailer's roof signals that the second stretch of filming will be delayed until the spring shower subsides. It means

Hinchcliffe will get just a little bit more time away from the spotlight, and it's that time that's in short supply these days. "Time, that's my most valued possession at the minute," says the 27-year-old. Since rolling onto the IndyCar scene in 2011, Hinchcliffe has progressively climbed the ranks of the open-wheel racing series, moving



"IF HE HAS MORE THAN TWO NIGHTS IN ONE PLACE, IT'S A RECORD"

— Rebecca Hinchcliffe

from promising newcomer to potential champion. Thanks to some savvy self-promotion and a few cheeky Go Daddy commercials, he's also quickly become one of the most (if not the most) recognized faces in IndyCar. With that fame comes commitments, and it seems that everyone wants a piece of him. There are the press conferences, the sponsorship appearances, the commercial shoots, the phone calls, the emails — the annoying journalist

disrupting lunch with incessant questioning? "Present company excepted," he smiles. And that's not even the racing part. But Hinchcliffe has always known the price of success. "I was kind of at the forefront of this new generation of drivers that was raised with the very distinct understanding that driving the race car is like the second most important part of your job," he says. The pressure at this level spills out from the track and floods into everyday life. And in a sport as competitive and unpredictable as IndyCar, pressure seems to be the only constant.

You could hardly blame Hinchcliffe if he opted to take this time to himself, especially considering the rough start to his season. Car problems led to a disappointing 19th finish at the season opener in St. Petersburg, Florida, where he won his first IndyCar race the year prior. He found himself in a seven-car wreck in Long Beach thanks to an ill-advised attempted pass by teammate Ryan Hunter-Reay. He made the top 10 in Alabama, but the seventh-place finish was a slip after qualifying second. The inaugural Grand Prix of Indianapolis is a week away and just around the corner from that is the premier event in IndyCar, the 98th Indianapolis 500. He'll be in Speedway,

Indiana, for the entire month of May prepping for the back-to-back events. Hinchcliffe knows expectations for the “Greatest Spectacle in Racing” are high.

“It’s our Super Bowl, our World Series, our World Cup all in one,” he says of the Indy 500, one of the pillars of the unofficial Triple Crown of Motorsport. “All of that extra time spent, it adds to the pressure. You appreciate how much more effort goes into this race than any one else, so you want to reward the crew and you want to reward yourself and everybody else for all that hard work over the month with a good result.”

It’s not just the weight of winning on Hinchcliffe’s shoulders. Despite its storied past, IndyCar is a struggling series. Its television audience is a mere shadow of the crowds drawn by powerhouses NASCAR and Formula One and a lot of hope has been put in young bloods like Hinchcliffe to bring back fans. After the Oakville-born racer won IndyCar’s Rookie of the Year in 2011 he became a well-known Canadian athlete in 2012, thanks in part to a few comical commercials he did for his then-sponsor Go Daddy. But it was in the 2013 IndyCar season that he showed he was no joke on the professional track. He claimed his first IndyCar victory at St. Petersburg and grabbed two more checkered flags, one in a daring last-second move in Sao Paulo, Brazil, to become the first three-win racer of the year. Despite the victories, inconsistent driving culminated in a number of did-not-finishes that placed Hinchcliffe eighth overall. But many felt that 2014 was Hinchcliffe’s year, that the Canadian kid in his #27 United Fiber & Data car had a real shot at his first series championship. The “Mayor of Hinchtown” was the new face of the open-wheel series and the *Toronto Sun* even proclaimed him as “the man who could save IndyCar.”

Hinchcliffe, though, knows it’s not a one-man game: “It’s extra pressure for sure,” he says of the praise. “But I think there are a lot of us that do a lot to try and promote the sport. My name probably comes up more than others because I’ve got a bunch of goofy videos on YouTube.” But it’s still a mantle he’ll take on.

IndyCar driver James Hinchcliffe sports his #27 United Fiber & Data racing suit at a commercial shoot in Toronto for Honda



Photo By Gil Tamim

Hinchcliffe is a genuine fan of the sport and still recalls those childhood Sundays watching F1 and IndyCar with his dad, an English racing fanatic who brought wee James to his first race in Toronto when he was only 18 months old. Some of his fondest memories are running around Exhibition Place at the old Molson Indy Toronto, and he'll never forget gripping the wheel of the first go-kart he received on his ninth birthday. If he can help bring the sport he loves back to its former prestige, well, he's all in: "If I'm in a position to help my sport then yeah, absolutely. Fine. Love it."

In 2012, Hinchcliffe was voted IndyCar's Most Popular Driver, and yes, some of that was likely because of the "goofy" videos online. But there's more to it than that: Hinchcliffe's an all-around likeable guy. He's unbelievably collected, managing expectations with pragmatic calm. He's grounded and humble, even though he's incredibly talented and intelligent and knows it. The jokes come easy and self-deprecation is effortless. He runs through the history of his guitar collection, which includes a sunburst '64 Fender Stratocaster, a similar axe used by his musical icon Eric Clapton, and has no problem revealing how good his playing is on a scale of one to 10: "Three," he admits with a laugh. There's a seemingly impenetrable air of relaxed confidence about him. It's like nothing could phase him. And that's exactly how a successful driver needs to be.

While the Dallara DW12s that Hinchcliffe and his ilk strap into week after week may not be the technological marvels used in F1, they're still dangerously swift, cracking 300 kilometres/hour as easily as Superman breaks a fortune cookie. A mistake could mean their life, and enough men have been claimed by speed's fickle and unsympathetic nature. Men like Canadian Greg Moore, Hinchcliffe's hero, who died in a violent crash at California Speedway in 1999. "In a race, and especially over an entire season, you are so reliant on so many other factors," he says of the challenge



Hinchcliffe mounts the podium at Sao Paulo after a daring, last-second move lead to his second win of the 2013 IndyCar season

and unpredictability of racing. "Let's say that there are a thousand things that need to happen for you to win a race — you control about 10."

And sometimes that lack of control leaves strategy in the dust. Sometimes the car doesn't perform how you'd like, as it did at St. Petersburg back in March. Sometimes your teammate makes an aggressive play that ends up wrecking a third of the field, including yourself, as it did at Long Beach in April. Sometimes a piece of debris flies off a car, strikes you in the head and knocks you out cold, as it did at the inaugural Grand Prix of Indianapolis a week after the Honda commercial shoot. And, yes, sometimes on an absolutely perfect day for racing, after you managed to come back from a concussion and qualify second in one of the biggest races on the planet, you see an opening that could jump you from fourth to second with only 25 laps left and go for it, make contact with Ed Carpenter's car, sending the two of you crashing into the wall and out of the race, just as it did at the Indy 500 at the end of May. That's racing. That's life.

It's the Monday morning after Hunter-Reay drank the ceremonial bottle of milk from atop the podium at the 2014 Indy 500. After his heartbreaking finish on lap 175, which capped off a disappointing month in Indianapolis, Hinchcliffe explains via email how "gutted" he is for his team. Even though it's tough to swallow how few points they've put on the board, he's looking at that silver lining: that the car has been running solid and that if they keep doing the things that they've been doing right, the victories will come.

But, as Hinchcliffe explained in the trailer just north of Toronto City Hall on that chilly May morning, he's not one to chase numerical objectives over his career. There's too much you can't control, too much that can go wrong even though you've done everything right. Instead, his ultimate goal is simple: "I want to leave this sport with the respect of the people that I respect in it. And if I've done that — career goal, check."

www.hinchtown.com

OFF THE TRACK WITH JAMES HINCHCLIFFE

SCUBA DIVING

“For me it's the ultimate release, because my life is very frantic and hectic and busy and emails and calls and everything — go here; do this. Down there: silence. You're like this guest in a completely other world. It's literally just you and what you're seeing and I find that so relaxing. It's my ultimate escape.”

MUSIC

“I listen to music to calm me down. If I need to get away from stuff for a minute I'll just plug in the headphones and I'm wherever the song is. I can get out of wherever I am if I just have my iPod.”

BUDGIES

“My girlfriend, Kristen Dee, we live together. She's from Australia. She grew up having budgies. We started with two. We're up to four. And I have to admit: they're a blast.”