



## It's On For Kanaan!

### **IZOD IndyCar Series Star Tony Kanaan Returns To the Prelude to the Dream at Eldora Speedway**

**Wednesday, June 8 Live on HBO Pay-Per-View®**

INDIANAPOLIS (May 18, 2011) – Tony Kanaan, the 2004 IZOD IndyCar Series champion and nine-time Indianapolis 500 starter, will compete in the **Prelude to the Dream June 8 at the legendary Eldora Speedway in Rossburg, Ohio**, which will be presented live to the entire nation on HBO Pay-Per-View® with proceeds from the telecast supporting four of the nation's top children's hospitals:

- **Levine Children's Hospital in Charlotte, N.C.:** [www.LevineChildrensHospital.org](http://www.LevineChildrensHospital.org)
- **Children's Healthcare of Atlanta:** [www.choa.org](http://www.choa.org)
- **St. Louis Children's Hospital:** [www.StLouisChildrens.org](http://www.StLouisChildrens.org)
- **Children's Medical Center Dallas:** [www.childrens.com](http://www.childrens.com)

Kanaan, who has 15 career Indy car victories, competed in last year's Prelude to the Dream, where he was the first foreign-born driver to compete in the Prelude since Colombian-born Juan Pablo Montoya in 2007.

"I'm thrilled to be back in the Prelude to the Dream," said Kanaan, who hails from Salvador, Bahia, Brazil. "It's an amazing lineup of drivers and we're all competing for such a good cause. It's very rare for me to get a chance to drive something other than my GEICO/KV Racing Technology/Lotus and to not have to race with points in mind. I'm not saying I'm going to do anything crazy, because the goal is to help my team win, but I'm definitely going to have some fun."

Kanaan is one of the most popular drivers in the IZOD IndyCar Series. He has four top-10 finishes in the Indianapolis 500, including a second-place result in 2004, and he holds the record for most consecutive races led, having led at least one lap in seven consecutive Indianapolis 500s between 2002 and 2008. Overall, his seven races at the point rank him 10<sup>th</sup> all-time in the category, just six races behind all-time leader A.J. Foyt, who led in 13 of his 35 starts at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Kanaan's 214 total laps led at Indianapolis rank him 28<sup>th</sup> out of the 198 drivers who have led a lap in the Greatest Spectacle in Racing.

Kanaan was the proverbial fish out of water in last year's Prelude, as the 2,300-pound dirt Late Model stock car he drove for the first time was a far different machine from the 1,600-pound, open-wheel Dallara he campaigns in the IZOD IndyCar Series. Nonetheless, Kanaan proved adept at turning right to go left around Eldora's half-mile, clay oval.

"That was the only time I drove that kind of car, and the next time will be the night of the race," Kanaan said. "By far, it was the craziest thing I had ever done. I had a lot of fun. I can't describe it. I definitely put myself in a very difficult spot, not testing and never being on dirt in my life. In 35 years, I'd never driven a car like that or on a surface like that."

"But, I enjoyed it a lot, and now that I've done it, I've heard that there are other IZOD IndyCar drivers that want to do it. I'm glad that Tony (Stewart) and everybody at Eldora showed me the preference of racing in the Prelude again. I can't wait."

The learning curve was steep for Kanaan, but with a little help from other Prelude participants, notably event founder Tony Stewart, Kanaan was slinging his dirt Late Model around Eldora's high banks with no fear.

"The biggest thing I learned is that we think our racetrack changes a lot? This is completely another world. I can drive with the brakes and the throttle at the same time, which I can't do in my (Indy) car," Kanaan said. "Tony (Stewart) was very helpful, and Jeff Gordon came over and we had some interaction because he had gone to Brazil for our go-kart race a couple of years ago. Kyle Busch also came over and tried to help me. The thing is, their experience in those cars is tremendous, but those three guys definitely came around and gave me as many tips as they could."

That driver-to-driver interaction is one of many reasons why Kanaan is making a return to the Prelude.

"A lot of the drivers that go there I've watched for a long time, so racing against those guys and Tony is awesome. The way the people welcomed me was awesome," Kanaan said. "You know, people try to make this big rivalry between NASCAR and IndyCar, but it doesn't exist at all. They are two completely different types of series. The majority of fans at this event are NASCAR fans, and when I went out to get introduced, I felt very right at home. They gave me a very warm welcome. That's something I enjoyed a lot."

So, what does Kanaan want to get out of this year's Prelude?

"To have fun. That's all of my expectations. We can get very competitive, but the biggest and most important part is to have fun and actually have the fans have fun and raise a lot of money for charity, because that's why we're there."

The live, commercial-free broadcast will begin at **8 p.m. EDT (5 p.m. PDT)** with an immediate replay. HBO Pay-Per-View's racing telecast has a suggested retail price of \$24.95 and is available to more than 92 million pay-per-view homes. HBO Pay-Per-View is the leading supplier of event programming in the pay-per-view industry. **Ordering information and up-to-the minute racing information is available at either [www.PreludeToTheDream.org](http://www.PreludeToTheDream.org) or [www.HBO.com](http://www.HBO.com).** Updates can also be found on Twitter at [twitter.com/PreludetoDream](http://twitter.com/PreludetoDream) and follow the hashtag #RideWithUs, or become a fan on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/PreludeToDream](http://www.facebook.com/PreludeToDream).

The Prelude to the Dream is a team event, and **Kanaan will join Stewart on Team Dallas.** There is still an individual race winner, but there is also a race within the race, with the field broken up into four teams, each representing a children's hospital:

- **Team Levine:** Jimmie Johnson, Denny Hamlin, Bill Elliott, David Reutimann, Austin Dillon, Ray Evernham and Cruz Pedregon.
- **Team Atlanta:** Ryan Newman, Carl Edwards, Clint Bowyer, Joey Logano, Ken Schrader, David Gilliland and Ron Capps.
- **Team St. Louis:** Busch, Kasey Kahne, Bobby Labonte, Justin Allgaier, Kenny Wallace, Ron Hornaday and Ricky Carmichael.
- **Team Dallas:** Stewart, **Kanaan**, Matt Kenseth, Brian Vickers, Marcos Ambrose, Aric Almirola and Dave Blaney.

**Each hospital will receive a donation**, with the payout breakdown as follows:

- Winning team receives 30 percent of net proceeds raised from the pay-per-view telecast.
- Second-place team receives 25 percent of net proceeds raised from the pay-per-view telecast.
- Third- and fourth-place teams each receive 20 percent of net proceeds raised from the pay-per-view telecast.

The lowest team score wins, and only the top-five drivers from each team will be scored. For example, if Team Levine has finishes of first, fourth, seventh, 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, respectively, from its top-five drivers, its score will be 41. In the event of a tie, the sixth driver will be scored.

The four charities – Levine Children's Hospital, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, St. Louis Children's Hospital and Children's Medical Center Dallas – all cater to the medical needs of children.

Drivers from all types of disciplines, some with lots of dirt track experience and others with hardly any, will participate in **qualifying, heat races and a 30-lap feature**, all of which will be televised live on HBO Pay-Per-View.

With no points and no pressure, the Prelude to the Dream is a throwback race, allowing drivers to step back in time and compete for the reasons they all went racing in the first place – pride and a trophy. And they'll do it on the same surface that racing legends and past Indianapolis 500 regulars Foyt and Mario Andretti competed on throughout the last 57 years.

For those who want to see the Prelude to the Dream in person, **tickets are available online at [www.EldoraSpeedway.com](http://www.EldoraSpeedway.com) or by calling the track office (937) 338-3815.** Act fast – the race has sold out in previous years.

Media members planning to cover the Prelude to the Dream can apply for credentials online at [www.TrueSpeedCommunication.com](http://www.TrueSpeedCommunication.com). **All credential requests must be submitted by May 27, 2011.** Complete event information can be found in the Prelude to the Dream online media kit at [www.TrueSpeedMedia.com](http://www.TrueSpeedMedia.com).

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#### For More Information, Contact:

Mike Arning  
True Speed Communication  
704.875.3388, ext. 802 or [Mike.Arning@TrueSpeedCommunication.com](mailto:Mike.Arning@TrueSpeedCommunication.com)

Patrick Byrne  
HBO Pay-Per-View  
212.512.1361 or [Patrick.Byrne@hbo.com](mailto:Patrick.Byrne@hbo.com)