



### **Vitor Meira Signs with A.J. Foyt Racing; Starts at Australia**

WALLER, Texas Sept. 25, 2008—IndyCar veteran Vitor Meira has signed to drive A.J. Foyt's No. 14 ABC Supply Dallara/Honda/Firestone car beginning with the IndyCar Series event in Surfer's Paradise, Australia next month and continuing to drive through 2009, with an option for 2010.

The race in Australia is a non-points event and will give Meira and A.J. Foyt's ABC Supply team an opportunity to work together in a race before the 2009 season begins in earnest.

"I'm really excited about this opportunity to work with Vitor," said Larry Foyt, who negotiated the deal to sign Meira. "We're looking forward to getting Vitor his first win in the IndyCar Series and getting A.J. Foyt Racing back into victory lane with ABC Supply."

"I am definitely going into 2009 with a little extra motivation," said Meira, who yesterday returned to Carmel (IN) from his native Brazil. "I have raced against the team for many years and have heard cool things about them. Many people would give an arm and a leg just to meet A.J. and I am getting to work with him, I think that says it all."

Foyt won't be requiring any body parts from Meira as A.J. already knows that Vitor puts his heart into every race.

"I've always admired him because he's a hard racer who charges all day long," said team owner A.J. Foyt. "He should have won a lot of races but he hasn't had the best luck. I believe we can change that and I'm looking forward to working with him."

Foyt was the owner when several drivers scored their initial triumphs in the IndyCar Series including Scott Sharp, Kenny Brack, Billy Boat and most recently, Ayrton Senna. That fact is not lost on Meira who summarized his approach to the 2009 season.

"This first race we'll get situated with each other and we'll quickly learn where we're at, then we can know where to go—what we need to maintain and where we need to improve," said Meira. "My goal is to come out and win, and by that I mean to give 100% no matter what is happening. I finished second many times but there were races where I finished fourth or fifth and I felt good about them because I gave 100% and we got the most out of the car that day. Whether it's in races or in the championship, if we are getting top-fives, it's because we are putting ourselves in position to win which is what you have to do before you can win. Then the wins will come."

The 31-year-old Brazilian's IndyCar career began in August, 2002 when he drove for the Menard team; three races and two months later, he won the pole and finished third in the season finale at Texas Motor Speedway.

He continued with Menard the next year driving a partial season and then joined the Rahal-Letterman team in 2004 for two full seasons. He moved to Panther Racing in 2006 and raced for them the past three seasons. In 93 career starts, Meira won two pole positions, led 424 laps and posted 27 top-five finishes, including two second-place finishes in the Indianapolis 500 in 2005 and this past May. He claimed 56 top-10 finishes and earned over \$6 million in prize money.

Darren Manning, who drove the No. 14 car for the past two seasons, will not be returning to the team in 2009. This season, the amicable Brit finished 14th in the standings after posting a career-best second place finish at Watkins Glen, NY and six other top-10 finishes, including a ninth place finish at Indy.

"We had a good relationship with Darren and I appreciate everything he did with our team," said Foyt. "Towards the end, I felt like things had come to a standstill and we weren't getting the best out of each other. It was time for a change and I was the one who needed to make the changes as hard as it was for us. I really like Darren and wish him well. I hope he remains my friend."



“There’s no hard feelings,” said Manning. “We had a good couple of years of improvements. Getting me on board was part of making his team better and I think we did that. I wish him well. We had a good relationship and I expect that to continue no matter what I end up doing.”

Following the final 2008 event in Australia Oct. 26th, the IndyCar Series celebrates its season with an awards banquet in Las Vegas, NV on Wednesday, Nov. 5th. The 2009 season gets underway April 5th in St. Petersburg, FL.