

Indy Racing League loses key cog in Tony Cotman

By Anthony Schoettle

Tony Cotman, 42, has vacated his post as Indy Racing League vice president of competition. The much-respected Cotman will continue to consult for the open-wheel series, but he will no longer work for the IRL full-time.

Instead, Cotman has decided to launch his own enterprise, NZR Consulting, where he will design and build race tracks. Cotman said with the IRL moving to more road and street racing, this is the perfect time to start this new firm.

Let's hope Cotman's move isn't interpreted as another mate jumping off a sinking ship.

It's a painful time for the IRL to lose a man, one of the few in their stable, who has the ability to unite the IRL regime with the old guard of Champ Car. He seemed to have the confidence of car owners, track operators and other IRL constituencies. Cotman was hired by former IRL boss Tony George in 2008 after Cotman had spent four years overseeing racing for Champ Car.

Currently, Cotman is spending most of his time in Brazil helping design the course for the IRL's March 14 race in San Paulo.

Cotman said he became interested in track design and construction because he often caught flack at Champ Car races when he often had little input into the track's design.

Here's hoping Cotman's experience serves the IRL well. And now that Cotman will be serving multiple customers (and his attention will no doubt be diffuse), here's hoping the IRL maintains someone on staff full-time that knows at least as much about track design and racing as Cotman.