

## Curt Cavin: Indy Lights ready with new car



Driver Conor Daly gets fitted for the new Indy Lights car at Dallara's facility in Speedway. (Photo: Curt Cavin/The Star)

The new Indy Lights car is nearly ready to roll.

The current car has been in use since the series debuted in 2002, and getting to this point has been a yearlong process. Conor Daly is scheduled to turn the first laps of Dallara's IL15 on today at the Putnam Park Road Course southeast of Greencastle.

The first official test is Monday at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course in Lexington, Ohio, where the IndyCar Series will race this weekend.

Dallara manufactured the car in Italy, and a crew is assembling it in Speedway. The car comes a long way in closing the gap to an actual Indy car. The goal is to reinvigorate the series that has seen its participation list drop to eight cars on ovals.

"We've pretty much got a mini-IndyCar here," project manager Tony Cotman of NZR Consulting said Tuesday from Dallara's Speedway facility.

Of particular similarity are many of the safety features introduced by the IndyCar Series in recent years, including built-in side intrusion panels and three inches of padding behind the driver's seat. Larger radiators on the left side of the car add another 16 to 18 inches.

Two-time Indianapolis 500-winning chief mechanic Owen Snyder, whose Dallara crew is assembling the new car, shows Conor Daly the nuances of the chassis.

The full-carbon car also features a bolt-on front wing assembly as is used by the IndyCar Series, although this kit is wider to reduce the chance of interlocking wheels. Paddle shifting, timing transponders and crash boxes are car-

ryovers from the IndyCar Series, too. The brake system has been designed for Indy Lights.

The price for the new car is \$270,000. A season-long engine lease is \$88,000. The current car costs about \$120,000, and while the engine lease is less, rebuilds bring the total cost for running it the entire season to about \$100,000.

"It's not a cheap, cheesy car," Cotman said. "It's going to take a step up in teams and how they operate because it's a step up in performance."

The footprint of the car is similar to the current model: 76 inches wide, 192 inches long.

Cotman expects the final product to weigh about 1,400 pounds, or about 140 less than the current car, and the all-aluminum engine, produced by Advance Engine Research, will have up to 500 horsepower with push-to-pass capabilities. A single engine is designed to last 6,000 miles without rebuilds, which covers the season.

The four-cylinder, turbocharged 2.0-liter engine has been made from scratch, AER's Andrew Saunders said.

"The whole inside is new for Indy Lights," he said. "It's very light, very responsive. It's a very versatile unit."

The front wing assembly (foreground) is much like the one used in the IndyCar Series; the underwings (rear) come in two pieces.

Andersen Promotions, which operates Indy Lights, has not said which teams have placed orders for the 2015 season.



Two-time Indianapolis 500-winning chief mechanic Owen Snyder, whose Dallara crew is assembling the new car, shows Conor Daly the nuances of the chassis. (Photo: Curt Cavin/The Star)

### Brickyard ratings

No surprise here: More people in the Indianapolis market watched last weekend's Brickyard 400 than any other.

Indianapolis' final rating was 15.0, besting the 9.4 of the Greenville/Spartanburg/Asheville market, according to the Nielsen Media research supplied by ESPN.



The front wing assembly (foreground) is much like the one used in the IndyCar Series; the underwings (rear) come in two pieces. (Photo: Curt Cavin/The Star)

Call Star reporter Curt Cavin at (317) 444-6409.