



An American Tour: 89



Indianapolis' Indy 500

The Indianapolis 500-Mile Race is an automobile race held annually at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway in Speedway, Indiana, an enclave suburb of Indianapolis, Indiana. The event is held over Memorial Day weekend, which is typically the last weekend in May. It is contested as part of the Verizon IndyCar Series, the top level of American Championship Car racing, an open-wheel formula colloquially known as "Indy Car Racing."

The event, billed as The Greatest Spectacle in Racing, is considered one of the three most prestigious motorsports events in the world. The official attendance is not disclosed by Speedway management, but the permanent seating capacity is upwards of 250,000, and infield patrons raise the race-day attendance to approximately 300,000.

The inaugural running was won by Ray Harroun in 1911. The race celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2011, and the 98th running was held in 2014. Ryan Hunter-Reay is the defending champion. The most successful drivers are A. J. Foyt, Al Unser, and Rick Mears, each of whom have won the race four times. Rick Mears holds the record for most career pole positions with six. The most successful car owner is Roger Penske, owner of Team Penske, which has 15 total wins and 17 poles.

Female participation of any sort at Indianapolis was discouraged and essentially banned throughout the first several decades of competition. Female reporters were not even allowed in the pit area until 1971. There have been nine female drivers to qualify, starting with Janet Guthrie in 1977. Sarah Fisher has competed eight times, the most of any woman. Danica Patrick led 19 laps in the 2005 race and 10 laps in the 2011 race, the only times a woman has led laps during the race. Her third place finish in 2009 is the best finish for a woman. [<http://en.wikipedia.org>]

