

GM Press Release: November 6, 1997: Corvette Convertible to Pace Indy 500 in 1998

General Motors Media Press Release

FOR RELEASE: November 6, 1997

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Corvette Convertible to Pace Indy 500 in 1998

LAS VEGAS — The all-new 1998 Chevrolet Corvette convertible will be leading the pack at next year's Indianapolis 500, the 11th time a Chevy has been selected for this honor. Driving the pace car will be none other than golfing's Greg "The Shark" Norman (and Chevrolet spokesperson). Those announcements were made today at the Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA) annual meeting in Las Vegas by Mary Hulman George of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and Chevrolet general manager John Middlebrook.

The 82nd running of the Indy 500 will mark the fourth appearance for Corvette as an Indy 500 Pace Car. The first time came back in 1978 -- the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Corvette. Subsequent appearances were in 1986 and 1995.

In 1998, the newest Corvette convertible still has the "right stuff" -- only more so. The pace car will be essentially factory-stock. Minor modifications include the addition of a steel roll bar and strobe lights behind each seat. To accommodate the strobe lights, the slight bulges in the stock tonneau cover were increased in size, and they feature a clear plastic lens through which the strobe lights will flash.

The pace car will use the "street version" of the Corvette's all-aluminum 5.7 liter LS1 small block V8 that produces 345 horsepower and 350 lb.-ft. of torque. This powerplant will be linked to a 4L60-E electronically controlled 4-speed automatic transmission.

People have come to expect that the exterior and interior design of an Indy 500 Pace Car will be unique, and this Corvette convertible will be no exception. The exterior features vivid yellow Indy 500 graphics over a special Radar Blue paint job. The in-your-face yellow wheels are unique to the pace car and tie in with the yellow interior accents, a treatment not offered on stock Corvette models.

An all-new feature on the pace car, and also on the limited edition replicas Chevrolet plans to sell, is a unique Active Handling chassis control system (JL4). This new system utilizes a yaw sensor, steering angle sensor, lateral accelerometer and other space-age technologies to enhance Corvette's already nimble handling with added accident avoidance capabilities. A "competitive driving" mode, something no similar system has, is available for gymkhana or autocross events.

Chevrolet plans to produce a total of 1,158 limited edition replicas of the pace car, and these will be available through selected Chevrolet dealerships in the U.S., as well as GM dealerships in Canada, Europe, the Caribbean and the Middle East after the first of the year.

Here's a list of all eleven Chevrolet Indy 500 Pace Cars and their drivers:

1948	Fleetmaster Convertible	Wilbur Shaw
1955	Bel Air Convertible	T. H. Keating
1967	Camaro SS 396 Convertible	Mauri Rose

1969	Camaro SS 396 Convertible	Jim Rathmann
1978	Corvette Coupe	Jim Rathmann
1982	Camaro Z28 Coupe	Jim Rathmann
1986	Corvette Convertible	Chuck Yeager
1990	Beretta "Concept" Convertible	Jim Perkins
1993	Camaro Z28 Coupe	Jim Perkins
1995	Corvette Convertible	Jim Perkins
1998	Corvette Convertible	Greg Norman

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