By JENNA FRYER

The Associated Press

Mike Conway doesn't regret walking away from last season's IndyCar finale, a decision made when he realized he simply wasn't comfortable racing on ovals. The Englishman just doesn't want that choice to mark the end of his IndyCar career.

Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing is the first team to give Conway another chance, announcing Monday a 1-race deal for the April 21 race on the street course at Long Beach. Conway, who scored the only IndyCar win of his career at Long Beach in 2011, will drive a second Honda for RLL.

"I'm very excited — it's a track I know well and a place I've won before and I'm really looking forward to competing again," he told The Associated Press in a phone interview.

Conway has been trying to put together a program of street and road course races in IndyCar, the series he still wants to be part of despite his decision to give up his seat at Fontana last September. He walked away after a day of testing at the 2-mile oval, telling A.J. Foyt Racing he was too uneasy to continue.

Conway missed most of the 2010 season with serious injuries to his back and leg suffered in a last-lap crash at the Indianapolis 500. He was in the 2011 finale at Las Vegas when Dan Wheldon was killed and was involved in a wreck at Indianapolis last season in which his car turned on its side against the fence.

"I never really liked ovals, to be honest," he said. "And then I was in the Indy crash and then the thing at the end of 2011 that obviously didn't sit well with me. I just felt like it was time to call it a

day and there's no sense doing something you aren't enjoying. It was the best decision for me and I am happy I made it because I wouldn't have been able to enjoy it."

But Conway very much wants to remain a part of the IndyCar Series and has been working through the winter to line up races.

He stayed in contact with RLL team co-owner Bobby Rahal and was able to put together the deal to drive the No. 30 at Long Beach. Sponsorship details will be announced at a later date.

Rahal said he and co-owner Mike Lanigan tried to sign Conway in 2011 but were ultimately unable to put together a deal: "Fortunately we are able to do so now. Mike is a very good driver and I think he will be very competitive in our environment. He and Graham (Rahal) get along well, so it's a real 1-2 punch for us."

Conway said he's still trying to line up more races for 2013 but needs to put together a funding package attractive to an owner willing to find another driver to race the oval part of the schedule

"I'd like to continue in IndyCar if possible. I'd like to ultimately get together a full street course and road course program and I'm working toward that," Conway added. "I knew it wouldn't be easy not to race on ovals but it's what I wanted to do. I've had a few years in the series now and I think owners know what I am capable of; it's just a matter of making things happen. I've just got to never give up and keep working on it."

Mattioli III leaving Pocono Raceway:

LONG POND, Pa. — The son of the late Joseph "Doc" Mattioli is stepping down as a member of the Board of Directors at Pocono Raceway, the track founded by his father.

The track announced Monday that Joseph R. Mattioli, III, was leaving after a 4-decade career at Pocono, including a stint as president and chief operating officer.

Mattioli III said the time was right to step down with the raceway now in the “very capable hands” of the next generation. Doc Mattioli died last January. Current track president Brandon Igdalsky is Doc Mattioli’s grandson and Joseph Mattioli III’s nephew.

The track added the younger Mattioli planned to focus more time working with veterans organizations that he has supported. Pocono has long been a stop for two races on NASCAR’s Sprint Cup circuit.

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