

# NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA



## Will Power

Team Penske

## Scott Dixon

Chip Ganassi Racing  
Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Will Power and our championship contender Scott Dixon. We'll start with Scott really quick.

Scott, I know qualifying didn't end up the way you wanted, starting from the 11th position tomorrow. Tell us about your day.

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, the day started not too bad. The car was pretty good. The biggest thing we've been struggling with all day is braking. We've had a lot of rear locking biases, like 62% or 63%. We didn't want to change any of the brake setup before qualifying because at least we knew what we had.

In qualifying, it seemed in Q2 we couldn't build the tire temp quick enough. It showed on the blacks we were kind of last until the last lap, then we jumped up to fifth. With the slow out-lap on the reds, I just didn't have enough time. I had to abort the first lap with traffic as well. Really only had one lap. There was no temp in the tires.

The car was actually pretty good, especially on the long run, once we get temperature into the tires. All three of us have been struggling to turn on the first few laps.

It is what it is. Starting 11th. Just got to try to stay out of trouble and have a good day.

THE MODERATOR: Will, it is your ninth pole at St. Pete, your 62nd pole overall in your career. You are now within five of tying Mario Andretti. It is your fifth pole of the year. Obviously a great day for you. Tell us about your run.

WILL POWER: It was a typical very tough qualifying session, the first few rounds. Made some slight changes. The car wasn't perfect at first. It does take a long time to turn on, so you could not do it like last year on your first

lap. Your second and third lap are really the best laps on the tires. Kind of played around with that a little bit.

Yeah, I mean, when I saw what Colton did on blacks in the first round, I saved some reds. I thought this is going to be really tough. But when I went out in the second round and made the car a bit better, made a mistake. I said, Okay, we're kind of close. Then I went all out in the Fast Six to get the most out of the car. It was enough.

Yeah, really, really happy with it. I thought we played it very well strategy-wise. Just very determined to win the race tomorrow, I really am. I really want to convert that pole into a win and finish on a high.

I know we're, what, whatever points away from Colton. It will be nice to be third in the championship, but for me it's more about finishing with a win. I'll be aggressive to do that. We'll see how we go.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions for Scott and Will.

**Q. Scott, obviously qualifying didn't go as well as you'd hoped today, but what is the plan for tomorrow? Any kind of specific thing you'll do differently tomorrow in the race?**

SCOTT DIXON: Not really. I think for us, ultimately we're at St. Pete, if you guess the strategy right, you can win from any spot. The likeliness of that, we just got to stay clean and obviously try to move up a little bit just on pace and hopefully good pit stops and things like that, eliminate any kind of issues there. If we catch a lucky break, so be it.

We're not starting on the first couple rows so we have to understand where we're starting. We're mid pack. Traffic and starts are going to be pretty interesting as well. We definitely need to focus on just trying to keep it clean, pick up cars when we can.

It's unfortunate because I think the car, race pace over a long run, is going to be really good. Again, all year actually all of us have been struggling to get the pace out of the car. It's been really frustrating.

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**Q. We had the announcement today about Jimmie Johnson. Having him there today, how exciting was that? How happy are you to have him onboard for next season?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, I think it's big for the NTT INDYCAR Series. Jimmie is a seven-time NASCAR champion. He's definitely coming over to go up a pretty steep hill. It's definitely tough. I think he's starting to see. He came to Indy GP, been to a few races this year. I think he's starting to see how tight the competition is, how one little mistake can have you fall five, six, seven spots.

It's definitely going to be a tough transition. I think obviously if he had done ovals, it would have been a bit more of a sweet spot for him. That's obviously not the case.

I'm excited for him. Fantastic to see a new sponsor coming over a new brand. I think it's huge for the sport. Excited to hopefully hear a couple other announcements here in the next couple weeks, as well.

**Q. Scott, obviously with the Aeroscreen on a road course, tire degradation for the race, do you think the tire deg is going to be quite high? Have you and the team discussed it? Do you have an understanding of how it will be in the race?**

SCOTT DIXON: It's definitely pretty interesting because I think when we went to Sebring earlier in the year, which is really the only place we get to run the street course tire, it felt like they wore out a lot quicker than usual. They came in pretty quick. We're expecting them to act a lot different than what they have.

My first run this morning, it took seven or eight laps before I put in my quickest. Pretty consistent to, like, lap 25. Each stint was five laps before we could turn the tires on.

We were actually thinking coming here the two stop was going to be pretty tough, most not because of the fuel mileage but tire degradation. Even the reds seem to be holding on really well, too.

We'll find out a little bit more about that tomorrow in the warmup. The tire has reacted a lot different than we thought it was going to. Definitely be pretty interesting. I think the tire deg, at the end of a stint, doesn't seem like it's going to be a problem.

THE MODERATOR: Scott, thank you for joining us. Good luck tomorrow.

SCOTT DIXON: Thanks, guys.

THE MODERATOR: We'll continue with questions for Will.

**Q. We heard from Alex, he talked about the physicality of what it was like out there doing several laps. Looking at tomorrow's race, very hot, very physical, what do you have to do tonight to prepare yourself for that challenge tomorrow?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, I mean, you've got to hydrate very well. I think I would consider adding that scoop to the top of the roll. I think it's actually a drag, a downforce loss. It does hurt the performance a bit, but it gets so hot in there, so physical, I just wonder if physically you'd be way better off with it. Maybe I'll try that in warmup tomorrow.

**Q. I know you want to win the race. Of course you have a teammate that wants to win a championship. If for some reason Scott Dixon is way down in the line, Josef is only one position away from getting a championship, has that ever crossed your mind what you might do?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, it has. I mean, obviously if that's the situation, I would let him go.

**Q. Next year you're going to have a teammate from New Zealand, Scott McLaughlin. Being your two countries are close together, any rivalry?**

WILL POWER: I'm sure that he wants to come in and beat me and everyone else because he's a tough competitor. But he's a lot younger, he has a pretty good future ahead of him. He's in the right team. I think he'll do real well, I really do.

Yeah, I mean, no different to the rivalry that I have with Scott Dixon. He's a Kiwi, too, yeah.

**Q. You're only five poles away from Mario Andretti. What would that mean to you if you were able to break that record? That's stood for a long time.**

WILL POWER: That would mean a lot. That would be a great achievement for me personally, to be up there with a name like Mario Andretti. It's something that I just love about racing, is when you get to absolutely get the most out of the car in one lap. That's qualifying.

To be at the top of the list for that would almost sum up my career, I guess, as far as being the speed that I have, maybe not the championships. Certainly a lot of race wins, as well.

**Q. You're now back to a four-car team. How do you**

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**kind of look at that, how it's going to play out with a new guy coming in?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, I mean, we've obviously been there before. It's more information. Obviously Scott is going to be in a learning year, kind of understanding qualifying, how the races go. I think this will give him a good head start this weekend.

Yeah, I feel like it's four pretty strong drivers. I mean, yeah, I've been there before. I know how it is. Engineering office gets pretty busy. Yeah, should be good.

**Q. You're going to get some old favorites back from a crew side coming from the IMSA side. How important will that be to have them back with an INDYCAR program?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, it's actually a good influx of really good people. It will just help on the engineering side of things. Obviously you've got a bigger crew to pick from as far as crews.

Yeah, all positives really when you add another car.

**Q. What is your karting schedule going to look like this season?**

WILL POWER: Karting? I was going to race a club race next weekend but then I realized I'm testing a couple days after, so probably shouldn't risk it. Yeah, I love the karting. No Vegas this year, unfortunately. They called that off.

**Q. Where is your mindset in terms of this being the last race of the year with the circumstances of how this season has gone with COVID? What would it mean for you to finish on a strong note this weekend?**

WILL POWER: It would be amazing to win the last race of the season, it really would. It would really make this year worthwhile for me. I would feel very good about it. Get to go on vacation feeling good about the finish of the year.

Super determined about converting the pole into a win. Obviously circumstances are going to play out. I'll do the best job I can. That's all I can do. See if we can get the car well so it lasts really well over a stint.

Yeah, that's the plan. It's been a trying season, I'll have to say, the beginning of it. We're knocking on the door every weekend, so we have to, we have to come into next year with very solid pit stops and solid races and we have to get ourselves in a championship position so we're not in a hole having to dig ourselves out the whole way. It's just been too many years we've done that.

That's a huge focus of mine going into next year.

THE MODERATOR: We'll let Will Power go and focus for tomorrow's race.

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