

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

## Scott McLaughlin

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon. We'll go ahead and begin our post race availability. Today we are joined by Scott McLaughlin, driver of the No. 3 Pennzoil Team Penske Chevrolet, who is our highest-finishing rookie.

Scott, not the race you wanted, but a pretty awesome experience.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Certainly unbelievable. I guess my first Indy 500, for Helio to get his fourth is tremendous. Obviously it was amazing hearing the crowd, getting out of the car I could hear it. After 2020, how dull it was, a great 2021 for everybody here at the Speedway.

My race, look, really happy to get the Rookie of the Year honors. I would have loved to have been a little higher. Feel like I could have been in the front group. Don't know if I would have won the race, but I certainly feel I could have been a factor in the top 10.

Bittersweet day for me. I'm proud of everybody on the Pennzoil car, it felt good. I've got many more to come, hopefully.

**Q. It's been a long journey for you to get there. What was the first major takeaway from the event?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: One mistake just eats you. You can't make mistakes here. It genuinely needs to be a perfect day. It's a place that really bites you. When you don't think it's coming. I just made a simple mistake. Didn't quite pump my brake pedal up enough. Yeah, had a pretty stone cold set of rotors going into pit lane there. Couldn't pull up.

Thankfully no one was hurt because I came in there pretty hot. But, yeah, look, obviously pretty stoked to get the Rookie of the Year. Absolutely that was the main goal. At the same time I had a really good car today. It's just a little, like I said, bittersweet.

**Q. Very proud of you down here in New Zealand.**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, thank you. Hopefully a lot of the Kiwis watched overnight, in the morning. My mum and dad were. Myself or Scottie or Will for Australia didn't quite get up there. Hopefully I got plenty more. I'm planning on being here a long time, not a short time.

**Q. At the end of this race, have you been thinking -- let me reword this. It's been a pretty impressive display from yourself. Were you expecting this type of performance coming into Indy?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: You certainly expect it from yourself. I put a lot of pressure on myself to perform at a very high level. That's probably why I'm so pissed off right now.

It's one of those things where you come here, you feel the energy in the place, and it certainly gives you goosebumps. You want to perform on the big stage.

I felt like up until that pit stop we were really solid. I was saving good fuel, the car was good. I was learning a ton. I made some pretty cool passes which I really enjoyed. Yeah, had a really good start, which was cool. I think I made it four-wide, which was pretty interesting for a little bit.

At the end of the day it's a learning experience. I'll take away these learnings and I'll tell you what, I'll always check my brake pedal coming into pit lane.

**Q. What will you focus on for next season?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I have to learn a little bit my timing, understand the draft a little bit more, really get a feel for the draft process, when you get the wake. I lost a couple positions today. I eventually got them back, but I lost a couple positions in the wash, washing up, trying to avoid the wall basically.

I felt like I've learned a ton this whole month. I've really enjoyed it. It's been more positive than negative month for me. I've done every lap I possibly can. It bodes well for me the rest of the season, at least for next year when I come back here. Yeah, it's all good.



**Q. What can you take away from the race this weekend going into the rest of the season?**

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Look, I think we showed -- it's twice now we showed some pretty good pace on ovals. One more oval left at Gateway. Excited to get back on an oval. I'm going to have my work cut out for me a little bit at Detroit. I think I have to learn a track in one practice session, qualifying, race. So it'll be tough, then a doubleheader as well.

I back my team to give me a great car, back my ability to go well.

Yeah, look, our goal this year has been to finish every lap we can in every race. We're doing that, we're ticking boxes. Doing 200 laps around here is a tough gig. Mentally it's very hard. I'm stoked to do it.

Like I said, I'll take this experience, move forward with it for the rest of the season. Certainly knowing what to expect, I know it's going to be even bigger next year for the 500. I'm really excited for it.

**Q. Was there a point in the race where you felt a win was definitely feasible?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: No, no, no. I think I just was -- I think we were semi in the front back. I knew where Palou was and Helio. They were just a couple cars ahead of me. I just know these races. Bathurst is exactly the same. You have to put yourself in that position. We certainly were with the fast guys.

That's probably what I most gutted about because I felt like I positioned myself pretty well. It's a mistake I don't normally make, yeah.

**Q. You said you kind of like walked up to the wall a couple times. Did you learn from that enough to where you think you could have been in the mix with Simon, the front two?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Look, I have no doubt, I think you just got to look at my pace towards the end of that run. I was right there with those guys. I know if we were in contention, I still think we could have been okay.

I don't think we quite had the pace to be where Helio and Palou were. I think a good solid top five probably was begging. But like I said, I'll learn from that. I'll turn the negative into a positive at one point. A long time in this sport hopefully.

Say congrats to Helio.

