

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Sunday, September 12, 2021

### Alexander Rossi

### Scott Dixon

#### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Another Grand Prix of Portland is in the books here at historic Portland International Raceway. We say congratulations to Alexander Rossi, second-place finish today, best finish of the season for Alex as he celebrates the 25th career of his podium, and Scott Dixon with his fourth podium finish of the season, 126th career podium. Dixie now fourth in points, 49 points out of first place and his teammate Alex Palou.

We'll begin with Scott Dixon, another big finish. Congratulations to the PNC Bank Grow Up Great folks, and PNC Bank, a double showing for you. Tell us about your race.

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, that was cool. Obviously big congrats to Alex and the 10 car side. Definitely started a little strange and shook the field.

Just starting with the start, I filled that gap because I figured Rahal or somebody was going to try and scoot down the inside of us. I bailed out of it and then got hit from behind, I think it was Felix, and that caused a bit of an interesting moment for all of us on the start there.

Then race control, it was just the craziest thing I've ever seen, and I've been in racing a little while. I don't know what they were thinking or how that came about, but put all of us at the back the field. Be interesting to go talk to them later and see how they came up with that scenario.

But yeah, thankfully I guess that maybe made our day, all of us up here, the result that we ended up with. Thankful that it turned out the way it did.

We had a few interesting kind of pit stops and exchanges and kind of lost some track position in a couple of situations on a restart with Josef there where he didn't go and then a bad first pit exchange.

So yeah, all in all, third, still pretty good. 49 points is a little ways out of the fight with two to go, but still mathematically

in it, and we'll give it all we have.

THE MODERATOR: When you fell that far back with scoring on the restart, did you think, our race is over, let's just try to salvage some points or did you think with some strategy we can get it back up front?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, you know, with especially how long that caution was, we knew that it was going to fall into a two-stopper, so we knew we still had kind of a chance. How that was going play out, we didn't really know. But it's frustrating. You kind of want that easy race as far as knowing what you need to do and not having such a strange occurrence at the start to kind of flip it.

But yeah, in the end it worked out well. Set us on the other strategy and it paid off.

THE MODERATOR: Second-place finish for Alexander Rossi and the NAPA Auto Parts Auto Nation Andretti Autosport Honda. Tell us about your race today, Alex.

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, I mean, I'm glad it all came back to us because we all would have looked pretty silly, I guess. I thought it was pretty low grip in Turn 1 when Felix, I guess -- when Scott and Alex and them kind of slid through, I didn't really have anywhere to go, and I thought if we got back to the styrofoam chicane, that was acceptable. But it was self-penalizing because we all went from like first, second, third to sixth, seventh, eighth, and then they're like, oh, you're going to 24th. It was like, okay, cool.

But fortunately it all came around, and as Scott said, it put us on the two-stop, which is ultimately the strategy to be on.

The pace of the car was good all weekend. I think we gave it everything we could there on that last stint, and the red tires had a window of time where they were a little bit better, and then it was just tough with dirty air, and Alex didn't make a mistake. It's always going to be hard to just go and drive around the pole sitter, but ultimately it was a good day for the team, good in pit lane, great calls, so yeah, started second, finished second.

**Q. Even though you said as long as you're**

**... when all is said, we're done.®**



**mathematically in it you still go for it, but with two races, 49 back, that's almost a full race's worth of points. How do you go for it?**

SCOTT DIXON: I don't know, try and win. It's definitely been a trying season for us, but ultimately if it comes down to we need to help Alex, that's fine, too. I think for us it's about keeping the championship at home and at the team.

So yeah, it's just the way it rolls sometimes. But yeah, we'll -- obviously we've seen it. We saw it at St. Louis how quickly it can flip. We've seen how quickly it can flip this weekend. Unless you're out, you're not out. We've won championships on a tiebreaker. It's all possible.

**Q. Alex, with just the two races to go, they're strong tracks for you, especially the finale in Long Beach. What does it mean for this team to get a podium to start off the West Coast Swing?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Yeah, it's nice to get a result finally. I thought we obviously had a podium going into St. Louis, and I gave that up. It was good to rebound here in Portland.

We didn't test here like Ganassi did, so I think to get two cars in the Fast Six against them was pretty good, and we tested at Laguna, and we feel pretty happy with the package we have there. We were strong last year, obviously Colton won, or the last -- 2019.

So yeah, we've got two good shots at it. I think we came out of the summer break with some solutions and identified some issues, and I think that's been a positive and kind of carried forward, and yeah, we'll do everything we can. We've got nothing to lose in these last two, so we'll try our best to take some points away from those guys and see what we can get.

**Q. Now that you've both got a podium finish, we've got the West Coast Swing coming up, how much does this change your approach for the next two races?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I think every -- it's the same every race. You're just trying to win, and then depending on what happens in the beginning or the middle, you adapt from there. For Alex and Scott, they have a championship to look at, and they're probably counting points a little bit, whereas for me we're just trying to get results.

At the end of the day everyone is here to try and win, and that doesn't change kind of at any point throughout the whole weekend.

**Q. Scott, did you suffer any damage to the car?**

SCOTT DIXON: I think we just had a cut tire. I know the steering was a little off kilter. I think Felix just kind of hit us right in the left rear, but nothing that really hindered us throughout the race, so definitely lucky in that situation.

**Q. Given what happened to you today, what do you take away from today's race that you look forward now to Laguna which comes up in a week's time?**

SCOTT DIXON: Well, I don't know how to answer that. Yeah, it was one of those days where you were kind of down and out, and then it flipped. So I don't know. I think we definitely found some setup things from Friday morning to the afternoon. Hopefully we can apply that to maybe Laguna. Obviously Long Beach is very different. But good momentum for the team. I think that's key.

A lot of us have had good speed this weekend, which hopefully that transfers to next week and the weekend after, and ultimately trying to keep a championship at Ganassi.

**Q. Alex, when you had that peak moment chasing down Palou, you went off, dropped a couple tires. Was that maybe the moment that may have cost you that opportunity?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: No. I mean, we kind of closed within the half second window, and it was just some dirty air, and we had some understeer in that corner in particular. Yeah, from there we lost eight-tenths and kind of came back at it, but ultimately unless the guy in front of you makes a mistake, we were even on Push-to-Pass and using it at the same time.

That's just the way it goes. We were trying everything to put him under pressure and see if we could get him to lock up front, but ultimately he's the championship leader for a reason and drove a great race, and you've just got to accept second sometimes.

**Q. The fact Ganassi tested her, you guys didn't; what kind of difference does that make at an event like this?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Well, I think when you have a two-day event for really no reason and you only have one practice session and an hour and a half between practice and qualifying, it makes it hard for the guys that didn't test here. Like I said, for us to get two cars in the Fast Six, we were really happy with that. And yeah, hopefully the advantage kind of comes back to us in Laguna and we can have a little bit of upper hand coming out of the box there. But ultimately I think the team has been doing a good job as of late, and we've just got to keep pushing forward.

**Q. Alex, what's the first thing you said to yourself after what happened in the first turn today?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: That sounds about right. Yeah, I mean, I was upset because, yeah, we started second and were I think eighth at that point. And then I was really upset when they were like, no, you're 23. I mean, whatever, it's clearly -- there was some reasoning behind it.

But yeah, it all worked out in the end. The guys that started one, two, three finished one, two, three, so you can't complain about too much, I guess.

**Q. Scott, what is it about Alex that makes him so good even though he's standing there and it's going to be hard for you to be frank and honest about it? He says he's not afraid to ask any of his teammates a thousand questions. Is he almost like the team's little brother?**

SCOTT DIXON: He's just an amazing person. Look at him, he's always smiling. I always tell him he's too nice. He's got to be more of a -- what Jenna said, jerk. I used a different word.

But no, he's obviously very adaptive. He's done a tremendous job in junior categories.

But yeah, he's a bit annoying sometimes when he's asking a lot of questions, but I think that's a good thing. As you can see with just adverse situations like today, he didn't lose it, and still made it happen when it counted. Definitely done a massive job this year, and what him and the 10 car guys have been doing has been very special.

Yeah, he's just a nice person, man. Too nice.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports