

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Wednesday, June 29, 2022

### Scott Dixon

#### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. Thanks for joining us. After a brief break, the NTT INDYCAR Series gets back at it this weekend at beautiful Mid-Ohio Sports Car course for Sunday's Honda Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio presented by the all-new 2023 Civic Type R. If you're talking Mid-Ohio, sooner or later, you're talking about today's guest. He's won a record six times at Mid-Ohio, a remarkable 12 top-5 finishes in his 18 starts there. Currently sits sixth in the 2022 NTT INDYCAR Series championship, one of only two drivers to finish every lap this season and currently has the most top 10s with seven in 2022.

He's the driver of the No. 9 PNC Bank Chip Ganassi Racing Honda. Great to have Scott Dixon joining us this afternoon. How are you, sir?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, I'm good. Thanks for having me on. Looking forward to obviously getting to Mid-Ohio this week. It's been nice to have a couple weeks off, but I think all of us prefer driving and being in the car. So looking forward to it.

THE MODERATOR: When you talk about Mid-Ohio it likely brings up a lot of fond memories of your wins there. Are there one or two that stand out more than the others?

SCOTT DIXON: I think like any of them, they're special in their own way. I think the last of course was probably the best one, obviously the most unexpected one where I think where we were able to save a ton of fuel. We kind of caught a caution, which I think was Ryan Hunter-Reay, at the perfect time and went on to win.

But the one even I think that was probably the craziest one was with Felix Rosenqvist, teammates a few years back, where it was a two-stop strategy against a three-stop strategy. We drove the tires off, and I think I had a whole logjam behind me the last three or four laps.

Yeah, a lot of fond memories. It's a fantastic track. It's a little bit of a bullring and one that's tough.

It's gotten even harder, I think, over the years with how slippery some of the surfaces can be in different areas and especially how the weather treats it, which obviously this weekend it looks like the possibility of maybe getting some rain, too, which will spice some things up maybe on qualifying day. Yeah, I don't know, a lot of great memories from that place.

THE MODERATOR: Obviously you mentioned sixth in the championship right now; is this good timing for you maybe to kick-start a crucial summer stretch for your championship run?

SCOTT DIXON: We need to. I guess is the obvious answer. I was hoping that the Indy 500 was going to be that turn and kick that we needed, but yeah, it's been an interesting year, lots of ups and downs and some missed opportunities.

I think as a group and as a team, we just haven't been getting the job done. We'll keep after it. I think Marcus has had a fantastic run, leading the points right now; Alex has had a little bit of bad luck. Just hoping for the whole team we can get ahead down here and fight for another championship for Chip.

**Q. I wanted to touch base real quick on something that had been reported recently that you'd been offered a potential contract to leave Ganassi and potentially take on some sort of leadership role within Arrow McLaren SP when you decide to hang up your helmet and quit driving. Is that accurate? I just wanted to clarify if those talks had taken place.**

SCOTT DIXON: Lots of potential, I think -- you threw "potential" in there a load of times. I haven't been a part of any of these conversations, so not really sure where a lot of these things come from.

Obviously people talk. I even got a few messages from people asking about the same thing. If people are having those conversations I haven't been a part of them. For me I love doing what I'm doing, I love being a part of the team that I'm with, and who knows what comes in the future, but as of right now just focusing on this season. Yeah, that's all I've got to say really. There's nothing to it.

**Q. Speaking maybe from a larger perspective, do you have -- does something like that, some sort of a leadership position on a team or any sort of a stake in a team, is that something that would interest you whenever you did decide to finish up driving full-time in INDYCAR? Is that something you've given any thought to?**

SCOTT DIXON: It's hard to really comment. I think for me, I don't see giving up anytime soon. I feel like in motorsport it's hard to make a decision from one year to the next, as opposed to kind of looking five years down the road or more. For me right now, it's just enjoying INDYCAR, trying to win races, trying to get back to where we need to, so that's where the focus is.

You know, the possibilities after I'm done, trust me, I'd love to still be a part of the sport. What that means and in what capacity, I have really no idea. But I love the sport. It's been my passion since I was five or six years old, so it's definitely something I want to be a part of for many more years.

As of right now, it's not on the radar.

**Q. You'd mentioned in the intro questions to Dave that you just felt like you guys had maybe just not been hitting on all cylinders so far this season through the first half. Is there anything in particular now that you've had some time to analyze and take stock in the first half of the year, anything in particular that's been a through line, a trend in maybe just not getting everything that you would have hoped out of this first half of the year?**

SCOTT DIXON: There's been some easy misses. I think we've had speed. There's some areas where we could definitely do a better job in getting more speed out of the car, but even Road America I think from our Q1 time would have got us through to Q3, but we overanalyzed the situation, made a very big shift in balance and that knocked us out of Q2.

I think at some points we're overtrying, and it's easy in this scenario where it's not as relaxed or just rolling as smoothly as it could be, that whether it's me or the team or the adjustments that we make, we just may be going over the top. We've just got to find our groove.

Right now it doesn't take much to kind of fall out of a cycle or fall out of where you need to be. So we've just got to keep doing what we typically do, not try to make a big deal of each situation, and hopefully get on a roll here soon.

Yeah, I wouldn't say it's one or two big things. I think it's

just us not doing what we normally do well.

**Q. You are the king of Mid-Ohio. Just like you pointed out, you may be the king of other racetracks, too. But I was just wondering, is there a favorite turn at Mid-Ohio, and down the road, would there be a turn that you would like to see named the Scott Dixon Turn or Dixon's Corner or something like that?**

SCOTT DIXON: That's not a decision for me for sure. No, I just -- I don't know. I guess it's the complexity of Mid-Ohio. I love the whole sort of 4 through 9. I think 9 catches a lot of people out, that kind of coming over the crest. But that's the same for 11, 12, 13 complex, too.

I don't know, that's a hard one. Turn 1, depending on the year with which car, when you used to be almost flat through there, that was pretty wild. Probably the carousel I think is that lead-up to that complex, and getting through the carousel is a lot of fun. Yeah.

**Q. As much success as you've had there, is there still a turn or two that you still -- you're going there this weekend, that man, I want to master that finally? Like I said, as much success as you've had, I would think on a road course there's still room for improvement, right?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, I could say all the corners I could do a better job. Yeah, it doesn't change from year to year as far as trying to better it. Qualifying last year, we were in the Fast Six, but our Q1 time I think was just better put together as far as getting all the corners right.

Turn 4 can be tricky. It's very easy to get in there too hard and then the car won't turn and you can lose a bunch of time where you just overslow it. I think that's probably one of the trickier corners for me.

Typically when there's a longish straight or a straight and I've got too much time to think about it, I kind of maybe overthink it sometimes, and prefer the flowiness of all the close connected corners a little bit better.

**Q. With y'all's team being such as it is now with talented drivers throughout, et cetera, do you find when you go into a week, do you feel like you're as much in competition with those guys as you are with anyone else, and has that caused you maybe to press a little bit? I'm just trying to kind of get into the root of, like you said, this season could have been even better than it has been so far for you. What is it like having that kind of talent under one roof? Do you feel the competition even intramurally so to speak?**

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

SCOTT DIXON: The competition is always big, no matter what the lineup has been. I think if it's just one car or three cars that you're competing against in the team. It's always been fierce.

Depending on how you guys take the weekends and how we look at the data or what's going on, it pushes you on a huge amount.

The differences, I guess, from different generations maybe of how they drive and what they've driven previously, and I think I see that definitely with Marcus and then also with Alex just on driving styles, it can sometimes trick you maybe going down a road that you probably shouldn't, and you should probably just trust your gut instincts and do what you do best.

I guess in some ways there's more distraction, but there's also more information. It probably makes the decisions a little bit harder. You've got to make sure that you try to stick to what you know best.

I get what you're saying, but yeah, it can be more of a distraction in some ways than helping you with a clear mindset of what you would actually want.

THE MODERATOR: Here's what I'm thinking: That opening in pit wall and that little drive up to Victory Lane, we call it Dixon Drive.

**Q. Entering the halfway point of the season, and there are 11 drivers within 97 points of the lead, can you ever recall a time in your career when it's been that tight at this point in the year?**

SCOTT DIXON: Probably not. It's been kind of a strange year in that typically at this point, and I've said this previous years, too, but maybe not to this extent, there's been a runaway of some point, whether it's one or two drivers or a big gap.

I think with how these weekends are and how easy it is to qualify the front one weekend and then qualify the back at the next weekend, it really does mix it up, which is great from a perspective or going down to the wire.

But yeah, it's kind of crazy considering how each person probably looks at the year and it hasn't gone as well as they would have hoped. I think it's played in the points tallies as you would think just because nobody has had a super smooth year. Look at Josef, he's won three races and is not even leading the points.

Yeah, it's great for everybody. I think it's pretty cool. Obviously you wish you were the driver that was leading

the points and are in a situation that maybe we were in '20 where we were almost leading by 100 points, so it's definitely interesting this year, and I think it's going to continue this trend just because of how difficult it is and how competitive it is weekend to weekend.

**Q. Chip Ganassi was quoted earlier this week as saying that he sees his team as being status quo for next year, that everybody that's running on the team this year will be back. To be able to know that with some of the other guys who are your teammates, how important is that?**

SCOTT DIXON: I think it would be huge, huge for Chip, and I think for all the drivers. It's definitely quite a good mix right now with young, middle aged and older. I think it's a lot of fun. I think that the balance as far as we've got there I think has worked really well, and I think if you look at how competitive the team has been, sure, there's always areas that we can improve on, and trust me, we're working as hard as possible to make that possible, as well.

Yeah, I love the dynamic right now. It's a lot of fun. It's a great group. They've already achieved one goal this year, and that's to win the Indy 500, and hopefully we can capture that second goal of the championship.

**Q. At least from the media perspective you probably couldn't find two more likable and easygoing guys than Marcus Ericsson and Alex Palou. Did you chuckle a little bit when you heard some of the comments that were made after Road America? I know Alex was pretty upset at Marcus, and Marcus didn't even know where that comment came from.**

SCOTT DIXON: I still actually haven't seen it. We had the test in Iowa, and nobody actually brought any of that up, so I guess it was squashed. I had actually forgotten about it until I think the plane ride home.

Man, it's competitive. You want to beat your teammates as much as everybody else. Yes, you work together and you give each other room, but ultimately once you get on track, it's every person for themselves.

You know, from the situation at Road America when you look at it, it's just unfortunate. Like I think it hit the car in kind of the perfect spot for that to fail. To try and do that again would be extremely tough.

Yeah, these guys are super competitive and super -- extremely good drivers, that that's what you would expect out of it. But honestly, I haven't seen any of the comments.

I can tell you from being within the team that nobody is

talking about that stuff anymore.

**Q. What's the closest you ever had with a teammate to where he kind of got under your skin for a day or two?**

SCOTT DIXON: Probably myself and Dan, I think, were -- it went for a few months actually. That was a bit of a rough spot, and it got squashed pretty quickly by Chip. But it lingered on for a while between us two, and then obviously we became best friends. It happens, man. It's just the competitive environment.

**Q. Who do you consider middle and who do you consider older on the team?**

SCOTT DIXON: Well, Jimmie is the oldest. I'm closest to him, I guess, and then Marcus is in the middle and Alex is -- I don't know. Is that how you would see it?

**Q. Yeah, I'd go with that, sure. When I hear "middle aged," I'm thinking older than you guys, though, so I'm just saying that.**

SCOTT DIXON: Most people don't think that way.

**Q. Unless you're talking about Kanaan, then that's fine.**

SCOTT DIXON: Well, Kanaan is even older than all of us. He's approaching the 50 mark, man. We've all got time.

**Q. In 2020 when you guys won the first four races of the year --**

SCOTT DIXON: First three maybe. Yeah, it was first three.

**Q. Can you talk about how much the team has evolved since then where that was the first three races with the aeroscreen? Can you explain how the car has evolved whereby it's trickier to set up now even though you actually have two years of knowledge of the aeroscreen?**

SCOTT DIXON: It's always changing, whether it's games you find at some places. I'd say from my experience the tricky part is the road course tire. The street course tire is still pretty robust and you can be pretty aggressive with it, and it's the same with the oval tire. For me the road course tire is very sensitive. Some tracks like Road America and Laguna, the primary is very low grip, like extremely low grip.

So I think that's probably -- depending on the person and your driving style, that for me personally has been the

trickiest part. My style is fairly aggressive and almost being an agitator I guess in some ways, and that really is the opposite of what that tire asks.

Yeah, I think it's different for each person, but the car I think has generally just kind of got heavier. The CG has got higher. The weight distribution, you can't really move it much. Most cars are trying to go as far rearward as possible, but with the weight that we've added in those areas. But ultimately it's the same for everybody. It's just how it applies to each person is a little bit different.

**Q. I remember you saying that one of the problems with the aeroscreen is the amount of instability in traffic in terms of the amount of air going over the rear wing made it very hard to pass or it was very disturbed air now. Has that improved at all, or is it still almost even more vital to start up front?**

SCOTT DIXON: Starting up front is always vital. I will say I feel like maybe before the aeroscreen the front tire would be affected a little bit more in traffic, and now you do get the scenario where you can kind of burn the rear tires off the car quite quickly, but I also don't know if that's a fundamental change that we've had in the last year or two of the tire itself. The tires themselves always progress and change, and most of the time it's -- well, it is out of everybody's control.

Yeah, there is no real way -- I guess some basic setup situations, you can try to help it, but ultimately you're just going for outright pace first, and outright pace is trying to qualify as far forward as possible, and then you maybe try to slightly detune it for the race, but how that applies, you don't really get a whole lot of track time, right.

You don't really get a lot of time to go through these science experiments. You get three days in season, and we've finally started to extend some of the sessions on Fridays from 45 minutes to 75, which is great, but then the tires at some tracks, you might go to a one-day test at Laguna Seca, you get five sets of tires, but you're really only looking at 20 laps of actual information, four laps of each tire that you can produce to try and get setup changes without tire deg coming into it.

It is what it is. But it is harder, I find, to tune the car, especially test days now just because of deg and -- a lot of that is because the car has just got heavier. Firestone is still the same sized tire on the car. They're doing their best with the materials that they can use. But it's definitely changed, I guess, the way that you'd probably go to a test and try to get the most out of it.

**Q. As you well know, I'm a member of the Trust for the**



**Motorsport Elite Academy, and we're currently in camp at the moment in Dunedin. The boys are in the gym. They've been in there since 5:30 this morning. I'm just about to go and pick them up off the floor. We've got eight kids this year, two from rally, one from speedway with USAC aspirations, and the rest from the circuit with some INDYCAR or Road to Indy aspirations, as well, and on behalf of the Trust, I just wondered if you'd give them a few words of encouragement, please.**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, of course. You know, I wish everybody the best. Obviously this is a great situation for everybody to be involved in, being selected for that, and have the guidance of everybody involved to try and make it on to the world stage, whether it's in rally or circuit racing or dirt track stuff.

I will say you're in great hands. You're with a lot of people that know exactly what needs to be done, and please reach out if I can help in any way.

I think trying to help young talent and part of a new NFT situation, which you know that's all they're focusing on is raising money for people to try and get to the world stage and excel in areas that they should. Yeah, I wish everybody the best and hopefully see you soon racing in America.

**Q. Then just quickly, as well, obviously there is two graduates from the camp currently in the U.S. in the Road to Indy program: Hunter McElrea in Lights and Billy Frazer in USF2000. Does it give you a kick to see these other New Zealanders looking up to what you have done, and now maybe Scott McLaughlin, as well, knowing that you're kind of the benchmark -- we were around the table the other day and these guys were talking about the fact that they still see you as the one that paved the way for these kids to come to North America.**

SCOTT DIXON: You know, for me, I was in a very fortunate situation. I think it hadn't really been done at that stage. It was definitely something new, I think, with the investors and trying to make it out of New Zealand as far as getting to some bigger series around the world.

It wasn't me, it was so many people involved, whether it was my parents or the whole Scott Dixon Motorsport Group which have helped the likes of Brendon Hartley and the Giltrap Group, as well, that have made this possible.

It's cool looking back always on how my road played out, you couldn't have written a book more perfectly in how doors opened in situations were achieved. So yeah, I'm

always greatly thankful for everybody that helped me and supported me in getting to this point.

**Q. You'll be very pleased to know that the heritage of the academy keeps on going. The McLaren Foundation here in New Zealand donated a trophy this week for our camp week winner. It's the Bruce McLaren trophy that dates back to the '60s, which I think might even have your name on it somewhere along the line. Our camp week winner walked away with that.**

Thank you so much for everything that you've done for the sport in New Zealand, and a great inspiration to these guys when I play this clip to them in about an hour from now.

SCOTT DIXON: Awesome. I can't wait to see how it plays out. Thank you very much, man. Can't wait to get back home. I'm looking forward to getting back home this year. It's been three years.

**Q. I'm in Dunedin right now and it's freezing, so don't worry about that.**

SCOTT DIXON: I'll come down when it's a little warmer over Christmastime.

**Q. Scott, Max Esterson, you've known him a long time. He's not very old, but he's grown up going to your races, he's doing his own thing now, and he came through through sim work. I understand he helped you set up your sim; is that accurate?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, absolutely. I've known Robin, his father, for many years. He's a lifelong friend of Chip's, and then Max I've known since -- well, since he came up to about my waist height. He definitely helped me a lot with getting my sim kind of going through the COVID period and then also trying to help me drive it a little faster, as well.

**Q. Is that strange? I think he's 18, so that would have put him at about 16. Is that strange to turn to a 16-year-old to help a six-time champion?**

SCOTT DIXON: I'm open to anybody helping me if it's going to be an advantage. And it sure was.

I think he may have been even 15 at the -- I'd have to ask Robin, but yeah, he was pretty young. I remember sitting on a call and chatting to him and going through data. It was something that he had done a lot of.

I actually went to the BRSCC Formula Ford Festival I think it was the end of last year and watched him finish on the podium there and a fantastic race weekend there and



obviously with his Red Bull tie and the academy there and everything, as well, so it's going extremely well, and obviously it's come on fast and strong for him. He's a big talent.

**Q. Lastly on this issue, just the sim in general, is it sort of wild in like how much it can develop a young racer and sort of get them into the sport?**

SCOTT DIXON: I think for a gateway into the sport, it's big. How much of it applies, I've never actually really sat down and talked to Max about it on -- I came from the opposite side, right, where it was just always driving, and then the sim programs I started kind of in the middle of the 2000s, I think, when I first started working with Honda and developing theirs and then moving on with GM to develop their stuff and even Ford a little bit.

I don't know, I guess what I always tried to do is applied the real world to the sim world, and I don't actually know how it works the other way. For us it's still always an ongoing process of trying to make them as close as possible. I know with Honda and HPD and what we did with this, it gets better the more you use it, but there's still things that you can't rely on.

It's definitely a gateway. I think we've seen that in many programs that -- I think NISMO was maybe the first one I remember with a Bathurst 12-hour situation that they used to kind of have for people to shoot for, and the winner would get to do Bathurst 12-hour, which was kind of mindboggling I think when that was first talked about, and then you see all these drivers that now are trying to progress through that way, and McLaren have a big Esport situation, as well.

Yeah, I guess it's still -- from my point of view, there's still lots to be gained and lots of areas to get better. But I don't know, that's kind of an interesting conversation, I think, to have with Max to see how it applied going the other way.

**Q. We're seeing such a revolution -- it may not be the right word, but we're seeing how there's a number of drivers that have come from F1 to INDYCAR, there's several INDYCAR drivers that are maybe talking about going to F1. In your time as a race car driver, is this about as close as the two series have ever been in terms of parity, attention, things like that? What's your thoughts about how INDYCAR stacks up against F1?**

SCOTT DIXON: Well, that's a tough one, and I think you're going to have many different answers from whichever side you come from. I've always really appreciated what INDYCAR is, from a driving the car that it is and how raw it is, the competition I think is a big one, and it's been a big

draw I'd say for most of the Europeans coming this direction, knowing that if they get into a smaller team, which really the small teams are gone these days, the budgets are fairly sizable for everybody to achieve and run competitively. So I think that's been the draw, that they can come over and race fairly with the whole field and we've seen how successful that's been for many of them coming over.

I think F1 is still the pinnacle, man. You look at the sheer size of it, you look at the sheer revenue, the TV numbers, it's on a different island. As far as a purist and loving INDYCAR for what it is and how competitive it is and how fun the cars are and the cool tracks that we get to go to, I personally prefer INDYCAR, but then you look at just the sheer size and popularity and some of the cool machinery that Formula 1 is, that's a different topic again. I was lucky enough to drive one of them in the early 2000s.

Yeah, it's kind of a hard question to answer. I think yes and no. I don't know. I don't know. That's a tough one.

**Q. I'm going to ask you a follow-up and I don't want to get you in trouble with Chip, but let's say hypothetically we see drivers in INDYCAR in their mid-40s, even into their later 40s like Helio and Tony, let's say four or five years down the road let's say you and Chip decide, okay, it's done, we'll put a wrap on this. What if an F1 came to you after your INDYCAR career was over; would you think about maybe doing that even on a part-time basis?**

SCOTT DIXON: I don't know who would be crazier at that point, the F1 team or myself. I don't know, man, that's a pretty big hypothetical. Again, what it comes down to for me is just my pure love for racing. If there was an opportunity that was hard to turn down, of course I would have a crack at it. I love doing what I'm doing, though.

**Q. What do you think is so special about Mid-Ohio for yourself in terms of the success you've had there?**

SCOTT DIXON: I think the team has always been strong there. I don't know how many times the team has gone there, say 14 or month. It's a lot, whether it was Dario to Charlie to myself. There's been a ton of different winners from the Ganassi stables. I remember going there for the first time for a test, I think, with Kenny Brack and maybe Bruno, and I was shocked at how good the car was right out of the box and I was like, this is much more fun to drive in this car than the car I had driven previously.

I think it's a combo. It's a circuit for me that again, it's like a bullring. It's constant. There's not real long straights. You can be constant attack in some ways. It's kind of got a little

less like that with how the grip levels are of late, but that could change at any point.

But yeah, I don't know. I think it's just certain style that maybe is normal for me and then also the success that the team has had.

**Q. As you say with the success, how do you think Jimmie will do this year given that he's raced there before?**

SCOTT DIXON: Hopefully good. Again, I think the hardest part is that we just don't get to test anymore. Obviously a veteran or someone that's done it along each time you hit the track, you just hit it a lot more smoothly than someone like Jimmie. This will be the second time he's been there, whereas I've probably been there 50, 60, 70 times.

He's always progressing. I think even at the Iowa test, he did a really good job in bringing up different ideas and applying them extremely well, I think, through the test. There's definitely some sweet spots, but the ovals and some of the road courses with him at the moment.

Mid-Ohio can be tricky just because the track evolves so much. It's hard when you're maybe new to a situation and each time you don't automatically think that you can just carry another two miles an hour through each corner and keep going and keep going and it keeps progressing. That's hard mentally for a person well-versed in it compared to someone that is not. Then you've got the added side to that is of it's track, grass, wall. There's no real situation for overstepping it and just kind of driving back on to the track.

I hope it goes smooth and goes well for him. I think this added track time that we have been getting I think since Road America should help him. It's just time. Like that's the hardest thing. Three tests in a whole season, it's kind of crazy.

**Q. Scott, you had seven top 10s this year, the most in the series. The one thing missing is the top 5s and the podiums on a consistent basis. Do you feel the competition is getting harder and harder over the years to consistently be there, or maybe is your car not capable quite yet on a consistent basis to be there?**

SCOTT DIXON: I think the competition has always been tough. I think for a top 5 to top 3 -- top 5 has maybe changed a little bit, but to make it to the podium, I think the competition level has always been extremely tough. Are there more players throughout the field and the depth to it? Yeah, for sure.

Honestly, I just don't think we've been doing a good enough job. I think that's what it comes down to. I think when we dissect some of the weekends that we've had, we've kind of made a little mistake here or we've kind of overchanged the car here or I've messed up in a corner that starts the lap.

Then when you break it down now, you're pretty much getting one or two laps in qualifying that gets the most out of the car. If you don't hit them right, you're just not going to press.

Yeah, I don't think especially in the last sort of three or four years, I don't think that has changed too much as far as a category or as a championship. Yeah, I just don't think we've done a superb job this year.

**Q. You've made a career out of taking what the car is giving you and you don't overstep it; if it's a top-10 car you take a top 10 and move on. These young guys seem fearless; they just seem to overstep, drive hard every lap. Every session they're always overstepping it. Have you had to change your approach at all and maybe come out of that comfort zone a little bit and push a little bit harder, and maybe you're not quite comfortable in doing so yet?**

SCOTT DIXON: I feel like when you're in practice or qualifying, I feel like you're kind of always pushing the limits. I don't think there's any time when you're not.

You know, in the race whether you go for a gap and you choose to or not, I think the style of racing is changing a little bit. I think there is probably a factor of people taking more risks and then just hoping it works out.

I feel like that goes kind of in waves, too, where the penalties kind of come down on that or if people start having that run of bad luck where they keep trying it and it doesn't work.

Yeah, I would say it's a little more aggressive than typical. But yeah, as far as the lap-to-lap stuff on a weekend with practice and qualifying, I feel like everybody is always giving it 100, 110 percent.

**Q. We've seen this happen before, you're top 10, top 10, top 10, and then you go on a summer run and a bunch of podiums and wins in a row. Do you feel like this 9 team the way it's constructed right now has it in them starting this weekend moving forward that, yeah, we can turn these into podiums and we can turn these into wins? Do you feel you're there yet?**

SCOTT DIXON: I hope so. As I've said earlier, I thought the turning point was going to be Indy.

Yeah, so there's been lots of changes, there's no doubt. I think on the crew side there's maybe one or two guys that kind of have rolled over from the last two years, and I would say that's probably the same on the stand side outside of Chip and Mike.

There's definitely some continuity that we need to get a little bit better. We need to kind of know what the right hand is doing with the left hand and situations like that. It can definitely be better. I think we're working towards that.

Definitely having a smooth weekend or getting on a roll will help that flow a lot quicker and a lot easier. But yeah, we're working hard, man. We win and lose as a team, and I can tell you that everybody right now is giving 100 percent, and hopefully we can find our stride here shortly.

**Q. How have you been these weeks being off track?**

SCOTT DIXON: It's been good. We did have a test in Iowa, which was extremely hot. It was actually fun to get back to Iowa. I'm excited for this event. I think what Hy-Vee and what the NTT INDYCAR Series is doing, just seeing all the construction, whether it's for the concert or the hospitality suites and everything that's going into it, they're spending a ton of money on an event that's going to be fantastic with all the entertainment. That was definitely a highlight of the downtime.

I think all of us would have preferred maybe just one week off, and that one week off maybe being right after Indy and then kind of go into a roll. But the TV schedules and everything that goes into it -- but it's been nice to kind of have a little bit of a break and try and reset and get going here, but yeah, I can't wait to get back to the racetrack.

**Q. Do you feel there's something that you need to improve to be on the top step of the podium, because you showed us a lot of speed, especially on qually day at Indy, and I think everyone was expecting you to win that race. But there are a lot of things that happen in an INDYCAR race. Do you think there's something you need to improve to achieve that win?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, first of all, thanks for bringing up Indy again.

**Q. I know it's hard.**

SCOTT DIXON: No, no --

**Q. Qually day was exceptional.**

SCOTT DIXON: Thanks, man. But yeah, I think Indy was a good example. It guarantees you nothing. You need to have flawless days, and unfortunately I made a mistake.

It's tough to swallow. That's hard, I think, for not just a driver, it's hard for everybody to rebound over situations like that.

I don't know. I think from my point of view, we just need to not overtry. I think whether it's my mistakes, it's coming from overtrying a little bit in some areas, and I think that's true in how we're changing the car and how we're trying to get through a weekend, as well.

We've just got to get back to basics, make sure you cover the basics first and understand what you need, and I guess stop trying to overthink things is probably the biggest thing.

**Q. This is quite off topic, but if you can choose some driver from the grid to join Ganassi for next season, who would it be?**

SCOTT DIXON: I don't know, that's probably a Chip question. We don't have any open seats, man.

**Q. No, I know, but if there's any possibility --**

SCOTT DIXON: I don't know, I think -- boy, that's a really tough one. I think as you look at kind of INDYCAR right now, I think it would always be fun for me to partner up with people that I haven't driven with, whether that's Josef or Will, even McLaughlin coming from New Zealand. I think there's probably a lot of people that would be a lot of fun to team up with for sure.

**Q. Since Indy didn't go your way and with it being double points, is there a sense of urgency to recoup the loss being that the loss was greater than it would be at any other race?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, that's always tough. It's great when you finish in the top 3 or 4. I think last year that was kind of our defining point, as well. We, I think, lost 60 points or so to Alex, and that's kind of where we finished the season, as well. You would have been a lot closer; you look at Marcus, how it vaulted him into -- he has a 20-plus kind of point lead at the moment. Indy is a big deal, but it should be a big deal. It's the biggest race in the world.

So yeah, urgency, I feel like every weekend you're trying to do your best and you're trying to treat it as any other weekend. Again, I think if you overemphasize things or try too hard, then it just makes it a little bit worse. So yeah, you've kind of got to let the course of the season play out



and then start to analyze when there's another two or three races to go and see how that's working for the points chase.

**Q. You've won a race in every INDYCAR season since 2005 but things haven't really gone your way this year. With your record do you think Mid-Ohio might be the one, and are you planning to do any different this weekend to try and get your first win?**

SCOTT DIXON: No, I hope any one of these next few is the first one for the season. Again, I don't think you really want to try and change anything. There's no more emphasis. Again, I think you're giving 100 percent each weekend no matter what it is and trying to win. It's just how tough it is at the moment.

If you get a bit of luck, that always helps I think in different scenarios like that, but yeah, it's definitely a cool record that we've got and one that we would -- I would very much like to keep that rolling. We'll be keeping our head down and trying to make the most of that, that's for sure.

**Q. You have two teammates in Marcus Ericsson and Alex Palou who are having really good seasons. Do you feel like your biggest rivals this year might be your own teammates?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, I think that's true for most years, to be honest, depending on how the first -- well, you never know going into a championship and then you kind of get more of a clear picture. No, I feel like your teammates are always the ones that have a shot, and it just depends on the season how it plays that sometimes it is and sometimes it isn't.

At the moment, I don't know, I think I'm 60 something points back from Marcus, and I think Alex is almost 50 back. We've definitely got some work to do. But again, the second biggest goal for us right now or the biggest goal for us right now is to capture the championship. I know all of us, all the drivers and everybody on the team will be trying to make sure that one of us can try and capture that, that's for sure.

**Q. You were mentioning you were going to come back in the warmer months in the southern hemisphere. The season finishes, what, mid September for you. Do you think there's a chance you could sneak back for that first weekend of October and the old WRC rally New Zealand, Mate?**

SCOTT DIXON: Obviously knowing everybody involved, I would love to get back down there. Our timing is going to be tough, I think. I think there's a couple of events for the

two weekends after Laguna Seca that I'm trying to do, the one weekend right after and then another later in Europe.

It'll probably -- I know we booked some stuff for Christmas, so yeah, trying to get down for that period of time.

I don't know, it's possible that I could get down maybe for a one or two-day trip for WRC. That would be pretty cool.

**Q. You mentioned you haven't been home in three years obviously due to the pandemic. What are you looking forward to most about coming back to New Zealand? I'm assuming family and friends is top of the list, but what else?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, family and friends. Oh, just the classic New Zealand summer, man, having a few beers, maybe some pies and just relaxing a little bit.

I think if it's similar to last year, we actually got quite a few weeks off. Typically it's like a 10-day to two-week stretch that we kind of get off before we go to Daytona 24-hour testing and stuff like that, so yeah, hopefully we can spend a good three or four weeks down there. None of my family apart from my mother has met Kit, who will be three in December, as well, on the 27th, so falls right into that period of time, so it's going to be a lot of fun to get back home and just enjoy it.

Honestly, it's been way too long. I've never been this long without going home. I usually try and get down there two or three times a year, but yeah, it's been three years, so it sucks.

**Q. Do you ever turn your attention or your thoughts to what you might do after you retire? Do you think you'll ever possibly move back to New Zealand and would you ever like to raise your children in New Zealand for any period of time?**

SCOTT DIXON: I guess Kit could probably fall into that category depending on how that falls, but honestly I don't see anything changing in what I'm doing currently for the next five years at least. But we've always kept a residence in New Zealand. Obviously it's my home, man. We'll probably chase summers a little bit, do a bit of both northern hemisphere and southern hemisphere if that's possible.

But there's nothing quite like New Zealand. It's an extremely special place, and I think it takes traveling the world to really understand how lovely New Zealand is. I do hope and look forward to at some period in my life spending more time down there.

**Q. What do you do in your time off as a family in Indianapolis? What would be Scott Dixon's layman's guide to Indianapolis for anyone going there?**

SCOTT DIXON: Well, the speedway is hit No. 1. You've got to get to the Indy 500. But for the kids and family, there's lots, and it's not just Indianapolis. For us during the off time we love to get to national parks, whether it's Yellowstone or Yosemite or Utah at some point. There's so many great spots. It's such a big country. It took us a long time to kind of break out of the racing kind of focus even in these downtimes to make sure you get to check out this beautiful country.

I feel very lucky to live here. Indianapolis, man, it's been a special place for me. I've been here longer than I've actually lived in New Zealand. I'm pretty much a Hoosier. I've lived here for 23, 24 years.

Love the people here. I love the hospitality and just how and who and how everybody is. Yeah, for me it's definitely a sweet spot for sure.

**Q. Are you going to be watching the All Blacks-Irish game this weekend?**

SCOTT DIXON: I will be. You just reminded me, so yeah, I will be checking that out. They lost last time, right, against -- was that a few years ago?

**Q. You're right, the All Blacks lost last November in Dublin, so there's a bit on the line this weekend.**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, let's get it done.

**Q. Obviously we're heading to Toronto after Mid-Ohio; how excited are you to be going back to Toronto after so long away?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, I can't wait. It's crazy to think it's been so many years since we've been there. It's a fun track. It's a fun town. I'm sure it's growing five times bigger than when we were there last time, as well. I'm guessing the racetrack is pretty much downtown Toronto now.

Yeah, it's a fun circuit but always extremely well received with the fans that we have in Canada. I hope one day we can get to race in Canada more than once as we have now, but it's a fun track. It races well. It's super tricky, especially the new kind of layout that we've had the last couple times that we've been there.

It's exciting. I think for a lot of the drivers, too, because there's quite a few people that wouldn't have been able to

-- that wouldn't have run at Toronto with the additions that we've had through the past couple of years.

THE MODERATOR: Scott, you've been very gracious with your time this hour. Thanks so much, and safe travels.

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