

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Scott McLaughlin

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to post qualifying for tomorrow's Honda Indy at Mid-Ohio presented by the all new 2023 Civic Type R. Our pole winner in Pato O'Ward will join us momentarily, but joining us now, the driver of the No. 3 Odyssey Battery Team Penske Chevrolet, Scott McLaughlin. Congratulations. Your third career front row start, third this season, as well. Tell us about your afternoon.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, I wish I was as fast getting here on track. Probably would have got pole compared to the other guys. But yeah, very happy. First time with Odyssey on the car, and it's exciting to start that relationship off in such a good way.

We've had this coming for a while. We felt like we had reasonable pace, and we've been wanting to sort of build on that bit by bit, and to finally sort of nail it in qualifying and get through the Fast Six and keep going was nice. Then to compete for pole and be as close as we were to Pato was fun.

Really pumped for tomorrow. It's all about qualifying here in some ways, so hopefully look forward to starting off good and getting on with it.

THE MODERATOR: It should be noted it's an all-Chevrolet front row, too, obviously big for the team.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yep, massive for Chevy. They've been great. Obviously it's been well-documented what they've done for us, and the power and drivability has been fantastic, so excited for what's tomorrow with an all-Chevy front row.

Q. It looked like in the last couple of segments you were just a little bit ahead in the green. Were you aware of that? What sectors did you probably not have it in order to knock him off the pole?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, I didn't quite nail Turn 12, which is the first turn, and then probably Turn 2 I went really deep. Yeah, Turn 2. Probably cost myself a little bit

of time there.

But look, I think Pato's lap was pretty stout. I think that's very strong -- to be honest when I crossed the line I was like, that must be pretty close, if not pole, because we did a run early in qualifying on a used set and went out in 67.5. To do a 66.8 was good, and then Pato's 66.7, so it shows how much the track evolved. Anyway, I deliberately told the guys, don't tell me the time that I'm chasing; just let me drive. That sort of worked out well.

Q. You talked a lot about the ups and downs of last year, how that really helped you developmentally as a driver. I know in May in particular you didn't have the results that you necessarily wanted. How did you feel like your experiences last year helped you get through that rough patch and get back to where you are starting on the front row for tomorrow?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, look, I think it just -- I went through so much adversity last year that this was nothing. This is water off a duck's back in some ways to what was going on. We were still -- the last few races unfortunately haven't gone great for us. We were competing potentially to be in top 5s and whatnot. It's not like the pace wasn't there.

Last year we lost ourselves a little bit because the pace wasn't there. That's sort of -- that was what was the tough pill to swallow. But yeah, certainly last year shaped me to be -- trust the process, trust what I'm doing is right. I've got two great teammates in Josef and Will who I fully believe could have been right here next to me if they had got through qualifying without any issues.

Really feeding off them and really feeding with the team and Ben, and that relationship is going well, too.

Q. I was talking to Tim Cindric in the bus earlier today and he said you're right where he expected you to be at this point in your career. I know that when you came up, you probably wanted to win last year, but in a lot of ways is it tough when you're a new driver like that to be able to handle realistic expectations rather than what you really want to do, which is win right out of the box?



SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, I spoke about it a ton. I think it's hard going from my mentality of in Australia where I was winning a lot and I think the last -- last year in Australia we won 14 races or something. It's hard to go from a mentality of just cutthroat, you have to win every weekend, if you don't it's a bad race, to just coping with top 10s, top 15s. Regardless of what situation you are, you're a competitive beast, you built yourself out to be. Every person in here, every driver is a competitive individual.

It's very hard to sort of get out of that and just go, okay, well, I've got to learn. I've got to just build with this. I've got to build with the team. I've got to build with the car. It does take some time, and it definitely took me more time than I thought. I think Tim and Roger knew exactly how long it was going to take. That's why they're the experts.

I just had to trust the process, trust them and trust what we had going on here, and I think, yeah, we are in the right spot. I'm competing for top 5s every week, top 8s every week. I think we're right where we want to be, but we've got a long which to go before we're where Josef is right now, and I've got certainly a nice person to groove myself on.

Q. I heard you being asked about how the last few races have gone and I think a lot has been made of Will's approach to how he's taken on the season in terms of a bit of a fresh approach and not worrying about things outside of his control. Is that something you've kind of rubbed off and bounced off this year and is that something that's helped you out, as well?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, I think a little bit. Like I said, I've got Josef and Will there. They're just very experienced guys, and I can just really feed off them. Even Simon last year, learning off him, too.

I'm in a really good space right now, and life off the track is a lot easier. I've got my green card. I'm all set in America. That's a big weight off my shoulders. My God, that was a pain in the butt for a while there. Then you sort of have -- you add that to the stress of the racing and learning new cars, new facilities, new everything, new people, it's a lot.

So yeah, I guess you enjoy what's happened, but there's still a lot that I can improve and and get better, and yeah, I think my approach to the season has probably been a lot more normal to sort of how I was in Australia, a lot more comfortable, and yeah.

Q. I wanted to follow up on that green card stuff. What kind of toll was that, and what did you have to go through?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: It wasn't too bad. It's like -- it's a stress. You get a lot of evidence and -- I'm a good bloke, and trying to prove to America, like keep me, I'll be all right.

It is a stress, but look, there's a lot more people going through harder stuff than I did just then. I'm very privileged to be able to call this place a home now, I'm a permanent resident and I'll be a U.S. citizen one day, and it's a proud thing to be here.

Q. (Inaudible.)

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: It didn't help that I met Kyle in Vegas, but anyway...

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