

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Sunday, July 17, 2022

### Scott Dixon

#### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are ready to resume with the man, the myth, the legend, Scott Dixon.

Congratulations. This is your 52nd career win which ties Mario Andretti for the second most all time. It is your 18th season, consecutive season, with a win, and your 20th season with a win.

Tell us about your day.

SCOTT DIXON: Thank you. Thank you. It was a very special day in so many ways. Obviously some of those numbers, it took a little while to get to. It's definitely been a bit of a dry spell for us. Sometimes that puts on a lot of pressure, not just me, but everybody on the team.

Today was just one of those days where I think the car was super fast all weekend. I think all the cars were across our group. You could see with the 8 and the 10 had great recoveries, even though they had some issues in qualifying. That's real teamwork.

For me to be a part of this team is what it's all about. I think it's my 21st season with Chip. All but one of those wins has been with him. Very thankful for what he's done, what his team has done, what everybody puts into this team.

Yeah, the race itself was fairly straightforward with how the cautions fell for us. My car was quite tricky to drive. We had some previous races, like Detroit, where we had a lot of understeer. Did the warmup in the morning, get to the race, a lot of understeer. I think we over-corrected for that and the car was super loose.

Really tricky race for myself to look after the rear tires, especially on restarts to try to get going, especially in traffic behind VeeKay there for a little bit.

All in all we came away with the win. Had a good, clean pass into one on Herta. That was it. Yeah, it was a lot of fun for me.

THE MODERATOR: Mario isn't here this weekend. We did try to contact him to surprise you on Zoom. But he wasn't available.

He did tweet: Utmost respect for my friend Scott Dixon and truly happy to congratulate him on 52 wins. Also congratulate his team because nobody does it alone. I hope this is just a step on your continuing journey. Well done.

What does a statement like that mean to you?

SCOTT DIXON: It means a lot. I love Mario. I love Mario for so many reasons, what he's done in the sport, achieved, what he gives back to the sport.

I feel extremely lucky to have the likes of himself and A.J. here most weekends. Even to sit and chat with these guys, the generations that they raced in or the time they raced is a lot different from now.

It means a lot to me, to even be mentioned in the sale conversation as these greats. I never thought it was possible. For me, it's a huge credit to obviously the team that I work with now, but also the team that I started with, whether it was mum and dad to my brothers and sisters, all of my family, to the Scott Dixon Motorsport Group, which were the founders of getting a group together to put forward money and enable to get me to where I am today.

As he stated, it's a team effort. But those words from Mario mean everything to me.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Earlier this week you said this week has been awkward for the team amidst all the kerfuffle. What does it say about the team in general and everybody involved that you could have results like this this weekend?**

SCOTT DIXON: It's not the first time. I think it's never about the errors or anything, it's about the comeback and how you get yourself back to the top.

As everybody knows, it's never one person, it's a whole team. Sometimes letdowns can be (indiscernible) by one



person. I think the way that everybody sticks together, pulls back and fights, that's what makes the difference.

That takes leadership. I think what Chip does, whether it's sometimes his tough pep talks or whatever it is, this is the only business he's in and all he wants to do is win. That's why I love being a part of this team, because that filters down to every single person in this team.

Yeah, it's been interesting. Not the most interesting time I've had at this team, that's for sure. There's many ups and downs through everybody's careers. It's just a bit of a blip and a bit of noise at the moment.

But it definitely shows the resilience of this team. Even today how the 8 and 10 fought back, especially the 10. I haven't seen how the race played out, but tremendous job for them, Alex and everybody, to get back up, and good points.

**Q. You have Emma and the girls here. Brought you a little extra mojo?**

SCOTT DIXON: It's great to have the family here. As always, it's a little mixed up which races they come to. I think they're coming to all the ones except maybe the last two, which is great.

I feel bad that Kit is not here. I'm sure he was at home yelling at the TV. He hasn't made too many races yet. He's a bit of a wild man. He's hard to contain at a race. Hopefully he can make it to the Indy road course.

Yeah, he would have been super excited. Can't wait to get back home tonight to see him. But always very special to have Emma here and obviously Poppy and Tilly.

**Q. You've joked all week that this is essentially your home track because it's in the Commonwealth. How does it feel to win at home?**

SCOTT DIXON: It always feel goods to win at home. That's when you turn it up a little bit, just that extra bit.

Honestly I feel like I'm at home. The fans are super into it. It's just very special I think to be back here. I think sometimes it takes moments like obviously what we had, we weren't here to really appreciate what we have as a sport and the people that love our sport.

Definitely in the winner's circle today, that was quite apparent. You don't always get that at some of the races. It's good to be back here in Canada.

**Q. You won here four times. What about this course**

**appeals to you?**

SCOTT DIXON: I think you can see when the cars rolled off, all of us were very quick. It's always a combination. But I particularly like it. It's a circuit that you can really attack. Some of the circuits now with some of the tires that we have, you almost have to drive at 8/10ths. This one you can drive at 12/10ths.

You can overextend yourself, find that little bit more speed, risk versus reward. I can't stand circuits with a lot of runoff, you make a mistake and nothing happens.

This one is very technical, very tricky. A bit of a bullring. There's no real time to let up.

Again, I think it's a combo with the stall and the way I drive to how good the team is.

**Q. The final restart, you got a real jump on him. Do you feel you really had his number at that point, barring any further stoppages?**

SCOTT DIXON: It was tough with the restarts behind VeeKay and Conor. They were on pretty old tires as well. Where they can be quick or having a little more temperature in their tires, it's tricky to really understand the gap and where you need to go.

I kind of was struggling on restarts, especially behind those guys. Whatever balance issue you have just kind of gets accentuated when you're behind everybody. Most of the day I struggled with a loose car. The adjustments we made didn't really kind of fix it, which was kind of, I don't know, once I get with the team, see why that happened, but maybe we just didn't adjust enough.

Where I'm going with that is behind those two, it was tricky. Colton was putting a lot of pressure. He was doing a fantastic job. Where I was struggling, he was good, so it made for a good race for him. Ultimately once we got clean air, I could jump, attack without any sort of hindrance and knew we could pull a gap.

**Q. If you were to go back to 21-year-old Scott Dixon and tell him that you would be on equal with Mario Andretti in terms of wins, what do you think that Scott Dixon would say?**

SCOTT DIXON: Crazy. I remember the day winning my first race, the next day was a real struggle, probably had a few too many drinks that night. I don't think I was even 21 at that point. That was a bit of a shock for the bar I was in that night (smiling).

But I remember even having the conversation with Michael Andretti about getting to his number. Man, you're crazy, it's not going to happen.

He's like, No, it's going to happen. Honestly, it's going to happen really fast.

The first win, there's some numbers that are achievable. But I think when you look at even getting to the Unisers, then Mario, this sport can be super tricky. You can be in it one minute and out the next.

I think having the consistency and the understanding with the team, having that common ground of trying to win, it becomes the life of it being more achievable that comes.

Honestly, at the age of 20, man, trust me, I had other things on my mind at that point. I was just trying to keep my job (smiling).

**Q. Do you think about chasing down A.J.'s title now?**

SCOTT DIXON: Probably have to be racing well into my 50s for that one.

It's hard. The competition's really tough right now. Even the lucky-ness of pulling strategies, if you have a bad day, pull off a win from weird cautions and things like that, gets a lot trickier because there's so many good teams now. You have a field of 25 or 27 every weekend that they're going to be thinking the same ultimate strategy.

Yeah, it's tough. But we'll keep going, man. If we can get on a roll here and knock out some wins, anything's possible. A.J.'s pretty safe, I think.

**Q. In that period of the race where Daly and VeeKay were in front of you, you gave Daly a bit of a hard time, what says to Scott Dixon risk versus reward knowing they were on a different strategy?**

SCOTT DIXON: It's always hard because you're not sure exactly how much fuel they've been saving. You don't know how far they could go.

I knew today with Honda, what we were able to achieve on fuel mileage, even the longest stints were very easy for us. We could really extend.

I trust Conor. I knew if I made a dive, he would have been super respectful. That was definitely not an issue.

It's tough, right, when you're trying to pass a car that's on a totally different strategy, but use the mirrors a little bit to try to understand where your real threat is coming from.

I think Colton and his team did the right thing. They went flat out. They didn't worry. It was a pretty big number we had to get. My team is like, You got to get this number for the first two or three laps. He kept attacking, kept on overtake.

At some point he had to give up because he wasn't going to make it. I knew we could get some big numbers if we needed to. He's good at it, as well. Yeah, it was nice to see those cars peel off in front so we could get some clear air.

I was surprised VeeKay pitted when he did. I thought he might keep going.

**Q. The period at the end of the race with the bag on the track, did that get in your eyeline, go over the top of it?**

SCOTT DIXON: It was weird. I saw it at the apex at three. I was like, Where do I go here? I didn't want it to go into the duct. Then I was like, Well, I'll go wide and go around it. As I was approaching the corner, Well, you know, there's probably a lot of marbles out there, I don't want to do that either. When I turned, I'm going to run straight into it.

Sure enough, I don't know what it was, but it was super sticky. Obviously the tires are sticky at that time, too. It stuck. That thing was flapping. When I turned left into turn five, didn't want to turn. Thank God this is the last lap. By the time I kind of got to the exit to six, it found its way off the car.

I don't know what that was. Had it happened a few laps earlier, that could have been a bit of a game changer.

**Q. Are you more relieved to finally get to win number 52 and tie Mario or are you more relieved to get your first victory since May 1st, 2021?**

SCOTT DIXON: Probably more relieved to just get a win. There's definitely people that just keep talking about it, which gets a bit frustrating. It's not like anything changes. We're still the same process, trying just as hard.

Again, I think in this sport you always think about the close misses that you had more than the actual victories. Can be a bit sad in some ways.

I'm happy for myself and my family, but really happy for the team. They've deserved it. They've done a tremendous job this year. We got the win, so that's all that matters at this point, I guess.

**Q. You are probably the best driver in INDYCAR history when it comes to saving fuel. You're not going to give up your secret, but what is it about your knack to be able to go fast and save fuel at the same time? Probably is a secret art.**

SCOTT DIXON: I think days like today, just with how the balance of the car was, being super loose, it enables you to just carry so much speed at apex. Rolling that speed is where a lot of it comes from.

That's where actually the trickier part for me during today was the push laps because you start to really aggravate the (indiscernible) that's not really liking it, the rear tires are starting to burn off pretty quickly.

Today fuel saving for me was definitely I shouldn't say very easy, but much easier than normal just because of the balance of the car.

There's a lot of things that go into how you achieve it. Unfortunately you have a lot of teammates during that period of time, a lot of people get very good at it. It's not the big difference that we used to have.

**Q. We heard you say after the race that, We needed this. How important was this win in the context of personnel moving around, some issues at various races?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, it's been a bit of a blah year. We've had loads of top fives, but they're not going to win you a championship. We're in the business of winning, right?

I think that's where it gets frustrating. You see the close misses. Indy is a good example. Indy is a good example for several years. It's a team effort. I made a big mistake this year. Definitely frustrating.

I think you start to hit a bit of a bottom-out. It's weird, this sport. When you're on a roll, you just think it happens, it's easy, stuff like that, you maybe don't really respect it as much.

There are low points. I've had these periods in my career just where you have to be really respectful of the sport. When it comes, you got to be extremely happy about it.

It's never one thing. It's attention to detail. It's hundreds of small details. But that's where this team, as we've seen, winning last year's championship with Alex, to winning the Indy 500 this year with Marcus, they're a tough group and a group that works extremely hard. Just very lucky to be a

part of this team.

**Q. You said it was a blah year. I guess you've only had one race outside of the top 10 this season, which is impressive. Does that give you a lot of confidence going into the second half of the season?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, it's periods where you see, like, obviously you do deep dives into a lot of things. Detroit could have been a lot different. Road America, as well. Mid-Ohio. It's the same for everybody, right? That's what drives everyone, is just how crazy the competition is. That's what I love. It makes it damn hard to win. It's how it should be.

Yeah, it's always interesting, this process. I think that's why INDYCAR is just so competitive across the field, teams, drivers, driver combos. It's really tough.

Yeah, I don't know. You just got to keep your head down I think. Obviously if you keep knocking on that door, eventually it opens. I was hoping it was going to open at Indy this year, but it just wasn't the case.

**Q. How much momentum does today's win give you going into the long list of races coming up?**

SCOTT DIXON: Hopefully lots. But again, you're only as good as your last race. Next weekend we go into a doubleheader.

It's a track, Iowa, if we look at it, I wouldn't say we're particularly great at. Last year we had some good results, a second and fifth, last time we were there.

We had a decent test there. I felt like we made some good gains. We wanted to actually go back but we were unable to just because of tire supply.

Yeah, it's going to be a big points weekend. I think the stretch that we're in five races in four weeks is going to put a pretty good pressing note on how the championship is going to flow.

I don't know, man. I don't want to predict anything in this sport. It's too tough to do that. All I know is we will be trying as hard as we possibly can.

**Q. You mentioned Chip's leadership held this team together. Does that come through in face-to-face meetings? Is it an understanding of what Chip expects in this organization? How did you see your team get through this?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, sometimes it makes you just put

your head down a little bit more and work harder, too. Not that we don't always. Maybe when reactions like that happen, I think it enables a lot of people to get a better focus.

I think Chip was extremely calm this week. I think that's real leadership. I think somebody's kind of throwing their toys out of the cart, running around, that's going to be a different reaction for everybody to see. He's very calm.

I think just the pep talk that he gave everybody before the race, his typical speech of doing the obvious things right, looking after your teammates, bringing up the trickiness of, say, the pit lane we have here, but that everybody in our team had a chance to win today. There's a strategy for everybody to win. It was really nice. Good for the 9 car and the championship. Again, the rest of the team did a hell of a job to rebound from pretty crazy starting positions, especially on the 10 side, to keep pushing.

I think it was a great calmness and a sternness that he had this weekend that kind of clears out the noise that's out there.

**Q. You've been in the sport for a long time. You've had a lot of I don't know if I can call them dreams but ambitions you've achieved. People from my generation now are looking up to you, what you have accomplished. What kind of message would you like to say to my generation that want to get into racing, but they don't have that push to go and chase it?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, thanks for your kind words.

I don't know, you've got to have that drive. That's a big part of it. You've got to have a relentless work ethic, deep dive. I think the biggest thing is probably always ask questions, always ask how you can do things better. Especially once you get to the level that it is now, there's so many smart people in the room that can guide you.

The worst thing I think you can ever think is that you know everything. That's probably the best advice I could give.

Even being in INDYCAR racing for 20-plus years, I'm learning every day, man, and it doesn't stop. It's continuous. It's hard work. I guess that's the biggest thing. You've got to be committed and you've got to be committed for everybody that's involved, but you have to get after it.

**Q. We last raced here in 2019. From what you can remember from that weekend, how did the crowd and the extracurricular stuff outside the race, what did that remind you of?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, I think even from Friday it looked like they needed more grandstands, man, especially on pit road everything was full on a Friday, which is crazy.

I think it just shows the love for our sport in Canada. It shows that we probably should be racing at more venues here. I miss the days of racing here three times a year, whether it was Edmonton, Vancouver or Toronto.

I think there's a lot of potential here. There's a lot of fans for our sport. They're very knowledgeable. They know all the drivers. They're wearing all the team kit. It's cool to see.

I think we should race here more I guess is probably the easiest answer there.

**Q. The manufacturer-sponsored races, Chevy has won all of them except for this one. What do you think it means to Honda to have a Honda engine car win their race?**

SCOTT DIXON: It's everything. It's cool to win a home race. I think what Honda do for the sport, these races, but obviously we're a Honda team. We're Honda all the way through with all our programs.

They're a tremendous partner. It gives me huge pride to win at a race like this, a big win for me with the numbers, but to win at a Honda race, home track of Toronto, Commonwealth.

I think it's very important to have the support that we do from our manufacturer. Yeah, of course without them we wouldn't have been able to win today.

THE MODERATOR: We'll leave it there.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports