

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, July 24, 2022

Pato O'Ward

Will Power

Scott McLaughlin

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'll welcome in the first of the podium finishers, Scott McLaughlin coming home third. His fourth podium of the season, fifth of his very young NTT INDYCAR SERIES career.

It was up and down yesterday, up and down a little bit today. Finally found yourself on the podium.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, thanks. Really pumped to back up. Felt like we had a car to challenge for the podium yesterday. We managed to sort of pull it off today.

Midway through the race today, the car was a bit of a handful and I wasn't too happy. (Indiscernible) got on the radio, calmed me down, as most of those guys on pit road do to us egomaniac drivers. Kind of brought us back to life.

Managed to get my head down, did some really good pit exchanges, managed to get ourselves into P4 there before the last caution. Then P3 on Dixon, which was a fun pass. I really enjoyed that. It was a really good exchange with him all race. Hope he enjoyed it. Probably didn't enjoy it as much as me, but it was definitely a lot of fun racing with him.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Scott.

Q. This sport is about partnerships. Talk about Freightliner, the job that Hy-Vee has done here.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Absolutely. Anyone has seen my car this year, it's been licorice all sort. Stuff going on everywhere. But I've had some fantastic partners on my car for a long haul. Freightliner this weekend, Gallagher next weekend at the Gallagher Grand Prix. They're promoting that a massive amount as well.

To have Hy-Vee like this weekend, all year they've been

with Rahal, Jack Harvey, they've got a great driver in Jack. I think this weekend has set the bar in terms of promotion for a race.

I think if you look at this facility in the years gone by, the crowd numbers aren't nearly as big as what we've seen in the last little bit. I'm glad my first race at Iowa Speedway was this one. I couldn't believe the vibe.

I jumped out had a little bop to Gwen Stefani a little bit before the race. I think it set me up pretty well for the race, to be honest. Blake Shelton after, big names. Hy-Vee want to go bigger and bigger. I think that's fantastic. To have that money, that investment into our sport, is something we all should be grateful for. It gives us jobs, give us a future.

I'm proud to be in a time in INDYCAR where it's so successful right now, TV numbers, partnerships, sponsorships. Celebrities coming to the races. It's really cool, on its way up. Yeah, really pumped with it.

Q. You took to ovals pretty quickly. Now you've gone a few different types of ovals. How does this compare?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, this is up there. This is awesome. I wish we could race every weekend, to be honest. It's just bad ass. You can throw it on the outside, run two lanes. You can take air off the guy behind you, guy will go behind you. It's wicked, you know.

Texas was fun. It's a bit more sort of like one-lane groove. Once we built that second lane, it was really good. Kind of like here, a bit faster, but scarier.

Indy is its own kettle of fish. Indy is INDYCAR.

Ovals for me, I've said it a number of times, I learned from a blank sheet of paper. Had great people around me, Will, Josef, Simon around me last year. Learned as it went.

Really, really pumped with how we're going, our development throughout the whole season. We're right there. Unfortunately we didn't get those points yesterday, which would have been pretty vital. We would have been right there with the guys at the front. Didn't happen.



I'm really pumped with our performance on the ovals.

Q. Physical condition, how difficult was this race given that you did 250 yesterday?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, look, yesterday I didn't run the cool suit. I'm pretty sure Pato didn't either. A driver preference. I had one of those go dead on me in a Supercar. I swore in my life I'd never wear one again. It was the worst experience of my career. I'd rather be really hot. Just had some strategies in terms of keeping me cool, ice baths or whatever before that race.

It was pretty hot. The biggest problem here is the forced air that we have is not a fan, it's pure air from when you drive fast. When you slow down it gets really, really hot. The cautions, when you come into pit lane, that's when it's the hottest.

Today I felt pretty good. INDYCAR medical, and my safety team were fantastic. They gave me an IV drip last night when I asked for one. Filled me up, juiced me up. Feel good. I got a lot of energy right now. I can't be unhappy about that.

Q. (Question about Supercars.)

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, look, that's where my got my first win in Supercars. I won there in front of my home fans, which is amazing. Just had some tremendous sort of championship battles throughout the year.

To be honest, I watched the Supercars for the very first time there. That's where the fire for me shined in terms -- burned. I wanted to be a race driver from the first point I saw Supercar on the hill.

Sad, some of these tracks that are built in residential areas, it's inevitable it's going to happen. But especially in New Zealand and Australia.

Unfortunately that's the way it goes. We got tremendous memories there that we should all be proud of and enjoy for years to come.

THE MODERATOR: Joined also by Pato O'Ward, second win this season, fourth over. All of this in his 50th career start, becoming an old man in front of our eyes. Second win on an oval, fourth podium of the season.

Your general thoughts about getting the win? Obviously great drive yesterday. Exceeded that one better today.

PATO O'WARD: Yeah, thanks. Great weekend for us.

We knew we needed to execute this weekend, just to have a shot at the championship. We've let a lot of points go from us because of one thing or another.

We executed. The guys were great in the pits. I did my job in the car. I knew we had the pace to win one. The problem was just trying to get up to Josef. One thing is getting up to him, and one thing is passing him. I'm glad he's okay. We took advantage of the opportunity that presented itself. I just walked away with it. I knew we had the pace to do it. It's just about being in the right situation.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Josef is amazing around here. What can you see from inside the team that makes him so good?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, obviously Will did an amazing couple of laps there, very close. In qualifying it's not too different to what we've seen.

Yeah, in the race, Josef is just really smart in lap traffic. You got to be really strong, pick your pass, keep your momentum up, keep your tires up. That's what I'm still learning. I wasn't that great in traffic today to be honest. I think I can learn from that, watch some onboard and stuff.

He's tremendous in lap traffic, picking the right lane. He's just got that confidence around this place. Confidence is a huge thing on oval racing, especially a place like this.

Yeah, he's got it nailed. Yeah, been here a few years.

Q. Yesterday you had the lug nut issue which kept you from contending for the victory. Today it looked like Josef was in pretty good stead to go back to back. How much does that show how this sport, anything can happen?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, look, I think you have to push the limit on everything these days in INDYCAR. The competitiveness. My guys yesterday, the stops have been tremendous all year. I think we were again fastest on pit road, or close to fastest on pit road today.

They did a stop. The stop before was a second faster than anyone in pit lane, that last exchange yesterday. They tried to go a little bit faster. You weren't going to do it. Unfortunately they dropped the car too early, didn't tighten the wheel.

Today I think there's a little bit of a freak accident with Josef. You are pushing the limits. You are doing stuff. I think it was mechanical. I don't think he lost that. But yeah...

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, Scott, we'll see you at the Indy road course.

We'll continue with questions for Pato.

Q. The fact that yesterday you could have won the race if it hadn't been for Josef...

PATO O'WARD: Are you telling me I wasn't going to be able to beat him (smiling)?

Q. No. I said you put yourself in position today to beat him. If you could go over how good a race weekend your whole team had.

PATO O'WARD: We had a great weekend. Obviously we were there, we were there to take advantage of an opportunity that got presented to us. I think even with him not finishing the race, I think we still would have given him a hard time. There was still one more pit stop to go.

Yeah, I was positioning ourselves to do what we just did. Super proud of the boys in the pits. The car was fantastic. I knew it was just all about getting into the Penske sandwich because, yeah, Will was not making it any little easy on me. I knew Josef was going to do the same. It was one thing to get up there, but one thing to pass.

It just explains how hard it is, how difficult it can be whenever you're going through the lap traffic, how you get some people, other people behind you are going to get them in a very different situation. That's how you can lose or gain time.

You're never going to perfect it, but trying to lose the least amount of time possible in that situation.

THE MODERATOR: Also joined by Will Power. Sixth podium of the season. 91 podiums in your career.

Your thoughts on a pretty good weekend for you?

WILL POWER: Yeah, great weekend points-wise. Would have loved to have got a win here. Tough competition, man. You can't let up one bit.

Yeah, the car was really good. I probably could have been more aggressive in that second-to-last stint because it seemed like there's a lot less deg. Must have cooled or the track took a lot of rubber or something. The track was really fast.

THE MODERATOR: Questions continuing for the top two.

Q. Pato, you've got eight podiums in your last 10 oval races. What do you attribute that to?

PATO O'WARD: I think the team has a great package in the ovals. I think that's definitely our strong suit. We're getting better in other areas.

But, yeah, just as a team I think we go to every oval believing that we can beat anybody and we're going to have as good of a package as anybody else.

Yeah, going to other tracks is a little bit of a different story in terms of I think we've done a good job strategy-wise in ovals, whether it's a superspeedway or short oval. We don't seem to have that in road courses. So I think there's some work to do there.

Yeah, great job by the team.

Q. Pato, top six in the championship, now separated by 44 points. Five races to go. Second or third place might not be what you need at the upcoming races. Describe how tight things are.

PATO O'WARD: I think the biggest thing is because everybody that's fighting for the championship is having good weekends. No one is having bad weekends.

For us, we've thrown away and we've given away an easy hundred points just either whether it was a strategy or if it was I won't mention the other ones. We've just thrown away a lot of points that would have put us in a way better position of where we are right now.

I have no other choice but to try and claw back. We can just be more risky than others. I really don't care. Four, five and six for me doesn't really change anything. I don't care for sixth or fourth. We need to go for one and two because we've already got a four and a three.

The only way to do that is to win because you're not going to get those points by being consistently in the top five. I think if you're in the lead, it would be a different story, but we're not.

Q. Pato, you were asked about your oval performances. Can you talk about your preparation? Anything you do, any particular part of your preparation that's important coming to an oval race?

PATO O'WARD: For me, I think the biggest factor is just confidence and having a car you can attack with. It doesn't only go for ovals, it goes for street courses. You have to put a lot of trust in the car if you want to extract a lap time.

Here in Iowa, it's a tire deg race, it's not a fuel race. It's important to have a car that can last, but a car that's good in traffic.

While you're wanting to get through traffic as quick as you can, you need to kind of hold back just a teensy little bit because you can over-burn quite quick.

I don't know if it's one thing or another. I try and prepare physically as much as I can. In terms of video, I'll watch a few minutes. Every weekend is different. All you can do, if you have a good feeling for it practice one, you just keep working at it.

Q. You have a reputation of being an aggressive driver. At Iowa it's about saving your tires and patience. Do you think your performance this weekend shows how much of a rounded driver you've become or are?

PATO O'WARD: Yeah, I mean, I would hope I'm getting better. I think I am (laughter).

The more laps you do, you gain knowledge. I mean, these guys lap circles around me in terms of knowledge like Will, Scott and Josef. Whenever you're up to fight with them, they were super quick, specifically the Penskes. The Penskes were extremely, extremely hard to fight with. Everything had to go perfect in order to either get them on a pit stop exchange or get them on the track.

Yeah, I think Iowa is just different because it's a tire deg race. Other ones play more into the fuel, which I think personally is a lot more boring. That's why Iowa is so good. It's just because it really plays into you have to be smart. You have to be smart not just if you're leading, but the leader also has to be smart because he'll go through the traffic. I think that's why the races here are so good.

Q. Pato, on the radio you were frustrated with lap cars in front of you, telling team that no one listens, let me do my own thing. How difficult is it to put that in the back of your mind and focus forward instead of remembering these guys are going to fight hard?

PATO O'WARD: I think what you have to do in that situation is just do what you know what to do. I think when you try and plan it too much, they were basically telling us where it was going to be I guess easier to pass some other guys. It's just not the case. They just kept changing lanes. You can't judge it. You just have to do what you -- you kind of have to react to it once you're in the corner already.

Every time I would prep into it thinking they wouldn't go in that same lane, they did. It just kept moving me backwards

rather than helping me. Yeah, I think sometimes too much information is just not going to help.

Q. Talk about your powerplant.

WILL POWER: I think Chevy's done a great job this year giving us drivability and horsepower. It definitely showed this weekend, all the Chevy cars were really strong.

Yeah, just lucky to be involved with these guys. They're very, very good at their job.

PATO O'WARD: Yeah, just a little bit to add on that. We've obviously dominated this weekend. It's been an all-Chevy podium both days. Qualifying was also all Chevy. The power was there. The drivability was there. The reliability was there. Just very crucial part of the season to have that. Yeah, great to have them power us.

Q. Will, can you talk about the consistency over the weekend.

WILL POWER: Yeah, very consistent run this year really. I mean, had a lot of podiums a lot of top fours. I know we got good cars here, so it was a matter of just being mistake-free. I felt like we were going to finish in the top five. That's exactly what happened.

Been trying to win around here for a long time. Been really wanting to win at this place, but keep coming up short. Yeah, really happy with the weekend.

Q. Do you put that down to the engine or the package in general?

WILL POWER: This weekend? The whole package. Car means a lot around this track. Car means more than engine. If you can't get through the corners, you're just not going to be fast. Simple as that.

Q. Will, patience was the key. How did you do that?

WILL POWER: Yeah, well, I was very patient at the start of the race. Just kind of driving to a pace to save the tire and kind of backing Josef up a little bit. Then that gave me more time, gave the guys coming around a lap to degrade a tire, you're saving. Certainly chopped through the field very quickly when we got to those guys, so it worked.

Q. Will, if my math is right, there are 270 points possible going forward. You've been in a number of title fights. I think you're only 22 points behind Ericsson. How are you going to capture this title?

WILL POWER: Yeah, just doing what I've been doing.



Simple as that. We've been executing, not really doing anything special. Get on top of the qualifying thing because we cannot have what we had in Toronto. Definitely got the pace.

Yeah, putting it together for the next - how many left - five. It's getting down to the wire, man. Better bring your A game or I'm going to take it from you young blokes.

PATO O'WARD: I think I'm still behind him, though. For sure, I was far back, man (smiling).

I'm coming for you.

THE MODERATOR: With that we'll wrap things up.

WILL POWER: Don't play with me. I've been in this game a long time (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: There we go. Good way to end it.

PATO O'WARD: Thank you.

WILL POWER: Thank you.

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