

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Friday, September 2, 2022

Scott McLaughlin

Felix Rosenqvist

Kyle Kirkwood

Press Conference



sporty straight away, kind of what Scott said. We didn't test here, but it felt like we just have to fine-tune it to get it where we want to, so that's always good. It's not really like that always when you start the weekend, so yeah, pretty exciting. I think we'll be pretty good.

THE MODERATOR: What will it take to keep up front throughout the course of the weekend for you guys?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: I think on this one it's all about getting through the chaos. We saw today a lot of red flags, getting cleared laps, getting the tire prep you want, obviously nailing a lap when you need to and kind of get through Q1 because I think it's normal here that quick guys don't get through Q1 because of those kind of things. I'm mostly focused on that.

I think if we put a lap together, we'll for sure make it. But yeah, it's a tricky one. Portland is always about surviving, and then when you're in Q3, you want to be there and starting up front. I think you just have a way more smooth race that way here, and at the back it's always kind of chaotic. Yeah, just focusing on the details.

THE MODERATOR: Scott, as a team you had one test date left, you could have gone to Laguna, you could have come here. You came here. How much did that help you guys?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, we struggled last year as a team so it was early on our radar we were going to come here regardless of the championship fight. Yeah, I think it was a good call. We feel like we've got reasonable machines for Laguna.

Yeah, like I said, we were able to sort of hit the ground running with what we had from last week, which has been good. Now it's just laps for me and hopefully massaging and car and hopefully we're right there.

Q. Felix, same situation for you guys; you had one to go so you made your decision. How did it turn out for you?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, Laguna was very tough for us last year. It was definitely one we wanted to get better, and kind of same thing there. Seems like the test day paid

THE MODERATOR: Interesting session today, finally wrapping up, though, Josef Newgarden was quickest with a lap time of 58.5. Some other good stories throughout the field that includes our first driver here today, driver of the No. 7 Arrow McLaren SP, from Sweden, Felix Rosenqvist. Also Scott McLaughlin is arriving right on time driving the Freightliner Team Penske Chevrolet, and we also will be joined momentarily by Kyle Kirkwood. Scott McLaughlin, third quick; Felix Rosenqvist, sixth; Kyle Kirkwood was seventh in today's practice.

Scott, thanks for coming in. Nice start to the weekend for you guys.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, solid. I think from Penske's perspective, having tested here last week, got a solid base. Just about figuring it out, and thankfully a lot of it's the same. So you know, it's a good start to the weekend. We can just sort of massage it now and hopefully stay up there.

THE MODERATOR: Obviously a continuation of some momentum that you've had now for some time.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, look, feeling really good. I think the whole team is gelling really well. I think everyone is working together and things are just sort of moving really smoothly.

I know what I need to do. I just need to try and win this race. That's my goal, and I just need to work on that.

Q. Felix, your thoughts on a practice session that got extended but you got some good work done?

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Yeah, I think we were pretty solid. Both me and Pato looked pretty solid. I think he had to end short. Yeah, he wasn't running in the end. I don't know why. Yeah, I thought we were good. The car felt pretty



off. We look pretty happy there now. I think that's what kind of all the teams do now. They pick where they're the worst and they go test there. Yeah, we always want to have more testing, but no, it's been really valuable.

Obviously here last year was actually my best finish of the year, so we didn't feel like we needed to go here. It feels solid.

Q. With the session being kind of extended and stuff, have you come up with an idea of how you're going to tackle Turn 1 in the race on Sunday?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I don't think you can plan here. You've just got to get through it. Keep your front wing on it. But really today doesn't -- yeah, there was a lot of red flags and stuff, but I think we can't preempt what's going to happen at Turn 1. What will happen will happen, and hopefully you'll be on the right side of it.

FELIX ROSENQVIST: Turn 1, the problem there is you can get pushed by someone, and then having to cut because of that, and then you're automatically slotted back out and behind everyone who actually made the corner. That's tricky.

I guess the best thing you can do is try and stay on the inside and not be on the outside because that's where I guess you have more control from there. It's always tricky and I've been kind of on both sides of it, so always interesting.

THE MODERATOR: Also joined by the driver of the No. 14 Sexton Properties Chevrolet for AJ Foyt Enterprises in Kyle Kirkwood. It's funny, you look at the top seven, a couple rookies mixing it up there late in the season. How proud, how pleased were you of the practice today?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Yeah, we came here and tested, obviously, last week, so that's obviously beneficial, especially when you have such a short session like that. It was us, Penske and Andretti here. Given that it was short, I had a lot of time on track. We were able to kind of get our car in the place we wanted, and showed up today and still doing big changes, but ultimately we had track time last week, so it definitely is beneficial at least for the first practice.

Q. Easy to pick up where you left off?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Yeah, well, it's a lot warmer now. We were here last week and conditions were quite cool, I think quite a bit faster, too. I don't know what you guys think about it, but with the cooler temperatures, obviously sometimes it brings speed, so the track was really fast last

week.

Q. To follow up on that, it's supposed to be much cooler the rest of the weekend. Running in this much heat, can you take a lot away from that? Did you lose something by not getting to run at the right time?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: With the delay you're saying? I don't know, it's the same for everyone. Having tested here, we tested in those conditions last week, yeah, it was a little cooler, nothing crazy. Yeah, I think you've got to do what you can do. I think track time is track time, and as long as the sun is still up, we'll try and put a lap time down.

Q. Turn 1, they came and rearranged the chicane. I saw some people go through that and test it. Was it just too tight to try -- if you missed Turn 1, was it too tight to try to get through all the little barriers? Is that why they had to open it back up?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I mean, I went through it a couple times. I went through it the first, when they had it, it was extremely tight initially. They opened it up a little bit in the first portion, but the second portion is still very, very tight.

I think if you look back kind of where I was watching the Indy Lights session and someone missed their brake point there, and you kind of -- there's so many signs out there that you almost don't know which one to kind of aim for.

You can definitely catch someone out. I think in the situation of a race where people are diving to the inside and stuff, there's a lot that are right there next to that curb that probably aren't necessary because a lot of people if you look at last year's race, they all went just to the inside of the curb and then shot left, they didn't go all the way left, and it requires someone at the moment if there were to be an incident to shoot way left and almost go against traffic, which I don't think is very right. But that's I guess the decision that we've made.

Q. Would another problem be if you slow everybody down too much, then on the start if you have six cars trying to get through there and they've got to go so slow, are we just going to have a wreck at a different spot?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Circumstantial.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah. Just got to try and make the right decision, and hopefully it works out.

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