

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, September 4, 2022

Will Power

Scott Dixon

Scott McLaughlin

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up the Grand Prix of Portland here at the gorgeous Portland International Raceway. We'll be joined by the podium finishers, Scott McLaughlin. Will Power will be joining us here momentarily. Third place, Scott Dixon, is on his way. In fact, just walking in.

Second place finisher, of course, Will Power driving the No. 12 Team Penske Chevrolet. For Power it's the second runner up finish of the season. Eighth podium of the year. 93rd podium of his still young career. Leads a championship now by 20 points over his teammate Josef Newgarden as well as Scott Dixon.

Again, Scott Dixon joining us as well. Driving the PNC Bank Chip Ganassi Racing Honda finishing third. Moving up 15 spots today. A busy young man for sure. Fourth podium of the season. 13th of his career. Again, now into a tie for second place in the NTT INDYCAR Series Championship. Will, we'll begin with you. Tell us about your day.

WILL POWER: It was a great day, obviously. Good finish. Could have been much worse, I think if Lundgaard didn't get us at the beginning there on the used tire. So spent the day kind of closing that gap to Scott that we got when we were stuck behind cars.

Solid day. Still a very tough fight. We've got to come up to Laguna seriously ready. Yeah, as you know, in this series it switches incredibly quickly. Got to be smart.

THE MODERATOR: You had a slight chance to clinch. A lot of things would have had to happen. At the beginning of the day if somebody said you will increase your points lead heading into Laguna, you would take that, right?

WILL POWER: 20 points, I would have taken it. Can't complain.

THE MODERATOR: Scott comes home third, moves up 13 spots back now to a tie for second. Remarkable comeback. You go back to the month of May and the 500 double points that you didn't get and to make a comeback like this to be 20 points out of the championship. Tell us about your day and, man, you're in the hunt now for a championship. No. 7 next week.

SCOTT DIXON: Could have, should have, would have. It's one of those things. Proud of the team. I think they've done a great job. We keep putting ourselves in these weird situations. The car was fantastic in Q1 on the box. Didn't expect too much of a change and thought we would have converted easy and didn't even make it. We have to stop doing these most improved days, for sure. It's not that much fun.

Yeah, you know, still in it. That's all that we can hope for. We did as much as we could today. We definitely got a little tighter at the end, but we had to use a lot of overtake early on, so that definitely changed things up, I think, for the strategy towards the final five there.

Had a tricky moment with the 10 car coming in front of us in the pit, which kind of screwed us a bit as well, and lost a position that we should have got on Rossi, which was frustrating. All in all, I think the team did a great job today. Yeah, we'll see. See what comes next week.

THE MODERATOR: Just the last, what, 21 laps or so and on restart you were sixth and you were able to move up some spots to get you back in this hunt.

SCOTT DIXON: It was interesting. I think when I saw Josef break I was, like, Wow, I'm not sure if he is going to make the corner.

He did all that he could to make the corner, but put him at a weird angle, and that, obviously, offset him and Rossi because Rossi had a great run on him out of 12 into turn one. Then, got a great exit.

I think Will and Pato got into it as well, and I got a run on Pato, and he put a pretty big block on, and a lap later Indy called that, and I was able to get past, which thankfully I think the front three we pulled a ten-second gap on the



next pack where we pulled away really quickly. It was a great restart. Something that definitely helped us on the points side, and we'll take what we can.

Q. Will and Scott, it's been a difficult track to gain position at. How important is qualifying going to be on next Saturday?

WILL POWER: It's like every weekend. First thing it does is keep you out of trouble in turn one. Obviously, the second thing it does is put you at the front. It's a tough track, man. Like, it's a hard track to get the car right. You've got to understand what you need.

SCOTT DIXON: I don't know. I don't think I've started out front too much this year. It will definitely make our day a lot easier. There's alternate lines there, and it's pretty high. I think the tire, the red tire, especially that they're bringing this year is a higher tire than what we had previous years. That could definitely change the red. It could be a five-stopper, who knows, if the temperature is high.

The day of the test was through the roof. Yeah, it's going to be, as Will said, qualifying out front keeps you out of trouble where we'll have to see. The caution can flip the field at any point. Especially if you qualify up front, you don't have a whole lot of options. We'll have to see how that comes once we get that.

Q. I think in a year where youth was showcased so much, it's going to be fought out between three veteran experienced drivers. How fitting is that to see that kind of determine the championship?

SCOTT DIXON: We're still pretty young. I don't know what you (laughing) --

WILL POWER: Yeah, we've got ten years to go, don't we?

SCOTT DIXON: At least. I just signed a ten-year extension (laughing).

WILL POWER: I can't tell you how much experience does play into it, though. Over a season, over even a race, it makes a big difference, and that's why you see the championship as it is.

There's definitely some super quick, young fast guys. What is putting the whole thing together is the experienced bit in my opinion, and you don't even have to be the quickest guy. You have to be experienced and smart and, obviously, a great team as well makes a difference.

SCOTT DIXON: You answered it, mate.

Q. We can go with that ten-year extension. That's official?

SCOTT DIXON: Sure. Whatever you like.

WILL POWER: It's with McLaren (laughing).

SCOTT DIXON: I didn't say that.

Q. Which series? I'm going to ask this, and then I'm going to ask Will. Are you surprised at all no team orders there at the end to get you that win?

WILL POWER: I get it from the standpoint that Scott is in. I've been there, and you don't want to give up a win. What's that?

Q. (Off microphone)

WILL POWER: I don't think he gave it up. He didn't make it easy, and he didn't make it up with -- that his best buddy, so he is probably going to do that. I think Scott just got a good run on him. I mean, Joe has got a good run on him there. Obviously, 10 points, 11 points would make a big difference. You wouldn't be having to finish third. You would have been having to finish eighth or something.

Q. (Off microphone)

WILL POWER: Absolutely. I was on the radio asking for it.

SCOTT DIXON: I think I called it with ten laps to go, I'm surprised they haven't swapped yet.

WILL POWER: I don't know. Yeah, 10, 11 points would be great. I think we go in there pretty confident that we could get it done. 20, it's still a big fight, yeah.

Q. Will, is part of that experience knowing how not to get taken out when Pato O'Ward -- he kind of sent it there on that restart from a long way back.

WILL POWER: Yeah, he sent it straight into me and gathered it up and came out the other side. That's a good season, man. Someone does a dive bomb like that, and you get away with it. Yeah, it's good. Not a good move, but expected in his position for the championship.

Q. But does experience help you somehow be able to absorb that? You had to do something to make it not worse.

WILL POWER: I left as much room as I could. Inside, inside, and I kept going further, and, bam, he hit me over the curve. I didn't expect it from Pato, though. He is

usually a pretty good racer, pretty smart racer. He was probably needing to win the race to have a shot at the championship, so he probably just went a little bit too far.

THE MODERATOR: I'm not sure the correct geographical term. All Down Under, all Oceania, all whatever podium. I think that's the first one. I can't think of another one, can you?

WILL POWER: Is it? No? First one ever? Yeah. First one ever. Wow. Boys from Down Under showing up. Chickens come home to roost, huh?

THE MODERATOR: Scott, do you have comment on that?

SCOTT DIXON: It's cool. Happy to be a part of it. If it's the first, that's pretty awesome. I think McLaughlin did a fantastic job all weekend, so it was well-deserved. Yeah. I don't know. It's a cool stat.

Q. Middle of the night down there, right? Middle of tomorrow?

SCOTT DIXON: Big party going on down there.

THE MODERATOR: If Crusher says it's the first, it's got to be the first.

Q. Yesterday, you had a chance to visit with Bruce, the guy that got your career started in INDYCAR. Trying to come full circle a little bit when you see the guy who got you started, and here you are fighting for your seventh championship. How special is that to you to visit with him?

SCOTT DIXON: It's always good to catch up with Bruce. I caught up with him earlier at Amelia Island Concourse earlier in the year. I get to see him probably two, three times a year.

This is close to him, being from Seattle. It's where it all started. Great and fond memories from him and many others that were involved on that team. Yeah, honestly, gave me my break that I needed. Even in Indy Lights. We might have been the first paid drivers in Indy Lights Series, which is kind of strange for that time of year and myself and Tony Renna. Yeah, brings back a lot of memories, and it was great to see him here.

Q. A quick one for Scott. The championship now, do you think any sort of confidence from 2015 and what were you able to achieve there -- have you thought about that kind of the gap that you were able to overcome there? Has that come into your mind yet? You are so close to the end of your race that you

haven't thought anything about that yet?

SCOTT DIXON: Anything is possible. I think it can be as simple as somebody having a mechanical issue. That's the tough part. I think it's pretty cool that we don't need any resets or any chase championships or anything like that. It always comes down to the wire in the INDYCAR Series. It's fun to be a part of.

I think the one in '15 with Montoya, it was a very outside chance. Maybe because it was double points. It was 35 maybe or so around that points gap that we needed.

It will be interesting. It will be a fun race hopefully, and we'll be, as I've always said, trying as hard as possible until we can't do anything more about it. Yeah, we'll hope for the best.

Q. You spoke about the level of competition in the series. I know you have spoke about that quite a lot over the past few years, but can you assess what Scott McLaughlin has been able to achieve in just his second season in INDYCAR to be able to win three races and be as competitive as he has been in his second season?

SCOTT DIXON: I definitely expect it. If you look at his track record, the guy is damn fast, and he has one of the best teams in the business. I think they've been very strong this year. They've been a step above the whole field.

All three of them have been super quick and have had the chance to win every race that we've gone to this year. It's great to see another Kiwi coming through.

I know there's a lot of talent down there. He came through kind of a strange path as well, but just shows you that it's possible and hopefully there will be some more talent from Down Under to come.

THE MODERATOR: Our friend texting us a question for you, Scott, particularly. Chip's philosophy of "never give up," certainly you've seen that with you and this team this year and even in the last, what, 21 laps when you restarted the sixth. Maybe just what does that mean when Chip is going around the paddock area saying, "Don't give up?"

SCOTT DIXON: I think it's a pretty easy motto to stand by, and I think it was three or four laps to go, he is on the radio. He was, like, Go get them. I'm, like, Okay. He was pretty fired up, which was even a little bit of a chuckle after that one.

That's Chip's deal. He is probably the most competitive



person I know. I always say the two most competitive people are Chip and my wife, so I get it at the track and then I get it at home (laughing).

It's a fun team to be a part of. I sensed that as soon as I walked through the door back in 2002. Yeah, it works for him.

Q. Question for Scott: I know you can't tell us everything about this, but your testing at Laguna Seca, how much of that focused on qualifying and your qualifying setup given that the track at times would be tough to pass on?

SCOTT DIXON: You try to have all different programs, but then you also try to tailor yourself as well. It was definitely an interesting day.

The hard thing about Laguna is that the tire I feel like is not very well matched, so you have literally got -- if you get five sets of tires, you have maybe 20 laps of actual decent pace. Then you are really working on digs.

I think the test went well across the board. We have probably ticked some boxes and worked out some question and answers that we needed to, but where we lie, we're not really sure until we get to next week.

There's a track that we were a little bit average at. If you look at our team in general, you know, just being a bit iffy this year. Even here Alex did a superb job to kind of skim through on each qualifying group, but if you look at the segments, we were kind of, like, 12th in back of all the cars.

We have some work to do, and hopefully we will get there. Laguna Seca, they have a big resurface change in the offseason, which will change the tracks a lot. Yeah, Will touched on that earlier. It's technical and sometimes quite difficult to get your head around.

Q. Hey, Scott. Congratulations on the podium. With yourself and Marcus still up for the championship, how does that affect the dynamic within the team going forward for the race next week?

SCOTT DIXON: I don't know. I haven't really looked at the points as of yet. I don't know what -- he is probably a little ways back now.

THE MODERATOR: He is 19 behind you.

SCOTT DIXON: Honestly, try to help if you can. I've been involved in quite a few of these, and it never really comes into play, or at least it hasn't as much as you would think it

would.

Situations like today with the 3 and the 12, I thought that would have been a no-brainer, but obviously, go to the last one. We'll have to see where it lies. We always work as a team to achieve the best, and if we can help all of our teammates, we definitely will.

Q. This one is for Will: How is Team Penske going to manage all the championship possibilities knowing that you're fighting for the title and knowing also that probably Scott McLaughlin will be fighting for that win alongside you?

WILL POWER: Yeah. I think that he is definitely in a position that he will just have to help simply. I don't think there will be any question about it.

Q. And this one is for Scott.

THE MODERATOR: Does Scott know that?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I came in at the wrong time.

THE MODERATOR: Or the right time.

Q. I want to ask Scott Dixon, do you feel that Pato blocked you at the restart after turn one?

SCOTT DIXON: It was pretty obvious. Are you his mate or something (laughing)?

THE MODERATOR: For those of you in person, any follow-ups for either Will or Scott? Otherwise, we will let two-thirds of the podium go. Thanks for coming.

Joined now by the champion of today's Grand Prix of Portland, driving the No. 3 Freightliner Team Penske Chevrolet with his third victory of 2022. Second road course win. Moving up to fifth in the standings, by the way.

When it comes to the standings, you're 41 points back right now. The last time we've had five drivers going into the finale that close, you go back 19 years ago in 2003 when there were five drivers in the IRL days going to the Texas Motor Speedway. They were separated by 30 that year.

It's going to be an exciting time I think going to Laguna. Maybe you're going to be playing golf at Pebble, which we can talk about later.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I'll be playing a lot of golf this week. I was nervous because I could feel a blister brewing on my hand. I'm, like, I don't know how hard I'm going to be able to hold the stick, but we're good. I think it's good.



We'll pop it tonight and press on.

THE MODERATOR: All right. That's the best news out of this so far.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Absolutely.

THE MODERATOR: Led 104 of the 110 laps. Dominating fashion. Congratulations.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Thank you. The car was phenomenal. Got a good start. Just for us the whole day, weekend went to plan. We racked up with a car that just needed a massage, like I said, on Friday. I was able to work on myself and then qualifying came around, and we put on pole. We saved a set of tires, reasonably good set of tires, for the Fast Six. We used that and got the pole.

Then I knew today that my first stint was going to set everything up. That's exactly what happened.

I'm not sure what happened behind me. I knew that I couldn't control what was behind me. All I could do is control what I did. It went to exactly to plan.

THE MODERATOR: The restart with, what, 21 laps to go. You had Will. You had Pato. You had a bunch of other guys breathing down your neck. How did you stay out in front of everybody on that?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: No, I was pretty calm about everything. I knew I just had to get a reasonable run off the last corner and try and break the toe a little bit going into turn one, but didn't want to overshoot turn one.

Then I saw in my mirror that Pato and Will were side-by-side. It looked dicey. When I saw that happen, I knew the first lap for me was going to be huge to try and break a gap.

That's exactly what happened. I got to 1.6, and that's sort of how it was the rest of the race. That was really my time that I had to make up. I had to make hay on that lap, and we did.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in person for Scott McLaughlin?

Q. Scott, obviously, you dominated and led all but four or six laps or something. Dixon was a little surprised there was no team orders there to get Will that additional 11 points. Will said he was calling for it on radio. Was there any talk on your radio at all or anything?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: No, they said that they would -- at the end of the day it was completely circumstantial. It's pretty obvious what position you're in if you do need to give up. I told Will before the race that I would fight him cleanly, and I think that's all he expected.

I didn't know he was asking for team orders, a switch or whatever, but I can't control that. I just drove my race, and I'm a team player. I'll do whatever I need to do, but for me I think the best thing we could do was win the race, either car. I think that's exactly what happened.

Q. The way you did dominate, if that call had come, would that have been tough to swallow?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Not really. Everyone knew that I would have been the true winner, so ...

Q. You mentioned you were testing. The biggest thing you learned is trying to learn to be a caliber contender as far as the championship. You're still in this with one round to go. Does that mindset change at all considering this is an opportunity you may come out of there as champion if the cards go in your favor?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, but for me it's just controlling what I can control. I can't do much more than that, and I think I've done that the last half year. I just go out there and just drive what I've got. I think Detroit for me was a big turnaround. I made a mistake I shouldn't have made, and that was because I was trying to overdo everything and control everything. It was a big mindset change.

From then on we've been really strong. I think we did some graph out there the last eight or nine races. We were leading the championship by 29 points.

I think what we're doing right now is building for a massive year next year. I haven't finished out of the top five or top four for the last six events or something. I'm feeling really strong. There's no reason why this can't be great momentum for next year, and yeah, I feel like I'm driving the best I ever have in my whole career right now.

I feel really comfortable and comfortable with the team. That's what you need to tackle championships, especially in the series.

Q. Given your position in the championship and kind of piggybacking off what Louis asked, are you going to take more risks going to Laguna Seca than if you were only three or four points behind Will?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I have nothing to lose, but at the

same time I want to do the best job for my team. I don't need to be a Kamikaze or anything like that, but I just need to focus on what I'm doing and just dot my Is, cross my Ts, and have a good run.

Ideal weekend is a pole race win. It's no doubt that I can go to Laguna Seca and win, and I'm ready to do that.

Q. Were you surprised how clean everything was in one?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I said to him today, I said, I bet you we'll with go caution-free for most of the race. I'll tell you the numbers later. Genuinely, I knew where I was going to go, and I think it was the right call by all drivers to go early out of the last corner to spread the pack a little bit.

Like I said yesterday, we've been banging on about it for two, three weeks. You would feel like an idiot if you were the one that crashed into everyone. So, yeah, everyone took a chill pill.

Q. For the six laps you didn't lead, can you walk us through that from your point of view?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I felt like I led every lap. Just the way the strategy felt, I knew that it was just cycles and stuff that at the end of the day that was just -- we were kind of leading. We just weren't officially. For me it was just those laps that you don't lead are almost the most important ones because they're the in-and-out laps. They're your exchange laps, getting up to speed, and I feel like we've been really strong all year.

Q. The first half of the race you had a good distance between you and Will, but at the end of only five laps to go he came close. Like, less than second. Did you start to worry about him?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: No, I was pretty chill. I just knew what I needed to do. Just keep hitting my marks. I was controlling the race.

I knew that we were far enough in the stint that if he got any closer, he was probably going to hit his front tire, and it was working in my advantage, and I had a heap of overtake left as well.

I was just driving to that and not trying to burn myself up. And I just didn't know if there was any lap traffic coming. I didn't want to catch anyone. Yeah, for me it was just drive consistent, hit my marks, and make it happen. For me the start of the race, that really set up the race for us.

I think pulling five or six seconds on everyone behind us,

that was the buffer we needed for the rest of the race.

Q. On a less serious note, any good stories about Crusher that you can tell? Maybe, what he means for the Australian motorsport and what he has done for guys like you in his career?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Crusher was one of the first people I met when I was a very young kid, and he started listening to me when I said I wanted to go to Supercars instead of Formula 1. That wasn't a bad thing, but I think a realistic thing for anyone in my position.

At that point I wasn't going to any time soon. We've gone through lots of ups and downs. He has seen me lose championships, win championships, win races. He has seen me win my first race.

Awesome to have him here and have Trudy here as well. I wish they would come to Laguna, but they're going to Arsenal on Monday. They're going to have a lot of fun. He is a key figure in motorsports. Australia's biggest news source. That's really put motorsport in Australia on the map.

THE MODERATOR: Speaking of Crusher, he confirmed what we were thinking. If he says it, it's got to be right. Look to your left and right at the podium. It was an all Australia, New Zealand podium. First time it's happened in the INDYCAR Series. For the young aspiring drivers watching, what does it mean for them?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: For me to share a podium with those two, it's pretty cool. I knew the battle with those guys towards the end of the race is always awesome.

I could see Dixon. Of course, he is right there, of course. It's super cool. Two of those guys, I looked up to, and I think massive for Australia and New Zealand motorsport.

These West Coast times are actually really good for Australia, New Zealand, where it's not too early in the morning like the other ones. Yeah, it's really cool.

Q. Scott, Will mentioned before that he thinks you might have to battle at Laguna Seca this coming weekend. Are you willing to help Will or Josef, or are you still prioritizing your own?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I think it's all circumstantial. I think I'm a Penske driver. I fit the mold, and if I need to do what I need to do, I am a full team player. Yeah, ideally, I would love to just go, but for me I need to pole and race win and have some fun.

If things happen, yeah, I'm ready to do what I need to do for the team.

Q. They were talking on the brake about how you had to learn to transition from right-foot braking to left foot and get that dialed in, which is no easy feat to pull off. What was the moment that just everything clicked for you? Was it during the offseason, or was it midseason, and what was it that just made it all sort of come together for you?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I think I'm still getting used to left-footing a little bit. There's certain corners, especially on this track this weekend, that I'm still struggling with compared to Josef and Will. Just how much left foot -- how much brake to use and stuff like that.

I'm still a little bit getting used to all that, where I'm definitely a lot better. I said that a lot through conferences through the year. I think Nashville last year is where everything started to click, and we started turning results around.

Although my qualifying wasn't fantastic, I always felt my racing was good. I feel like every race this year we've been in contention.

I've either made a mistake or the team might have had a tough pit stop, but just really proud of how we're running year two. I think it's a massive jump. I feel like a new person. Yeah, Josef has won five. I've won three. We're the most, which is pretty cool.

Q. You joked earlier about having to make that decision between looking at Formula 1 and Supercars when you were younger, but you're kind of regularly beating drivers who were actually linked with Formula 1 at the moment. Is that something that has crossed your mind or something that you have been able to digest?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: No. I haven't even thought about it. I'm enjoying INDYCAR right now so much. Sure, I would love to drive a Formula 1 car and test one, whatever, but I've found a really good home here in America. I've found a really good home with Penske, and I would be hard-pressed to go anywhere.

Motorsports is a weird game sometimes. You never know where you will end up, so I would never say never, but at the end of the day that's a bucket list item to drive a Formula 1 car, regardless of who you are.

I'll just keep hammering over here and have a lot of fun doing it. It's been a ball. I feel like a different person, man.

I'm so happy. My wife is so happy. It's just cool. I'm just having probably the best time of my life, even throughout the championship winning years with DJR, which is so much fun. I have so many good friends from that.

The time right now trying to find speed within myself and beating Will, Scotty, other people, it's a ball. Yeah, yeah.

Q. I know we asked you a lot about your expectations through the year and through this whole journey that you've had, but you've one three races this year. Knowing that's the same that Alex Palou won in his championship year last year, you know, is that something that you have comprehended that was possible for this season that you would be at least winning three races and being in championship contention at the end of the season?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I thought we could be a little bit of a underdog and creep up on everyone there. Three races is huge. I wanted to get at least one, but we managed to obviously win three, which is awesome. Like I said before, for me it's just we're building some serious momentum for next year, and I'm learning a ton.

I feel like a completely different driver even from the start of the year at St. Pete. I just feel a lot more complete. Like I said before, I feel like I'm driving the best I have my whole life. Hopefully that means good things for next year, and we can work together as a team. Like, the team cars are unreal to drive. It's hard work from all three of us, and I'm proud to be doing the job.

Q. You showed a lot of pace in the whole race, but then after the race start, you were maintaining the pace around a second against Will. How hard was it for you?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Look, it was a tough race. The pace was so high, especially with a three-stop strategy. It's basically just go, go, go. Maybe a little bit, but not much.

I just felt like that last stint we just really -- I got that gap, and I just controlled it from there, so that was just for me the most important thing and I'm really proud of it.

Didn't really put a foot wrong. To lead as many laps as we did was an awesome achievement for us, all the team strategists. Really proud of everyone. Yeah.

Q. Just to finish it, if you couldn't choose yourself, who would you like to win the championship?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Roger Penske (laughing).

Yeah, Roger Penske. I'm not answering that question. I'll get myself in a lot of trouble.

Q. Just having a chance to go to Laguna here in the final race of the year to have a shot at a championship, I know we're just an hour since you took the checkered flag, but have you had a chance yet just to kind of reflect on everything that you have accomplished through the 16 races this season and your second season in INDYCAR?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: It's pretty wild. I'm tremendously proud to be going in with a mathematical chance. I've said many times last year was hard, and mentally draining and hard on my wife, hard on -- it was hard on her because she saw me upset and just not happy, but there was also a time where I was going overboard in terms of unhappiness because I felt, like, very hard on myself. I always have been, but it was just a hard year.

When we won St. Pete, it was like, Okay, well, maybe I can do a little bit more. And then with my guys, engineer Ben, you know, it's very cool. I just am really grateful to be able to just compete for Captain and compete and win and do him proud. Any time you see him and he is coming up after the race, it's very cool.

It's just a huge turnaround. Really proud. I think like I've said before, it's just creating momentum for next year, which I believe I can go into next year and compete for the championship the whole way through.

Q. This year with this team with nine wins across you three guys over the first 16 races, having two drivers really in the thick of the championship fight and the third in you that still has a mathematical shot heading to Laguna Seca, has the end of this season with Team Penske guys more in the thick of the championship felt any different just from your observation from last year where Josef was kind of in it, but still a bit of a long shot and the other three of you guys were out of things?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: To be honest, it actually feels way more relaxed. I was trying to teach Will how to play golf this morning before the race, just how to swing a club, stuff like that. We just chill out and have fun.

I think we're all in a bit of head space because the cars are really good, and we're proud of everyone for how hard they've worked to get us to that point, but we know it's INDYCAR, and things can change in an instant.

Definitely before practice and stuff, it's a little tense. Everyone is a little on edge. What's going to happen;

what's going to happen?

For the most part, we just have a lot of fun, and I think it's the whole name of the game. Just go out there and do your job and have fun.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Nathan. It will wrap things up. Wrapping up the Grand Prix of Portland. Congratulations, Scott McLaughlin, his third win in 2022. And the season 2023 can't get here quick enough for you, so bring did on. Back here next year. Thank you, Scott.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

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