

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Scott McLaughlin

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We're joined by the driver who was P1 in this afternoon's practice session, Scott McLaughlin.

Scott, nice start to the weekend for you guys.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, thanks. Really good day. I feel like we had a really good car. Good Ranchers the first time on the car this weekend.

Starting with a P1 is obviously good. It's practice. For everyone to have a go on blacks, then reds, everyone is showing their cards a little bit.

I feel good. I feel like my road course package is really strong. We won Portland, and have been really strong here, in road courses in the past, even at Laguna.

I think first road course of the year, so really excited to be back on one.

THE MODERATOR: Is there something innate about road courses that fits your driving style, feels natural to you here?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I think maybe just there's a little bit less going on. Like, there's a lot going on, don't get me wrong. I think from bumps, standpoints of just how physical these cars are, probably on the lesser side. This place is hard on the neck because of the high speed.

I really put Barber down to it's one of the most committed tracks I've ever driven on. From a perspective of like racing Supercars at Bathurst, the commitment, laps there, this is a similar level in terms of committing to a lap, trusting what you have underneath you, even if you don't understand what's underneath you as well, which is the beauty of INDYCAR.

Yeah, very happy with it. Our test translated really nicely. I feel comfortable. But there's a lot of laps left to go.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Now that you're a big TV star in America, how nice is it to back that up with a P1?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: My wife is not here this weekend. She said, I'll come if you get pole. So that's my goal. I really like having my wife at the races. There's no pressure there.

But look, I think it's just been fantastic, the doco. Obviously we had me and Josef, Marcus, a pretty big part of that first episode. That's a lot of pressure. From what I read online, everyone has been pretty welcome to it, thought it was great.

I think what's really cool about the doco is you could watch this racing for years and you understand everything, it kept you captivated. I thought at one place last night I was going to win the race again, but I didn't. Then you have the normal fan that we're really trying to target. It really shone a really good light on INDYCAR.

I'm sure it's going to be better and better. They're filming everything right now. Really excited for what's ahead for INDYCAR and can't thank Roger and the team enough for really working hard on this. I think it's a big step for INDYCAR.

Q. Scott, obviously you're at the top of the chart. How did the stoppages affect you today?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: It's hard because this track is, like I said before, high commitment, you need confidence. Regardless if I've done a heap of laps here in testing or not, it's all about flow, getting into a rhythm. It's a bit like playing a guitar or drums, whatever, you want to get into a rhythm of hitting your laps, learning how long the tires take to warm up. It's hard when they stop and start like that.

I was a bit worried there in the middle session. I thought we left our run too late. We did know our car was going to be reasonable, we just wanted to make sure we used the track at the right time. Thankfully came through.

It's tough. I think it would be harder if we hadn't done the test day here about a month ago.

Q. Off of what we saw last night, how difficult is it with the month of May coming up to not overlook this race given what's coming up?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: This race, it's very important I think for me especially. At the end of the day we're showing good speed, but we haven't capitalized. Our bad races haven't been bad, bad. We have been edging on a top 10 if not a top 10.

I really want to win this race. It would really set us up well for the month, give us a lot of confidence. Not that we're lacking any, but it would be a nice little pep.

I always circle this one on the calendar as a very important one. Get out of here with some solid points and look to what is going to be a pretty long month of May.

Q. Which Good Ranchers box do you recommend?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I get custom. I have a T-bone, New York strip. Got a little bit of chicken as well. I have to watch my weight. I'm on the heavier side of drivers. You can use my code 'Scott' and you can get 25% off. It's on the inter web, yeah.

Q. Looking forward to qualifying tomorrow, one lap on the reds, maybe two?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I don't know. Depends on temps. I think you'll be wanting to make sure your tires are probably ready for that second lap. If you go a third, I think you might just get it. It will really depend on the competitiveness of the group as well in qualifying.

THE MODERATOR: What happens if you use the code word 'Josef'?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: It's more expensive. You see how bougie that guy is. Louis Vuitton stuff.

Q. I've been reading a lot about the new wind deflector there is for the rain, if there's a rain situation. Can you tell us anything about that at all?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I can't really because I haven't really run with it. The one thing that's really good about INDYCAR is they learn from what we've learned in the past. Indy GP was our last wet race. We learned we need to deflect some water off the screen. That's what it's ultimately going to do.

I think we're going to be constantly learning in that process. It's a good step. I think it's going to help. That's optional, I think. I don't know enough of it until we get into the wet

race. I am sure the studies, the CAD drawings and everything they've done in the wind tunnels and whatnot, they'll be all over it, it will be an improvement.

Constantly evolving the screen, a new thing each time, but we'll see.

Q. I spent some time with your mum and dad the other day. I feel the Bus Bros need some help. I'm bringing you a personalized care package from New Zealand that will include things like Ginger Nuts, Chocolate Fish and things that people don't understand.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: These Americans don't understand how good it is down there. Some good food down there. We'll bring it onto Bus Bros, for sure.

Q. My code is 'Kiwi'.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Nice. Chocolate Fish is nice. Chocolate, some carmel, pink inside, wrapped in chocolate. It's legit.

Q. You've talked about the commitment you need this weekend. Can you talk about how hard it's going to be to keep your concentration across the whole race? Looked a bit hairy out there a couple times.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: That's what it is at this track, so many different corners, high-speed stuff, then you have the seven, eight, nine section where you have to use a lot of commitment over curbs and then slow it down.

It's very hard physically on the body. Probably one of the hardest in terms of that. So fitness-wise you got to be right.

Yeah, it depends. If it turns into a fuel race, which it has in the last few years, you've got to think about saving fuel but trying to maximize speed as well. There's a lot to think about around this track.

But definitely at the end of Sunday night, you're mentally drained probably more so than physically, which you are physically as well. It's pretty crazy. I love racing here, I really do. I think it is one of the best road courses on the calendar.

Q. How do you approach next practice session when you have a fast car? Do you go for changes? Do you stay the way it is?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, that's a good question.

You got to have a bit of a balance on how far you go with

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the car. But I think the best thing you learn in this session is you have a really good base. You can experiment with a few things. But then ultimately if it doesn't work, you know you can go back to this race car and be there or abouts.

But we'll make calculated decisions going off of what we learnt from the test as well, where we think the track is going to be. Hopefully we put it in the sweet spot.

We're going to have to improve. That's INDYCAR. Overnight, people will find 10ths, half seconds. We have to work hard and make sure we come out flying tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, everyone.

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