

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, July 2, 2023

Scott Dixon

Will Power

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up your Honda Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio presented by the 2023 Accord Hybrid. Podium finishers will be here. Alex Palou will be here momentarily, as will Will Power.

Joined already by Scott Dixon, Mr. Mid-Ohio. Another podium finish for Scott, driving the No. 9 PNC Bank Honda for Chip Ganassi Racing. Led a couple of laps today. Best finish of 2023. 133rd podium of his career. 197th top 5 of his career, which extends his already INDYCAR SERIES record. Scott, congratulations. Back on the podium. Good day for you guys?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, it was definitely a good day. A little bit frustrating here and there. First up I think we had a little bit of an issue with the fuel probe, which I think in hindsight that would have cleared -- we would have cleared Herta, which we would have had a race on I think with Alex.

But, yeah, the pace of the PNC Bank No. 9 was really good. Fuel mileage was super easy, so Honda definitely stepped it up here this weekend. Great power, and obviously the fuel mileage was pretty good.

So, yeah, it was kind of a race where I think had a couple of things changed maybe with the 45 at the start and then obviously with the 26 later on, you know, we could have maybe been in a race for the win.

But huge credit to the 10 car and obviously Alex. He is on a hell of a run. He definitely has a pretty big championship lead at the moment, which is going to be definitely tough to overcome.

THE MODERATOR: Also joining us finishing third today, Will Power, driving the No. 12 Verizon 5G Team Penske Chevrolet. Third podium of the season for Will. Of course, the defending INDYCAR SERIES champion. 97th podium of his career. He is one shy now of the late great Al Unser for fifth great all-time in that category.

Will, you said on the TV broadcast you looked up and heard at the very end you finished third. A little surprised by it?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I didn't know where I was the whole race because the last I knew at the start I was P9 and then obviously the whole sequences went on.

Yeah, real fast. Solid day. No mistakes. I think if I got a bit better start, I could have been -- it's hard to say. Obviously Palou is very quick.

Yeah, not much more we could have got out of the day. That was kind of what we had.

THE MODERATOR: Feel good about it? Did you guys need this, need a podium?

WILL POWER: Yeah, obviously everyone needs to beat Palou, but I don't think -- that's going to be a very tough challenge to beat him in a championship this year. He is so on point in every respect, in every respect.

He is not missing a thing, which is very difficult in this series to be extremely fast, which there are a lot of guys that are, but then being able to do all the disciplines as well plus the intricacies of fuel save, tire conservation, in-and-out laps, the qualifying.

It's bloody hard to have that all nailed, and he is doing it.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.

Q. For both of you, the last time a driver won three in a row was you in 2020. You started the season with three victories in a row, and you have had some pretty good seasons. The last year you won with consistency. When you look at a situation where a driver is not only winning the most races, but he is also the most consistent, isn't that almost an unbeatable combination?

SCOTT DIXON: Definitely. Yeah, it does make it tough. As Will commented, and it's not just Alex, but Julian, the whole 10 car group are just doing a phenomenal job. Even with Barry as well.



It's never a single person. The effort is big I think on all the cars in Chip Ganassi right now, but they're firing on all cylinders.

It's hard. I think we had a pretty good race today, but obviously we still didn't have enough to overcome that. I think had a few things changed, same as with Will, same as anybody out there, could have been a bit more racier.

Yeah, it's going to be tough to beat.

WILL POWER: Yeah, like Scott said, he has a -- just from a strategy standpoint as well, which I know it's the first time he won a championship. That group on that car is very smart. Like, they're putting it all together. Yeah, it's an absolute team effort, but he is also nailing it.

I think Ganassi in general seems to have a very good package right now all-around. So they're a tough group, tough group. All good drivers. Obviously a very strong team. I think we all have a little bit of work to do.

Q. If both of you could talk about the peace of the race, other than the first lap incident between the two drivers from Sweden. It was fast, and it was green all the way until the end. What's it like out there from the driver's standpoint to where you're just out there running all the way to the checkered flag without stopping?

SCOTT DIXON: It was still really tough. I think to get your laps right for me actually and I think talking to Alex, we got pretty loose towards the end of the race, which is a little bit unusual, but lap traffic was pretty tough.

Some of the people seemed tougher than some of the others, but I actually had a couple of pretty good runs on most of them, and it wasn't too much of an issue.

I know Alex got held up pretty heavily there by the 55. I think we closed about a 10-second gap with him there on that situation.

Yeah, trust me, it's not easy, man. You're flat out trying to get as much as you can every lap, and it's hard work, hard work.

WILL POWER: Yeah, I think that the blue flag rule, it's crazy. You use push-to-pass up and have to race somebody that's going to be a lap down like you're racing for position.

The series is so tight and competitive, and everyone is so good now that I think we could have a blue flag rule. It's

not like we have yellows constantly, and you're going to get your lap back.

Maybe they do it in the second half of the race, but it's ridiculous when a leader gives up 10 seconds. I mean, I think you were five seconds down the road, closed it right up. Probably would have overtaken you if I didn't get held up on going a couple of laps longer.

Yeah, there should be -- we should have a talk about it, I think. I don't know what you think.

SCOTT DIXON: We do every year.

WILL POWER: We tell them every year. They're, like, yeah, yeah, no, we hear you. Crickets.

THE MODERATOR: It's better than not hearing it at least.

Q. What is the simple solution there because the car you're talking about held up quite a few guys today as you are alluding. Is there a solution in the sense of if you're doing it to everybody, maybe it's time to move? How do you go about that, Will?

WILL POWER: I think that's actually the problem is it takes a lot of people to police that because if there's a blue flag rule and the first guy passes and then you've got to have a command blue for everyone, but I think if everyone just understood, if you get the blue flag, you have to let the driver go within the lap.

That I think is their issue is the amount of people in race control that would have to police that. It becomes -- I think that's the thing. It becomes a bit difficult, but we're at the stage where this competition is so tough maybe we have to add some people to do that.

SCOTT DIXON: I think disabling the OT would be the first kind of...

WILL POWER: The disabling of the OT, and that was the one they say, well, how do we police? Do we disable it for everyone after that? It sounded like that was a big problem, but not like a ton of people go a lap down anymore anyway.

Yeah, disabling the push-to-pass would be a big step if you are going to be a lap down, yeah.

Q. For Scott, like you just talked about the probe thing, Graham Rahal had the same problem on the first pit stop. A second and a half, but it's huge, right? When you go back on the track, that kind of puts you behind from an 8-ball standpoint.

SCOTT DIXON: You're definitely fighting over tenths of a second. Especially in the pit stop exchanges like we were. Like maybe we would have cleared the 26, and that would have been a much easier race for us and possibly a race with the 10.

So it's part of it, man. Some weekends you don't get it, and some you do. I think our team is extremely good. Honestly I haven't looked at it. Maybe I missed the mark by a foot and screwed the guy.

We'll look at it and see what happened there, but definitely the first stop was a bit slow.

Q. You're in meetings with Alex all the time. You all race each other. Right now what's special about him in a nutshell?

SCOTT DIXON: I think he is just covering all bases. As Will alluded to there, the qualifying is solid, the race pace is solid, strategy is solid. It's just a really good all-around package right now.

It's never always one thing, but having quick paces is something that is huge obviously with how tight the competition is now, but even today we didn't qualify on the front. We were fourth and sixth, but he was still able to overcome the three possibly quicker cars in qualifying.

Some others may have had some problems on pit road or just whatever it was. He has done a hell of a job to cover all bases.

Q. Scott, what are the similarities you see between Alex and Dario who won, what, three championships in a row in that car?

SCOTT DIXON: I think it's always different. The racing is definitely different from what we had back then. So the guy we obviously know is a big talent. You see some talents come along that maybe just really are quick and maybe inconsistent or something like that, but he is definitely the full package.

So Dario is a legend of the sport obviously and won a ton of races, big races, and obviously a ton of championships, too.

So it's early in Alex's career. He has a big, wide runway to go yet to see what comes. We'll see if he even sticks around in INDYCAR.

Q. Scott, I just wondered if you could give us an idea of how you feel your year has gone. You have gone

from fifth in the points to second this week. You've had some really strong finishes. I guess, just from your own perspective, how do you feel the season has gone, and could it have gone any better, or are you happy with where you are at right now?

SCOTT DIXON: It's just been a bit blah, to be honest. I think we've had really good pace throughout the year. Maybe haven't executed in the times that we probably needed to.

So, you know, we're kind of right on the top of the hill at the moment. We just need to get over the peak.

It's definitely tight out there. It's definitely tough. I think there are a few races that could have changed maybe the course of the year a little bit, but I think everybody on the team has done a hell of a job across all four cars.

I don't think there's anything that stands out right now. It's just not being on the right side of a couple of things, but generally pretty happy I think with pace and just how the races have gone. It's just not what you hope for as well in some cases.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations. Have a good holiday weekend.

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