

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Sunday, August 27, 2023

**Pato O'Ward**

**David Malukas**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Wrapping up today's race, we are joined by Pato O'Ward, coming home second today, leading 18 of the laps. Seventh podium of the season, 20th career podium, fourth runner-up finish here in 2023. And David Malukas, first podium of the season, second of his career, second here at World Wide Technology Raceway, as well.

Pato, your thoughts on coming home second here on the oval?

PATO O'WARD: Good points obviously. It's another second in the books for us this 2023. Yeah, Scott Dixon decided to do a Dixon today. Whenever they told me, He's going to try to make it without stopping again, the guy's going to do it for sure.

THE MODERATOR: How does he do it?

PATO O'WARD: Well, he just does it. He's just Scott Dixon, you know? I feel like that's what he's best known for.

THE MODERATOR: Saving fuel?

PATO O'WARD: Yeah. He knows how to do it better than anybody with a great combination that he has with his team and car and everything. It's a bummer that we weren't even close to kind of even race him.

But, yeah, I'm happy with today. I'm super happy with the strategy. I don't think we would have been able to make that three-stopper work.

Yeah, boys were stout in the pits. Super happy with the car. Yeah, a bit annoyed with all the lappers. I'm sure David and Scott are, as well. It's nothing new, but it has to change. Like, they're just...

THE MODERATOR: David Malukas back on the podium here. There's something about this track, you and the

setup that just clicks, doesn't it?

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah. I mean, we had a really good car. Going off the start, I was comparing to Newgarden there. Our tires were falling off very similarly. Comparing to Herta, as well. He was falling off quicker than we were.

I knew at that point we had a chance to go for it. With all the yellow playing out, the strategy. We tried to do what Dixon did. I don't know how he can do it. We were falling off like a cliff trying to meet that fuel target. I was lifting at the start/finish line. I am like, Guys, that's not possible. We had to kind of cut it off and go heavy push from there.

Then at that point I was just dealing with lap cars. Overall we had a really good car, and it was good for the team. Another podium at Gateway. Yeah, going through obviously INDYCAR two times here and through INDY NXT, we just keep getting podiums.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

### **Q. What effect did you think the different tire compound had on the race today?**

PATO O'WARD: It brought in some pretty horrendous marbles onto the racetrack, which made the second lane almost impossible to use. I don't think I was the only one.

Were you struggling with that, too?

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, it was pretty treacherous.

PATO O'WARD: I think not that the blacks don't create marbles, but definitely this alternate tire was a special add-on to that. It made it pretty hard. The difference in grip wasn't that big of a difference.

### **Q. Would you be in favor of being on those the rest of the ovals going forward?**

PATO O'WARD: I think two different tires for the ovals is actually pretty cool. I just think if they want good racing, we can't be in single file. Then even the lappers can be racing with the leaders.



Just get out of the way, yeah.

**Q. You're both among the younger drivers in the series, the future of the series. Does it amaze you sometimes when you see that Scott Dixon is still able to do all of these great things? He's been in the series since 2001.**

PATO O'WARD: He's a six-time champion for a reason. Yeah, you just don't run out of talent. You just don't. You don't forget it either. So the guy is going to be good until he decides to retire.

I think he's got another 10 years, yeah.

DAVID MALUKAS: I hope not (smiling).

**Q. Just the way he's able to masterfully use that fuel saving strategy, maintaining a big gap, how do you do that?**

PATO O'WARD: Starts with S, ends with N. That's what it is.

DAVID MALUKAS: I was just trying to figure out what that meant.

PATO O'WARD: Scott Dixon (smiling). You tweaking, bro? What you doing?

DAVID MALUKAS: I just spaced out (smiling).

If I knew, then maybe we would be able to replicate it. But we don't know how he does it yet, so...

**Q. David, what happened with McLaughlin going into three?**

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, I followed the car in front on the inside. Obviously for position he squeezed down. I was right on the curb. It's not like I washed up into him. It's more that he cut into me. We had a tap. I managed to save it. I guess he did, as well.

He came to me at podium and said something about it. I don't know if he's, like, oppressed by it. I don't know, I think he got beef from that.

From my standpoint, if you squeeze somebody down on the inside, what else are you going to expect? I can only go on the curb so much.

**Q. You both mentioned traffic issues. If there were something like more downforce where you could easily drive beside them, would that help the issue?**

PATO O'WARD: No. Just move. Like, you're getting lapped, move.

**Q. Is the single-file nature of it the crux of the problem?**

PATO O'WARD: No. Because if they were fast enough, we wouldn't be catching them.

DAVID MALUKAS: I think what he said earlier with marbling, if you can do whatever possible to reduce marbles and we can actually use the second lane, then the lap cars won't be as much of an issue.

PATO O'WARD: Texas, you don't need them to move because you have a second lane. But you have nothing to do here.

I feel it's more of a gentleman's agreement, but nobody follows it. I feel like I've followed it pretty much my all my career. If I'm not having a good day, I'm not going to screw your race.

Hopefully that comes in return whenever I am having a good day and they're not, which has been a few cases. Definitely it's not everybody. But the consistent lappers, it's like, Dude...

**Q. Heavy marbles make it harder for them to move out of the way safely?**

PATO O'WARD: No, just slow down in the straightaway and somebody pass by. It's super simple.

**Q. Pato, you're one of the most popular drivers in the sport, how do you feel about rivalries? Forming some rivalries in a race like today, there was a lot of single-file racing, can that bring some more excitement and entertainment to the sport?**

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, I don't know. Yeah, I saw some people on Twitter. They also said to bring back like Indy Rivals.

From an off-track standpoint, you can have all the beef you want. I feel like once you get on track, you can maybe race the person more aggressive. I don't think you would use your car as a weapon in any sorts.

Once I go on track, it's an equal playing field, unless you have an on-track incident. If it's off-track, I don't think you'd carry that over to the racing circuit. I think that's a bit dangerous and immature.

**Q. Pato, how was it having to qualify again on race day morning, then get into the race in the afternoon? Does that change a lot of the dynamic for the team?**

PATO O'WARD: I didn't think it was too bad actually. I enjoyed it. I think it was all right.

Obviously I'm not the one that's preparing the car. I'm not the one that's going to be preparing the car if something happens.

I think it does bring in a bit of an extra stress because of just how tight the schedule was from qualifying to the race. Especially around this place, if you get greedy, it will bite really quick.

It's just finding a fine balance. But I didn't think it was an issue.

**Q. Going into the final two races, Portland and Laguna, very different to where you are today. Portland has been a surprise going through the first turn. Any thoughts looking ahead to that?**

PATO O'WARD: I guess just be flexible to the chaos, the right calls.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations.

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