

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Sunday, September 10, 2023

### Scott Dixon

#### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Kiwi fest continues. Scott Dixon, Chip Ganassi Racing, led 20 of the 95 laps. Third win of the season, third in the last four races. Sixth podium of the season. 137th of his career. 56th career win now. Finally Laguna Seca, you can check off that box. Congratulations.

Wasn't easy, was it?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, it was a wild day. I think as McLaughlin was commenting, I think he had a drive-through penalty as well. Race control was drive-through penalty, pretty happy today.

I think the morning kind of was tough, just to start off with a bit of a failure, then obviously getting a grip penalty wasn't the way you wanted to start the day.

I think we had done a good job in qualifying, which would have put us in a good spot to obviously fight for the lead on more of a straightforward race.

As we had seen in the last kind of two or three days, even in the practice sessions, it's been a lot of cars falling off track. I figured that the race was either going to go green to checkered or have a bunch of yellows. We had the yellows.

The restarts were very tough. Kind of between 10 and 11 the way they would check up was difficult to get your space right. There were a lot of crashes in the last corner unfortunately with some restarts. I remember even being three-wide with Pedersen and Armstrong. I think that's when Armstrong spun as well when he was on the outside.

It was a tough race. But worked out for us. Strategy, we just tried to keep it simple, kind of working from the back end of the race. I was definitely shocked to see the 5 and the 28 pit when they did. I knew after that we had a really fast car, even with some of the damage we kind of had from the contact with the 21 on the start.

All in all, great day. It's nice to rebound like we did. Definitely some heated moments throughout the race.

Pretty pissed off at times. It's always nice to finish the year like that.

THE MODERATOR: Good momentum for 2024. Questions, please.

**Q. There was talk back at Nashville that you go to Laguna Seca, have a straightforward race, a good way to decide a championship. Now we had a Nashville here. Is it concerning where you expect this kind of race to decide the championship at the end of the year?**

SCOTT DIXON: I'm excited for Nashville. This year at Laguna I think was interesting. You kind of had everybody trying a little bit of everything. It was particularly hard I think to keep it in the right spot. Offline was very difficult.

I don't know if we really saw deg really play out or anything like that. It was definitely a wild race. I think that's what you need for a championship finale.

If it's not going to be an oval, it needs to be a street course that's kind of wild. Nobody wants to be sitting in the seat, Man, this is boring. Nobody was bored. From the driver's seat, nobody knew who was going to have the strategy to pull it off, have enough fuel for the end.

It's just a shame that Palou decided to lead the championship by too many points, and it became a bit boring on the championship side (smiling).

**Q. Can you give us your perspective on lap one, why you think they gave you the avoidable contact penalty?**

SCOTT DIXON: I have no idea. I have no idea what goes on up there, seriously. I don't know what to say (smiling).

**Q. What happened?**

SCOTT DIXON: It's chaos anyway. The starts, I feel like we normally get a little more room to do. I was trying to accelerate. The 26 was right beside me. The 21 was maybe off track, coming back on track, then we connected. I haven't really seen a replay to really understand what



happened.

Man, some races for that you got to give up one spot. Today was a drive-through for several people. I really don't know, man.

**Q. Of your three victories this year, two now have come after lap one incidents. Is that a testament to you and your team and style of finding a way back to the front?**

SCOTT DIXON: And engine changes. We're two for two on that. We know the sweet spot now. We'll keep doing it (smiling).

**Q. At one stage it looked like Marcus was going to join you two on the podium, clean sweep the podium from New Zealand.**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah.

**Q. What does this mean to a team like Ganassi with you and Alex finishing first and second, Marcus taking Rookie of the Year? What's that mean when you get back?**

SCOTT DIXON: It means a lot. I think the year that everybody had, even with Marcus collecting on the first race of the year, to come out and win. I think we definitely hoped, having a 1-2-3 in the championship was going to be difficult with obviously a split, 11 car kind of driver roster. Marcus moving on to be honest, a hell of a teammate, a good friend, just wish that it stayed status quo. Obviously it didn't.

Yeah, it's a good year. We've had years like this. It's been a long time ago. I don't think I've ever been part of a situation where you come into the last race and you can't fight really much for anything in the championship. We were locked into second. Alex was locked obviously for the championship, which was quite bizarre.

Everybody's stress level was a lot lower. You could all just kind of fight for the win. I think that played out from a lot of people to watch. Everybody was just going for a win because everybody was trying a bit of everything throughout the day.

Huge, huge year for the team. It's great to see Armstrong doing well. You can see that he's got great speed. The 11 car side are working really well. I felt bad because I popped up the inside of the 55, I was like, Man, I can see the green car going on the outside, it's slippery out there. I'm not sure that's a good spot to go. I think I drove over the curb. I think the 55 tried to turn. It's hard to go

three-wide through there. Ultimately he ended up in a bit of a crash there.

Yeah, would have been great to see him on the podium, for sure.

**Q. Keeping with the New Zealand theme, what's going on? Is this your son and grandson utilizing Dixon DNA to take over INDYCAR for good?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, I guess. How old is Marcus? He could be my son, I guess. He's not, I can confirm that (smiling).

But, yeah, there's a lot of talent from New Zealand. It's great to see. Even around the world, obviously, with Lawson going into F1, Hartley and Bamber have done, too. It's impressive to see for such a small country.

Obviously the racing heritage is strong down there. There's a lot of support. I think the hardest part for a lot of us, New Zealand is a small country, so funding is very difficult. I think the right people, the likes of Peter Johnson and Craig Harris, the Giltraps, have been helping a lot of people, even with Shane van Gisbergen, it creates a lot of hype. It's great to see that some of these guys are getting the chance.

Yeah, hopefully a lot more.

**Q. We had eight cautions today, four of them were in the last corner restart here. Is there a better solution than the chaos we kept seeing in that corner on the restarts?**

SCOTT DIXON: I feel like I did a good job on the last restart, right? I went a lot earlier. There was no caution. Yeah, that's what the guys need to do (smiling).

Yeah, I don't know. I feel like when you go out of 10, then just the kind of congestion, some people are on bad tires, they can't stop as well. You kind of get this whole pack-up, this rubber band effect. Ultimately if you kind of go out of nine like I did, before 10, it kind of strings it out a little bit more.

The restarts have been interesting this year. Sometimes it's the only advantage you can get, right? You try to jump it. We've seen a lot of that throughout the year.

I think in the off-season we have to try and figure out a way to do that a bit better. Even if we need to maybe go to no passing until the start/finish line or something. You don't want to make it boring either.

It's a fine balance. It's very difficult for race control to call it. There's a variance of when people hear green, whether it's a spotter, spotters are looking at the guy that's tapping, the guy that waves the green flag. There's a whole sequence that goes along. Composure is just trying for the biggest advantage possible.

Yeah, I think going out of nine is probably a little bit better than kind of going out of 10 and having the congestion in 11.

**Q. I realize there was a long stretch of your career where you couldn't win here. You've done so much in your career. To still be doing something you haven't done before, what does that mean to you?**

SCOTT DIXON: It's awesome. One of the first days I had in CART was here. I came to Laguna in '99 or something with PacWest as an end-of-season thing. I was blown away by this track. It was also one of the first tracks, went to Vancouver in '97, watched the last race here in '97 as well, back to back. That was a lot of fun.

Yeah, it's great. Obviously the track changed a lot I think from last year to now. Makes the racing style a little bit different.

Yeah, to win is pretty cool, man.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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