

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Wednesday, January 10, 2024

### Scott Dixon

#### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We continue with 2024 Content Day in the INDYCAR Series here in Indianapolis. Joined by the No. 9 PNC Bank Chip Ganassi Racing Honda and Scott Dixon, beginning his 24th season in the INDYCAR Series, six-time INDYCAR Series champion, finished as the runner-up in the championship last year with three wins in the final four races, making up his 56 career wins. How is the off-season treating you so far?

SCOTT DIXON: It's been good. Just busy. But yeah, it's been a lot of fun. Driving a couple of different things obviously with the INDYCAR stuff and then IMSA program. It's been busy.

THE MODERATOR: Looking ahead to 2024, obviously you finished 2023 pretty strong.

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, finished really well. I think we got off to a little bit of a slow start, I think, in some ways, and the season when you look at it was fairly consistent, but definitely came on song later in the year, and I think working with Ross and having some stability there has been really nice.

Yeah, that's been good, and obviously to win the last three or four races was huge, and a huge year obviously for the team with winning the championship first two and then obviously Rookie of the Year, so that was good to see for everybody that works so hard at Chip Ganassi Racing.

**Q. Those three wins in the last four races to end last year, was there anything, when you've had some time to reflect on last season, anything that was starting to work well or clicking or execution within the team those weekends that you didn't have those first 13 races? What did you make of that?**

SCOTT DIXON: I think there were some missed opportunities kind of early on, maybe strategy a little bit, too. I think Toronto was definitely a big letdown in what we did there.

You can also dissect a lot of different things and maybe the

performance in some areas.

I think everybody kind of just got into their flow. They felt a lot more comfortable. I think when you're changing a lot of people in the stand and the people that are involved there, it gets difficult to really -- for each other to understand themselves, I think, or get the confidence, as well, which I think that really started to develop later, and Ross being new to the team, kind of had three or four different engineers in the last two or three years. To have that stability I think has been really good, and he's done a really good job.

**Q. This team I think six or seven years ago pared down from four cars to two cars to try to get that level of execution down when things were going to be string out a little bit too much. You're expanding to five cars this year. What do you feel about Chip Ganassi Racing as it is right now is better suited to handle that influx of full-time INDYCAR entries this year compared to when you guys were scaling things back from 2017 going into 2018?**

SCOTT DIXON: Well, I guess we have yet to see how that goes. It's never easy.

I think my biggest point of view on racing and having done it for a while at any level, it's all about the people. There sometimes can be a limit to how many of those people can find or how many people that are compatible.

I think with different programs and maybe the size of the team maybe not changing so much and having kind of the depth there I think really helps. But you're still adding a lot of moving parts to an already pretty big team.

Hopefully we can jump in and dive in, and it's going to be no missteps. That's obviously the biggest and best goal that we can have. But we'll see how that plays out.

Five cars is a lot of people, a lot of moving parts. Yeah, it'll be interesting.

**Q. Last time you had someone truly fighting for championships like Alex has been the last couple years with you as a teammate as Ganassi was when**



... when all is said, we're done.®

**Dario was around in the early 2010s or so. How is that relationship as teammates with you and Alex these last couple years, and now I guess in particular compared to those years that you spent battling Dario at the front of the field as a teammate?**

SCOTT DIXON: I think the relationship is definitely a lot different with Dario, just in the fact that we were strictly two cars and it was a much smaller kind of environment.

I think there's a lot of different things, just even how the team is laid out, how many moving parts and people there are. I think the one-on-one stuff is nowhere near like what it used to be.

But then there's also so many changes I think with the structure of the race weekends, testing programs, even how you deal with debriefs and data and all that stuff has definitely evolved a lot. Yeah, it's far from the same.

**Q. As a respected voice in the garage, a lot of times INDYCAR will ask you your thoughts on things, maybe things that they're thinking about doing. The series took some lumps back in December when they had to announce the delay of the hybrid and also some other -- Honda made their well-publicized remark. Where do you see things right now, and what are some of the things that -- there's a lot of positive but yet there's still areas to be worked on. From your point of view, how do you see things working right now?**

SCOTT DIXON: I think it's good. I think it's been -- I don't know, the health of the series I think is probably the best I've seen it in quite some time. I think when you look at car count, the teams, the amount of sponsors and the depth of the sponsors is something to be very proud of.

I think we're kind of at the point now where we couldn't really take any more entries. That's a good position to be in. You've even got other teams that are saying that they could run more cars with the amount of sponsors that they have.

But either finding the people or engine leases is kind of the restricting issue at the moment. That's really positive.

Obviously there was going to be a transition with Roger and his group coming in. Having spent a little bit of time with those people in the last couple of days, I think there's a lot of great things in the pipeline and some big changes that are going to come.

With the hybrid thing, that's a difficult situation, but you've definitely got to lay it out in a way that it's going to be worthwhile and reliable, and I think they've done a really

good job in not just diving in and creating more of a mess.

I think it's important for the series, it's important for the future of the series. I think you always -- I think when you're a driver especially and when you're so close to it and hands on with it, you want everything to happen as quick as possible, but that's just not reality.

But I think we're in a really positive spot right now.

**Q. An important decision has to be made first quarter of this year with the TV contract that will begin next year. NBC seems to offer everything that INDYCAR needs. INDYCAR would probably like a bigger check. From you what NBC has been able to offer, what's your viewpoint? Would you like to see this relationship continue, or would you take a gamble on a new network?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, obviously that's not my decision, thankfully.

**Q. But you're one of the people that is on TV every week.**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, but I think also that the landscape has changed a ton with that, too, especially with streaming and so many different outlets. Whether you lock into an Apple TV or something like that, if you take a loss in viewership but then take the check, there's a lot of things to kind of really go through, and even if you start to split things like we had in the past.

I love working with NBC. I think they do a tremendous job. They're a great group of people.

But that doesn't cover everything. It's not always about that.

Yeah, I guess I'm just glad I'm not making those decisions.

But I think there's a lot of opportunity out there. I think especially with the latest NASCAR deal, I think a lot of these companies need to step up, especially on the pay side.

**Q. If you walk up and down pit lane or through the paddock, there's a lot of former drivers on pit lane now; TK is on pit lane, Helio is going to be on pit lane working with his teams, you work with Dario, Rick Mears is one of the guys that's a respected former driver in the garage. What's it like to have that type of experience and talent and knowledge to be able to draw from from a series point of view with the younger drivers coming up?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, I guess -- I don't know. Most of those guys are tied to a specific team. They're probably not going to share too much.

For me, they're all just great friends. That's a little different perspective. Dario obviously will be working closely with the young guys on our team this year, Kyffin and Marcus, and Linus, as well. There's a lot of changes on our side, so I think he'll have his hands full.

TK is full on with McLaren, and it's good to see he's found his spot, and I'm sure he'll be very helpful for that team, as well.

**Q. You're second on the wins list, second on the podiums list, first on the top-5s list, second on laps-led list. At what point do you actually start to look at that and look at your career, and is there a thought you have about that?**

SCOTT DIXON: I don't know, stats are tough. As I always say, it becomes a topic of conversation when hopefully you get a win or something like that. For me, it's pretty simple. You've just got to keep trying to win and then those things come along with it.

It's amazing to look back on some moments and see what we have achieved as a team and as a group and even with my family and things like that.

Plain and simple, winning is fun, so you've got to try and keep doing it.

But yeah, the stats I hope -- as I've always said, when you walk away, hopefully you're happy with what you've achieved.

**Q. You're obviously one of the older drivers in the series; how much longer is Scott Dixon going to do this?**

SCOTT DIXON: I don't know, we'll see. Helio is setting the benchmark, you know.

**Q. Obviously we're going back to Milwaukee this year. What are your thoughts on that?**

SCOTT DIXON: Excited to go back to Milwaukee. I don't think I'm super excited about a double-header on another short track. But that's the way it is.

I'm excited to see how the partnerships work. I love the circuit. I love the track. I love how difficult it is. There's so many positives. I just hope it's a great execution.

I think it's going to be a fantastic show. It's just hoping that we can have a sellout and make it what it's worth.

I think we have a great kind of roadmap with what they've done in Iowa with Hy-Vee and things like that, so if we can create partnerships like that, it's going to be huge. But I love the circuit. It's cool.

**Q. And what about the Million Dollar Challenge at Thermal?**

SCOTT DIXON: I haven't heard -- I don't think they've finalized a lot of the stuff, just how they're going to break it down. The difficult part I think if the feature race becomes a sprint race, it's going to be -- unless you've got a super soft tire that degrades a lot, then that will create some action. It's not a track that's going to be easily passable, so maybe you'll be waiting for some mistakes and things like that.

I don't know. I think that the idea is great and I think it's an idea that could really expand in other areas, especially new circuits that we go to, maybe off-season stuff. I think the platform is really good. We'll just have to see how to make it work well to make it the spectacle that it needs to be. But kudos to everybody that's been involved to create something like that, and it's the starting point, so I think everybody is really excited for it.

**Q. We've got the announcement with the mid-season hybrid arrival. It's kind of unprecedented. How do you think that's going to -- what do you think it's going to do for the championship this year compared to other years as far as the impact of that, maybe the credibility for the champion, et cetera?**

SCOTT DIXON: I don't think there will be an issue on the credibility of the champion unless -- I don't know, there's so many hypotheticals.

I think the process has been to make it as reliable as possible or to make it really roll out in a smooth way.

At the moment in testing when it fails, you have to stop the car immediately. I don't know if that's going to be true when you get to -- say you're leading a race by 20 seconds and you've got three laps to go, I don't think any driver of a team is going to stop the car. Whatever happens in that case. There's a lot of unknowns -- well at least for me it's unknown. I'm sure other people know about it.

I think it is what it is right now. I think it's definitely a positive that they're not just abandoning it. I think you've got to do it properly in the way that they've done it, and I



think the technology is going to be huge. It's a pretty trick system and something that will hopefully evolve pretty quickly.

I'm excited for that part of it. You've just got to roll with it. For me, I just want a car that's fast, and whatever which way you have to drive it. But this will definitely add some pretty tricky driver situations in how you use it and something that if you use well I think can definitely benefit you. I'm excited for that side.

**Q. You don't think -- it's not like we're putting an asterisk on this championship as a mid-season regulation change; do you think it would be a tougher championship to win, or do you think because of that it might drastically change the layout of the back half of the season?**

SCOTT DIXON: I think they're all extremely tough. There's no -- I hadn't actually thought about it, to be honest, because I didn't think that would be something that would change much.

I guess if you look at it insofar as a DNF or reliability issues maybe, but I feel like that can be true anyway with the current formula with different situations.

Yeah, I don't think I'd put an asterisk over this championship.

**Q. Just wanted to follow up on something you had mentioned with the team growing from four cars to five for the season. What mainly are the concerns of that, and how does the team solve those concerns, if there are any at all?**

SCOTT DIXON: I think it's just people, right? There's just more things going on.

I think that's something the team has done really well. Obviously with four cars, even going from two to four or two to three at some point, it can be tricky. As I commented on, it's about finding the people. The people are key, and to working on the same environment, everybody being happy, which you can never have that, but getting as close as possible. There's just a lot more moving parts to try and contain that will be no small challenge.

But I think if there's a team out there that can pull it off, it's definitely this one. I don't know, fingers crossed, man. I'm part of this team. I want it to go well.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.

