

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Scott Dixon

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We welcome now the two-time champion of the Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach, Scott Dixon.

Scott, we're all kind of amazed how you did it, how you pulled this off. Are you equally as amazed by any chance?

SCOTT DIXON: That was fun (smiling).

I think it was definitely a bit sketchy in the fact that the pressure is coming hard and strong. I knew they would burn their tires off pretty quickly with kind of 10-lap offset. I think they had to close a 10- or 12-second lap. The abuse was coming thick and fast.

I think we could have had the status quo there with Josef. We had over a hundred seconds of OT left. I think he was down to the 20s by the time he even got to me. Even to get that out, they weren't trimmed out, we were trimmed, that would have made it difficult to pass.

Once you get into the confinements of the corners, it's really tough. Obviously the incident between Colton and him backed him up a little bit. We were okay once we got past a couple people in traffic.

I would say I didn't get the number consistently, so I was a little worried about that. We kind of have a light that comes on that gives you a couple of laps' heads up that you're actually going to run out of fuel. I didn't see it with two laps to go. They came on the radio saying, Go flat out, mix one, overtake, whatever you need.

That was definitely nice to hear at that point because the stress level was pretty high. To get after it for the last two laps without a concern was big.

Huge credit to the team. A big weekend for Honda, Acura, HRC. I think we had almost 200 PNC guests this weekend here. Nice to have Alex on the podium as well. Big weekend for Chip as well with the IMSA race, a couple INDYCARs on the podium. Hopefully he's happy tonight.

THE MODERATOR: It's also a Honda sweep obviously, which is big for our friends from Honda. One thing to do what you did, period, but to also utilize push to pass when everyone thought you're not going to be able to do that.

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, it's easy to push the button. It's quite nice when you push the button. But you got to pay up at some point.

Some of the laps there were heavy on the OT on the straights, out of the corners, then in the portions where you knew they couldn't really attack.

I think Josef, I think he burnt his tires up. Obviously Colton, once we knew we had a little more fuel in the tank, I wish I knew that a little bit earlier because that would have been easier to manage.

Big day. It was a lot of fun. Obviously it's nice to get some kind of crazy strategies going on and have two strategies playing out. I don't know where the 12 car finished, but he was on the same strategy as us. I'll see where he ended up.

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with questions.

Q. Even people like Senna used to struggle to do a certain pace, switch it on and speed up at the end. Is that difficult?

SCOTT DIXON: I think when you're in the portion of saving, it's always nice to hear, Hey, you don't have to save. I'll take that rather than going the other way, for sure. Sometimes these strategies go the other way. Luckily we were on the safe side of the fuel (indiscernible). The number I was getting was maybe not the actual number, it was bigger than what I was getting. It was nice to have that safe factor in there.

We drove the car back to the pits, did a little burnout. There was sufficient fuel there.

It can be. When you go into the corner 10 or 15 miles an hour faster, which you do on OT, really pushing. The coast phase can sometimes start at the 700-yard, and you brake at the 300. If you brake at the 300 full throttle, it gets pretty



hairly. It's nice that you can push.

Q. After the Rasmussen shunt, how much of a dilemma were you and Mike having about whether to commit to this strategy?

SCOTT DIXON: It was black and white. I normally question it. Today I was like, Hey, let's just get on with it. They kind of told me late, as well, which I think strategy-wise was well so a bunch of others didn't dive in and take the same stop.

I knew it was going to be tough. I think what you kind of hope for in the long run is that you get some caution laps again, which would have made it a lot easier for us. Again, the pace was pretty solid, man. We didn't really have to push crazy amounts. It saved the tires as well. The car had plenty of pace left at the end.

Q. Every win is a good win. What happened last year, to come back, 20th consecutive year you have a win in the series, how important is this? Where does this rank?

SCOTT DIXON: It ranks on the stressful meter pretty high. Yeah, that one was up there.

I think Nashville maybe beat that a couple years ago where we didn't take tires on the last stop, we tried to do crafty and do 50 or 60 laps on a set of tires. That was pretty wild.

This one was up there because they were coming hard and fast. They were going to get to us with eight to 10 laps to go. Even the scenario do you push, maintain track position over maybe not finishing, it's kind of a hard decision to make.

Chip actually got on the radio. I couldn't really hear what he said. I heard he was yelling. I guess it meant go. That's what I did. I think he must have said just kind of make sure you stay in the lead 'cause so many times in this sport you kind of unfortunately are on the bad side of that where I've lost many races that way where you kind of give up the position because you know you need to make it on fuel, you get a caution within the next couple laps.

Yeah, worked out well.

Q. How much did the lap traffic add to the stressful meter there?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, big. Kyffin I knew was going to be fairly kind to me. I passed the 51 earlier in the race. I knew they hadn't trimmed out at all. I knew it wasn't going to be an issue, even if you had to use overtake, which I did.

I wasn't overly stressed. Especially if you get them in one, the other competitors can't really get them until out of five or a little ways down, so you can build a bit of a buffer.

Yeah, today, though, I think trimming out helped us. We were able to pass a little bit easier on the straights and make it count where sometimes you can get pretty stuck there if you have a lot of drag on the car.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about the history of this event and how it adds to its lore, compare how you feel after your first win and now your second win.

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, it's big. I think the first time I came here was '99 in Indy Lights. It's always a marquee event. I think the history of this race, this was their 40th INDYCAR race, right?

THE MODERATOR: Correct. 40th INDYCAR race, celebrating 50 years next year for the event.

SCOTT DIXON: There's not many events on any schedule that people can celebrate like that.

I think what we really enjoy as drivers and teams is the atmosphere, man. This place is wild. It's got a lot of energy. It's a lot of fun. That's what we need to be doing. We always say we hope we can have more events like Long Beach or the 500 or Nashville, places like that. This one's tough to beat, man.

Q. In terms of the drivers in the field, there's a lot of people that feel they can do a lot of things. The fuel saving thing, you got Alex Palou saying he wouldn't have been able to pull that strategy off. How does that make you feel?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, it's big. Obviously he sees what we do. He can see all of that, which makes it difficult. I think a lot of these times, these days, you can't hide anything, especially in our team. Some things back in the day, you used to be able to keep to yourself. That's just impossible now.

But Alex is very good, as well. He's definitely one of the toughest, one of the best drivers in the series. Obviously defending champion. We've started the season well together, work well together.

Yeah, it doesn't always work out. It's a difficult discipline I think, trying to make sure before the race that you know you're going to need a car that really rolls well through the corner if you do get into a position like this. It's not just all about technique. There's a lot of steps to take to get to there.

Even for me today, that was one of the -- I wasn't sure we were going to get that. When you do, it feels damn good.

Q. At this point of your career, what motivates you to keep you going? Obviously as your family grows up, does each win mean more?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, sad the family wasn't here. Today they're in the UK at the moment. Spoke to Emma, the kids are obviously in bed.

Yeah, it's cool to have these moments. I think the 2020 championship, (indiscernible), that moment, taking those pictures, they're there forever. It's huge for the family and people along the way.

Dedicating that race win to Sir Colin Giltrap who passed. Without him, I never would have gotten to this situation in my career. There's a lot of people along the way.

I think early in my career, you probably don't appreciate nearly as much as you should. Even my first championship, I was like, Oh, that was kind of cool. You just move on. What helped me understand that was the next two years were really shitty. That put things in perspective pretty quickly.

Motor racing is full of ups and downs. I'm lucky with a team that's very successful and we've won a lot of stuff. Honestly, what drives me are the losses, the close misses, what keeps me up at night and definitely push me.

Q. Did you ever imagine you'd still be this competitive at 43 years of age?

SCOTT DIXON: I don't know, man. I guess you hope so, but I never really focus on that. I don't know. The only time people try to bring it up, not myself, not people around me. It is just one of those things.

Obviously age is a thing. I don't know. I don't really see it. For me, I enjoy the craft. I enjoy learning. I guess once it becomes annoying to me or I'm getting beaten badly, maybe it's time to move on. For right now, nothing in the short-term that's going to take me away from that.

Yeah, I don't know. You always look ahead. You look for positive things. There's no point dwelling on bad stuff.

Q. The win today moves you within 10 of AJ Foyt's all-time mark of 67. Do the next wins sound a little bit different than 11, 15, 20? Does it feel like it's getting closer?

SCOTT DIXON: Still sounds like a lot (smiling).

Some years there you could knock out five, six or seven. Six. I never got to seven. Almost did. Helio ruined my parade on that one. It's a good year, you can possibly get four or five. That's strong.

Yeah, we'll just keep our head down, man. It's one of those things that I always say hopefully when you leave the sport, you're happy with the stats. Of course, these are big stats. This is a big deal. We're still a long way away from that.

Q. What do early wins in the season do for a team when you're shooting for a championship? Do you notice the sense of momentum, team energy?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, it's big for the team. Obviously last year we left it pretty late, winning the last kind of three or four. A win's a win. I don't know. It just becomes more a topic of conversation, right? Halfway through the year, You haven't won this year.

Again, any of these races are super tough to win. You have to get everything completely right, then that doesn't guarantee you anything.

Yes, it's great to win early in the season. It's huge. It's big for the team, big for everybody's morale. Hopefully that stuff carries to the marquee event coming up here shortly in the 500. But right now the focus is Barber next week.

Q. I notice when they pulled the car into Victory Lane, there was a scuff mark on the left rear. Can you talk about that? Did you even know about it?

SCOTT DIXON: I definitely hit the wall in exit of four and also in exit of eight. I think on two different stints. I don't know if that was on the paint or on the tire. Pretty light. I do it a lot, unfortunately (smiling).

Q. I don't know if we call this a Chip Slam, the Cadillac racing team won yesterday in IMSA, the big relief for Sebastian, Chip running around like a madman waving the checkered flag in Victory Lane, happy as can be. Talk about special weekends like this that don't come along that often.

SCOTT DIXON: I'm probably more happy for the 01 guys to be honest. They've had a bad run. It's been frustrating with that side of the team. The fact that it's a great group of people. I just don't think they deserved the results they've had.

Daytona was a bummer. I think it was ours to lose, and we



did, through no fault of ours. Sebring, you couldn't imagine anything worse. Leading a majority of the race, losing with four minutes to go.

Having been a part of that team for quite some time and just seeing the ups and downs, kind of the sadness that was there, that was huge. It was cool to see the strategy worked out. It was a little aggressive, but they got it done. Hopefully that gets a roll on for them because they greatly deserve it.

Chip, obviously he's the team owner, but the people that work on that team have put in a lot of effort. It's great to see them celebrating.

Q. Your thoughts on the passing of Sir Colin Giltrap on Friday of last week?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, definitely a big loss to lose Sir Colin. As I mentioned, a huge help for myself, but pretty much outside of motor racing as well, but any Kiwi that's raced internationally is because of him and his family.

To have the foresight as he did at young ages to help. For me, it was definitely a huge help. I had an investment group that of course out of 14 or 15 people, you're going to have people that disagree. He had enough kind of clout to straighten out the people that weren't agreeing.

Forever in debt to him and his family. Obviously I've spoken to Richard. Haven't gotten to speak with Michael yet. Jenny and everybody in the family. It's a huge loss. But what Colin has done for motorsport and many people around the world is huge.

It's definitely a sad week, for sure.

Q. Looking at the series itself now, you have a run of races coming up, big stretch of races. What's that like in terms of preparation for yourself and the month of May, having one day at the open test, has that hindered things?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, for us probably the least amount of running is better. I think we have a pretty good base there. With losing some of the engineers we have over the past couple of years, there's definitely other teams that have a pretty good idea of what we do. That will help some other teams.

Yeah, it's a tough battle. I think for me, once we get to the month of May, it's 10 weekends in a row including Le Mans. It's definitely full on, for sure.

That's what I love to do. Love to race cars, be out there.

Hopefully we can have a pretty special 10 weeks when we get to that portion of the year.

Q. How much confidence does this give you going to Barber and the Grand Prix at the Indy road course?

SCOTT DIXON: Barber has been interesting. Second six times. Never won there. The goal was always to try and step on the top step again.

We had a really good test at Barber. Only probably half of the grid did, so it will be interesting to see how that applies. Then I think once we get to Indy the following week, the other half of the field tested there. It will be interesting to see how that plays out.

Yeah, you have to be good at all these tracks. They're all very different, very difficult. Probably looking forward more to Barber than Indy road course. I'm looking forward to the month of May.

THE MODERATOR: Numbers impressive. 57 career wins, 20th consecutive season. You look back to the end of last year, four wins out of the last six races.

SCOTT DIXON: It's good. Try to keep it going.

THE MODERATOR: You're doing okay.

SCOTT DIXON: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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