

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Saturday, July 13, 2024

Scott McLaughlin

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Joining us, the champion of tonight's race, Scott McLaughlin.

Scott, congratulations. Your thoughts?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, just checked off probably one of my biggest goals that I had this year personally. Super proud. At the end of the day I did the job in some ways from my perspective, but it was a team win. They put me out in front and got me the lead. I was able to show how good our car was just controlling the pace at the front.

Yeah, obviously not a race that we're used to seeing in Iowa, but we'll move forward and know that we got a good car for tomorrow. I think even better when the sun's out. Hopefully we can carry it on and win again.

THE MODERATOR: So many restarts. Nerve-wracking.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah. One of them I left it in my caution fuel gauge, too. That's why Colton got beside me. That was mine. I could have thrown that away. I was very lucky.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You came into this night with five career INDYCAR victories. On the broadcast you said you couldn't call yourself an INDYCAR driver until you got a win on an oval.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I always felt like that. It's correct. I felt like an open-wheel driver, but an INDYCAR driver is someone that can win on all three racetracks. Thankfully very proud to say I've won on an oval now, along with a road and street course. Proud moment for me.

It's taken a lot of hard work, work hard behind the scenes to be better. Whether it's here or with the old surface, Texas, any of the other ovals, I feel like I've been really strong, just haven't quite finished it off.

Yeah, we were able to do that today. Thankful to my team

who really got me out in front with some rapid pit stops.

Q. It's safe to say you feel like a complete driver now and you didn't before?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: There's room for improvement all the time. I'm nowhere near a complete driver. I just feel like I'm an INDYCAR driver now, or I'm proud to say that I am. Ultimately everyone wants to win on an oval. It's exhilarating, most fun racetracks some days.

Those two laps qualifying today, it's just up there with Indy, exhilaration terms, how fast it is, how quick it is. It's just a little bit shorter and a little bit less to start.

It's a lot of fun. You get a lot of enjoyment from oval racing. I think it's the backbone of the sport.

Q. After so many podiums on ovals, how much was that eating away at you, or was it not in the back of your mind?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Especially after losing Texas in '22, that hurt for a long time. You sometimes think if you ever get that chance again, you know how hard it is. Ultimately I'm in such a good race car, race team, thankfully we come with a really good oval package as a team.

At the end of the day I have two of the world's best oval drivers in the same equipment. It's a matter of beating them, which is tough to do. I feel like we've shown up since the start of the weekend with a really good car, a stranglehold on what I want from the car.

Before qualifying today I had confidence I could post some really good laps. In the race I was biding my time, saving fuel when I needed. Thankfully we got out in front of Herta.

Q. What additional work did you do in the off-season to help you get better on ovals?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Just a lot of tape and understanding, listening to spotter's calls, working with my spotter. My spotter is at Indy, as well. Working with Simon Pagenaud has been a huge help for me and taught me a



lot. He's a huge feather in my cap, in my corner. Very lucky to have him. He's been an open book.

To get my first oval win, I don't think that's by coincidence. It's because I started working with Simon. He's been a massive help. Then Benny, my engineer, a guru with car setup. An old IRL guy. He loves this sort of stuff. I really enjoy working with him.

Q. When you're out in front like that, have a good lead, what do you want in your head at that point from the spotter? Were you frustrated when those yellows started falling towards the end?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, I mean, the first one, I was it kind of splits -- looked after my tires a bit. I knew it spaced me out from the back markers as well. Probably most likely wouldn't catch the back of the pack.

At the end of the day I've worked really hard with my spotters, especially Adam. Adam has been in my corner from 2021. From my first ROP at Indianapolis Motor Speedway, he's been my guy. Along with Rick Mears and everyone, whatnot.

Simon again, he was one of the guys that said you have to work with your spotters, get a language. We have the same language every oval. It's the same whether it's 10 to go, a hundred to go, whether it's tight or whether I got a gap. It's the same temperament.

Adam, I fully believe he's one of the best. Don't ever want to lose him. Make sure we do (indiscernible) our pockets and pay him.

Q. How close did you think it was on pit road? Colton came down the backstretch ahead of you.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I said, I think I got him. You always believe it. Doesn't matter if you are behind him. You just say that you did. I believe this time I was in front of him. Must have been a whisker. I don't know what it was. Yeah, it was a bee's thing.

Q. Scott, you seem to have confidence in your car, know you were strong. I remember something about last year where you sat down with Newgarden and went over video. He gave you some coaching. Has that helped or played out?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yes, that was before last year's Iowa. I wouldn't say it's helped. It probably helped me in '23 here especially. It gave me an understanding of where I can trust the air and a few things.

I think Josef probably kicks himself because he probably gave me a bit too much information. Ultimately you've got to use it every chance you get.

Yeah, I think any bit of advice I get from my of my teammates, whether it's Will, Josef, Rick, Simon, anyone like that, you take it. I've been a sponge ever since I was here in INDYCAR.

Oval racing, I never raced on ovals until I came here to America and raced INDYCAR. It's a hell of a step up from what I was doing. Never on a dirt track or anything like that. Try to understand it, trust it, it takes a while. This year I'm in a position where it's really clicked. I'm fully trusting it, regardless of temps or whatever.

Q. You mentioned Pagenaud. Team Penske has been wanting to have multiple drivers winning on ovals. This is a big sign that we know with Penske with all three drivers now can get this done on ovals.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Like I said before, he's been unreal for me, as you know. Such a good teacher. It's special to work with someone like that. For him to basically give me everything, it's crazy.

You should see the notes I get. He sends me notes every morning before I go on track. I don't even have time to read it sometimes. It's crazy. It's like essays, longer than your reporting stories. It's crazy.

Ultimately I treasure them. I save them. I'll never give them to anyone else 'cause they're just that good. Yeah, I'm very proud to do it for him, do it for Benny as well. Benny has been a huge help for me in that regard, Benny Bretzman. Good team.

I'm very thankful to have the people, blessed to have the people in my corner. That goes from the people I work with, but then I've got my wife, soon to be dad. All that stuff. It puts into perspective. It's called winning races, but it's always good having good people in your corner.

Q. What does it mean to be part of the success that Team Penske has had here also with Ryan Blaney?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Blaney texted me we're corn brothers now. He was one of the first guys to text me. Great friend of mine. I was picking his brain a lot about the track and whatnot.

Ultimately I got a chance, a lifeline to come over here to America, achieve a dream. But I had to deliver. You're expected to win on all tracks for Penske. It was getting pretty slim for me on the ovals. It's just nice to deliver

when you need to and have the chance to.

Yeah, we'll keep rolling. Hopefully we can get another one tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations.

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