

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Sunday, July 21, 2024

**Kyle Kirkwood**

**Scott Dixon**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are joined now by Kyle Kirkwood for Andretti Global. Best finish of the season. Third career podium.

I'm assuming, given of the way Honda dominated this day, how the team dominated, you'll take second place in this situation?

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Yeah. I mean, super happy with second, especially when a teammate wins, right? That was the goal today. We started 1-2, we wanted to finish 1-2.

Of course, I would rather have won. That's always the thought. I also wasn't going to push the envelope whatsoever in that situation. We didn't have much pressure from behind. The last thing I'm going to do is attack Colton and potentially cause an issue just so I can win.

Took it as an Andretti Global win today.

THE MODERATOR: Also joined by third-place finisher driver in Scott Dixon. Four time winner here on the streets of Toronto. Fourth podium of 2024. 141st career podium which ties you with the all-time lead with Mario Andretti. That's not bad. That's not bad. Congratulations. Tell us about your day.

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, it was frustrating I think because of yesterday, to be honest. We had a very good car all weekend. Decided to wave a lap off of because a car coming out of the pits, which I probably didn't need to. That lap would have got us through. Then screwed up my last lap. That was frustrating. I think we should have been a lot further up the grid. The car had a ton of speed.

Maybe four cars at the start or three cars at the start, started picking them off. Once we got clean air, we could run really fast pace, low 61s, 61.1. Just started overcutting everybody.

I guess in theory we needed a bit of a longer race, maybe a 120-lap race would have been great (smiling).

Kudos to the team. Congrats to Andretti, Kyle and Herta.

THE MODERATOR: Did you have a feeling the overcut would work best for you today?

SCOTT DIXON: I don't know. We were kind of bummed after we saw the tire choice. It was kind of weird. We figured a lot of people were moaning about the greens so the field would have been a lot of green starters, but it was majority blacks. We kind of missed that.

We should have mystery boxed it, don't choose, then you get the minority. Should have done that, which maybe would have been better for us. But the overcut worked well.

Interesting day. A lot of accidents. Hopefully everybody is okay. Haven't heard too much. Definitely exciting out there.

THE MODERATOR: Everyone is okay, which is the best news today.

We'll open it up for questions.

**Q. Can you talk about the tire performance today, like green, less laps. How was the tires today, black and green?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: To be honest, I think we had a different outlook on the tires than maybe potentially you thought after warm-up.

I thought both tires were going to be good. Of course, there's always a crossover from the soft to the hard tire. For the hard tire you want to go as long as possible to maximize that. On the softer tire, the green tire, today you want to go a little bit shorter. That way you're not falling into too much deg later in the stint.

Yeah, performance was great. The tires held in well. I was super happy with them all weekend. I think this has been



the best tire choice of the year. Of course, I'm going to say that because we were super fast this weekend.

Honestly, with out-lap pace, general feel of the tire, then degradation, too, I thought was pretty solid. Maybe a little bit more deg would have created a little bit better racing. Overall Firestone came here with a very, very good tire I think.

**Q. Scott, coming from so far back, did you see a lot of the action as you were coming through? A lot of carnage. Did you have to dodge any of that?**

SCOTT DIXON: I think most of it was behind us at that point. I don't know what other carnage was going on. I saw the 3 and the 12, which looked like it must have been pretty fun with how animated the 3 was. Obviously they've had some close contact racing in the last few races. It's tough when it's teammates, too. I haven't seen that to react to that.

Obviously the crash with Pato captured a few people there. One was pretty spectacular. Yeah, luckily I was ahead of that most of the time.

I think the lucky car out of that one was the 10 car. Everybody kind of just crashed in front of him or got a penalty, which definitely helps. You got to take those days. They did a hell of a job.

Yeah, I didn't see too much carnage. The 3 and 12 was close to me, right behind me. I kind of saw it going into five, but I was no part of it.

**Q. Kyle, you did your best Rubens Barrichello impression, how to not necessarily pressure Colton but keep the position. Talk about that a little bit.**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: To be honest, I was pressuring Colton because I was trying to get him to go faster because Scott was breathing down my neck for the restarts. I was trying to do the best I can to manage the gap in front, that way I'm not going too slow in certain sectors were Scott was quick. I'm also trying to make sure Scott is not passing me.

It was definitely a chess game out there, especially at the end with the restarts. Before then, we had a ton of pace, right? I think if we were in front of Colton, we would have sailed off into the sunset. We were super, super fast. I was stuck in his dirty air the entire race. Maybe could have passed him, caught him off guard a couple times. Ultimately it was team first.

**Q. Scott, you're still in the thick of this championship fight. How annoying is it, even though it's a teammate,**

**the good fortune continues to go his way?**

SCOTT DIXON: I wouldn't say it's good fortune. They do a hell of a job. That's why he's won two championships in the last three years. I don't want to take anything away from that. You create a lot of your own good luck. They do a good job of that.

We'll keep fighting here. I think without our tire issue at Road America and the (indiscernible) at Mid-Ohio, I think would maybe be leading the championship.

It's frustrating, but you can't do anything about those situations. It's out of your control. We'll keep our head down here. I think this time last year we were 120 points back, we closed it to 60 or 70. Until we're out of it, we're never going to give up.

They're a tough team. I see all they do, and they do it well.

**Q. Tying Mario if anything is a hell of an accomplishment.**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, I didn't even know anything about that. That's very cool. Podiums are a big deal. It's always fun to celebrate. Obviously you want to be on the top step. To be at the top of it, the peak of it, especially in this current field, man, it feels really good.

Mario is a hell of a guy. Obviously accomplished a hell of a lot more than I have in my career, many different categories. I think we're very lucky to see him at the majority of our races and what an ambassador he is for our sport.

**Q. Kyle, if you had overcut or jumped Colton somehow in the pits, there was no team orders there, that was part of the plan? There wasn't going to be you having to hold back?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: No, there's no preconceived notions. Of course, we went into the race saying we need to dominate this race and we need to run up front and we need to not put each other in positions where we might potentially get beat by other people.

Ultimately the strategy we were both on was the best one to be on. It just so happens that we both pit on the same lap. Fortunately we were not next to each other so we're not hurting each other in pit lane. There was no chance of an overcut and undercut potentially slowing somebody down just to get a position on one another, which obviously would hurt us.

Ultimately Colton, like I said before, qualified on pole,

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

deserving of the win. I was also very fast. I think we were faster, but he was very, very fast himself. Yeah, he's deserving. I wasn't going to pressure him to an extent to where it might cause a hiccup for either one of us, not only for him, so...

THE MODERATOR: When you lead every session over the course of a weekend, that's pretty good.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Exactly. Colton coming in this weekend, he was super fast here last year, he had some unfortunate things happen in qualifying. This weekend he showed his pace once again in all sessions.

I think not only the race performance, but his weekend performance deserved him of the win.

**Q. Scott, we all know all the championship is hard to get and you have to be good on all types of tracks. First four street courses this year, two wins, a third and seventh. How do you take that in perspective for this break going towards the end of the championship run?**

SCOTT DIXON: I think it's definitely interesting with how it ends. We got one road course left. What is it, four short tracks. Should be good for the Penskes, I guess (smiling). Whether it was tailored that way, I have no idea.

But I think we had really good cars at Iowa, as well. It was a little bit different there. It was a struggle for passing. Milwaukee will be interesting. They've really got to work on the formula for those tracks because nobody wants to just follow the leader. Unfortunately with the repave at Iowa, that kind of ruined the best short track we've had for a good five, 10 years.

It will be interesting to see the Milwaukee test for us, almost zero deg as well, extremely hard to pass. We'll have to see how that plays out. I know they're talking about bringing a softer tire.

Deg is key. You need three or four seconds over a stint. That spices it up, makes it interesting. Firestone don't want to hear people talking about degradation, but it creates great racing.

We'll see. It's been a long time since we've been in Nashville. It was a great place for our team. Milwaukee has been in the past, as well. St. Louis. Anything's possible, man. We'll keep trying.

**Q. Now that you ran hybrid on all three styles of track, which style did you notice that made the biggest difference specifically with weight and overall boost?**

SCOTT DIXON: Mine didn't work at Mid-Ohio, so... That was the worst part.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: To be honest, I was zoned out when you asked the questions.

SCOTT DIXON: Asking about hybrids.

THE MODERATOR: Road course, street course or oval.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: It's heavier. Creates a little bit of power. I personally don't think it's doing anything for the actual racing. I think some people are starting to think that, but I don't think that is the case whatsoever.

**Q. In a race like this, how do you decide between undercut or overcut?**

SCOTT DIXON: A lot of the times it's just determined by what tire you start on really. I think we overcommitted to going long when we started on the black tire, which is meant to be more durable. But anything can change. A caution at any point can kind of flip it on its head.

It seemed like a lot of other teams had a different read on it. The 3 car started on used greens.

KYLE KIRKWOOD: Wild to me.

SCOTT DIXON: I didn't think anybody on this planet would do that. All is on the table, I guess.

You feel it pretty quickly whether it's going to work or not. For us, we were saving a lot of fuel. We could sit with the people we were with, even fellow competitors. As soon as we had clean air, we could really attack. That's where we knew the overcut was going to work. I've been in situations where you get clean air, you don't go any faster.

It's hard. First time here with the hybrid. You're not sure with the extra weight. A tire that we've run earlier this season, but a tire that has run with a car that's 100 or 105 pounds lighter in weight. A lot of the tracks are unknown, to be honest.

**Q. With today's competition, how rare is it to see one driver have a perfect weekend, lead all three practices, pole, then win the race?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I mean, it's not a shock from within our organization, to be honest. Like, I don't think it's a surprise to everyone that Andretti Global is really good on street courses. So is Colton Herta. Colton Herta I think personally is one of the best qualifiers at the moment in



INDYCAR, especially this year, right?

It's really, really not a shock to me whatsoever. It showed this weekend.

Of course, on any given weekend it always changes a lot. When we come to street courses, we typically have a lot of confidence coming into them, yeah.

SCOTT DIXON: I kind of agree, to be honest. I think four of the Fast Six were Andretti cars. They're extremely fast out of the box. Even in the warm-up this morning they threw in some pretty impressive laps.

Nice when you can have the pace. It doesn't always play out that way. Sometimes strategy, especially when you start from the front, you can be a bit of a sitting duck.

Honestly for Colton, it was nice to see him have a smooth and deserved weekend.

**Q. Which did you use most, the hybrid, push to pass?**

KYLE KIRKWOOD: I used the hybrid every single lap. It was definitely worth quite a bit of time here, more so than the ovals. That's to be expected with lower speeds. I didn't use that much overtake. Coming into the last caution, I had 154 seconds left, so...

SCOTT DIXON: I used everything every lap (smiling). They were in a little bit better position than I was.

Yeah, I don't know. I think I had maybe 50 seconds to go with the last restart.

THE MODERATOR: 44.

SCOTT DIXON: Whatever it was (smiling). Yeah, hybrid every lap. If everybody is doing it, you kind of got to do it.

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