

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, September 1, 2024

Scott McLaughlin

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Scott McLaughlin joins us, third win of the season. Still mathematically alive for the 2024 NTT INDYCAR SERIES championship. Chevrolet clinches the manufacture championship as well.

Your thoughts on another win in 2024?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: It was awesome. The car was a lot better today than it was yesterday. I was able to do what I wanted in traffic in some ways. Kind of what Pato was able to do yesterday. Just big props to Benny and the crew. The Gallagher Chevy was unreal.

Yeah, once I got confidence with the car... The first stint was quite tough for me, but once I got confidence and where I wanted to run the car, I felt the track was really cool. Even the way racing Herta there, he's a little bit older tires than I was, whatnot, and you could sort of enter at the same point. He would go low, I'd go high, you'd sort of end up in the same spot. That's why you could have really good side-by-side racing, I thought. It's always fun when you're leading.

Yeah, it was a fun race. I thought it was a really fun race. It was a lot funner for me than yesterday. Good Lord. Really proud of everyone. Proud of the turnaround. We were really bad yesterday from my side.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Another oval win.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Definitely an INDYCAR driver now (smiling).

Q. You're becoming an oval driver. How proud are you of being able to master this unique skill in racing?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Look, I wouldn't say... For me, I think winning on an oval, not saying road and street courses isn't satisfying, because I'll never forget my first race win and whatnot, but it's incredible winning on an oval. A lot of things have to go right. You have to make the

right moves at the right time. That's probably why I put Indy above a championship in some ways because it's just incredible how perfect it has to go on an oval.

Yeah, it's the backbone of our sport. I thought it was great. The crowd was awesome. Yeah, it was an awesome weekend. Honestly, I thought the racing was a lot better than we all expected, as well. Yeah, that's props to INDYCAR. That's props to Firestone. The drivers, as well. There were a couple incidents, but we were mostly pretty good.

Q. One of the incidents was to your teammate, Will Power. Could have been a really huge day for him. How shocked were you by seeing that? He could have been leaving here if not the points leader only down a couple.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, I mean, you got to make your own decisions, and I felt like I made it reasonably. I knew his position. When Palou didn't start the race, it's like things shifted to Will in terms of trying to get him back. That's sort of why it made it a little bit easier in the stint.

Yeah, man, it sucks. Look, he's still in the chance. Probably could have capitalized a lot. Yeah, I don't really know what happened, so I can't comment on it. I know he spun. Yeah, I was surprised for sure.

Q. Not counting how you did yesterday, which race did you prefer, the evening or the afternoon?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Honestly, I know I won, but I like this race. Yesterday was extremely hard. I don't know what other drivers thought or said, whatever. I could not see into three and four. The glare from the sun was incredible, especially when the windscreen got dirty and stuff. That was a big issue for me.

It probably made the race-ability of the track tougher down three, four compared to today because it was so hard to pick the right line. No one wanted to make a wrong move.

I prefer this start time. I thought we had a pretty good crowd, yeah. Unless they put some lights on, it would be pretty sick. It would be awesome, yeah.



Q. The other drivers yesterday said the cars were disappearing, then reappearing. You weren't the only person.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Okay, interesting.

Q. Before this weekend, Penske was unbeaten on ovals this year. Yesterday obviously was a bit of a struggle. Everybody said you guys were lights out at the test here. Did the field catch up a little bit to Penske?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I think the test maybe threw us for a loop a little bit. The tire was a little bit different. The pace of the cars was a little bit different. When the pace slowed down yesterday in the race, we just weren't good when it was slow. When it was high speed, the car was quite good, created natural downforce. When it started slowing down, that's when we really struggled, which we fixed today with a couple things.

I think we just missed the mark yesterday. I mean, our qualifying was really good. I thought we hit some really good lap times. I led the first 30 laps or whatever it was. I felt pretty good until I caught traffic and I just couldn't do anything.

Today was a big change-up for that, as well.

Q. You said you were beating yourself up yesterday. Was it mistakes behind the wheel?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, it's my first flat track, I guess. Yeah, I was pretty peeved. Honestly I'm going to sleep like a baby tonight. I only slept like four hours last night. I was up till probably 3 in the morning. I couldn't sleep. I was rolling over.

It's funny. I think it's a lot to do with a doubleheader. The adrenaline is just going. But I generally just was pissed off with the way it went and my performance, a little bit of the team's performance, the car performance. It was just trying to think of ways to make it better.

I mean, that's passion. I think my engineer was the same. He was four and a half hours. Same. It's a passion to be better.

Yeah, I'm going to sleep like a baby tonight. I need to catch up as much as I can because we are going to have a baby, so it won't be too long.

Q. When you talk about how much confidence you're feeling, how much better did you feel in traffic

compared to the lap cars yesterday?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Oh, my God, like 10 out of 10. 100% better. It was night and day. I could pick where I wanted. It took me a little bit of time to get comfortable and confident. Ultimately, man, it was just lights out for me today in traffic. I think some of my moves on the restarts was showing my confidence, what I had underneath me. Yesterday, I was hanging on for dear life.

Q. Was the lap traffic fair?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: They race you hard when you're leading because they want to stay on the lead lap. You expect it.

No, I thought it was fair. Honestly, I had a blast racing Colton for the lead. That was awesome. We were banging, side by side. But it was legit. That's how it should be.

I knew he was there. I slid up a little bit. He pinched me. We hit. It was like proper. It was so cool. Like being in the Super Car again. You're just banging doors. This place is nice because you haven't got much banking. It's like a big road course. It was fun.

Q. I think it's your first win for Gallagher. Your guys had a late night. Speak on that. Secondly, your fueler said the last stop like he wasn't there, plugged in perfectly. Talk about your stops today. Your spotter is from here in Wisconsin, as well.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: They were ripping today. Unreal. Really fast in the pit stops. I saw on TV, but the 21 car was super helpful, the box behind us. It was really good sportsmanship, to be honest. Just allowing me to have an open in into my pit box under some pretty important pit stops. They don't have to do that. They're a lap down car or trying to stay on the lead lap and they're trying to help me. That's props to Team Chevy, too, for that camaraderie.

On Adam, yeah, it's awesome for him. He's been chasing this win in Wisconsin. I don't think he's even had one in INDY NXT. It's super cool to have that for him. I know he's going to be having a couple Spotted Cows tonight, that's for sure.

THE MODERATOR: New sponsor for 2025.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: And Gallagher, nine hours to change the stickers. Pretty incredible job. The car looked pristine this morning. The effort is just unmatched. Really cool to see. They just want to do it.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

But yeah, this is an important race for Gallagher, an hour or so down the road, however far Chicago is. That's their home base. Pretty cool.

Q. Was the racing what you expected this weekend or more?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: It's hard to tell because the tire changed from the test day. The test day was hard, difficult to pass and whatnot, no deg. This weekend was really good.

I probably would say it was better than we all thought. The track was wide enough, yeah.

Q. The drivability of the track over the two days, the differences in the rubber, the temperature, did that factor into today's race or was it another game on?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: It was interesting. I thought the bottom lane, it was a little bit harder than it was yesterday. I think the heat, it being a darker sort of tinge of asphalt, it was probably a little bit hotter today to make those moves.

Yeah, the track was really fun to drive. Slick in places, but once you sort of got your head around it, it was really, really cool. Super fun, man. Super fun.

Q. Back to a more elevated banked track in two weeks' time. Differences for you as a driver? What's the first thing that comes to mind?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I haven't stepped foot in that joint yet. It's a whole new place for me. I've seen some footage, whatnot. Watched the NASCAR race there and old INDYCAR footage.

It's going to be interesting, that race. I'm hoping we come with a similar tire to what we've done this weekend and we can have some really good racing.

I'm sort of expecting a little bit of action, man. People are crazy right now. Like, there's a lot of people out there that don't give an 'F'. I'm excited to see how we go.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, Scott.

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