

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Thursday, April 24, 2025

Scott McLaughlin

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Join now by Scott McLaughlin. Last year's pole winner for the Indianapolis 500. First of all, welcome back. Good to see you back. Car seems to be doing okay?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, we had a really good day. A good couple days. Felt like we got through a lot from a hybrid perspective.

Then yeah, I felt like the morning qualifying session, high boost session, was a bit of a crapshoot, you could say. Couple yellows. When the track got better, it was a bit dirty from some of the shunts as well. Then everyone was trying to cram a lot in in 40 minutes.

Yeah, look, overall really solid balance to kick off the month of May. The car is certainly different with the extra weight and whatnot. I think speaking to a lot of the drivers, I think we all concur the same thoughts: it's different.

It's fine, fun to get used to and understand it. I feel like I really honed in on a lot of things at a low intensity level just to feel out the car and see where we're at.

Qualifying is going to be proper in terms of just what you need to do on the lap and thinking about what the car's doing, the degradation of the tires with the heavier car. It's going to be a lot of fun.

I think as well, if we have a hot day for the 500, it's going to be pretty fun. Yeah, just trying to get comfortable with the race car. Hopefully we're good.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Scott.

Q. You've picked up where you left off last year. A lot of drivers have said they've really had to yard sale their car, haven't been able to use anything from last year. How much of the race car from last year have you been able to use this year?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Same car. Exactly same car. Hasn't touched a piece of tarmac since May here. Pretty

happy to have that. It shows in some of the balance numbers as well. We had a pretty solid race car or read straightaway. That's a good feeling.

For me as a driver, getting out and up to speed, understanding all this other stuff that comes with it. As I said, it's going to be a lot busier now, which is cool, but you want to be on top of things.

I feel like having that opportunity to come here with a similar car and get going has been good.

Q. Kyle said the traffic seemed like it was difficult. How much difficulty did you get have getting clean laps?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: In the boost session?

Q. Yes.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I concur with him. A couple of the new teams, you can pick who they are, rolled out today in some pretty peculiar spots. Oh, well, somebody is not going to be happy with you. It was interesting to watch. Actually, one of those new teams pulled out in front of me, though. I was a little pissed.

Overall, you understand everyone's in the same boat. Everyone is trying to get laps and do whatever. You can only be so sportsmanlike to a point. You got to get going. That's why I say, once the time came down and the crashes happened, only 40 or so minutes left to go, I knew it was going to be a bit of a crapshoot.

Yeah, but I thought we got enough done to look at it, come back. Definitely think I needed to do more single-lap qualifying stuff just to practice it. It was a good initiation.

Kudos to INDYCAR for giving us the opportunity to run the high boost. Weird running it now. Super weird. But it was cool.

Q. You had May-like weather the past two days. You're a seasoned veteran now. How good is it for you to have that accurate weather?



SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, I said to my guys before, it's so nice going here and sort of understanding what I want, what feels right, remembering changes we made before. Definitely experience is a good thing.

But yeah, I think this is the best weather we've had in probably three, four years, at least the time I've been here doing the Open Test. Warm, much like what we might see in May. But you just never know with Indiana.

Yeah, we'll look at the data and figure it all out. I think we're in a really good spot.

Q. You said kudos to INDYCAR for giving you that morning session. A lot of people wanted to see if it was going to be too slow or too fast, balance way off. Are you content with where it's at?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, you just try to get a feel for not only yourself but manufacturers, everything like that, to see where everything sits.

I think with the parameters we ran at from a team perspective, we didn't throw everything to the wall today. I don't think anyone would have.

It was a good read with a heavier car. The biggest thing that has changed now is the heaviness of the car. It's very different. It feels weird. Not weird, but just feels different to usual.

To do that and be able to have an extra session at high boost rather than throwing it out on Fast Friday, who knows there could be rain on Fast Friday. You never know here. It's nice to come out here in reasonable conditions, not too much wind, have a feel for it, get an introduction to what it's going to be like.

Q. Are the changes you're making on the car, are you able to predict what they're going to do?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: You're talking about weight jacker and bar?

Q. Yeah. Is it doing what you would expect or what worked a year ago in a change is not going to work now?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: No, it's lefty loose-y, righty tight-y. The weight jacker still works the same.

There's some nuances to the setup that we had to change, for sure. Not change, but like move to I guess you could say. Yeah, it's still fundamentally what you feel in the car when you're out in front compared to in traffic, what you

need to change for that. It's very similar.

Q. Your setup with the extra boost this morning, how close do you think that's going to be to what you run in qualifying? Was it relatively close? A lot of changes you still got to make to it?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I guess you could say it's somewhat close if you get a read. We didn't go out there completely different. Certainly trying different things underneath the car that you guys can't see, no one can see. It's more of a feel inside the team.

I mean, yeah, all three cars, we had a crack, but within the limits.

Q. How much would you have to change from yesterday's car to this afternoon's session? Speeds were up a little bit in the afternoon.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: From yesterday's car? Yeah, the car was pretty similar to yesterday, to be honest. I just didn't quite get the best run yesterday. I mean, you can be a hero and try to get a massive tow today, but it doesn't really feel good.

Q. I heard during commentary the fact that New Zealand has the second highest number of drivers in the Indy 500 with three, along with the UK, then the U.S. with 15. As a Kiwi, how does that make you feel?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, it's awesome. A little country that punches above our weight, as you know. One of those guys is an absolute legend of the sport, probably the greatest of all time in Scott Dixon. He's done an amazing job of putting New Zealand on the map. Having Marcus here and now myself, it's a cool thing.

I think it's exciting for the Kiwis back home. Yeah, hopefully we can pull out the front for them.

Q. Looking slightly more towards the month of May, your pit box is going to move probably multiple times. Also then wondered the way you're going to come into the pits using the pit-in, how hard are they adjust to, those variables?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, I guess the pit-in for one, we don't get to practice that really until Monday of race week. That's probably the only thing. I think all us drivers would probably want to practice it say today on the hot stops. Because we had too many cars in pit lane, the safety is to bring the speed limiter closer into the pylon, into the attenuator. That does take a little bit to get used to. Want to practice that pretty hard on Monday and Carb Day.



The pit box thing, you've just got to deal with it. You have marks to practice in and out laps, wherever you're going to be. I don't think I've ever had the same pit box here ever. Hopefully we can have the same one this year as last year because that was pole.

Q. Looking away from this, Barber next week, then the Grand Prix, how difficult is it to change your mindset from what you spent two days doing to get back in the thick of things thinking about the championships?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, no, it definitely takes a couple laps to sort of get acquainted to a road course again. Your head is moving around a little bit more. It won't take too long. We had a test there not long ago.

Yeah, Barber and Indy, for me Indy GP hasn't been that kind too me, particularly in qualifying. Trying to tidy that up a little bit. We'll be okay. Need to get back on track a little bit.

Had a solid run at Long Beach and hopefully can keep going.

Q. Try to avoid the mannequins at Barber.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: That helped me last year (smiling).

FastScripts by ASAP Sports