

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, July 6, 2025

Scott Dixon

Mike Hull

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Joined by the champion here at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course in Scott Dixon who led 11 of the 90 laps today, driving the No. 9 PNC Bank Chip Ganassi Racing Honda, his first win here since 2019, first win of the season as well, seventh here at Mid-Ohio, 59th career win, just eight behind the legendary AJ Foyt for all-time lead now. Also joined by Mike Hull, the longtime managing director at Chip Ganassi Racing, who celebrates their 143rd victory in INDYCAR.

Scott, two-stopper, no big deal, right?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, as soon as I saw the caution at the start, which we had been talking about, I was like, man, the two-stop is on. We worked pretty hard this morning in the warmup on fuel mileage and making sure we got the car balance kind of where we needed it.

First stint was pretty easy. Second stint we actually got into a bit of trouble on the soft tires with the left front. I don't know if it was that tire, but 10 laps in I could see it starting to come apart, and I knew that we were kind of locked in on the two-stopper so that was going to be pretty difficult, so we pushed and kind of used the average on the black tires and used them a little bit more once we got to the final stop.

The final stop actually they didn't take any of the front wing out, so it was so loose for that last stint. I was just really looking at the corner and the car would turn itself, which, one, is really physical, but two, it's really hard to push extremely hard because you start to lock rears, especially into 4 and into 2 and also into 9 where ultimately that got Alex.

We were hoping that we were going to clear him, but obviously they were super fast today and pushing really hard on the three-stopper. Maybe earlier on in the stint I should have pushed a little bit harder, but just wasn't sure what was going to happen with that left front on the reds.

He made the mistake, so kudos for us and the team, everybody on the No. 9, everybody at HRC to get the mileage we had today. I don't know how many others were on the two-stopper. I don't know whether the next highest wound up, but the -- six, so that was really good. So congrats to Felix, as well.

But yeah, tough day. It was nice to have that flip on Alex after what happened on St. Pete this year. Yeah, good finish, but I can't thank the team enough. Mike and everybody on the crew, the pit stops were fantastic and ultimately the strategy worked out well.

Q. Eight lead changes; that ties the all-time record here at Mid-Ohio. Four-tenths was the difference, which was the closest finish in 10 years.

Mike, your pit stops have been superb all season long and obviously proved it once again here today.

MIKE HULL: I think the guys today were a little disappointed because they had two really good stops, but I think they got beat for the average that they worked for because some people did a three-stop strategy, so they short-filled.

But they work really hard. They're dedicated to the team. They're dedicated to Scott, certainly. On the tire situation, we were lucky that Alex ran reds for the first stint so we knew how long they could go because we really didn't know until then, and Kyffin did the same. I think Kyffin ran 30 laps on reds. Alex ran 27 laps and we were asking Scott to run 31 laps. I think we got to 30 or 31 and that was significant for us.

I would just simply say this one more thing about how teams work on the professional level, especially in motor racing. Most teammates are so carnivorous with each other; they don't really give an inch to their teammate. I think that's what we didn't see today. What we saw were two people at the end of the race that knew what they were doing, and they followed Chip's rules. He has only two rules: Number one, don't hit your teammate because you don't -- or hit him hard enough to where you helicopter out of the place; and number two, remember rule No. 1. That's what we saw today, and it was spectacular to finish first



... when all is said, we're done.®

and second.

Q. Scott, when you see Alex go off there in Turn 9 with a few laps to go, what goes on in your mind at that moment?

SCOTT DIXON: Well, on the approach to 9, I saw the dust and I was like, oh, maybe that's a lap car or something because there's been some times in these sessions where the dust has actually been lingering in the air. You come through 1, there's a load of dust and then you don't even see the car that's in front.

I didn't know if it was him, and then obviously I see it's a black car. He's had multiple colors this year, so it's always hard to figure out, and I saw that he was kind of struggling to get going.

Hate to say it, but pleasantly surprised when I saw that he was rejoining the track.

Q. Leading the race, obviously you had to fuel save, he didn't have to. Was it a situation kind of like Long Beach where as long as you got the run out of the slow corner keyhole he wasn't able to get by you?

SCOTT DIXON: I think he was kind of backing off and relieving the pressure and then kind of having another run, which was definitely interesting. We still had to get a pretty big number. That whole stint was definitely not easy. The pace was pretty good.

The pace actually for us even on that last stint with the amount of front wing we had in the car was tough, but I think we were able to -- I was kind of shocked we were able to hang with him as much as we could and not really let Lundgaard close on us. Yeah, pace was good, but I wasn't sure how hard and how much he was saving when he was leading earlier in the race.

Q. How important is it to keep this Honda streak going at a race that has Honda's name all over it?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, it's pretty sweet. Congrats to everybody at Honda, to everybody at HRC. I know they work extremely hard. It's been a tremendous year for them, and we'll definitely try and keep that streak rolling.

Q. I was thinking back, and I can't think of too many really tight on-track battles with you and Alex as you guys have been teammates specifically for the win. Are there any moments that you think of that come to mind in terms of battles with Alex in races that have been pivotal for you guys?

SCOTT DIXON: Not so much. I think recent maybe St. Pete, but even then we weren't really battling. It was kind of over pit sequence and that kind of stuff.

Not a whole lot of side-by-side stuff, but we've had it, especially on starts and restarts and things like that. But I think Alex does a very good job keeping it clean unless it's maybe the 12 car. I think this weekend they had a bit of a beef going on there.

Yeah, it's been a pleasure to always race him, and yeah, we've never really had any issues.

Q. There's two records that you continue to extend. I think it's 23 seasons total with a win in your career and 21 straight. These both continue to get extended every year. I know you don't like to reflect too much on records, but where do you think of when you hear those numbers? Does it put your career of consistency into perspective a little bit?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, I don't look at it too much, honestly. Each race I go to, I'm there to win. This year has been super frustrating for us, for all of us on the 9 car. Anytime we could have something roll our way, it just hasn't.

We've had a load of mechanicals. It's been extremely frustrating. Indy, I think, was one of the best 500 cars I've had and it was over before it even started.

This is big for team morale and for everybody involved. We know we can win, just hopefully we can get on a roll here.

Q. I know this was a big day for you, all the family being here. These moments that you're able to share with so much of your family, does it add a little bit extra to that to have those moments and opportunities with them?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, for sure. I think it is the first win with Kit actually here, so that's pretty sweet. Thankful that they made the drive over today. They only got back to Indy last night around midnight and then decided to drive over this morning.

The only one that missed out was Poppy; it was her birthday yesterday, 16th. So hopefully that's a pretty good present for her, even though I'm not sure she's not too worried about that. But she'll be arriving tomorrow back to Indy, so looking forward to seeing her.

But that's what it's all about, these memories. You see the photos obviously with Alex and his family that he's been able to celebrate this year, and for us it's definitely very

special.

Q. I know you don't like to talk about the streak, but your streak is one-year-older than your teammate Kyffin Simpson. When you think of that and when you think of how good Kyffin has been lately, if it wasn't for stalling on pit lane, he may have been on the podium too. What does it say about the fact that we're now realizing how good he can be as a driver?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, I think it's big. Mike can probably speak on it a little bit, but the team that we all have around us, whether it's Chris Simmons to all the engineering group to Dario, there's a lot of support there, and everybody digs pretty deep. Obviously he can lean on myself and Alex quite a bit as well, and since the day I joined this team it's been an open book. Everybody works extremely well together. Everybody is here to win.

He wouldn't be here if Chip didn't think that was possible. He did a fantastic job yesterday in qualifying. We've seen those scenarios throughout the year.

Yeah, I was hoping that it was going to be a one-two-three. That's how we left the meeting this morning was that we were going for a one-two-three, and unfortunately had a bit of a situation there, but hell of a job for Kyffin and everybody on the No. 8.

MIKE HULL: I would simply say, first of all, thanks to Melinda because she organized a barbecue on Friday night at the bus, the coach area, and the last time we did that was Pocono and we finished one-two-three, there's something in that. I don't know what we're going to do for the next race.

Kyffin is 20 years old, I think maybe. 20? He drives like somebody who's much older already and he's a sponge and he has great teammates. The resource that Chip Ganassi Racing has is teammates. It isn't the sponsors -- the sponsors are important and they're a resource. I don't want to say they aren't. But it's how the people work together, and the drivers work together as a team of people, in this case a team of three.

Kyffin came through an educational process prior to INDYCAR racing that taught him how to race cars. He didn't do the normal ladder system program. He was part of it but he didn't do just that. So it's almost an old-school approach to how you race. I directed that.

He won the ELMS championship when he was 18 years old. If you think about that and what he learned how to do in the last year when he won that championship, he did 58 pit stops before he came to an INDYCAR race.

He's learned how to race, and now it's paying dividends. He'll be up here for many years to come.

Q. Scott, for a kid from New Zealand who learned how to race in Japan, did you ever think that this small little road course surrounded by Amish cornfields would be your best track?

SCOTT DIXON: Well, I don't know. I'd say Watkins Glen is maybe my best track for the time we've been there.

But no, Mid-Ohio is a lot of fun. It's definitely a very difficult circuit. Kudos, I think, to INDYCAR to extend -- I think a lot of the best INDYCAR races is when you can have a flat-out three-stopper and a two-stopper that converge at the end, and that always creates a lot of suspense and a lot of craziness.

It's not probably the easiest place to pass, and unfortunately what they did safety-wise for Turn 4 has probably made that a little bit tougher, but it's been -- I can't say just for myself. I don't know how many times the team has won here. It's like 13 or 14 times. I think if you go back to Zanardi, Vasser, Dario, Charlie Kimball, it's a ton. It's a combo that has worked well for a lot of us drivers that are lucky enough to be at Ganassi.

Q. Talk about when Palou came out in front of you, were you thinking, oh, boy, here we go again, and when he did get around you, any flashbacks to Road America a few weeks ago?

SCOTT DIXON: Not really. Road America was a bummer. It's frustrating when you come up short like that. We definitely had the speed there and the pace.

Again, we should have qualified a lot further up. I got myself into a situation, but the car was definitely fast enough to be up in front to start the race and then to do what we were going to do. There would have been a slight scenario change there, I think we would have been looking pretty golden.

But as far as the pass on track, the momentum -- I think the same situation maybe with Siegel earlier in the race. There was a lot of people making mistakes on the approach to 9 and getting crossed up and going off.

When I saw him and saw the difference of speed, he was a sitting duck.

Q. Mike, you and I talked yesterday about a yellow coming out three of the last four races on lap 1, and you said it's 80 percent driver, 20 percent strategists.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

Talk me through when that first yellow came out and then the decision to pit when Christian Rasmussen was off the course.

MIKE HULL: That yellow was really good for us because it lasted a long time. If it had been like one or two laps, our strategy probably would not have worked, so it was great.

I just feel Mid-Ohio, having been here a lot, that this racetrack has always been a driver's racetrack. The engineers can work on the car, they can tune on the car, but they can't change the car enough for a really good driver to be fast.

The driver has to be able to drive the car. The driver has to be able to change their line going into each of the corners to make the exit faster than everybody else. You cannot engineer the car to do that here. It's the only racetrack we race on that's like that. This is a pure driver's track. That's what this person is sitting to my left. He's a pure race driver. He's an old-school driver that races a modern race car. That's what it takes here.

That's why if you look at the people that have won this race, for the most part, all of them have been exactly that, and that could go back to the very first time they ever raced here.

I think that you have to take that into account, and then in terms of the strategy, we don't just have one strategy. It might look like we do, but we don't. It certainly depends on what happens in the first 20 percent of the race what we're going to do next.

Today it just worked out for us. I think last year historically here the cars that did two stops finished fourth, fifth, sixth, so I think what we did here today compared to what people have done in the past is probably pretty extraordinary.

Q. You mentioned the barbecue. Especially with the 9 team but Ganassi as a whole, it's obviously like a family. How important is chemistry and that family feel inside the 9 pit box?

MIKE HULL: I think what's important about it is how unselfish it is. If you can create unselfishness on any sports team, any business for that matter, you can accomplish more than anybody else can. What happens is in the worst of times, the best comes out. In the best of times, you work harder, but in the worst of times is when it comes out the most, when you have teammates, in our case across three teams, that operate as one.

We just had to make sure -- Melinda and I just had to make sure that we had enough food, and the rest takes care of

itself.

Q. Mike, you just mentioned it, one team. That's a motto that's used at Chip Ganassi Racing a lot. Scott mentioned it, this is a pretty exceptional year for Chip Ganassi Racing. I know there's been some struggles on the 9 car, but Scott mentioned Vasser, Zanardi, Dario. Where does this team rank as the one team Chip Ganassi Racing?

MIKE HULL: Well, each of those teams had their own personality, even though it's one team. I've worked on Scott's car for 20 plus years, so on race day I'm all about Scott. If he doesn't win, I'm really upset. But when the team wins, I'm not upset.

But I think to answer your question, I think winning is the byproduct of teamwork that is -- which is totally unselfish. That goes back to Chip when I first went to work for Chip, which is 33 years ago.

He is all about making sure that everybody shares equally in the good and the bad and understands how to improve every day no matter what happens and understands priority more than what people realize. He works hard to build blocks one at a time. He's not that ferocious guy that some people think that he is; he's exactly the opposite. Frankly, when I went to work for him, he was so volcanic, and I just did my job.

But it's worked out so well here for all of us, including Scott that's been with us for a long time as a race driver. How often do you see that in motor racing? You don't see that; even in NASCAR teams where they stick together, you don't see that. This is a great situation, and it's a reflection of who Chip is.

Q. For Scott, I know you don't really look at the overall rankings, but you are closing in on AJ Foyt. Is that an attainable goal?

SCOTT DIXON: Well, if you have a season like Alex is having, sure, we would be almost there. Yeah, I don't know. We'll keep knocking on the door. Yeah, some years are tougher than others, and some years things kind of just roll your way and you keep -- wins just come a little easier.

We'll see, man. We'll see where it ends up, and obviously stats, like I've said many a times, are something that you can look at, and when you're done with the sport, hopefully you're happy with them.

Q. Scott, in the if not for that mistake, do you think you would have had anything to catch Alex Palou in the closing laps?

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

SCOTT DIXON: It would have been tough. He had better tires, more fuel. It was going to be a tough situation. That's where I was kind of shocked that he didn't pull away like I thought he would have. I thought he would have been probably a second a lap quicker just because of the scenario that we were in with the heavy save, and I don't know, what did he pit, maybe 10 laps to go or eight laps to go. We had to run 30 laps on a set of tires.

He was definitely in a pretty good situation, and unfortunately for him, it didn't work out the way that he wanted.

Q. What does it mean to be the first driver other than Alex Palou or Kyle Kirkwood to win a race this year?

SCOTT DIXON: It's kind of weird. Good, really good. Very good for Honda. That's a sweep so far for them this year and something that we'll definitely try to keep that tradition going through the end of the season.

But yeah, quite strange, I think, when you're over halfway through the NTT INDYCAR Series championship and only three drivers have won. I feel very lucky to be one of the three.

Q. Scott, you obviously have won a race 21 straight seasons. When you got into this, did you ever imagine that you'd have a streak like that?

SCOTT DIXON: No, definitely not. I had big dreams to be racing, but to be in this scenario, to be with this team, to get to work with the people I get to work with on a daily basis is unbelievable, and I don't know what this is, 24 years or 23 years with the same team, is pretty sweet.

No, I pinch myself every day. It's very, very sweet.

Q. Mike told us earlier about what it's like to go through this season where Alex has won so many races and Chip Ganassi Racing as a whole has been successful, but it's not always been you guys on the 9 car. I know as you went through those seasons with Dario and you won a handful of championships and 500s, you've seen lots of teammates have success alongside you. What has this season been like for you in that sense?

SCOTT DIXON: You know, you can't really change that situation, so for me, I think it's great. I spend a lot more time with these people than my family. They are family. So to see everybody happy is fantastic. It's not always going to be your day. It's not always going to be your year. I've seen plenty of those where it just doesn't work out.

Yeah, we've been frustrated. It's been tough. But ultimately I think to see the whole as a whole to have is huge. Happy for everybody. We've just got to do a better job, we've got to work harder, and hopefully we can keep working on that door and it opens like it did today.

As I keep saying, all you can say about what Alex and the 10 car group have done is just tremendous, man. Congratulations.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

