

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, August 31, 2025

Scott McLaughlin

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Third-place finishing driver today, Scott McLaughlin.

One of those races you look back and watch, a lot of action.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Your thoughts on finishing 2025 with a podium?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I had an absolute blast, man. That was so much fun. Restarts were intense. Yeah, it did string out a little bit, as it always does, mid to late stint. I think the exchanges and the restarts were phenomenal.

Yeah, obviously bittersweet for me. Third is great. I'm glad I sort of held on to that at the end. I felt like I could have held off Josef there. He was controlling his lane. I just turned a little late, got caught. Nearly saved it. Once you're sort of out there, it's hard to get it back.

Thankful I was able to straighten the wheel just before I hit the fence. The car was straight. I was able to push on, yeah.

Very good end to our season. Great team win. But I'm pissed off at myself.

THE MODERATOR: For? Could have been more?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I feel like it's just been one of those years, haven't quite put everything together. Had plenty of speed. Very lucky to get a podium today.

I have to give massive props to Kyffin Simpson. Probably the best oval race I've had. Felt like 2006 or something. Pinned around the outside, gave me some room. If he came up, I was in the fence hard. Big props to Kyff. Really, really happy to race him.

I thought the racing out there was really fair. I don't know what happened to Malukas and Foster. Yeah, I thought it

was a really good, proper goddamn INDYCAR oval race. Yeah, anyway, let's get this going. I want to go to Broadway (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: Open it up for questions for Scott McLaughlin.

Q. In the long off-season is there a possibility we see you somewhere else, maybe in Europe?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I'm racing at Suzuka in a couple weeks in a Corvette. Working on a couple other things right now. Won't be at Petit. It's my daughter's birthday, first birthday. I'll actually be in Australia at the time spending a little bit of time there. Not racing anything, just going to hang by the beach, have a bit of fun.

I don't know. Couple little forks in the iron, in the pot.

THE MODERATOR: Stokes. Iron in the fire.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Iron in the fire. There we go. Yeah, that's where we're at.

Q. Would you mind taking us through those final laps with you're battles with Kyffin Simpson. What did you think when he overtook you in the closing laps?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I made sure as soon as he got in front of me, I kept that lane open as much as I could. I didn't care if I was the only one up there. I used it until I couldn't. Kept there, kept there.

I got a really good run off one, sort of psyched him to go to defend me. I wasn't going to pass him on the inside into three. I wanted him to go so it cramped his entry. Then I was able to get a really good run through three, four. Basically just held it flat. It was one of those ones where if I'm in the fence, worst case probably sixth.

Like I said, that kid raced me with a lot of respect. He's getting better and better every week. I really did enjoy racing him. Like I said, probably my best battle ever on an oval.

Q. We need some more of these bigger ovals on the

... when all is said, we're done.®



schedule. They're a lot of fun. This season for Team Penske as a whole, up and down. Talk about St. Pete to today, the roller coaster of a season you've had with the team. What does it mean to finish on the podium and take that momentum into the off-season?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, I think we've had really good speed all year, as we've always said. Not quite Palou. He's been standout. That's on top of everyone. Massive props to him. Everyone needs to be better.

Certainly a different team, different look, different look inside. It's got a great future. I see light at the end of the tunnel. Very excited for what's ahead.

I think Roger is pumped and ready to go. Wants not only INDYCAR to be amazing, but our team, too. He's pushing us. Yeah, it's exciting.

Yeah, I'm glad to finish out the way it is. It's nice to have a beautiful, long off-season. At the same time I kind of wish we had six or seven races left. It's not realistic.

These big ovals are great. We need people to come to them. At the end of the day it's on everyone to work yourselves, everyone be positive, get people coming to our races.

Very excited for the future of INDYCAR. I can't wait to be a part of it. Hopefully we can, yeah, as a team grow and grow.

Q. What does this do for your confidence going into the off-season, having had a strong end to the season?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, I don't think I lost a heap of confidence throughout the year. It's just nice to have a couple good results. Like I said, it's bittersweet to end right now, knowing we were coming into our own a little bit, having strong results.

It's kind of nice to have this off-season now. I felt like we just got our feet on the ground with people. Now we can really work this off-season to be better, work together, smoothen things out.

We know exactly where we need to be better. We have the people, the personnel, to improve. I'm very excited for that.

But yeah, it's a long off-season. Is it a needed off-season? I think so. It's going to be really nice for us. Yeah, I'm sad as a race car driver I'm not racing my car next week.

Q. It's been a tough season across the board for everybody at Team Penske. A little bit of cause to celebrate when Will won a couple weeks ago. Roger finally I don't want to say looked ecstatic, but he looked relieved when he left Victory Lane. How important was it to finally see the guy that runs everything to get a break?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, I mean, I'm glad Josef won because I would have got a kick up the ass. Fantastic. I'm very happy for Roger. He's been through a lot obviously. But he's a great leader, someone that I respect immensely. Yeah, very happy for him to just get some results.

As we know, we are strong on ovals. We needed to be better at other places. Important we had a win here. Important that we won on an oval. Yeah, it's just nice to give him some results and give him something to be happy with.

Q. When you had the moment out of turn two, how quickly did you go from being upset that you nearly lost it to the fact that you realized you're not in that bad of shape?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, I dropped the right rear. I tried to save it. Went up the track a little bit. Then I knew I was definitely gone. I tried to sort of pedal it a little bit and straighten the wheel when I hit the fence. Thankfully that saved it. I was pleased.

Entry of three, this thing is kind of still straight. For me it was just about cleaning the tires off. Benny, my engineer/strategist, was super good on the radio, kept me calm, which is sometimes hard to do.

Yeah, the restart, I think Conor Daly, he had alternates on, a mushy feeling tire. Softer, but felt a little bit loose on the restart. That's why I lost out to Palou there.

Yeah, I'm sad I probably didn't get to keep second because I think I had something there for Josef. Would have been fun.

Hey, we're good. Keep pushing.

Q. Penske started off the season and especially at the Indy 500 as a team where almost nothing went your way. How does this result revitalize the team going into 2026?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Like I said, it's bittersweet to end right now because we're on a bit of a momentum. Gives us a chance to reset, recuperate, smoothen things out within the team.



We're in a great spot right now. Really genuinely see a lot of light at the end of the tunnel. Everyone is getting better. We've got to get better ourselves. But I'm really trusting and confident that the (indiscernible) gets better, get better for next year, start the season right in 2026. 2026? Jesus.

Q. You mentioned your battle with Kyffin. You were teammates in IMSA. You hear a lot of drivers talk about the best oval racing happens when you trust the driver that is alongside of you. Talk about your relationship.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Outside of the LMP2 thing, I haven't raced Kyffin a ton, at least on an oval. I put a lot of trust in what Kyffin was doing. I raced him how I would race Alex Palou or Josef or anyone like that. He raced me like them. That's a huge credit to him and his development. I know he's put a lot of work in to be better, be stronger.

Obviously he's in a Ganassi car, which is strong. We all know that. Still got to pedal the thing. He ran a really good race.

Yeah, man, I couldn't believe how long we were side by side for, especially in P3, P4. I thought it would have run out, he would have washed it up. Honestly thought I was in the fence probably four or five laps to go. I thought he was going to wash up. I was sort of prepared for it.

Yeah, like stellar job by him. I'm no oval veteran. Like, I got a little bit more experience. It was nice to race a dude that genuinely respected the outside lane. Honestly, man, it felt like I was Helio and Sam Hornish. It was sick. It was really cool.

I was trying to give the fans something. When I went across the line, I could see everybody - probably cheering Josef - but thought they were cheering me (laughter).

We had a good time. Good kid.

THE MODERATOR: Great way to finish up 2025. Congratulations.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Cheers.

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