

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

Friday, February 27, 2026

**Dario Franchitti**

**Scott Dixon**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Recently it was announced that Dario Franchitti, the four-time INDYCAR SERIES champion, three-time Indy 500 winner was coming out of retirement. This weekend he'll drive in the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series race coming up tomorrow afternoon.

Our other guest today will be watching with interest, the six-time NTT INDYCAR SERIES champion and 29-time race winner in Scott Dixon.

Dario, welcome back to a race weekend for you. Your thoughts in general?

DARIO FRANCHITTI: Felt a bit different coming to the track this morning from my job at Ganassi when all I have to do is tell these guys what they're doing wrong. Now I have to do it right myself.

It's exciting. It's a very different feeling. It's nice to experience it again. It's nice to sort of be sitting there last night checking out all the data, looking at everything, preparing for the day. Getting here this morning, all that stuff, I was a bit late with the traffic.

Yeah, it will be very interesting to see how today goes. I have no real expectations. I think there's a fair chance of rain, which could throw a bit of a spanner in the works. But we'll see.

THE MODERATOR: Scott, your thoughts on your pal hopping back in a race car or race truck?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, it's super exciting. I think when I heard that he was coming out of retirement, I was like, Shit, I hope he's not coming back to INDYCAR (laughter). Dario is a bad-ass.

I think with his records and obviously what he's done in the past, everybody in the INDYCAR paddock was glad it was truck racing.

I'm looking forward to watching him. I applied for the spotter position. Been declined.

THE MODERATOR: You declined Scott to be your spotter?

DARIO FRANCHITTI: We already have a questionable crew chief with Jimmie. There are going to be plenty of opinions. I'm sure Scott is going to end up on the timing stand, as well. Poor Jeremy is not going to hit him. Then he really gets excited if Chip shows up.

As I say, I'm sure there will be a few people pointing out my errors. But that's what you get for, what is it, 13 years of telling people what they're doing wrong.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.

**Q. Dario, Jimmie is really truly going to be crew chiefing? How did that work into being?**

DARIO FRANCHITTI: Jimmie is more excited about this than anybody. He is the person I think that's put it all together, him and the team at Legacy. Being the boss there, he's got people (smiling).

He's worked hard at putting this whole thing together from the very first conversation. Jeremy, the crew chief. Jimmie is going to be there giving me advice. Even two nights ago he's on the phone 11:00 at night and 7:00 the next morning talking about restarts. He's fully into it (smiling).

When you have a seven-time NASCAR champion with you there getting that information, I wish he'd been there in 2008 doing that job. It would have helped.

There's no substitute for experience. He might be thinking at some point he wished he got in the truck and drove it here instead of me, depending on how I get on.

He's going to drive the truck in San Diego, as well. Yeah, he'll have the headset on. I'll be very thankful for his input during the race.

**Q. You do have experience and have won on this**



**course, which most of the other truck drivers cannot say. Is there any real advantage to that? What can you say you do bring?**

DARIO FRANCHITTI: I think track experience, yeah, is one thing. I understand the surfaces and the details of the circuit. It's going to feel a lot different in the truck certainly than it did in the INDYCAR.

It was so long ago. My last INDYCAR start here was 2013. There will be a lot of people out there, a lot of drivers out there learning. We included. If the rain does come, that's going to throw a bit of a curve ball in there.

**Q. Dario, how much did this prove with a race driver, the fire and intensity never go away?**

DARIO FRANCHITTI: Yeah, I was talking with Dale Jr. about it the other way. Scott and I talk about it all the time. The amount of times Scott gets asked the question, When are you going to retire? You have a guy that's still winning races. He's as good as anybody, an elite level in INDYCAR still. One day he will retire and he'll want to come and play old cars with me again.

You know, we don't have a seniors tour. We don't have that kind of thing. We don't have that outlet going and play. This is a chance to do that.

When I retired, I was quite happy being retired for a good amount of time. I was driving cars and demonstrations and stuff like that. Thought I'd like to see what it felt like again to do it. That's just sort of escalated from there, I'd say.

I've been fortunate over the last seven years I guess to drive some really exceptional cars at some fun circuits. This is just the next extension of that.

This is not a comeback. This is just getting to experience something fun, being fortunate enough to have great friends that help me to do that.

**Q. How difficult were the early years of retirement? You made it clear when you retired, you were basically told to retire?**

DARIO FRANCHITTI: I was quite happy. To start with, I was quite happy. I love coming to the circuit and helping the Ganassi guys try to find that extra edge.

But as time went on, you just want to... I wanted to experience that again. I love driving racing cars, racing vehicles. That was something I sort of discovered a little while after my retirement.

When we were racing together, when I was racing in INDYCAR, the intensity of the whole thing, it's a different kind of enjoyment than the stuff I get to do now.

**Q. Do you have any interest in doing something like this, Scott, when you retire? Does looking across to your old boy here, is it depressing? Invigorating?**

SCOTT DIXON: I think with Dario, it's super exciting to see someone - how old are you now?

DARIO FRANCHITTI: 52.

SCOTT DIXON: 52. 18- and 19-year-olds in the field.

DARIO FRANCHITTI: There's probably kids in there. If you do the maths, there's probably kids in there that are young enough to be my grandchildren.

SCOTT DIXON: On my side, yeah, I think at some point try something. I don't think I would have in the cards seen that Dario would be racing a truck in 2026. I think it just shows you that anything's possible.

Yeah, it's the fun side of it. I'm sure it's going to still be extremely competitive for Dario. Dario is only here to try and win, as well.

I'm just excited to see the process. Hopefully you can prove that it's still possible and open the gates for many others (smiling).

DARIO FRANCHITTI: That's a good point Scott makes. We joke around and everything. But I want to do a good job, I want to be competitive. I don't have an expectation of the result. I want to be up there. I was to be up front.

We've talked a lot. We raced at Goodwood together a couple times now. We spend more time laughing than focusing on the job. Jimmie has been involved. T.K. came across last year. Also the MX-5 races. How many times have we sat and watched the MX-5 races and thought that would be fun.

I'm quite happy to do it here. Certain people at the table think Daytona looks a bit better (smiling).

**Q. Dario, you retired not of your own choice. They said you couldn't drive anymore. Here you are, you're going to race. What is your health situation? What are you allowed to do and not allowed to do?**

DARIO FRANCHITTI: I've been racing since 2019. That was a conversation with the doctors back then, insurance companies, those type of things, to have that discussion

with them, what they felt.

Yeah, time's a great healer on that. That's the best way to put it. Everything's looking really good, right? I do regular scans and all that. Things are looking a lot better than they did even six, seven years ago.

Otherwise I wouldn't do it, it's as simple as that.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

DARIO FRANCHITTI: Chip has gone through a bit of an arc with this. Chip obviously was there when the accident happened. He was instrumental in the whole thing. At first he wasn't very happy about it.

Why would you do that?

Because it's going to be fun.

When I got to test the truck, he was on the phone finding out what was going on (smiling). He's a little - what's the word - careful. That's just fine. I think he'll be cheering me on come tomorrow night.

**Q. Dario, what are the nerves going into today, now that today is the day? Do you feel a little bit like a duck on the pond?**

DARIO FRANCHITTI: Like a what (laughter)?

**Q. Like a duck on the pond. Everything is calm on the surface, but beneath the surface, butterflies.**

DARIO FRANCHITTI: Not yet. I feel quite calm right now. I'm sure just before I get in the truck before practice and qualifying, I'm sure the nerves will go up a bit.

I've always felt that part of my job is to control those emotions. Especially somewhere like Indy, when you used to have those nerves, how do you calm this all down. I think we all go through, don't we?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah.

DARIO FRANCHITTI: We all have that. I'll just do what I would normally do: chill out, try and focus, then ultimately try and do a good job.

**Q. How are you navigating the responsibilities with Chip and the team, obviously the truck deal?**

DARIO FRANCHITTI: Well, luckily Chip is very understanding, as are these guys. This weekend I'm not really doing my Ganassi duties. If I see anything glaring,

when I get the time, I'll obviously comment. Went and had chats with Kyffin yesterday, that kind of stuff.

I'm going to be focusing on the truck because one of those is enough. I'd rather do one well than attempt to do two and make a bad job of it.

THE MODERATOR: Scott, your general thoughts. Year number 26 for you in the NTT INDYCAR SERIES. Looking ahead to this weekend? On the verge of another championship for you, how much are you looking forward to this weekend?

SCOTT DIXON: Definitely excited. I think preparation and off-season stuff went really well. The two test, I think we accomplished what we needed to, which was really good.

Ultimately you don't really know until you hit the first practice, especially here in St. Pete. You get a real good understanding the first five races in.

I'm actually super excited for this month. I have five races in the month of March. Definitely excited with the addition of Sebring.

No, head down. Definitely be chasing a seventh championship. The competition obviously is going to be extremely tough. I'm looking forward to it.

THE MODERATOR: Appreciate both you guys being up here.

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