

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Scott McLaughlin

Conor Daly

Kyffin Simpson

Press Conference



was going. That's what I worry about first.

I love Carb Day. It's awesome. We have some Wienermobiles to check out too, see how fast they can go.

THE MODERATOR: You're on Slaw Dog?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I'm not on that.

THE MODERATOR: You've got your bet on Slaw Dog?

CONOR DALY: He doesn't have a big enough insurance policy.

THE MODERATOR: Kyffin, how is your car?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Feeling good. Feeling excited. Just looking forward to getting back in the car, getting some running in. Hopefully the rain stays away. Yeah, hopefully get some running in before Sunday.

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

Q. Conor and Scott, how important is tomorrow in the grand scheme of things? Obviously you don't want to damage that car, but there's still things you can sort.

CONOR DALY: Yeah, I mean, it's a very important day for the crew, too, to add another round of practice pit stops, get everyone loose, warm. Once again, probably a different condition level than last time.

There is always more research to be done at this track. There's always more that I feel like you can get a feel for. Our session got cut short on Monday, too, with the rain.

I think it feels like you spend an eternity in qualifying trim, then you're thrown back into race trim, completely different feel. It's a nice day to get loose again, get things going. Maybe that is the day where you find the race-winning change, that was what we needed.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, I think for me, we blew an engine up early in the month. I lost Monday, half of Monday's practice. I've always sort of felt like I had a pretty

THE MODERATOR: Continuing on with row 3. Starting ninth, the 2024 pole winner for the 500, Scott McLaughlin. Starting eighth, he's led 82 laps in the Indy 500, 13th start, Conor Daly. You're digging the white sofa.

CONOR DALY: I like this a lot. I just asked Scott McLaughlin which F1 driver he is.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: You donated this to the cause.

THE MODERATOR: Starting seventh, third Indy 500, Kyffin Simpson.

Boys, is the talking done yet? Can we look ahead to tomorrow?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I don't think we've even talked. This row hasn't talked yet.

THE MODERATOR: Do you know each other?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: We know each other really well. We won Sebring together.

CONOR DALY: Our dogs met each other. They're friends.

THE MODERATOR: What do you look forward to the most tomorrow?

CONOR DALY: I mean, Switchfoot. I can't wait for Switchfoot. Honestly, that's going to be sick.

For us personally, on a real and professional note, just hope that our car is good after we caught some debris on Monday. Kind of ripped up our floor and front wing. We have to make sure that the car is going as fast as the car

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good car, but just behind the eight ball in terms of just ticking off some things.

Ideally we run tomorrow just to finish off that list. I think if we run tomorrow, we'll get through all that. Like Conor said, it's ideal for the crew, for us to get some marks, pit boxes, big exchanges, which is really important to winning this race or at least being competitive.

Yeah, sort of that last Carb Day it's a bit of risk versus reward. Do you want to be faster? Doesn't matter. You want to have a good feeling for what everything is and be safe at the same time knowing that you've got to take this chariot into the most important race of the year.

Q. First time in the race box that you'll be in for race day.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: We purposefully chose our pit box for that reason, big open out. We could have been a little bit further forward, but I wanted an open out in case of pace car periods, whatnot.

Yeah, it's nice to lay some rubber down in the box, get a feel for what your first gear feels like, as well. I wouldn't have thought about that maybe five years ago. Now I'm probably thinking a bit ahead for the race. That's the good part about Indy, you build on it every year.

Q. Conor, how much do you get impacted by hometown support?

CONOR DALY: I'm just thankful people care, honestly. That's cool. I'm very lucky to get to do this, to hopefully give them something to cheer for.

I feel like over the last few years, we've been able to at least one-up something, whether that's lead lap, this year is my best qualifying. We're hopefully giving them something to be excited about. We've got a great race car.

It does mean a lot. It means the world to have people that actually care to see you put your whole life into this game that we're playing.

Q. Conor, you're the only Indiana-born driver in the field, living in downtown Indianapolis. How important is all of the extracurriculars to the month of May for you?

CONOR DALY: I mean, I love getting out there and doing all the things. It definitely is a lot. This month goes by so fast I feel like, especially because I probably overload my schedule. I don't mind doing it because it is the best month of the year. It's very meaningful to go out and interact with

the folks that do support this sport, but also myself.

Yeah, I love it. I'll get out there and do as much as I can to a certain point. Yeah, it means a lot to be able to interact with people that support me.

Q. After what happened on Monday, have you had a chance to look at the new pieces? What have they told you about it?

CONOR DALY: Yeah, I mean, if you look at the floor, it looked like I ran over a hatchet and it was going down the right side of the underwing.

They did a great job, though. Thankfully it looks as though it's brand-new again, which is great. I guess I'll find out tomorrow if it feels the same.

Q. Scott, after what happened last year, were there any added extra points of emphasis of trying to get back?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Not really. I mean, I've been saying sort of all week, I feel like last year sucked and stunk, but it's part of my journey. I feel like I've gotten years of experience in one. It was a tough thing. I never wish that upon my worst enemy, as I've said. It's something that I've grown from, for sure. It put a lot of perspective in my life.

Yeah, no doubt I've come back stronger for it. I don't think I'm driving any differently this year just because of it. I'm just looking forward to getting back into the race, create a new storyline, getting on with it. I'd love to go zero to hero, of course, but at the same time driving with emotion like that, it's probably a detriment. I just got to go out there, execute, see what I've got.

CONOR DALY: Join me on lap one.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: When I saw Conor was starting next to me, I was like, Shit, not again. The guy peed his pants last year. You got diapers on this year?

CONOR DALY: Yeah, for sure (laughter).

Q. If y'all are coming to the white flag in the lead, who is the one guy or lady you don't want behind you?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I don't care.

KYFFIN SIMPSON: I don't think it really matters, to be honest. Doesn't really matter. Whoever.

CONOR DALY: I just hope I'm in traffic like Alex was last

year so no one can pass me.

Q. Just a curiosity of who you trust, who you're racing against in that moment.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Personally, I don't think you can trust anyone at that point for the biggest race of the year. Everyone is prepared to do what they need to do to win the race.

CONOR DALY: Yeah, I mean, as much as I like Scott, probably respect goes out the window and you're just going at each other as hard as possible. Respectfully attacking you with everything I've got.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Exactly.

Q. Conor, last year Ryan was in the car you're in. With this one-off entry, a missed timing on the fueling ended up his day. What is the communication like to make sure you got everything you got?

CONOR DALY: I think the team learned a lot from that. They've been doing research for months on how to get everything nailed when it comes to refueling, the stops, strategy, everything.

We're not worried about it. We're just going to move forward one stop at a time. This race is almost an endurance race. You have to be patient. You can't make a mistake, but stay in the fight, stay towards the sharp end. We're going to try to be there for the last 30 laps.

Q. It is the Indianapolis 500, it's Christmas in May, but what part of the day are you most excited about? The nerves of getting ready for the day? The green flag? How do you beat Alex Palou?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: I'll start with the first part.

Favorite part of the day is probably the checkered flag. Hopefully you're seeing it first. Once the race is over, that's a big stress relief. That's always nice.

How you beat Alex? Man, it's annoying sometimes, honestly. You look at his data, seeing it from up close, it's frustrating sometimes.

It's nice to learn from.

CONOR DALY: For me, I like the Snake Pit. That's one of my favorite parts. A lot of energy over there. A lot of smiling faces and excitement.

THE MODERATOR: You going again?

CONOR DALY: That is my religious experience before the race. Going to go there no matter what, rain or shine (smiling).

How do you beat Alex? Honestly, it's been on display. That team has executed perfectly every time given the chance to do that. You can't make mistakes up against them. I've been a spectator all year so I've just got to watch it. You guys have to fight against him all the time.

They're very good. But they're not impossible to beat. You just have to execute at the highest level and do the best job possible because you know they will. To be the best, you got to beat the best.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I think for me the start line, honestly, part of the reason why I wanted to become a U.S. citizen is this race, because of how amazing the pageantry and how we celebrate our troops. When they play "Taps," it's hard not to get emotional, to be honest. 400,000 people at this race, not one person is making a sound. I fell in love with this race even more even before I was a driver.

On the topic of Alex, like I agree with Conor in some ways. At the end of the day, he's not impossible to beat. He's solid. The team is at the peak of their power. They've got pace, strategy, they've got confidence.

I've been in that point in my career at different times back in Supercars, whatever it was. You've always got someone chasing you. The hardest part is being able to stay there. He's been able to do that for a very long time, which is kudos to him.

We've been working hard to be better. And I definitely feel like if you're one-on-one with him, I'll back myself to the tilt. That's how you've got to think, how you've got to believe. He's done a very good job. No mistakes. Put some pressure on them, see what we can do.

Q. Conor, you've driven for a lot of different times. You don't have loads of continuity at this race. As a driver, is it preferable to have the continuity, or is it beneficial bringing in different philosophies?

CONOR DALY: I mean, I think I've got used to not being in the most ideal position in my career. Yeah, would be awesome to have continuity. I don't even know what that word means.

This team, thankfully, I know the people, they do know me, although there's been a year in between. That has helped us from where we started. It continues to help us because

I have the same engineer.

Yeah, I think all of it has been helpful for our effort this month. I think it's shown clearly.

Q. Is there more pressure or expectation given it could lead to other opportunities?

CONOR DALY: Go big or go home. Yeah, this is the only thing I've got. I'm going to leave it all out there, honestly. Yeah, that's the only chance I have.

Q. Obviously racing can be quite a physical sport. Sometimes drivers have to get in the car when they're still injured, like possibly in Rossi's case this weekend. Can you talk about the mindset of getting into the car and having a race when you're not feeling physically 100%.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: To be honest, outside of like an illness -- touch wood -- I've been in the clear. Regardless, it's something you never want to do. At the same time I think we want to do it as much as we can. As long as we get cleared, we'll race in whatever state we're in.

Yeah, Rossi, I really want him to race. He's a past winner and someone that's super good around here. You hate to see what happened to him on Monday. Same with Pato and everyone. Just glad everyone's okay.

Yeah, you would get in the car no matter what, if you got cleared.

CONOR DALY: Yeah, I mean, we saw Josef get bolted back together and jumped in the car like a week later a couple years ago. Rinus had the same thing when he got injured. He missed very minimal time.

We're a bunch of psychos, honestly. If you have this job, you're very lucky to have this job, so you don't want to let that go away at all.

Like I said with Alex, you have to rip his limbs off to have him not in that car. Same for me. I have to be in the worst possible form ever to not be in a race car. If you have that chance, you never want to let that go.

KYFFIN SIMPSON: Yeah, I've never had a real major injury that has kind of hindered me from driving at all. Praise the Lord. Hopefully that doesn't happen.

As long as you're physically able to drive, I think any of us would be in the car.

Q. Conor, things come up good for you on Sunday,

what is the first thing you buy from the card shop?

CONOR DALY: Taking things one day at a time. We'll think about that when we get there. One lap, one pit stop, one day at a time.

The card shop? He thinks I'm going to buy a lot of Pokemon cards, which I am obviously.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: If you won the 500, what would you buy?

KYFFIN SIMPSON: I don't even know, honestly. Not a clue.

CONOR DALY: I would buy a lot of Pokemon cards. Chevy. No, you get a free Chevy. Never mind.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I don't know. Not going to say it.

THE MODERATOR: Good luck on Sunday.

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