

# NTT INDYCAR SERIES

## News Conference

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

### Scott McLaughlin

### David Malukas

Press Conference



that feels being so close to something so massive. He's going to be feeling it. He's going to go through it himself and have his family around him, but I'll talk to him when I see him.

**Q. What did you see? Felix kind of came out of nowhere. Were you able to see --**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I honestly was looking left to see Pato and see if I got him on the line. It's quite a bit of money from fifth to third so I was trying to get third. I honestly thought I saw Dave going into 3 -- I saw Dave go into 3 and I thought he had it. I'm sorry to say that right now. But Felix was riding the top and I couldn't -- I wasn't really focused on the battle. I was focused on mine. I saw it after the race. It's crazy.

THE MODERATOR: David Malukas joins us, back-to-back runner-up finishes in the 500 for David, best finish of this season, second top 3 of the season. Some consolation, you're now up to second in the points standings. Just your thoughts on -- I know. 233 10,000ths of a second, which is the closest finish in Indy 500 history. So you're a part of that. What are your emotions right now?

DAVID MALUKAS: Yeah, just disappointment. I just don't know what else we could have done. We were driving 150 percent that whole race. The guys did a fantastic job getting the car where it needed to be. We had the fastest car out there that whole race. It was ours to win, and I knew that.

I've never pushed that hard in my whole life. Just to finish, like -- I can't believe it. This whole season, even before, just keep getting a lot of seconds, but we just can't get -- now it's like -- I don't know how much closer you can get to getting it. So yeah. Now we're even P2 in the championship. It's great, so many seconds.

But on a high note, this team, everybody from Verizon and the whole crew and even outside the 12 crew, but the 2 car, the 3 car, everybody -- I've been through many different teams, although I'm still young, 2024, from the wrist injury, been to so many different teams, and nobody is like Team Penske. Everybody here is just so closely

THE MODERATOR: We'll begin our post-race news conference after the running of the Indianapolis 500 Presented by Gainbridge. We're joined by Scott McLaughlin, driver of the No. 3 Pennzoil Team Penske Chevrolet, with a career-best finish here in his sixth Indianapolis 500, second top 3 of the season, 24th career podium. I know that doesn't mean much --

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I mean, I'm happy. I went from 10th to third in two laps. I mean, I had an awesome -- I had so much adrenaline going through my body right now, but ultimately congrats to Felix. I saw him up high in the last two corners and I was like, how is this going to work out, but the draft is incredible. It's really tough to lead this race now.

I took the lead there for a little bit, and you're just so draggy out front. I feel for Dave. He's a good kid, and been great around here. I know he's going to be gutted, but he's young and he's going to be just fine.

Just really happy for my Pennzoil Chevy guys. Probably kept a lid on it a little bit, but the last 365 days have ate at me to come back here, and even on the warmup lap, when I took the green I was like, well, this is good.

But it's been an emotional month, and just nice to come back and execute. We weren't fast enough in traffic. I really struggled to hold with the 12 and the 10 there at the last couple restarts -- sorry, the last exchanges. So I had to make my hay on the restarts. I was just throwing it in and taking whatever gap I could. I really thought I was never coming out, so it was just nice to guess out of there, no crashing, and yeah, go third.

**Q. Scott, have you gotten a chance to talk to David yet?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: No, I haven't. I'll talk to him. I've lost plenty of races in my career, and you sort of know how

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connected and truly feels like family. Obviously coming from all of that, Roger was one of the first guys to come to me and tell me that he believes in me and told me to keep on pushing.

Because of him, I can sit here and cry that I'm going for a P2 position. I think that's why it's really emotional for me because I wanted to get a win for this team and just wanted to be written across those history books. Everything happens for a reason. I think there's a reasoning to this. We're going to just use it as more motivation and just keep pushing forward, and someday maybe it'll happen.

**Q. We get that red flag, and you're multiple spots behind the top position. What's the mindset as you're sitting there in pit lane waiting?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: For me, I was 10th on that first one and I was like, I'm just going to ship it and if I crash, I crash. This is it.

This is the pinnacle, and this is what I want out of everything. I think Dave would have been the same. I think we were on the alternate strategy, but we had 10 or so laps better tire than everyone else.

So we knew that we probably had grip on the restarts, grip up high, just a matter of just making it happen. I mean, you did, you were leading. And you're young. You're going to be fine. We're both going to get one, I reckon. Hopefully.

**Q. David, you come out of Turn 4 just trying to break that draft. What did you see with his speed that allowed him to catch up to you?**

DAVID MALUKAS: I mean, he just had a really good run. There's nothing else I could have done. I'm trying to think back, maybe something different with deployment here or there --

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: There's no way, man.

DAVID MALUKAS: There's just no way. In the car it looked a lot closer, which it was really, really close, but from the run I didn't know he had that big of a run. Watching the replay and seeing the run that he had, it actually made me feel better because I was like, to be honest, I don't think there's anything I could have done. Maybe could have shortened it by a couple thousandths. I think that was the IMS gods telling me that it's not my time.

**Q. David, I imagine your initial reaction is based on feeling like you could have done something different, and then when you're looking at the screen out there**

**and realizing, oh, it's not necessarily something you could have done, the disappointment is still there, but I imagine it's not so much on you. Does that change how you're going through that moment, or is the pain consistent through that whole thing regardless?**

DAVID MALUKAS: I mean, the pain is still there. It makes it feel a little bit better. Watching it, he just had such a big run. There's definitely nothing we could have -- yeah, there's just nothing. With the positioning, the timing of all of it, yeah, there's nothing we could have done.

We did everything we could, and it's just a big thank you to this team. They gave me the best car out there.

**Q. How did you find the sort of strength in that moment to even -- you probably could have sat there for 10 minutes with your helmet on, but you took your helmet off, you did the interviews, all that stuff. How did you decide to push forward in that moment which is really challenging?**

DAVID MALUKAS: Well, I think it's just because I really started to beat myself up in that car so I told myself I need to get out of here before I just keep on overthinking and making things so much worse. Yeah, just had to get out, and it was a good decision to do, get out and just see everybody and kind of just let the emotions out because in the car it was not good thoughts.

**Q. Scott, you were really heartbroken a year ago; David, you're heartbroken today. Does this race hurt more than others do?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: All right, hear me out. It's Christmas but not everyone gets a present, and that's the worst part about it because you wake up you're like, yo, we're going to get presents, it's going to be sick, and then only one guy goes home with one. That's what my mom said. It's kind of a good way to look at it. But at the same time, yeah, everyone here that finishes not first despises today, and it is what it is.

I mean, you've just got to take the learnings, whatever it is, whether you crashed last year or you finished where we finished today: What could you have done differently? What could you have done better? What was out of your control? And just come back stronger.

Personally, I've hardly seen the replay, David, but I don't think you had any fight back at that position. The speed was slow, Felix was going to get a run regardless. Yeah, it sucks, but -- because I think if the pace is faster, it's a normal race, I think David squeezes one home. But it's just off a restart.

**Q. Are you surprised, David, at how much this hurts?**

DAVID MALUKAS: Not really, to be honest. I just knew this whole month our car was spectacular, and I knew if we were going to be in a position like that, it was going to hurt. I was just so committed in my mind. I was not nervous, I was not anything on those last few restarts.

For some reason in my head I felt like, we got this. We're going to get it. And we didn't, by just a few little bits. I think that's why it hurts because in my mind I really thought we were going to win it, and we didn't get that right.

I think it's when you give yourself a goal and when you don't achieve it, it tends to hurt, and I think that's why it hurts so much.

**Q. David, you had said that last year kind of replayed in your mind for a whole year and that was with about a tenth of the race to go. What is kind of the coping process to get over this one, an even closer finish for you?**

DAVID MALUKAS: Just use it to drive me even more. Last year was more in the fact of, hey, I do belong here, I can be there in the end for the fight. Now it feels more of, okay, I've learned what it is to be in those last 20, 30 laps. I've learned from last year what I did wrong, corrected it this time.

Of course a little different scenario, but whatever scenario we were in, I felt like we were on the right strategy and made all the right decisions.

Going around this time we know we're there, we know we have it. This time it's just more of we've got to use it to build this drive, keep this momentum going. Obviously we still have our whole season for this year, and got 365 days until this, so we're going to keep going.

**Q. Were you okay with INDYCAR kind of red flagging it like they've done in recent years and then going -- accelerating that last caution to have a one-lap dash to the finish?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yes. In opposition, yes.

DAVID MALUKAS: If you asked Marcus Armstrong, he'd probably say no.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: But I think we all know that that's probably what's going to happen. I imagine if it was less laps, they might have shut it down.

DAVID MALUKAS: At the end of the day, in those situations, it is what's the best decision for the fans. Even no matter what position, if you're in Marcus' position, you want a good show. You want it to be under green, and I think no matter what, that is what should always be the right decision, is to go green and give everybody a show.

**Q. David, obviously Indy is Indy, but next week is Detroit, the rest of the season, championship to play for. How quickly can you put this behind you and look forward?**

DAVID MALUKAS: I mean, it won't take long. We're just going to use it as, like I said, more drive, more motivation, more push and more obsession. I think that's -- right now I'm just so obsessed, I just want to get this win. We're so close so many times, and all of Indy, even Indy GP, it's just a lot of seconds. We're getting so close. Literally I don't know how much closer you can get. Yep, we're going to keep pushing.

**Q. Scott, for you, I was surprised to see you finished third coming back from tenth. Talk about how you made that move that fast?**

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Look, I had a really good restart on the second to last one, and I got to sixth, I think, and then I just -- the next restart I had a really good restart. Honestly, I thought my restarts all day were really solid, but I said I was going up to the top no matter what. I didn't really care where I was going. It was just throw it up and hope we come out all right.

Honestly, I had a pretty good run off 2 and everyone was side by side, so I just checked myself up and was going to try and get a big run, and decided to deploy. Deployed out the hybrid, helped me get to the line, sort of doing a go-kart, like crash down, trying to get low, and it was amazing. Yeah, it was cool.

**Q. David, you've spoken a lot about this mindset that everything happens for a reason. Can you talk a little bit about how you came to adopt that and kind of why it's proven helpful and why it could prove helpful in this situation?**

DAVID MALUKAS: I think it's through hardships. Everybody here in this room has hardships. It's the ones you remember. Obviously really, really good times you remember. But if I think back to when I was a kid, elementary school, middle school, I remember all the bad things I did. So you don't repeat them and you learn from them and you make yourself better, it makes you who you are.

That was something I truly kind of enveloped as to be who I am in 2024 coming from the wrist injury. That was a big hardship for me, trying to overcome that and come back into the field and go back into performing with one and a half hands.

Having all these hardships builds character, and for me it just gives me more drive, gives me more motivation, more obsession to go out there and have my dreams come true, right? We're getting so close. I will not be able to die at rest until we can go get a win.

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