

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

Sunday, September 6, 2026

Scott McLaughlin

Jonathan Diuguid

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are joined by our champion driver and Jonathan Diuguid. Scott McLaughlin who led 87 of the 90 laps snaps the 35-race winless streak. His eighth career win. Finishes sixth in the standings.

The stat that I love, Scott, you led the first lap of the season and you led the last lap of the season.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Sweet.

THE MODERATOR: Team Penske, their 312th INDYCAR SERIES win.

Scott, congratulations. Great way to finish up 2026.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Thank you. A culmination of some hard work. I think the whole team, all three cars, just been working on basically I think from the Mid-Ohio test for us, at least on my car, we found a bit of a direction.

Always felt, yeah, Raul was my guy. We've been having that good energy, that feeling that we could do this, but it was just about putting the parts together.

Today was fantastic. We've had poles. Haven't quite completed the races. You could see that it was there. Really proud to get our first win together on a road course where the last couple years we probably struggled at the most.

Yeah, what a great way to end the season. We have a lot of hard work to do over the off-season to come back stronger, combat against the 10. I think J.D. would agree, it's just a good finish to the season, gets everyone excited.

THE MODERATOR: Jonathan, a lot of people talk about momentum. It can be real in racing?

JONATHAN DIUGUID: Yeah, obviously we had the same conversation at the end of last season. It's definitely nice to win the last race of the year. We just have to figure out

how to win some more in the middle.

Scott mentioned, we had a crucial test for our organization. Today was proof in the pudding, showed up with good cars, got the pole and the race win. Scott led the majority of the race. That bodes well.

We're strong on road courses, street courses and ovals now, which is what it takes to be competitive in the championship. Real excited for 2027 already.

We'll definitely celebrate this win, it's an important one for the team.

THE MODERATOR: Open it up for questions.

Q. Scott, are you going to do any work over the off-season on your doughnut game?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: It's been terrible, right? I've been waiting six years to do that. My initial one I wanted to park it against the fence and do it. I lost it in the smoke. I was too close to the wall when the smoke cleared.

It sucked. Look, I was doing donuts, that's all I can ask for.

Q. The importance of winning the last race of the year, may not be a championship, but you get to celebrate a victory for months, whereas generally a lot of people only get to celebrate it for a week. How much does that help boost you especially when you return home to Charlotte?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I'm very excited. I said on TV, for me to win as a dad, I've been wanting to win for Lucy so much. That's the main thing.

Yeah, we'll celebrate it, but we'll learn from it, too. I don't think we were that great across the stints. We need to figure out why we're using the rear tires a little bit more than the 27 there.

Yeah, I'm very happy, but there's work to be done.

Q. Jonathan, second year in a row Team Penske has

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won the season finale. How important is that for the organization? It was a tough season with the injuries you had to deal with.

JONATHAN DIUGUID: I would say it's a tough season. We won three races this year, which isn't something to shake a stick at. We moved all the cars up in the championship about all of them finishing in the top eight.

I think as an organization we're definitely heading the right direction. Our performance has been strong. Like Scott mentioned, it's all about execution.

Winning the last race is definitely the last memory in everybody's mine. It's very positive for the team and the shop.

The trophy here this weekend is quite a nice one, too, as well.

Q. Looking at the way the race played itself out, you ran the hard tire in the last stint, a good choice. Was the tire deg what you thought it was going to be?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, about the same. I was probably surprised how bad I was at the end of a black tire stint. But we made it progressively better. That's what you need to do. I thought we had some really good (indiscernible) in our car to figure that out and get it back to where we needed.

That's a lot of trust in myself and Raul, figuring out what rear bar and front bar we want, all that jazz. Like I said, it's good.

I was thankful that Kirkwood had reds to put on at the end. He was quick on the blacks. I knew if I could just get through the out-laps, then control that first part of the stint, he would probably die off a little worse than I would. That's sort of what happened.

Q. Gap never got bigger.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: No. My goal was to keep it at two seconds the whole time.

Q. This work that you and Raul have done, for you two as driver-engineer, the relationship that you have, this can now cement that a lot more during the off-season, can't it?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, I'm so happy for him. Malcolm Finch gets forgotten as well. He's my performance engineer. He's been fantastic.

For us to get that success, we never stopped believing. We knew we could do it. It was a matter of putting it together and the feeling that I needed to go fast and trust the car. Really sort of hit on that this weekend, but even the last couple events. Thought we've been on a bit of roll.

Yeah, the three of us working well. I think the whole 3 stand is fantastic. T.C. was amazing on the radio. His experience was fantastic. Dave Faustino. Everyone, really, the last few events, basically since June, July, I think we've been really, really good. It's just getting some car pace to control like we did today. It was awesome.

Q. Scott, do you feel more relief, more excitement, more pride in this one?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: A bit of everything, to be honest. I'd say a little bit of relief because I've been promising Lucy a long time a race win. She has no idea. She gave me nothing on FaceTime before. That's part of it.

Yeah, it's just a good, good day. Good day. It's cool to just have a good weekend. I mean, we were top five every session. Just from the jump felt like we had really good speed.

Q. You were complaining about vibration late. How bad was it? Were you feeling everything 10 times as big?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: It was bad enough for me to think about where I was placing the car, look after the left rear, not run the curbs and stuff like that. I wanted to bring it home more than anything. Thankfully we had reasonable pace and wasn't pressured. I sort of was able to do what I wanted there.

The vibration, wasn't a panic. I wanted to know what tire it was so I could understand it and move forward. It was a good call and great communication, as I said, from T.C. on the stand.

Q. With the close calls you've had this year, what is your mentality during that final stint? Are you hoping and praying no yellow comes out?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, it's just control what I can control. I can't control if a yellow comes out. We had a good exchange. I came out in the lead. That was just a matter of then bringing up the tire nice, not using it too hard, making sure we had something to play with in case the yellow came out.

For me it was just like control the gap and do what I need to do. If a yellow comes out, we'll reset and go again.



Q. The ice cream nights really made the difference this weekend?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, yeah. Yep, Revival Ice Cream Shop. I went Friday night. Went last night. I might have to go tonight, as well.

Q. Jonathan, with the reshuffling for the 3 car, how rewarding is it to get this moment?

JONATHAN DIUGUID: Yeah, like Scott mentioned, that group has been working very well together for the last stands of the season. It was a lot of changes. It's kind of an All-Star team, too, as well.

The people moving in those positions were very experienced, like Scott mentioned with Tim on the radio there, Raul, Dave Faustino, Malcolm running the engineering of the car. They're all extremely experienced guys who know how to win.

There's been a lot mentioned about Raul. I can tell you, he lives it. He never sleeps. I'm sure Scott has had to mute his phone at 3:00 in the morning sometimes. He's relentless. Like Scott said, I'm really proud that he's able to finish the season off with a win.

Q. Scott, you're the first Chevy driver to win here at Laguna Seca since Paul Tracy in 1993. Talk about that and what that means to you.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: Yeah, I didn't know that. Proud obviously. We got the 249 and 250 poles for them. To get that was a big milestone for Team Chevy. Yeah, to win today was special. I didn't know that stat, so that's pretty cool.

Proud of the effort. It's been hard for everyone. We worked together really well, all Chevy teams. I feel like we're going to have to keep working in the off-season, keep getting stronger and better. We know where we need to improve.

Yeah, I feel like it's a massive team effort from everyone up in Michigan. Really, really proud. Proud to do it for them. Yeah, we're going to have to work hard in the off-season to come back better.

Q. Obviously 2025 was not the season that you wanted to have. Talk about putting that in the rearview mirror and how you were able to turn that corner.

JONATHAN DIUGUID: Yeah, I mean, obviously we didn't have a lot of time. The off-season is long. It does take a

lot of work and effort from a lot of people to kind of right the ship, identify what the issues are, then be able to address them with limited testing sessions, testing on the race weekends as much as we are on test days.

To be honest, you always question yourself, too, are you making the right decisions when the results aren't coming. Obviously our short oval performance and speedway performance was strong. Street courses is there, but road courses was the biggest deficit we identified. We had a strong Mid-Ohio race, had a strong race here. I think it just goes to show we're on the right track and have a good foundation to build on.

Like Scott said, we'll start to focus on the details to have all cars in the top five and be able to fight for a championship.

Q. On the fire suits, the cars, Penske's 60th anniversary. What do you say about 60 years of Team Penske and your role in this organization?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: I think it's just proud to put this uniform on. The people that raced before you, the people that work before you, to celebrate 60 years has been amazing for Roger. To have success is fantastic. Is it as much success as we want? No. We keep continue as we always are talking about: Effort equals results. We will keep working.

60 years has to be a long time. Has to be celebrated. He's the first one to go, Okay, let's see about the next ten. It's keep working hard, keep getting better and better. It's a testament to this team and his leadership, as well.

JONATHAN DIUGUID: I think Scott answered it pretty well there, so...

THE MODERATOR: 3 a.m. phone calls.

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: My second wife.

THE MODERATOR: Where is the party tonight?

SCOTT McLAUGHLIN: INDYCAR banquet, bro. Anywhere for a free drink.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations.

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