

# IndyCar Media Conference

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## Scott Dixon

## RC Enerson

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Scott, we'll start with you. Five wins here at Mid-Ohio. That is incredible. It's a track that you come back to every year with a lot of success. What are your thoughts heading into the race weekend, especially after what you were able to gather from practice today?

SCOTT DIXON: I think it's always a place that the team likes coming. I think it's 11 or 12 victories for the team here, so it's always been definitely a place that we've run well at throughout the generations.

But yeah, today rolled off the truck pretty well and the car was decent. We didn't really get our new tire on in the first session. We kind of got the first or second time lap, and then on the last lap our instruments came in Turn 4, and then this afternoon we still hadn't done any tire runs.

I think the car is always competitive, and hopefully we'll see what tomorrow brings. Obviously the weather conditions are going to be tricky, I think, throughout, and will definitely dice the field up a bit. But yeah, always happy to be here at Mid-Ohio and it's always a fun track. Hopefully it dries out before tonight.

THE MODERATOR: RC, how was your first day in a Verizon IndyCar?

RC ENERSON: It was incredible. It's completely different than anything I've driven, and coming from -- every time I come here, I always tend to do all right, and it's one of my favorite tracks. It's got this thing about it that it fits the driving style really well, and I'm just excited to be here, and this is probably -- it's probably the best track to make my debut at.

**Q. RC, how different was the feeling you had today being an official day of you've had two practice sessions, only a limited amount of time on the tires as opposed to test day when you're going through programs and learning the car?**

RC ENERSON: Yeah, I'd say the tire difference, it's a big difference from the Coopers in Indy Lights. The Coopers fall off a lot towards the end of the races, and

these ones tend to -- after the first couple laps where you get your fast time they tend to not fall off very much and you can keep your speeds up, and it's amazing. It's a completely different experience, and it's challenging.

**Q. Dix, when I talked to Simon yesterday and asked him about the points chase, you were the first person he mentioned. He thought you were coming for him more than anybody. Your reaction to that and your thoughts about tightening this thing up coming down the stretch?**

SCOTT DIXON: He should probably be a little more worried about his teammate. He's on a pretty good roll there.

We tried to turn it around. I think we had a superb car at Road America, aside from the mechanical problem, and then obviously Toronto. I think we could have been on a similar run right now. It's kind of frustrating, but the positive thing is that the Target team has had a strong car throughout a lot of the courses that we've been to of recent and pretty much the whole year outside of Indianapolis.

I just hope we can get a turning point here soon to make it interesting. Right now I think there's two or three that have a good shot, but if it comes down to Sonoma, he's had a pretty smooth year, Simon. He hasn't had any big -- I think Road America was maybe the only sort of upset that he's had, and well, Toronto he got bit pretty bad there, too. We'll have to see how it cycles out.

But yeah, obviously we want to come on strong. We've got five races to go and a lot of points on the table, and it's still possible, it's just whether we have enough time left.

**Q. RC, what's the situation after Mid-Ohio? Are you doing more races?**

RC ENERSON: Yeah, well, Mid-Ohio is obviously our debut, and then we're really looking to try and do Watkins Glen and Sonoma. It's not confirmed, but we're doing our best to try and get that done. Hopefully do the tests, as well.

**Q. Scott, you've won here five times, more than anybody else. When you come to Mid-Ohio, is it a**

**thought of feeling good, or is it a thought of knowing what kind of a grueling weekend it is, especially race day? Is it knowing you've got a lot of work ahead of you?**

SCOTT DIXON: I think there's always tracks that you -- I like untoward tracks. That's what I love about the Verizon IndyCar Series is there's so many different disciplines. It's not just one thing you have to be good at. There's places that when you see it coming up on the schedule, you feel a little more at home or a little more confident about, but I'd like to think with this team we've got a great opportunity at 99 percent of the tracks we go to.

Mid-Ohio, as I said, has been a bit of a standout for the team with the amount of victories that they have had here, and even with Dario, with Charlie and myself and then going back to Zanardi and that era, too.

I don't know, I find it fun. It's very physical. It's a track that you can in some ways get quite angry with and it rewards you, whereas some of the street courses there's more of a finesse with it. Especially now with the high downforce that we have, qualifying we're going to be almost flat through Turn 1. At the test we were almost flat in Turn 1, so that's pretty substantial, and obviously the lap times are falling very quickly and setting new records at a very old race circuit.

Yeah, I don't know, I love coming here, and I know the team does. I know pretty much the whole field does, so it's one of those.

**Q. Graham said he was going 147 through Turn 1.**

SCOTT DIXON: I think we were doing about 148.

**Q. Scott, when you were RC's age, I believe you had already won a race at Nazareth. What do you think when you see a kid like that 19 years old come into the series because you know firsthand if you play it right you can win a race.**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, certainly. I think it's great to see young talent coming through. It's part of the sport. It's part of what we need to see. We've had a good influx of recent, and it's pretty cool in the fact that we have a series that, okay, so there's some bigger teams and some more teams that have done better jobs, but in layman's terms, you pretty much have the similar equipment. So it's nice that you can come, and if you're good you can get close.

The only hard part with rookies now is the testing program. At least this year was a little more open. It was good that RC had the opportunity to test here last week, but still, you're competing against guys that have been coming here for years and they've had a ton of test days. It's so close right now that you're looking for

hundredths and tenths of a second to make the difference.

You know, I think in the future we could probably lose a lot of in-season testing for the regulars, but the rookies, they should probably step that up.

**Q. And when you won, did it happen so soon for you that you didn't really know what you had done?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, you know, I think our circumstance, too, was a little different. It was definitely a pretty big fuel race the way it turned out. It was on an oval. But yeah, I think for us, it came at a very good time for my career, and obviously vaulted me the next season to Ganassi, through the help of Toyota. It was definitely a different scenario.

Yeah, it's --

**Q. RC, were you even aware that at one time Scott was the youngest winner in IndyCar history?**

RC ENERSON: Yeah, I mean, I can believe that. I grew up watching a lot of these guys race. My first Indy 500 was when I was three years old, and seeing these guys go around, and now I'm 19 years old and there's a lot of the same guys still there. It's kind of like I get to race with my idols, really.

SCOTT DIXON: We must have had a good generation, I think.

**Q. There were years in different series, et cetera, where the newcomers, you couldn't always tell how talented they were. The talent level of newcomers coming in, especially through the Road to Indy, seems to be much higher. Can you talk about that a little bit?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, I think a lot of the times it's not just straight-out lap time. It's confidence of knowing how to race, being in formula cars for a long time. A lot of us all start at a very young age, but it's kind of grooming that you get up until the point of IndyCar. I think the Road to Indy right now, they've done a very good job in having the different classes, and I myself have driven the Lights car I think two years ago when it first came out, and it's a difficult car to drive.

I think it teaches you a lot of different things. Right now the IndyCar has so much downforce, I think at some point now you're getting to almost 6,500 now, 7,000 pounds of downforce. It's more of a momentum car, which is quite odd for an IndyCar.

But yeah, it's great to see what they've done and how they've been able to push these young drivers through, and they are doing a hell of a job, which is great to see, and it's great for the future of the sport.

**Q. How is the overall talent level of the series right now?**

SCOTT DIXON: It's tough, man. I think I was at an event last night, and Dario and Bobby Rahal were talking about how close it is these days. If you look at Bobby Rahal's era, he could have finished second or third at the Michigan 500 and he was three laps down.

You know, the competition is so tight right now, and you're fighting over such small margins. You know, you can't be good in just one area. You've got to just -- and you're constantly learning. I think that's the biggest thing for me is that every day there's something new. You're constantly learning something, no matter what teammate it is, whether it's the rookie Chilton on our team or TK who's been around for a long time, there's always something different that you could probably do a little bit better.

So I think you're fighting over those finer points, whereas even when I started, your star would apply at a different track if it was a street course and you'd have run quite well and you'd really have to work on a road course, but it's across the board everywhere now that you're fighting over such small things.

**Q. Talking about the confidence that a young guy has to have, obviously one of the big hurdles for all of them come qualifying is learning the ropes, because I assume RC hasn't had the chance to try the reds in testing. Does the fact that the track is going to go green again, will that make it easier or harder for him to exploit those last bits of grip that the reds produce?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, I think -- I don't know, it's funny at Mid-Ohio, too, it seems like every session it's a green track. It kind of starts off very slow, and then each lap it gains and gains and gains and gains. There as you see, you see the rookies especially struggle with the red tires because the window is quite small, as well. You're maybe talking two, three laps or even in the past we've had one lap, and the amount of speed that you can pick up in that half a lap to a lap is pretty big.

I know in the future they're talking about having red tires for the first practice or even the second practice, so somewhat similar to Formula 1 so you can actually experience that through the weekend, and you have more people running on track, and plus trying to see the degradation throughout the race, which I think would be better for Firestone. So hopefully that's something that -- even if the rookies got the red tires for a session, I don't know, it's definitely hard right now, and I think that's why you see Helio and TK's generation hanging on.

**Q. RC, are you confident that you'll be able to exploit that extra grip?**

RC ENERSON: Yeah, I mean, it's a completely new situation for me. I'm coming into a race that's 90 laps long with pit stops and fuel saving and all these things that are new to me, where I'm used to green-to-checker race going all out as hard as you can. So I think it's a little bit more of an overall driver thing.

And then the reds, we don't get to see them. I've never driven on them, so the first time I'm going to get to see them is qualifying. So that's what I think is the biggest thing for the rookies, I guess, is they don't get to see those until it's when it counts, so it's hard to extract all that not knowing going into it, and I think that's what comes with the experienced drivers where they're able to know how much grip they're actually going to gain to be able to push it to the max right off the bat.

**Q. RC, you said earlier that IndyCars are totally different than what you've driven before, and you just mentioned pit stops and all these things are totally new. Is there anything that you learned in Indy Lights that you can take advantage of moving to IndyCars?**

RC ENERSON: Yeah, as I went up through the ladder, the cars get a lot more physical. It's a bigger car. It's going to be heavier, more downforce, and this is kind of on a whole 'nother level, and it's -- I'd say this car suits my driving style better than the Indy Lights car. This car is more of a momentum, and it kind of likes to be planted and never likes to be sliding around, where the Lights car really likes to slide around and fine dangle. It's tough to drive because it's so inconsistent, whereas this car it's meant to drive for 90 laps and take pit stops, and it's more of a proper car I feel like.