

IndyCar Media Conference

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Scott Dixon

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We're now joined by our race winner Scott Dixon, driving the No. 9 Target Chip Ganassi Racing Chevrolet for Chip Ganassi Racing teams. I know a lot of people ask you and tell you, you really make it look easy here at Watkins Glen International, but obviously it's not -- you're celebrating your 40th IndyCar win, which breaks your record for fourth all-time with Al Unser. Obviously a huge accomplishment for you, but what goes so right here that allows you to just dominate the rest of the field and keep them behind you?

SCOTT DIXON: I don't know. I wish it happened a lot more often. You know, that's the hard part, right, is that these are the weekends that you definitely don't forget, just in the sheer fact of we had such a smooth one, which made it hard also going into the race. We had been fast in practice, fast in qualifying, obviously got the pole. You just think of the problems and maybe strategy not going your way or maybe having a mechanical and taking you out of it.

A lot of it is what the team does. Huge credit to everybody at Team Target and the whole Ganassi organization from the people back at the workshop to the guys that are here on the weekend to make this opportunity possible. The car was just fantastic, and the track I love. I love coming to obviously upstate New York, and this track is one of the old-school great American tracks that we're lucky enough to come back here and race.

Again, huge thanks to the Verizon IndyCar Series and everybody at the Glen for working this out in a very short time frame, and the fans responded. It was great to see so many people here with not even having this on the schedule earlier in the year. I don't know, just love being back here, and I think we should have a double points race here and probably race two or three times at the Glen.

THE MODERATOR: This is the 102nd win for Chip Ganassi Racing teams, as well. It makes sense it would come at a track like this where all of your teammates really were having such a great weekend. What is the team able to provide in terms of experience and data from past races here that help you and also the entire team?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, even in my career with the team, it dates back to even going to a test in 2002 with Kenny Brack and Bruno Junqueira when we were in CART, and going to Mid-Ohio for the first time, you jump in the car, and you're like, wow, this is a lot different to the car I drove here previously.

It's a great baseline, but this team is very good at not being stagnant. I think we've had a rough year on paper, lots of ups and downs, but the performance of the car, we've been fast at a good majority of the places that we go on to kind of outside of Indianapolis. Everywhere else was really good.

It's never one thing, it's always a lot of small things to equate to what we have, but I think with these road courses like Mid-Ohio, Watkins Glen, Sonoma even for the last couple years and Road America, I think Road America could have been a great day for us, too, outside of the mechanical problem.

But it's just a great baseline, plus this weekend across the board the team did a fantastic job. It was great to see Max, a rookie this year, make it into the Firestone Fast Six. It's extremely tough, especially in a rookie year I think to make it through into the Firestone Fast Six, and huge credit to him this weekend, as well.

Q. From start to finish for a whole weekend, you dominated every practice session. You broke a new track record here. You won the race today. Would you say this is the most dominating weekend from start to finish in your career at one track on one weekend, in your long career?

SCOTT DIXON: It's probably close to it, yeah. I think for a road course, I know we've had some dominant weekends like this at ovals. Kansas I think rings a bell back in the day where the team had a very dominant streak going, and Mid-Ohio we've had something close to that, but I think to lead all three practices, warmup, qualifying the pole, and then win the race. I think TK actually got fast lap in the race, which is one thing I didn't get. I'll talk to him about that later.

It was definitely a very dominant weekend, but I think when you're in those weekends, too, your mind is just running crazy with possibilities and things that could go wrong, especially in the race. Yeah, I don't know. As I

said, I think we should race here more.

Q. You had a perfect car and a dominating car at Toronto. Talking to your guys in victory lane, they said they kind of learned their lesson a little bit with the pit strategy, that they were bringing you in a little early this race so the Toronto thing didn't happen. Does this race in many ways kind of make up for how dominant you were at Toronto?

SCOTT DIXON: Unfortunately it doesn't. You always think about those ones more than some of the victories that you get just because of the sheer fact that you thought you were so close to getting it.

Toronto was a tough one. We'd been bitten by that just on the 9 car side three or four times throughout my career there, and we had spoken about it before the race. I think that's what made it a little bit harder to swallow.

I think Mike called a perfect race this weekend, and it's so hard, you can't equate for a yellow coming out when they do, and today we were on the other side of it. We were like, hey, we're going to pit as soon as we can. As soon as these windows open up, we're going to take care of ourselves and make sure if we lose out a little bit, so be it. At least we're not going to go to the mid-pack or back of the field and have to try and fight our way through.

As you saw today, we pitted a lap pretty much before anybody else, and we had a caution a lap later, and that's just how these races can flip. It's tough to swallow when it's on the other side.

Q. IndyCar prize money purses aren't what they used to be, but you said during the broadcast and during the win that you'd be donating your winnings to the Wilson Children's Fund. Tell me about that decision.

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, coming into the weekend, I think actually any other weekend, especially around this time, I've obviously -- a year going on with the loss of Justin, being back at Pocono just recently, and obviously talking to Jules and seeing the family, this was a place that Justin really loved. Last time we had a good battle here, and he kicked my butt. It's a place that he got I believe it was his first win maybe in the combined IndyCar and Dale Coyne's first and was definitely a milestone, and I was thinking about Justin a lot this weekend.

Obviously with the launch of the Wilson Children's Fund, the new website and all that stuff, I just thought -- Emma and myself and our family could donate our winnings from this weekend.

Q. At the end you have 16.53 seconds lead over Josef Newgarden at the finish. Can you give some secrets how you saved fuel? Is there any special trick, especially with Helio Castroneves came in 57 or 58? Were you concerned that you can't make it until the end?

SCOTT DIXON: The brakes I guess is a good one. I don't know, we've had a phenomenal run with Chevy, and I think I maybe got the Chevy Volt engine today, we were running on electric or something out there. But the mileage was through the roof. They gave us -- Mike gave me the number, and then I knew we had four or five cars to pass. I'm like, oh, man, that's not going to be too pretty after fighting for a few laps, and luckily we got through the traffic in about a lap or two. But even then the number was very big, and I was a little worried about that, but I knew that with our combination as a team and how about the car was going to be, or was this weekend, that we were able to probably get a lot better fuel mileage than some of the others.

I knew if we were in a tight situation like that, we were going to be the best at the job, and that definitely played true. But I can't give you any secrets.

I drove it back in. I was going to do some burnouts and stuff, but I didn't think everybody would like that too much.

Q. When you look at the wins in '05 to '07 you had Eric Bretzman was your engineer, now you've got Chris. What's his role been, and how much confidence did you have in his setup and just what he was able to do?

SCOTT DIXON: I believe actually in '05 it would have been Chris and Bretzman on the same stand, which was a hell of a combination and a combination which I wished lasted a lot further. Obviously they're both very talented and had to split off into different teams at some point. Chris I've worked with for many, many years and have known him for even longer. Always have great confidence in Chris and always had great confidence in what Eric brought to the team and still continues to on the Cup side. I think you can credit a lot of the 42's pace actually of recent to Eric Bretzman. So it's good to see him fitting over there.

But yeah, you know, as always, there's places that we know that we have a good baseline setup and a place that we can run strong at, and this is definitely one. We didn't really change the car too much all weekend. I just wish there was less practice this weekend. Everybody else got a lot better from practice 1 to practice 3 in qualifying. But yeah, no, Chris is fantastic, always is and always has been, and same with Eric.

Q. This year's championship is coming down

almost to the same points spread as last year. What do you say to power? It's about the same number of points you had last year, and maybe what advice do you give to Pagenaud?

SCOTT DIXON: Both of them, man, you've just got to go for it. You've got to race it like any other race. It's hard. I think all of us fall victim to falling into a championship battle and racing for a championship as opposed to just doing what we need to do. I think in the past this team has done a very good job with the championships that we've -- not so much stole but taken last minute with Dario's record and some of mine, as well.

You know, it's definitely a very emotional ride, I think, going into it, and Will has been in a lot more battles for the championship than I think Simon has. But then also Will took a pretty big hit today as far as points.

You know, we'll have to see how that team handles it. I think Roger will be very happy that the championship lies with that team and they can fight it out. He's going to be a happy man either way. But yeah, I think the biggest advice I could give those two, not that they really need it, is just race it like any other race.

Q. I guess at minus 104 you could conceivably score enough points to tie them, but you'd need zeros on Pagenaud's part. You're going to try to win at Sonoma, but who do you think has an advantage among the two guys that are realistically the only two guys running for the championship?

SCOTT DIXON: It's hard to say. I think Simon has done a phenomenal job this year, and especially early on in the season. It's somewhat a Penske-dominant track, or has been at least for qualifying. We've had a good run there recently with the race victories. And Will has -- I don't even know how many poles the guy has had at that place, a lot, and the same with Helio, too.

Yeah, it's going to be interesting to see how it plays out. I think going into the race I would say that Will has maybe a stronger situation going in as far as speed in qualifying, but the race can throw so many different variables, and Simon has just been rock solid in so many different situations this year. I think we could see that, especially at Mid-Ohio, where Will got the advantage in the pit stop exchange but Simon was able to work it back out.

It's going to be a good battle to watch. I just hope I'm in front of them.

Q. After 50 laps in the DW12 with these speeds, can you compare and contrast the physicality of this race compared to 2010 and the previous years?

SCOTT DIXON: It's hard to do that. Things change so much. I like to think a lot of the tracks that we go to, the most physical ones are the bumpy ones, just because you're correcting so much. The street courses have a lot of grip, but places like Mid-Ohio or Road America have a lot of character to them, so the braking zones are a little bumpy, the apexes, but the speeds and loads are high. Here it's still very smooth and you're not doing a whole lot of correcting.

And then with how the race played out, and we had a 16- or 18-lap final stint while saving fuel, you know, the pace comes down a couple of seconds and the loading comes down a lot.

Had this been a flat-out race, I think, throughout, which they may change I think the distance of the race next year just so it's not so much of a -- kind of a -- you're right in the middle of making it on fuel and making it pretty easy to be achievable but not being that slow. So next year they may change it by five or ten laps and see how that plays out.

Yeah, it's physical at times, but the way the race finished today, it wasn't so.

Q. Where does this victory rank in your 40 so far?

SCOTT DIXON: You know, it feels darned good right now, so right on top of the 40 right now. You know, I don't know. There's so many different races. Indianapolis I think is always going to be a standout just because of what that race means to a lot of people and to yourself, especially I think as I've been in the series for so long now, to see what Indianapolis is really about. That one is always really tough to top.

But I think as the weekend goes, which if you look at my Indianapolis 500 victory in 2008, that month went very similar to how this weekend went. We led a lot of practices, we got a pole and we led almost 150 laps or something, I have no idea. But it was a lot.

So you know, Indy is hard to beat, man, but this was definitely a pretty sweet weekend.

Q. I believe in victory lane you said you were talking to the former CEO of Target. Can you take us through what it means to keep winning for them? I know they're not going to be on your uniform full-time next year, but take us through that part a little bit.

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, Chip has got a lot of friends, and Bob Ulrich was the first CEO I think when I joined the team in 2002 and has always been a good friend. He was at the Phoenix race this year. He comes to Milwaukee sometimes and Iowa. He was actually in Iowa this year, as well. He still comes to a lot of the

races.

You know, I think as I've said many a times, the best part I think of the 15 years that I've had with the Target relationship outside of the 27 that Chip has had is all the friendships that I've made. Bob lives most of the time still in Minneapolis or Phoenix doing his music museum out in Phoenix but still plays a big role in -- we catch up a lot, we talk a lot, and he was a huge part of my career in the early part. Yeah, it was definitely nice to chat to Bob. I hadn't seen him since Iowa. But he's always the guy that will be calling Chip, as do the other CEO's that we've had through the course of the relationship.