

IndyCar Media Conference

Wednesday May 16, 2018

Marco Andretti

Scott Dixon

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Joined by the driver of the No. 9 PNC Bank Chip Ganassi Racing Honda, Scott Dixon.

Scott, take us through your day and how you think it went for you.

SCOTT DIXON: It started off kind of average. I think the car was decent. The conditions were probably more favorable around lunchtime. The heat of the day, we went through some struggles, went through some pretty big changes.

A long story short, we ended up finding a couple of good changes. The second-to-last run was fairly decent as far as being comfortable in the car, kind of being very consistent. That was nice.

But all in all, just trying to get through the motions, trying to get through the test items. Yeah, that's it. Find a big draft occasionally, take it. Not as good as Marco.

THE MODERATOR: Speaking of big drafts, fastest driver of the day, Marco Andretti.

Same question I just asked Scott. Take us through your day, how you felt it went, what kind of things you accomplished today.

MARCO ANDRETTI: Yeah, just still early days. But checking off the boxes right now. A lot of test items. We got through a ton of stuff actually today. It was a pretty productive day. We got the car to almost there in traffic. We're not there yet. But, you know, I'm sure everybody's dealing with a similar thing.

But, you know, we think we have a direction, which is positive. We just later in the week need to confirm that hopefully. Yeah, I mean, same as him: just working away, see where we end up.

THE MODERATOR: For both of you. Have you been predominantly working in traffic, not worrying about qualifying at this point?

MARCO ANDRETTI: I did one run alone, which was pretty slow. I don't know. We'll see. I mean, it's four laps, and we got to stay flat for four laps. The car is going to go as quick as it's going to go. Just try to get



the balance right.

You know, I mean, pole is awesome, but you want to win the race. We're always working on the racecar more.

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, been our focus. I think our qualifying car has been good the past couple of years, but our racecars have been not as good. Yeah, we just ran full downforce all day and tried to work with the car and find better combinations just for being comfortable in traffic and trying to get the car a little more grip. Yeah, we didn't even attempt anything like trimming it.

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

Q. For both of you. When you look at the entire week long of practice, how valuable is it and how necessary is it to have that much practice? How much do you worry about getting too much information to the point that maybe you confuse yourselves in what direction to go?

MARCO ANDRETTI: I don't know if it's too much information. But when you're good, you always want it to rain and go right into the race instead of giving other guys time to catch up.

This place is a humbling place. I mean, tomorrow you roll off with the same racecar, and could be 17th. That's how the month goes. I prefer less practice. You know, we say it's a month, but it's really like a week and a half. It's a lot, but it's not that much.

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, it's just really condensed. Days like today are just really long. You're out running from 11 in the morning till 6 at night. It used to be nice to have a proper lunch, kind of get the rest of the day broken up.

Yeah, you know, it is what it is. It's the same for everybody. Personally I would like it over a two-week period. That's just the way it is.

Q. You are both on teams with multiple drivers. Does that help you check off the boxes a lot faster than maybe if you were the only ones out there?

SCOTT DIXON: I think Marco has about six teammates. I have one.

MARCO ANDRETTI: Yeah, I don't know. I've been really focused on the 98, to be honest with you. In the debriefs, I just have blinders on and really focus on

what we need. A lot of times you find yourself leading the way when you do that.

So far so good. There's always things you can take and directions and stuff. But, you know, a lot of times you end up on quite different packages amongst the six of us, I guess as you said.

Q. Scott, since you went from four cars last year to two this year, is it harder work for you guys?

SCOTT DIXON: It's a lot quieter with T.K. out of the room. He made lots of crazy noises.

Yeah, no, it's been good. He's super laid back and good to work with. I think on this combination, it's a little more difficult. Ed is trying to get up to speed with our package and our car. They've tried some interesting stuff. So, you know, debrief last night was good. Tonight I'm sure will be, too.

But, yeah, I think going from the size the team was with four cars down to two is definitely a different dynamic. But, you know, it's too early to really say. There's always pros and cons.

MARCO ANDRETTI: Our meetings are too damn long, that's for sure, at the end of the day.

Q. Marco, is 227 about the tops on these new cars right now?

MARCO ANDRETTI: On this boost level in a tow, yeah, I think so. I think you might be 228, 229 for pole, I don't know, without a tow. The difference the tow makes this year is huge. You run alone at 221, then you pick up a little tow, and 227.

You're not going to have that in qualifying, so... But you'll have the boost. It will probably be pretty close.

Q. How much of an issue do you think the overtaking might be compared to last year? Is it tougher?

MARCO ANDRETTI: It's tougher, yeah. It will be more I think track position. Scott and I were talking about this a little earlier today. I prefer it to be track position. I prefer once you get to the front, have a good car, you should be able to stay there instead of being a sitting duck.

However, if you're third or back in line, it's going to be very tough. It's going to take discipline to wait for the guy to have a go and have a big wash-up, then you get him.

It will be tougher to pass. But I prefer that.

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, it's been interesting. The first two cars seem to be able to swap back and forth pretty easily. As Marco just said, once you get third and back, especially if you're fifth and back, the wash-out seems to be a lot more this year, which is kind of

interesting.

It's early days. The car, I think we found some things that helped us today, helped that issue specifically. So, you know, the track temps are pretty high. That typically follows in that category, too. But, yeah, even if the guy gets a bit of a wash-out, but still has enough of a train in front of him, the acceleration is just insane.

It's really hard to pass that guy if he does make a little bit of a mistake, whereas momentum seemed to be a bit of a key last year.

Yeah, early days again.

Q. Andretti has three of the past four Indy 500 wins. Do the new aero kits take away any advantage at all that you might have had in the past few years?

MARCO ANDRETTI: I don't know. We're P1 right now. It's still early days. We don't know how the race is going to play out yet. The car feels good. It's just circumstances have to work out really. I mean, this place picks the winners. I've had the best cars ever here and not been victorious for some reason.

Just need to have a good enough car and good enough shot and have circumstances work out for you. I think, yeah, this team has been extremely dominant the last couple years for sure. But still feel good about things.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you.