

IndyCar Media Conference

Friday May 25, 2018

Scott Dixon Emma Dixon Chip Ganassi Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We have some distinguished guests, including Scott Dixon, his team owner Chip Ganassi, and Emma Dixon. Good to have these folks with us.

The genesis of this goes back a year ago when we had a press conference here at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. I had an epiphany when I was on Victory Lane at Sonoma when Scott had captured his fourth championship. I thought about how a place like this that is a place where we speak of legends, the legends of the sport, all of us know who they are, sometimes we don't pay attention that we're in the presence of a legend now.

When you have a gentleman that won four titles, he becomes third all time on the list of winners. The people in front of him, one has the name Andretti, one has the name Foyt. Tells you we're in pretty rarefied air.

We have in Born Racer, the documentary we introduced a year ago, I think an incredible opportunity to get a behind-the-scenes look and a deep look at Indy style racing in a way that even those of us who are pretty deeply involved don't often have the chance to do.

It certainly details Scott and his career, what it's like to have a family, try to balance that, the ups and downs that go to being on a team with highly competitive people with a unified goal to win, the pressure that's attendant upon that.

I just think all of us are going to thoroughly enjoy it. We're going to give you a teaser of Born Racer which we'll show you on the screens right now.

(Video Shown.)

THE MODERATOR: Scott, I don't know how long it's been since I first met you, but it was many years ago, early in your career with Ganassi. I've always been impressed with your demeanor, the way you conduct yourself. You seemed always to be, at least to me, a very humble individual. Yet here is a documentary made on your life. What was that like?

SCOTT DIXON: It's definitely for me not something I'm really keen on. I guess we had some iterations before, processes that we had talked about. This one just felt like the perfect fit. The people that were involved, the concept, what we were trying to get out of it. For me, actually Emma and I, the first time we saw it probably two weeks ago, I don't know, it was just really exciting and really cool to see the detail that nobody really gets to see.

I think going through my career, you get asked so many different questions, Why do you do this, what about your family, blah, blah, blah. This is just unprecedented, back-stage access people don't get to see. It's got something for everyone to, one, understand the sport of IndyCar, the sport of racing, being in a competitive environment, then also the numerous amount of people that make this happen. It's such a team sport. A lot of people forget about that as well.

I don't know. I'm really excited for it. I think there's lots of cool stories, lots of cool, interesting people in there that they captured really well. For me, that was the biggest thing. When I'm out on track, I don't get to see what's going on behind the scenes. Even for me, it was a definitely a breath of fresh air, really fun to see that process.

THE MODERATOR: I know that Chip would say this, Mike Hull, that you're the consummate team player. You have anchored this team for a long time, in good times and bad times. In the interim, you gave them some of the most dramatic film footage we've ever seen. What was it like looking at that again? I'm assuming it's not the first time you've seen it. I watched it, my jaw fell open again.

SCOTT DIXON: It's definitely a spectacular crash. I saw it, I was firsthand, obviously in the moment. It actually slows down a lot. The whole process of that crash from start to finish, feels like it takes about two minutes.

It's part of racing. It wasn't my first crash. It won't be my last. You just hope that you're lucky enough, and we're very lucky to be in modern-day racing where safety standards are so much higher, everything that the teams try to do, but Indianapolis Motor Speedway and everybody involved try to push that to new boundaries.

I've been a part of this team for 17 years. The leadership from Chip and Mike is what has grounded me to the person I am today because we've been through a lot. I started at a very young age at this team. We've accomplished a hell of a lot. I hope we can continue to accomplish a lot more.

THE MODERATOR: Given the fact you've been on the major stage for 17 years, you won at a very early age, you've been a consistent winner, winning 41 titles, won championships, but the journey didn't start the minute you got at Chip Ganassi Racing. It started back home with your family, going through all the formula ranks. Did this film give you the chance to pause and reflect on that?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, I get moments to do that. Obviously my family has been a big part of anybody's life when you're growing up. My dad was a guy that I admired, looked up to, obviously bridged the gap into racing for me. My mom and dad had to sacrifice a lot, giving up weekends. So did the rest of my family, my brothers and sisters, too. It captures a little bit of that.

For me, the beginnings in New Zealand, I think Kiwis are renowned around the world for getting in there, getting it done, not making it a big deal. I think from a young age that has helped me control the stress or the environment a lot, too, then getting to the world stage.

Yeah, I don't know, I feel very blessed. What I get to do, I get to wake up every morning and say I'm an IndyCar driver. Not many people get that chance.

THE MODERATOR: Chip, you've been around this guy a long time, been involved in racing. I think about the premier teams we have in this series, many of the principals have raced in their career, like you did. Given the fact that you have your foot in a couple worlds, what makes IndyCar unique, even Formula 1 and NASCAR?

CHIP GANASSI: Start with the speed. These are fast racing cars. They're a lot faster than NASCAR cars, quite a bit faster than a Formula 1 car. To me speed is at the essence of racing. Anybody can race bumper cars around, 50 miles an hour. You're talking about a skill level that very few people on the planet might have.

THE MODERATOR: Chip, one of the things that is so important, you've tried to build an infrastructure and a team. You know full well that when Scott goes into that racecar, he depends on every single member of Chip Ganassi Racing teams to make this work. Part of it is developing that cohesion, that family atmosphere, that one single goal: to win. What is that like from an owner's perspective?

CHIP GANASSI: You get into this sport and you have

this desire to win. I obviously was a driver before. When I started a team, I always wanted to have a team that drivers would want to drive for. When you have a desire to win, you try to surround yourself with like-minded people, that have that same unrelenting desire to win. It starts small with people in the team. You bring people onto the team. It sort of snowballs, this unrelenting desire to win kind of snowballs.

Drivers come along like Scott Dixon that have that same unrelenting desire to win. It feeds upon itself. I have to tell you whether it's the team members, whether it's the partners in the team, the sponsors, the PR people, the guy mopping the floor to the people that answer the phone, everybody in the organization is focused on people with an unrelenting desire to win.

I think what Matthew and the people from Universal have captured in this film is just that. That's so rare because we oftentimes are caught up in talking about cars and fans and engines and body kits, safety of course. At the essence of why people like Scott Dixon, why people like Mike Hull, the engineers, all these guys, at the essence of all that is an unrelenting desire to win. Everything else is sort of peripheral to that, if you will.

It's not often you get people in from the outside like the film people or Universal for that matter, that want to capture that. It's easy to capture the simple things like the hoopla, the fans, the food, say it's fast, same old shots you see all the time. But these guys were different. I think they wanted to get to that essence of an unrelenting desire to win. I think they've captured that.

THE MODERATOR: I don't think there's a better title than Born Racer having known in guy. One of the things that's interesting is a 17-year marriage in racing is a long time. I think about the fact, Chip, two different nights, I might be messing one date up. I remember in Richmond where Scott led every single lap and won the race. I also remember one night where Chip Ganassi Racing had the most (indiscernible). I notice in press conferences, Scott never waivers. The iceman image, we see the burning desire to win, but he has that innate understanding that you have to weather the good times and the bad times if you're going to be consistent. I think you would agree with that.

CHIP GANASSI: Yes. But there's a distinction between a burning desire to win and an unrelenting desire to win. There's a difference there. I think that's what we've been fortunate to have on this team, is an unrelenting desire.

THE MODERATOR: Emma, I think all of us, particularly the Indianapolis 500, have a great deal of empathy for the significant others. What makes racing unique among many major sports is I think we really feel we have a relationship, we know them, we're able to rub

elbows with them. We're a little nervous, you're a little nervous I'm sure. But interestingly enough, you were a highly competitive runner in your career, an elite athlete. I'm assuming that you understand exactly what it takes to be at the top, why he has to be focused sometimes solely on racing, not even on you, not even on the children, but he's focused on racing.

EMMA DIXON: Yeah, I think that has been a big help for our relationship as well, is that I do have that background. I know the dedication that goes in to being the top of your sport. I never got to fulfill my dreams as much as Scott has, but I was on that journey to get there.

To be honest, I know the girls and I have to play second fiddle. I'm actually totally fine with it because I want nothing more than for Scott to fulfill his potential. I think that's why our relationship works so well in racing.

There are times during the end of the season where he's fatigued, he's getting tired, he might have had a bad race. Then that's my competitive side. I'm like, No, let's get training. I'm keeping on track with the food, cheering him up like a coach would, like my two coaches or my manager would be there. I can definitely bring that side to his racing.

THE MODERATOR: Because of that, because of the fact that you know what it takes, and we see it in the other spouses at race time, we see them standing on the war wagon, marching back and forth, as tight as a drum, I don't know if anything would beat the elation being the person across the finish line first. I think with you, in any good relationship, you each take joy in each other's accomplishment. What is that like?

EMMA DIXON: It's so interesting you say that. I think I can speak for all the wives, fiancées, girlfriends, other halves, but when I speak of Scott's wins, I always say we. It's really bad. I catch myself saying it sometimes. The team, Chip, Scott, Mike, everybody behind the team has done very hard work.

I don't know, it collectively feels like a win for me as well. I know that's how the other wives feel it. We do the behind-the-scenes stuff. I know Scott would like a cheeky glass of wine some nights, but I'm like, No. Tonight before we go to the track, we do all that kind of stuff.

Truly when he's up on the top of the podium, I'm feeling that win, too. Not just because I love my husband and I'm proud of him, but it really does feel like a win for us.

THE MODERATOR: Scott, it is a win, is it not?

SCOTT DIXON: It is. It still is a team effort. Emma and I, the best team in my eyes. We work harder together, even being parents on the circus you go

through traveling from race to race is demanding. Emma takes a good amount of that load.

Yeah, Emma has definitely made a lot of this achievable.

THE MODERATOR: As someone who spent a lot of time at the short tracks, been called a talent scout for the next level, I sometimes go through a series of answers to a team, which is yes he's had the big crash, yes he's married, yes he has children, yes he still wants to win. I can certainly have the sense, I do, when this occurred for you, Scott, this was a plus for you. I mean, I thought you were mature beyond your years early on. But I thought when you married Emma, it sort of took your game to a little bit of a different level.

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, for sure. We're definitely opposites in some ways. But I think that's definitely made us both better. Myself, for sure, especially, being a little more outward, talking. I've had to. Not known for talking a lot, I have to get some words in there occasionally. Emma has helped there.

Also her upbringing and mine, it's been a perfect fit. It's why it works so well. It's going to continue to work very well for a long time.

THE MODERATOR: Emma, I'm comparing apples and oranges here, not trying to kid everybody in terms of the difference. During the month of May, my wife knows I'm going to be gone the entire time, she understands that. When I had younger children, she had to balance that load. How in the world do you juggle this? How do you juggle the family life, the raising of children, try to make their period as normal as it could be when you are a celebrity?

EMMA DIXON: I've been asked that a lot today. A lot of people have asked where they are. The priority is that their life is as normal as possible. They're at school today. They've got exams. It's important we keep their schedule very similar.

We have a great village around us that help. When we have to be at the track, there is somebody as good as family that is picking them up. But the girls actually, they love what daddy does. Sport is a small window. We're never like, Man, he's not coming home. It's not a thing for us in our family. Sometimes he'll go to an appearance. I'm like, Go straight to the test. It makes no sense to come home. I don't want Scott fatigued at the test. I want him doing his best job. When Scott is at home, he's very present. That's what he does so well, same as at the track, that's all he cares for.

Would I love him to sometimes wave when I catch his eye? He doesn't because he's in that moment. When he comes home, he's an amazing husband, very loving father. That's how we juggle it.

THE MODERATOR: I want to point out www.BornRacer.com, and [@BornRacerMovie](https://www.facebook.com/BornRacerMovie), you can find that on Facebook.

We'll open it up for questions.

Q. What was the timeframe for filming? Was the crew with you during all of last season?

SCOTT DIXON: It was a good majority. I think we started just before Phoenix last year. We'd obviously had a fair bit of prep before that. It went all the way through after Sonoma, actually through almost November, December. It was definitely a wide range.

They missed some of the races during the season, but a majority of them.

Q. Sounds like there's thorough coverage of what happened here last year?

SCOTT DIXON: Oh, yeah, there's plenty of that (laughter).

Q. What is it with you Kiwis? This is a nation with the population of San Diego County. We have you in IndyCar, we have Brendon Hartley in Formula 1. What is it about you Kiwis?

SCOTT DIXON: I don't know. It's hard. I think a lot of us obviously with how young we all started in racing, I've known those guys for a long time as well. There's definitely been quite of a rapid (indiscernible).

Coming from New Zealand, there's not a whole lot of resources to pull from, but there's a good key group of about 15 people that helped me to get to the junior categories, the levels I needed to progress. The same with Brendon. I was actually one of the investors in Brendon's program.

I don't know. I think some of it is the upbringing. It's funny in New Zealand, over here somebody comes to mow your lawn. In New Zealand you wouldn't even think possible of paying somebody to mow your lawn. Get out there and mow your lawn. It's a different way of living down there. You just got to get stuff done, don't think too much about it. I think that helps a little bit. Yeah, the talent is strong down there.

Q. Why is this stage in your career the right time for this movie? What is the goal? What do you hope the release of this movie is going to accomplish for you and IndyCar and racing as a whole?

SCOTT DIXON: I think the timing, obviously we're at a point in my career where we've achieved a lot. The team has, too. Across the board with what Chip alone has achieved in many different categories, winning just about every big race in the world. I think there's been a lot of desire to do something like this for quite a bit of time. It was just really trying to find the right fit, making sure the essence of what they're capturing was good.

I think for IndyCar, this is huge. It's a sport, the most exciting racing on this planet. It doesn't get the credit it deserves. I hope this alone helps capture a lot of what we do, what goes into it. Even one day, maybe it helps kids and the younger generation get into the sport that is so good and so great in many different areas, whether it's on the engineering side to pit stops, mechanic kicks. There's such a broad range. I hope it really shines a spotlight on IndyCar racing.

Q. Can you give some more details when the film will be shown, just America, New Zealand, worldwide?

CHIP GANASSI: I think in the fall. Coming to the U.S. later this year.

THE MODERATOR: Chip, let's take a good fan. They watch us. What do you think they're going to learn about IndyCar?

CHIP GANASSI: Any time someone asks you a question, you put it in your own sort of perspective. I don't know. I think Scott, when he said a documentary like this has an ability to touch so many people of all ages. I just liken it to, I don't know, I guess it was about 1966 or something when the movie Grand Prix came out, what that sparked in my career. You don't ever know something like that has a direct connection to any participation, let alone success that you have.

It was something that sparked me. Sort of that was the movie that everyone sort of judged themselves against in motorsport. It touched so many people. I think this has the ability to do something like that. I know whether it's the subject matter of the film, the cinematography of it, and the story that's told, those are all things that sort of capture different facets as well as different interests in the sport.

How do you get exposed to motor racing? Whether it's today through social, through television like most of us grew up with. We know today so many more people are accessing it through social media. More people are accessing motorsports than ever before. I think the television companies haven't figured out how to monetize that yet. The good news is more people are accessing it. Something like Born Racer comes along, the people behind it I think have a real ability to notch itself in the concrete wall of motorsports benchmarks.

THE MODERATOR: One more question.

Q. With all your success here in IndyCar in America, do you think in short or longer term future we can see an IndyCar race in New Zealand?

SCOTT DIXON: I think it's a great idea. Got to figure out how to do it.

I think all of us have raced in many different countries, even in this series. Australasia would be fantastic. I know there's been a lot of talk about racing in Australia,

back it up with a race in New Zealand. Until it happens, you just talk about it. Yeah, that would be really cool.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations to the folks that put this together. I would like to say personally thanks to each of you for the contribution you made to the sport in your own unique way. Scott, I am delighted that the period between Pole Day and race day was a little less eventful than it was.

SCOTT DIXON: Thank you.