

# IndyCar Media Conference

Friday June 1, 2018

## Ryan Hunter-Reay

## Scott Dixon

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Joined now by the fastest driver of the day, Ryan Hunter-Reay, driving the No. 28 DHL Honda for Andretti Autosport. Ryan has two podium finishes here on the Streets of Belle Isle and a best finish of second, but Ryan, off to a really good start this weekend. With the new car, how are things adjusting and changing to the track?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Oh, it's certainly busy out there, I can tell you that. I don't think anybody would be 100 percent satisfied with the balance that they have, but that's the choice. It's a lot of fun around here. You really have to wheel the car to get it done, but you know, hats off to the Andretti Autosport team. We came here with a much better car this year. I was really happy with the balance even to start out with. The car was basically doing the fundamentals that I needed it to do, the front was working well, and from there we just kept chipping away at it. We'll see. Good first practice today, but a lot riding on tomorrow with qualifying and race 1.

THE MODERATOR: With the track being as bumpy as it is, and I know this is fairly subjective, but would you say that this is one of the more physically demanding tracks that the series goes to throughout the 2018 season?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: The track actually, they've done a great job with it. Penske has put on a great show here, and they've really brought this track a long way from where it was even four years ago, massive amounts. The braking zones are all really nice, and the passing opportunities are there. It's about everything you can ask for in a street course.

I think it's more just the characteristics of the concrete surface. You're constantly -- any bump that you do have, the car never really wants to take a set because it's just not a very abrasive surface, so the tires don't really get into it, and I think that's why you're just constantly fighting it. A lot of countersteer; in one corner you're just sawing at the wheel a lot. But that's the beauty of street courses. We'll try and find a little bit more grip for tomorrow and try and start out up front.

THE MODERATOR: We've seen a lot of different diversity and parity in street course qualifying so far

this season. What are you expecting from tomorrow's qualifying session?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Anything goes in IndyCar. That's the beautiful thing about this series is anybody in the top 15 can put it up front. You just don't know what you have. Just going to have to keep working on it, keep your head down, and try and get what you need as a driver from the race car, work with the team on that, and that's about all you can do. Yeah, I couldn't even begin to predict who would be up front. Obviously Graham has had a good run here. This guy tends to be a major pain around here, as well. Anybody can end up putting that lap together. It's going to come down to hundredths of a second for sure.

THE MODERATOR: Joined now by Scott Dixon, driving the No. 9 PNC Bank Honda for Chip Ganassi Racing. Has a win here in 2012, which was the series' first race back since 2008 at the time. Scott, how did practice go for you today, and how are you liking your car, your setup that you have heading into tomorrow's qualifying?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, actually pretty happy. I think practice 2 was really good. We struggled there with the reds. I think it was like run 3 by the time we actually got a lap on the blacks in. And the speed was really good. And then we went to the reds and kind of did my out lap, and it was up a ton until Turn 13, where I never hit the fence, I think we lost like four tenths just in the one corner. So the car has got a ton of speed. We were able to match it the next lap with another mistake in Turn 5. We'll see. It's about getting the right gap here in qualifying. It's such short sessions and such a small window with the reds, it's going to be really tough to get it right. Hopefully we can have a smooth qualifying, but the PNC Bank car feels pretty decent, but there's a lot of good cars out there, as Ryan mentioned, so they're going to be extremely fast, too.

**Q. Scott, you do triathlons; is this weekend almost like competing in a triathlon because you've got track disqualifications, race, qualifications, race?**

SCOTT DIXON: It's pretty tough. It's tough for the drivers physically and mentally. It's also extremely tough on the crew. They've just come on basically a month at the speedway, and you don't even get much time before that, obviously with the races previous to starting at Indy, and then have to come in, have to prep

the cars. You just hope you have a clean weekend. If you crash on one of the races, at least the first one, it takes a big toll on them. But yeah, I actually like the double headers. Maybe a week off after Indy would be kind of nice for everybody, but nobody ever seems to want to do that, so we'll see.

**Q. And also, hopefully you don't need to use them, but Firestone has got its new rain tire. Have either of you checked it out, looked at the tread pattern and how that might work on a wet course?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, it's the new asymmetric one, which from what they've talked about, we went to Firestone early in the year, they were pretty happy with the direction they were going. It's definitely different. Hopefully it's more suitable to some of these street courses where we can get a lot of standing water. It looks like it'll do a better job with that. But until we get it try it, we'll have to wait and see.

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: I haven't seen it.

**Q. I'm just curious with just some of the track conditions, it looks like every year they come back and they try to get some of those cracks and stuff, but there's some grass growing places. How rough was it today with a couple cars going through, and a squirrel on the track. Is this an interesting course when it comes to the conditions?**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Yeah, any time you come here, even if you're happy with your car, you feel like you're sliding around. I think it's just because of the concrete surface and sudden drop-off making this track so much smoother over the past four years and making it raceable where you have passing opportunities in the brake zones. You couldn't ask for much more from a street circuit. But no, I didn't notice any grass on the track or anything like that. Maybe a little bit of pit-out, but the track looks great to me. Got to make the most of it. The good thing is it's the same for everybody, right? A lot of guys have been having trouble braking, especially once the tires start getting older. No doubt that will be a factor tomorrow in the race. Lots of squirrels around here, that's for sure. I've seen that.

**Q. You touched on it at the beginning: All four Andretti cars in the top 10 today. What kind of strides as a team, what have you been doing to get stronger on the street courses?**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: I don't know. I mean, I think we're just looking at it from what some of the things that have worked for us at the other races that don't always apply here at Detroit, and then some things that have worked in the past for us at Detroit. We're trying to mix it all up and make something happen with it. I think the communication is there, but what we had last year didn't work for us, so we had to come back with something different. Even though this is a completely different car, we had to come at it from a new approach, so I think that's most of it.

**Q. I know that surface is a big part of it with the concrete making up most of the track, but how much of the correcting we're seeing and how much different is it maybe this car to drive the car as far as the aero kit and lack of downforce this year?**

SCOTT DIXON: You're saying because of the aero kit, how different it is?

THE MODERATOR: How much of the corrections of the car that you're having to make are due to the surface versus the actual aero kit itself?

SCOTT DIXON: I think the first session seemed a lot further off, and then as we get more track reps, the actual speeds get quite close to what we've seen in previous years, which is pretty good considering we're a lot less downforce, 25 percent, 30 percent less.

But I don't know. I find this place always tricky no matter what. Any generation of car that I've been in, and even if you go back to the previous Dallara, it's always difficult around here. It's very bumpy, it's very physical, it's very hard to get right, but I think that's what makes it so much fun, too. This car, I think, the parity is definitely a lot better, I think, for a circus like this over what we had last year, from Honda to the competition, so I think that's maybe slightly better.

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Yeah.

SCOTT DIXON: But yeah, it's not a big difference.

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Yeah, I agree. I think that this place, especially this first session is always pretty green, pretty far off, and you're fighting the car. I think overall here it's just very tough to be accurate with the car lap after lap if the tires fall off because you're sliding around so much placing the car accurately over a race is one of the most difficult things about Detroit.

**Q. Scott, last year you had a fairly heroic effort finishing on the podium with a banged-up ankle from your crash at last year's 500. How much pain were you in, and how important is it to be 100 percent at a difficult track like this?**

SCOTT DIXON: It definitely wasn't super comfortable. I don't know, whatever the drugs were they gave me that I could only take for three days were pretty impressive, but I was actually quite miserable after this race going and doing Texas and then we had another crash with Sato there, and then Le Mans was not fun at all. But yeah, here I think for us, coming second in that first race was a big deal, and I think we could have finished second in the second race had we not had the problem in the pits. But yeah, I feel a lot better this year, that's for sure.