

IndyCar Media Conference

Saturday June 9, 2018

Scott Dixon

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by the winner of the DXC Technology 600, Scott Dixon, driving the No. 9 PNC Bank Honda for Chip Ganassi Racing. He is now the Verizon IndyCar Series points leader heading out of this weekend's race.

Scott, we were speaking in Detroit and we didn't know how quickly that tie would be broken with Michael. It came pretty quick. How are you feeling about tonight's accomplishment and the race overall?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, mostly just for the race, you know, I think we kind of just played it fairly cool to start with. Car felt really good out of the box. We actually ran on some pretty heavily scuffed tires. Everybody was worried about how the tire situation was going to be. I think we had eight or 10 laps on our start just to make sure we weren't going to have an issue.

I was very I guess surprised to see how that first window went. We went all the way to the pit window, until we were out of fuel, which I didn't think was going to be a possibility tonight. Yeah, we didn't really have any tire issues. There were a few marks on ours, but the speed and consistency was very good. I think Firestone did a very good job.

It's always very tough coming to these tracks each year when circumstances change with aero kits, just of the loading that we have here, especially on the right front.

Yeah, the race was smooth. Got a little tricky there towards the end. I wasn't sure, we were kind of right in the zone to try and do that last stint without a pit stop. We had to get a pretty big fuel number. That's what I was worried about. Simon and I kind of checked out. I just automatically thought the others were trying to get to the end of the race without having to do that last pit stop.

Again, pleasantly surprised once everybody pitted on the lead lap in that last pit sequence. Yeah, all around great team effort. Everybody at the PNC Bank crew was good. Car setup was obviously phenomenal. Strategy was perfect. So it's nice to have one of those nights. It's not too often you get sort of a runaway especially in the series at the moment. It was kind of cool to see for us.

THE MODERATOR: When you look at the history of classic IndyCar tracks, very historic ones, you think

about Texas Motor Speedway. This is your third win here. What does it mean to win at a track like this?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, it's always been a special place. I think Eddie and his whole team just do a fantastic job. The track has changed throughout the years, the style of racing has changed throughout the years. That changes from year to year.

But the way that he does it, you know, when you get to fire guns, wear cowboy hats, '15 since my last win, nice to get a new hat, the other one was getting a little worn out. So that was definitely a positive.

I love coming here. This event is really cool. They put a lot of effort into it. Did the Indy 500 pre media tour out here, too, so it was cool to come back and get a win in Texas.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Scott.

Q. Did your team make you aware of how much Rossi and Pagenaud were going at it behind you?

SCOTT DIXON: It seemed like even on the stint before that Pagenaud was quite quick for the first sort of five laps, then fell pretty hard. I knew that was coming. I knew the first couple laps he was going to be pushing pretty hard to try to get a move done.

Yeah, they were giving me lap times quite often. I think we were in the 18s quite a few laps, then I heard they were into the 15s, then dropped into the high 9s, 10s, 12s. We kept stretching the lead. They kept me pretty up to date on what was going on with those two guys.

You always try and build up a bit of a buffer, especially once you start getting into lap traffic. Can always be tough, especially some guys don't want to give up that lap.

Q. Seemed like you probably knew that you had Simon pretty well covered. Were you sure you had Rossi covered?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, Rossi seemed to go pretty hard at the start of the race, which we really didn't have much interest in doing. We kind of wanted to see how the tire situation was going to be. We wanted to see how bad other cars were going to get off, get to the end of the pit window.

That was the last time I saw him. I knew he was hovering around the second and third. After the

second stop, we jumped him and Wickens. Wickens was pretty strong at the start, too.

The car was pretty good. It didn't fall off. That was the positive part for us throughout the night. Even at the end of the stint, if we had clear traffic, we could still run 15s and 16s.

Q. Did you have any issues with blistering?

SCOTT DIXON: I think we had a few marks on some tires, but nothing that was performance for us. Definitely wasn't a safety issue from Firestone. They knew it wasn't going to be. They sent out a bulletin last night saying they were 100% behind the tire, it was going to be no problem.

We didn't see any issues out there. There were some marks on tires, but sometimes with these tracks, the G loads, the loading that we get, you're going to have that.

Q. Last night while some drivers were panicking about what they thought the race may end up looking like, you weren't. Why were you so confident?

SCOTT DIXON: It's always tough at Texas because we do our practices during the heat of the day. The track changes significantly once we get to the nighttime. Once the track temp goes down, the grip really comes up. I had that sensation at the end of the last practice last night. Once the track temp started to come down, the grip level really came up. I knew it was going to be a pretty good situation for the race.

I think some may have wanted it to be a little bit more closer, but it looked like in the mid pack, at least from my view when I was having to pass people, the racing was pretty tough. Definitely some side-by-side stuff, some action. It wasn't just follow the leader. It was pretty cool to race out there.

Q. Pretty different discipline, but getting ready to go to Le Mans, this has to be a pretty good confidence booster?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, nothing really applies from a mile-and-a-half banked oval to Le Mans. Yeah, it's nice to win. It's fantastic to win in the competitive series that we have right now. It's always nice to jump on a plane tomorrow and head to Paris, then to Le Mans. The race week starts kind of quickly over there with the technical inspection thing tomorrow, actually Monday, in the afternoon as soon as you get there it's kicking off.

Le Mans as an event it really cool. I think it's always hard to know how the package is going to play out until you get to the race. Pretty confident that Chip's team, the 4 GT program, is going to be strong. Our team on the 69 over there has managed to get a third place. Obviously we'll be shooting for a class win.

Q. Didn't take you long to break the tie with Michael. Now the only two ahead of you are Mario and A.J. What is it like to break the tie with Michael so quickly?

SCOTT DIXON: It's really cool. Obviously I have massive respect for a lot of these drivers. But when you look at those names, A.J. Foyt, Mario Andretti, Michael Andretti, the Unsers, to me it still seems very strange that 'Dixon' is on that list, too.

I feel very privileged and lucky to do what I get to do. I love racing. I love the Verizon IndyCar Series. I think it's the best racing on the planet, one of the most difficult with all the disciplines. For me, man, I just hope it continues. I hope we can keep a winning style, pick up wins. It's so difficult right now it's so competitive.

Yeah, I haven't seen Michael. I don't know if he came back. He might still be in Montreal. I haven't seen him yet.

Q. Back to the physicality of the event. The heat seemed to be a big deal during the day. As it cooled off, did it get easier as a driver?

SCOTT DIXON: It's still pretty hot out there. Even on the cool-down lap after it finished, I was like, Man, it's pretty hot out here. Normally you get wet from the sweat and the suit gets wet. Once you have the air blowing over, it's pretty good.

During the race it was okay. Yeah, once we stopped at the end, you could definitely feel the heat. I think I'm probably more in pain from how Chip rag dolled me there in pit lane after the race (laughter). Otherwise, the loads are high here, especially when the first 10, 15, 20 laps of the stint, it's pretty physical. The loads are higher. Still not like a street course, road course.

Q. Eight days ago you were winless for the season and not led a lap. What changed in the last eight days, if anything?

SCOTT DIXON: We won two races and led a bunch of laps. That's a positive.

I think we had great speed at the start of the year. I was disappointed with how it went down at St. Pete, how it went down at Long Beach. There's been scenarios I think even Barber, we set sights on finishing second until the rain hit. We would have been the only one that didn't have to hit on the one-stop strategy.

The speed has been there. Unfortunately we've either made mistakes as a team, I made a mistake, we just didn't really hit our stride. It's nice to finally show the speed the car has, the performance that the team has.

Yeah, it's never really anything changes, you just kind of get into more of a flow. Sometimes you're on the right side of a call.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations.

SCOTT DIXON: Thank you.