

# IndyCar Media Conference

Sunday June 24, 2018

## Scott Dixon Ryan Hunter-Reay

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are joined now by Scott Dixon, driving the No. 9 PNC Bank Honda for Chip Ganassi Racing, who finished third in today's race. This is Scott's sixth consecutive top-five finish here in 2018, including two wins at Detroit and Texas.

Scott, you started eighth, the lowest you ever started here at Road America, but were able to work your way up to the podium. What did you and team work on during the race to get you in that position?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, I think had we started a little further up, we could have had a good shot at trying to fight for the win today. The PNC Bank car had good speed. Qualifying was bad placement, that's what it came down to. Went out of the pits, five cars left in front of us, had the 10 car coming on the lap behind. It was hard to get position. Had to wave off my first lap, then the car wasn't up to temp for the second.

We struggled. Should have started a lot further up. Will had a bit of a problem. We were on the outside lane. Everybody lost momentum in that. Unfortunately when I looked in the mirror to the right, lost quite a few positions.

We had to fight to get through. The car was pretty good on the long stint. I think for us the saving grace was probably the black tire stint two. We closed a hefty gap there. We were able to save fuel early in the first stint, which enabled us to go a lap longer than everybody, had the overcut for the rest of the race.

I think speed-wise we were right there. Had a bit of a crack at Hunter-Reay on his out lap on the last stint there, but cooked it too much going into 14, got a bit loose, lost momentum. That would have been really the only chance of passing him.

All in all, great points day for us. Lead in the championship, which is important. We've definitely got to get our act together in qualifying.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Scott.

**Q. You were talking about the chance for Hunter-Reay. You're saying 14 after he came out of the pits or when he was coming out of the pits?**

SCOTT DIXON: I got to him on his out lap. It was his

out lap in 14 where I was very close to him, going into 14. Just went a little too deep, got sideways, when I was on trail break, lost momentum. That would have been a good shot. He was struggling a little bit during the race on 14. I think our car was very good on 14, 1 and 3. Yeah, just got a little aggressive there, lost momentum.

**Q. Earlier in the lap you can make the pass, no?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, there was too much of a gap. The undercut, it was the first time we tried to go the other way. We tried to undercut the leaders on reds. We thought it might have been quite good. Still getting up to speed on the out lap is not as fast as your rolling lap, even at the end of the stint.

We had to try and close that gap. I had a pretty good run on him going into Canada Corner as well. We just kept closing the gap. Tough to get close, best option would be front straight 14.

**Q. How great was a caution-free race physically?**

SCOTT DIXON: It wasn't too bad. I think everybody is pretty fit this stage of the season. The straights here are very long. On the physical side, I didn't find it that bad, to be honest.

**Q. Was it very enjoyable being at this track?**

SCOTT DIXON: I think as far as configurations here and IndyCar Road Course are as close to the packages we had last year, because we were trimmed so much in last year's configuration. I think it was a difference only of a few hundred pounds.

Here and IndyCar Road Course is the closest we had to match to last year. So all in all it still seems like people are taking a big step. Some guys were quite trim. The hard part with this aero kit is that the trim levels are pretty coarse. It's not really fine-tuning. I think that's good, because sometimes people just get it really wrong, and we saw that today.

Yeah, I don't know. I'm still not totally sold on the low downforce situation. I think the front wing needs to go through a bit of change to make the racing a little bit better. It seems like it's quite inefficient in traffic. I know everybody's working on that and looking at that for the future.

**Q. It seems like in recent races, whenever you come into the pits, you come out either ahead of somebody or having knocked off 10ths if not a full**

**second. What are you doing there? There's been a noticeable change. Is it an actual change or...**

SCOTT DIXON: I think it's something our team focuses on a lot, pit stops. It's something for me as a driver, you can pick up spots very easy. Easier to do it in the pits than out on the track. Phoenix was the first big one this year. We had a horrible qualifying, but gained several spots on the first pit stop. That was pretty significant.

Yeah, I think they're just extremely consistent. They're not trying anything fancy, they're just making sure they get through it. Over the course of a race, that really adds up.

Yeah, I think strategy has been part of it, too. The pit stop guys have been phenomenal this year.

**Q. When you were coming down the frontstretch, first and second, Newgarden and Hunter-Reay were coming out of the pits, did your eyes get big, did you think you had them?**

SCOTT DIXON: I knew the undercut was going to be difficult, especially with everybody going to new reds at the end. They come in really quick. The blacks for me at least, the first couple laps in the high-speed corners were very difficult to get the front to bite.

I actually preferred the blacks. I felt like our black stint was very strong, but the first two or three laps, you lost a ton of time.

I knew it would be interesting. But obviously, you know, two big talents in front, trying to get by them, it's going to be something else.

**Q. Josef won, Chevrolet, seven out of 10 Hondas. What's the difference on a course like this between the two?**

SCOTT DIXON: I think they're pretty evenly matched, to be honest, at the minute. They do it in a different way. I think the Honda's fuel mileage and general race power is strong. Peak power on the other side is maybe a little bit better. On the long straights here, we saw them come back, whereas Detroit they struggled a lot more with the midrange.

Yeah, I think outside of the Penske cars, the other manufacturers struggled pretty big this weekend, which is good for the Honda camp. Hopefully it carries on throughout the rest of the season.

THE MODERATOR: Scott, thank you very much.

SCOTT DIXON: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: We welcome in our second-place finisher, Ryan Hunter-Reay, driving the No. 28 DHL Honda for Andretti Autosport. A new best finish here for Ryan, also his fifth consecutive top-five finish, including a win in Detroit.

Seemed like you were going to contend for a win with Josef there throughout the whole race. Did you feel like you might have had something for him, things just changed throughout the course of the race event?

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Yeah, I felt like we had the pace for him, especially the first two stints. I really felt like it was going to be a really good race between us. Whether it be first, second, third, fourth stint, I didn't know when it was going to come.

In hindsight, I should have pressured him a bit more in the first stint. We were focused on a fuel number at the time. Unfortunately that Penske fuel number comes into play, can't really go hard.

In the end, I thought the last two stints, he did a very good job. He turned it up a bit. When he was on his reds and my blacks, I couldn't keep up with him, especially in the dirty air. We were pretty evenly matched in the last stint. Right at the end I got a little bit loose. He started to pull away a little bit more. I think the damage was done at that point.

I thought the first stint we were going to have a really good race between the two of us.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Ryan.

**Q. He led 53 of 55 laps. You think must have been an easy day. Is that selling him short? How hard was that to accomplish what he did?**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: I mean, he had a good car, stayed up front, great racecar driver. That's what he drives for Penske for, that's what he's hired to do. It wasn't easy.

We were pushing each other 110%. Then with Dixon behind us on hot tires as we came out of the pits on cold, definitely the money today.

I was hoping to make it more interesting not for TV, but for fans here. I felt like I could give him a run for his money early in the race. Just never came to fruition. I was hoping for a yellow to mix things up. Had a yellow come out, he would have been the car coming out punching the air like you see on an oval, car behind is going to have to pop out and pass somewhere. I was hoping for that scenario, but never came, though.

**Q. As you continue with these consecutive top-five finishes, you're moving up the standings. What does this weekend mean to you in terms of the championship?**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Very fortunate. That's Josef's third win of the year. That's unfortunate. Once you get into a three- and four-win category, that's where you look at past championships and usually they have three, four, five wins in them. He's getting in that territory now. We're going to have to start raking in

some more wins.

Yeah, being there, being second now in the points, continually moving up, I think back to, like, Long Beach, electrical issue we had at Indy GP. Doesn't happen. Man, we'd be way up in front.

Just got to keep pushing. Just got to keep pushing. We're going for race wins. Hopefully we can get back on our stride like we were '12, '13 and '14 at Iowa, make something happen there. That's my objective at the moment.

**Q. You've had such a strong performance at Iowa. Heading into a weekend like that, what are your thoughts knowing that you're coming off of such positive momentum?**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: It's a new car, so you don't know what you're going to have. I love that racetrack. Now if we can only add the Milwaukee Mile back on, I will be a happier person. We can put the Milwaukee Mile at the end of the season, I don't know how we do it, just to get the two, Road America and Milwaukee Mile, away from each other on the calendar.

I think I'm dreaming.

**Q. When you're coming out of the pits, here comes Dixon at full speed, did your eyes get real big thinking, Oh, no, he's got me?**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: I didn't think he got me. I knew I was going to have my hands full. Scott Dixon is not the guy you want to see coming out behind you on hot tires when you're on cold. I could see his hair on fire.

I knew I had to be patient, put the car on the marks, hit my apexes, put my power down when I needed to. We had loads of overtake left. I had a lot of (indiscernible) to go on the wing. Unfortunately I didn't get to use them on Josef.

**Q. A lot of drivers describe this as their favorite track. How rewarding is it to be able to push as hard as you can and still come up with a good result like this?**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Yeah, it's nice for sure. Starting third, I'll tell you, going green the whole way was a lot of fun. Like I said, I thought we'd be a bit better, knowing how the first outing went, the first stint went, how close we were with Josef.

Getting around here for however long it was, a full race distance, going 100%, add Road America in and IndyCar doesn't get much better than that for a driver.

Good, fun day. One position short.

THE MODERATOR: Ryan, we'll see you in Iowa.

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Thank you. Have a good day.