

IndyCar Media Conference

Sunday July 15, 2018

Scott Dixon
**Zachary Claman de
Melo**

James Hinchcliffe
Simon Pagenaud
Robert Wickens

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by James Hinchcliffe. Started ninth and finished fourth today in the Honda Indy of Toronto.

James I know it's a step lower than you finished last year, but how excited are you to have another strong finish here in your hometown, and how has the city continued to embrace you throughout years?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Given the day we had, I'm thrilled with fourth place. We got shuffled back on the start, spent the whole stint by Marco. Tried a lot of 'push to pass', but it was looking worse and worse.

On that one restart where everything went sideways, going into turn two, Takuma decided to put me in the wall. I bent my front toe link. From there on out it was a really struggle. My car changed. Nothing you can do in a pit stop to change that. Once the tires got up to temp, I learned where it was going loose, where it was pushing, we could kind of drive around it.

The Arrow car was good. I was able to keep Charlie behind us. Top five today given everything we had to fight through is tremendous. Happy for Robby to be up on the podium. Given the weekend we had, we've been pretty average all weekend to be honest, thought we had more for the race.

THE MODERATOR: I know no IndyCar racing is never easy, but seems, like, this one was exceptionally physical. What were the conditions like?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: It was tough. So bumpy. Very, very hot. That makes the track greasy. Sliding around a lot. Once we bent the car, even more difficult than it is already around here. For us it's mentally taxing, physically taxing. A few more bottles of water before we get to the celebratory drink tonight.



THE MODERATOR: Elaborate on how excited you are for your teammate getting the finish he did.

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Obviously, we came in here with high hopes. Have had setbacks on podiums through the years. Robby has been doing a great job all season. We managed to kind of stay out of trouble on those restarts. Able to capitalize from other guys having bad days today. Kept ourselves relatively out of trouble, him less than me. That's why he finished up a position ahead.

It's a shame. It would have been fun racing with him. We could have had two podiums in a row.

THE MODERATOR: I know the race is just finished. Once this weekend is over, do you ever kind of go, Aah, because of all the energy, all the people?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Yeah, no doubt. This race is obviously one of my favorite of the year. I love coming home. The support the city gives Robby, myself, the team, is just incredible. We're really lucky to get to come here and race in our backyards. A lot of guys don't get a chance to do that.

It's awesome to come home. To go through all the extra stuff that goes with being at home is obviously a lot harder. This week is very busy for us both. We came straight from Iowa, had stuff all week long. I like taking the next week off after this race. That's what we'll be doing, going up to the cottage, shutting off the cell phone. You guys are all in Mid-Ohio.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for James.

Q. This has been obviously Robert's first trip to this track. You've been here plenty of times now. What advice did you give him going into the weekend and during the weekend?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: I mean, our setup is so good because we really push each other. Every track that we're going to, a lot of them Robby is going for for the first time, for the first time in a decade. We sit down every weekend and we go over notes, go over video, he picks my brain a bit.

The big challenge of this track is just really the bumps and the multiple surface changes, getting him to understand there's no such thing as a car that feels great over an entire lap here in Toronto. You need a

pretty okay car everywhere.

Obviously like we've seen all year, every position and every situation he's been put into he's handled like a veteran. No different here this weekend. Like I said, happy for him to get a podium here at home.

Q. You started in ninth, but then you got up to fourth. Don't you think that's great? What was it that you did that was different to make that accomplishment?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: I mean, one of the big things we did different from other guys is not hit the wall too hard. Obviously some guys had some problems.

You're right, coming up from ninth to fourth is a great result. I think any frustration we feel is just from knowing that had we not damaged the car on that restart, we might have been able to get further up and get further up the grid. It's still a result we can be proud of. Certainly on a day when a lot of other guys had a bad day, we managed to come out with a pretty good result.

Q. You've been doing the Honda Indy here for a few years now. I'm not sure about you, but walking around the track this weekend, seems to be more energy with the crowd. Could you comment on how the race has grown since you started, how it felt as a driver.

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: For me, it's incredible to see the growth over the last few years. Jeff Atkinson and the team does an incredible job year in and year out of finding ways to grow this event. The city of Toronto really gets behind it, which is great. The fans are turning out, which is great.

I think now having three Canadians in the race, obviously both Robby, myself from the area, certainly helps the cause. The fact of him running well helps us. There's a lot of factors. At the end of the day these races are won and lost by the promoters. Jeff and his team have really focused on trying to improve the fan experience here. I think everybody that comes here leaves with a positive experience over the weekend, fun for the whole family.

At the end of the day we have a hell of a show on Sunday. That's what it's all about.

Q. Especially considering how the first lap went, do you feel like sometimes you're playing defense early on instead of being able to attack on your own?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: I mean, it's one of those things on lap one you're trying to go as best you can. Everybody is stacked up, trying to take advantage of mistakes. I tried to take advantage of Simon going wide in turn three there. That's what let Robby get by me at the start. You're trying to be offensive because that's the best time to make mistakes, but ultimately

you can leave yourself vulnerable, which is what happened to us today. It's a risk you take, kind of a balance as best you can on the starts and restarts.

Q. How much did the heat affect you mentally, physically? How did it affect your tires? Did it change up your plan as it got hotter in Toronto?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Yeah, I mean, it definitely affects the tires. It didn't change our plan in terms of our tire strategy. Certainly as the track temperatures go up, the oil comes up a little bit more, the tires get hotter. It's sort of a vicious cycle. You have to take care of them a little bit better when the track gets this hot.

From inside the car, yeah, I mean, it's incredibly physically taxing when you start getting dehydrated at the end of the race. I probably drank more of my water bottle inside the car than I have at any race. I knew I wanted to try to stay ahead of it, not worry about it at the end of the race. Those last 10 laps it was getting hot, dry mouth, ready to get a nice cold bottle of water. If you prepare for it, it's manageable. For sure today was tough.

Q. Dixon called this a physical race. You mentioned the contact with Takuma. It was really a rough race. Are IndyCar drivers racing harder than in your experience?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: I think this track kind of lends itself to that sort of behavior anyway. But at the same time, the series is getting more and more competitive every year. Teams are closing gaps on other teams. The quality of drivers across the field is going up. To make a move, sometimes you have to be a little bit more aggressive.

I think it's a combination of both. I think the level of aggression in the series is going up as the level of competition is going up. Certainly this track is no stranger to contact, rubbing situations, front to back. I think it's a little bit of a combination of everything.

Q. Do you know how much you're loved?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: By whom?

Q. Everybody. Everywhere we walk throughout the entire field.

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: That's very kind of you to say. I'm very, very fortunate to be in the position that I'm in, getting to race IndyCars for a living, getting to travel around the world doing it, meeting great people, great fans. I'm one of the guys that tries to not take that for granted. Really appreciate the position that I'm in and enjoy every minute of it. I try to share that with the fans as best as I can.

Before I was a driver, I was a kid with a hero card and Sharpie, trying to race Mario, Michael, Jimmy, all those guys around the paddock. For me to be on the other side of it now is a huge privilege. Trying to share the

experience with as many people as I can, what I love doing, what I'm going to continue to do. I'm glad people are enjoying it.

THE MODERATOR: James, thank you.

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: We welcome in another fellow Canadian, Zachary Claman de Melo. Started last in today's Honda Indy Toronto, but able to make his way up to a 14th-place finish.

Zachary, you made it through your first race as an IndyCar driver. Take us through the experience from start to finish what it meant for you to be a part of.

ZACHARY CLAMAN DE MELO: It was extremely special to race at the highest level of motorsports in front of a Canadian crowd. I've enjoyed it a lot. It was just a really hectic race, really hot out there. It was a tough race. I think that's what it looked like.

THE MODERATOR: It seems like, to your point, the physicality of the race, James was saying how hot and physical it was as well. How were you able to make your way up? Nine spots is no easy feat.

ZACHARY CLAMAN DE MELO: The team did a great job with strategy today. Caught some yellows at the right time which was extremely helpful for me. There's a lot of pickup on the safety car laps, I think that's what you saw when I don't know which four went off in one. Just stayed conservative this race.

THE MODERATOR: The fan support is very strong in a home country. You're joining a group of drivers that have been growing in popularity over the past many years. How did you feel you were welcomed into that family, that support from the Canadian fans here?

ZACHARY CLAMAN DE MELO: The fans were great. I expected to probably be a little bit overshadowed by Hinch and Wicky. But the fans were great all weekend. A lot of people knew me. I got a lot of support, signed a lot of autographs. Extremely cool experience.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Zachary.

Q. This is your last race now with Dale Coyne. Might have been your best finish. Are you optimistic about being able to come back next year?

ZACHARY CLAMAN DE MELO: Yeah, I mean, that's definitely the goal. I haven't really explored options for next year yet. I'm sure my manager has. I think I had a strong year. The pace has been good. Results aren't always there. I improved every race as a driver, which was my goal going into the season as I said many times. I think I showed I had the pace, kept the car out of the wall most of the year, which is always

good. The goal is to be back maybe even this year and hopefully do a full season next year.

Q. Do you think being in the car not necessarily week in, week out, but more on a regular basis, does that help your season progress?

ZACHARY CLAMAN DE MELO: I think it's definitely helpful to be in the car on a consistent basis. We had some rough patches. Being in the car more consistently helped. We were jumping a lot between ovals and road courses when I was slated to do mostly road courses. I'm glad I got to do the ovals. I was good on them. It was a strong experience.

Q. Looked tough out there today. Looking at where you go from here, what happens next?

ZACHARY CLAMAN DE MELO: I think I just get involved in every conversation. God forbid somebody gets hurt. I know Harding is in a funny situation. I want to throw my name out there, get back in the seat this year, get more experience as a driver. I have a lot of support from everyone this year, so it's been a great year. I think the main focus for me is to get back into the car next year and start working this year to get back as soon as possible, whether it be in an IndyCar. No matter what it is, I want to stay sharp and ready when I get my chance.

THE MODERATOR: Zachary, hope to see you again soon. Thank you.

ZACHARY CLAMAN DE MELO: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: We welcome in Simon Pagenaud, on a big day for your country, how excited are you to end up on the podium here?

SIMON PAGENAUD: First of all, I think it was quite incredible to see the crowd today. I think this weekend, the support is definitely on a rise. You can see the excitement from the fans. I want to thank Toronto for such great support of the Verizon IndyCar Series. For us, coming here and racing at cities and events like this is very special. Thanks to all the fans and to you guys from Toronto for the support.

Personally, it was a great day. I just wish I went one spot higher to make it a very, very special day for France. Very proud. I think we haven't had the easiest season. This new package threw us off quite a bit. But it's a testament to Team Penske, Chevy and Menards as well, obviously, for all the hard work they do in the background.

Obviously we come here every week, go racing every week, but there's a lot of work being done in the background. I want to thank everybody for that. It brought a lot of updates, it's starting to really suit me. This weekend I felt like I was back. That's my usual level of performance, which felt very positive.

In the race, I had a quiet start. We got crowded a little bit. Either I was going for it and we were all going to crash four-wide or I gave up to try to finish the race and see if I was going to get another chance, and I did.

The famous and infamous restart was a bit of a chance for me. Unfortunate for Josef. For me, it was a good opportunity to make some ground. On cold tires, I was really strong. The car was really good. That's how we made spots. Fastest guys in the pits today. I want to also thank my new crew. It's a brand-new crew this year again. My crew chief, his second podium. It's pretty cool to be able to give those guys some good results and see how good they are. So great day.

THE MODERATOR: We'll welcome in our third-place finisher, Robert Wickens. Started 10th today and gained his third podium finish of the season.

Robert, I can imagine a pretty big weekend for you, probably a pretty big day. How happy are you to end up on podium in your first Honda Indy Toronto in the Verizon IndyCar Series?

ROBERT WICKENS: Yes, it's amazing. Honestly 365 days ago I was rushing to the podium to watch Hinch. It's crazy full circle I'm here now. Honestly, it was a great day. We made our lives difficult qualifying 10th. We thought we had an okay car, but we didn't really piece it together in qualifying. We found something in warmup, but we weren't fast, so it's like one of those things. What do we do into the race? We kind of committed to it.

We were pretty fortunate there on that restart that basically got me up into second, just right place at the right time. Probably more luck than talent. But we ended up in P2 after that restart. Honestly it was the turning point of our race. For the track position, our pace was good enough to stay there.

When Simon and I got into it a little bit, I was expecting him to actually overcut me because I made a mistake on my out lap, I was kind of cursing myself the whole lap thinking, Oh, God, this should be interesting.

SIMON PAGENAUD: I made one on my inlap.

ROBERT WICKENS: I was thinking, I need a little bit more, a little bit more. I tried going into one. He defended it. We had a little contact there. Then it was kind of a dogfight straight up at turn three. I broke as late as I could, probably the latest through the entire race. Give credit when it's due, Simon was able to match it on cold tires. Hats off to him.

Then it was just good, hard racing. I was ultimately maybe hoping for a little bit more space on the exit. When the guy is on cold tires, you can only expect so much because he's trying to get as much grip as he can.

All in all, I thought it was a great day. Yeah, a little bit lost for words to be on the podium here. It's so cool.

THE MODERATOR: I don't even have to awkwardly write it up. I was going to have each of you give your perspective. From our perspective watching the screens, that battle between the two of you is one of the key moments of the race. What was your perception on that battle, Simon, how it shaped your podium finish?

SIMON PAGENAUD: I think it's IndyCar racing. It's hard racing on the streets of Toronto. Two cars that are battling for the same real estate. I'm coming out on cold tires in a position advantage. Robert tried. He had to go into turn one as deep as he could. I really thought I was actually going to crash in turn one after we had contact.

But I managed to get a really good run out of turn one. From there, I was like, Okay, now I'm defending as hard as I can. I have to keep this position.

It's my job to keep my position and try as hard as I can. Obviously it's not about running each other into the walls or crashing together. The key is to just be on the limit of that.

Certainly was on the limit, but two very professional racers in my opinion that just raced really hard. That's what IndyCar is about.

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

Q. Simon, Scott brushed the wall.

SIMON PAGENAUD: I saw.

Q. You were able to cut down his gap fairly significantly. What happened after that in terms of he was able to pull it back up again?

SIMON PAGENAUD: Binder didn't help. Closed the gap, made Scott's life difficult, my life difficult. C'mon, man. It's the end of the race. Getting really close here. Make it easy on people.

But it doesn't take much with these cars. With so much on the limit, just takes your air away a little bit, you start sliding around. I lost a little bit of time on Scott. I have to say he was really, really fast. It would have been really tough for me to match him.

I thought I had something and I tried. But gave it everything I had.

Q. Robert, with so much pressure and attention on you and James coming into this weekend, how do you live up to all that attention the way you guys did today?

ROBERT WICKENS: Yeah, I mean, I think I would take a home race every race, if I could. It's such a cool

feeling. I've never had one as a professional driver. To come here and take in how good the Toronto fans are. What makes it even cooler is it's not just me saying it, Simon mentioned it, Scott mentioned it. The fans here in Toronto are one of the best on the calendar.

To be Canadian, to just embrace the whole thing, to get out of the car, hear the grandstand roar, it brought me goosebumps. Hopefully it's those feelings that you wake up tomorrow morning to go to the gym to be better and to try to improve your position.

Q. Seems like there's no hard feelings despite being aggressive. Is that the brotherhood of racecar drivers?

ROBERT WICKENS: I think it's because we both made it through.

SIMON PAGENAUD: I for sure agree. For sure agree.

ROBERT WICKENS: I think if one of us didn't finish, I think there would be very different feelings.

SIMON PAGENAUD: Quite true.

ROBERT WICKENS: To be honest, we were both right on the edge. I think that's what IndyCar racing is all about. We both definitely pushed the boundaries, but we didn't go too far where you just destroy the other guy. I think that's where the limit was.

Q. Robert, you and James both have climbed up in the race after the incident at turn one that involved several cars. From your perspective, what was that like?

ROBERT WICKENS: Fortunately I was ahead of it already. No, I mean, I don't know what happened in turn one that caused the yellow. I know that restart was crazy. It was so slippery. It was weird. It wasn't that much like pickup or marbles on the track at that stage. Man, there was rubber flying off of the tires a lot, just trying to clean the tire constantly.

I just got a super lucky restart. Josef got a little bit wide in turn 11 coming to the green. It was just right place at the right time. Basically everyone else was checking up for Josef. I looked up at the flagger, I saw the green waving, I had a run, the seas just parted. I had an open line down the inside to turn one, and I took it.

When you do a move like that, you have to face everyone around is aware of your surroundings. When someone is coming from sixth to second, it could go wrong because not everyone is expecting that to happen.

Q. Robert, looking back as this race, some of your best races have been on street courses. Does racing in Europe lend a hand to you in racetracks you've never raced on before?

ROBERT WICKENS: I don't think so, to be honest with

you. I've just always as a kid, I've always loved racing on temporary circuits. I think they just really cater to my driving style. I'm a driver that I'm never really like 110%. I'm always around 98. I'm not the guy that's going to be putting wheels off even on a permanent circuit. My whole style of driving, I feel like I'm not really putting myself out there to be vulnerable for incidents.

I feel like on a street course, I can keep that same tempo and driving style. Something I've taken with me. My best track in DTM was a street course. I don't know if there's anything related there. I'm definitely pretty comfortable on street courses here as well.

Q. Simon, you mentioned having to be less aggressive early in the incident that dropped you back three or four spots. How much of a factor do you think that played in your mentality for the rest of the race, including that incident with Robert?

SIMON PAGENAUD: I was really upset, that's for sure. I mean, you do all that work, qualify the best you can, by turn one I was seventh. Man, what just happened? So you have to obviously rebound from there. You just can't wait and continue to dig a hole. Just keep going, keep trying to find more positive.

That point started saving as much fuel as I could, which helped. Then people were starting to make mistakes. I think they were pushing on the restarts, all the guys in front, started making mistakes. I thought my car was pretty good. Certainly when the restarts happened, I went the other way. I went through attack mode. I took chances.

After that, it was a battle with Robert all the way to the end. So definitely changed into full attack mode after that.

Q. Robert, you mentioned a year ago going to Victory Lane to greet Hinchcliffe. Did you ever think it would be reversed a year later?

ROBERT WICKENS: Well, a year ago I didn't know that I was going to be racing in the Verizon IndyCar Series. Honestly, to answer that question, no, I wasn't expecting to be here a year later. But life's a crazy thing. It's hard to kind of predict the future. I like to think that I'm just kind of a perfect example of that.

But it's just been a great day, a great week, been a pretty good year to be honest with you. This is our third top five in a row. It would be great if we could keep up this momentum.

Q. Robert, a lot has been made about your rivalry with Alexander Rossi. This week in the press, Paul Tracy addressed the fact that he thinks IndyCar needs rivalries that extend off the track. Do you agree with that? Do you think the camaraderie among drivers is what strengthens the sport?

SIMON PAGENAUD: I want to see it happen in the

driving lot, the fight, boxing and stuff (laughter).

ROBERT WICKENS: I'll openly say I've never punched a human being before. I sparred once, but...

Honestly, I'm a believer that you don't need to fight the guy in person to have a rivalry. I think what we're doing, we're both very fierce competitors, but maybe I respect him more than he respects me, maybe that's the problem. At the moment I think -- I don't know what happened, so I'm not going to say anything. I thought he had a broken front wing. He was in the wall the next corner, so I don't know what happened. I'm kind of piecing it together.

No, but honestly, he's an aggressive driver. Some days it's going to work for him and some days it's not.

Q. Robert, lots of family and friends here. What does it mean to you to be able to share that moment with so many people close to you?

ROBERT WICKENS: It was amazing. Honestly, that last stint there, I'm like I'm going to go all in to try to get by Simon while he's on cold tires. I knew it was my only chance. Once it didn't work, I was still kind of pushing. We had to save fuel a little bit.

I was honestly pretty content with P3 there. Then I saw that we were both catching Scott. I'm like, Okay, game on. Started pushing more and more. Noticed I was closing in a little bit on Simon. I was like, Okay. I went from chill mode to, Okay, let's get greedy and go for more. Then I nearly crashed. I decided that I'm going to back it back down.

In this series, I'm learning it's so unpredictable. 20 laps left, I'm a comfy third, then there's times like I'm, Oh, my God, we have a shot at winning this thing, then back to a comfy third. Something I'm not used to. A lot of European racing is not stagnant, but pretty predictable. Here anything can happen.

Q. There was a lot of talk before the race that turn three was the turn everybody was worried about, then it really turned out to be turn one. Did that surprise you when you realized that was the turn you had to be careful of?

SIMON PAGENAUD: I think actually kind of 11 was tough. The thing is, the line was actually changing throughout the race. It was getting more and more marbled. Turn shallower to get closer to the inside wall. It was getting really tough. On the restart, you could see it was very difficult.

Turn one was actually not a big deal. I think it just started in turn 11, that section 9, 10, 11 was really tough today. I think that's what happened.

ROBERT WICKENS: Nailed it.

Q. You both like street courses?

SIMON PAGENAUD: Yeah.

ROBERT WICKENS: Yeah.

Q. The layout specifically here, what do you think?

SIMON PAGENAUD: Yes, awesome. It's an awesome track. I mean, again, this year they made improvement on the track. It's a lot less bumpy, which personally I like the bumpiness because it's more difficult to drive, it rewards good cars, good drivers. This year was a lot easier to drive into turn one.

But overall, it's an awesome track. I think it creates great racing. I think it's one of the most dicey races we have all the year. Like Robert said, anything can happen any time of the race, yellows and restarts. Yeah, I've led the race and finished 22nd in 2013 actually. Anything can happen here.

Q. A lot of racers and drivers have coaches. Is there any coaches that you had that you would like to give a shout out to?

ROBERT WICKENS: Oh, man. Testing me. I mean, honestly I've had a lot of help along the way. I'm definitely not a one-man band doing it on my own. Biggest thing, epiphany I had in in my career is three years ago I took on a mental coach. That was a huge help for me. I was at a pretty low point of my DTM career, figured why not.

It's weird, in motorsports growing up, it was always if you had a mental coach, it was because you weren't strong enough. It's just insane, because if you look at all the other sports in the world, in my opinion, tennis players I think are the best athletes in the world. The team they have built around them is insane. I don't understand why in motorsport if you have a driver coach or mental coach you're seen as possibly weaker.

That was a big thing for me. I still work with him today. To be honest, in the Verizon IndyCar Series, our driver coach at Schmidt Peterson Bob is doing a great job. He's been carrying me a lot on ovals. He just has such a good eye.

SIMON PAGENAUD: I brought him there actually.

ROBERT WICKENS: Thank you.

There's been so many people that's helped me get to where I am today.

SIMON PAGENAUD: Personally, that's a great question, my favorite journalist here. Sorry guys. Gil de Ferran for me has been a tremendous mentor. It was a very interesting part of my career because we were actually teammates in a sports car. The first time I could feel what he thought was a great car. I could actually feel it. That's very unusual to have that chance. We were sharing the same ride. He was setting up the racecar, telling me how it should be. I

would try it. We would talk about it overnight. He had the things that he liked, I had the things I liked. He was like an open book to me, and he still is. It's been life changing to get to work with him.

Obviously there were a lot of people along the way. Sebastien Bourdais helped me come to the U.S. Derrick Walker was a great manager. It's about meeting the key people and getting those opportunities and maximizing it. All about meeting the right people.

Q. We're heading into a point of the year going to a track where Scott Dixon is very good at. Obviously nobody is giving up yet.

ROBERT WICKENS: Is there a track he's not good at?

Q. How tough is going to be to keep him from winning the championship?

SIMON PAGENAUD: Which one is it?

Q. Mid-Ohio.

SIMON PAGENAUD: How many times has he won there? Too many, yeah.

Yeah, he's good there. Sometimes he's unlucky, too. We all did. It's just part of life. Yeah, get to work and find a way to beat him.

ROBERT WICKENS: Testing there on Tuesday. Work starts.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations. Thank you very much for your time.

SIMON PAGENAUD: Thank you.

ROBERT WICKENS: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by the winner of Honda Indy of Toronto, Scott Dixon. Moves him to three wins here on the streets of Toronto and three wins in 2018, his 44th career win.

Scott, take us through what was going through your mind when you're going through the restart and you see Josef, the race leader, hit the wall and you're able to sweep past?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, quickly thinking I can't believe this is happening to you get to one and three, I don't want to do the same thing. It's very nerve-wracking.

Sort of backing up into that restart, we'd been under caution for three, four, five laps, I don't know exactly what it was. It didn't seem like Josef was in any hurry to warm up his tires, which I thought was kind of bold. I don't know what their strategy was. They were really trying to save fuel and open up their pit window. We spent a lot of time under that caution trying to make sure the tires had heat.

When the tires are hot, as you're cooling down, they can pick up so many things, all the dirt out of the grooves, rubber, seems like there's a lot of seams around the circuit, especially on the back straight. Picks up a lot of that stuff. I think he just had a ton of pickup. When I saw it, the seas were parting, away we went, which for us, especially for the championship, he's our closest competitor right now.

I didn't expect it for one, but it was good for us, for our day. I think the PNC Bank car was definitely fast. We seemed to be a lot of faster than them on the first 10 to 15 laps of the stint. Definitely, because we sat so close to him, started to burn our tires off a little bit quicker. That's where our race was won today, was through the bad luck or bad situation that Josef had.

But had we found clear air in any part of the race, we would have been able to.

THE MODERATOR: Do you feel that is how the race was won? It seems like you had a lot of opportunities and were closing in on him before the restart.

SCOTT DIXON: We were definitely giving him a lot of pressure. The start, had a really good run. He did the obvious thing right, that was to throw the car in there and use up all of the road. I think had he given me a little bit more room in one or three, we would have got around the outside. I could see he released the brake was and rolling speed, was going to use all of the track. Had I not got out of it, we both would have hit each other.

I think especially on the black tires, once we got to the black tires, we closed that gap really quickly. I think he seemed like he was struggling a little bit more on the blacks. It's hard to say. Without that caution, maybe we would have had the opportunity. He would have made it very difficult to get past. He's a hell of a driver, and it would have been difficult, but I think as far as pace goes, I think we definitely had more pace than them.

THE MODERATOR: You would think you would have clean air after that. You ended up behind Ryan Hunter-Reay for many laps and didn't get the clean air until late in the race. How hard was it to stay patient?

SCOTT DIXON: It was difficult. We caught him pretty quickly. I made a pretty good run at him. He was struggling out of one and two down the back straight. He was blocking a bit.

It's a tough situation to be in, right? You're waiting for a caution, the last car on the lead lap. But in our defense, it was backing us into Will, which Will wasn't a problem, but Pagenaud was coming. We had a six-second lead, that got down to less than two seconds. We were kind of monitoring that.

I knew as soon as we got clear of Ryan, we'd be able to turn it up again. I think our first lap with a clear track, we were able to go about a second and a half faster.

It is what it is. I know what Ryan was trying to do. It's a crappy situation to be in, but he was racing for his race, too. He's still pretty deep in the championship.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Scott.

Q. (Question about heading into Mid-Ohio.)

SCOTT DIXON: You can't really rely on past results, especially this year we've had a lot of big changes with the car. I think especially with some of those circuits, we found when we did the first universal aero kit test at Mid-Ohio, it didn't really work well with our setup. We're one of the two teams that will be testing there and Sonoma, our test days we get in season. Hopefully we can use that to get a bit of an advantage. We test there on Tuesday, then have the week off.

You hope for a good race. It's been good for us in the past. It's not something we can use to our advantage without having been there with the new car. Josef was extremely fast last year, too, ended up getting the win. I think right now Penske have done a good job with their qualifying, won a lot of poles this year. Disappointed in myself yesterday we kind of gave that away. I think we really had the speed to get it done. I made a mistake.

I love going to Mid-Ohio. I love the track. I think these cars are going to run really well there. Yeah, but doesn't guarantee us much.

Q. Mid-Ohio is coming up next. It's a track you did very well at. A handful of races left. Leading the championship, how do you not get too comfortable?

SCOTT DIXON: It's an easy trap to fall into. You just got to treat it as one race weekend, go there with the mindset of being fastest in the first practice, second practice, being fastest in qualifying. Definitely can't get complacent. With the competition, it can turn so quickly. All it takes is for me to make a mistake or the car to have a mechanical, which last year at Mid-Ohio, that's where we lost the lead in the championship.

It can turn very quickly, as we saw this weekend, and even last weekend at Iowa. Just got to keep your head down, man, keep focus. Nothing comes easy. All of us, every single person on the team, has to put in the hard work. By the end of the year, when you look back on it, hopefully it pays off.

Q. How did the new track surface feel in a race setting? How do you feel it might have impacted of the increased on-track action we've seen from previous years?

SCOTT DIXON: I think definitely for the restarts, being up front where we were, I tried on the first lap in one to

get around the outside of Josef. The tricky part there is the concrete patch. They've done a really nice, smooth transition, but it's a transition to a slip and slide. Once the tire gets temperature, it's actually quite grippy there.

I think from the restarts, it looks like there was a ton of action going on, whereas the previous year it was very tough. It was so bumpy, you couldn't really use the inside lane very much. I know even on the start, there was four-wide behind us my spotter was saying.

I think it's great to see those areas improve. I think the concrete patches, they can maybe do a little bit of grinding on them to get some grooves in there. I think it will be really beneficial.

Q. Do you feel any pressure because you're leading up to A.J. Foyt's record?

SCOTT DIXON: I think A.J. is pretty safe. He's a long ways ahead. I think for us, we take it race by race. We're in the business of winning races. If we're not doing that, I won't have a job for too long. That's the focus for right now.

Going into next two weeks, the focus is to try and win Mid-Ohio. Right now with 44 wins, next on the list is Mario I think at 52 or something. We'll see how it goes. Right now just trying to get the job done for the team.

Q. How does it feel to get another win up here in Toronto? Elite company with Will Power and Franchitti. How does three feel?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, it's pretty sweet. I'll have to call Dario tonight and say I finally tied him at something.

It's cool. I love coming here. I think the first time I came here was in 1999 in Indy Lights. I love the fans here. They're very knowledgeable, very enthusiastic. I think it's really special, too, to have Hinch and Wickens. Everybody calls him Wicky now. It's nice to have him and de Melo, as well. I don't know if French Canadian applies to Toronto or not.

It's cool to see the support even on the Victory Lane there or whatever, to see all the Canadian flags and the following those two have. It's special and strong for the sport and the future. But I love coming to Toronto. I feel like it's kind of my closest home. I'm part of the Commonwealth, which is nice. Bit of a longshot there, but I'll take it.

Yeah, I love racing Toronto. It's a cool venue, great people, and fans are fantastic.

Q. Racing a Honda here, they put a lot of money into this race, how does it feel?

SCOTT DIXON: Hopefully Honda keep giving some more money. That would be good. It was good for us to win in Detroit, then I think to win here is obviously a Honda home track, St. Pete with Sebastien, then

another weekend for Honda in two weeks, the factory people, a ton of factories in Ohio there. It feels nice. I know Art was very happy, smiling from ear to ear in Victory Lane there.

They've put in a lot of effort. Honda are definitely in the laying down. The engine performance, the liability, even the fuel mileage I think has been a huge part of what we've been able to accomplish.

Q. 2013 you win here twice, now another win here. Your thoughts on maybe some of the similarities and differences between all three wins?

SCOTT DIXON: I think as I said earlier we're in the business of trying to win. That's the focus. There are some tracks we haven't won at that I'd like to win at. Yeah, Toronto I think, it's funny, as you go from track to track, you remember the ones that slipped away or you lost more than the ones that you've won unfortunately. It's kind of weird out that works. 2013 was extremely special, to win both the Saturday race and the Sunday race. Graham Rahal last year did it at Detroit. It's tough to do, but it's a lot of fun.

Yeah, I don't know, we'll keep focusing on trying to win any race no matter where it is, but winning here is very special.

Q. The win records?

SCOTT DIXON: Eight is an infinity away. Takes a long time to get eight.

Q. You talked about the surface here. It looks weird, but seems to race quite well.

SCOTT DIXON: Street courses, I actually even liked last year's track. I think there was a pretty big group of drivers that disliked the frontstretch last year. You have to have character. Much like Iowa. When Iowa was brand-new, it was smooth, you were flat out, it was not that difficult. These tracks are really tough. They're going from really high grip, new top seal like we were on the frontstretch, to probably 15-year-old concrete that's polished. It's tough.

You have to try and work every night on trying to make the car better in specific places, but then others there's a lot of compromise. It can catch you out very quickly, too. These tracks are very high concentration. The street courses, F1 race on them occasion. They have road courses anyway, not anything like what we have to deal with. It's a big part of the Verizon IndyCar Series, that's what makes it special, the diversity we have. Real street courses, some amazing road courses, some pretty sweet ovals. I think, I don't know, I enjoy it immensely.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much.