

IndyCar Media Conference

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Scott Dixon

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: You'll be starting first in tomorrow's race. How helpful is that for you? Obviously qualifying is important anywhere we go but particularly at this track.

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, I think ultimately everybody wants to qualify. It's just difficult when you're coming into a track with a new aero kit, and we only had, I think, 22 minutes of green time. You know, I think in some ways, or in many ways, I think IndyCar made the right decision as far as trying to put a priority on getting some running tonight in hopefully dry conditions that will benefit for everybody for race setup and that kind of stuff later on. It was going to be hard, I think, schedule-wise to try to get everything in. I'm sure there will be guys that are not happy about it. For us it works out great because we're leading the points, but ultimately, too, I think our car was pretty good. Would we have got the pole? Maybe, maybe not, but right now we're just trying to focus on getting some changes for tonight's practice and obviously make the race car a little bit better.

THE MODERATOR: From what we can see of tomorrow's forecast, it does seem like quite different conditions with some heat expected, but how helpful will tonight's extended practice session be heading into tomorrow's race?

SCOTT DIXON: I think definitely more beneficial for -- again, I say some people are going to be happy, some aren't. There was definitely probably eight or ten cars that tested here, they probably want to see less track time. But I think for all the others, it will be very beneficial to get some proper running in. For a safety side, too, I think it's important, especially to have in and out laps, understand the pit exit and pit entry but also to make sure you know what the car is going to do in traffic. The first practice a lot of people spend a lot of time trying to get clear track and understand the balance for qualifying. I think it's good for everybody to get some proper race running in tonight and understand their cars a little bit better come the race tomorrow.

Q. As far as the points race, does it help having your main contender right there next to you? You can kind of keep an eye on each other, and you know that if you finish close to each other, he hasn't really gained much on you in the points?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, it's never just one, right? I think

at the moment there's still quite a few that have a great shot. They've definitely been on a strong run of recent. They seem to have rolled off good here. They were one of the teams that tested here, so we expected that. But yeah, we'll just stick to our own strategy and try and make the car better. There's no point in us sort of trying to follow along what they're up to. We just need to keep our heads down and try and make the most of it.

Q. Scott, you didn't do much running so far, but when you were on the track, was it completely dry, or was there some wet points somewhere on the track?

SCOTT DIXON: There were some periods where when you would leave pit exit and you could see a bit of moisture on your advise or. But I think they did a fantastic job with the track. Obviously the pit exit and entry, pit exit especially was hard to keep dry. I think the grass is holding quite a bit of water down there. So those I think everybody was being very cautious to make sure that there was no issue there. But yeah, the track, they've done a great job.

Q. You said that you will do some changes to the car, make it better. Can you say in which areas you will change the car?

SCOTT DIXON: I think, you know, the difficult part of coming here and having not tested here is the track has changed -- the car obviously has changed. We're almost a thousand pounds less downforce than what we had last year. There's new dumps in different places, trying to get ride heights, just the basics, just trying to understand the basics. That's why we were really trying to make sure we got at least a run or two in in the practice just now to make sure we could get those areas better. But yeah, I think the car rolled off very neutral, which I liked. We kind of de-tuned that a little bit, and I think we went the wrong way, so I think we'll probably chase that up again.

Q. In ideal track conditions, last year's pole time was 189 miles an hour; how close do you think you guys would have got to that now?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, I don't know. Tracks on the mile-and-a-half time -- was it 23? Yeah, so I don't know, I think Rossi ran a 24.4. I don't think a 24 would have been broken. But it's definitely interesting looking at the overlays, how much faster we are on the straights and still some guys are flat in 3 and 4. You're hauling the mail through there now.

Q. You'll know more after tonight's practice, but will tomorrow's race be closer to an Iowa race or a Phoenix race?

SCOTT DIXON: You know, it's hard to tell. I was actually kind of surprised, I think, with some of the running we just did then, there was some cars that you could definitely get a run on through 3 and 4. With more track time, they'll probably get a little bit better, but it still seemed like there was cars that were going to fall off pretty hefty. And it seems with the banking, at least in 3 and 4, you can still get quite close and get a really good run down the front. The difference with Iowa is you just have so many options, right; you've got two or three lanes, whereas here you don't. You've kind of got to tee it up and line it up more like a road course pass and opportunity in a situation like that. I definitely think good cars will be passing bad cars.

I don't know, it's hard to predict. I think the race running to what people do in practice is vastly different.