

# IndyCar Media Conference

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## Alexander Rossi

## Scott Dixon

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Joined now by our second-place finisher, Alexander Rossi, driving the No. 27 NAPA Auto Parts Honda for Andretti Autosport. This is Alex's third consecutive podium. Alex, obviously as cars are going by you as you're on this different strategy, I imagine it could be a little bit frustrating. How do you keep your focus in a situation like that?

ALEXANDER ROSSI: Just a great car and great team and great group of people talking me through it because you're absolutely right; it's a mental game. It's a mental game because you're trying to obviously hit a fuel number to go X amount of laps, and it was a very, very big fuel number, and unlike the 500 in 2016, I didn't have a teammate to tote me around, so I had to figure out how to do it myself, which was a big challenge.

But huge hats off to Rob Edwards and the whole 27 NAPA Andretti team for coming up with it and keeping the faith that I could manage it. It was just enough at the end. Obviously you want to win the race, but the goal really is to beat Scott, and we were able to do that, despite it only be a couple-point swing. It's something, right? So we'll take that and we'll refocus and recenter ahead of Portland.

THE MODERATOR: (No microphone.)

ALEXANDER ROSSI: They still mean a lot just because of the view of Sonoma being double points. It's that much bigger of a swing. So the goal right now is just to hopefully get within 20 points going into Sonoma, and then it can really be about who beats the other person type of thing. That's where our focus is, and we have found some road course performance definitely in the second half of this year, so got two road courses coming up. Portland is a very unknown challenge for us all, so it'll be interesting to get on track there, and I have complete faith that Andretti Autosport as a whole will build great race cars and we'll be able to be competitive.

**Q. Alex, I think you tested here before. With all this fuel saving stuff going on, is it possible in principle to simulate the test in fuel saving mode for the race?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: You never believe that you're going to need to fuel save as much as we did, so you

can definitely practice it and find ways to achieve better mileage, but what we were looking for at the end was pretty astronomical, so I don't think you ever really think that that's going to be the scenario until you're forced into it, and then you've just got to think on your feet and experiment and try and make it happen, so yeah, but I think it's not a complete understanding. You only have a partial understanding from a test.

**Q. The second question, your teammate, Ryan Hunter-Reay dropped out with engine problems. Were you a little bit scared when you were informed that maybe similar things could happen to you?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: I had no idea what happened to him. They didn't talk to me about it. Obviously I saw him slow down. Obviously I was disappointed for him because I didn't have a teammate around, but yeah, with him having a great race, he could have definitely been on the podium, as well, so it's unfortunate that that happened.

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by Scott Dixon, driving the No. 9 PNC Bank Honda for Chip Ganassi Racing. Finished second in last year's race here at Gateway Motorsports Park. Scott, obviously the race developed with the idea of different strategies, but how did the race develop after starting from pole and ultimately only losing three points to Alex in the championship?

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, it was a bit of an interesting night. I think early on we were probably burning too much fuel, which I didn't think that was going to be the case, but when we pitted fairly early compared to some of our competitors, obviously that didn't make any difference for me at that reset with 70 or whatever to go. I don't even know how many it was to go. A lot. And then it was kind of split strategy to save the fuel or to go. And then for us actually, and I'll take the blame for it, we kind of sat in no man's land doing halfway of each trying to make a decision of where we were going. Ultimately we lost a ton of time to the 12, and then by the time we did get after it, it made that strategy maybe not so perfect.

The Andretti guys and Rossi did a fantastic job making that no-stop situation work, and obviously a big congrats to Will. Great speed at the end of the race. He was pretty good in traffic and was able to go on to the victory there.

**Q. Alex, did you have complete trust that the strategy was going to work, or at any point during that stint were you kind of sitting there starting to do a slow simmer about, man, I'm getting sold down the river here, I'm all the way down to ninth, it's going to be hard to get back up to finish ahead of Scott, especially if the yellow came out?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: No, I mean, it was difficult to achieve what we were trying to achieve, but the 27 NAPA guys have definitely done this before. So it wasn't our first rodeo, and I definitely had confidence in the people on the pit stand who are giving me those numbers and making the calculations to make sure we can get to the end. It's frustrating, but you've just got to be patient with it, and yeah, at the end of the day, you're relieved that it works out because always there's that thought in your mind that it would suck if it didn't, but we're going to have to be pretty aggressive, so I wasn't going to be upset. I'd rather honestly finish second going down swinging and trying to win the championship than finish second and just trying to accept that.

**Q. Alex, speaking of being aggressive, there was a run there you hung on the outside probably a little longer than you may have wanted to, and several of us all, oh, crap, there went the championship, but you saved it. What went through your mind when you wiggled over there?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: A lot of bad words. It was one of those ones where I had pretty much given up, and it just came back really probably by the grace of God because I was on the brakes and ready to hit the wall, so it just kind of corrected itself, and that was a pretty big blessing I got there.

**Q. Were you informed of that incident, hey, don't go up there?**

SCOTT DIXON: Not really, no. We were having our own problems. I didn't hear anything. I think they mentioned some cars losing some spots trying to high line, but they didn't specifically say who it was.

**Q. Scott, I think around lap 149, 150, Will Power overtook you. Was it coming as a surprise, or you saw him coming?**

SCOTT DIXON: No, they were pretty hard for me for trying to get the fuel number. At that point I think we were going to be a lap or two short, so I figured it was best to try and get the mileage where we could. He was definitely fast, but they were able to -- they had stretched the window beforehand. We started to fall into that spiral where we hadn't been getting the mileage that we needed to. Yeah, it was just a bit of a sitting duck, you know. I don't think anywhere at the point through that middle part of the race anybody was going hard, it was just coasting and trying to maintain your spot without screwing yourself.

**Q. Alex, you guys got Portland coming up and the series hasn't been there since 2007, so what's it**

**like coming into an unknown challenge with such a big race?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: It's really no different than any other race. We're fortunate that we get a day of testing there. I think by the time we get to qualifying on Saturday, we'll have a pretty good idea of what we need and how to extract the performance out of the car and the track. But really excited to go there. I went out there before the 500 during the month of May, and the whole northwest region is super excited to have IndyCar come back, and it's always great to add new tracks to the calendar, so it's an exciting opportunity for us, and hopefully it's a friendly track for us.

**Q. In the first stint when you were leading, Scott, and then Will was second and Alex was third, you got tucked up behind I believe it was Ed Carpenter for a long, long time. Do you think there should have been better cooperation from the back markers?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, we basically were just trying to maintain the gap and get fuel mileage. When we started to talk about it was probably a little late at that point, but yeah, it was just strictly to try and get fuel mileage. I think everybody did a pretty good job tonight. You could get a big run if you needed to. I think that middle part and the first part, everybody was just kind of cruising along there. It probably didn't look too great, but it was pretty hectic there at the end.

**Q. With the championship aside and also fuel strategies, this is a new track relatively for Indy, so what I'd like to know from you guys is the racing strategy when you're in that car, not when we're talking to you. What's the biggest challenge of this track to you, and do you see a difference from last year to this year?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: There's definitely a difference from the two years. Just with the aero kit changes, and it's a great racetrack. It's very unique for a short oval because you have almost like a road course corner for Turn 1 and 2 and then a more traditional mile-and-a-half, mile oval in Turn 3 and 4. So you've got to have like two completely different driving styles, which you sometimes get on the bigger ovals. It's pretty unique to have it like that, and the track and the promoters did an amazing job and the facility and how they repaved the lane for us and just all the kind of improvements. It was a joy to drive here and in front of a great fan base, as well.

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, it's awesome. I'd hate to be paying for the fireworks that were here. That went for a good solid maybe 30 minutes. But yeah, it's a fantastic track. I was lucky enough to race here in the early 2000s. I think as Alex said, just the promoters and just the energy, even going downtown, they had a couple events throughout the week, and just the vibe and the interest and the knowledge of the sport, it's really cool to be a part of that, and obviously the crowd that we had tonight. It's awesome to come to places like that.

**Q. Does it make you drive faster when you have this kind of vibe?**

SCOTT DIXON: The competition does, but yeah, no, it's cool. You don't want to come here and drive in front of three people and a dog. You want to race around with a lot of people in the stands. It's cool to see, as I said, just the atmosphere is great and the people.

**Q. The further along we get in this championship, have you all found each other maybe racing each other a little differently, maybe giving each other less space on track, and do you anticipate that moving closer to Sonoma?**

ALEXANDER ROSSI: We didn't really see each other tonight to be honest with you. That was more probably Will and Josef. No, I think we've always raced each other pretty hard. That's just the nature of how we are. Yeah, I don't see that really changing obviously come Sonoma. There's a lot on the line there, so who knows what will be the case. But again, I'm the one who hasn't won any championships and he's problem four, so I should probably take a page out of his book and see what he's done in the past.

SCOTT DIXON: No, you know, I enjoy racing Alex. I enjoy racing everybody in the field. So yeah, you know, it's always tough when it comes down to the wire. But I think you have that situation throughout the season. Everybody at this level, you do everything you can to try and get one race win. It's no different week in, week out. Obviously as Alex said, coming down to Sonoma, there's a little bit more on the line, but strictly you've got to treat it as any other race. But yeah, I enjoy racing everybody.