

IndyCar Media Conference

Sunday September 16, 2018

Chip Ganassi

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Chip, if we can sum this up, I'm not sure any of us are surprised. Your team did what it was supposed to do. This is what you do, Ganassi Racing does, Scott Dixon as well.

CHIP GANASSI: Yeah, we sit down every year, I'm sure Mike said this, sit down and take every day one day at a time, try to do the best we can, try to do the best we can on Friday, Saturday, today.

I'm so, so lucky to have the group of people I get to work with every day, show up on the weekends, be a part of this team. I can't tell you what the team means to me, what it means to be a part of a team.

You get involved in racing, and let's face it, you know how long I've been around, I was hoping to hang around a couple years in racing, hoping I didn't have to get a job. I mean, look what it's turned into. It's really something special.

I'm lucky to have great sponsorship. I'm lucky to have great partners. I'm most lucky of all to have a group of people that can put their own individual, you know, agendas aside to be a part of a great team of people. I don't know any other way to say that.

The unselfishness that we have in our team is second to none. You know I'm convinced that I could take our team of people and do just about anything with them. That's how confident I am in the people we have on our team that make all this happen. Scott and I are so lucky to have these people, it's incredible. I don't know what else to say.

THE MODERATOR: You heard Mike talk about how Scott is everyday, makes it happen, he's so consistent in that effort.

CHIP GANASSI: Yeah, I mean, I've said it a thousand times, you've all heard me say it, he's the guy on the track, off the track, if you take a piece of stone, inject some brains into it, chisel it out, it's Scott Dixon. He's just the man.

I'm not saying anything new here. But to see him develop as the kind of person he is, his family, I don't know any other way to say it because we've all seen him since he was 21 years old or something hanging around the sport here. Just to be a part of that, to be along for the ride like that, with somebody like that, is

really special.

Obviously he's had a lot of great teammates, a lot of great friends. He's pretty much grown up -- we've all grown up in our adult life with him as our driver. It's a relationship that he and I have that I can't imagine it being any better with anyone else.

THE MODERATOR: Mike just said that it's difficult to judge a driver, a team in the moment. This is a stopping point to reflect. Only one other guy has done what this guy has done.

CHIP GANASSI: Obviously when you talk about records, A.J., Mario, all these guys, obviously Scott's name in that group now, with A.J. just in front of him in championships, that's something that someday we'll look back on and talk about it and compare, was this guy better than that guy. That's the great thing about sports: someone in today's era, are they as good of another driver back in another era. In any sport we question that. We'll never know the answer. That's what is great about sports, is that comparison.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. You said you have great sponsorship partners. With Scott now the fifth title, was there any time a situation where New Zealand companies approached you to be a sponsor?

CHIP GANASSI: I don't know of any New Zealand companies that ever called me, but you're welcome to give them our phone number.

Q. You were the first one to get to him. What did you say to him?

CHIP GANASSI: What did I say to him? I'm sure I just said something like, Hey, man, great job. I'm not the most esoteric person you ever met in your life. I just say what I mean. I don't know what else to say.

THE MODERATOR: You're well-versed in that reply, as well.

CHIP GANASSI: He makes it easy on me.

Q. You might not be esoteric, but let's see if you could be reflective. When you were that kid that skipped graduation for qualify for the '82 500, was this part of the plan? Once I get done with driving, I'll be an IndyCar team owner?

CHIP GANASSI: You know, if I told you that was the

story back then, it would be silly for me to say something like that. I might have dreamt that once or something. I told you, back in 1982, my number one goal, I can tell you my number one goal in 1982 was to be there in 1983. I mean, that was my number one goal, just to be there the next year. I had no idea.

I'm sure you look up in the Indianapolis Star, someone quoted me one time, I can't imagine why anybody would ever want to own one of these cars. I said that as a driver. Sure, you can look that up. I'm telling you, it's there somewhere.

Q. What has this weekend been like for you?

CHIP GANASSI: Well, I think in terms of let's start at the crowd surfing. A lot of people egged me on if I was ever going to do that again. I said yes. So I guess I had to do it. And it was fun.

I mean, in terms of the rest of the weekend, again, it's down to the people I have. Obviously I wasn't in Las Vegas, but it's a great story with Ross Chastain there, a watermelon farmer from Florida. He's won every NASCAR stage he's driven for us. That's some sort of storybook being written as we speak, yeah.

Q. I know you had a lot of years with Scott. What is your recollection of the very first time you met?

CHIP GANASSI: I'm trying to remember my first experience with him. I just remember, like, I would say things. He'd say, Okay. I'd say something else. He'd say, Yes. I mean 'yes' and 'okay' were the first 37 things he said to me. That was it. Does this guy say anything? He was pretty shy back then. Every once in a while, you need anything? No, I'm okay.

I recall I think Denver was his second race for us, and he finished second behind Bruno Junqueira there in our other car. We were downtown in the streets of Denver there, by the Brown Palace. I just don't remember him saying much.

I'm thinking, This kid is good, but does he say anything? Obviously he developed into a gem of a guy. Back then, he was a kid from New Zealand. I wasn't sure he could string sentences together. But he's okay. He's great now, yeah.

Don't anybody write that the wrong way (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations.

CHIP GANASSI: Thank you very much. Appreciate it.