

# IndyCar Media Conference

Sunday March 10, 2019



## Scott Dixon Will Power Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We will get started with the NTT IndyCar Series post-race press conference for the Firestone Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, joined by our second- and third-place finishers, Scott Dixon and Will Power.

Will Power, driving the #12 Verizon Team Penske Chevrolet finishing third in today's race, his fifth podium here on the streets of St. Pete.

Will, it was an eventful race for you, a lot of passes for the lead, battles for the lead, as well. What in your opinion was the defining moment for your race?

WILL POWER: Yeah, the thing that cost me the race, the chance of the race was when I was passed on that restart. We pitted early.

I think Roger did a real eight call hoping it would go yellow but didn't. We still were in the game. I felt we were quicker than Rosenqvist, and we could have pulled a big gap, which would have covered for the called tie penalty, but unfortunately, I lost that position and I was stuck there.

I just had to do everything I could on out laps after I had to pit early from everyone, and third was as good as it could possibly do.

THE MODERATOR: Joined also by Scott Dixon, driving the No. 9 PNC Bank Chip Ganassi Honda for the team, finishing second, the reigning series champion, matching his best finish here on the streets of St. Pete.

I know a second-place finish always feels a little bit bitter at the end, but are you happy with the way your team has started off the season?

SCOTT DIXON: We always come to these races to win. We came up a little bit short. It was an interesting race. I think between at least the Penske cars and Ganassi cars, it was a bit opposite.

I felt our cars were strong for the first 15, 20 laps, especially on restarts, as well, but the last sort of five to ten, it flipped the other way and they had some really good speed.

Had some great battles out there. Lap traffic was interesting, Will and I had a really tough fight in one, two, and then all the way to three I think it was, and then, you know, it worked out for us.

But all in all, I think strategy-wise and pit stops, it was a clean day for us. I think any of us got out front, as Will said, had some really good pace, you would have been able to capitalize and Josef's did that and their strategy, they were able to run and start on new Reds and use Reds later. Their pace opened it up. Interesting day, and good points for us and hopefully we can keep maintaining that.

**Q. A sporty little battle there with Felix battle on turn one, what was that like and how impressed were you in his debut?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, he did a great job all weekend to qualify the way he did and to race the way he did, very strong in the race, good as you would expect. I couldn't see anything -- he's a rookie, but he's obviously going to be really strong and has done a good job.

**Q. Same drivers, different spot. Coming out of the pits, looked like you just beat him, and is there a line there, seemed like he pretty much had to lock him up or you guys were going to have a big moment in turn two.**

WILL POWER: It's the driver on track that has the right of way, so unless the guy coming out of the pits is going to clear him, which both times actually it was so close with Scott and Felix, yeah, I expected them to back out because that's -- that was a rule but was keeping one eye right there just in case.

**Q. Will, obviously we're kind of joking about it Friday with the success of the Penske, but to come out strong like this, does it feel good for you guys?**

WILL POWER: It's great. It's pretty impressive for the team to have won in every series, except sports car. I don't know when they start -- they didn't win, I think sports car is getting dropped now (Laughter).

Yeah, they got a chance next week to win, so we'll see what happens. But yeah, unbelievable when you think about Penske and all the race wins they accumulate, they have accumulated over the 50 years and they continue to do it.

**Q. For both drivers, good racing today out there, a lot of good racing out there today. What is it that both of you like when you come here and about**

### **this course?**

SCOTT DIXON: I think it's fun. It's technical. I think it's the atmosphere. The city, as they say, embraces the race and they do. Even walking around downtown, I think everybody, for me, at least living in Indianapolis, it's nice to get some warm weather, especially this week.

But I don't know, the traffic has passing opportunities, turn one, turn four you can maybe get sneaky occasionally, but a lot of circuits don't have that combination. You've got to give Kim (Green) and Kevin (Savoree) a lot of credit, obviously Firestone, too, for sponsoring this event but it just has a great feel about it, kicking off the season, I think everybody is happy to start the season.

WILL POWER: It's a lot of fun. It's the atmosphere that makes it great. The track is good, but you see the crowd -- the crowd on Friday was awesome. It was a great crowd today.

Like Scott said, the city embraces it. It's tough to make street courses work. It's stood the test of time.

**Q. Last year you said you felt you were the fastest driver of the season, you had a lot of speed and poles, but you didn't have the consistency that Scott had and that was important in the championship. If you look at Josef's stats from last year, he had a pretty good year and surprising he was fifth. Now that he's started off the season with a victory what does that say for the type of year he may end up having?**

WILL POWER: I'm sure he's going to be right there. He always is. You know, just it's going to come down to consistency. There's so many good guys up front. It seems as though the same guys always end up at the front at the end of the year, just through speed and consistency, understanding how to deal with INDYCAR. There's so many variables in (the NTT) IndyCar (Series) anything can happen. I expect Josef to be there, Scott to be there, Rossi, Hunter-Reay had a pretty bad start, but there's a lot of people that are fast now.

**Q. What do you think about Josef's, under new Reds towards the end, a lot of us thought those weren't going to last that long but worked out perfectly for him. Do you think you had a chance when he was on those?**

WILL POWER: It was going to be interesting. I thought he held on pretty well with the used Reds at the start to be honest. He fell back a little bit, but again, towards -- none of us ran this race all the way out until the first stint. They actually held on pretty good. I was kind of surprised. The lap times were pretty good. He was the only one which he knew he was going to do. If he started on used Reds -- you have to by rule run a new set later on.

Yeah, we knew it was going to happen. You know, they had the speed, anyway, so I don't think it was going to be too big of detriment but as the track was cooling later on and the rubber was gripping up the surface, typically those things should last a bit longer.

**Q. Scott, you mentioned your drink bottle didn't work during the race. In this heat, do you think that had any sort of impact on your mind, body, 110 laps?**

SCOTT DIXON: Kept pushing the button a lot thinking it was going to work at some point. It was kind of annoying. It was definitely a physical race, lots of green laps. It was pretty hot out there and the car is moving around a lot, especially on a slight downforce situation, and you have to push the whole time, right, to try to close these gaps. For me it was physical. I think I've had about six bottles of water, so nice to finally get some water.

But yeah, that happens occasionally. Hopefully doesn't happen again.

**Q. Sorry if you've answered this already, Will, but when Bourdais' engine blew, you had to go across the grass to get into the pits. Do you think the end result had been different if you had kept on that first stint?**

WILL POWER: Absolutely. Put me in a way better position -- or defense, couldn't do anything. We had to pit early. These guys had more fuel. There's just nothing we could do about it.

I just was -- yeah, and I knew it wouldn't go yellow because I know that they didn't go yellow unless it's a big issue. I knew that that was going to be a stationary yellow. I thought he saw something else. That's the late call. It was a close call. Maybe it should have kept going, but yeah.

**Q. I know you've got time to be satisfied, soak in today's race, but looking ahead, a racetrack unlike any other on the circuit, going to COTA, how big a race can that be, and what's your outlook toward that event?**

WILL POWER: I'm looking forward to it. It's such a great track. I really hope it gets a big crowd and people turn up because it's really probably the best track, best facility and track in the U.S.

Obviously, the U.S. has some fantastic historical tracks like Road America, and every track has its own character, but it's certainly a great facility for sponsors and a great safe driving track.

So yeah, looking forward to it.

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, as Will sort of said, hopefully, we get some good traction there. First time I'd ever been there for the open test. It's definitely a fun city. I think the track itself should race really well for our cars

just because the sheer size of it.

Yeah, we'll have to see how it goes, push on the marketing size and get bottoms in seats and keep pushing but I think the race itself should be really good.

**Q. How is the dynamic with Felix?**

SCOTT DIXON: That's a little hard to compare, to be honest. I think it's been a lot of fun. Felix has worked with the team for two or three years now with open tests we've done with him as a rookie. The guy has got a ton of experience in so many different cars, so it's been really refreshing, actually, to not be in the same ecosystem and thinking of the same things. It's kind of thinking outside the box which has been really refreshing.

But yeah, he's a strong guy, very committed and obviously very talented and he's going to be a hell of a fight for the whole year, and it's nice to be working with somebody really close as far as on the speed side.

**Q. Regarding the scarcity of yellows that the NTT IndyCar Series might be heading towards.**

WILL POWER: I know what you're saying but to me, it should be about someone deserves to win. Someone shouldn't win because some random yellow fell at the right time for him.

All the money and effort that drivers put in to get into this situation and teams put into development, you should win in a deserving manner. That's why I think the pits closed thing, that's the last thing they need to fix in this series for it to be exactly what you say, pure racing.

You're right, they don't just throw the yellow for anything or debris, it's not an issue. I think it's the right direction.

SCOTT DIXON: I totally agree. You know, it's nice, if it's random and it falls your way, but the possibility of that is pretty slim. We'd seen that the last two years here with the result. It was just kind of random, flipped the field, and makes for an interesting race maybe.

But as Will kind of said, it's not completely fair, and the teams that are really fast, qualify up front, the ones that get hurt, the leaders always get hurt.

If there's consistency there, that's great. I think we've had a glimpse of that in the past and then kind of went haywire there for a little bit so hopefully, I think as a driver, all you want is it to be a consistent call the whole time.