

# NTT IndyCar Series News Conference

Sunday June 2, 2019

**Press Conference**

## Scott Dixon

Chip Ganassi Racing

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Scott Dixon, the race winner today. Perhaps a bit damp.

Scott, first win of the season, first win came last year here. 45th of your career. Keep adding up. We'll worry about the numbers another time. This had to be pretty gratifying.

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, big-time, more so just for the team. Felt like a bit of an idiot yesterday, especially clipping that inside wall. Honestly, when I hit it, I didn't think it was going to break the suspension. It did.

Today was all about redemption. The team nailed the strategy, the car was super fast. Were able to get the mileage we needed to, which was going to be really tough, with the exception of those last couple cautions.

It's pretty interesting how INDYCAR right now is stopping the races and making sure they get proper restarts. It's definitely great for the fans. A bit nerve-wracking for the drivers, I think. You kind of just want it to be done. I would have been happy for it to end under caution. It wasn't going to go that way.

THE MODERATOR: Your crew members diving into a one-foot pool. Looked like there might be some bruises after this.

SCOTT DIXON: (Crew Chief) Blair (Julian), I don't know what he was trying to do, man. He went for the full belly flop from a great height. I thought he was coming to come up bleeding. He didn't. That was good.

Got my chin when I dove in. It looks very different when you're standing from above (laughter). Who cares at this moment. We're just happy that we got the win, the first win out of the way this year. Points-wise it was a big day for us. I thought when you get to that hundred-point deficit, we were pretty close to it after yesterday's result, it was going to be tough.

We almost halved that today. We'll keep working on that this week coming with Texas. Hopefully we can get on a bit of a roll here.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. It seemed like the key was after that first pit stop, you had a clean track ahead of you. At that**



**point you were able to start running qualifying laps to build the gaps. How important was that strategy?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, the way the whole strategy played out, that first one, I saw the whole field pit. Oh, dear, I've seen this movie before, and it didn't work out very well.

We knew we had to kind of try and create the gap. We had to try and go as long as possible on the reds, so at least we had only one more stop to go. We tried and we tried. They just fell off a cliff.

I think we started losing almost four seconds a lap. (Spencer) Pigot had the same issue. We came in, dove into the pits, then the caution came out, which was definitely a little bit of a life saver.

Still even from that point, to get the fuel mileage, pretty big numbers we had to reach. We knew that the other pack was going to try to stretch it out. They could run as hard as possible if they had some clear air. Never seemed to really go. The pack stayed quite tight.

We had some issues there with Hinch (James Hinchcliffe) and Pato (Patricio O'Ward), slowing us down. I was kind of worried about that for a point there. He had the issue with his car, which I thought they were going to let go for a while, maybe just pull it in. That didn't happen.

**Q. How memorable will this day be for you, same day that you get honored by the Queen?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, it was definitely a huge honor to get the Companion (New Zealand) Merit of Order, which is definitely very prestigious, something you don't expect. For me, I think it's not like a normal accolade, like a trophy or a race win. It's something of a very different, you know, feeling. So for me it's definitely been outstanding. Very proud to get that CNZM label.

Yeah, I don't know. It's kind of weird that whole thing in a great way, to have that recognition in New Zealand, from England as well, all part of the Commonwealth. Yeah, huge day and definitely not one I'm going to forget.

**Q. Was Mike Tomlin your good luck charm? Did you have any interactions before the race? Did he motivate you?**

SCOTT DIXON: No, it was all Chip (Ganassi). He

wasn't sharing him. I got to briefly shake his hand before the race. That was it. I think he was kind of hanging out with our stand, both the 10 and the 9. Good luck, I hope he comes back. Hope he's coming to Texas next week.

**Q. Seemed a bit confused during qualifying with the steering issue. I assume those were resolved?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, it's just a bit unnerving when you have a steering wheel that's really offset and making a clicking situation. Every time you go in a corner, you're hoping it's going to work. Thankfully it did.

It's kind of that uneasiness you have that it makes it very difficult to push hard in qualifying. Especially on this circuit, it's about 110 percent commitment.

We found the issue with the steering rack and put another one in for the race. The car in the race was perfectly fine.

**Q. The redemption things you were talking about. You said it had been quite a while since you had the self-inflicted incident. What was last night like, this morning? Did you feel more pressure to redeem yourself today?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, I was definitely pretty miserable. I think I went straight back to the bus and stayed in the whole night, didn't go see anybody. I went and hung out with the team when they were repairing all the damage I caused.

When scenarios like that happen, you feel really bummed. When you know all the effort that goes into these race weekends, especially a doubleheader right off of Indy, we had a bad run at Indy, yeah, you just want to try and make something positive out of it.

Kind of even more in a hole after qualifying. I felt like we had a car that was definitely capable of pole, but we just didn't really do it this morning. It was perfect for them to kind of dig me out of the situation that we had from yesterday and earlier in the race. I just tried to keep it off the walls.

**Q. Bonus today? Josef (Newgarden) exiting the race earlier, suffering a bad day helps you out.**

SCOTT DIXON: Definitely helped the points situation. I think it was 92 or 93, he got the pole today, a 93-point deficit which is not a great deficit. It was nice to half that almost. I think we're almost 52 now. At least we're kind of in the mix.

But as you can see, it changes so quickly. We'll just keep our head down and try to make the best of it.

**Q. With Marcus (Ericsson), his seventh or eighth race in INDYCAR, were you concerned on any of those restarts? Did you think he might have a little bit there, might be able to pull a surprise out of his**

**bag?**

SCOTT DIXON: Yeah, it can go either way, right? Sometimes with a rookie in that situation, they want to kind of get it home and get a decent result as opposed to getting aggressive and not finishing. I was kind of relying on that.

Seemed like he hung back a little bit, especially on the restarts didn't push as hard. Even after the first attempt when he was behind us, I can understand that's maybe what he was going for.

I felt like our car was really good on restarts anyway. When you have the clear air, you're able to set the tone for where you can start, where you need to start, created enough of a gap that we didn't have too much pressure.

**Q. I think you told someone yesterday you're going to go after wins this year because the championship is a lost cause. Adding to the Newgarden situation, change your mind at all?**

SCOTT DIXON: No. Going for the wins is kind of what you got to do. I think with the competition right now, it's never one other you're fighting a constant of five or six people. After Indy, it actually got really tight for the first five or six. Previous to Indy, it seemed like two or three kind of stretched out.

This year I think is going to be another year, especially from this point, you're going to have to be really consistent to get a championship. It's how we won last year. We did have three wins, but we were able to turn bad weekends into good ones. We've seen that from Josef. Some pretty average qualifying positions. Him and the team have been able to pull out some great podiums, some big wins when they really needed it.

THE MODERATOR: Texas in a few days. Excited about that?

SCOTT DIXON: I got a big week. Detroit tomorrow, then simulator for Le Mans on Tuesday, then I go to Houston to hang out with A.J. (Foyt) for the day. Thursday we're at Texas. Won't be at home much. Yeah, looking forward to Texas.

THE MODERATOR: No. 45 for the No. 9. Congratulations.

SCOTT DIXON: Thank you.