



Left-hand

BY JAN TEGLER

TURNS

Indy racer Scott Dixon steers the design of a new Graham Chronofighter Oversize

Perched above the pits in the tower terrace grandstands just past the famed yard of bricks which forms the start/finish line at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, Graham-London's Eric Loth and I had a terrific view of the 2009 race. The #9 Target Chip Ganassi Racing (TGR) Honda/Dallara tucked in close behind the #6 Team Penske Honda/Dallara on a restart following the race's third caution. As the field came off of Turn 4, Dixon got the jump on Briscoe and by the time the two crossed the start finish line they were side by side. The defending Indy 500 winner stood on it all the way to the corner and executed the pass perfectly.

A high five with Loth revealed a Graham Chronofighter Oversize on

his wrist. That he's wearing this watch is no surprise: he created the watch with Scott Dixon—the racer who we watched flashing by at over 200 mph.

Founded in 1996 by Loth, British Masters SA is an Anglo-Swiss watch firm with two brands: Graham and Arnold & Son. Both are named after towering figures from the history of British horology, and each has carved out a unique niche. Graham is a maker of bold chronographs—many of which have a distinctive left-hand crown and protector assembly.

Graham On-Track

It's always inspiring to meet watchmakers with a passion for their craft. But it's more exciting when you find a leader with passions outside of horol-

ogy that also intersect with pursuits aligned with their brand.

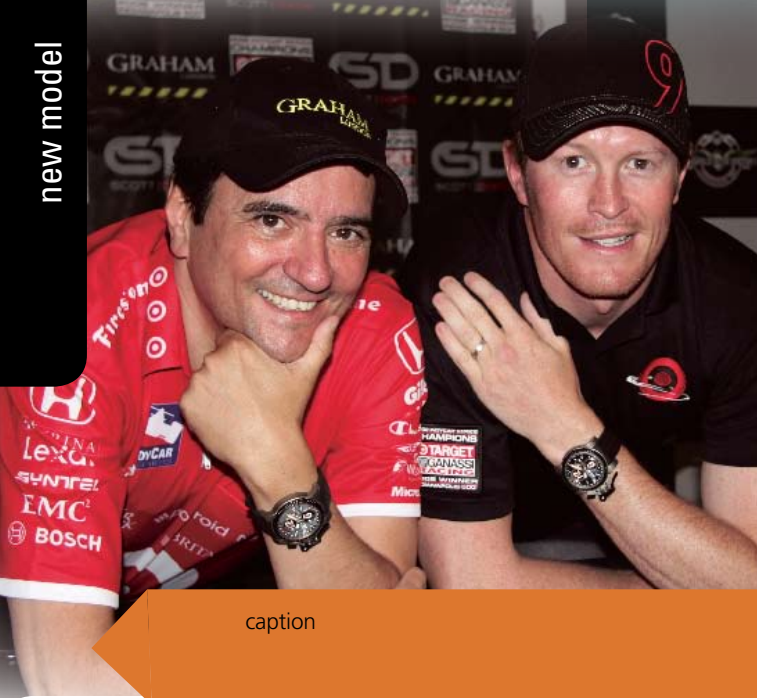
Loth has spent his professional career in the world of watches, working thirteen years for the Swatch Group before founding his firm. He has been interested in racing for most of his life, so in 2004 he decided to get involved.

"I've always wanted to see what racing was myself but couldn't race for many years due to time and budget limitations," Loth explains. "I started five years ago seriously with regularity racing and then friends of mine told me I should join a series. So I started with the Swiss Porsche Cup three years ago."

Back in the United States, Scott Dixon began racing at the age of seven and has amassed wins



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and championships in nearly every series he has competed in. He is a two-time champion of the IndyCar Series (2003, 2008) an Indianapolis 500 winner (2008), a winner of the 24 Hours of Daytona (2006) and has the highest winning percentage all-time (nearly 18 percent) of regular IndyCar Series drivers. Dixon has been interested in watches for most of his racing career, and in 2005 he decided to get involved.

“My interest in watches started pretty early on,” Dixon recalls. “I believe just about everyone in racing has a love for the mechanics of anything, and fine watches are at the top of the list. It was many years until I was able to afford one of my own.”

Once Dixon was able to indulge his horological passion it didn't take him long to discover Graham.

“Graham watches are very striking and unique,” he says. “As soon as I saw a friend wearing one I just had to have it. I love the Graham line because they stand for engineering excellence with a design twist.” In fact a Swordfish chronograph, Dixon's first Graham, was on his wrist inside the Ganassi Lexus-Riley Daytona Prototype he was piloting in 2006 when he won the 24 Hours of Daytona with teammates Dan Wheldon and Casey Mears.



Dixon meets Graham

While Eric Loth and Scott Dixon were busy finding success in their chosen professions, neither realized that they shared passions for each other's careers—until Scott Dixon made a special trip.

In the 2005, a common friend of Loth and Dixon organized a meeting between the two in La Chaux-de-Fonds. Dixon was traveling in Europe with his manager, another star open-wheel and sports car racing driver, Stefan Johansson (whose own line of watches is profiled on page 66 in this issue). Dixon's enthusiasm for Graham was such that he had already been thinking of creating a special timepiece with his favorite brand.

“Scott had wanted to see my

company because he was a fan of Graham and had a Swordfish on his wrist. So he knew the brand already,” recalls Loth.

Over the next three years Scott Dixon continued his winning ways in IndyCar racing and kept in touch with Loth. In the meantime, Graham introduced a titanium-case version of the Chronofighter Oversize. With Dixon's triumph at the 92nd running of the Indy 500 and the introduction of the advanced new Chronofighter, Loth saw an opportunity.

“Scott was still expressing interest over the years. By this time, we had put our titanium Chronofighter Oversize with carbon bezel into production. It occurred to me that this could

be the right basis for a special edition for Scott.”

With the right canvas in hand, Loth and Dixon moved quickly. Development of the special model took place over several months in late 2008.

Satisfyingly, Dixon’s enthusiasm for the project led to direct involvement.

“That has been the interesting part of the deal. Scott gave us his personal logo type and some ideas of the colors he wanted, especially on the dial and about the engravings. He already knew the watch and he knows watch technology pretty well so he knew what he could ask for and what he could not. It was very good to have Scott so interested and involved because it makes the watch more credible,” says Loth.

Graham Goes to Indy

Graham presented the Chronofighter Oversize Scott Dixon at the Basel fair this year to enthusiastic reaction. Dixon’s reputation in racing is truly international, not surprising given his background.

“The response has been crazy,” Dixon reports. “All the other drivers love it and want one. I would say a third of this year’s Indy 500 drivers have a Graham watch. Drivers love fine watches because they love per-



formance, unique materials and engineering excellence.”

Just 100 examples of the Chronofighter Oversize—Scott Dixon will be made, and appropriately most will be offered in the U.S. They won’t be hard to spot, not only because of the model’s distinctive Graham-look but because of its unique dial and caseback, a product of the great relationship between Loth and Dixon.

“The caseback is interesting because usually we put something like, ‘Limited Edition’ with a name on the caseback. But Scott said, ‘No, just put—Made for Scott.’ We have a transparent caseback with Scott’s logo type printed on it.”

For his part, Dixon appreciates how unique it is to be personally involved with a design-forward manufacturer in the design a watch of his own.

“When you get an amazing opportunity to have a limited edition watch with such a great company you want it to have a personal touch. You want it to be subtle but also show a

little passion from what I do on track and the technical side of racing.”

At the race

While the possibility of another limited edition from Graham and Scott Dixon is exciting, watching the race in person with Eric Loth proved equally enjoyable. Loth knows racing.

Scott Dixon put his skill and passion to the test in front of us, doing his best to defend his 500 title. From lap 64, he led until lap 91 when teammate Dario Franchitti took over at the front. Together, the two put on a dominating performance with Dixon accounting for 73 laps in he lead alone. But a mistake in the pits late in the race doomed the Kiwi’s chances.

It’s a bitter pill for any driver to swallow, especially a defending champion.

“Indy is always a tough race and a huge let down unless you win,” Dixon affirms. “So this year was even harder as Dario and I were very dominant in the early parts. I’m only out there to win and it’s very tough to make a mistake near the end of the race,” he says.

Despite the disappointment at Indy, both he and Loth agree that the new Limited Edition Chronofighter leads the pack when it comes to driver-inspired timepieces. ☺

“Drivers love fine watches because they love performance, engineering and unique materials”

