

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

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An Interview with:

Alex Bowman

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by the pole winner for the 63rd running of the Daytona 500, Alex Bowman.

Q. What does it feel like to make history on the front row four consecutive years in the Daytona 500, second time you're on the pole?

ALEX BOWMAN: Yeah, I mean, it's pretty incredible, right? I'm so appreciative and blessed with this opportunity. I think for me, it's really hard to sit here and be like, yeah, I did it, and I did this and that, and that's why we're on the pole for four consecutive years or on the front row for four consecutive years.

It's much more about Hendrick Motorsports and the 48 team, Greg Ives, the engine shop, the chassis shop, body shop, Chevrolet, everybody at Ally for all their support. It's more about the people that make it happen.

I floored it, but I'm pretty sure everybody else did, too. Just appreciative that my race car is really fast.

Q. Obviously there's so much work that goes into it, there's so much emphasis from the whole organization. I guess being a superspeedway, why is it so important to Hendrick to have you guys be on the front row every year, to win the pole? Where do you think that comes from?

ALEX BOWMAN: Yeah, I mean, that's really just something that's important to everybody, and I think it's really different reasons.

I think it means a lot to Mr. H. He wants to win everything. Like every category, he wants to be top of the list, everything. It means a lot to Greg because he wants to prove that he can build the fastest race car probably.

And it's a lot of pride for the guys in our body shop, for the guys in our engine shop, to prove that they're putting the best product on the racetrack that they possibly can.



You know, I think it's just a real big source of pride for everybody that they feel like there's -- most racetracks we go to you're trying to dial the race car in to the driver, and there's a lot of, like, there's a lot of other things that go into it.

Here it really just comes down to who built the fastest race car. And I think it's important for Hendrick Motorsports to come up and prove that they're the ones that did that.

Q. Does your team have certain cars that are specific to you, and if so, was this a car that you had driven before?

ALEX BOWMAN: Yes, so I think for the most part at HMS the cars you have kind of like the 48 fleet, the 24 fleet, the 5 fleet, the 9 fleet.

To be honest with you, I don't know which car this is. I don't know the chassis number and I don't know if we've raced it before. I don't know if it's a new one. Obviously it's a fast one, so that's good.

But I wish I had a better answer for you. I guess I didn't do all the homework for you. I don't know. Greg? He was right behind me. He's got to be coming in here at some point. I think he's on the phone with Claire, but after that he'll probably be able to answer that question.

Q. I know sometimes when big things happen for you, you end up buying new cars, so I'm curious if this is one of those? Have you committed to Rick that you're buying another car?

ALEX BOWMAN: No, no more cars. I have way too many cars. When he gave me the Chicago car, it 100 percent has like put me out of room in my shop, so I feel like if I buy another car, I'm going to have to build a bigger shop. I'd need to race Cup for a couple more years to be able to do that.

Q. I would feel remiss if no one asked you for an update on your drag racing with Mr. Hendrick.

ALEX BOWMAN: I think we both gave up. I think he broke his car and then I broke my car. I think they're both running again, but I'm not sure -- both cars got so fast, I'm



not sure either one of us really have any desire to take a streetcar to a racetrack and go 165 miles an hour in a street car.

I don't think it's going to happen, but it's fun to talk some smack with the boss. Obviously we're both big car guys and maybe we'll race something that's a little more reasonable and a little bit more in control.

Q. William was on a few minutes ago, saying he has no idea who gets what, that the cars are basically equal, yet you were a mile-an-hour faster than him in the field. What do you think was behind that?

ALEX BOWMAN: I feel like everybody at Hendrick Motorsports has the same tools. What each team chooses to do with those tools is on them. All four teams work extremely close together.

I think Chad this year has done an incredible job of -- I just feel like there's more communication, at least to me. Like, I've talked to Chad a bunch this off-season, which is something I really wouldn't have done in the past.

I think what it really comes down to is Greg Ives and the 48 team being just extremely intent on coming down here and getting the pole and maximizing every little thing. There's no detail that wasn't looked over. I think he's been obsessed with the 500 pole, and it shows in his stats. He's been on the front row I think the couple years before I was driving for him, as well.

It's a long streak for him, and it means a lot to him.

Q. Last spring you and Hendrick announced a one-year contract extension. Curious if you guys are having conversations now about your status with the team beyond this season.

ALEX BOWMAN: Yeah, you know, just kind of with everything going on in the off-season, we haven't really talked about it yet. I'm sure it'll get talked about. I want to be at HMS for a long time, and every time I talk to Mr. H I think that's a mutual feeling.

I'm not too concerned with it at the moment. I think Ally has been a great partner so far. I think everything has been going extremely well. Yeah, I mean, I'm sure talks will start eventually, but just thankful for the opportunity that I have at the moment and just trying to maximize it.

Q. As you guys pointed out a little bit ago, you guys at Hendrick come down here the last several years with the tools and the speed and the cars to put yourselves in contention to win this race, but it's been since 2014

that a Hendrick driver has actually ended up in Victory Lane. What's it going to take for you or one of your teammates to kind of be able to make a return trip this year?

ALEX BOWMAN: Yeah, for me it's been an interesting couple years driving for HMS in the 500 obviously from the front row every year, have had extremely fast race cars. It's like we make it through every crash until that last one. We go all day, we miss crashes that we probably shouldn't miss, and then a crash that we probably should miss we get caught up in.

It's been frustrating to not get a great finish here in the 500. Obviously we've had some other superspeedway success, and we want to win this deal. This is the Daytona 500. Everybody wants to win this deal. We've just got to get through the whole race. We just haven't been able to get through the whole race, and it hasn't ever really been our fault. We've always had great driving race cars, fast race cars, led laps, but just got to get to the end.

Q. Since 2000, the driver who's sat on the pole has not won the race --

ALEX BOWMAN: Aww, why you got to tell me that?

Q. You have to go back to Dale Jarrett with the bad-ass Robert Yates engines. He's the last guy to pull off that feat. How do you kind of kill that jinx and be the guy that breaks through?

ALEX BOWMAN: Well, I didn't know that, so that wasn't even in my head. So now I'm all worried about it.

I don't know. Kind of like I said before, you've just got to make it to the end, and I feel like if we do that we're going to have a shot at it.

But yeah, it's a really hard race to win. So many things have to go right. Your day has to go so well, and it's hard. It's tough to do.

It's hard to do no matter where you start. I don't think any of our previous 500 runs have really even been influenced from where we start, so just got to get to the end, and if we do that, I know we'll have a chance.

Q. Is it going to be fun to hold this over William for the next four days?

ALEX BOWMAN: I don't know about that. I feel like as a driver, it's cool, but like it means so much to the team and it's such a direct representation of their effort. I might not make fun of William too much over the next couple days,



but if there's a good opportunity to, I may have to throw a jab or two.

Q. I asked William this and I'll ask you. Obviously a big advantage of having teammates on the front row for the 500 is to potentially be able to control the front of the field for the start. What's your confidence level in the speed and the race setup, that you and William will be able to do that for as long as possible?

ALEX BOWMAN: Yeah, I think you've seen much more of that, obviously, over the last couple years. We definitely weren't the first to do it, but I feel like Chevrolet has done a really good job of it, and Hendrick Motorsports has done a good job of it, as well. Hopefully it works out and we can.

We've had plans that worked, we've had plans that fell apart, but obviously this is a team sport, and when it comes to superspeedway racing there's a lot that goes into it. We're going to do everything we can to keep both those cars up front.

I've got Greg Ives walking behind me. He actually is funny when he talks, but then he stops talking and he gets real serious in a meeting and you don't know if he's going to hit you or if he's upset about something.

But no, I'm going to floor it and hopefully stay up front.

Q. These are still unprecedented times in NASCAR where you're not able to get the usual amount of practice and whatnot, yet you seem to have a terrific rapport with this team. You guys are putting fast cars out there and you can't stop talking about how great everyone has been over at HMS. What does a night like this say about the camaraderie, the unity and the overall togetherness of Hendrick Motorsports and how well they've been able to do in these unprecedented times?

ALEX BOWMAN: Yeah, I think I've watched some of what Mr. H has said in the last couple weeks and he's talked about how the atmosphere in the shop is better than he's ever seen it and how people are more pumped up. I would agree with that.

I would say the communication has been better than ever between the teams. Coming off the championship, the guys are all pumped up. Everybody is extremely proud of that and what the 9 team were able to do last year. My guys I think are pretty proud of our Playoff run last year.

I think there's just a lot of really positive things going on at HMS right now, and a night like tonight just proves all the hard work is worth it.

Back in the shop, some of these guys come and help me on my sprint car and midgets after hours and none of them have been able to lately because it's been some long nights in the shop. I know that they've all been working hard and working some late nights. Just super appreciative of each and every person's hard work at HMS because it definitely shows up on the racetrack.

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