

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

Saturday, June 26, 2021

USA

An Interview with:

Alex Bowman

THE MODERATOR: We are now with our race winning driver, Alex Bowman.

We'll go right to questions.

Q. Alex, when the 5 passed you with four laps to go, where on the track were you beating him and where was he beating you?

ALEX BOWMAN: I thought I could do an okay job of taking his air through two and three. But I was plowing tight through turn one. We were on two tires there. I was free most of the day. We had tightened the car up, then put two tires on. I just burned the front tires off of it trying to stay in front of him.

Yeah, I mean, I was okay for a bit, then the fronts fell off a lot. Grille screen folded in. I don't know if that kind of played a hand in it as well. As soon as he got beside me, I knew with clean air he was going to be able to drive away from us pretty big.

Just tried to do all I could to keep him behind us as long as I could.

Q. You've won basically all three of these races on late-race situations, specifically here and Richmond. Is there anything that you feel like you're doing late in those moments or that you're learning how to manage those situations that's gotten you these wins?

ALEX BOWMAN: I wish there was something that I was like, Yeah, I'm doing this. I think it's all pretty situational. We were really strong on that short run to end Richmond. Here I just got a hell of a push from the 12 to be able to clear the 18. Hendrick horsepower doesn't hurt by any means.

Obviously got pretty lucky there with Kyle's misfortune. I mean, I feel like we've always been a team that ends the day better than we started the day. We've never been that like win stages type of team, but we've won our share of races here lately.



Yeah, I don't know exactly what it is, but glad it's working out lately.

Q. How did you adjust to what Kyle was doing to hold you off, especially his bumper tapping you a little bit?

ALEX BOWMAN: Yeah, the Cup cars are super aero-dependent. If you don't have a car in front of you, your car makes way more downforce than if you have a car right in front of you. Tried to take as much air away from him as I possibly could. A lot of time in the mirror trying to see where he's running, trying to run similar lines as him to take the air away, keep him behind us. It honestly worked a lot longer than I thought it was going to. Didn't work all the way to the end. Just got lucky that last lap.

Q. You were apologizing on the radio during that last lap. Have you ever gone from that kind of disappointed, that down, to that high in half a lap?

ALEX BOWMAN: Yeah, it was like a hundred feet. I keyed up. I'm like, I'm sorry. He's blown a tire (laughter).

I don't really know what to think. This is the strangest win I've ever been a part of. I thought I was running second, which was still going to be a good day for us with how we struggled throughout the course of the day. Then he blows a tire, we win; can't do a burnout because I have to race the car tomorrow. I typically stand on the roof of the car; can't do that because I got to race the car tomorrow. I typically drink all the beers; can't do all that because I got to race a car tomorrow (laughter).

I have to be way more responsible than I really want to be right now. It's definitely been a unique win. But, yeah, I've never been in a situation like that. I was literally keyed up, apologizing for burning the front tires off the thing. Saw his crush panel fly out, him have a flat.

Yeah, I can't believe it.

Q. Did you see whether he cut something?

ALEX BOWMAN: I don't know. I don't know if he ran something over or what the situation was. I saw sparks, tire come apart, crush panel exit the race car because the tire came apart. Kind of normal flat tire situation.



Q. What has been the key to this Hendrick run? Three drivers winning all these races. What is it like around the shop to be part of this winning streak?

ALEX BOWMAN: Yeah, the morale is obviously super high at Hendrick Motorsports. It's really cool to see it that way.

I think there's not one thing. It's each and every individual at Hendrick Motorsports from top to bottom in every department, it's everybody at Chevrolet. Our engines are strong, bodies are great, chassis are great. The guys putting them together are doing a great job. Having Chad in a new role is really good. Mr. H and Jeff and everybody are giving us all the tools we need to put the parts and pieces together to go win races.

Yeah, it's not one thing. It's a culmination of everybody's hard work. It's cool to be a part of it and be the guy that gets to drive 'em.

Q. Over the course of your career you've had at times lamented your bad luck.

ALEX BOWMAN: I don't know what to say about today (laughter).

Q. Just in general this season, how does it feel to be on the other side? You probably have seen other drivers when they say, You can do anything, just falls into wins. To have that feeling of coming out on the other side and enjoying it the opposite way, how does it feel?

ALEX BOWMAN: Yeah, it feels pretty freaking good. I don't really know what to think. Richmond, when that caution came out, I was kind of bummed. Thought we were going to struggle on the short run like we had been most of that day. Then we came away with a win.

Here I'm apologizing to my guys, we come out with a win. Yeah, I don't know. It's pretty interesting to be on the other side of it. I'll take it. I've had my fair share of bad luck over the course of my career. Hence the whole "Bad Luck Bowman" thing.

Maybe that's all behind me and it was just in preparation for this great luck that we have right now. Yeah, I'll take it.

Q. You alluded to it out there, how cool it was to see these fans back again? While your celebration has to be muted because of another race, you enjoyed that moment. Could you feel the excitement, the people embracing this win?

ALEX BOWMAN: Yeah, it's really neat. I think Pennsylvania race fans in general are some of the best in the world. Whether it's sprint car racing or Cup racing or whatever the situation is, PA fans are pretty dang awesome.

To see a packed grandstands, packed infield. I went through a run through the infield today, aside from everybody yelling "William Byron" at me, because they had us mixed up. Pretty normal for Pocono. I don't know why Pocono people think I'm William. I guess I'm a little insulted because I feel like I'm way better looking than him.

PA fans are pretty awesome and it's cool to see a packed house.

Q. Quite a duel here today. You held Kyle off for a long time. We saw that at Richmond. Greg talked about confidence. In dealing with you at times, confidence is up and down, it can be. What does it mean to have these type of performances at end of races? Until the tire blew, it didn't work out. What does it mean for you from that standpoint?

ALEX BOWMAN: It's pretty fair to say. It's pretty hard to be confident coming running off of 15th to 20th at Nashville, right?

I think the guys have done a really good job of giving me fast race cars all year. Really, when you look at how we're running as an organization, it's hard to not be confident going to the racetrack. These couple races that we've won on late-race restarts, holding off some really fast race cars, it definitely gives me confidence. Getting the lead from a guy like Kyle Busch on a late restart is not easy to do. Definitely gives me confidence going forward.

Q. Obviously the announcement about Jeff Gordon, the role. He's played an important role with the organization previously. Greg noted Jeff spent some time with him this week, helped him out. Don't know how much you've consulted with Jeff, but any time recently any conversations with him?

ALEX BOWMAN: Yeah, I don't remember if it was the beginning of last year. I guess it was probably there were some really impactful conversations from me midway through last year, kind of through our summer struggles a little bit. Then early in '19, as well.

Jeff is super helpful. He gets it from an organizational side, he gets it from a race car driver side. That's been really cool. I don't think I talked to him at all this week aside from I think he was at the meeting. Lots gone on this week, I

can't remember.

I got to fly home from Raceway Park in Indianapolis I guess two weeks ago with him now. That was really cool, to fly home with him and his parents, share old open-wheel racing stories. It's been kind of cool to build that relationship with Jeff.

When I first started driving the 88 and kind of sharing it with him, I didn't really know Jeff. That probably out of everybody at Hendrick Motorsports, just with him having to wear so many different hats, having so much going on, like that relationship probably took the longest to build. But it's really cool to get to lean on somebody with so much knowledge in so many different areas and have his help and advice.

Q. Obviously you ended up with a victory today. What do you feel about tomorrow? What do you have to do if Larson is as fast as he was today?

ALEX BOWMAN: We got to turn a little better at the end of the race. I think that was our biggest problem there, was just being a little tight off.

Yeah, starting 20th is going to be super difficult here. We'll have a good pit stall, so that will be good. But we know we're going to have a fast Ally Camaro. We know we're going to have good pit stops, good strategy. I think Greg's strategy was pretty on point today. I'm excited for it. I'm excited to go try to beat that 5 car again.

Q. Do you feel going into tomorrow's race, the confidence that you have right now, do you believe wear and tear and fatigue is going to play a huge factor tomorrow?

ALEX BOWMAN: Somewhat. I feel like these Cup cars have come a long way. If you try to do a doubleheader 20 years ago, nobody's stuff would have made it, right? Everybody seemed pretty successful with it last year. I put my guys in some terrible situations with it. I'm not sure there wasn't a doubleheader that we didn't go to a backup last year. Happy this is a little better situation for them. There's not much damage on that thing to repair and start over with.

I mean, I think in what we do, if it was a hundred degrees here today, driver fatigue and pit crew fatigue might be a little different. But it was a nice day, not too hot, a little bit of a shorter race. I think everything will kind of be business as usual tomorrow.

Q. Did you feel like you learned enough about your car in traffic? What kind of adjustments do you feel you're

going to need to make for traffic?

ALEX BOWMAN: We ran like 12th all day. I feel like we were in traffic almost all day. Kind of took to the end for me to be able to kind of really drive the car how it is in clean air.

It's a huge difference in how the race car drives. Yeah, I've got a pretty good idea of what it's going to do in traffic. I experienced it all day. It's only going to be tougher tomorrow.

Q. If you're in the same position tomorrow on the final restart, do you pick the front row? Were you surprised that Larson didn't pick the front row to get a push from you?

ALEX BOWMAN: I was really surprised he didn't pick the front row. I was just surprised somebody didn't, right? We were fourth. Somebody could have restarted second, and instead they restarted fourth and sixth. I was pretty surprised nobody took the bottom.

But, hell, I'll take it. Thanks to Blaney for the push. He pushed me all the way to the center of one, never tried to get out of line, never tried to do anything, ultimately got us out front. Big thank you to him. Much appreciated.

But, yeah, I was pretty surprised. Obviously I would do it over the same way I did.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Alex. Congratulations. Good luck tomorrow.

ALEX BOWMAN: Thanks, guys.

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