

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

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USA

An Interview with:

Ben Beshore

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by the winning crew chief, Ben Beshore.

Obviously a pretty eventful finish. Take us through what was going through your mind those closing laps.

BEN BESHORE: Yeah, I mean, you guys probably heard, we had a transmission issue where the transmission was stuck in fourth gear. We had a hard time getting on and off pit road, hard time doing restarts. We just decided to pit with one lap to go, take the penalty on the final restart there and get as much gas in as we can. Hope it went green. It sort of fell into our favor there with it going green, us being able to save enough to have enough to actually push the guys in front of us out of gas, have just enough to make it to the checkered.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Ben.

Q. The type of issue you experienced, would that typically be one that would pretty much end your day or is it one recoverable from?

BEN BESHORE: It depends on something like that. Sometimes you can get a pry bar in there, knock the linkages loose. If there's a tire carcass or debris that got on top the linkages, got them crossed up, something like that is fixable.

We didn't find anything like that. We're assuming it's probably internal. Generally it's a compounding issue - if you have a problem like that, something else break loose in the transmission, then it will completely break. Or you'll burn the clutch up getting on and off pit road. We're fortunate enough it happened late enough in the race that we had just enough clutch to finish the race.

Q. Prior to all that happening, Kyle said he thought he had another really very fast car this weekend. Do you feel like you've been making a lot of progress lately?

BEN BESHORE: Yeah, I mean, any time you go to Pocono with Kyle Busch, you got a shot. He's so good



here. His results show it. We felt like we had a good car yesterday coming home second there. We had to take a little bit more of a strategy play to get there. We were on a tire deficit. We felt like on equal tires we could hang with the best cars. Obviously with the 5's troubles, that sort of hampered their speed. We were right there. These races, the way they play out, the cautions come, it's anybody's race.

We felt like we had really good speed. The team did a great job preparing the car.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about your progression as a Cup crew chief now being with Kyle every week.

BEN BESHORE: We started off slow this year. We've really sort of I feel like hitting a stride here, gaining on points. We had some issues early in the year; we were back 14th in points. We've had a steady progression. The 550 tracks seem to be our strength right now. We haven't had race-winning speed at the 550s but we've had top five speed. We're just missing that little bit to honestly be able to run with the Hendrick cars.

I think we're getting there. We got some work to do on the 750 type stuff and the road courses. But we're close. We just need that extra percentage to be able to compete for wins week in, week out.

But the team and everybody has really gelled. I think this type of event really showed it, like how the team had to dig down deep, overcome problems, solve the problem that we were underneath, make the best out of today's situation.

It was a really testament to the team.

Q. What did you tell Kyle when the transmission problem happened to try keep his mind from delving onto the transmission issue?

BEN BESHORE: Yeah, I didn't tell him much. He's been a race car driver for a long time. That's one of the advantages of having Kyle, he's experienced. He's probably had that problem before. He probably knows how to work the clutch to get it on and off pit road, what we got to do to get down pit road.

Probably wasn't something that he did, like you have a



rookie get the gears crossed up. He did a good job of keeping his head, staying with the program, and listening to us on what kind of lap times we needed to run to save fuel at the end, just make the best out of the day.

Fortunately we didn't catch a caution and were able to make it to the end there.

Q. There was some discussion maybe you were the least competitive of the JGR bunch about a month ago. Now you seem to have overstepped, become the frontrunner for the JGR organization. What's transpired?

BEN BESHORE: I don't know if you could put your finger on one thing. I think we're just doing a better job as a team figuring out what Kyle needs. It's the ever progression of this sport. It moves fast. The setups, everything progresses fast. Even though we're in a lame duck season with this car, guys are still working hard and making gains. You just got to keep pounding away week in, week out to get that stuff going.

Luckily on these 550s, we've sort of hit on a package that Kyle seems to like, is comfortable with. We can at least go out there and compete.

Q. (No microphone.)

BEN BESHORE: A little bit of a wild card. I think it's a wild card for everybody. It's a long road course. I was there the last couple years with Xfinity. It tends to rain there. I think anything can happen there. There's lots of sand traps. It's not like a Watkins Glen where it's sort of a clean road course. There's a good chance somebody is going to get fenders knocked in, knocked in the grass; it's narrow, tight, blind corners, it's hard on brakes. It's a grueling four-mile road course. It will be a fun challenge for sure.

Q. Is it in a weird way the transmission almost won you the race because it allowed you to come back in and get a little more gas?

BEN BESHORE: Yeah, yeah. For sure. With us having that problem, that forced us to pit with one to go and take our penalty because with only fourth gear, the guys were going to leave us on the restarts anyhow. We just thought that was our best play.

Now, we had a fast car before that, but a fast car burns a lot of fuel when it's out front. I don't know if we could have made it on fuel mileage. We probably would have been one of the cars stopping, to be honest.

Yeah, in a weird way it did win us the race. I was proud of

the team for the speed we had in the car, too. I think we could have competed either way.

Q. Your thoughts on pulling this off, a second and a first? As a crew chief, this has to be a significant weekend for you, one you're never going to forget, especially here at Pocono.

BEN BESHORE: It's pretty special. I'll call this my home track. I grew up a hundred miles from here. Yesterday was my grandma's birthday. She was in the grandstands. She just turned 91.

Yeah, to have family up here yesterday, come out today with a win, really a solid performance from the team is what I'm most proud of. The guys keep chipping away and putting good cars together. We'll just keep heading forward.

Q. With the first and second, do you feel like you've made gains on Hendrick?

BEN BESHORE: When we go to Michigan, I'll probably tell you then. Pocono is so unique with three corners. Kyle is so good here. He probably equalizes maybe some of our car deficiencies here with his talent. Just being 100% honest.

I don't know how many races he's won in the last four years, at least been competitive. He's really good here. We feel like we're chipping away at them. Those Vegas, Kansas, Texas races deep in the Playoffs, those are going to be the telltale sign of how far we've come.

Q. Over the last 10 or 15 laps, are you thinking you know those guys are going too fast, they're going to have to pit? Were you quietly confident?

BEN BESHORE: I was never confident. I knew we were in a better position than we were. We had done a better job throughout the run of saving. So I knew we could get to a spot where we had enough, then we could push and force their hand where they would have to either let us by and save more fuel or run 'em out of gas.

We sort of had the upper hand by having the penalty, coming a lap later, then Kyle saving early and often put enough in the bank for us to be able to run hard at the end and attack.

Q. Who jumped in the car and pounded?

BEN BESHORE: That was our car chief Nate. We sort of came up with a plan. We had our interior mechanic, we had a similar issue a year ago on the transmission that he



was a part of. He knew what it took to fix that problem.
This turned out to be a different problem.

Our car chief jumped in there. You never know what
problems you're going to have to address in these long
races. Yeah, he's a 20-year veteran. He's a very skilled
mechanic. He was the best guy for the job.

THE MODERATOR: Ben, thank you for taking time with
us. Congratulations on the victory.

BEN BESHORE: Thank you.

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