

# NASCAR Media Conference

## Press Conference

Saturday, November 5, 2022

An Interview with:

## David Wilson

**THE MODERATOR:** We are joined by David Wilson, the president of TRD and the winning OEM for the 2022 NASCAR Xfinity Series driver championship. We'll go right to questions.

**Q. From Martinsville Saturday night to today, what have you seen out of Ty Gibbs?**

**DAVID WILSON:** Well, it's obviously been a tough week. It's been a tough week for our family, Joe Gibbs Racing, Ty. The whole team is part of our family. And what I saw Thursday from Ty was some humility, and it felt to me like he spoke from his heart. Wasn't overmessed. It was a good first step.

Of course, words are one thing, and ultimately your character and your reputation is defined by your actions, and that will happen one race at a time, one lap at a time.

Tonight, that young man drove his rear end off, and that was one heck of a race. I mean, that was an incredible race by Ty and Justin and Noah. They raced each other with respect. It was similar to last night; that was an incredible race, and everybody was -- again, they did it right.

Tonight was a great first step.

**Q. Ty obviously winning the championship, how do you assess his talent at this point? What does he need to get to that next level, Cup?**

**DAVID WILSON:** Ty is ready. He's there. Because of his last name, because of the race team that he races for, obviously he is under a microscope, and he is always going to face -- he has faced this question of does he deserve to be there, how much is he there because of his family.

Anyone who really watches the sport and watches what he has done can easily recognize that he's earned his spot, and he's ready to go to the next step. There's nothing more he needs to do. There's nothing more he's going to learn at the Xfinity level, given how radically different these cars are to the next generation cars.



If you want to get really analytical, the one thing that he doesn't have perhaps are the number of reps that a lot of his peers have, and the reps really help you with race craft at his level.

But my gosh, he is a talented, talented young man, and he's going to do some great things in the sport.

**Q. To follow up on what Jordan was asking about Ty, you mentioned that he's found that first step. If Ty were to come up to you and go, okay, what would be your advice of what the second step is, what that third step is, what would be your advice to Ty to handle himself with the following years moving forward?**

**DAVID WILSON:** So I've talked to Ty, and I've talked to his father and have spent a tremendous amount of time talking to his grandfather. I think any young person, any gifted individual, athlete is well served to try and remain humble and appreciate where they are and appreciate that they're not racing for themselves, they're racing for a team. They're part of a team.

Unfortunately I think Ty forgot that a week ago and didn't understand the ramifications, the repercussions of his actions because they hurt his teammate, they hurt his team, they damaged our brand, and that was a tough, tough lesson.

For us, the messaging going forward is about humility and teamwork and respect.

**Q. On this being the first step in actions speaking louder than words, he obviously drove an extremely clean race. I think he might have made contact once slightly with Justin Allgaier. How much of a message do you think that sends to the Cup Series drivers that we're expecting he's going to race against next year?**

**DAVID WILSON:** You know, I don't think you can -- one race isn't a cure-all. It's one race.

Now, tonight was amplified because it was a championship race. Really what I find pretty remarkable is how in the end he had to strap in tonight after one of the toughest weeks of his professional career and do a job and race against the best drivers in the sport, and he was able to



compartmentalize and do his job.

I don't think he was out there holding the steering wheel worrying about racing the right way. I think he knows how to do that.

But it was on a national stage. I think it was really important. It was a tremendous opportunity for him to demonstrate what he's capable of, and as far as when he gets the opportunity to drive a Cup car, it's a reset. Of course in the background, he's been driving a Cup car, that 23 Cup car, and he's got a pretty fast race car for tomorrow.

But again, tonight was a great look, and we're really happy for him, really happy with what he did tonight.

**Q. You heard the reaction at Martinsville. I'm sure you heard the reaction from the crowd tonight. You're about to part ways with a driver who got booed for 15 seasons driving the Cup Series, winning two championships, and now you've got a guy who's probably going to go up to Cup and experience a lot of the same reactions at least initially. What is that like to think about that, and is it here we go again kind of at JGR?**

**DAVID WILSON:** Yeah, well, what I know and what you have probably already heard is certainly his family doesn't want that for him, well and truly doesn't want that for him. I remember the Sunday morning after Martinsville, one, talking to his grandfather, talking to Coach Gibbs, but I was talking to his grandfather, not to Joe Gibbs. He was terribly distraught because the last thing he wanted for his grandson was for him to be disliked from the fans.

It really is personal. But what I said to Joe is -- at the time he was 19 years old, and I didn't believe that you're going to shape your reputation based upon one race or one season. I think that comes with time.

Let's make sure he has the support because with as few reps as he has, as I was saying earlier, he hasn't seen all of the circumstances, all of the things that can happen during the course of a race.

I thought actually after that event, we saw a course correction from Ty. We saw some things that we were like, okay, he's listening, he's growing.

Obviously there was a backslide, and unfortunately when that happens that kind of erases everything in the rear view mirror and you have to start over, and even more so because of the circumstances and because of how egregious it was.

I don't think the black hat is planted firmly on his head just yet. I believe that through his actions, through his words, through his sincerity that he can recover and be who he wants to be, be who he believes he is.

But honestly, that's up to him. We're going to have to see how that plays out over his career. He's going to be arguably in the sport another 15, 20 years, we hope.

**Q. Presumably Ty is going to go to Cup next year and replace Kyle Busch; in light of recent events, has there been in the conversation of maybe a promotion, he's not ready for a promotion, that he could use another year to season in the Xfinity Series?**

**DAVID WILSON:** No, he's ready. He's ready. He's more than capable.

The question is he emotionally ready perhaps, right? How many kids at 19 or 20 years old are emotionally ready? Probably, if you're absolutely analytical, critical, you'd say no. These kids are getting married at that age. Are they ready to get married? I'm veering way off topic here.

But what Ty has going for him is he has a family that loves him dearly. He has a manufacturer that believes in him. I believe that the lessons -- I believe that there's a silver lining from what happened last Saturday night, and those lessons learned, those tough lessons learned will serve him and toughen him and bring some humility that was necessary and needed to allow him to take that next step.

**Q. This is obviously a bittersweet weekend for you with losing Kyle, losing KBM, but then you also have Christopher in the Championship 4, you have Ty winning the championship. How do you personally navigate all these emotions?**

**DAVID WILSON:** Wow. Yeah, this whole year has been a roller coaster for me personally, for Toyota, for TRD. I don't like being in the news cycle like we have been every week it seems like. But this is just one of those years where a lot of things are going on, and in the end, I'm able to find perspective. I've got a two-and-a-half-year-old at home that keeps me grounded. I find peace with that.

But the reality is that we have so many wonderful things happening. We get to watch Christopher Bell race tomorrow night. I was sharing with some of you here yesterday, 10 years ago next month I was in Indianapolis celebrating his USAC national midget championship, 10 years ago, and tomorrow he's racing for one of the biggest motorsports trophies in this country, and he's racing because of TRD and Toyota, because we built a ladder for

him.

I'm awfully proud of that. I'm going to focus on all the terrific opportunities we have and the terrific team that we have around us. Yeah, I think that's what I'll do.

**THE MODERATOR:** David, congratulations on a great year and another championship here in the Xfinity Series. Thank you for your time.

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