

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

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An Interview with:

Chris Gayle

Coy Gibbs



THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by our first members of the championship-winning team, Joe Gibbs Racing, with Coy Gibbs, the vice-chairman and chief operating officer at Joe Gibbs Racing and father of our driver champion, Ty Gibbs, and Chris Gayle, crew chief of the 54.

Q. Chris, you've worked with a lot of different drivers, finally got a driver title. What does that mean to you? How does that feel?

CHRIS GAYLE: Yeah, it does feel great. You know, I've had multiple drivers. Obviously I've had a single driver on the Cup side, won some races but never got to the point where we probably had a legit shot at winning a championship.

I felt like last year running for the owner's championship was the closest legit chance that I've had to get that far to feel this emotion. But it's cool. To put it in that much effort and to come away with both of those titles this year, owner's and driver's together, it's kind of cool to build that relationship with one guy, in spite of knowing whose son he is.

But that part is really cool. So to be able to do that is a really big accomplishment, and I feel really proud about it for sure.

Q. Working with Ty, how does he compare to some of the other drivers that you've worked with?

CHRIS GAYLE: I think all the good ones are really aggressive, really good at restarts, getting through traffic, like they have a natural talent to do that. That's one that some guys just don't get it, and they can be really fast out front, but they can't get back around guys. I think you saw that multiple times today.

I think that's the key to guys that are really good is they know how to do that.

Q. Coy, just the difference between the emotions of

last week to where you and the team are tonight; how stark of a difference is that, and just how rewarding is this seeing your son be able to celebrate a moment like this?

COY GIBBS: Yeah, it's definitely been a tough week for sure. When you start this day, I'm kind of like, I just want to get this day over with. That was my mindset, because I want to move on and get past it.

But it is -- I've been through this before in multiple sports. Ty hasn't. So it was more watching him and seeing how he's going to react during the day. I think he's just doubled down and did his job after making a huge mistake last week.

It was fun to watch that.

Q. Chris, for you, how personally rewarding is this moment? You moved from the Cup side back to the Xfinity side. To have a moment like this and lead Ty to a driver's championship, how rewarding is this for you personally?

CHRIS GAYLE: Yeah, it's really rewarding. You guys know a little bit of the story, having to go back to the Xfinity Series that I wasn't necessarily happy with, but I kind of set some goals if I wanted to be part of the best team in the Xfinity Series.

And I feel like that with the group of guys that we had, we were able to kind of put some -- they like to call themselves the misfits, the guys that nobody wanted, and we kind of took them and added a few guys and really made a solid team out of it.

Personally, from my standpoint, it's been good to see that, and it's been good to get these wins, and it's been good to -- we all have a little bit of ego or we wouldn't be doing this, that's just the way it is.

For me personally, it's been good to feed that ego and know you can set a goal and go do it. This is just a culmination of that and makes me feel really proud for everyone involved, but that part of it for me personally.

Q. Do you know what's next for yourself for next year?



CHRIS GAYLE: Not yet. We'll cross that bridge later.

Q. For Chris, you mentioned, you talked about this in your TV interview, how Ty responded this week. I just wondered, what did you think initially after everything that transpired last weekend as to how you thought your driver would respond once you got to the racetrack?

CHRIS GAYLE: Well, it's hard to say. Like I know Ty, but I've never -- Coy just alluded to it. Ty hasn't gone through something like this. I don't know him personally from that level, from going through something so tough.

Obviously yesterday and today, I kind of saw a different Ty. I saw him -- Coy said double down. I saw him kind of put his head down, focus on the racing side of it more.

It was a really tough week having to answer questions from you guys, everything that could have went along with that. He hasn't had that much of a spotlight directly on him the whole time.

It was just good for me to watch him in the race today knowing that I saw him completely focused. Even coming into the racetrack this morning, we just talked about little things that had happened during this week, and he's like, yeah, this doesn't bother me at all. Like this -- the games that are happening and all I'm going through, I'm focused on the racetrack. When I get between those two walls, that's what we talked about, he's going to be good there.

I felt like he was able to deal with all those problems and tune that out and then focus on the racetrack today. He did a great job of -- he lost the lead a couple times, had to get back through traffic cleanly, passing -- racing for a championship around all those cars that were doing the same, and I was just proud of him to see him doing that and be that resilient with everything against him this week.

Q. As the race played out and once again, which typically happens, we saw the four title contenders racing around each other up front for the lead and the back and forth that went on between the four of them, did it impress you as far as the quality of his actions and navigating that part of the day?

CHRIS GAYLE: Yeah, for sure. I mean, I think that's the thing, right? Like he was challenged and put in a few spots where guys got around him on a restart or a pit stop, and he basically had to figure out how to do that.

And there was plenty of time left so he could be a little patient, and I think that's probably what he'll tell you today. He realized that when you've got a good car, when he's

focused in on it, he can do that and get back through the field and not have to wreck anybody or anything like that, just to be honest.

I don't think that -- I think he just learned that today. I think it was a really good chance for him.

Q. Coy, this kind of plays off of what he said. As a father, how do you feel now having seen your son overcome and do what he did and put his mind forward and race like he did and kind of what he's shown you in the days since last week? How proud, I guess, is what I'm asking you?

COY GIBBS: Yeah, no, I'm definitely proud of him. I mean, I've always got his back as his father.

Obviously it's heartbreaking to go through tough stuff and watch -- it's actually more heartbreaking to watch him go through it. I don't give a rip; I'm old and don't care. In fact, I've been racing with Chris since we were like 23 or something, so I've known him forever. We've kind of gone through a bunch of stuff in our life.

But to see a kid hurting -- and he knows he screwed up; and to go through all that, it's tough. It's tough as a parent for sure.

Watching it today, yeah, just to see his determination. I think he's got skills and he's determined. It definitely made me proud. I think it made my wife -- we were both proud, just because he just hammered down and did his job. If he wants to do this for a living, he's going to learn how to do that.

Q. Chris, obviously the move at Martinsville took out a teammate and allowed JR Motorsports to have three competitors in the Championship 4. How do you approach that knowing you're going to have to go up against three cars that are from the same team, and how did that approach go?

CHRIS GAYLE: Yeah, I don't know that we had some methodical approach. Let's be honest, we didn't know starting this race if we were going to get wrecked 10 laps in or if it was going to go clean or what would be the case.

All you do is focus on the things that you can control. I know it sounds simple, but that's really the truth. The things we could control today were bring the fastest car we could bring to the racetrack, have Ty as determined as he ever can be, plan to run as clean as we can ever be; and where things fell at that was like, even if we didn't win it today, we were going to be happy with that.

Q. Chris, I think you guys had your best stop on the last one, 13.7 seconds I think it was. In the overall scheme of things, how decisive do you think that was?

CHRIS GAYLE: You know, I don't know because we lost the lead there for a little bit and then still had to get it back, so I don't know that that was the game changer.

But I mean, obviously it helps. You'd like to -- I think you could see, I think we had a strong car and then just some restarts and the pit stop stuff when you would get back, it would take us 15, 20 laps to kind of get there, and then I think you could see the strength of the car come through.

I feel like if we had stayed out front all day, we might have not let them get quite as close. But I don't know, the ups and downs of it, I'm just glad it all worked out.

Q. Coy, Ty has done a fantastic job bouncing back and apologizing, but you heard from Noah and them, and maybe you haven't yet, but they were obviously showing him a little bit of respect and telling us that, yeah, he raced us clean, and they didn't really have a problem racing around him. That must make the dad part of you a little bit prouder?

COY GIBBS: I haven't heard anything from them yet, so yeah, that definitely -- after last week, anything is better. You bumped me but you didn't wreck me, and I would be happy with that.

I don't know, I think it's a process. I see all these young guys. We're bringing up young guys now. Actually this is my first time I get to witness a young guy with Cup and Christopher and actually see him break through.

But it's just a process. They make mistakes. They do stupid things. Sometimes it happens to you, sometimes you're doing it to someone else. Obviously doing it to your teammate was awful.

But I think that's why they're running Xfinity. The Cup guys still make mistakes, that's for sure. I see that every weekend sometimes.

Just got to learn from it. And you can talk all you want, but you'd better do the right thing down the road. That's kind of what I tell him. It's your actions. We'll see where that goes.

THE MODERATOR: Coy, Chris, congratulations on an outstanding season in the championship. Enjoy the off-season, and good luck tomorrow.

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