

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

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An Interview with:

Shane Van Gisbergen

THE MODERATOR: We've now been joined by our race winner of today's NASCAR Street Race at Chicago. We've been joined by Shane Van Gisbergen.

Congratulations on today's win. Take us back to when you did receive that call from Justin. Did you ever imagine that you would be sitting here this evening?

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: Yeah, good evening, everyone. The short answer is no. Like it's something that I guess you dream about.

As Justin was saying, when he first approached me about it, he said it could happen and I'm on the short list, and when he gave me that call, it was pretty special.

I guess preparation started, and admittedly I haven't watched NASCAR too closely the last couple years. I was a big fan like 10 years ago. I was a big Tony Stewart fan, so working with Darian was pretty special.

I became a student of the sport really and tried to study as much as I can about how the races were and how the drivers are, how the cars are, and I was a bit scared after COTA, but it was really cool.

Like coming a week early, going to Nashville, being part of the Trackhouse team and then meeting all the Project91 guys. The prep was intense, but we're very thorough, and I felt ready.

I knew it was going to be difficult, though. Like the amount of road courses the guys do now, there are very good drivers here, and it was tough. Qualifying yesterday was intense, and the racing, the battles were really fun, but everyone was respectful and clean, and it was really cool.

Q. I know Kyle Larson came to congratulate you, but when he was in here, he was wondering I guess what you thought about the field. He said, I think when a guy like that can come in and kick your ass at your own game it shows we all have room to improve. I'm curious what he thinks about us. He obviously passed a lot of us, so I am curious if he thinks we all suck or if we could actually compete like if we weren't really that



bad. What did you think of them?

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: I'm sure if it was an oval it would be the other way around. I guess this is my sort of bread and butter, the street circuits. Almost half of our series races are street circuits. I'm comfortable with the walls. It took me a bit to learn the proximity of the car, having the car on the other side of me, so I was missing apexes turning left and struggling turning right to know where that side of the car was.

But yeah, I got better and better, and in qualifying I left a lot on the table. It's very intimidating on these straights. You have 90-degree corner and no runoff. I left a lot on the table in braking, and every lap today I was learning and getting better.

But those guys are good. In the wet the tire was so different to anything I'm used to, but they were straight into it and just into it. When I got on the slicks again I was probably a bit too timid and the guys were all over me.

The next restart I was just trying to find my feet a bit and figure out how everyone races and what it's like.

Everyone is good, and the passes they were making were committed. I probably was a bit too nice to some people, but that's how it was.

Coming back through the field, I thought, once the race got shortened we had to pit in order to make it on fuel, and I thought it was going to be difficult from 18th.

I don't know the paint schemes that well or the numbers so I was kind of trying to read the numbers on the wind screen to figure out who people were when I come up on them and try to remember who's good and who's not.

Yeah, had some really good battles coming through. Some guys waved to me and some guys battled hard, which was really cool. Everyone was clean and I got a couple of taps. I tapped a couple of people. There was that crazy restart at Turn 11. The spotter was going off. I've never raced with a spotter before and I normally would have just barreled on and joined the crash. It was pretty cool to see how that side of it works.

Q. I've seen all of your wins in your career. Where do



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you think this one ranks? I've certainly got it right up there.

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: Yeah, it's obviously pretty high. Like Supercars is my dream, and winning that championship and races like Bathurst over there are still top of the list. But to come in and do this, yeah, I don't know where it ranks yet. It's still sinking in.

It's obviously one of the most special victories I've ever had, and yeah, to share it with so many people, to have my dad come over and a few other family, and, yeah, like how awesome this team is, it's great. Trackhouse is such a cool organization to be part of. The atmosphere in the team, I've never really experienced anything like it before.

Q. Probably more relaxed than I've seen in a couple of years. Does it feel like this is the sort of place you could come to race full time?

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: I miss racing in the States. I've done Daytona four or five times now and just the way the American people are and how they go racing, it's so much more enjoyable. And even doing the media stuff, which I hate, everyone here is really nice. They ask good questions and they're respectful and it goes both ways. Everyone here has made me feel comfortable, and it's so enjoyable the way the races are run.

The qualifying at Nashville, I couldn't believe how relaxed everyone was. But then it was like a switch. The intensity turns on and away it goes.

I'm committed next year to Supercars. I still love Supercars and hope it goes well there. But in '25, who knows.

Q. You thought you had a motor problem there? Were you just being a little paranoid and hearing things?

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: Yeah, I got close to the fence and it echoes funny off the fence sometimes, and I thought it sounded funny. I looked at the lap times. We went from doing high 29s to 31s on that last restart, and I wasn't really pulling away that much where I felt like I was trying.

Then the water pressure, I don't really understand imperial that much, so the settings are a little bit different to me, so I started stressing when they changed color. But that's normal under yellow and under green and stuff.

I had put the radiator fans on for when I was in traffic, and it just got too cold when I was out front. So that was my bad, and, yeah, I need to be able to switch or get them to change the dash to Celsius.

Q. There was quite a few of your supporters here from Australia and New Zealand. Did you get a chance to interact with a lot of them? What was that like throughout the weekend?

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: Yeah, I've never done 50,000 photos on the podium before, but there was some guys with SVG shirts that came from Australia and came to watch the race. They snuck up on to the podium and took some photos with them.

The support we've had and the interest from people in Australia and New Zealand, it's overwhelming and so cool to see how interested people are in this race.

Hopefully shows how good our Supercars drivers are and opens the floodgates and we can come over here and race. There hasn't been anyone from Supercars since Marcos really come and have a go, but there's plenty of good drivers now wanting to come try and expand and come over here. Any of the top 10 in Supercars are good enough to come and do what I just did.

Q. It was a big deal changing the city streets to a race car track here in Chicago, but also this is usually the weekend where it rains. How did this track compare to what you have experienced before? What kind of adjustments did you have to make based on the way the track ran and the weather?

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: Yeah, it's pretty similar to some tracks we have. Like the last half of Surfer's Paradise is pretty similar to this. But the changes in surface were extreme. To go from old to new, and then the concrete. I've never driven on concrete like that really. Maybe Sebring a little bit. But then when it rained the concrete was crazy slippery for everyone, so quite different.

But for NASCAR, like their first-ever street race and the way the weekend run, unfortunately the Xfinity Series didn't happen, but yeah, it's credit to NASCAR to nail it on their first weekend. Hopefully it leads to more street courses, and I'd love to be here for them.

Q. You alluded to this earlier, but in V-8 Supercars you sit on the right, shift with your left, and here you've got the exact opposite and pedals in different positions, that sort of thing. How long did it take you to adjust to that, and how did you prevent the muscle memory from kicking in at any point during the race?

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: Yeah, I guess that's something I've been quite diverse in the last few years. My

rally car last year was left-hand drive and change gears with the right hand, so fairly similar.

But it's been a long since I've driven anything without a flat shift, so learning the technique and timing, how to change gears quick, I was a bit slow on the straights yesterday and I think I got a little bit better today.

A little bit different, but I got comfortable. The team really helped me to get comfortable. We ran out of adjustment a little bit to get the brake pedal in the spot that I liked. I couldn't get it far enough to the right. But otherwise I was very comfortable in the car.

Yeah, the most difficult thing on a street track was the car on the other side, having that meter and a half of metal on that side instead of the left, it just took a little bit. I probably left a bit on the table with that.

Q. When did you know toward the end of that race that you could win the race? Talk me through that battle with Justin Haley at the end where you went back and forth into Turn 4, 5, 6.

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: Yeah, when I started catching him, I actually put a move on him into 7 right when the yellow come out. That's when I thought I knew it would be okay because he didn't defend as hard as I thought.

But yeah, after that restart it was a good battle, and out of Turn 2, I probably could have shut him down more aggressively, but I didn't have the mirror set up good enough on that side and let him get through.

But I saw when I was catching him, he was a little bit weak into the Turn 4 braking. I just let him have it and then crossed to the inside. That was probably one of my car's strengths was braking there.

But yeah, he was awesome to race against. The guys told me he'd probably be aggressive at the restarts. I don't think he's locked into the Chase they said. Yeah, I tried to get as good of a jump out of the last corner to make a gap into Turn 1.

Q. I'm curious, Marcos Ambrose, of course a lot of experience in NASCAR. Did you talk with him before this race?

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: Yeah, and he was amazing, how open he was. It was probably himself and Owen Kelly. Also Boris Said a little bit. They were so open about how to fit in really, what to expect, how the guys are going to race. Marcos was awesome. Yeah, can't thank him enough. Every little bit of preparation, it all helped, all that

advice.

Yeah, it was really cool.

Q. What piece of advice that he gave you, what came into play during the race today that you really noticed?

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: Yeah, don't talk about understeer and oversteer. No one knows what that is here. It's all loose and tight and stuff here. Had to change my terminology a bit. Darian is a good ol' boy. Have to use those words. It was cool. Like you hear that stuff, everyone talk about it on the radio.

It's quite a different way of working and describing the car and the way the pit stops work, the spotters. It's a completely different world to me.

Yeah, all that little stuff added up.

Q. Kyle Busch was in here earlier, and it was his assessment that because of your experience with V-8 Supercars that you have four to eight years on the full-time Cup guys when it comes to driving this Next-Gen car because of the similarities. Based off of like a week of driving this car, do you think that's anywhere close to an accurate assessment?

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: I don't really know the answer. Definitely a street circuit I'm more comfortable in, and come back next year a lot of those guys will be quicker. The way the car achieves its speed is very different with the aero under the floor rather than over the top with the spoilers and wings like we have.

So, yeah, riding on the bump stops here, it was crazy how bumpy this track was. But it's so powerful, the under floor, that they do everything they can to activate it, so you can see everyone just hitting the bumps and riding so hard; whereas we in Australia ride so high and soft to try and make the car compliant. So very different philosophy.

Then of course the rear diff. We have a locked diff, and this car has an open one and it just turns so much better than what we have. So yeah, huge differences in cars, but I think the street races, the more they do here, the better they'll get. You could see guys leaving a lot on the table on corner exits to the wall, where I wasn't afraid of getting close.

Q. There were a lot of people from your country and Australia that come over here to watch dirt racing, but it's been more than a decade since Ambrose won in NASCAR. What kind of impact will having guys like you, Jenson Button, Kimi Raikkonen, have on our

sport of bringing outside eyeballs on to stock car racing?

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: Yeah, it's an amazing opportunity and probably something we couldn't have done in the old car. That car looked so foreign to everything else, where this car is a bit more relative to all race cars around the world.

Yeah, it's appealing. Like you said, Jenson yesterday, he was so competitive and we were both running up front probably where we shouldn't be. It was pretty cool, and this car now allows people to do it.

Hopefully people look outside the circle a bit more and let foreigners come and race.

But for sure an oval race would be a completely different world. I'd love to try it, but that would be the four to eight years to get up to speed for sure. It's so difficult or looks so difficult and intense how that all works. I'd love to give it a go.

Q. Obviously you've got a lot of street race experience, but as this particular track, as you got more and more familiar with it as the day went along, what section did you really like and what sections were you like, I don't really like this, this kind of sucks?

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: Probably from Turn 6 onwards, and then you got to the tight, twisty technical stuff. I could see yesterday the first -- like I was four tenths down on Denny up to that Turn 6 and then the rest of the lap I was very strong.

I was quite confident through there with how close you had to be to the walls, and then overnight I really had to work on the first half of the track.

I think I got better at that today, but yeah, there's no bad parts to the track. That's all just character and how it is.

But definitely the last half of the lap, it was really cool to hustle the thing through there.

THE MODERATOR: Shane, congratulations again. Thanks for joining us, and we hope to see you again soon.

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