

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

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An Interview with:

Chris Buescher

THE MODERATOR: We'll wrap up our post-race media availability with the winner of tonight's race, Chris Buescher.

Three wins on the season. Talk about this year, your team, how you have been able to do it.

CHRIS BUESCHER: Yeah, unbelievable at this point. Yeah, there's been a lot going on. Certainly talked about it after even Richmond itself, but surely after Michigan. Talked about kind of hitting our momentum at the right time. This is another big step in the right direction.

I think first and foremost this was as much an RFK win and Brad's win as it was ours. That was the exact push we needed for the entire two laps coming back to the checkered. Wouldn't be sitting up here without him and us executing that way.

It's what we've tried to do when we've gone speedway racing. Kind of committed to it at a lot of places. Here at the 500 led all the way with three or four to go. Ended up getting separated.

We've worked hard to find ourselves in these situations. We've needed to capitalize and close the deal on the last 2% of these races. We were finally able to do that tonight.

Huge moment to do it here at Daytona, to close out the regular season this way. Surely a big moment for us, great momentum. I hate even saying, but probably good for points and what we got ahead of us, as well. Got some really fun racetracks coming up for us that we've been really excited about even before getting that checkered flag tonight.

Certainly pumped up for where we're at as an organization, the momentum we've had, the consistency and flexibility we've had at all different styles of racetracks.

I think it's safe to say we're going to be a contender as we head into the Playoffs now.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.



Q. You have three wins going into the Playoffs. Do you feel you as a team are a championship favorite?

CHRIS BUESCHER: I think we're a contender. We still have work to do. I don't think we're under the illusion that says it has to go through us and us only right now. We've got tracks we still need to be better at. We've got work to do as a group and as a team to get in the hunt.

I surely feel confident about our ability to drive through the Playoffs and feel like we can certainly be a contender in this thing.

I feel like I'm not able to get up here and quite say that, yeah, this is ours, it's in the bag, but there's been definitely several teams that have been very stout this season, as well, right? 24 is on, what, five.

Yeah, I mean, certainly we're going to have a hard fight, but we're in a heck of a spot and couldn't ask to be any better right now as we head into really the time that last season we kind of hit our stride on the year with Darlington, one of my favorite racetracks, Bristol is my favorite.

Heading back to where we got that win last year, it puts a lot of confidence in us. Then Kansas is a place we've been pretty fast at in the past, too. Just have to work on a little more execution.

You look at the first round, I'm excited for it. As we keep moving through, everybody will tell you, everybody's had bad luck through the season. I'm under no impression that's not the case. Just think about the Playoffs last season, able to be leading at Texas when we had a tire failure there, ran so competitive at the Roval. There's really good opportunities for us still to come.

Yeah, I mean, I feel very confident that we have a lot of potential over the next 10 weeks here.

Q. Back in January we came over to RFK, toured, had lunch. You told us this was going to be a different year. Is tonight more of a statement win for you?

CHRIS BUESCHER: I would say that it's for RFK in a lot of ways. We know how much has gone into getting everything to look like it does right now, for y'all to be able to come in. The human performance center, the



investments that have been made by our group, it's really cool to see.

I've been there for 15 years at RFK, right? I've seen it in a lot of different scenarios. I'm so proud of it now, realizing the work that it took to get it to right now, what we've been able to accomplish, how competitive we are. Also realize that came at a rather large inconvenience for a lot of our people through the times, as well. It wasn't easy to do this.

I think it's for everybody at RFK as a whole that says, Look, this is what we did, we know it was hard, we know it didn't make sense to everybody all at one time, but it's worth it. This is the result of putting that effort and really working hard to find speed at all these different styles of racetracks.

For us, I'm proud for our -- selfishly, own group as much as anybody. Not to make a statement to anybody else other than ourselves that this is hard work paying off for us to be able to be here right now.

Yeah, I mean, heck of a time to do this as we head into the Playoffs. Certainly gets everybody pumped up. Get to put another trophy sticker on our wall of success, I guess. How we grade ourselves internally, we get to add more stickers up there.

It makes me happy for everybody within our group that's put their blood, sweat and tears into this thing to make it successful. I'm just fortunate to be up here and get to be covered in champagne and talk to y'all at the end of the evening.

A lot of moving pieces to get to this point.

Q. This season has been a breakout for you. Do you go into the Playoffs with your chest pumped out a little bit?

CHRIS BUESCHER: Even before Richmond, it was a highlight year for me on the Cup side. Been running here since 2016. If you go through the years, it's been a steady progression. Nothing earth-shattering. I've worked hard to find our way.

Certainly last season felt like we did a lot of good things, but it took us too long to get there. We ended up missing the Playoffs, being able to win a race in the Playoffs, not participating. Certainly felt like that momentum would carry over into this season, and it has.

We've been competitive at a lot of places. We've had chances to win a lot. For me, that's certainly a highlight year for myself and for our group.

Yeah, I mean, it makes you feel pretty confident as we head into the Playoffs knowing that certainly the last, what, five weeks has been massive highlights. There's been a lot of days and a lot of finishes that I've been very proud of throughout the season. Combining those with what we've done here of as late, that's what gives me the most confidence into the Playoffs, we're going to be flexible and good at lots of different places.

Q. You win Pocono as a rookie. I don't know all the circumstances. Then you go a long time without.

CHRIS BUESCHER: That's good. That means the history books didn't give all the circumstances. That's what everyone said it would do, so I'm glad that's there (smiling).

Q. You went a while, changed teams a time or two. How did you stay the course? What was the key to maintaining confidence and positivity?

CHRIS BUESCHER: I mean, it's hard. I don't know everybody's stats. If you went through our garage area, everybody has been winners throughout their careers, from starting off whether it was quarter midgets, legend cars, late model racing. Everybody in our series is winners. It's hard to not win. It's hard to be a competitor and not win.

Certainly difficult three years where you feel like you're doing your best to run 15th at times. You get excited when you can get to a top five. Then you get a second place along the way and you're mad you were that close, couldn't get the job done.

It has its ups and downs. But certainly the realization that your successes through the years have gotten you to the top level of motorsports, that it's going to require a lot of work and dedication to being able to get those checkered flags and wins. It's going to be a matter of surrounding yourself with the best people that can help you get there.

That's what keeps you going, knowing there's always a buildup, always a progression. I feel like we've been really close lots of times through the years. In seasons past maybe there's been three highlights on a season. That's not many, right, when you're used to coming off and winning every weekend on your short track.

Keeps us in much better spirits going to each racetrack thinking this is a great chance for us to at least compete for a top 10 consistently and a lot of places feel like we're going to be competitors to win.

Q. Getting with Roush in 2020, how big of a game changer was that?

CHRIS BUESCHER: Yeah, I've been with Roush since I was 15 years old. I've always been under the umbrella here. It was a homecoming of sorts for the first time being in a Cup car for Roush. Spent a lot of years at the shop in Concord working in the shop, putting other driver's seats in what I felt were my race cars. Eventually downgraded to the special projects guy because I think I worked too slow, they just needed me out of the way. Got to know a lot of people within our entire facility. Got a ton of friends throughout our building.

Coming back and being able to reunite with those people has truly made it a lot more rewarding to have the successes now.

Q. Bubba after the race declared his love for you and says this makes everything cool. Your thoughts on that.

CHRIS BUESCHER: No, heard afterwards that they made the Playoffs, as well. Certainly know how fun that is, that's a good measure of success on your season.

From going back to those Roush days where we had four Xfinity cars, us as teammates along with Sadler and Ryan Reed. Spent a lot of time together. Raced each other a lot. Kind of have been on different paths for a little while.

To have him come to Victory Lane was certainly cool. Congratulations to them, as well, for making the Playoffs. It's hard to do. We know that because we've been trying for a lot of years. It's a big accomplishment.

Q. Have you had a chance to see Ryan Preece's accident? What do you see from your viewpoint?

CHRIS BUESCHER: No. Actually Bob offered me a chance to see the replay, and I didn't want to see it yet. Ryan is a good friend of mine. Also my spotter, him and Ryan are close as well.

At least while we were in Victory Lane got word he's at the hospital, they ran through a lot of stuff and he's doing well. That's good to hear. I obviously don't know the full details. All I seen was just little frames of it while we were under caution. Didn't realize it for two or three laps, I don't think. I just seen a car was in the infield down the backstretch and the nose was messed up. Happened to be on the 47 when it was on one of the monitors. Realized how wild that was.

No clue of the cause or how it got to the extremity that it did. Good to hear he's doing good, still getting checked out. Hoping the best for him.

Q. He posted a message on social media saying, I'm coming back.

CHRIS BUESCHER: Awesome.

Q. Every accident is different, so I don't want to be comparing apples and apples. Can you give a sense of --

CHRIS BUESCHER: You're going to ask me what it's like being upside down again (smiling).

Q. At one point his rotated. He rotated more than 10 times. Nothing like yours.

CHRIS BUESCHER: Anything at superspeedway is scary when you have upside down moments, right?

My rookie season, with Front Row, we flipped at Talladega, wasn't a bad one whatsoever. Very slow. The only thing that hurt was landing back on all four.

The Charlotte rollover certainly knocked me around a good bit and jarred me.

I think I would compare it more to that one from what I seen. Certainly looked very violent and very airborne.

It beats you up. I haven't seen it, so I don't know how big of a sudden stop or one major impact along the way. I just know that it was painful in the fact that it's knocking you around so many different directions so quickly. It just doesn't feel good. There's no way to go about it.

Appreciative of how safe our race cars are. I think as an industry sometimes we forget that it is dangerous still, and that can certainly lead to some of our wilder moments.

It's a dangerous sport. We know that getting in. Sometimes you push it a little too far to the back of our minds. Got to remember it.

Yeah, I mean, like I said, without seeing it, to be able to give too much, but I know that it was jarring just from the little bit that I have.

THE MODERATOR: Chris, thanks for your time. Congratulations.

CHRIS BUESCHER: Awesome. Thank y'all very much. Have a good evening.

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