

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

Sunday, August 11, 2024

An Interview with:

Richard Childress

Justin Alexander



THE MODERATOR: We're going to roll into our post race media availability. We're joined by our race-winning car owner and crew chief, Justin Alexander and Richard Childress.

We'll roll straight into questions.

Q. I can imagine that you can anticipate what my question is. Just want to hear what you think about the finish.

JUSTIN ALEXANDER: I'll be honest with you, I have not even seen any of it. The last I saw, we were going into three. I kind of looked down for a second thinking it was over. I was trying to watch him. I didn't see anything. All I saw was them cross the start/finish line. I haven't seen anything on the finish.

But we've had speed all weekend. We had speed. It's just a testament to everyone at RCR with all the hard work they've put in these two off weeks. From the time we unloaded, we were fast. Led practice. Qualified sixth. We should have won the race outright before the caution with Stenhouse. We executed all weekend.

I don't know. The finish? We're in Victory Lane. I can't comment on anything else 'cause I haven't seen it honestly.

RICHARD CHILDRESS: Do you want me to comment?

Q. Please and thank you.

RICHARD CHILDRESS: When I seen him go down the backstretch, like Justin said, we had the race till the 47 and whoever went in there and wrecked. We had such a big lead on the 11. Oh man, I said.

I didn't do anything. We just waited till the restart. The 22 jumped outside and got in front. I knew what he knew he had to do going in.

They would have done it to him, you know? It's one of

those deals that when it comes down to winning a race and you're in that position, you're hungry, you do what it takes. That's what I told him all his life.

Q. Do you feel this is maybe Austin's best complete race in the Cup Series, given the speed y'all had in practice, leading to how good he was in the final stretch of the race, ultimately he had to face two Cup champions and got the job done?

JUSTIN ALEXANDER: Yeah, from as far back as I can remember, I'd say this is by far -- I told someone that before the race was asking me.

Up until this race started, it was one of the better weekends we've had since I've been back. Even before from years back, I don't think we've ever just been this competitive from the jump-start.

Yes, I would say that.

Able to go up there and drive, execute all day, then pass the 22, pass the 11 on track. We did it a couple times. It just shows that we had the best car out there, in my opinion, and one of the best cars throughout the weekend.

Yes, I would say probably yes.

RICHARD CHILDRESS: Yeah, I think this was probably the best all over from start to finish that he's probably had. I think this is his fifth win. Texas was pretty big. He won it flat out.

I'm just proud of these guys for the effort they've put in. We said a few weeks ago we're going to change a culture. That's what the complete companies did. Justin, Keith Rodden, everyone that's been involved. I can't say enough about how proud I am of them.

And the pit crew tonight, they stood up all night long.

Q. Justin, what new challenges do the option tire present? How did you strategize with that challenge?

JUSTIN ALEXANDER: Definitely bigger challenge than most weeks. The biggest thing I think was when to put them on obviously and how to get the most out of 'em.



I didn't think a lot of guys were going to put them on early. I didn't think you wanted to. It would have got you track position, but it was going to bite you back in the end.

We debated whether we saved a set for the end of the race back and forth. We almost put a set on. I think the 99 and 12 did there at the end before the caution, last caution. It made our job a lot more difficult.

I think it was cool from a fan perspective to see the different strategies. There was definitely a big difference in pace, especially Richmond with so many other strategies you have going on.

I think it was a success in my opinion. Whether we do more or not, I don't know. It makes it tough.

Q. Richard, there were reports on the team radio Austin was being told: I don't care how you do it, just wreck him.

RICHARD CHILDRESS: I didn't say that. I didn't hear anyone say it and I was on the radio.

Did you?

JUSTIN ALEXANDER: No, I didn't.

RICHARD CHILDRESS: I don't think anyone said that, no.

Everybody was quiet. We left it up to him to do his job. Hell no, nobody said, Go out and wreck him, do what you got to do. Nobody. I was on the radio the whole time.

Q. Obviously Joey Logano, Denny Hamlin were all unhappy. Hamlin said something to the effect of it's worth the tradeoff. You said you think those guys would do it, too. Is that how it's viewed? If there's retribution, it's worth it to make the Playoffs?

RICHARD CHILDRESS: Short-track racing is short-track racing. You're going to see it. I've seen it more than once. You have to, Nate. You've been around a long time.

When it comes down to the end of the day, any of these guys do what it takes to win the race there at the very end.

Q. Richard, in the broadcast you were very stoic, so many things going on as far as having the lead, the caution. Talk about how you was able to corral your emotions during those chaotic times.

RICHARD CHILDRESS: Said a few bad words when the 47 and whoever it was wrecked down there. Then I took a deep breath. I didn't even come on, did I?

At the end of the day I left it up to them. I didn't tell them anything. I knew these guys knew their job, the pit crew did what they needed to do. So I didn't say anything.

No, I know I didn't, I don't think. That's unusual (smiling).

Q. If this happened to you, what would you like to see NASCAR do going forward? We understand there's challenges, short-track racing is short-track racing. It could have been potentially dangerous, a crash, anything. Thank the Lord nothing. What would you like to see different?

RICHARD CHILDRESS: Well, if you've been around racing as long as I have, you've seen this happen a whole lot. I think NASCAR will handle it just like they do. It's racing. That's what they do.

It's happened to us before. We've been leading that race on the last lap. I was just talking to somebody. Was leading Pocono coming into the last tunnel turn, got knocked out of the way with the 3, Earnhardt. I could go on and on and tell you more of 'em.

That's racing.

Q. Richard, you mentioned Dale Sr. He obviously has had some historic moments here at this particular racetrack. To you, knowing that it's your grandson, it's the No. 3, seeing that car back in Victory Lane...

RICHARD CHILDRESS: Anytime you win, and especially when you see your family, grandson, go out and win it. I've been in a lot of winner's circles with him over the years, dirt tracks, late model ARCA, trucks, all of 'em. It just gives you that great feeling.

I know how hard he's worked for it. I know how much crap he's taken over the years for being my grandson, going out and driving.

He had to earn it. That's the way he's done it. He's earned his way.

Q. Not to push back on you too hard, but there's audio on the Internet of the 3 team's radio: Wreck him, wreck him, wreck him. Are you willing to go back and listen to it and reconsider?

RICHARD CHILDRESS: Yeah, I don't think anybody -- I never heard it on our radio, unless somebody was making it up. I didn't hear it.

Did you?



JUSTIN ALEXANDER: No.

RICHARD CHILDRESS: Not on our No. 1 channel, No. 2 channel, no one said that.

If you believe in everything you hear on the Internet, I'm not Santa Claus if it ever comes up (smiling).

Probably somebody just saying it, put it in there.

Q. It doesn't look great. What would you compare this to in other short-track racing? He was far behind Logano, bumps him out of the way, come down on the 11.

RICHARD CHILDRESS: Well, I don't know what you could compare it to. I mean, I can go back and history. I've seen a lot of it before. I can't sit here and pick one.

It's racing. They would do it to him, I promise you. If he would have been leading it, that 22 would have moved him out of the way. The 11 would have moved him out of the way. Either one of them would have done the same thing. I've seen it before.

You have to. Seen it right here at Richmond. Clint Bowyer won the race the night I think it was 88 and 18 knocked each other out of the way. He come under 'em and won the race on the last lap. You just think back of history.

I'd like to go back to that Internet deal. No one, I promise you, on our radio... Somebody may have put it on there or come up with something. But nobody told him to wreck him. I never said a word, I promise you. I know he didn't, 'cause I was listening to our radio. No one said that.

You know how the Internet goes? I've heard all kinds of things. You have, too. So that answers that.

Bob, did that give you a good enough answer?

Q. Yes.

RICHARD CHILDRESS: Think back in history.

Q. Supposedly it was your spotter who said that.

RICHARD CHILDRESS: I didn't hear him, and I was on the radio with him. We'll see. If he did, he did a damn good job at it. He won the race.

Q. I guess that's the question. We're all sitting here wondering is there a line, and where is it. Maybe it's different now because, as Denny said, to get from 32nd

in points to now top 16 in points, there's probably a different line than maybe there was in the past. Is there?

RICHARD CHILDRESS: We're in the Chase. I don't know where you're trying to draw the line.

Where do you think? You speak up.

JUSTIN ALEXANDER: I don't know (smiling). I'm enjoying listening.

I don't know. Honestly, truthfully, I haven't seen anything. I didn't see any of the last half lap after we left the backstretch. I can't comment on anything that happened.

With the way the format today, just in general with the racing, we've been the victim of a lot of different guys. When you have to win to get in kind of thing, right, it's the format. I think it's what NASCAR wants.

Certainly they don't want anyone to get hurt. I don't want anyone to get hurt. But yeah, I mean, it happens all the time. It's not just at the end of a race. It happens throughout a race. A lot of times you miss it when guys will knock you out of the way. They'll do what they got to do.

I'm not commenting on the end of our race, but that is the format we race in nowadays, so...

Q. To echo something Denny was saying. Is this something, with a controversial finish like this, you expect any kind of retaliation?

RICHARD CHILDRESS: Just prepare yourself is all I can say. It's a two-way street. If you kick a dog, he might bite you, but you might get bit again yourself.

THE MODERATOR: With that, congratulations, gentlemen.

RICHARD CHILDRESS: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: And go prepare for a good night of celebration.

RICHARD CHILDRESS: Thank you. Thank all the press for all you do. Thank you.

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