

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

Sunday, February 2, 2025

An Interview with:

Chase Elliott

THE MODERATOR: We are going to start with our final media availability, we've been joined by the race winner, Chase Elliott. Congratulations on the win, Chase. We'll go straight to questions.

Q. You mentioned it in your TV interview, but what was the ambience like out for post race? It looked like a lot of fun.

CHASE ELLIOTT: Yeah, no, it was super fun. I'm sure they would have been excited regardless. I'm a little biased in the situation just for myself. It was an extremely special moment. I think the people in the crowd here made it that. I'm thankful for that.

Yeah, it was a moment I'll never forget, for sure. It's not every day you not only race in an environment like that, but to have the opportunity to win and kind of share that moment with the crowd, it was really cool.

I hope we put on a good show. I hope they enjoyed it. Seemed like they were into it throughout the night. Yeah, seemed like a success.

I know it's always tough from a winner's perspective when everything goes your way, but it seemed like the track was racy. Just thought the whole deal was much improved compared to the last few years.

Q. Would you be a proponent of being here again?

CHASE ELLIOTT: I don't have any issue with coming back. Like I said, overall it seemed like a good show. The tire wear came into play. The environment from not only tonight but last night, the place was packed out. Just seemed like a good all-around event.

Yeah, I just feel like if we're going to race on a football field, this is probably as good of a place as any to do it.

Q. What made the difference with the Coliseum?

CHASE ELLIOTT: I think just the size of the track. It just seemed bigger to me. I don't know what the technical distance would be, how different it is or not. The



straightaways seemed a little longer, the corners weren't so sharp. Didn't seem like it was such a sharp apex.

I think all of those things, that combined with the track surface having some age to it, all three of those things probably had a pretty large impact on the race being better and kind of putting it a little more in your hands as far as tire management and all that stuff.

Those would be the three big ones for me.

Q. How do you lead 171 laps and only get shoved out of the lead once here?

CHASE ELLIOTT: Yeah, that's a great question (smiling).

Honestly, felt like there at the end of the first hundred that Denny and Tyler had gotten better than us, and we needed to be a good bit improved to track those guys back down. Was kind of afraid if we lost control, it was going to be hard to get it back.

Alan made some good adjustments there at the break. We were able to get back to 2nd. I felt like I needed to take my shot and try to get the lead. If it worked out, great. If Denny got me back, then so be it.

I just felt like my best chance to win was to try to get control of the race in that moment. Took that opportunity and was fortunate enough to kind of have the race play out in our favor. Certainly Ryan kept us honest there at the end, too.

Q. What's it like to win a race when the crowd is that into it? You knew 60% were the locals, and the other 40% had to pass some test, to be vetted. I've never seen a crowd that was literally hardcore. You get kind of jaded after doing 40 years of this, but what was it like for you?

CHASE ELLIOTT: Coming from you, that is quite the compliment for the event. We always get the questions. You've been watching a lot of racing, too. For you to say that in all seriousness is a pretty big compliment for the event.

It was a great environment before the race. I just think probably the biggest lesson I've taken from the weekend is



kind of reaffirming my belief in less is more. Like this crowd, it wasn't 80,000, 90,000 person crowd, but it was a smaller number, a more intimate number. To your point, they were all very much into the show.

I think it makes for good TV. It looks good. They were into it. I think all those things are positives for us as an industry.

Q. Is it special to win a race like that?

CHASE ELLIOTT: Absolutely. Yeah, no, absolutely it is. I alluded to it earlier. I think the people and the environment make those moments special. Without the environment being what it was, it wouldn't have felt the way it did. I think all those things contribute into what will always be a memorable night for myself and our team.

Q. I think you made two or starts in K&N?

CHASE ELLIOTT: I think two.

Q. Knowing the history of this place, leaving that phase of your career, thinking you'll never get a chance to win at Bowman Gray, then winning the race, is that something you had any sort of romanticism towards?

CHASE ELLIOTT: Look at Chad Knaus back there showing some excitement. Thanks, man (smiling).

Yeah, I haven't really thought about it from that perspective. But absolutely. At that point in time it was just such a different time in my career because, like, I was coming along, and at that point I had not raced on any bigger racetracks.

I would say when you ask any driver that's coming along, they're going to be like, when you get a chance to go race at Richmond for the first time, you're like, This place is big. You go to Iowa and some of those tracks, then you get to your first mile-and-a-half, you start getting to some of those larger racetracks, that's a really big deal for a young driver.

At that point in time I wasn't as excited about it because I was ready to go race on bigger racetracks. I don't think I appreciated it probably as much as I should have during those years that I did it.

But now having some more experience and understanding more about the track and the history here, what the crowd's like, all those things, I think it makes it more special for sure.

I think some of that comes with just experience, just having

a greater appreciation for places like this that have had a very deep history in our sport, whether a Cup race is here or if it's just a sanctioned event like the modifieds or whatever.

Q. NASCAR is going two parallel directions. How important, in addition to the international big markets, is having these kind of grassroots kind of events?

CHASE ELLIOTT: I think it's paramount honestly. You hate to see, I mean, 'historic' might be the wrong word, but the cornerstone racetracks of what paved NASCAR to be what it is today shut down or go away.

If us having a race or if it's the Rockingham case where those guys are taking Xfinity and Trucks over there, if that's going to keep that place alive and keep it from shutting down or getting bulldozed, then I think that's a victory for motorsports.

Whether it's NASCAR or whatever, I just think having these racetracks survive this day and time is a really big deal. We need to try to make sure we're doing as much as we can to keep those places in business and give us the opportunity to even return there one day, right?

What happens if the effort from the state didn't happen and Rockingham goes away, North Wilkesboro goes away, they get bulldozed, we can't have special moments to return to anywhere because they're gone.

I just think it's important that we do what we can to make these places continue to be special here in the region, which obviously has a big footprint with NASCAR and the history here. I think we can expand, grow, try new things while doing that all at the same time.

Q. You were dominant early. Regained that after the break. Did you have to bide your time with the adjustments you made?

CHASE ELLIOTT: Yes and no. I think I probably didn't save enough through the first hundred laps. I really wasn't sure how much to save. Sometimes when you're the leader in that scenario, you're kind of setting the pace, and those guys can judge off you how hard to run.

I think that Denny and Tyler and a few of 'em did a better job, Ryan, saving their tires to have something left there in those last 20 laps in that first one.

I think our balance could have been a little better, too. I do think we got our balance better for the second half. I think I did a little better job saving. I took my opportunity to try to get control of the race when I felt like I could. Didn't know if

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

I was going to get another one, honestly.

Denny is so good. You give a guy like that an opportunity to lead the race, control his tire wear, do his thing, he's going to become hard to beat as the race wears on.

I felt like I needed to take my opportunity while I could to take back control and conserve what I could from the lead. That was going to be my best shot at winning.

Q. With such a great start to the season, there's a two-week intermission to Daytona, how does that start, win, stop affect you as a driver?

CHASE ELLIOTT: It sounds to me like I can enjoy it for another seven days, an extra seven days, versus a normal race. That's a good thing.

I mean, look, I know it's not a points race, but I don't care. These things, man, they are so hard to win. Whether it's a points race, not a points race, before the season, the All-Star... This garage has become so competitive, these guys are so good at what they do, it's very rewarding to cross the finish line first in whatever type of event it is when you're racing against those types of drivers and teams.

That to me is very enjoyable from our perspective. We'll take the positives from the weekend. For sure we recognize there's 37 more to go. There's a lot of racing left. Just hope we can build on this.

Q. What is your pick for next week?

CHASE ELLIOTT: That's a good question. Man, I'll be honest. I was really pulling for the Bills. I was pulling for Josh Allen. I've become a big fan of his.

With that being said, the Chiefs are always tough, but I'm pulling for the Eagles. I'd like to see them win. I'm getting some head nods in the back. I love it (smiling).

I'd like to see the Eagles win. Jalen seems like a stand-up leader and individual, somebody that I think everybody can admire. I wouldn't mind seeing him get a win. He came close the last time they met.

Q. What does it say about the quality of the racing and the show that a guy can start 23rd on a provisional and come through the field and challenge you for the win?

CHASE ELLIOTT: Yeah, I mean, I think that says a lot. Truthfully, like I said, I think the racetrack was racy and there was enough tire wear that it allowed that to happen where a guy could conserve and make smart decisions and claw his way up there. Ryan certainly did that.

He has become elite at places like Martinsville and here and Phoenix and some of these shorter tracks. You really have to be mindful of all those things.

Yeah, when I saw him, I was, like, Man, didn't he start last? Then I thought about it a little more. I thought, That's really not all that surprising at all as good as he was at Martinsville in the fall. This isn't super different from that. It is different, don't get me wrong, but there are a lot of similarities. Not super surprised to see him up there by the end.

THE MODERATOR: Chase, congratulations again. Thanks for spending time with us.

CHASE ELLIOTT: Appreciate it. Thanks for being here.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports