

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

An Interview with:

Martin Truex Jr. Jimmie Johnson

Q. Martin, seeing the 19 on the pole, is it weird at all to see that car on the track with someone else in it?

MARTIN TRUEX JR.: Not really. Sounds funny. I've been there before. 2010 I went and drove the 56 car and the Bass Pro car won the Daytona 500. I've been in the shoes before (laughter).

Happy for James and all those guys. I know they worked hard. Toyota put a big effort in this off-season on their speedway program. We were terribly slow at Talladega last year the second race. They went to work. I think we're all proud of those guys. Both Jimmie and I up here, we're beneficiaries of their hard work on the engine.

Proud of all those guys. It will be fun to go racing with them on Sunday.

Q. To take the pressure off of tomorrow night for you guys, how critical is that to knock that out tonight?

MARTIN TRUEX JR.: It's huge. I think it's speedway racing, so a lot can happen. You can have a great car, a great plan, execute a great race, and something can take you out of it. We can just go concentrate on working on our car for Sunday now, be smart about it tomorrow night if we need to be.

Q. For both of you, what is the sense of weight lifted off the shoulders? You two earlier today during Media Day were the two that probably spoke the loudest about the open provisional for Castroneves, having to potentially race your way in. What is the sense now that you don't stress tomorrow night?

JIMMIE JOHNSON: Yeah, it's a big weight lifted off to say the least. The experience I had last year, it's been ringing through my brain at night. I've jumped out of bed a few times with some nightmares as this day got closer.

We're doing so much to turn Legacy Motor Club around, have it point in the right direction. The partnership with Carvana and bringing Shaquille O'Neal in, what's in the



days ahead, what we have planned, man, it would have really been a bummer to miss the race.

Obviously there's still a chance to race in tomorrow, but so happy to have this behind us and not have to worry about it.

MARTIN TRUEX JR.: Yeah, same I guess for different reasons. A lot of people put a lot of effort and hard work into doing this. You always like to see them enjoy the fruits of their labor.

Get everybody at TRICON coming together with Toyota and JGR support, good collaboration. A lot of fun guys on our team that have been around a while. It's going to be a fun week racing with them. Hopefully we can have a good week and be prepared for a great Sunday.

Q. Martin, what has today and this process been like with being able to reunite with Cole and have a little bit of fun?

MARTIN TRUEX JR.: Yeah, so far it's been good. I think it will get more fun now. He was pretty nervous today, more nervous than I was, that's for sure.

Yeah, it's good to have him back. Need to remind him to put his sunscreen on. He's not in Canada anymore. He got sunburned already today.

JIMMIE JOHNSON: I noticed that.

MARTIN TRUEX JR.: Yeah, but it's going to be fun. I've missed having him around. He's so much fun to race with. It's going to be a fun week. I look forward to hopefully capping it off with a big win. That would be great.

Q. Obviously Toyotas have not qualified well on superspeedways. Did the cars feel better than they did last year?

JIMMIE JOHNSON: My standpoint, it's hard to tell. I'm not in the cars as often. We were encouraged by our pace in practice. Picked up quite a bit of speed.

Once qualifying really got underway, whole field picked up speed. So hats off to Toyota and what they brought. In addition to that, what JGR has been able to do, really nice

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job.

MARTIN TRUEX JR.: I mean, honestly, when we come here with these cars and this package, they feel slow no matter what. You wait for whatever pops up on your dash when you take the checkered flag.

Seriously, these cars are so draggy, it doesn't feel fast qualifying.

Q. Jimmie, now that you know you're in, how much do you switch gears and use tomorrow night as a way to get the car ready for the Daytona 500? Secondly, as a team owner, you're going to get an extra check here on Sunday. How important is that for Legacy Motor Club?

JIMMIE JOHNSON: Money equals speed. The more we can bring in the door, the better we're going to be. Excited for that. Just hope we can roll some cars back on the trucks when the race is over. That will help the bottom line, too, at the end of the year.

Just excited. The partnership with Carvana, Shaq being onboard, Reebok logo on the car. Hopefully we can grow the relationship more and have a great showing here.

Tomorrow -- I talked to Chad Johnson twice after qualifying. First time I talked to him, it was like we're just going to ride at the back and not do much in the qualifier. The second time I saw him, Maybe we have to get in there, work on ride heights, put some pressure on the pit crew.

I'm sure by tomorrow we're going to try and race and win the Duels. We'll see (smiling).

Q. With you both being Toyotas, I'm sure you'll be working together at some points. Do you have any memories of working together in previous restrictor plate drafting races?

MARTIN TRUEX JR.: I pushed him into the show last year.

JIMMIE JOHNSON: That's right. That's totally right.

MARTIN TRUEX JR.: Short memory (laughter).

JIMMIE JOHNSON: Typically we were in different manufacturers, so... You'd be scolded if you worked with the other guy too much.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, congratulations.

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