

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

Sunday, March 16, 2025

An Interview with:

Josh Berry

Miles Stanley

Eddie Wood

Jon Wood

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, Wood Brothers Racing. Joining us today are four members of the iconic Wood Brothers Racing team celebrating their 75th anniversary this year. Crew chief Miles Stanley. From ownership, the CEO and co-owner Eddie Wood. Co-owner Jon Wood. The winning driver, Josh Berry.

We'll get right to questions.

Q. Josh, a lot of people would have expected your first win to come on a short track. What does it say about how you've grown as a NASCAR Cup Series driver and why shouldn't people be surprised about what you did today?

JOSH BERRY: Well, I think for one, this has been a really good track for me, right? I have two Xfinity wins, two big moments in my life. This place has been really special. It's been a good racetrack for me, especially in the Xfinity Series. Cup has been a challenge, but the cars are different. Adapting to that.

Honestly, the biggest thing I feel right now is I'm just thankful to be in the situation that I'm in and driving fast race cars.

I think our car really from the start I felt good about. I kind of trusted my instinct a little bit in practice about how I thought the race would play out, what we needed.

We fought hard all day. We had a mistake on pit road, but the guys were able to rebound, we were able to get back up front. The strategy went all wild. We were on the frontside of it. Was able to get up front, bow Joey for a while and hold him off for the win.

Obviously with my experience on the short tracks, you would think that's where you're going to win. If anything I've learned in this sport, you never know what day can be



your day. You just have to put your head down and be there to capitalize.

Miles and everyone brought us a great race car and we found ourselves in position.

Q. Miles, 67 to go, you're staying out. I was assuming you were going to try to run it dry, then pit. Were you trying to make it from there?

MILES STANLEY: Well, at that point in the race we still don't know what cautions are going to fall, right? I felt like the best strategy for us at that time was to put ourselves in the best track position that we could. That was by staying out.

It all played out to where we didn't have to run it dry or save fuel. But we were getting close there to where we were going to have to start deciding on how we were going to save or how we were going to make it.

At that point in the race I felt like the best thing was to put ourselves as far forward as we could.

JOSH BERRY: I have an answer for that, too.

After we had to come down pit road and tighten up the wheel, I told him don't be afraid to do something different here because that's the only way we're going to be able to get back up front. That's what he did. I mean, dude's pretty good.

Q. This race is historically ran with no caution at the end. You're running a risk. Logano made it. You're willing to lose that track position if you need to, correct?

MILES STANLEY: Yeah, I mean, at the end of the day I guess you could say we're in Vegas, so we gambled.

JON WOOD: I'm doing the Wood Brothers Twitter as I'm trying to post (laughter).

Q. As you guys have been running better, it's easier to be like it's the Wood Brothers-Penske alliance. Last year we didn't talk about that as much. Where does the truth lie here? Is it fair to lump you in so much with Penske? Do we need to give more credit to the



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organization separately?

JON WOOD: So, unfiltered or filtered?

Q. Unfiltered.

JON WOOD: When we suck, it's our fault. But when we do good, we had nothing to do with it. It's 100% Penske or something.

I think that's a frustrating part. These are our guys that are doing this. We sat in a room and debated who our next driver would be for 2025. It's Josh Berry. Those are decisions that we made collectively. It's our race team and our decision.

It gets a little frustrating. I'm probably hypersensitive because I'm not just an admin that, like, laughs it off and doesn't care because I got my paycheck for the week for doing social media. It hurts a little bit when I see that stuff.

But then this happens and the results speak for themselves. I haven't really had to be super crappy on social lately, defend ourselves. He's just doing it. That's the neat part.

Q. With this, you're the first Division I weekly series driver to win a Cup race. How meaningful is it to prove it can be done from this level?

JOSH BERRY: What was that?

Q. National Auto Parts...

JOSH BERRY: First National champion.

It's really cool. That's obviously a really cool stat. Yeah, my story here, it's been well-documented. We talked about it a long time, how I got here, the years of grinding it out on the short tracks to get to this opportunity.

I've been very fortunate to have some amazing opportunities in my life. I say it every time. Five years ago, I felt like I was going to be a career short track racer. I wanted to be Bubba Pollard. I wanted to be on of the greats on the short tracks.

Junior Motorsports gave me a chance to drive an Xfinity race. I won a race, won another race. I get an opportunity in the Cup car. That goes well. Here I am now.

Those grassroots are important to NASCAR. There's a lot of amazing drivers at that level. I'm just thankful. I wouldn't change anything about how I got here. I look back now and I miss those days tremendously with driving with

my buddies to all these racetracks, working on my own car. Those people made me who I am, the way I think, the way I approach racing. I wouldn't change anything about it.

Q. Jon and Eddie, two wins two years in a row. How important is that for you guys?

EDDIE WOOD: We ran really well all year so far, early in the season. Things felt right. They just feel right.

I think Josh fits us. Miles fits us. Everything just fits. I used to make fun of people years ago when they would talk about chemistry. Football teams, baseball, all that. Then it kind of bled over into racing. This goes back a few years.

When things click, they click. I've been doing this since I was a kid. I was there when David Pearson and Leonard Wood, my uncle, hooked up. That clicked instantly, like right off the bat.

This feels like everything is clicking. I'm probably not answering your question, but it feels good to win the hundredth one last year with Harrison. It was good for him, good for us to get that one, actually to get it. Now to get the next one is just a really big deal to us. Really special.

JON WOOD: This one was legit. Sometimes they'll put an asterisk beside a speedway race. It's speedway racing. He dominated those last 20 laps.

Look at our track position, our qualifying, the whole package from Daytona to now, if you throw out COTA, you're not supposed to throw 'em out, but if you do, his qualifying average is fifth. He's either led or won in every race since. It's not supposed to be this easy. I think that's just a testament to his level of focus and Miles' big brain (smiling).

Q. Eddie, your team hasn't won in seven years before winning twice in the last 17 races. Did you ever think it would ever start clicking again?

EDDIE WOOD: Through the years we've been through so many ups and downs. This sport's just like every other sport: there's more downs than there is ups. When you do get in position to be fortunate enough to have the ups, you really appreciate it.

In racing, it's always next week. You got another week. You got another opportunity to turn things around if you're not doing well.

That's how I think we've survived this long, is just you never give up, you never quit, and you just keep going to



the next race. All of a sudden things will start building. You stay on the corner long enough, it will be your turn eventually. That's kind of the way we are.

Q. Josh, obviously you had success in Xfinity. After the season of Stewart-Haas, then coming here, did you have any doubt on whether you'd ever win a Cup race?

JOSH BERRY: You know, that's a hard question to answer 'cause I think back through the last few years, right? I feel like when I left the 9 car, I was the most confident I'd ever been as a driver. I thought Alan did a tremendous job building my confidence throughout that whole process. Since then, it's been tough. My Xfinity Series season in '23 was tough. Then last year just battling through the emotions of every part of that was difficult to manage, right?

Through those days, you learn so much about yourself, so many lessons that I learned last year from them guys have struck. Now I find myself here in this new opportunity. From the minute that I sat with everyone at this table and thought about this opportunity, it just felt right. Like, it just felt like the right fit for me.

Our performance the start of the season has 100% exceeded my expectations. I think it just goes back to just trusting your instincts as a driver that if you're in a good situation, surrounded by good people, have fast race cars, you can do amazing things.

That's where I'm at with it really. Miles has done a tremendous job believing in me. I know there's times even in the short couple weeks that he probably thinks, What is this guy talking about? Whatever. He's had my back. We've built this quickly together.

Yeah, ultimately it comes down if you're in a good situation, surrounded by good people, leave it up to those guys to do their jobs, trust what you know as a driver, and here we are.

Q. Jon and Eddie, you were talking about you guys picked the driver. Why Josh?

EDDIE WOOD: That's who we wanted. It was simple (smiling).

JON WOOD: Evidently I've mistaken his results. I got it backwards. I sat and told Lee Spencer how great he did in his debut year. Josh was like, I ran 29th all day.

JOSH BERRY: I flew home that night thinking that my Cup career was over because of how I ran that day. It was a last second thrown in the car. I had no preparation.

Even thinking back to that day, they believed in me and they gave me another week. We went and finished in the top 10.

It's amazing the things that have to happen to get to this point.

JON WOOD: He drove in two or three different style racetracks, having never driven in a Next Gen car, and he ran competitively and finished well in two of the three. So I was sold from that point.

I didn't know Josh from anybody. Like, I knew who he was, but I hadn't been following him. I didn't want him to do well. I was like, This isn't supposed to be that easy. You're not supposed to outrun us when you just hop in one of these things.

It stuck in my mind that week, This dude's probably pretty good. But it never dawned on me there would be an opportunity. He just seemed like a Chevrolet driver through and through forever.

As the Stewart-Haas thing began to evolve and unfold, we're thinking, This might work out. We had to check a couple boxes before. Once those were done, we could say, Let's go get Josh. And it worked.

Q. Eddie, where do you think realistically the race team stands right now competition-wise?

EDDIE WOOD: You talking about here, NASCAR Cup?

Q. Big picture in Cup.

JOSH BERRY: Cup? I can tell you this, it's the toughest I've ever seen it. Like I said, I'm old and I've been around a long time. I've seen a lot of races.

I was talking to Rudy this morning sitting on pit wall before it started. I've never met Rudy. I introduced myself. We talked. I said, Man, this is hard.

He talked about how hard it was.

I said, This is the hardest since I've been racing. I think it's the hardest right now, most competitive.

You hear that word a lot, 'most competitive'. Everybody is competitive, and they are. Congrats to this guy on leading his team. It's just amazing what they do.

On my best day, I couldn't touch it. I mean, it's just so complicated now. You've got to be so on top of it.



I guess the difference, when I was younger, we worked on the race cars. We changed tires. Everybody did everything. Now you can't do that. It just amazes me the technology. Come sit with us on the pit box next week and just watch. It will blow your mind.

Q. (No microphone.)

EDDIE WOOD: I hope so.

JON WOOD: I have been so far. Except for COTA. Throwing that one out. Other than that, I mean, yeah. It's been unbelievable. Usually you start up front, you stay there, or you have a better chance of staying there. To be qualifying this well this early, these two being as new to each other as they are, is really unfathomable.

Q. (No microphone.)

MILES STANLEY: 42.

Q. (No microphone.)

MILES STANLEY: That's kind of my expectation, honestly. Let me step back a minute.

Where we've run the start of the season has exceeded my expectations, for sure. But my goal for this team and with Josh and where we want to go and what we want to accomplish this season, this is it. We want to win a race, we want to make the Playoffs, we want to advance in the Playoffs. We're marching down the path to do that.

I strongly believe we can be a contender week in and week out. There's weaknesses in our program that we have to work on. I'm honestly surprised with how we ran this weekend. It wasn't one of the races that I had pegged as we're going to be in contention to win this thing. There are races in the beginning of the season that I think we can, but this was not one of them. I'm very surprised.

It does help build the confidence in the team and the organization and all the guys. Confidence, as we all know, is super important for everyone in this sport, in this industry. This is a pretty good step in the right direction for all the people on our team, from the pit crew, to the mechanics, to the guys in the shop, the engineers, everybody. It helps everything, so it's a good step.

Q. Josh, can you talk about the decision not to do a burnout after the race for your first career win.

JOSH BERRY: So, yeah, I don't know. There's a couple reasons. For one, over the course of the off-season, I found myself watching the 2014 Daytona 500 when Dale

won.

He went down to one and kind of swung around took his stuff off, waved at the fans. I think back of Saturday night short-track racing, we wouldn't that type of celebration, because you couldn't blow the quarter panels up, blow the motor, tear the car to hell after the race.

That's just wanted to do. Kind of who I am. I did a little bit of one there at the end there, just kind of spun around a couple times. That's just who I am as a person.

I've spent my whole life working on my own race cars, building race cars, got my ass chewed a couple times for doing burnouts when I shouldn't and tore stuff up. I just want to soak in the moment.

I could have pulled down there, done a burnout and got out. I wanted to enjoy it. I didn't care how long it took. I wanted to go down there, turn around backwards, just have a moment to reflect on that 'cause it's just a huge accomplishment to win in the Cup Series. I feel like so far I've done a good job of that.

Q. Is the sky the limit for the 21 team in 2025?

EDDIE WOOD: I didn't understand you.

Q. Is the sky the limit, meaning multiple wins, championship, getting to the Championship 4, even possible for the 21 team?

EDDIE WOOD: Like I said, it's a day-by-day thing. Everybody works as hard as they can work every day.

I used to hear when it's your day, you can't mess it up. We had a problem on pit road today. He came from the back, back to the front. That's just the way it unfolds.

Like I said, these guys are going to work as hard as they can. Josh is going to drive as hard as he can. You see where it lays at the end of the season.

Q. There was a record number of lead changes today, but you didn't lead the bulk of your laps until the tail end. How are you feeling as the race is unfolding? Did you have a sense you could win, you could pounce?

JOSH BERRY: Really, just going back to the start, I felt like we had a good car. Obviously we never got to the lead. Really the whole time I just felt pretty confident about the car we had.

I mean, these races are so long. It's so easy to get your



head out of the game when it comes down to I like I said, I've raced cars, I've built cars. When the car is good, the car's good. That's how I felt, right?

I could have gave Miles a bunch of comments about the car just to give him. I felt like the car was good. I felt like we just had to go execute. That's where we're at.

Really so far this year, that's the best part about it, I feel like we're not overthinking anything, right? We're going out, trying to have the car drive good, qualify well, maintain track position. Obviously be mistake-free on pit road, which we haven't done the last couple weeks unfortunately.

What we did after that, just like I mentioned earlier, lost track position, back in the 20s. I told Miles, We got to do something different to get back up there. We were able to do that. We caught the caution, and found ourselves up front.

That's sometimes what you have to do in these races, put yourself up front. They're long, a lot of things can happen. I guess the fastest car doesn't always win, but you have to be in the right spot to capitalize when it's your moment.

Q. Miles, I know you've won a lot of races as race engineer. How does it feel to win one as a crew chief?

MILES STANLEY: I honestly don't really know how to answer that. It feels great right now. It's pretty cool. Like you said, I've been part of winning several races as race engineer or as a performance group manager, championship has been part of that, too.

It feels great. I don't really know any other words to put to it. I'm really proud of this team. I'm really proud of the guys that put all the effort in at the shop, from everyone that works on the cars back at the shop, to the road crew guys, the pit crew guys.

We've got a pretty young team in the guys that go over the wall. Like Josh said, the last couple weeks we haven't been perfect. We've had some mistakes. They've really recovered from those really well. I'm proud of that.

I have a lot of confidence in the team going forward. It feels great to get a win this early in the season for our group.

I've been confident that we have the ability to do that. Certainly surprised that we were able to do it here, able to do it this early in the season.

But yeah, feels really good.

Q. Josh, take us through the battle and the final laps when you're out front.

JOSH BERRY: Yeah, I thought really once we were able to get toward the front, I tried to just stay patient on that longer run, just keep the tires underneath me as long as I could. Had a great battle with Joey, he ended up getting in front of us.

When we came out on the front row, right, you know it's going to be a fight. Daniel did everything he could to try to hold us off. It's just a battle. I mean, there's no way around it. Whoever ended up in front was going to win the race. We were beating and banging a little bit. We were able to get the lead and hold him off.

Once we were able to get out front, stretch a little gap, I tried not to overdo it, just be smart, hit my marks, manage the gap behind me, and hope it stayed green.

Q. You guys are looking at your phones. Who has reached out so far to congratulate y'all?

JOSH BERRY: I don't know. I have so many texts and stuff. I can't even really fathom it. I FaceTime'd Dale Jr. in Victory Lane because he's done a lot for me. He was jacked up.

JON WOOD: That was my first call, too. You answer that one when he calls. Dad's is Jim Farley. Mine is Dale Jr.

EDDIE WOOD: Jim Farley called me. Hadn't even got to Victory Lane. Then Edsel Ford called. You take those calls (smiling).

Q. Miles, it's one thing to win a race and be qualified for the Playoffs late, at the last minute. This is early. Does this give you guys some chances to plan? Does it give you opportunities to take chances going forward?

MILES STANLEY: Yeah, it certainly does open up the box as far as what you can do with the rest of the season as far as trying to develop your setups, trying to develop your team.

We're still really young as far as the whole team goes, our relationship as well. There's a lot of development that we still have to do naturally, win or without a win.

It kind of relieves some of the stress of trying to make sure you get that win so you lock yourselves in the Playoffs.

I think we'll try to take advantage of it as best we can, whether it's trying different setups or risks in strategy calls



in the races. It definitely bleeds through the season.

Obviously most importantly is still generating points, generating Playoff points so we can progress through the Playoffs, not just making the Playoffs. That's not the only goal. The goal is to progress through the Playoffs, not just make 'em.

THE MODERATOR: Miles, congratulations. We'll let you go for inspection.

MILES STANLEY: Thank you, guys.

THE MODERATOR: We'll continue on.

Q. Josh, there's been a lot of legendary drivers that have won for the Wood Brothers. What does it mean to add your name to that list?

JOSH BERRY: Yeah, no, it's amazing. The Wood Brothers have been around for 75 years. It's just tremendous the legacy they have in this sport. It really is an honor just to get to drive the car, but let alone win a race and run like we have, like I said, it's far exceeded my expectations.

This is a special day for all of us to win at an intermediate track like we did. It's really cool. Just thankful for the opportunity more than anything to be behind the wheel in the Cup Series. It's an honor and a privilege. To be driving fast race cars like this, have this opportunity, is really special.

Q. Josh, I remember sitting in New Hampshire last fall. It wasn't official yet. What was going through your mind knowing that your future was secure and it would be with an iconic team like the Wood Brothers, that you could finally get some stability in your career?

JOSH BERRY: Yeah, I mean, it's interesting, right? Obviously it's like I said earlier, from the first time I sat with these guys, it felt right. Thankfully we got that taken care of pretty early in the season.

There still is pressure as a driver from then on, right? I know that they're watching every lap that I make knowing that I'm going to be a part of their future. You want to go out and have good races and prove yourself, get everybody excited, wanting to be a part of this.

I don't know as a race car driver the pressure of trying to perform ever goes away. Obviously it was good to have a ride lined up amidst everything that was going on with SHR shutting down.

Really for me, I wanted more than anything to finish that time in the 4 car as strongly as I could just because those guys, I owed it to them, I owed it to the 4 team, everybody at SHR. These guys are watching me week in, week out. I wanted to start this year with them excited and ready to go.

I don't know if last year I did that as much as I wanted to. That was most certainly my intention.

Q. Josh, you touched on that story after your first Cup Series start on the plane ride back thinking your NASCAR Cup Series career was over. In this moment right now, reflecting back to that moment, what would you tell that Josh Berry on the plane?

JOSH BERRY: I mean, I don't know that I would tell myself too much different, right? I mean, that weekend was such a whirlwind, an opportunity that I never saw coming. It was a last-second deal. Unfortunately the race didn't play out any good at all.

In that moment, you just think, Man, that was my opportunity. I wish I'd have done better. Thankfully they just gave me another week, right? That was the extent of it.

I remember the Internet, reading it, everything, Put this guy in, put this guy in, he doesn't deserve the opportunity. For whatever reason, Mr. H, everybody on the 9 team decided to stick it out. That's something that I'm very thankful for.

Thinking back on it, I think if they didn't do that, I was in the midst of talking to the 4 team. If they felt like I wasn't the right move, I don't know what that would have done for my career as a whole, right?

For guys like me that just are fighting for every opportunity, you just need to be in the right place at the right time. Thankfully I was and everything worked out like it did.

Q. Josh, you thought your Cup Series career was over. How does a driver of your caliber pick up from some a mental roadblock and push yourself to a position like this? How is the journey?

JOSH BERRY: I mean, I think for me, I remember the next day we were in the simulator running 500 laps at Phoenix and spent some time with that team to try to get a little bit more acclimated.

I remember I was running laps, lap after lap in the simulator not even knowing if I was going to race the next week. We were preparing like it was going to happen.

I think what allows me to focus on that is years of



short-track racing and working on my car. You're not going to win every race. The tough days, you just wake up whether you win or lose, you go to work on Monday and try to be better for the next one, right? That's where my head was at. I had no other choice.

There's no use in sitting and pouting over it. You just get to work. I was there first thing Monday to try to figure out the Next Gen car, what I needed to do better, how to adapt to the team. Thankfully it all worked out in the end.

Q. On the business and strategy side, you're always looking as a businessman running a team, are people more apt to take your phone calls or call you after a win like this?

JOSH BERRY: Yeah, I don't know. I'll be pretty busy I think on my phone the next few days trying to get back with everyone.

Yeah, I don't know. First time, so I'm just soaking it in.

Q. On the strategy side, you're playing with house money, made the Playoffs. Do you change your strategy between now and September the things you might try?

JOSH BERRY: No, I don't think so. I feel like we still just kind of keep doing what we've been doing because it's been working, right? Go to the racetrack every week, try to prepare the best we can, put the best race car on the track we can. Just try to go out and try to build momentum and run well. Really that's where my head's at in this, right?

I think there's a lot of good racetracks coming up for me. A lot of good short tracks. I feel like there should be good opportunities for us. I don't think there's any reason to overthink the Playoff eligibility. Just kind of go and keep racing and doing the best we can.

Like I said earlier, win or lose, you go to work on Monday for the next race. I think that's where our heads are at.

Q. Josh, you get your first NASCAR Cup Series win in your 50th start at the top level. Is that surprising to you to get that win so early on in your Cup career?

JOSH BERRY: I mean, yeah. You see a lot of statistics about guys in the Cup Series, kind of the hundred-race mark being the mark of when the performance kind of turns I guess for 'em once they build experience.

I don't know. At the same time I don't consider myself the same as a lot of younger guys, right? I'm older. I'm more experienced in racing as a whole. Not Cup racing or Xfinity

racing. Still relatively inexperienced in that side of things.

As a racer and a person, I'm 34 years old and have been racing for years and years and years. Even though it's at a different level, I've seen a lot of different things. I feel like that proved in the Xfinity Series that I was maybe a little bit more prepared than really I thought I was.

Now to be here today, it's really cool.

Q. The Wood Brothers are known for so many first-time winners. A lot of those guys like Dale Jarrett, Ryan Blaney, they got their second win with many others elsewhere. You're early in this deal now. How important is that, that you guys have this deal to build together and actually have a driver you can invest in and have a career with him?

JON WOOD: We don't know because it's never happened lately (smiling).

The wins that we get have been at the tail end, the middle to the tail end of the season with Blaney, with Harrison. Harrison was two or three races before the cutoff. So now at the front end, it's going to be a completely different feeling.

You're racing now for stage points instead of a win. Knowing that we're going to make the All-Star. Haven't done that I don't think in a long, long time.

EDDIE WOOD: It's been a long time. I don't remember. Just I'd forgotten about the All-Star Race. Somebody mentioned a while ago you're automatically in that, not in the other race. That's big for us.

JON WOOD: But to have it on the front end is relieving. It's just a huge burden. Everyone is so uptight. Not everyone, but the guys that are from 15th to 25th, I consider us in that range, we typically are, it's so nerve-wracking, particularly when you get midways through a regular season, you're looking at one, two, three, four, five points. It makes for some long races. To know that we're there now, don't have to worry about it, it's a huge, huge burden to overcome.

EDDIE WOOD: You mentioned first-time winners in our car. That's one thing I'm probably most proud of. We got a wall in our museum with the winners. I went a couple, three weeks ago, already got a picture of Josh in a Motorcraft uniform ready to go hoping we'd get that first win.

You never know when you're going to get one or if you're going to get one. I felt so good about the combination with



Miles and Josh, like I said a while ago, they just clicked and you could see it from the get-go. Just felt like he's going to run up front. You got to get in the right spot to win a race. These races are so hard to win.

The way he won it today is really special.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations on this great win. Thank you.

JOSH BERRY: Thanks for all you guys do.

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