

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

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An Interview with:

Joe Gibbs

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Coach Joe Gibbs. We'll open it up for questions.

Q. Coach, it came down to a money stop once again. The pit crew talked about how appreciative they were of the moment to put it on them. What can you say about them and their mentality?

JOE GIBBS: I think as we all know, it's a total team effort. You have to have everything. I've learned in pro sports, if you can't do one part of the performance for the day, you're not going to get anywhere.

Thank goodness, that crew has taken it upon themselves. They kind of told me, they said, Hey, that's what we wanted. We come in third, got a chance to win, come out first, so...

We've worked extremely hard with our pit crew. We came from kind of a hole probably 18 months ago. But everybody at our race shop, our coaches, Chris and Brian, really worked hard.

A lot of credit goes to the athletes, too. They work extremely hard. Three days a week it's practice, three days a week it is mandatory weight training. They go through a lot.

Of course, everybody knows in our sport it means a lot, so big deal.

Q. I spoke to Chris Gabehart afterwards about secrets or techniques that you use at Joe Gibbs Racing that came out this week. Talk about the pride you have in those guys, your experience as a football coach coaching these guys.

JOE GIBBS: I think, like I said, we made a decision when Coy was running the show, he and Matt, they made a decision to go with young athletes. The problem with that is it takes a while, conditioning, working with them. You miss some of the veteran leadership.

I think this group over the last two years has really worked hard. It's a big deal in our sport. So we put a lot of



emphasis on it. We're just thankful we got the guys we got there. I think we had a good day on pit road, period, today with all four of our cars.

Q. How important was it for Joe Gibbs Racing to sweep the weekends with Brandon Jones getting back in Victory Lane yesterday?

JOE GIBBS: I thought it was great. I called JR, his dad, he was in the winner's circle. I called John Menard. John is huge in that program. Talked to everybody.

Just think the world of Brandon. He's won races with us, a number of races. It's great to get him back. I really think he's got a chance to really do something special this year. So we'll see.

I know how much it meant to him and JR to get that win, particularly here at Darlington.

Q. A lot of people talked about with Denny Hamlin the longevity he continues to show. Being his owner for two decades now, what about Denny's work ethic continues to keep him at the top of his game?

JOE GIBBS: I could tell you this, one of the things about going in the sim, it's hard work. You're in there. Honestly, I think Denny, he is in the sim as much as anybody we have, any of the young guys. Stays after it.

I've told the story, I mentioned it the last time I talked about Denny. I went to him at Watkins Glen two years ago. He struggled road racing. They went as far as putting other setups on his car. That guy went to work in the sim and worked as hard as he could. He set on three poles in road racing.

You get somebody that age that still has the drive to get it done, I think Denny has a real drive, and I think we're fortunate to have him.

Q. How cool is it to get the win done here at Darlington, 75th anniversary, what it means for the sport?

JOE GIBBS: It is cool. Everybody loves coming to Darlington. I go all the way back to Denny when we first got him, our final test for him before we signed him, J.D.

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who found him, my son, said, Let's put him at Darlington. He'd never been here. Let's put him in an Xfinity car and see what he does.

He finished eighth. J.D. told me, he said, I think we need to sign this guy. I said, I agree.

But he has had a feeling for Darlington. Of course, he's got a feeling for a number of tracks he's really good at. Really appreciate Denny, his leadership with our group. He's our veteran guy. Just really appreciate him and what he's done for us.

When you think about 56 wins, that's a huge deal. We hang banners at 1:00 tomorrow. He's going to have 56 on the wall. That's a bunch. So I really appreciate him. God has blessed us with a bunch of great guys.

Q. You talked about Denny's leadership. How important is it with so much youth now for JGR to have a veteran leader?

JOE GIBBS: I think it's really important. I'll give you an example. This week in the sim, Denny went in first before our young guys. I think it means a lot to us, his leadership.

When you think about all he's got on his plate, too. Denny's owner of 23XI, all of that. He can lead our group, really goes after it. I think this week was a huge deal for us in that our young guys, they went into the sim after he was through getting it straightened out.

Anyway, just really appreciate that, so...

Oh, Denny is here (laughter). I think you guys probably want to talk to him. I'll let you take over, Denny.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for joining us, Coach.

JOE GIBBS: Thank you.