

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

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An Interview with:

Joey Logano

Paul Wolfe

Walter Czarnecki

THE MODERATOR: We are going to get start our post-race media availabilities with our winning team. We have crew chief of the No. 22 team, Paul Wolfe, and Vice Chairman of Team Penske, Walt Czarnecki. Congratulations to you both. Do you want to just kind of walk us through those final laps and how you're feeling?

PAUL WOLFE: Yeah, thank you. Obviously a long day for us starting with a not so great qualifying effort yesterday, but we knew we had a good car after practice yesterday and felt like we fought hard all day and chipped away at it.

The track got pretty racy, which was encouraging. We weren't sure that it would widen out. Obviously practice tends to be pretty single-file, and it was hard to pass, but our cars were good enough. I think all the Penske cars obviously were very fast today, as a bunch of us got to be up front and lead laps. So showed the strength of that.

Just the 22 team just fighting all day. Like I mentioned, not good qualifying effort. Our pit stall was not ideal, but the guys really adapted well to that and had a solid day on pit road considering the pit stall selection.

Joey did what he typically does at the end of these races when you put him in position. I think Coleman said it. There's nobody better at it than him. He just continues to show us that as we go along here. It's exciting to be part of, and I'm glad we could get our first win of the season.

It's been a bit of a struggle this year to get the results that I feel like we've shown the speed, but we haven't put it all together, and it was nice to just have a nice solid day and be able to find victory lane finally.

THE MODERATOR: Walt.

WALTER CZARNECKI: Thank you. First of all, congratulations to Paul and to Joey. Before the race I was asking Paul what his strategy was given the fact that our



starting position wasn't exactly optimal. I said, What's your strategy? He said, We've got a fast car. So that worked.

But, no, I'm really proud of this team. Team Penske has been bringing good, competitive cars for the first 11 races. We've been in the hunt in every one of them. We've qualified very well. Had a chance to win some other races. Now, two in a row. Hope that's a real momentum builder for us.

Again, if we weren't bringing good cars or there were other issues, that's one thing, but we've been there. So Blaney's time is coming too.

THE MODERATOR: We'll get right to questions.

Q. First for both of you, and Walt, you kind of touched on it with Blaney, but is this a sigh of relief? I know Cindric won last weekend, and now Joey has got this win here. Is this kind of now a sigh of relief after such a struggle with the start of the season, and kind of just what does that kind of weight off your shoulders feel like for an organization like yours?

WALTER CZARNECKI: I don't know if I would characterize it as a sigh of relief, but rather, it reduces the pressure. The fact that here we are, I think this is 11th race of the year, and we got two cars in already for the playoffs. So it allows the team to I won't say freewheel, but to be able to do some things that they might not have been otherwise to do.

Now, the mission is to get Ryan Blaney into the playoffs. But, again, in fact, I said to Paul coming over, I used that expression. I said, Well, the pressure is off, and he agreed. So, Paul.

PAUL WOLFE: Like you said, we've had fast cars. We've been in position. I think Blaney surely could have won multiple races. I really appreciate that relationship we have amongst our team and specifically the 12. We work very closely together, and it's kind of ironic how the end of the race we were racing the 12 for the win today.

I saw Hassler after the race, and told him how much I appreciate our relationship and how well we work together. The way the racing is with limited track time these days and things like that, I think it's very important the teamwork



aspect and how well we're able to help one another to ultimately make us better on race day and as the race goes on. We continue to work together. I appreciate that and recognize how important it is.

Q. Second question for you, Paul. We talk about from you guys and the drivers about track position being so crucial for especially these mile-and-a-halves with this car, but when I look at the finishing order, no one started in the top 10 except for Kyle Larson that finished in the top 10. Can even go to the top 12. It's like the starting and finish grid completely flipped. Do you have an idea of maybe what caused that or strategies?

PAUL WOLFE: Well, like I said when I opened up, I feel like the track actually widened out pretty well, and there were multiple lanes. We didn't see that in practice. In practice we caught cars that we were three-tenths faster than. You just get stuck behind them because there's one lane, nowhere to go.

As the race got going and the track widened out, there was opportunity there if you had fast cars. Like I told Walt, I thought we showed really good pace in practice and was optimistic if the track widened out, we could work our way to the front. I think ultimately that's why you saw that because there was opportunity.

There was a little bit of strategy today with two tires. You saw multiple cars do two tires to get track position. We looked at it a couple of minutes. Like I spoke of our pit stall selection, that makes it a little more difficult when you are trying to come around cars and really to optimize the position gain by doing two tires.

We didn't feel like we were going to gain enough because potentially you have to wait for the car to come -- the 35 was coming around us pretty much every pit stop as he was pitted right in front of us, so there's that delay time there. When you are trying to do two tires, sometimes you're better off just committing to four.

That was kind of our strategy all day. Fortunately, our car was fast enough that we could make our way to the front without doing the two tires.

Q. Paul, I assume after last week you were, like, God, if we don't make the playoffs by 30 points or something, you will look back at that and just be angry. Does this kind of heal anything from last week?

PAUL WOLFE: Well, obviously wins heal a lot of things and fix a lot of problems. Last week was unfortunate. You know, we're not proud of what happened there. It was

nothing intentional. It was really a learning moment, like I've told all the guys in our meetings this week. We know what happened, or we have a pretty good idea what happened, and we need to make sure that doesn't happen again and move forward.

Fortunately, we have great partners and owners that understand that sometimes it's just part of the sport, and we're all working on the edge. It's hard to compete if you're not and trying to get all you can. It was something that we could have done a better job of to not have happen with that penalty post-race.

We've continued to look forward from that, and I think that showed this weekend our focus was on continuing to bring fast cars and put ourselves in position. Yes, it feels good, and we've put that behind us and learned from it.

I've got a question for you, Bob, if that's all right. Did you do your picks yet for the championship this year? Are we in that or not?

Q. You're in the playoffs.

PAUL WOLFE: Oh, we are? Good. Joey will be happy to know that. Or maybe he won't. I think he likes it when you root against him because that really fires him up.

Q. (Off microphone).

WALTER CZARNECKI: Why not? If I may, I want to give a shout-out to Benjamin and Sebastian Würth, who came here from Germany. They're the principals of the Würth Company that's been a long-time sponsor/partner of ours, sponsored this event. They've been on our cars for several years.

They made the trip from Germany, and these two men are just absolutely over the moon. In fact, in victory lane one of them asked me, What's the next race we should come to? I said, Well, maybe we ought to wait until the playoffs start, and we'll make a selection. They're going to come back. It's great when we're able to do that in front of our sponsors and from the event sponsor as well.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for the time and congratulations.

We are now joined by the winner of today's Würth 400 here at Texas Motor Speedway, Joey Logano, driver of the No. 22 AAA Ford from Team Penske. Joey, big win for you in that it's your first win with AAA on the car. What did that mean for you and the team?

JOEY LOGANO: Yeah, finally. You start to wonder if you



are ever going to win for these guys. They've been a great partner of Team Penske and myself for the last 14 or so years. Yeah, it's been kind of heartbreaking being close quite a few times and never getting into victory lane.

It was a special one to be able to click one off for them and for the 22, right, to be able to -- after what happened last week to be able to rebound and come right back, it was a total 22 way of doing things. So proud of the team and giving me a fast car. I had a really fast car. Just had to methodically pick them off throughout the race and have some good restarts there at the end and execute those parts of it and ultimately get the win.

So it was an exciting last few laps. One particular moment going down the back straightaway was really, really sketchy, but felt like I had to make that move, and it was worth the risk.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up to questions.

Q. You brought it up. Does this win erase the negativity of last week with the disqualification?

JOEY LOGANO: I mean, there's always a story next week, right? I told my wife last week before we left, I said, Watch, we'll go win this one. It's just how we do stuff.

Any time you kick us down, I feel like we come back ten times harder, whatever that is in us. Definitely had a fast car today, and like I said, it's nice to change the storyline.

Q. For you, you mentioned also the sketchiness on the back stretch. The track in general, some of the drivers we talked to said you couldn't get up top. There was a lot of bumps. The track hasn't changed much since they've done it as far as that aspect of it with the bumps and the integrity. There's still some PJ1 left up there. It's hard to race here. Is it just something that they should look at yet, or is it just continuing as status quo?

JOEY LOGANO: I think there was definitely -- it's hard to pass. There's no doubt. It's going to be hard to pass no matter where we go. All the cars are the same. I mean, how do you pass a car that's going the same speed as you?

That's why everybody is willing to do something different to position us all up in the front to get clean air. There were a lot of two-tire calls today and those type of things, but there was room to race. There were moments where the top lane in one and two was the dominant lane. You could go to the bottom and try that for a few laps. You can go back and forth and try different things.

Three and four, there were some cars that were able to run high. We were not one of them, but there was cars that could do that and make passes.

I really thought it became kind of pretty racy there at the end, especially the second half of the race. I would say the majority of the races this weekend had a lot of big moments in them. So ultimately I would say it was a pretty good race weekend for Texas. I wouldn't take anything away from that.

Q. I guess you might have answered this, but I'll ask it a different way maybe if you didn't. Usually we hear from you guys that track position is so key with qualifying at these mile-and-a-halves, but when you look at the top 10, top 12, it's almost like a complete inversion of the starting grid, except for Larson. Does that surprise you at all, or was that just kind of what you were talking about with pit strategies with the two tires and how cautions fell?

JOEY LOGANO: Yeah, I think there were some good cars that started towards the back. There were some moments where a couple of the good cars lost track position, whether it was from pit road penalties or wrecks. There were a lot of wrecks there at the end. There were moments like that that shuffled the field a little bit, but we just put four tires on every time.

We never even swung the bat at two tires because of the stall that we had with the 35 in front of us, we just felt like putting two tires on was asking for a crash on pit road because we would be leaving when he is coming in. We just kept putting four on it and trying to methodically pick off a couple here and there.

So we didn't really go for the haymaker pit strategy. We just kept it basic, and we felt like our car was fast enough to get up there and honestly I thought race in the top 5. I didn't know we were going to get to the lead. Our lap times were good enough to be in the lead, but we took so long to get there. Yeah, everything ended up working well.

Q. Did you tell your wife that there were going to be ten drivers probably wrecking who would wreck themselves?

JOEY LOGANO: I didn't tell her that part. I didn't know that, but I just know how this sport works, right? That's why you got to just brush some stuff off. Last week, did it suck? Yeah. It's a long week, but you know that next Sunday presents the opportunity for redemption. We did that today.



Q. We saw several good drivers wreck, so how come you didn't?

JOEY LOGANO: I think there's a few reasons, and I don't drive their race cars, right? A lot of it could be setup choice. There's definitely guys that I think have the ability to drive their car a little bit more on edge, and they're willing to take that risk a little bit more at times. That's either going to be good for you or bite you.

That bump down in three and four, it's brutal. Everybody is down on their rear limiters as much as they can be. If you are a little free and it hits the limiter, it's gone. There's no opportunity to save it.

You've got to think of risk versus reward throughout the race. Not just on pit strategy, but when you are trying to pass somebody, how hard is it worth pushing it here to make a pass, and what is the ultimate goal? There's times you've got to push your limitations, and there's others you've got to stay within reason.

Everybody does something different, but to answer your question, I can't say why. I have some thoughts, but a lot goes into it. It's not just the driver. It's the setup as well.

Q. You talked a moment ago about when you kick us, we have a way of just coming back. Where does that come from, and how do you build that not only you have it, but it's a cultural thing down through your team?

JOEY LOGANO: I don't know. I think any time somebody says something about you, you can use it as motivation, whether it's good or bad. When you have some negative comments and things like that, you have a chip on your shoulder. Well, I'll prove you wrong. You want that story. It's cool, right?

I mean, I don't feel like I put more effort in one week over the others, but I think subconsciously there's something that happens. Something happens in the playoffs. There's something that happens when someone says something to you, right? I think everyone in here can probably relate to that at some point. If someone has something bad to say about an article you wrote, you are kind of like, Oh, watch this, maybe I'll write a better one. I don't know what the next thing is for a reporter, but --

Q. Right a worse one.

JOEY LOGANO: Write one about that person (laughing). Whatever that may be, a lot of times it just gives you a little extra motivation, a little chip on your shoulder, a little bit of want to shove it in their face a little bit.

Q. So what does it mean to you now that you had a start the first ten races, fast cars, nothing happening? Now you have the win. Now you're in the playoff. What does it mean to be in a playoff 11 races into the season?

JOEY LOGANO: Yeah, really I went in today and said, Man, I just want a solid one, just something to build momentum. We paid the price from last week in qualifying, going out early, and now you have a bad pit stall.

Okay, I just have to get some momentum going. Just got to top 10, top 5 and start clicking those off, getting some points. I need that.

Then just found ourselves in position to win. Glad we capitalized on that. The goal was to get some momentum rolling. I feel like just get some stuff going, juices flowing again. Yeah, turned out well.

Q. The moment on the back stretch, notwithstanding, a lot of people on pit road kind of commended Michael McDowell's two-tire call there at the end and were really almost taken aback that it worked so well. Were you surprised that two tires that late kind of stayed up front for as long as they did?

JOEY LOGANO: Well, it worked for a couple of different reasons. One, he was able to get clean air on his car. Once you lose the clean air, the lack of grip will show up more. We saw that throughout the day. As soon as the two-tire cars got swallowed up by a couple of cars, next thing you knew they were all the way to the back. Not all the way to the back, but they would lose quicker.

Michael did a great job at maintaining on restarts, getting the lead, and he was able to do a good job at defending that for a long time. If there wasn't so many restarts, it wouldn't have looked as good as it did. 40 to go was the last stop, 40-something to go. Maybe five laps consecutive green flag, you know, at one point there, it just kept caution, caution, caution, caution. So, yeah, that's what kind of just let him stay up there.

Q. Paul said you went with him to the dirt track last night.

JOEY LOGANO: I did.

Q. I'm just kind of curious, building that kind of camaraderie, you guys are so close anyway, but to have that kind of camaraderie and just build on that, how important is it to the driver/crew chief relationship?

JOEY LOGANO: I think the biggest thing is you have to understand that you're on the same team. Paul and I realize that that. I told him over the offseason, Listen, I have weaknesses. There are things I need to be better at, and I need you to support me doing that. I need you to help me overcome some of this. Whether it's with the car, like I'm going to ask you to do that, or help me get better as driver.

None of us are perfect. Everybody has strengths and weaknesses. As long as you're on the same team working together, you can overcome a lot of things. Once I think everyone feels secure in their job, you're able to do that. No one is fighting for their job on our team. I feel like everybody does a good job at supporting each other. That's the most important piece you can ask for on a team, I believe.

Yeah, it was fun. I laugh because if you know Paul like I know Paul, he's the most -- I'm trying to say the right way. Everything has to be just right for Paul. Everything has to be clean. He gets upset if his drapes hang the wrong way in his house. This is the type of guy.

So his son, Caden, started racing at Millbridge, and he's running dirt. I laugh because Paul, even when went to Bristol to run on dirt, he does not like it. That is not who Paul is. He asked me to go to a dirt track. I'm like, What (laughing)? I just had to see that as I stood into turn three on the fence and those sprint cars went rolling off, and it blasted us with dirt. It was funny to me (laughing).

Q. Did you have a good time?

JOEY LOGANO: Yeah, it was cool. Those guys are just BA, man. It's cool to watch the speed that they carry. It's a totally different discipline. You see what some of those guys do trying to switch back and forth from one to the other. It's such a different discipline to race a sprint car. I've never driven one, but gosh, it just looks completely different. It's fun to talk to them. They're all real nice people too. It's cool.

Q. Paul was afraid you might catch the bug.

JOEY LOGANO: There was a want to do it for sure, but also I think about my family. I think about the position I have as a job. I think about my sponsors. I think about Roger Penske and think, Probably shouldn't be doing that, but it does look fun, there's no doubt about that. It looks fun. If you could take some of the risk away, I would probably do it.

Q. You've always been known for executing when it

counts, and today was no exception. What did you and the 22 team figure out that made the difference in closing the deal at a track that can be so unpredictable?

JOEY LOGANO: No, I just think if you look at the final restarts, at that point you are going off of what you had early in the race. You are going off of your prep work that you've done the whole time, so at that point you're not coming back down pit road. It's just me and Coleman at that point. It's up to us to make the right decisions on the racetrack, whether it's the choose or just getting up through the gears and how to manage the first lap of a restart.

You just have to go back on everything that you've looked at and previous restarts of that race, the previous history of the race in general, and trying to make the right decision.

Q. This was your 37th win, so you break a tie with Brad Keselowski, and now you're tied with Bobby Isaac for 23rd all-time.

JOEY LOGANO: That's cool.

Q. What it does it mean to keep rising and rising up the record books, and how does it feel to break that tie with Brad considering how long you were teammates?

JOEY LOGANO: It's really cool. I respect Brad as a driver a lot. Even more so as a person more than anything. So I consider him a great friend of mine. I don't think there's many people I trust as much as I do in Brad.

It's cool that we go out there and race with each other still, and we're able to separate what we do on the racetrack and what our families are like.

So, yeah, it's neat to be racing against him for my whole career. We came in at the same time, you know. I always say he was a big part of getting me here to Team Penske. He was the one that told Roger that, You get Joey to drive. I owe a lot to him for saying that.

Yeah, that's always neat, and obviously Bobby Isaac is a legend in our sport. Yeah, it's neat to keep climbing up through the record books. I don't look at it that often. It's cool to hear it, so thanks for telling me, but I feel like I still have a ways to go. So I don't look at it a whole bunch, but racking up stats are cool.

You don't know when your last win is or those type of things, but yeah, it's neat to rack them up. I always say there's more important things than just racking wins up. You have to do something with them afterwards and make sure you make an impact in people's lives the best way you



can, but the wins definitely help do that.

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