

# NASCAR Media Conference

## Press Conference

Sunday, June 8, 2025

*An Interview with:*

**Chris Gayle**

**Heather Gibbs**



**THE MODERATOR:** We are joined by Chris Gayle and Heather Gibbs. Heather is representing the owners and Chris is the crew chief.

We'll go ahead and open for questions.

**Q. Chris, at what point did you know for sure that you had enough? In that last stretch, how important was it for you guys to push the pace?**

**CHRIS GAYLE:** Well, I mean, I knew we had enough when we left pit road. I knew what I was putting in. I knew what lap it was going to be. Here are the three caution laps, we're in the fuel mileage all day. Based on previous runs and pace that we've had, I felt confident we were good there.

We didn't really save fuel. I didn't ask him to save fuel on the final run. I asked him if he got in a spot where he couldn't pass someone, don't unnecessarily use fuel. More if there was a green-white-checkered and you need to stack and stay out, I wanted the ability to do that.

I was fine with it, knew we were okay the whole time. This did pivot a little differently, right? We only needed one can on that final stop. I think a lot of guys needed two. Someone will have to clarify for me. I wasn't able to see the 24, how many cans they took. I know they were talking about needing to wait on fuel. I had an idea that everybody else needed to wait on fuel. I'm thinking we could do it on one can. We can maybe get the lead off of pit road with the situation the way it is.

Unfortunately the stop was bad. It wasn't a wait on fuel. I think he missed the jack on the left side and the gun was turned wrong left rear. I think what could have been, they've done some 8.0 stops, could have been that. I think it was a 10.8, if I go back and look.

I told Denny this is the situations where you have weeks where they win us the race. They made a mistake and we still won them the race. It kind of works both ways and shows you the team aspect of it.

**Q. Chris, knowing you had enough fuel, was your strategy to drive the leaders in front that you knew were short on fuel kind of out of fuel, like Byron?**

**CHRIS GAYLE:** For sure, right? There's two outcomes, right? You're going to push from the beginning, if you know your own fuel, once you catch them. They're going to decide they're going to let you go because they need to save enough fuel to make, then you're in the lead. I thought we were good on fuel. If we would have gotten the lead earlier, we would have maintained the gap and saved fuel at that point. Or you're going to push, they're not going to give you the lead, you're going to run them out. Either way it works out in your favor.

You're hearing them, so you know what they're telling you and how short they think they are. We went into turn one after the race, he did a burnout, went down to three and four and did a burnout. We probably had another lap, lap and a quarter of more fuel than we thought we did. When you are kind of figuring all that, maybe these guys can go a little further than they're saying. You're always worried about that.

**Q. Heather, what is it like watching that as a team owner and a mom with both your cars there, trying to figure out who needs to save and who doesn't?**

**HEATHER GIBBS:** I think obviously Denny being the veteran knows how to capitalize on saving fuel the most. I think for Ty, just having a run up there, they were kind of in the front, they were in the back, then they were back and forth all day. It was a long day.

Just to have them up there was exciting and I think left him a little bit bitter leaving just because you can see them and have to back off.

But just great to have the finish. It was thrilling. I was like, C'mon, don't let the 24 win (laughter). Let's go.

**CHRIS GAYLE:** Let's let the 11 and 54 both run out of fuel.

**HEATHER GIBBS:** Exactly. As they were explaining to Ty, as the 24 ran out, they're like, That's why you have to back off.

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There's so much to learn. It's so hard. Sundays are hard. I was talking to Gabehart about that. It's really hard to learn, so much to try to take in. All the veterans have so much experience. Every race you just get a little bit more knowledge and understanding and try to capitalize on it.

But hopefully the momentum will move forward. It was a great day.

**Q. Denny, no matter what's going on around him, seems to thrive amid a little chaos. Are you, Should he go home? Not go home?**

**CHRIS GAYLE:** That's me. I've being nervous and worrying bout Denny in the first stint. He doesn't seem to care one way or the other, or at least gives you that feeling.

**HEATHER GIBBS:** No, I mean, it's funny, because I have four. They don't really do anything. When he gets home, he'll be home. It was good. He kind of thrives in chaos, I know, right?

It was true, we wanted to get him in the car. We made it to Sunday. I joked with Chris, he's like, We'll try to make it to a certain point and then we won't talk to him. I'm like, Just go.

**CHRIS GAYLE:** I think that's what he decided, lap 50, end of stage one, if he gets the call from home by then, he'll get out, Truex will get in. If we got past stage one, run till the end, tell him at the end of the race and we'll handle it then.

**HEATHER GIBBS:** He's as cool as they come, that's for sure.

**Q. Chris, your pit stops, looks like on the green flags you had a crew member designed to catch the fuel man. Is that right?**

**CHRIS GAYLE:** That was the first stop.

**Q. That was intentional to prevent a penalty?**

**CHRIS GAYLE:** We've seen others do this. When you're doing a situation to where fuel only is where you normally see it, like at speedways, where some other teams have a guy to catch the fueler in case he's caught or whatever, starts to lose the can, to keep it in the box and keep the guy from going across the line.

That's not exactly the way this played out. He was supposed to wait on fuel, right? Denny was. He decided he was going to audible and not wait on fuel. Of course the fueler is not ready when he takes off, right? He said

that was on him when he left.

Thankfully the other crew member was smart enough when they finished the four-tire stop, he kind of got in the position in case that happened because they practice it for fuel-only stops. It worked out. It was needed this time.

**Q. Denny said you have had a lot of speed, not necessarily the finishes over the last four or five races. Do you look at the finishes and say this is tough, or do you look at the speed and say as long as we keep bringing fast race cars...**

**CHRIS GAYLE:** I look at the speeds mostly. But specifically, we've had speed all except North Wilkesboro. I write that off as we need to do something better there. If you throw that away, thankfully wasn't a points race.

You have a motor failure at Texas. You have a clutch failure. Those things, I mean, are not really within my control. There's some TRD. There's some collaboration there, but it's not fully in our control.

I don't feel too bad about that. If we were slow, ran bad all day, the motor blew, I mark that down as we have to work on our car. I don't think that's been the case anywhere outside of North Wilkesboro this year.

You know if you eliminate those type of things, you're going to continue to break through. The more you put yourself in position, you're going to hit some of 'em and you're going to finish 'em out.

**Q. On Denny, with everything he sort of has gone through with baby watch, the 23XI stuff the past few weeks, how have you seen his focus on the performance with the 11 car? How has he stayed focused on that?**

**CHRIS GAYLE:** I haven't seen any difference, to be quite honest with you. We kind of have a weekly schedule that's the same where he comes in for meetings on a certain day. We post do our simulation work after those meetings on Monday. He shows up on a Wednesday to do the simulation for the week of. Nothing necessarily really changed.

We don't sit and talk about the 23XI stuff at all. We talk more about the 11 car, what is going on with it, what he needs with it, what he needs at that specific race, something that happened from the previous race. I haven't seen any difference.

The only conversations we've has is baby watch, Okay, who are we going to get to fill in? What do we specifically

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need to change if he was to get out of the car? What would be his plans in that case? The timing of things. Hey, I got to know by here to get stuff in the car if you're not going to show up. It's that kind of thing.

**Q. Road course next week. Is Ryan Truex still the reserve driver? I don't know if it changes because it is a road course.**

**CHRIS GAYLE:** It doesn't change, no, as of right now. Man, surely we can have that baby delivered this week before Mexico. I have no control over it, but I'm hoping we don't have to do that again next week. That's a long flight home. I don't think you can do that as quickly as you came here, right?

**Q. Chris, which crew member was it that caught the fueler?**

**CHRIS GAYLE:** I'd have to go back and watch. I think it's Dylan Dowell (phonetic), who is our carrier.

**Q. We're watching Carson Hovevar go through a lot of things here even in the last three weeks, but certainly in the last few months. I think about how fast he's been, but all the gut punches. When you work with a young driver, what are the challenges of the ups and downs?**

**CHRIS GAYLE:** I think it's conversation, right? Just like what we talked about, engines blowing, things beyond your control. Any situation that happens, even good, there's something to learn in it, right? You can have those conversations afterwards about what you did good and bad.

The things that you can't control, you had zero influence over, you got to learn to let go of those things. There is nothing you can do about it.

I actually heard Denny say that when someone asked him about the engine stuff. Maybe it was in one of our meetings a couple weeks ago. He was like, I don't worry about that kind of stuff. I just can't do anything about it. I guess it cost me maybe a win at Kansas. What can I do about it? Let it linger and bother me until the point that I'm not focused where I need to be the next week? Then it beat me twice. That's the kind of thing.

**Q. What do you worry about with Mexico next week?**

**CHRIS GAYLE:** Rain. It looks like rain is potential all three days, right?

**Q. (No microphone.)**

**CHRIS GAYLE:** Mostly just because Denny is worried about the wet and not being very good in the wet at road courses. I know he sat on three road course poles 2023, I think. I know he has speed at road courses.

He himself will tell you that's his weakness. Not necessarily Sonoma or Watkins Glen because he has so many more reps there than other drivers. But a new course, he just tells you he struggles with that.

My only concern is that. Then you do the challenge of rain at a new course. It's going to be a challenge for everybody. Nobody has any experience here. That does level the playing field. But that's my biggest concern, just rain. The complexity of that, tires, off-course, what may happen. We don't know about the cooling, how hot are we going to run at that elevation. We have plans in place to deal with that.

**THE MODERATOR:** Congratulations again. Heather, you're welcome to come back anytime.

**HEATHER GIBBS:** Thank you.

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