

# NASCAR Media Conference

## Press Conference

Sunday, July 6, 2025

An Interview with:

**Justin Marks**

**Stephen Doran**

**THE MODERATOR:** We're going to continue with our post-race media availabilities. We've been joined by our race-winning team. We're joined by Justin Marks, who's the owner of Trackhouse Racing, and the race-winning crew chief, Stephen Doran.

Questions, please.

**Q. What makes Shane so good here, particularly from the outsider's perspective? It looks like a lot of patience, and he knows when to pick and choose his spots and he's content to save his tires if he needs to. But what is it that he does so well here that is the difference?**

**JUSTIN MARKS:** Well, I mean, for me in my experience driving race cars for 20 years, it's his racing IQ. It's how strategic he can think while he's on the limit of the race car.

A lot of drivers, it takes all of your mental bandwidth to drive the car fast, and Shane is one of these guys that can drive the car at the limit but be thinking bigger picture stuff. He knows where he is in the race, and he knows how to -- he's great at managing his tires, his equipment, all that kind of stuff.

Plus I think for his talent profile specifically, street races are just -- they come very, very naturally to him. He's got a lot of experience doing it in the V8 Supercars series, but I think in races like this where everybody is working so hard just to get the apexes and get out of the corner and right way and all of that, he does that just naturally while he's thinking about bigger picture stuff so he can really put the whole race together in a super impressive way.

**STEPHEN DORAN:** Yeah, just to add to what Justin said, you watch him, and he's like a machine out there. He makes no mistakes and he just waits until somebody misses an apex in front of him and he pounces on them. He just drives through the field. You saw it yesterday and today.

His laps are so consistent, and that's part of why he saves



his tires so well.

**Q. The emphasis for you guys, has it been the road courses, that you need to maximize your opportunities on those?**

**JUSTIN MARKS:** Well, I think it's a unique project with Shane. I wouldn't do this -- we wouldn't be doing this if we thought we could go win road courses and we know we're not going to run that good on the ovals because he's never done it before. At this level of the game, you have to be a complete package.

For his level of intelligence and how he studies and how he adapts and how he learns, there's a real opportunity here for him to figure the ovals out and get fast at the ovals and be a complete Cup driver.

I think we've seen him coming that way just in the last month and a half. He's pretty consistently top 20 now on the ovals when he started running kind of like 30, 32nd, and I think that that development is just going to continue.

I think when you think about the project, we've got somebody who's talented and that we can make a Cup driver out of, and while he learns in the meantime, we can win a ton of road courses and punch that ticket to the playoffs and give our sponsors a ton of return for their investment.

**Q. There's been news this week obviously with the team, Suárez not returning next year. Your comment on that. And why make this change and why has he not had the results that the other teammates have had?**

**JUSTIN MARKS:** Yeah, as far as results, I don't know. Look, Daniel has been a huge part of this company for four and a half years now. When we sat down and looked at our -- kind of mapped out our three-year and our five-year plan and the sponsorships and everything that we're trying to accomplish over the next five years of the company, we just got to a point where we felt like that relationship had borne a lot of fruit for us, but it was time to move on.

As we grow and as the team grows, obviously we have to identify different opportunities. Look, Daniel has been a huge part of this company and a great friend of mine. We

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met last night, me and him in the hotel for an hour down in the lobby and we just talked about our time together, everything that we've accomplished together, and him and I are in a really good place.

It's just this isn't a sport where you do the same thing forever. As we grow, we just felt like it was time to wrap up that relationship and work to try to help him to find the next opportunity but continue to grow as a company what we're trying to accomplish.

**Q. Justin, it was a weekend sweep for Shane, a runner-up for Connor in the Xfinity race and another top 10 today for Ross. Obviously Daniel had a premature end to the race today, but what is your overall assessment of the race weekend for your organization?**

**JUSTIN MARKS:** Yeah, I think that it was good. I think everybody had speed. Ross did a good job. When Ross first came here a few years ago, he was lost. He was completely lost. And he's worked hard on understanding what it takes to be successful here at Chicago.

And they had some really good speed. I think he ran top 10s or a top 15 all day. Obviously Shane does his thing. And then we just didn't really get an opportunity to see what Daniel had. He had a great start, passing cars in the beginning, but then got tore up, and we just didn't get an opportunity to see it.

I think we focus hard on every race, but this is one where we've got a race car driver and a race team inside of the building that is so elite at this place that we try to learn from it and try to replicate it, whether it's on the engineering or the car side or the driver side.

From an effort, I'm always giving my team an A. I think that we -- like I said, the 1 had a good day, and I really wish the 99 would have been able to complete their day because I think we could have put all three cars in the top 10.

**Q. When the 51 was buried in the barrier there, were you expecting a caution? And if so, would you have been worried about another restart?**

**STEPHEN DORAN:** I really wasn't too worried. I saw where we were on the track. I knew there was weather coming. But was very glad to see we crossed the line before it came out.

**Q. Shortly before the end of Stage 1, you guys had originally planned to stay out. Was that kind of code talk, or was it a legit last-second pivot to bring Shane down pit road?**

**STEPHEN DORAN:** I wouldn't say it was code, but I did see how many pit the lap before. Didn't want to get buried behind them. Kind of a last-minute call, but we knew that was in the cards if a bunch of them came.

**Q. Stephen, you know SVG is going to do his job behind the wheel. How much pressure do you feel preparing these cars for road and street courses to just give him something in the ballpark so he can do what he needs to do?**

**STEPHEN DORAN:** I don't know that I feel pressure. It's excitement knowing if our team does our job, we have a good shot at it. And that's what I preached to our guys before the race: Just execute, smooth on pit stops. Nothing fancy. Just get your job done and let him go back out there and do his thing.

And our guys have been great, México and here, just executing all day. Strategy was good. Just two solid, solid day.

**JUSTIN MARKS:** I was going to say that I was going to go find Stephen before the race and I ran out of time and couldn't find him. But in these positions when you've got a guy like Shane, you don't have to push or get cute or anything like that. It's just about doing your job well, where it's pit crew or Stephen running the strategy or whatever.

It's like just not putting yourself in a position to make mistakes and pushing too hard. It's just like do the job and do it well, and then let the driver go do his thing.

**Q. Justin, what do you think Shane has to do in the coming years to be considered the best NASCAR road racer ever? He obviously has the talent to do it. It's still early, so I don't know if the title is there yet. But what else do you think he has to accomplish to prove that to everybody?**

**JUSTIN MARKS:** Well, I think it's just keep winning. I think, at the end of the day, it's just keep going to these races like today where you just execute a complete race and don't make mistakes and win. I think it's super, super simple.

Look, I don't want to jump the gun, but he's the best road course stock car racer that I've ever seen. I think when he's done with us all and walks away from the sport, I think he's going to walk away as the best road course racer that this sport has ever seen.

I think, like I said earlier, it's like you put him in these situations that he's got to learn quickly and adapt quickly,



and he does it. México was ridiculous. It was just ridiculous. It was an equalizer. Nobody had ever been there before. Everybody had to figure it out, and the guy wins by 18 seconds.

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I don't think it's more complicated than just going to racetracks and consistently and reliably just beating everybody.

**Q. Justin, regardless whether you have SVG or not, there's some questions about México returns, a lot of doubts on whether this race returns. Do you have opinions on either?**

**JUSTIN MARKS:** Well, I mean, I think it's a -- well, México in particular, I think it's a great thing that this sport is going to other countries because what we have here is such a unique form of racing. There's open-wheel racing all around the world. There's sports car racing all around the world.

But a NASCAR Cup Series is one of the most competitive if not the most competitive form of racing in the world, and it's a spectacle.

I think that exposing people to it is important, and I think should be a very high priority on NASCAR's business development strategy.

We went to Austria like three weeks ago to a big Red Bull event, and Max was there with the F1 car and the Dakar Rally cars were there and the bikes were there, and people freaked out over the Cup car. It sounded and looked different than anything they'd ever heard before.

I'm leaving Tuesday night to go to Goodwood to go -- I'm leaving on Thursday night to go to Goodwood and make a couple runs up the hill in a Cup car. I think it's incredibly important.

Also in general I think street races are something this sport should commit to wherever it is, whether it's in Chicago or San Diego or wherever it is, because I've always been a fan of finding ways to take the product to the people. If you can take what we do and plop it right in the middle of a city so people can come see it and have never seen a race before, I think that can only be good for the sport.

I've got a soft place in my heart for road racing. It's what I did for 20 years. It's what I love. This sport has been doing it for a long time, and I think these are important initiatives. I know they're expensive. I know NASCAR doesn't really make any money doing it. But there's a bigger picture it's solving for, and that's exposing this sport to more and more people who have not seen it before.

