

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

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An Interview with:

Shane van Gisbergen

THE MODERATOR: We will continue now with our race winner, Shane Van Gisbergen. Congratulations on your win. A sweep for the weekend. When you got out of the car, you said, "I love this place." What means so much about being here in Chicago?

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: Yeah, epic weekend for us. I'm a lucky guy. I got to drive for two great teams in JR Motorsports and Trackhouse and it just made my job easy. We had great preparation and my cars all weekend were excellent.

Then today the strategy was a bit back and forth. I was probably a bit conservative at the start and not aggressive enough, but yeah, our pace was good, and then just believing in Stephen. He did a great job on painting the picture on strategy again, and even though we were a little bit out of sync, it was going to work out for the better.

Had some really great battles at the end. The guys at the end I felt were really, really strong, but we probably had a tire advantage. Yeah, cool to win here again. I've had a great run at this place, and I really enjoy it.

Q. You had to go to the care center yesterday when you got overheated. Did you feel 100 percent today? What was your energy level like?

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: Yeah, I was good today. This is my third Red Bull of the day. But just yesterday, I cooked. I don't do well in the heat, and then it went wrong yesterday with the cool suit failing. It failed from the start. It never got going. Then in stage 3 I managed to get the water flowing, but it didn't cool down. My body temp was just screaming.

Yeah, once I got some air con and just cooled down, yeah, I felt pretty good last night after a lot of fluids. Woke up this morning and just kept drinking as much as I could. I'm not perfect, but I was really good in the car, and again now, I'm hot, but I felt really good the whole race.

Q. You're now in just two years the most winningest foreign-born driver in the NASCAR Cup Series. When you hear that, what is your reaction, especially when



you take into account all of the names from other venues of motorsports that have come here and tried this type of racing?

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: Yeah, that's a very special stat. That's why I'm here, I guess. Justin took a massive chance on me to bring me over, and as I've said many times, these races are like a holiday to me. It's the ovals where I'm really focused on getting better and better.

I come here and there's no stress. People probably think there's more stress and expectation on us, but I kind of just get excited by it and love driving. It's the ovals where I know I'm getting better. I'm not stressed about it and I'm not forcing it, but I love trying to progress and get better and better.

But yeah, to be a foreigner here, there's not many of us who have broken into the sport and stayed here for too long, and pretty cool to be here, that's for sure.

Q. One of the things we noticed when you spoke on how you were a bit conservative in the beginning and then you had to get in sync with Stephen. We noticed what seems to be a telepathy with your whole team. Speak more to that because we saw how things went in México, we see how things went in Chicago. And as you're moving forward, talk about the telepathy of how y'all work together and the communicative way that you're a little conservative, then you get in sync, and it just took off from there.

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: Yeah, our team has been really cool to be a part of this year, the 8 guys and girls. The start of the year was pretty rough for us and we didn't do well at COTA where we thought we would, and we've just been getting better and better.

Just the atmosphere of the guys and how focused they are and on the grid or on the start line there after the race, seeing how much it means to everyone, that's why we do it, how stoked everyone was, and even having JP back, who hurt himself at Pocono, just such a valuable member of our team.

I know that his body is pretty beat up, and to get in there and no complaints and say he's not hurting, to do what he did on the tires there on the rear end was epic.



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Yeah, as a team, the 88 team, it's really cool to be a part of it.

Q. I don't know if you know, but before you took the white, Cody Ware was buried in the tires. You probably haven't seen a replay. But if there was another restart, do you feel confident you would have held off Gibbs again?

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: I think Tyler Reddick was the one I was worried about. There was a tire carcass on the exit of 6, and there was a yellow flag, or a blue flag they have here. And when they didn't put it out for two laps, I figured they were just doing everything they could to get the race finished before the lightning hold.

I feel like you never know what's going to happen here with the yellows. And when they left the tire carcass, I thought they're going to try and finish this race before weather affects it.

Yeah, when you're in the lead like that, you're just begging for the white flag to come out and to get to it. And I came out of the last corner and just saw a heap of smoke straight ahead of Turn 6, and I just held my breath until I crossed the line really.

When I got the white flag, I come around the next couple of corners and the yellow came out. It was a massive relief, but you never know if they're going to throw the yellow and try and have an exciting finish.

Q. Even though he fell out later, were you worried about McDowell after he got you on the start?

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: Yes and no. I wasn't pushing too hard at that stage. His car was really good, but he looked like he was struggling to put it together.

I kind of had his speed, but when I'd get close to him, I'd get hot. So it was kind of just managing and waiting.

I think the guys at the end were a lot faster than him. He was decent, but really the Toyotas and those drivers were really strong at the end. And they were a bit faster than him, I think.

But it would have been interesting to see how it played out.

Q. Two wins here in three years; how much has this track, this city changed your career?

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: Yeah, I've said that a few times this week. This joint, it's changed my life. I didn't

have any plans to do more NASCAR races when I first came over here, and I never thought I'd be in NASCAR full time.

Yeah, it's pretty special here, some good memories, and some good races. I love the track. It's a cool place to come to. You feel a nice vibe. You feel a good vibe in the mornings walking to the track with the fans. It's pretty unique like that.

Yeah, I enjoy it. I hope it stays next year. But as the guys were saying, when I arrived, I'm biased. Obviously I love street circuits, but if we go to a new place, I'm all for that, as well.

Q. I want to clarify something you said a couple minutes ago. You were talking about on the last lap, you come out of 12 and you're looking all the way down the frontstretch and you see smoke in 6, so you're like, oh, crap. That's when you're like, I've got to get to the white right now?

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: Yeah, I shat myself. When I came around the corner, he mustn't have been long in the fence, and there was a whole bunch of smoke. And you just panic because it's different to the lap before. I think, oh, shit, what's happened there? As soon as you got to the line, you were fine. But that four seconds to the line, I was in full panic mode, trying to get to the line as quick as I could.

Q. The last lap is driven under caution; what's going through your mind? What are you looking at as you're absorbing that you've won here again?

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: Yeah, I tried not to get caught up in it. The spotters started celebrating and I'm like, guys, let's get to the line first. I just drove around, tried not to make any mistakes because there were safety trucks all over the place and so much debris. I just cruised and then celebrated when we got to the line.

Q. With next week being a road course again, you have a decent possibility of tying for the most wins on the season. What does that mean as someone who's still developing on ovals to get that done just on the road courses?

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: Yeah, it's amazing. We've had a pretty good year on road courses so far and had glimpses of speed, but I really think we've developed our car as well. There have been some areas that we haven't been good at, we've been lacking a little bit. Yeah, like our car setup has drastically changed in the last few road courses, and it's been great trying to understand this car

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and be able to try stuff.

I'm slowly starting to understand it, but there's still some things we can be a lot better at. But try again next week, and we can just keep trying to be better. We're near in the position now where you have that playoff spot, you can take more risk. It's been enjoyable figuring this car out and getting outside the box a little bit.

Q. How do you think your prior experience with street racing translated into success on this course?

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: Yeah, it certainly helps. I think the first year was a big gap to the other guys. That's what I grew up doing in racing in Australia. When I moved there, most of the races were street tracks, or half of them at least. But I really feel like a lot of people are really good here at the moment, but thankfully we've been able to keep getting better, get our cars better, and I've understood the track better.

Yeah, I guess I'm a little more comfortable with the walls on both sides of the car and just being accurate and knowing whether to take risk or not. Seems to still be my strength here, I think.

Q. Now with two wins on the season, I think it's safe to say you're locked into the playoffs. Will preparation for the Round of 16 begin, knowing that there is a road course in the Round of 12, leading to the possibility of Round of 8 appearance and potentially a fight for a championship?

SHANE VAN GISBERGEN: Yeah, that first round is going to be very difficult. It's got one track I haven't been to, Gateway. It's got my favorite oval in it, Darlington. I love that place. And then Bristol, which is what I've found the most difficult track. I feel like I may as well be driving the other way there. It's so hard. It's some pretty difficult places for me. But I feel like we're making still massive leaps on the oval, and there's still a few weeks left to keep getting better.

So yeah, just got to keep our heads down and try and keep pushing through.

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