

# NASCAR Media Conference

## Press Conference

Sunday, July 20, 2025

*An Interview with:*

**Chris Gayle**

**Joe Gibbs**

**THE MODERATOR:** We are joined by the winning crew chief of tonight's race here at Dover, that's Chris Gayle.

Chris, if you would just take us through the race from your perspective, especially the last few laps through double overtimes.

**CHRIS GAYLE:** That was tough on the heart. My ticker was struggling to let everything go there and just watch it. At that point I'm just a fan like you guys.

Yeah, I mean, really I would say we had a top two, top three car all day. We were probably better on the long runs. Not that much interesting until we got to that spot where the caution came out after the last green flag cycle, right? You kind of have to make a decision on we got eight laps on tires, the 20 and the 3 were going to benefit from that caution. They were far enough ahead of everybody they're probably going to take four and probably come out in front of us.

I wasn't sure what the 9 was going to do. We were having a conversation, me and the engineers, on the box about what to do. I think we all completely agreed the way we win the race today is to stay out and get clean air. Eight-lap older tires isn't the ideal, but this is the one opportunity we have to do it.

It's just a matter of was the rain going to come in time. Once we kind of held the 20 off for 25, 30 laps, let's hope the rain doesn't come and let's get to the end of the race so we don't have multiple green-white-checkered.

It rains. Okay, this is great. I get an hour for my tires to cool off. Everyone's tires are going to be cool. Probably not as big a detriment if we went back green flag racing with only three or four caution laps to let my tires cool, and guys had cool ones behind us. This will probably get more guys to stay behind us and have a few more buffers.

Then the wrecks start there with the 20 underneath us. I don't even remember what the second one was. Then you're like, Oh, gosh, now I got the 19 with right side tires



underneath us. Wasn't sure we would hold off the 19 underneath us in that scenario, starting below us.

Give kudos to Denny. When you get him in a situation where he's got the ball in his hands and it's time to go win the race, he finds a way to do that most times when he's sitting there in that situation.

That's what we talked about, was at this point we got three wins. If I pit for four tires or pit for two tires, I come out fourth behind the 9. We'll run third. Probably get the 3. Unless something exceptional happens, we're not going to pass those cars.

We need wins. How can we manufacture some way to give ourselves more opportunity for that to happen? Might not pan out, but we definitely weren't going to do it doing the same thing as everybody else. That was our train of thought there and thankfully it worked out and we held on.

**THE MODERATOR:** We'll open it up for questions.

**Q. We saw a little bit of water on the frontstretch after the red flag. What were the discussions with you and Denny? Did he see anything?**

**CHRIS GAYLE:** I had a few concerns going into it. He said a few things over the radio. We had talked about it before he went got back in the car, was on the pit look. Kind of looked. There was some down from our pit box, the 34, 19's pit box, a couple in front of us, coming across the racetrack pretty good. There was some back a little closer to the restart zone.

They had used some sort of kitty litter putting up near the wall, like pouring out the backside of the wall, looked like it was coming out.

We were definitely concerned about it. He was saying something. I said something to my official. It didn't matter. We were going. So we had to move on and not focus on that, focus on what he needed to do.

**Q. It's been a while since the third one. How nice is it to get back in a rhythm with this team and get another one on the books?**

**CHRIS GAYLE:** You might laugh at this. When we did our



... when all is said, we're done.®

team meeting today, one guy kind of always dismisses the team meeting with some sort of saying. Ours was oval racing today. That's what we were all excited about, going back oval racing. We had a great Chicago race, but not a very good Sonoma race for us at all.

We were ready to get back oval racing. That's the thing for us, remind me where have we not been good except North Wilkesboro, I will give you that one, at ovals this year, that we haven't been a top three, four, five car. I think all of 'em pretty much. I feel good about ovals right now.

**Q. After the first win at Martinsville, you spoke about how much that meant to you, maybe a weight off your shoulders. To now have four through the first half of the season, what does that mean to you? Do you breathe even easier now?**

**CHRIS GAYLE:** I think you get the first one and you're like, Okay, this is what I expected. It's nice to have it solidified. Then I think as you get more, you want more. We're all greedy people, right? We all want to win. As we start to get more, I'm like five would be nice, six would be nice. Where do you draw the line?

Still you just take 'em every week at a time. You get yourself into situations like I talked about today, we have the pivot. Are we going to try to win today's race or take third place? If you're racing in the Playoffs, might be a different scenario. For us today, the win is going to help us more in the Playoffs than anything else.

As long as the opportunity is realistic, you're not going to do something way outside of the lines, but yeah, I don't know. It's good to have four. I'm happy, obviously. Happy for the guys. I talked about that before. They didn't have to accept me completely coming in. They have. Embraced it. I think all the guys are having a really good time.

**THE MODERATOR:** We've been joined by Joe Gibbs Racing team owner, Joe Gibbs.

If you would just take us through especially the last part of the race there as you're battling between the weather and the double overtime.

**JOE GIBBS:** I can honestly tell you this is all over the place today. We love coming here. We had sponsors all day long. It's a huge deal for this part of the country. We just appreciate that so much.

I appreciate Chris, all he's done there. Denny's just after it. To think about where he is in his career, how hard he works at it, his leadership means so much to us.

Tomorrow we meet at 2:00. We have our competition meeting. He's in there. The rest of the guys are young. He's kind of leading the way in so many different ways. I just really appreciate him. When you think about the fact he's been here now 18 years.

Appreciate Toyota. Just a great partnership. They're there with us every step of the way. It really, really truly is one of those rare partnerships that you go through the highs and the lows. But just really appreciate them.

I talked about hanging that banner tomorrow. I really appreciate everybody back at the race shop because, as Chris knows, those guys are after it. They do so much to get us across the country and all the different places, coming back for Sonoma and everything that we have to do to get up here. Just really appreciate.

Lord has blessed us with a great team. I just really appreciate it. It was great for Chase again, two in a row. For Bass Pro, that's a huge deal.

Progressive, I left a message for them. I said, You guys have the magic touch. Progressive was in there.

It was great getting Ty in the fifth spot there. It's been an exciting finish to the race really.

**THE MODERATOR:** Back to questions.

**Q. Chris, what was the challenge of having a new tire today with no laps on the track yesterday? Did you notice anything different from your seat?**

**CHRIS GAYLE:** Yeah, not really. Obviously we do a lot of simulator work and prep. When you don't have any track time, that's all you've got. You make a lot of assumptions when you to some of that stuff.

Thankfully we've had this kind of left side tire change at some other racetracks this year. The right side was a construction change. We have some information to be back to.

We didn't feel like it would be that different. We thought the pace would be a little faster, even though the temperatures were up. Kind of offset each other. Very similar pace to last year.

We kind of questioned how much the tires were going to wear. Once we got through this first 35-lap run and saw the wears, it honestly wasn't very much different than last year. I think that kind of settled us down, this is going to be very similar to last year, not anything new to expect there.



**Q. Chris, when you mentioned earlier with Denny if you put him in a situation where he has the ball in his hands, he finds a way to win a race. How important is it to have that mentality, especially at Dover?**

**CHRIS GAYLE:** It's critical, right? Some guys will shy away from that moment, some guys will embrace it. That's the one thing in the off-season, we had a conversation. We really had this after Vegas where I kind of could have been more aggressive in a situation. I probably still had my mindset of let's get the best finish for the day.

We talked a lot about, like, in his opinion give me more opportunity to win the race. I don't care. I think I told you guys, another fifth, another 10th, 12th for me doesn't do a whole lot for my career. A win makes a big difference. We're going to have enough wins to get in the Playoffs, let's stack that.

I think just our conversations like that have empowered me more to put him in that situation. He wants to be in that situation to be able to have a win. I think that's what happened today.

**Q. Chris, Cliff Daniels was telling Larson on the radio he heard you guys were close on fuel. He was surprised. What was behind that?**

**CHRIS GAYLE:** Not close. If he was listening, we probably were close at different times saving fuel. But it was also that the one-can stops we had, we didn't have to go to two cans during a stop or something like that.

We were good for probably one more green-white-checkered, maybe two. It wasn't any concern. I think maybe he just took more out of what I was probably saying to Denny about saving in certain scenarios earlier.

**Q. Coach, Chase Briscoe was talking about how important it was for him to make sure he didn't wreck Denny, how if it wasn't a teammate...**

**JOE GIBBS:** Thank goodness for that.

**Q. What's your mentality there when you see two of your cars hanging on the door, going all out? How nervous are you?**

**JOE GIBBS:** I think I've said this to you guys numerous times. The most uptight I get is when two of our cars are up there going for it. So much can happen.

We've had incidents where it hasn't gone well and it's taken us two months to get guys to talk to each other. It can really, really hurt what you're building, the teamwork part of

it. That's so critical.

Our sport is totally different. You have four cars trying to solve problems. Having them work together, teamwork-wise, really is important. When we get to the racetrack, everybody's after it. They're on their own. They want it for their sponsor.

We understand that. It's racing. We go it. There's no deals. But it is something that you think about a lot. I do.

**Q. Coach, three top fives today and Ty also advanced. How excited are you for your grandson after the kind of year he's had?**

**JOE GIBBS:** I really appreciate everybody that's on that team. There's some people there that we got off to a terrible start. It was awful. I had people on that group that came to me encouraging me, ideas for me, after it. I think they care for Ty. It just was a huge deal.

We've added a lot to that team, as you guys know. When you see somebody go through some real tough like that... This sport will really measure you. But those guys have fought back.

Our pit crew there, those guys did a great job today. They have been there through the first part of the year when nothing went right. There was nothing went our way. So you appreciate those guys. Just kept fighting. I appreciate that.

So for us to get to this point, we still got a long ways to go because we got to win to probably get in the Chase. It was a huge deal today. They fought their guts out at the end.

**Q. What does it tell about your organization when you have a weekend where there's no practice, no qualifying, to step up to the occasion?**

**JOE GIBBS:** That's probably a good one for Chris. All I do is pray on race day.

**CHRIS GAYLE:** That's what I was doing at the end, coach, mimicking you. That's all I could do.

Honestly we kind of looked forward to that. The earlier question asked about the tire and everything. No practice. We look at that as an opportunity. If you go to pre COVID racing and post COVID, we started all those races with no practice session.

Those were opportunities where the first runs of the race, that's where the most passing happened. We could distinguish ourselves from the other guys, right? You could



have guys who missed it and guys who hit it. Somebody come through the field.

Once we had three pit stops, they would lock down and passing would come harder and harder because all the cars got the balance closer, all the drivers figured it out.

That's how we looked at this morning, an opportunity. We had an opportunity to be better than someone. Us starting 13th, that's what we talked about. We think we have the process we use to get the starting setup, the way Denny's bought into using simulation, doing a lot of that work with us, we think we're going to have what we need run one and we hope others don't because they may not take the same process and have the same tools all to do that.

I think that's the key for us. We were looking forward to it.

**Q. Coach, I have to ask you a football question. The success that the Commanders had last year, then looking forward to this season, how proud and happy have you been with the team?**

**JOE GIBBS:** I think everybody that pulls for the Commanders or in the old days the Redskins, everything in my house is Redskins. Honestly, it's great. It's great to see that organization, what they've done. To see somebody like Jayden jump in there, there's a lot of great stories there. It's a hugely important deal.

I was fortunate to coach there because in DC that team is important. I mean, it's a big deal. I just appreciate it a lot. So thank you for bringing that up. We'll be pulling for the Commanders.

**THE MODERATOR:** Gentlemen, thanks so much for coming in. Congratulations.

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