

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

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An Interview with:

Denny Hamlin

THE MODERATOR: Denny, congratulations on two in a row, winning today.

We'll open it up for questions.

Q. I talked to Chase Briscoe after the race. He said he was racing you hard but wasn't going to wreck a teammate for the win. Anyone else he said he might have been more aggressive with. What does it say about him as a teammate?

DENNY HAMLIN: Yeah, that's the toughest, the toughest line to walk truthfully because if it is someone else, you don't mind running 'em up in the fuzz, right? If it's a teammate, you got to sit down and you got to see that guy tomorrow afternoon. It's just a little different in that aspect.

When we went back, right before we went back, me and Christopher were walking back to our cars. I said, Just don't wipe me out. I was afraid, we got old tires, I don't know what the grip level of the track is. I just didn't want JGR cleaning itself out, somebody else win it.

I think truthfully he probably laid off of me there off of four and ended up wrecking himself because he didn't want to have the big contact.

Yeah, it was good, hard racing. Ultimately I got the better end of all the restarts in the end. It was certainly stressful to have to overcome those three overtime finishes there, or however many cautions it was. It was a tough battle.

Q. Fourth win of the season and there's still 15 races left to go. What does this say about your level of competitiveness and performance at this point in your career?

DENNY HAMLIN: I mean, I love it. I just love that I'm able to still do it at a high level. I mean, every morning when I wake up, I'm just hoping I still got what I had yesterday, you know? You just never when you get to this age, right?

I don't know, last night I was looking at the TV. It was a little fuzzy. I think I was just tired. Oh, man, I'm not losing my eyesight, am I (smiling)? I get paranoid about little



things that might hamper my ability to do things at a high level at my job.

Every time I get in, like the first stage, I'm just driving through cars, it's like, We're still good (smiling).

Q. All four of you guys were top five all day. Do you feel this is a statement of victory for yourself and the organization?

DENNY HAMLIN: I was looking, it was all JGR and Hendrick there at one point. I think it was top eight. Resources goes a long way, apparently (smiling).

I don't know. Yeah, there's a lot of pressure, too, when you know that it's a company thing. It's not like your setup is what's winning that day. Clearly when all your teammates are in the top five or top six, it's a philosophy that your team is coming with to the racetrack. It could be their tires, whatever it might be.

At that point then there's a lot of pressure to be the best of 'em. Then there's a lot of pressure to not be the worst of them. When they're spread out through the field, you got a four-car team, they're one through 20, they're spread out evenly, you can say it's a setup thing, right? But when you got all cars that are that strong, you clearly did something right.

At that point it's you're racing three competitors that got the same thing that you got. At that point you got to show 'em who's boss.

Q. During the 56-minute red flag delay, what helped you maintain your composure?

DENNY HAMLIN: I never thought there was hope that we wouldn't go back racing. I do think you have two choices with your mentality: you either get out of the car, hope and pray this never goes back green, you just win this thing by weather, or you look at the radar, use your brain and say that we're going back racing so you better do everything to prepare for what happens when I do get back in this car.

I just kind of went back to the bus, changed, did a little bit of work, and came back out here and was prepared to get after it when we got back in the car.



The job's not done till we get to lap 400. Today was an example of that.

Q. Talk about the differences from the April win last year. It was hot last April, unusual for the weather. Compare that to today's win?

DENNY HAMLIN: Yeah, it was just different. This is one of the more physical, demanding racetracks that we go to anyway. It's certainly in the top I think three just simply because of the g-forces it has. You don't have long straightaways to take breaks. When I say 'take breaks', typically drivers like to relax your body. You should relax your bodies on the straightaways to not fatigue all your muscles during the course of a three-and-a-half-hour race.

There's not a lot of time to do that at this track. With it hotter, you're going to be more dehydrated. You're going to have to take in more fluids, have sweat dripping in your eyes. Many times I had to clean off my eyes because I have sweat dripping down through my visor. It was one of those hotter races that we've had this season, what we've had in a while.

But really, I felt fine all day long. It's just the hottest it was is when we went back racing. The car heat soaking on pit road there, the car was way hotter once we got back in with 13 laps to go than it was when we were running all day long. Just not having that wind running through the car and cooling it, it was an oven.

Q. You mentioned on Victory Lane that you really used to struggle here. Now you have back-to-back wins. What's changed over the years, either you or this track?

DENNY HAMLIN: Well, it's twofold. There's two things. One is obviously my driving. I've talked about that, changing my style to more of a Martin Truex and Jimmie Johnson style.

The other is focusing on what I need to tell the team to make the car better, identifying where I'm losing time, then focusing on what I need to tell them how I can go faster in that section of the racetrack. Just try not to get caught up too much in...

NASCAR is an emotional game where you really kind of get caught up in shit that doesn't matter. So I just try to look at it from a very straightforward point of view, numbers point of view. Find out where I'm bad, analyze what I'm doing, analyze the best, then figure out how I can go faster like them, then give that information to the team.

It typically takes me a little bit longer to give the team the

feedback that they're needing because I like to analyze it, make sure it's right, before I tell them. But it's just changing my mentality on that process and how I'm doing it.

Q. Nobody mentions you and championships this year. Is that because this is such a tired topic, never happen, something's going to happen to him?

DENNY HAMLIN: Maybe, yeah. It's going to come down to one race or it's going to come down to when we get into the Final 8, which I expect that's what our minimum expectations are every year. Do you not have trouble that takes you out of being in the Final 4?

Yeah, that's why I think the regular-season championship is really high. I hold it in super high regard. It's 26 races. There's no eliminations, not any of that other stuff, right?

When you look at the standings, Chase has gone overlooked. He's been consistent. There's guys at the top that stubbed their toe. He hasn't. But you can't deny that when you look at the racetrack out there today, we were all running like one through five, right?

It's not an accident that the same five guys running up front every single week. It's just a matter of can those five guys make it through this type of format in Playoffs? We couldn't even make it out of 32nd seed in a bracket. It's a tough format. When you shorten your seasons into three races, fricking anything can happen. I try not to just, Oh, we're going to do it this year.

If we do, we do. If we don't, we don't. I care about wins. Trust me, I want more trophies, more trophies, more trophies. When I'm done, I want to be in the top 10 of all-time winners. That will mean more than any other accomplishment I could have.

Q. There was a lot of talk on the broadcast when you came back from the red flag. When was it made apparent to you you were going to stop on the apron coming out of pit road? Do you agree to have you sitting there with the yellow flag while they're drying the track?

DENNY HAMLIN: They didn't want to run off caution laps, which is very understandable. We had fans out here obviously very enthusiastic when they saw the sun come out, which I love that enthusiasm from our fan base. They wanted to give them all the racing they could at the end of that race.

They told us beforehand, before we even got in the cars, here is the process. We're going to get in, pull out, they



need to dry the first half of pit road, then we'll be ready to go. They were very transparent in all that. I think they did a good job executing it all.

Q. This is another W for the Captain Chaos category. You say all the time, it's apparent, that you do thrive in chaos. Even though on the surface everything bubbling up like this for normal people, it should have the opposite effect it's having on you. How do you deliver? Can you explain why this is the case?

DENNY HAMLIN: I'm just so highly competitive. I mean, that's the only way I can explain it, is that I just don't know if there's anyone on the face of the earth that is more competitive than I am. I'm sure there is. I just don't know them.

I just feel like when I'm tested, I'm going to give you a little more. When you doubt me, I'm going to give you a little more. Like, I just feel as though I thrive in game time moments, finishing off races like this.

When I think about it, I go home, that's going to be a pound-your-chest moment. They had three shots at me and they couldn't do it. They had fresher tires, couldn't do it.

It's just very gratifying. I hype myself up in that process, while I'm in the game. I'm out there not thinking about how are we going to lose this. I'm sure there will be another caution. We were going into turn three, about to take the white, there's another caution. I'm not thinking about, dang it, shoot, we're going to end up blowing this race. I'm not. I'm waiting on who's next, who's next, who am I going to beat next.

I just think a lot of it's just mentality. Anyone that knows me, anyone that plays golf with me or pickle ball or basketball or whatever, or races against me, knows that that is my intensity level. When I'm tested or I have distractions, you're just going to get a little more out of me.

Q. There was no on-track activity yesterday, you were still part of the Xfinity broadcast in the booth. How much of an advantage was that for today?

DENNY HAMLIN: Yeah, that was fun. I hadn't done it in a few years. Did I learn anything from yesterday? I don't think so. Truthfully, I would probably learn more if I was able to sit in my bus and concentrate on what I'm looking at. I've got lap times that are sitting right there. I can study that.

In the booth, you're like, who is talking next, they're in your ear, after this we got to go to that. It's a little bit distracting.

I don't know that it's a big advantage to doing it.

I certainly did enjoy it.

Q. When you look at next week, Brickyard 400, what are your thoughts on that track? Is that something you look forward to each year?

DENNY HAMLIN: I don't think I've ever wanted to go back to back so bad. That's a track that I've just come so fricking close to winning. I just want to cross off all the major racetracks on our schedule.

It's going to be hard. I mean, we're going to have to qualify well. There's just so many things that are going to have to go really well for us to win that race.

It's not like any other conventional track, you have speed, you're just going to go through the pack. It's not that type racetrack.

But the history of it is unlike any other. I mean, even when you're driving it, you feel like you're at a historic racetrack. Highly, highly, highly motivated. All I can hope is that something happens this week that derails everything and then I'll do better.

THE MODERATOR: Denny, thanks for your time.

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