

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

Sunday, August 3, 2025

An Interview with:

Rudy Fugle Jeff Andrews

THE MODERATOR: We are going to roll into our post-race press conference for the Iowa Corn 350 Powered By Ethanol. We're joined by winning crew chief Rudy Fugle and Jeff Andrews with Hendrick Motorsports.

Q. Rudy, getting the free pass on the SVG yellow towards the latter stages of Stage 2, did that ultimately end up putting you guys in position, or do you think you would have been in position to win had you not gotten the free pass there?

RUDY FUGLE: Yeah, I think we would have been more like possibly where the 19 or the 6 was if we didn't get that. But yeah, definitely it forced our hand into being off strategy for sure.

I thought it was going to be really good because we got to have tires with the guys ahead of us, but we got to set an advantage to some really good cars behind us that had to wave around. But then we got a short run and they all got tires, so the name of the game after that Lucky Dog situation was just a bunch of cautions. That kind of made it really, really weird.

Q. When did you guys know you were going to be good to the end on fuel, and how much did this race age you there on top of the box?

RUDY FUGLE: Yeah, it was tough. We'll see in however how many years it aged me. Time will tell on that. But yeah, it was very stressful.

We didn't know until about eight to go that we were really, really close to our number. That 30-to-go to that eight-to-go number, we were able to save a really big chunk and get really close and then you're also just hoping you pick everything up.

You get a really good mileage and you know what that mileage is while you're running. Restarts are tough. When you get all those restarts and you get all the way through the gears and the caution comes out, it's really hard to tell how much you've used. That's ultimately what bit us last



week, and this week we were able to save enough.

Q. What is it about William as a driver where he gets put into these scenarios, leading a lot of laps this season and yet he's able to find ways to persevere and continue to put himself in positions to not just be in championship form but in the constant mix no matter what calls?

RUDY FUGLE: He's an awesome driver. I think he's the best driver all around in the field right now. Of course he's mine, and I should say that, but I really think he's maturing and getting the experience to show that off.

He's very well diversified, and then he's a fighter. He's got a heart of a lion and fights through everything. There's no quit. Those are things that he's gotten better at as well over the years is just rolling with the punches and what happens next, and next thing you know you're leading and you've got a chance to win.

Q. William hadn't won since Daytona. He had two races over the summer where he had run out of fuel. What did you need more, a win, or did you need to win a fuel mileage race for confidence going into the playoffs?

RUDY FUGLE: Yeah, I think the win was big for us. I think that just solidified everything we've had going on where we've -- since Michigan, I would say, we've had really fast cars still. Haven't gotten many good finishes, and you get constantly -- we kind of joked about it today; you constantly have these questions of what's going wrong, what's wrong, what's wrong.

This year I don't know that there's a ton wrong other than circumstance, and sometimes that's the way these races play in the summer is that way. The win is huge to solidify what everyone at Hendrick is doing, working hard, and to get a win for the company is huge.

Q. Rudy, last year here at Iowa you fell short to Ryan Blaney at the end. How much does it mean to you now a year later getting it done in that dramatic fashion today?

RUDY FUGLE: Yeah, I love this racetrack. It's meant a lot. I've had a lot of success here in the Truck Series.



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William has now won the trifecta.

I was here for that night. I was working on Bell's -- one of his first Xfinity races and William won that night and I was there and able to go congratulate him in Victory Lane. I've been here for all three of his wins, and it's just a really cool place.

The race track is very unique. I've always liked it since we started coming here in the Busch Series in the mid 2000s. It's just a cool place.

It's great to get the win. Just always had a lot of good finishes here and loved the crowd and the excitement of the race fans here.

Q. Rudy, going into today, the last 50 races, one win but 12 second- or third-place finishes. In the last 50 races you guys have finished in the top three a quarter of the time. That's a fantastic stat. What was keeping you from winning, and did some of the things that were holding you back break through today, or were they unique circumstances?

RUDY FUGLE: Yeah, in two of the races, three to four tenths of a gallon of gas would have got us a win in the past couple months, and then just these weird -- even today I felt like the hammer was dropping on us. We were going to run in the top 5 and then all these cautions come and I was like, it's all going against us. Thankfully that last caution and thankfully we had a good enough car that we were able to save gas and get there.

It's a credit to everybody on the team, but yeah, it's been tough because you're just waiting for that next thing to drop, so that's why we were all sitting up there like when is something to go wrong today, and it just didn't. Thankfully that gives us more confidence, and it'll give us a boost for sure.

Q. Jeff, I'm asking a question to somebody who's got the top three cars in the points, but for Hendrick Motorsports, only one win in the previous 10 races before today and obviously you guys are an organization built on championships and wins, and while there were a couple close opportunities with the 24, what's been the challenge over the last 10 races of where you guys feel like you are heading closer to the playoffs?

JEFF ANDREWS: Yeah, it certainly hasn't been a lack of work and effort at all of Hendrick Motorsports. Like you said, we expect to win and that's a standard that Mr. Hendrick sets for us when we come to the racetrack.

Just a lot of work has gone on. Obviously we have Phoenix in mind and some similarities here, so a lot of work went into Iowa to just try to understand if there was something there that would help us turn the corner a little bit towards Phoenix.

But I think from an organization standpoint, the one thing that Rudy and myself and the crew chiefs and other leaders of the company, Chad and Jeff, Mr. Hendrick, when you get in these times, you just can't question yourself. You've got to know that you're putting the very best race cars on the racetrack you can, and I firmly believe that. The men and women of Hendrick Motorsports do an incredible job and build amazing race cars. We get to come to the racetrack and execute that great product.

It's been not that far off. It's incredibly close right now. I think you saw the lap times today, and the tire falloff was next to nothing, and at one time there was this whole group of cars within a tenth, tenth and a half of the top 10.

It just doesn't take much to go from top 2 or 3 and a little hiccup here or there and all of a sudden you're outside the top 10, and once you get back there these days with this car, it's tough. It's a struggle to claw your way back up there.

I love our race teams. I love where our mindset is right now. We're rolling through the late part of the summer here, which typically hasn't been our strongest time of year, and I just love what we've got going on right now, and we're focused on that 1, 2, 3 in that regular season championship and getting all those bonus points that are available. That's another big one for us.

Obviously we want to win that and get that regular season championship, but that second and third also pays, too, and we want to take those points away from our competitors if we can.

Q. Rudy, after finishing second last year, I know only having one race to go off of in this car, how tough is it to prepare for a track like this, and did you feel like you needed to make any changes after being fast last year?

RUDY FUGLE: Yeah, not having a big notebook is really tough for coming to a new track. The track aged a ton; we saw that in the color of the corners and how much that changed. So the grip of the track is way different, so you're guessing at that.

Then Goodyear threw a way different tire at us, not just the compound but a construction change, which is a huge staggered change, and then we get 20 minutes of practice



where we can change about three things.

It's one of the bigger challenges we've had, but we had some good tests from the General Motors Chevy group. They gave us some information, got us close, and then our group finished the job.

Q. I'm curious what you thought of the quality of the racing. I spoke with a couple drivers afterwards who said the passing was tough. Assuming NASCAR comes back here, what do you think the racing will be like moving forward?

JEFF ANDREWS: Yeah, I think to start, let's give a shout-out to the fans who showed up today. I looked up there in the grandstands and that place was packed. So that's great to see.

Then it's our job as an industry, I think, to come here and put on a good show, put on a competitive race. If you're following along, there's a bunch of different strategies, comers and goers and different things.

But yeah, it's tough. All of these race teams out here are really, really, really good race teams these days and put great race cars on the track, and the competition is close. When you come somewhere and maybe don't have the amount of passes during a race that you want, I'm sure NASCAR will look at that, and I don't know if we'll come back with something different or -- but for us, as competitors in a sport, we've got to take what's in front of us, the race car, the tire, the track, whatever that is, and we've got to go out and try to do the very best we can as Hendrick Motorsports.

I guess the quality of the race probably differs on your opinion and where you finished and different things like that. But love coming here. Hendrick Motorsports loves to come to Iowa and I know NASCAR does as well, and we love seeing all those people sitting up there in the grandstands today. It was fantastic.

We got here Friday night and got off the airplane and could not believe the amount of people pulling out of the parking lot after the ARCA race. It was just incredible. Great to see.

Q. Last year it seemed like the Fords kind of had the advantage when it came to fuel mileage. This year it seems like the Toyotas have had the advantage. How nice is it to get the Chevy a win in the fuel mileage game?

RUDY FUGLE: Yeah, I think it's all circumstantial on who's ahead and what track and what's going on. But what's

really nice is it gives some validation to our tools that we're using at Hendrick Motorsports, our engine department works really hard at that. Scotty Maxim, Bobby Dell, Ben Proctor, those are the three that really work hard with the 24 team. They help make sure we have all the information we need so we can feed our engineers, and all of our engineers work great to get that.

Those tools to get us home and know that we're going to get home or really close to home, that's the important thing, and we keep getting better at that. Sometimes there will be races where one manufacturer is up or down, but overall, when you're able to use all your tools and your people widespread from top to bottom, it makes it big.

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