

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

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An Interview with:

Austin Dillon

THE MODERATOR: We'll start our questions with Austin.

Q. You said on TV you have a broken rib. How did that happen?

AUSTIN DILLON: I don't like to talk about it, but I fell off a ladder pulling my bow case off getting ready for hunting season. Fell on top of the bow case. It knocked the breath out of me. Knew it was pretty bad. Went ahead and raced Iowa. I got it x-rayed. Seventh one on my right is broken.

I've been racing with it. It's been pretty painful. I raced Watkins Glen, Iowa, then here. Should be good. It's made pretty big improvements over the last two weeks.

Q. When it comes down to these end-of-the-regular-season situations, why is your team so clutch?

AUSTIN DILLON: Yeah, I don't know, man. I guess we're just built that way. You're never out of the fight kind of deal. My guys really believe me, the pit crew guys I have, they're dogs. They stuck with me through thick and thin when they probably had the opportunity to go to other teams and be more successful.

They stuck with me. I think we just have a bond that means a lot. I think it was big to build on Iowa. That was a good run for us. We had to compete with some top teams on pit road. If you ask them, they struggled the first couple pit stops. I didn't notice it. I couldn't figure out why we lost track position the one time. Then they got it together and were clutch when it mattered.

A couple dogs out there. I like working with them, for sure. They're my boys.

Q. Can you give me a sense of just the work behind the scenes of trying to get this company back up to the way it can be, the way you guys want it to be. You have so much on your plate beyond being a driver. What has gone in to build to a moment like tonight beginning something bigger?

AUSTIN DILLON: You look at our organization. There's



one rock in the middle of it. That's my grandfather. He's always been there. He's always the guy on top of the truck and trailer giving his all. You don't see that from every owner out there.

If I can be a rock to help the rest of the organization when the rock is getting older. He is. He's getting older. He's still a fighter. You just want to fill those shoes as best as you can and helped when you can.

Richard Boswell is a heck of a leader. A good get for us in the off-season. He's a guy that can be a leader for years to come after crew chiefing for him. The guys really rally behind him.

He built an excellent team for us. Multiple times I told him this year, if I can't go fast with the team I have right now, I need to think about doing something else, moving to another role. This feels really good.

Just keep working on that and see what we can do in the Playoffs. I think I have a great team right now, probably one of the strongest ones we've built. It's a testament to guys coming to RCR because they know what they get with my grandfather, then me doing what I can to reach out and tell them we want to make this organization as strong as some of the top teams out there. There's a lot of big, strong teams out there. We scrap and claw and figure out ways to win. I think we have fun when we do that.

Q. Do you have a sense of the fire that your grandfather still has? We heard what he said on the radio after the Dover race, seeing his reaction to other things. What do you see out of those fires and what are those meetings like when you're talking about the organization, how much you have to calm him down or...

AUSTIN DILLON: We have knock-down, drag-outs between the two of us.

Q. (No microphone.)

AUSTIN DILLON: Yeah. We get into arguments to the point of frustration. It's very hard when he's your grandfather to have an argument with him because you don't want to argue about it. There's certain directions we have to go to move this boat forward, right? I'm constantly



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pushing him. My brother has stepped in now and trying to help as well. Between the two of us, we want to try to take some of the load off of him as we go.

Yeah, but he's very loyal to a fault almost. He really takes great care of those that are around him. We just push him to try and make change at some point in time.

He usually has a way about it where you tell him one thing and he's going to get upset about it. Then two weeks later turn around, What do you think about this? That's a great idea, man (smiling). I love that.

At his age, too. One thing that I think really hurt him last year this Richmond race, going over this process, it stung to him because he felt like NASCAR kind of let him down in a way. They had to make a call. I got over it. He doesn't get over those type of things.

Hopefully this lets him sleep at night again to that point because this sport is special. It's given our family a living and a lot of other families a living.

Man, I couldn't believe the race we were having out there with Ryan. That one section in the race when we were side by side, I had no tires, it was icy slick, you can't get the throttle down. We're just riding there beside each other trying to play like chicken, who can get a little bit more.

The tires were done. We were both toast. We were able to just gain that little bit of an advantage. Richard made a great call to hit pit road. I was able to manage my tires at the start of that run and that helped me for the end.

Q. Was it not hard to come in here and be angry over last year?

AUSTIN DILLON: I'm too tired to be angry. I mean, I got a little cold, a broken rib, a lot of adversity. Man, some things you don't understand at the time. Come back around. God has a way of putting that timing together. I feel like I was probably the calmest I've ever been tonight in the car winning the race. I didn't act a certain way. I was just thankful for the opportunity.

It was just a timing thing. If you would have told me we would come back a year later and sitting in Victory Lane after all we went through, man, we went through that and I, like, cried in our appeal process because that win meant a lot to me to be able to race with Denny and Joey.

Before that period, we didn't have a good run. I was so, like, pumped to just be up there racing for a win. Then to come back this year, everyone is telling you, Go get it done. You can get the redemption here. Show him what it

means to win.

Dude, I had a three-second lead last year before the caution came out.

Tonight it kind of played out the same way it did last year. Our car just kept getting better and better. We weren't that great at the start. A little tight. The guys did a very good job of just keeping up with the track for me. I was struggling giving them the information really. I thought I did a better job last year telling them what I needed.

Our car had short-run speed. At the end when it mattered, I was able to kind of take it easy when we got the tires on before Blaney. I think that ended up netting me the end of the run.

Q. I saw you got on your driver's side window. Did you have any thoughts after last weekend?

AUSTIN DILLON: Dale was there with me. Hey, we got to make sure this is inside the car now so the window net doesn't trip me up.

I had thoughts. I couldn't get out of the car. I had my radio harness twisted underneath my belt. I'm pulling on it. Couldn't get it off. That took me forever to get out of the car. The burnout was good, but the get-out was not (smiling).

Q. Do you feel like you get enough credit for the success you've had at the Cup Series level?

AUSTIN DILLON: I think I get the credit I deserve, man. I have some great fans out there. It's cool when I go out and sign autographs. I have some loyal fans because they've had to go through a struggle at times.

We're kind of like a fighter. We don't go away. I think a lot of people think that guy is going to go away at some point. We're able to claw, chip, find ways. I like that underdog mentality a little bit.

Yeah, no, it feels pretty good. I won two Xfinity championships, quite a few Cup races now. This one probably one of the best ones because no drama and it was pretty much a butt kicking there. It was good.

Q. Do you feel this sends a statement to anybody out there who may want to point fingers at you and say why is this guy still driving the 3 car?

AUSTIN DILLON: They're going to do it either way. I could win 50 races, and they'll say my grandpa gave me the ride. They're not wrong. He did. He did a great job



putting me in it. Hopefully I'm paying off on his investment at some point (smiling).

Q. A few days ago we were talking, talked about you have success here at Richmond and at Daytona. How does it change going into Daytona next week?

AUSTIN DILLON: Probably changes a little bit. We have to help our guy out in the 8, try to support him as much as we can, get another RCR teammate in there. He's really good at Daytona.

Do what I can. Maybe try to get us bonus points, stages and stuff. Focus probably goes to the 8 now.

Can we ask for more short track races (laughter)?

Q. Maybe I'm projecting, but seeing you in Victory Lane, the way you walked in here, was there a bit of a swagger, part of you that's like I'm back again?

AUSTIN DILLON: Yeah, I guess. I just kind of can't believe it right now a little bit. It's so hard to win at the Cup level. The execution, we were very flawless tonight. At times I don't think we were the fastest car, but we out-executed people. When the restart happened, we chose the bottom. I was able to get clean air. I think I was giving it all I had right there to get as far as out in front as I could to create that gap.

When the 12 short pitted us and I had to run him down, I was trying to be patient. Boswell made a great call. Really adamant that I don't hurt my tires at the beginning of the run. It paid off.

If you want to call it swagger, I'm all about it. I feel like growing up in the Truck Series and Xfinity Series, I felt like I had maximum swag, swagger, winning and doing different things.

You get to Cup level, it just humbles you. It's a whole 'nother department of winning. Now I'm more thankful than anything. It's not like, Kiss my butt, I won. It's more like, Man, that was awesome. To be able to get a win at the highest level of motorsport, and do it for my family, RCR, Welcome, the pit crew, all those guys. I'm the guy that got to wheel it tonight. Thank you, Jesus.

Q. Last year it seems like from the moment that you got to Victory Lane, you walked in here, a dark cloud. I don't know how much of a celebration there was. What was the celebration like last year? How is this one going to be different?

AUSTIN DILLON: Well, the guys already asked if we were

going to the house to party. I'll do whatever. Like I said, I'm wore out. When we left, Ace was like, Dad, we haven't won in a long time. It was just last year, dude.

What else did you say? Is everybody going to come to the house?

ACE DILLON: Yes.

AUSTIN DILLON: There we go. So if Ace man says everybody can come party tonight, I guess it will happen.

Q. Austin, with him hopping up there with you, how much more does this one mean having the whole family here?

AUSTIN DILLON: Ace, what is it like to win?

ACE DILLON: Good.

AUSTIN DILLON: Does that feel good to win, when Daddy wins?

ACE DILLON: Yes.

AUSTIN DILLON: We don't win all the time, do we?

ACE DILLON: Yeah.

AUSTIN DILLON: But today what happened?

ACE DILLON: Win.

AUSTIN DILLON: That's right. It feels amazing.

ACE DILLON: Why do you call a flame a button?

AUSTIN DILLON: I don't know.

ACE DILLON: A fish button.

AUSTIN DILLON: Telling jokes now, man. Went from zero to a hundred real quick.

Yeah, it feels amazing. I told Justin Alexander last year, I'd do anything to get my daughter to Victory Lane. I've had Ace to Victory Lane a couple times now. Now we had Blaize. She was up there with her finger up going No. 1. Those are the moments you cherish forever, keep on fighting. Hopefully that rubs off on them, dad never gave up and got himself to Victory Lane.

Q. How much you've taken on outside of just driving the race car, how much has that driven you in addition to the fire to competition?

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AUSTIN DILLON: Yeah, you wake up and it's pretty surreal really to be able to work with your family, work on the Carolina Cowboys, for example. I love working with them. I've learned a lot about people in general. Those guys are one tough customer, all those Cowboys. I think it makes me tougher. If I would have complained about my rib before now, the Cowboys would have been like, That's nothing. Get over it. Move on.

I enjoy a lot of it, man. You have to compartmentalize everything, the family part, compartmentalize getting to the racetrack and the ups and downs of it.

But Boswell, he's special, man. We had it out probably six or seven races in. It was a one-on-one meeting with him and I. It was like an adult conversation. Hey, man, we're both competitors. We're very similar in a lot of ways. We got to respect each other in that way.

From that point on, man, that guy's my brother. I understand him. I think he understands me now. He's just, like, I couldn't ask for a better guy to push me and ask the right things. We have an understanding of each other now. It's really nice to have that.

Q. How does this victory shape your confidence and your momentum as you enter the final week of the regular season, going into the Playoffs?

AUSTIN DILLON: Well, I mean, I liked that first round. Those are places that we run typically well at. Darlington. I think New Hampshire is in there. Is Gateway in there, too? I'm all about those three. Yeah, we can play spoiler on those three, for sure.

We can take things we did tonight, strategy-wise, just execution-wise, and take it into the Playoffs and we'll be good.

I think it all started at Iowa. We probably had a better car than 10th place. The cautions just didn't fall our way. I definitely think that first round is a good one for us.

Q. You were really good here in Nationwide, then Xfinity. Took a while for the results to start coming at Richmond in Cup. What is working here for you?

AUSTIN DILLON: This was the worst track for me when I started racing. I'm not kidding. I came here, I don't get it, I don't understand it. Drive harder, slower. We had one test. One Xfinity run that was pretty solid. Got to the lead, kind of understood some things.

I feel like I run a different line than everybody. I don't know

location-wise on the track, if you watch me, I'm very adamant about where I put my car on the long run. I don't know if that's the patience that helps the tire live longer.

I'm usually running in my own place down there, kind of catfishing around the bottom. But, yeah, I just had one really good test. I kind of found a rhythm.

I'm able to tell the guys what I need in the simulator before we get here. If the simulator feels right, my guys wanted to change some things. I'm like, This doesn't feel right, go back to what I know. I can drive around that feel.

I'm super confident when we get on the simulator that I can get it close to what we have here. For me, like, I try and help the other guys in our team to show them what I feel. It's something about the location of where I run I think is the biggest thing.

Q. You were where you wanted to be when you were battling Blaney?

AUSTIN DILLON: Yeah. I don't want to be on the outside. Kills my tires. At least I can't make it work out there.

I should have won an old car race here, too. There was one I sped on pit road that we were capable of winning, for sure.

Q. You've talked about the general perspective of last year's win compared to this year's win. You praised the Lord and that sort of thing. Can you talk about your faith-based perspective between last year and this year. Have you leaned into that? Is there any scripture or anything you pulled from?

AUSTIN DILLON: I think when you go through the ups and downs of the sport, you start realizing what we do here, we live in a bubble a lot of the time. There's a lot of other stuff that goes on in this world.

My dad has preached to me lately about Proverbs, a proverb a day. It's really quite simple. I don't do the greatest job of it. I try to keep up with it. I did one perfect for a month, 31 days, proverb per day. He pushed me, finally got me on it.

Every time I open the Bible and read Proverbs, it speaks to me a certain way and grounds you. That's the biggest thing, you have to have a way to get grounded, know what's really important.

Proverbs is pretty easy. It tells you what you need to hear most of the time.



Q. Both R.C. and Richard hit on how they were feeling during the final 10 to 15 laps. What was going through your mind towards the end?

AUSTIN DILLON: No caution. No caution. Don't blow a tire. I got to a point where with, like, 20 to go, the car was kind of getting squirmy on me, I was losing the rear tires. Gave it a little front brake. It calmed down. I kind of got confident again.

When I was listening to lap times, he was gaining, gaining, gaining. Then we crossed over. When I heard that we were like half a 10th or a 10th faster, I said he burned his stuff up. I knew that wasn't going to be the problem.

They let me know the 48 was coming. There was a couple laps where he was a 10th or so. With four to go, I ran a lap faster than him. With the three seconds, I knew we were fine.

Q. Last year you sat on the podium and said it was potentially your biggest win outside of the 500. Does this surpass it for you?

AUSTIN DILLON: This feels great. This is what I wanted last year. It's not how I wanted to end it last year. Felt like I had to with my back against the wall kind of deal.

This year it just played out the way God wanted it to, I guess.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much, Austin. Congratulations.

AUSTIN DILLON: Thank you.

Ace, you got anything to say?

ACE DILLON: What do you call a rainbow fish, a camouflage fish, and a red fish?

AUSTIN DILLON: What?

ACE DILLON: A planet.

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