

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

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An Interview with:

William Byron

THE MODERATOR: William, congratulations. Thanks for spending some time with us. From your perspective, can you just share with us what it was like from your vantage point on the final laps, especially with the final caution coming out, the shootout at the end?

WILLIAM BYRON: Yeah, probably the first time I've really thought about it too much, but you're thinking about it's going to be a long run to the end, right? You're just trying to manage your stuff. When I got the lead, How do I manage my tires, manage my stuff, to get through the next lappers that I got to get through? Honestly, you're just kind of counting the laps, trying to match that with what your effort level inside the car is.

When the caution came out, I told myself before the day started, I'm not going to get anxious about pit calls or cautions or whatever. I'm just going to do whatever it is that I'm told to do.

I was thinking about the possibilities of other guys taking two tires or whatever it is. I think that's in the back of your mind. Just trying to execute pit road, not speed, have a good rolling time, all those things. Get in the box on the marks.

Our guys had a great pit stop. I felt like pit road in general went really smooth that last time around. Then it kind of shifted to, Okay, how do I get through this restart? How do I get a good launch? What is my balance going to be once I do get clear? All those things.

Yeah, just kind of tested everything in those last 40 laps, just all the different scenarios.

THE MODERATOR: We're going to go to questions.

Q. The contact with Ryan, your view, your approach. He thought there was nothing foul about it. What was your play there?

WILLIAM BYRON: Yeah, I mean, that's what you guys want to see, right? We're going for it. I feel like in that situation, yeah, I never, like, wanted to make contact because I felt like I had a good position, like I was inside of



him. We also had the lap car. I can't see where the lap car is in that instance. I just knew I wanted to commit to the corner and have position.

I hate that we made contact. I think he was probably leaving just enough space, as well. I was going into the corner committed. That's kind of fighting for space.

Yeah, it's hard racing. We both want to make the Championship 4. It's a race win. It's no ill will. It's just kind of hard racing, racing for the win.

Q. The last two weeks the amount of points this team has seen slip away during the third stages, it would be understandable if you were down in the dumps, worried, but outwardly you seem very calm, focused. Do you have us fooled, or do you think the last couple years, having gone through this, has all that experience helped?

WILLIAM BYRON: Yeah, I mean, I think I just have good people around me and good perspective. I found that perspective, I don't know exactly when, but I just found it. I felt good coming here. Like, obviously I was nervous. Everyone's nervous. They want to win. They want to do the best job they can. They don't want to let their team down. That's the biggest feeling.

I just came here. I knew I prepared. I knew I had done everything I needed to do this week. In some ways I worked harder, in other ways I didn't work as hard, gave myself a rest. I felt like I just was prepared. I was going to do everything I could do in the race car and see what the result was from that. That was my mindset.

I think I'm just thankful to have good people around me and a good team. Definitely the last two weeks were very depressing because there was no result. When Talladega happened the way it did, I was almost numb to the result. It just seems like it's just been happening this way. You just kind of keep digging in, keep digging your heels in. We just came here with a lot of determination.

Our team could have gone one or two ways: we could have been like Vegas didn't go well, Talladega we had a shot to win, whatever happens at Martinsville. But we came here on offense.



I think that's what I'm super proud of. It was a very freeing position to be in, having to race to win, not like the last couple years where you had to count points. That freed me up inside the car, as well. I think our team just put everything out there this weekend. It was the ultimate test for our group, the ultimate one we've been through yet. That was pretty cool to see.

Q. You led a career-high amount of laps. You became the first driver to win from the pole, sweep both stages and win the race in the whole Playoff era.

WILLIAM BYRON: Nice (smiling). I knew that, by the way. I was like, Man a lot of guys don't win from the pole, statistically, right?

Keep going (smiling).

Q. I also saw a stat that you're the first driver at Martinsville to win from the pole since 2013.

WILLIAM BYRON: Love it (smiling).

Q. With all that being said, is the best race of your career, best race you've ever driven in your life?

WILLIAM BYRON: I hope it's not the best because I hope next week is good too.

Q. So far.

WILLIAM BYRON: So far...

Yeah, I feel like all the things I've learned and all the things that my team has learned obviously, we just put that all into a big effort this weekend. We're like, Whatever happens happens.

Yeah, I do think from start to finish, it's the best I've ever felt in the race car. That's a damn good feeling. Yeah, I think it's been a lot of work, a lot of heartbreak this year. The 600, different races. You just channel those things, learn from 'em. If you can learn from 'em, they become positives. They become things you lean on in the moment.

For some people they become scars and things you can't get past. For me, I found a way to flip that script either this week or sometime during these Playoffs. It went the other way.

Q. Yesterday you were talking about your mentality driving yourself up here yesterday. Are you driving home after this by yourself?

WILLIAM BYRON: I don't know. I see my mom over

there, so maybe I'll get mom or dad to drive (smiling).

I don't know, probably take it easy for a couple days, get ready for next.

Q. What are you going to be thinking about driving home?

WILLIAM BYRON: I think it's important to reflect. I think I'll think about, as I am, I feel like I'm very analytical, some people could say, introspective. I'm probably going to think about all the things that happened, all the moves. I'm going to try to remember the good things. A lot of times your mind doesn't really remember the good things because they're a little bit subconscious.

Yeah, it will be hard to remember exactly how it played out, but I'll try to. I think I will also try to move past and get ready for Phoenix, honestly. Just manage my week, just manage every opportunity I have to get better. Just try to learn as much as I can.

Q. Personally how does it feel to come up this big at such a clutch moment, be big enough for the biggest moment?

WILLIAM BYRON: It's awesome. I mean, I have a friend of mine that told me this week, he said, No moment has ever been too big for you.

As a competitor, you don't really realize that. Like, you only view it in your eyes as every opportunity. You only kind of look at it as missed opportunities, things you could get better at.

Yeah, I feel like this week, this weekend, it's just trying to maximize the chance you have in front of you 'cause you never know when the next one's going to come. Even though you think you're going to be there all these times, you never know.

You want to give everything you can to it. I felt good coming into here that I had given everything. Once you get in between the lines, in between the walls, you're going to give everything. You just got to go out there and do your thing.

Q. Wins for you at this track as big as you for Daytona because of your history?

WILLIAM BYRON: That's a good question. They're two totally different techniques. Everyone would say this place is a lot in your control, it's finesse, it's managing tires. Everyone would say Daytona is aggression, split-second decisions.



They're totally different racetracks. It makes me feel good that I have diversity in my skill set, that I can go to Daytona and anticipate, make good decisions in a split second. I can come here and finesse, manage tires and things.

Yeah, they're two totally different. Yeah, they are two huge places.

Q. From an emotional side, you had your win here in 2022, then you won the 40th anniversary race in 2024, now this.

WILLIAM BYRON: Yeah, I think this is probably the toughest place to get ahold of. Still is. So yeah, I think it's kind of an evolution.

They are big wins, for sure. The 40th anniversary win was big. The win coming here the year after my mom's deal, just winning, having them here, was a huge deal. That was number one. I think it still is number one. We talked about that this week. This is a close second, but...

This place has meant a lot to me and my family. Me and my dad coming here years ago, watching race cars go around. What I saw from being an outsider, I feel like I still hold onto that and it kind of fuels me.

Q. You follow other sports closely. Friends with athletes. As an athlete yourself in a big moment like this, watching some of your in-car from the broadcast, it looked like you were in the zone at some points today.

WILLIAM BYRON: Really (smiling)?

Q. Did it feel like that?

WILLIAM BYRON: Yeah, I feel like I have... I don't know, I feel like I get into kind of a zone probably in there. I mean, I notice some guys stare. I don't really stare. I just look like I'm kind of falling asleep in there. Kind of weird (smiling).

Yeah, I feel like I just kind of get into a zone probably. Just that cadence and rhythm, I guess. As an athlete, you always want to find that.

I think the biggest key is when kind of things don't go your way, how you adapt to the circumstances around you and stay in that state.

Q. In terms of looking ahead to next week, a big talking point was Penske, the fact they're not going to be eligible to win a championship. The fact that you're

not going to have to go up against a Penske car when they're so good in that race, how does that sit with you now?

WILLIAM BYRON: I don't know. I mean, everyone's really good in this series. I think you saw an awesome battle between us and the 12. I told Jeff earlier in the weekend, I said, If you don't win here, it doesn't matter for next week, right?

I feel like the challenge was tonight for us. There will be another big challenge next week. It's not like we're thinking, Oh, we got off easy because they're not in it. It's not nothing like that. Denny, Chase, Kyle are amazing competitors. We're going to have to do everything we can do next week to win that one, too.

Q. On Media Day, we were talking about how you guys were kind of far off on the flatter, shorter tracks. You were, Well, Gateway and Loudon actually give us a chance to get better. Those might be good tests for Martinsville.

WILLIAM BYRON: Yeah.

Q. Did you really believe that at the time? Was that false optimism?

WILLIAM BYRON: Yeah, those things are real. I mean, the notes are real. I felt better I think than my crew chief did after Loudon. When I got out of the car when we finished third, I was like, Man, that was awesome.

He was like, Well, we didn't win.

I knew it was a step. I knew the car felt good. I could drive it hard. I had what I needed in the car. The 12 was just a little bit better. The 21, they were really good. I knew that was a good step. I was hoping that applied to this weekend. I was cautiously optimistic.

When we unloaded the car on Saturday, I was like, Okay, we're getting closer. We have something we can fight with. Just a matter of how much.

I think, honestly, us and the 12, like I said, were super evenly matched. It was a battle.

THE MODERATOR: William, congratulations again on the win. Best of luck next weekend in Phoenix.

WILLIAM BYRON: Thank you.

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