

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

Thursday, October 30, 2025

An Interview with:

Chase Briscoe

CHASE BRISCOE: They're going to -- my high school is actually opening up the whole gymnasium. The Lawrence County Tourism Board rented an LED TV or whatever. I don't know how many people are going to show up. Might be a hundred people, might be 1500, I don't know.

Obviously the whole city has gotten behind me and this run. They were sending me videos today. They lined the entire Main Street up with checkered flags, running a 19 flag at City Hall. So yeah, it's pretty cool how into it my city is, for sure.

There's not very many. There's only like 3,000 people there in the first place. All 3,000 are pretty excited about it.

Q. When you signed with JGR, could you have envisioned the way this season has gone this year?

CHASE BRISCOE: Yeah, I mean, I definitely knew it was a possibility. I've watched it with Bell and Denny and even Martin having these runs every single year. I knew when I signed on at JGR, it was definitely a potential.

But yeah, with how the beginning of the season started, I was like it's going to take a little bit longer than I anticipated just to be competitive. Seemed like once we got to May or June, things started coming more easily, just making more sense.

I would say around August I was like, man, if we just continue this, we can make a run at this deal.

Obviously the whole Playoffs I felt like the whole time we were more than capable of doing it.

It's a surprise I guess in some senses, but not a surprise at the same time 'cause I knew that all the pieces to the puzzle were certainly there.

Q. You come into the race with the longest odds to win here. Does that give you a little bit more motivation?

CHASE BRISCOE: I mean, my whole career I've been the underdog with the longest odds. I kind of like that,



truthfully.

But yeah, I don't know, I don't feel like we're some underdog. I feel like Playoff-wise we scored more points than anybody up till last week.

Yeah, I don't feel like we're an underdog. I feel like we're all honestly really evenly matched. It's just a matter of executing.

I wouldn't feel like we're an underdog. I feel like it's a pretty good bet.

Q. Denny as your teammate but a championship competitor, what is the extent of how much you will work together, be teammates, until you're not?

CHASE BRISCOE: That's something I guess we'll navigate. He's been in this situation before with other teammates. For me, I don't know.

Truthfully, every single weekend it's not like we're really just Denny and I discussing how our cars are. There might be a time right after practice, I'll run over there and ask him real quickly a 20-second answer.

Yeah, I don't think it will really change a whole lot. I mean, we're still going to do our company-wide debrief after practice and stuff. Yeah, I don't think it will really change a whole lot as far as just the communication side goes.

Q. What do you think your greatest test has been this season?

CHASE BRISCOE: I think for me this season has just been trying to learn a new team, a new car. Truthfully, a lot of new people. Just coming to a new manufacturer, there's been a lot of learning from that standpoint.

I would say that's been the biggest test this year, trying to understand, first off, how this team even operates, then just the communication side of that, just how the cars drive.

Q. Learning everything new, here you are in the Final 4.

CHASE BRISCOE: There's definitely been a lot of new. Truthfully even 35 weeks in it still feels new to a certain

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extent.

There's been a lot. I knew it would be a lot going to just a new team. You're learning a ton of new people. JGR has 400-something employees. Just trying to understand names, even just the people that are in power in certain positions, but a new manufacturer, there's new people on that side now. Just the processes are all different, whether it's sim or how you approach the weekend. There's just been a lot.

Still, like I said, 35 weeks in I still feel like I'm learning a lot every single week just because it is so new kind of from what I've done the last seven, eight years. I certainly feel like we've grown a lot over the course of every week, but certainly these last 10 or 12 weeks.

Q. Are you surprised it's taken you five years to get to this spot?

CHASE BRISCOE: I don't know. I was close my sophomore year. I don't know. It's so hard to compare. I feel like the first four years of my career to now, truthfully I'm glad that I had the four years of experience at SHR just because I have Cup experience, I kind of know the ins-and-outs of Cup racing. I still had races where I competed for wins or won at SHR's level.

I feel like it would have been hard to step into this car year one of your Cup career and go perform. Cup racing in itself is so hard to go do.

Just kind of the perfect storm. I had a couple of years of experience in Cup. Somewhat competitive equipment. Now gave me the opportunity to obviously come over in elite equipment and show me what I'm capable of.

Q. You had great success in the past with Boswell. What is it about James Small that helped you turn the corner?

CHASE BRISCOE: James just does a really good job week in, week out of getting me prepared, really just making it as easy as possible for the amount of work that it is. It's a lot of work every single weekend to go to the racetrack and be fully prepared. Not only James, but our entire engineering team on the 19, they just do a really good job of, as much data as there is, trying to simplify it to where I can really understand it and kind of have a bullet point of what I need to focus on week in, week out.

James and I have obviously had a great start to our tenure together. Hopefully we can just continue to get stronger and stronger.

Q. You know you have the speed. How did you have to adapt to the execution needed to get to this point?

CHASE BRISCOE: I mean, speed is the first part. You have to have speed to go run up front. You're not going to take a slow car and run up front with it. Speed has not been our issue.

For me, after the first part of the season, is understanding the speed that I had, learning that I don't have to make a lot of these moves I've had to the first four years of my career. I can let the race play out.

Gabehart talks to us all the time. If you just have a good day, you're probably going to run top 10 at JGR. Something that took me a little bit. I was pushing the issue on everything, was making mistakes, trying harder than what I probably needed to. Once I just let the races come more naturally to me, I feel like that's when the results started turning around.

Q. You won at Phoenix in the past. Does that give you added confidence?

CHASE BRISCOE: Anytime you go to a racetrack you won at before, I guess there is a certain confidence just because you know you can do it and you know you've done it before.

I mean, the cars are so different, especially in my situation. That was three years ago. A lot has changed. I still think that just when you go to a track you've won at before you're a little more excited to go because you know you've done it before.

Q. Does this feel different than 2022?

CHASE BRISCOE: Yeah, I mean, it's just a bigger deal on the Cup scale. Also that was during COVID, so that whole year felt really weird. Like, I think out of all the races I won that year, there were only fans at one of them. There was no media. It was just different.

Yeah, it feels way different than that.

Q. When did you feel like this was a championship-caliber team?

CHASE BRISCOE: Would I say there was a stretch around I want to say it was August, we ran second three weeks in a row. That was when I was like, Man, if we can keep doing this. At that point we still didn't even feel close to our full potential. We were, like, running top five every race throughout the whole race, just getting finishes. Everything was just starting to click.



Like I said, I felt like we weren't even to our full potential yet. I felt like if we kept building that to the Playoffs, we were going to be in a really good spot. Throughout the Playoffs, I still don't feel like we're at 100% per se, but we're way closer now than we were in August. I would say around that three-week stretch is where it was like there's really potential here to make a run at that.

Q. As a driver, how tough is it to just to that every week?

CHASE BRISCOE: It's been unique in a sense of even the first three weeks in a row where we ran second, you're like, Man, I just ran second. That's pretty cool, right? You feel like you're proving a lot of people wrong in a sense.

Even my competitors, I felt like at that point they're not surprised to see me up there, but I'm not one of the normal regulars. Now, like, I feel like they race me differently just because I'm up there kind of consistently week in, week out. Even just going to the racetrack, more people are wearing my stuff than I've ever seen before, more people recognize me. That part's been different, for sure.

So yeah, I don't know, it's definitely been a big change. It seems like the last 10 weeks, it's like every week it just keeps going more and more and more. It's fun, though.

Q. Can you finally call yourself a normal regular?

CHASE BRISCOE: I hope so. It would help if I win this weekend, for sure (laughter).

Yeah, I don't know. It still is odd 'cause I spent my whole Cup career kind of being a 10th-to-20th-place guy, where you can run up front every six, seven weeks. Now being up there consistently, it's a lot more fun, for sure, just finding yourself restarting up front.

In the past, like, I would be amped up in those moments because you didn't get those moments very often. Now it feels like another weekend. Honestly it feels very similar to those 2020, 2019 Xfinity years where you go to the racetrack, no matter what the style of racetrack is, you're at least in the mix to run up front and potentially win. That's a lot of fun to be a part of.

Q. What did you learn so far this week?

CHASE BRISCOE: I don't know. Just that how big of a deal it is, I guess. I've obviously been a competitor, but I've never been here. Just seeing how the week is, how much more from a commitment standpoint. You're doing a lot more stuff, obviously a lot more interviews, stuff like

that. I didn't realize how big of a deal it is.

I've been in the Final 4 in Xfinity, but it's just not to this scale. Now being here, I'm sure it will feel way different on Sunday. Even our first day I guess of championship week, it definitely is noticeably different than any other week.

Q. When you talk about this being your first-ever Championship 4 in the Cup Series, but being at JGR, what are you doing to try to get your mind off pressure a little bit?

CHASE BRISCOE: Honestly, I don't feel like there's any pressure. That probably sounds weird to say. Nobody really expected us to be here anyway, so...

Yeah, there's really no pressure. I feel like there's more pressure next year with how good this year went, now the expectations are there. This year there was really no expectation for anything outside of maybe winning a race.

Yeah, not a whole lot of pressure. Like I said, I'm sure Sunday will feel different. Right now, I don't know, it doesn't feel any different, if I'm being honest.

Q. What kind of emotions are going through your ahead looking down the row seeing these guys that have all competed in the championship?

CHASE BRISCOE: It's special just knowing we're even up here. Those are guys that I definitely look up to. Not so much William, he's younger than me. Sounds weird to say I look up to him.

Denny, as a fan, I watched him race for championships. Larson, I've raced against Kyle since I was probably 15 or 16 years old. He was always like the guy to beat. Just to even be on the same level as them guys for one weekend is super special and humbling.

Yeah, I would love to obviously beat those guys. If you can beat all three of these guys, then you've earned it. These are arguably three of the best guys week in, week out.

Q. What has the dialogue been between you guys?

CHASE BRISCOE: I feel like normal. I'm sure Sunday we're not going to be talking and hanging out. Just how media works. You're just around 'em a lot. I don't know, I've seen it from the fan side. Tony playing Head Games, all this stuff. I don't feel like there's any of that. Maybe I'm just naïve and easygoing and talking to everybody.

Yeah, I don't really feel like it's any different.



Q. At the start of the year, did you imagine being in this position at all?

CHASE BRISCOE: I wouldn't say I, like, imagined it. I wasn't like, Man, we're going to make the Championship 4 this year.

But I knew it was a capability. I think you have to think it's a capability. Like I was saying earlier, as a competitor, I've raced against Joe Gibbs Racing. I knew that if everything went well, there was a very good likelihood you would be racing for a championship.

But yeah, I mean, year one... I'm not going to say it's surprising. It also I would say exceeded expectations for year one, for sure.

Yeah, I don't know, it would mean a lot to do it in year one with Coach obviously taking a chance on me. Just to start our tenure off together winning a championship would be pretty cool. It would certainly make the expectations going forward way harder.

Q. This 19 car sat on pole here last year. How important is qualifying going to be on Saturday?

CHASE BRISCOE: I think it's important, for sure. Look, is winning the pole really going to do a whole lot as far as race results go? I would say no. I've won seven poles and haven't won one of these races.

It helps from you a pit stall selection standpoint. You don't even have to qualify on the pole. You just have to beat these other three and you'll get pit stall number one.

I don't think starting position is necessarily a huge deal in this race because it seems like the Championship 4 guys can always get through the field. The field obviously knows what you're racing for, they're really respectful about that.

I would much start first rather than 25th or something. I don't think it's as big of a deal as people probably make it out to be outside of the pit stall. The pit stall definitely makes a difference. They changed how pit road is. It's not as big of an advantage, but it is an advantage.

Q. When you stop and you look back at where you were this time last year, how much things have changed, have you had time to do that? What are your emotions in doing that?

CHASE BRISCOE: I haven't looked back a ton about it. I mean, just yeah, a year ago, I remember literally sitting on the grid crying because the chapter of my life... I dreamed

of just racing in Cup, right? To do it for the guy that was your hero, and specifically the car that you cheered for as a kid, knowing it was shutting down, just the friendships and everything I'd made, that part was the saddest thing for me last year, just knowing that that chapter of my life was coming to a close. Just not knowing what the future held.

I knew I was going to Joe Gibbs Racing, but you never know what another organization is going to feel like.

Yeah, this week all the 14 guys, we still have a group chat. They were sending me motivational videos, trying to pump me up. Boswell texted me, sent me a video of his kids wishing me good luck. That part brings me back to last year knowing what that group meant to my family truthfully.

Yeah, it is crazy what a difference a year can make. You go from being sad and down in the dumps. I mean, I don't know, it was just weird. I mean, we were the last people to leave last year because we didn't want it to end. Whether we knew when we walked out the tunnel, that group would never be together again. They literally kicked us out. They forced to us leave. We were here longer than the champions. Hopefully this year I'm the one that's here the longest again.

Q. What were some of the motivational videos you got?

CHASE BRISCOE: Probably Boswell's kids. That one was a good one. They were all jacked up. Then all the 14 guys, they do this thing where they take shots of Fireball all the time. All of 'em took a shot of Fireball, yelling for me and J.D., my car chief, he came from the 14 car. They were like, Go get 'em Chase and J.D. Those were probably my two favorites.

Q. Do you feel going into Phoenix that extra week was beneficial?

CHASE BRISCOE: I wouldn't say, like, from my standpoint it was really an extra week. I mean, it definitely I guess gained us a day of sim time. I can't speak for James and the engineers. I'm sure they were working way more on Phoenix than I was, just leading into.

Yeah, last Friday before we went to Martinsville, we went and ran sim, right? That's something that if we would have been in a must win or whatever at Martinsville, we wouldn't have been doing that. I think that was definitely an advantage.

Yeah, even just as an organization, right, Joe Gibbs Racing has been able to spend three weeks on Phoenix. Hopefully that will make a difference for us this weekend.

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Yeah, I guess we'll find out.

Q. You and Byron are the only two of the four to have wins at Phoenix in this car. Would you consider that having a leg up?

CHASE BRISCOE: Yeah, I don't think it makes a difference. I mean, yeah, it's nice that I've won here before. That was the first year of Next Gen. I mean, like nobody even knew what to bring setup-wise. That was like the third or fourth race in Next Gen era.

I don't think there's a whole lot you can take away. Even the racetrack is different. That time I was running basically defense in turns one and two. We don't really do that anymore. So I don't think you can take a lot away from it.

Q. How much coordination has there been between the two JGR teams?

CHASE BRISCOE: From my standpoint, I don't know. I'm not the one building the setup. I mean, I'm sure that there's still coordination, especially with our teammates, right, with Ty and Bell.

I knew Denny ran my setup on the sim, for example. I saw kind of what his notes or comments were about it. I never ran his setup on the sim. They were at least running ours. I guess there's some correlation there.

But yeah, from my standpoint, it felt the same as every other week.

Q. What advice has James given you?

CHASE BRISCOE: Honestly nothing. We still haven't really talked about it. Like, we still don't really ever talk about the Playoffs. He's just talked to me about Phoenix in general. But it's the same conversation we had when we came here for race three or four. There's been nothing about championship really other than he sent a text to our entire group chat about this week let's give it everything we got, pay really extra close attention to every detail.

Yeah, there hasn't really been any other conversation about it.

Q. In regards to Phoenix, since they've been hosting the championship here for several years, might be gone for a while, are there any unique memories to Phoenix for you?

CHASE BRISCOE: I think the biggest thing about Phoenix for me is it is where I got my first Cup win. Coming back to this racetrack, there's a lot of memories just from that day.

That's the biggest thing, is just going back.

I kind of remember, like, standing on the front straightaway, looking in the grandstands. That whole experience in Victory Lane. Yeah, you never forget your first win.

That's the thing I think about when I think about Phoenix. Yeah, hopefully I can be thinking about my first championship, too.

Q. Do you have any rituals when you come here?

CHASE BRISCOE: No. I normally hit up a Whataburger at some point. No, nothing crazy.

Q. What happened to the motors last weekend?

CHASE BRISCOE: I don't know. I have no idea. I just know the thing blew up. I think it was something with the valve cover. I knew it had a hole in it. Outside that, I have no idea. I know it was something different for all three of us.

Q. Any concern because of that?

CHASE BRISCOE: Yeah, I mean, statistically it's happened once out of 35 races. I mean, it's not like it's really been a concern for us.

I don't know, there's two ways you can look at it. You can look at it as it's the race for the championship, hopefully it doesn't happen this time. Or just kind of the best race for it to happen. There's obviously been a ton of extra attention now this whole week.

As far as the 19 team goes, that was really the only race outside of the first round of the Playoffs where no races mattered for us. If we were going to blow up, that would be the one to do it in.

Q. Do you think Toyota was pushing the envelope there?

CHASE BRISCOE: I don't think so. Not by the way they acted at least. I think it was one of those deals where we blew up.

Martinsville is really hard on stuff. You're shifting so much, turning the thing, rpms. It's unique how it was different for all of us. Based on the meetings we had Monday, I don't think there's any concern about this weekend.

Q. How different has this week been, what's it been like putting in extra hours? How different has it been?



CHASE BRISCOE: I mean, we've been there till 10 or 11 at night other weeks during the regular season running sim. It's not that different. That's kind of how the 19 team operates, James, the group in general.

Yeah, I mean, it's a little different this week just 'cause you have to leave so early. We kind of just had to cram everything in for two days. Just whatever time could work.

I don't know. It's honestly not been a whole lot different. Maybe four, five more hours of sim time. Outside of that, it's really about the same as what we normally do.

Q. In general, what has this first Championship 4 experience been like for you? Any surprises?

CHASE BRISCOE: Not yet. I mean, I'm just getting started, right? But no, nothing yet. I guess earlier just the scale of it. There's more people here than I thought there would be, even for this. Media people we see every week, but there's a lot of new faces I don't normally see. That part of it's a little bit different.

I think on Sunday it will probably be feel different. The pre-race, everything else. Yeah, to this point, though, it feels the same.

Q. You said your dad is still a critic, wanting you to be better. What has he said throughout this whole Playoff run?

CHASE BRISCOE: He's still pointed stuff out at times. He used to always be like every practice session, everything. This year it's been funny. Probably a couple months ago, I was like, You coming to practice?

He goes, Honestly, I don't know if you guys need me anymore. I don't know if you bring a lot of value. You guys have been good everywhere.

He definitely is starting to trust us a little bit more. But it's been fun, obviously, to have him be with me through this whole journey, both my parents. All my grandparents are still alive. Having them kind of see this, yeah, it's just special to get to experience all those things with the people that you love, have been there from literally day one.

So yeah, I'm excited for them to be a part of this weekend. Hopefully it will end with a win. Regardless, it's still an amazing experience for just our family. This is something that we never thought I would even get to this point, right? Honestly it's just icing on the cake, the whole thing. Racing every single weekend is icing on the cake for us.

Q. What do you hear from Mitchell this week?

CHASE BRISCOE: It's been cool. Our Lawrence County Tourism Board, crazy we even have one of those, they rented an LED TV. My entire high school gym is doing like a watch party. They say there's going to be 1500 people there. I don't think our gym even holds 1500 people.

Yeah, I'm excited to see what the turnout is. They're doing something at the high school. They're opening up the concession stands, the whole nine yards. The American Legion is going to do a watch party, too.

My whole career, whether I was even in ARCA or now Cup, just that area has always been a huge supporter of mine. I think part of it is everybody kind of knows everybody. But yeah, to see how excited they are. Every win, we don't have a siren, but flying a 19 flag this week. All down Main Street is checkered flags. The whole city and county has really been getting into it.

I think NBC is sending a camera to the high school to have a live view of it. It's going to be pretty neat.

Q. Has to be surreal. Your high school gym...

CHASE BRISCOE: It's wild, yeah. It's wild. They definitely were never going to come during my high school tenure to watch anything else. I only rode the bench in everything I did.

It's crazy just to see the support that you have. All these other guys, I'm sure they have people from their hometown that support them. They're not from a town of 3500 people, right? It's different whenever you come from that small of a town. I've seen people from literally two, three hours away talking about how they're going to drive to Mitchell just to watch.

It's going to be cool to see what the outcome is.

Q. Not to spoil the reveal tomorrow, but your 2020 Darlington win was voted the number one moment of the Xfinity Series era.

CHASE BRISCOE: That's cool.

Q. Your thoughts on how that win resonated with how you are now?

CHASE BRISCOE: Man, it's cool to hear. That was obviously, regardless of what I was going through, our family was going through, it was an unbelievable race. Me and Kyle. Truthfully like an instant classic, right?

To see it with the circumstances and everything that was. I



mean, every single weekend of the year I have at least two or three people come up to me and still talk about that race, how it helped them get through difficult times. Just to see the impact that race had.

When Marissa and I went through that, two days before that race, we contemplated ever going public with it. We just prayed about it. Felt like we were called to go public with our struggles. Then to win that race, have my emotions, just everything that kind of went around that race, to see the impact that had with multiple people, I think now we understand kind of why we had that happen.

Then yeah, to be able to have Brooks now and the twins, for them to be in Victory Lane at Darlington, obviously to be out here, it's pretty cool to hear that was voted the number one race. There's been a lot of incredible races in the Xfinity Series.

Yeah, I'm humbled that that one won.

Q. What does this weekend mean for him?

CHASE BRISCOE: Yeah, he's been saying ever since Talladega, We're going to Phoenix, baby. I don't think he really knows what it means. We're going to Phoenix. He knows that Phoenix is a long way away. He was wondering if he was allowed to take his iPad to Phoenix because it is going to be such a long way.

Yeah, I don't think he really understands quite. He'll tell you, You're going to try to win the championship, going to do a big, big, big burnout if you win. But I don't really know if he knows what it is.

It's been cool to just to get to experience that. But I think he's just more focused this week on swimming and having fun with his cousins and brother and sister, getting to see his papa and grandma. Then the race is just icing on the cake.

Q. Earlier today you were helping with food bags. How important is that to volunteer your time?

CHASE BRISCOE: At the end of the day, that's what it's all about, is helping people. For us to go out there and do that, I think people, race fans, naturally want to be around race car drivers, right? It draws more people out there. They said they were going to pack over a thousand bags just for those going out there in that short amount of time.

Yeah, just the impact you can make in the community, whether it's us doing that, a couple years ago in my hometown we gave away bikes. Just a couple months ago I did a similar thing with God's Pit Crew and packed a lot of

bags for disaster relief.

To do that kind of stuff, at the end of the day that's what's important. I think we all get caught up in thinking that winning this trophy is important. But just being a good person at the end of the day is what's the most important thing.

I think that can kind of bring us all back to what is important this week, is in the midst of all the chaos we have going on, we can still go help people and make an impact.

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