

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

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An Interview with:

William Byron

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: There's really no reason other than it costs a lot of money to get a plane. I feel like commercial for me is just as easy. I live 15 minutes from the commercial airport in Charlotte. I go TSA Precheck. I keep my head down. It's great. I love it. I like to get treated like a normal person, which I am.

Q. Do people recognize you?

WILLIAM BYRON: So I was getting some pizza at whatever that place is that starts with like a Z. The lady was checking me out. We were having a very average interaction. I think I was annoying her because I got some Nerds Clusters, then put them back.

The other lady was like, Good luck this weekend.

I was like, Yeah, appreciate it.

It was funny.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: Good. I mean, I think I would feel pretty good coming into this weekend regardless I think just with how I feel like we're capable of running, I guess.

Yeah, I mean, last weekend just was a big shot in the arm for our team just to be able to execute like that under the circumstances, then just kind of the way the Playoffs has been, it felt like we were just wanting to see things kind of go our way for once. So it was good.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: I don't know. I mean, I think I get over this weekend pretty quickly. It's really just so much work to get here. Then when you get here, it's like, Okay, how do you perform that weekend. Sometimes it's gone better than others.

It's a huge blessing to be in this position again. I think, yeah, you just try to make the most of it, try to do the work



that it takes to win.

I look at it like it's all over in a few days. You just try to leave here with no regrets.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: Yeah, I mean, I feel like my life has been pretty normal and pretty similar for a few months. I think just trying to honestly focus in for these three or four weeks.

You talk about it in other sports, like baseball they always talk about October. I feel like NASCAR is becoming kind of October, maybe first week of November. That's really a period of time when you need to focus in, kind of just figure out what works best for you.

Yeah, for me it's been three or four weeks of pretty committed to what I'm doing. Obviously I do things to step away. Typically play golf during the week. Don't do that this week because it's a short week. Do other things.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: Pretty decent. I'm pretty decent. Pretty consistent. I'm in a good headspace with golf. Hopefully that continues this off-season. I usually -- if I look at my camera roll, I'm usually working on golf from November to February the most.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: I'm not, no, yeah.

Q. What is your handicap?

WILLIAM BYRON: I'm like an 8.4 right now. Not too bad. Could always be better. I don't know. I feel like when you play with people, though, you want to be high handicap. You want to overdeliver.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: Different people, I would say. I have a few buddies. Yeah, I mean, I feel like we have a good routine going. Right now my course is closed, so just going to other places. Just kind of poaching off my friends



right now.

Q. Does this one feel different from the rest of the Playoffs?

WILLIAM BYRON: That's a good question.

I think it does, yeah, obviously. I don't know. It's just fun. It's fun. Yeah, you want to be in this position every year. Until something changes, this is what you want to do every single year, is be in this spot.

I feel like for us, it's just trying to execute this weekend.

Q. With Xfinity having their final race of the Xfinity Series era, what would it mean to be first champion in the Xfinity Series era to become the Cup champion?

WILLIAM BYRON: Oh, man. I don't know. I feel like it's just kind of you hope to have that evolution in your career, like where you have success along the way. But to be honest with you, when you get to the Cup Series, it's a totally different beast. You have to just adapt and learn how to thrive and succeed at this level.

Yeah, I think for us it's been a journey to kind of get to this point. I can definitely lean on those past experiences as positive ones.

Q. Speaking of past experiences, in '23 you came here and won the pole, led laps... What did you learn from that experience? At some point in that race did you think you had it?

WILLIAM BYRON: In some ways, yeah. I thought the opportunity was there. I just think we've learned the hard way this year that it's never over. I think that's what sticks with me.

I mean, honestly, until that guy throws the checkered flag, the race is not over. I've learned that, like I said, the hard way this year. That's kind of fueled the way I prepare.

Q. (Question about the tire.)

WILLIAM BYRON: They were surprisingly softer than what we used to race, but they were harder for the amount of tire we had. Or felt harder because they just had more grip.

Yeah, I think we've definitely improved the tire. That's definitely changed the racing. I think it's kind of brought it back to classic NASCAR. What I mean by that is, like, typically you're taking four tires, typically you're working on your balance. It seems like the guys that can do those

things the best typically show up in the end.

I think it's just made the competition a little bit more I guess authentic probably, just kind of made the racing more authentic.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: No, I mean, it's a very normal weekend for me personally. I have a lot of family coming in town, which is awesome. I love for them to be here.

I would say the biggest addition is probably Jack to the family because he's going to be my brother-in-law. My sister got engaged two weeks ago. Pretty excited about that for them. It will be good to see those guys.

But yeah, I think no, it's kind of business as usual.

Q. How important is tomorrow?

WILLIAM BYRON: It's a step in the weekend, for sure. It's the first step to kind of learning a lot about your race car and figuring out what is next.

Yeah, we will be ready for it and excited.

Q. How much more confident or has your preparation for this race changed as opposed to last year?

WILLIAM BYRON: Yeah, like I said last weekend, it just felt like last weekend was a lot more freeing, not having to chase the points and look at the leaderboard. I did look at the board during the race. I'm like, Oh, it's so nice not to be worried about this BS (laughter).

Yeah, it's great. We do a lot of points racing all year trying to win the championship in the regular season, we count stage points. It's gotten pretty straightforward towards the end of this year, which is super nice.

Q. Is that the same this week since it's pretty much winner take all?

WILLIAM BYRON: Yeah, it is the same, for sure. It's not necessarily winner take all, per se. It definitely is a third stage is what matters. You have to race the race, but the end is all that really matters.

Q. What feels different this time around? How do you feel better prepared?

WILLIAM BYRON: When I hear you say that, it's third straight, it's really cool. We should take pride in that as a team honestly because it's hard to do, especially with this



Next Gen car. So yeah, it's exciting. It's all that our team's kind of been here and done this before.

Yeah, I think it just kind of narrows the focus. I think it just kind of makes it clearer. The track hasn't changed. We've been in these positions. It's very routine.

Q. What's your mental approach like going into a high-stakes weekend like this?

WILLIAM BYRON: The same as always. That sounds really boring, but it's the same. If anything, you just kind of narrow your focus on what has worked for you. It doesn't have to be perfect. You just have to continue to just kind of work through the different challenges.

I'm sure there will be a ton of things that happen during the race. Just have to stick with it.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: Not yet, no. Not yet. It takes a lot of discipline to do that because, yeah, I mean, it was a little bit of a weird win celebration, right? I was like, All right, I'm going to go to bed and do my normal deal. In a way, I had some enjoyment, I got to relive the memories.

It was kind of quickly going on to this weekend. I feel like the season is - you guys know better than me - it's a few days away from ending. You will have plenty of time to reflect in the off-season. Right now it's just kind of focused on kind of what we're doing here now.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: Oh, man, there's such a list (laughter).

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: I don't think there's like one thing. I think it's just kind of build on what we've done to this point. I think that we had a few checkmarks along the way. We needed to do this at this time, figure out where we're at at this track or what this feels like. There's probably less of that.

I've come to this Championship 4 before and had an emphasis on one thing. That's not normally good. I think it's just kind of feel the weekend out.

Q. You and Kyle have team goals, but individual goals as well. Anything change?

WILLIAM BYRON: I don't think so. I think at the end of the day if one of us was fortunate to win, we'd be happy for

Hendrick as a whole, happy for the individual as well, because we have a good relationship.

No, but, I mean, Mr. Hendrick expects us to go out there and race hard. This race is between four guys that have raced. We've had battles, all of us, throughout the season. We understand each other.

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

WILLIAM BYRON: Probably just getting back up off the mat getting ready for last weekend. After Talladega spinning through the grass, taking the checkered flag sideways, not having the finish, getting yourself remotivated to get to the racetrack. It was a little bit hard.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: I don't think it does. I think the pit stalls are very equal. I think qualifying is a good kind of measuring stick, but it doesn't mean as much as it used to, which is good. I think there's an even playing field there.

Yeah, I feel like it's important, but it's not everything.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: What was the question?

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: With the pit crew?

Q. Yes.

WILLIAM BYRON: I mean, I trust those guys, right? They're the experts in the field. For me, I love trusting them. I don't really think about anything in terms of the pit stop. I'm just thinking about how can I execute my job when it comes to pit road.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: Exactly. Just every little detail. There's a lot of 'em.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: Yeah, I think we're glad to be here. In some ways throughout the year we kind of expected to get to this point. I think that's a dangerous feeling, right? You don't want to expect anything because this sport is very unpredictable. There's a lot that you have to work through.

Yeah, I think we just wanted to be in this position. We



wanted an opportunity. It's cool to be here.

Q. What is it like returning to a racetrack at a place you've won?

WILLIAM BYRON: I don't think about that much. We could be going to any racetrack. It could be my weakest racetrack stats-wise and I would prepare for it equally as much.

I don't really look at the past success or feelings here. I'm sure it will come to mind at some point. It's not top of my mind when it comes to preparation.

Q. What do you think it would prove to be the regular season championship and overall champion?

WILLIAM BYRON: I don't think it would prove anything. They're two totally different races. Trying to win the regular-season championship takes a different mentality than trying to win in this Playoff format.

Yeah, I think just very different, but at the same time being able to excel at different characteristics, different formats and stuff is really important.

Q. What have you learned about yourself as a driver and how far you've come since 2018?

WILLIAM BYRON: I feel like I've come a long way. I feel like there's still a ton to learn. Honestly, I feel that way. I'm 27 years old. In some ways to me that sounds young, other ways it sounds old, like I've been doing this for a while.

There's so much for me to still learn. I'm just kind of on that path.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: I don't know. I think I use it to my advantage, right? I'm young, and hopefully I have more years of doing this. But you never want to take it for granted. You just got to go out there and try to do the best job you can because you don't want to take for granted the opportunity.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: I haven't talked to Jeff a whole lot yet. Yeah, I mean, we kind of had our normal cadence at the racetrack, the way we talk here. I'll definitely talk to him before the race, for sure.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: Yeah, it's cool to hear him say. He's been a big part of that. When I came into this deal, it was very broken up, I would say, just in terms of where the drivers had been, the team. Been a lot of change in a few years.

For me, it's just kind of been building that consistency. Sometimes it can be a bit monotonous because you're just doing the same thing all the time. We're always learning and growing. We have I feel like very loyal members on our team where it just feels like that core foundation has been there for years, which is cool.

Q. You and Rudy are a little bit on the understated side. Do you like that? It allows you to fly under the radar.

WILLIAM BYRON: Yeah, I mean, I just never want to say or do anything that feels out of character. I just try to stay true to myself, just do my job inside the race car, let the actions of that do the talking.

Yeah, if I'm fortunate enough to win races that are meaningful to me, I show a lot of joy and excitement to that. I enjoy the moment, I feel like.

Winning the 500, I enjoyed those few weeks. Yeah, right now it's kind of the task at hand. He and I are just careful not to get too far ahead of ourselves.

Q. You enjoyed Martinsville. How big that win was, how much momentum does that give you going into Phoenix?

WILLIAM BYRON: It's great. It's great. Feel good this week. This sport is always humbling that we're going to get back on track tomorrow, it's going to be a new task. Can't be naïve to that, the nature of the weekend. Everyone is on equal footing.

Yeah, we're going to use, if anything, the mindset and the approach and our process. We're going to use that and have confidence in that.

Q. Take me back to 2023, your first appearance in the Final 4. You won the pole, the first stage, led a ton of laps. What did you learn from losing that's going to help you this weekend?

WILLIAM BYRON: Yeah, I mean, I'm a totally different person than I was back then. That's true with anybody. Like with age, you should be learning, you should be improving.



I've learned so much since then. I don't really look back at that person and say, Man, how do I just be a little different?

There's so much different. Probably the only thing the same is the track and the car I'm driving.

Yeah, it's a constant evolution. I mean, I probably use stuff from that race to apply to future wins the next year. I would say, I mean, this script kind of has been written since then, there's been so much that's happened.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: Yeah, it was awesome. It's cool to do community things in this circumstance because I feel like it's what we should be doing, we should be giving back. There's way more stuff important than what we're doing on the racetrack.

Yeah, it's cool to have that perspective.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: I don't know. I mean, yeah, I think everything in life kind of has a shelf-life, I guess. I feel like this has kind of reached its life maybe for the time being.

Yeah, I'm going to just soak it up and enjoy it 'cause this is a really special weekend. Regardless of where it is or what the changes are, whatever, I'm just going to try to enjoy it.

Q. When is the best time for Christmas decorations to go up?

WILLIAM BYRON: As soon as I get around to it, I guess. Probably like end of November, December. I am very fortunate to have a birthday that falls right at the end of November. I feel like when I get around to my birthday, kind of gets the positive vibes going for Christmas. I love that time of year. I'll look forward to that.

Q. Best time for them to come down?

WILLIAM BYRON: Yeah, same thing, like whenever I get to it. Usually they stay a little too long. Sometimes it's like January 10th. I think rule of thumb is January 6th or around there.

Q. Real tree or fake tree?

WILLIAM BYRON: Real tree smells nicer. I like the ambience of that.

Q. Multi-color or white lights?

WILLIAM BYRON: White lots. Multi-color is interesting.

Q. LED or...

WILLIAM BYRON: I say LED. You could change it to multi-color if you want.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: It did, yeah. It did. It was something that I think was kind of eating at me a little bit, to not have won in that round of the Playoffs. That was something I really wanted to do and accomplish.

I think really what it taught me was even though it's what I've wanted to do for a long time, it was the work that it took to get to that, not really the result -- I don't know. I didn't change my approach at all. I just kind of was working through it.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: Yeah, I think it's real. We're humans, right? Everyone has their own approach and mindset. However you get to that place where you feel good is going to be most important.

Sometimes we've won races when we've come off, like, two or three bad results, just like last week. Try to use it in a positive way, but not hold on to the other ways.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: Yeah, I mean, I think that's the hope, right? You don't know until we kind of get out here and get going.

Yeah, I think that's hopefully the hope and the goal, is that the tire and everything kind of makes sense on paper, but you never know. We'll see when we get out there.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: My music is kind of wide-ranging, but I would say I've been into Coldplay lately. Probably that.

Q. If you had to go on a long road trip, who from the Cup Series would go on with you? What would be the must-have snack for you?

WILLIAM BYRON: I'm a very individual person. I like my space. I think I would just drive by myself. That's not any offense to anyone. That's usually what I do.

Must-have would be, like, I don't know. Nerds Clusters are pretty good. Let's do that.



Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: Nice. I don't know what that means.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: I love it. Thank you.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: I think it's similar, but it's just kind of I feel like business as usual in a way, which is super nice for our team that we've kind of been through that.

Yeah, I would say just kind of leaning on past experience and just things that we've been through. There's been many, many times this year where we've had big moments and things to kind of look back on and lean on.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: Yeah, we feel good about where we're at. I mean, honestly I don't think we talk about where we're at a lot. I don't know how other teams do it, but we don't talk about kind of like how good we feel or anything like that. It's just kind of the task or the goal.

Yeah, I can't necessarily tell you where the team's headspace is at because I feel like we're just kind of focused on what we're doing.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: Yeah, that's a great question. I just now thought of this. We were in those positions before, and we came ready to play, but we didn't capitalize and we didn't finish off the deal.

I think about the Roval in 2021 I believe it was. We came in a must-win, and we were leading in the third stage until the caution came out. We haven't closed the deal. Yeah, that's the first time we've closed the deal. It was a very good and freeing feeling to be in that position.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILLIAM BYRON: Yeah, I mean, it's hard to. I think it's the wrong approach to be like, Yeah, we did this, we're just going to show up and it's all going to go good.

Definitely at some point in time that experience might come to your mind. If it does, it hopefully brings a positive vibe to it. Hopefully it brings something different than, say, a race like Indy where we ran out of fuel or the 600 where we lost

the lead. Those experiences shape you in a different way.

Hopefully this experience helps shape us in a different way.

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