

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

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An Interview with:

Ty Majeski

Tyler Ankrum

Kaden Honeycutt

TY MAJESKI: We're all trying to pull the rope in the same direction. Joe and I's relationship, we can be honest with each other. I'm going to tell him when he messed up, he'll tell me when I mess up. We move forward together trying to be better.

THE MODERATOR: We're now joined also by Tyler Ankrum. We'll continue the questions.

Q. Ty, the late-race caution shook everything up. What more did you feel like you needed specifically tonight? What can you still take from this season even though you didn't end up on top in the end?

TY MAJESKI: To answer your first question, I felt like we were just a little bit off in dirty air tonight. I wasn't really in clean air too much. When the field kind of got strung out a little bit, I could match the 11 at times, but when I was up close to somebody, just fought a little bit of everything. I know that's a little bit cliché with dirty air. We talk about it every single week.

Yeah, just fighting lateral. I don't feel like I turned as good as him. Just a little bit of everything tonight. It's not that we were bad, we were just a step off the 11 tonight.

Q. Tyler, you weren't able to get it done. What did you feel like you were missing at the start of the race, and how do you move forward after a season where you were able to snap that winless streak?

TYLER ANKRUM: I mean, yeah, the first two stages were real rough. We were really, really bad in dirty air. Really bad on the long run. Finally came back down in third stage and put tires on it, we took three quarters of an inch spoiler height out of it.

Just get the spoiler out of the air, tighten me up in general, make it drive better in dirty air. That really made the truck come to life. That last long green flag run I think we went from 17th to eighth. The truck came to life. Felt like if we



had one more caution, probably could have driven it to the top five. Got sandwiched three-wide on that second to last restart.

That's Phoenix. You're driving head on into the spotters right there into the final corner. That's really difficult on their part. That's why it's so important having really, really good spotters up on top of the roof. My spotter did a fantastic job all day long keeping us clean up until that point. At that point in time, nobody's lifting. We're all going into the corner and see who makes it through.

Good effort in the final stage to get it to the top 10. Everyone we couldn't close it out.

Q. Ty, did you feel like had you not had that last caution, you would have been able to hold Corey off when you were out front? I know he did that crazy seven-wide move to get close to you. Were you feeling good at that point?

TY MAJESKI: Yeah, when we took two tires, we really needed the restart to play out right. I needed him to maybe get caught in third or fourth coming off of two. When my spotter said inside 11 out of two, I knew we were probably a sitting duck there on two tires.

Yeah, I think it was the right call. Gave ourselves a shot at a championship. If that restart goes a little bit differently, I get a little bit of a gap, we're probably sitting here as two-time champion.

Proud of Joe for making that gutsy call. Hard to make that in that moment. You always want to be on offense at the end of these races. I think two tires gave us the best opportunity to win tonight.

THE MODERATOR: We're also joined by Kaden Honeycutt.

Q. Ty, hindsight is 20/20. With the gap you had to the 11, did you think that would be enough with two tires at the restart? How many rows of cars do you think you needed to keep that lead from the 11?

TY MAJESKI: Yeah, I mean, it's hard to say. I felt like we weren't going to put four tires on, come out behind the 11, beat him on the restart.



Giving ourselves a chance on the second row there on the restart, behind two guys on old tires, I came out of the restart okay. I came out of two in the lead. Unfortunately the 11 was pulling on my quarter panel down the backstretch already after one corner.

If that restart plays out differently, somebody goes lower into one and takes air away from him, it could pan out differently.

To answer your question, I thought that was our best shot at it, I really did. I'm totally behind Joe's call for two tires. It just didn't quite work out.

Q. Tyler, tonight probably didn't go the way you hoped it would. Making it here, breaking your winless drought, would you consider this season an overall success?

TYLER ANKRUM: Oh, yeah, 100%. I don't think you can say it's not. To have a win, all the top 5s, all the top 10s, to make it here, yeah, 100% it's a success.

Everybody's first win on my crew this year. Including myself, first time in the Final 4 this year. You can't really ask for more than that out of a redemption year, if you will.

We're going to keep on improving. We're going to work really, really hard in the off-season, make our trucks better, make myself better, and we'll try to come back.

Q. Ty, there was some chatter on your radio after that restart that maybe Corey had laid back, crossed the line early. I assume you couldn't see anything from where you were?

TY MAJESKI: Yeah, I couldn't. I haven't seen a replay.

Q. Kaden, can you just explain what it was like to try to have to come back from that penalty. Hope you're feeling okay from everything you said on the radio.

KADEN HONEYCUTT: Yeah, y'all heard that, didn't you (smiling). Sorry about that. It did hurt, for sure.

No, actually I thought I had fun there the first stage. I had no idea I got back to seventh. I was chucking along pretty good there. A little bit on the tight side. I knew we had a good truck. I knew we had a top five, top three truck to compete with the 11 and Ty. Just didn't quite pan out there.

We finished third, but the two tires just was really tight for us on the restart. The best option I had was maybe both of

them would have washed out and I could have maybe snuck by. I didn't really see that happening.

Either way, it's been an amazing season. I'm glad we were able to finish third and be in the Championship 3. It was a really good day for us. Just needed a little bit more speed.

Yeah, I'm okay thankfully.

Q. Tyler and Kaden, the 11's restart, this is Phoenix, there was a tire advantage, but seven-wide. What was it like seeing that? Were you aware that he came from that far back to even clear you on exit?

TYLER ANKRUM: I think the 9 saw it coming. I didn't see it coming. The 9 went so low. I'm like, I'm going to go middle here, build the run and go. Then the 11 was just at his door. It's kind of how we all got jumbled up right there in the center of one and two.

I didn't think the 9 expected him to be there. He kind of panicked and straightened the wheel up. He didn't necessarily turn right, just kind of straightened the wheel to kind of give them both room. It was enough to get him to the right to where I had to check up and get right, kind of bottled up that whole lane.

But yeah, no, it was a pretty impressive move on his part to go seven wide like that. To do that, you probably didn't lift until you're out the center of the corner. That's fricking doing it. That's doing it pretty big.

KADEN HONEYCUTT: I knew he was intense the way he lined up sixth there. Whenever me and Ty were side by side into one, I had no idea we were seven wide. I knew we were probably middle three or four there.

Yeah, I looked over to my left, I saw him. This ain't going to be very good if it went green.

Yeah, I mean, he did an excellent job on the restart. Executed really well. Yeah, I think I maxed out my restart pretty good there on that. Unfortunately just didn't have enough to hold him down.

The only really thing I could have done was probably pinch harder. We're seven wide, like I have no idea. At that point I was just holding my line.

Yeah, either way he executed. He was able to get there.

Q. Kaden, Stewart Friesen came on the broadcast and praised you and your talent, shouted you out for committing to this team for the rest of the season. Now that you know you're moving on for 2026, having



someone like Stewart Friesen in your corner as you continue your career, what does that mean to you?

KADEN HONEYCUTT: That means a lot for sure. Stewart is one of the best that's ever done it in dirt and asphalt. Stewart Friesen, this whole entire HFR team, Chris, Al, giving me the opportunity to finish the year out for them, I don't know how can I repay them. The only thing I could have done is win it for them tonight as a gift.

I feel like this team has elevated a whole lot throughout this Playoffs. They have a ton of confidence in the team and themselves. Very glad we were able to show off their speed throughout the Playoffs and make it to Phoenix and fight for this title.

Yeah, I'm very fortunate to call this team my second family, too. Probably walk up in that hauler anytime I want, talk to Stewart, Jimmy, those guys. Just looking forward to having him back in that truck. He deserves to be there. Just very fortunate to fill in for that 52 and represent him and the team well.

Q. Ty, after such a long distance, close to the 11, it looks for me you were simply running out of laps. With a couple laps more, do you think you could have caught the 11?

TY MAJESKI: No, I don't think so. He was on tire advantage there. Like we talked about before, he executed well on that restart. Once he got out in front of me, it was over. I knew that.

Yeah, if that restart goes like I said before just a little bit differently and somebody takes his air away and he gets caught up in traffic, I break free there, that could have been the race-winning move.

Yeah, just didn't pan out that way. Overall just proud of the effort of the 98 group all season long. Thankful to have the opportunity to come back here and race for a championship once again for the third time in four years. Not a lot of people can say that. Just happy to be here and have another opportunity.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you so much for your classy answers. Appreciate you. Have a good off-season.

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