

# NASCAR Media Conference

## Press Conference

Saturday, November 1, 2025

*An Interview with:*

## Corey Heim

**THE MODERATOR:** We are now joined by the 2025 Craftsman Truck Series champion, Corey Heim. We'll get right to questions for Corey.

**Q. You referred to it in Victory Lane, but over the last few weeks you may not have been the affable Corey that we all know, basically saying that you had a lot of pressure on you, that you felt great relief at winning this. How intense was that feeling? How gratifying is it to get the job done?**

**COREY HEIM:** Yeah, I can't say I've felt this feeling in past years. The first year I was a part of the Championship 4, I was not a rookie technically, but rookie from a full-time perspective. Was just kind of happy to be there, but also knew we had a lot of momentum; so wanted to prove myself.

Things got out of control, didn't get that one. Last year I felt it was our year. We had the momentum. For lack of a better word, kind of got our teeth kicked in.

This year we came back and broke just about every record you possibly could. Felt the pressure that if I didn't get the championship, that cherry on top, the season obviously would have been really good in where we were at. That was the ultimate goal. Even if we had no wins to our name in 2025, we still were trying to win the championship. That was our number one goal.

Just felt a lot of pressure to get that done. Especially being with the best truck team in the garage as well, I felt a lot of pressure to fulfill that and make the most of it. Certainly had some crazy stuff going on at the end there that almost took us out of it. It was just meant to be, for sure.

**Q. Did you allow yourself at any point over those crazy things you mentioned to ride that emotional roller coaster of this is how we lose or we're back in it? Did you go up and down, or were you pretty steady throughout that?**

**COREY HEIM:** Honestly, I mean, yeah, I had a lot of thoughts brewing in the back of my head about just how terrible the end of the race could have gone for us there,



starting 10th on fresh tires with 10 to go.

I was completely determined to make sure that we had a shot at it at the end of the day. I'm not going to say I'm going to go and wreck by any means, but I drove into three on the inside wall there as hard as I could. It stuck thankfully. If not, we would have probably wrecked about 20 of 'em.

I was so determined to make up for it. Scott did the right thing. He put us on four tires at the end there. I didn't think we'd be that much better than everyone else, being able to drive around the inside wall, take all those spots. Certainly we did the right thing. That's why we were in Victory Lane.

**Q. There's a lot of variables that could go wrong on the restart. How much conviction do you have the seas are going to part the right way? Is there anything in real time I shouldn't have done that, or did you feel pretty confident in every decision you made?**

**COREY HEIM:** Yeah, I mean, realistically in my other Championship 4 races, I had no confidence in my competitors after what happened in 2023. Being able to control the race and be on offense rather than defense, basically not allow anyone to wreck me, for lack of a better word, was kind of the way we needed to do it.

If we stayed out or took two tires, and there was a four-tire guy behind us, the Championship 4 that was with us this year, definitely had a lot more faith in them racing me clean. Me being on offense and being in control was kind of the priority at the end. I think Scott knew that.

Starting on the bottom, too, I wanted to be in control of where my truck was on the bottom and me sliding up rather than taking the top and being victim of someone else sliding up.

Pretty much just did everything we possibly could to make sure we didn't get taken out basically. We were able to accomplish that.

**Q. When you did take four tires, did he lay back, not lay back? Take me through your mindset of trying to do everything you can to get all you can so early in there, just trying to judge how far back can I be to get the run that you did on that restart.**



**COREY HEIM:** Yeah, people are going to talk about anything they possibly can to put an asterisk on it, right?

We kind of kicked their ass this year, put ourselves in position. I did everything it took to be in the right spot at the right time. When you got a guy that stayed out on 50-lap tires, you put him on the front row, if you don't give yourself a gap, you're screwed. If I start on the guy's bumper.

I know how much NASCAR, we talk about it in the driver meetings all the time, how much you can get away with. I didn't abuse that. I listened to them. I did everything I could to put myself in position to win the race.

**Q. How does somebody lead a lap in every race in a season?**

**COREY HEIM:** Cross the start/finish line first as the leader (laughter).

I'm kidding. Certainly just from the very beginning, I was honestly surprised that we were able to get through Daytona and Atlanta as well as we did. I think somehow we were able to lead a lap at Daytona. I don't know at what point.

To bring the best equipment every single week is a feat that's maybe overlooked. I know a lot of people are talking about statistically how good we are. We were so good every single week. That truly takes a team from top to bottom.

Everyone at TRICON Garage, this crew, Toyota, the support from them, it really takes an organization, team, manufacturer. You don't see it every day where we can bring cutting-edge speed every week. We haven't had that in years past. We've been good at intermediates, road courses. We were able to put everything together this year and bring our best. That's a phenomenal feeling for me.

**Q. 2020, Kansas, ARCA, the first win. Put yourself in those shoes. Now kind of back to today. What has the journey been like going from who is Heim, who is this guy, to everything that's happened this year, where you are in your career right now?**

**COREY HEIM:** Yeah, no, it's a surreal feeling. I came from 2019, I ran a part-time schedule with a different team. Had a pretty lackluster year. My dad's investing pretty much every dime he's got into my racing career, hoping I can latch onto a manufacturer, get some support there to allow me to full-time race.

Took a chance to go to Venturini Motorsports in 2020 and run a seven-race schedule and did some late models on the side. If you run seven ARCA races, you're not really in a running to be in a full-time truck at some point.

It was kind of the breaking point for me, honestly. I was able to win Kansas. I think it was my last race of the year. Get a full-time opportunity with Venturini and Toyota the next year. Go out and have a really good year. Set myself up for success going forward.

Little by little I kind of just kept faith in Toyota, what they had planned for me. I've always felt like I've been put in a really good position at all times.

Kept faith in that, kept faith in TRICON Garage. Earn was kind of unsure where we would land from them moving from David Gilliland Racing at the time. I'm glad I stayed committed and loyal to those people that put me in that place at the right time. Just to look back at kind of where he was, like you mentioned, it's a pretty surreal thing. If you told myself in 2020 where I'd be in 2025, I probably wouldn't believe you.

Definitely a pretty surreal feeling, for sure.

**Q. I was a little bit confused what you said to the interviewer after the race. If I understood correctly, you were not happy with the car after qualifying and practice. What kind of improvements were done for the race?**

**COREY HEIM:** Yeah, really after practice, we've been so good the last eight or nine weekends that we were good in practice, we were good, but we've been great the last eight or nine weeks. So to bring a truck that we've had weeks to work on and didn't quite hit it where we needed it to between practice and qualifying was a little bit disappointing.

We knew we had the speed to get it done still. We thought handling more than anything. The speed was there, the handling was not. We've had both for a long time now consecutively on weekends.

The fact that we were able to kind of put everything together and make sure that we were able to get both handling and speed in the truck for tonight, understanding how the weather was going to change, how the grip levels were going to change as the sun went down. We practiced in the daytime. Being able to tie that all together...

I was definitely stressing about it a little bit. At the end of the day, we got one of the best crew chiefs up on the box, Scott Zipadelli. He did everything he knew how to do. His



experience paid off there for his adjustments for the race. Very grateful for him and everyone on the 11 team.

**Q. When you're seven wide, as low as you can go pretty much, in that moment you're probably thinking you're in an okay spot. Backing up a little bit, you were talking to your spotter, basically saying, I can't really see anything in front of me, coach me, tell me where to go. Going into that restart, how optimistic were you that you would be able to gain the ground that you did?**

**COREY HEIM:** Yeah, if I remember correctly, I was more torn because I thought -- I was 10th, and I thought five guys were going to choose the bottom. Typically you would fill both lanes. I thought I can be 10th on the outside, or 11th on the inside. I'm pretty sure only four guys took the bottom. That's a layup. I'm going to go bottom, gain a row, not a row but the inside advantage on that row.

Yeah, I thought that was a layup as far as choosing the bottom. Then the main concern for me is just how bad the dirty air is on restarts. We're all bundled up, racing a bunch of airplanes out here basically trying to find clean air.

I told him if a bunch of guys dive to the apron, I can probably take advantage and go the top and have a bunch of momentum off of two.

By the time that we got to the start/finish line, I knew I had enough of a run to go to the bottom. I figured we'd be three or four wide. Not seven wide. I based it off of the 9 truck in front of me, went lower and lower until he couldn't anymore and I could with my tires.

I didn't think about it very much at all. I went off muscle memory and my instincts at that point. Definitely glad it worked out. I was on the inside wall through one and two. I didn't think it was going to end well. Sure enough, the four tires worked.

**Q. Scott was confident in the call. When you're sitting on pit road waiting for the jack to drop, seeing everybody go by you, what's going through your mind?**

**COREY HEIM:** Yeah, I was disappointed to see everyone roll by me. It's a track position racetrack. I knew that we had a pretty good stop. I think Scott originally thought that we just had a really bad stop and everyone passed me. He came on the radio, What's going on? What's the deal?

We rolled off first car on four tires of course, was able to

execute on that. Yeah, he's just really good at what he does. I really did think that two tires was the call there, to be honest with you, but that's why I'm not a crew chief at the end of the day.

He did a phenomenal job and has the entire year, really all three years I've been a part of his team. I find it funny that I still doubt him because he always proves me wrong.

**Q. With how dominant your season was, all the records that you broke, what do you want to remember the most from this season?**

**COREY HEIM:** Yeah, I don't know if there's anything specifically. I mean, just looking back at what we've been able to accomplish this year, a lot of it is because who on the 11 crew has made it happen.

It's such a team effort at the end of the day. Those guys have just consistently set me up with really winning equipment. Scott being the captain of the team, he's been the guy that's kept that whole crew together since 2023. We've had literally every person, other than pit crew, together on that 11 crew from the middle of 2023.

Obviously guys want to work for him and with him. It's really a big family, honestly. It feels like a family. I want it to be remembered that way. We won as a family. We did everything right. Looking back at 2024, where our weak spots were, we really honed in on that and made it better.

Just a consistent progression from 2023 when I first started with those guys. Truly took a family to get it done.

**Q. I hate to keep harping on the seven-wide move, but on the end of it, obviously there's infinite amounts of space going through one and two. It all funnels. When you're on the bottom lane, you have to clear up, what is going through your mind at that point?**

**COREY HEIM:** Yeah, I knew if I was going to enter low on the apron like that, I was going to need to shift to third gear. So I grabbed third pretty quick. Tried to roll speed. As soon as I tipped into throttle, I couldn't believe how much grip I had down there, compared to everyone else. I was just rolling by 'em.

I didn't really know how many people were on my outside at that point. I really didn't care. I was just going to commit to throttle. If someone got in the wall, I really didn't care, honestly. I was going to keep going because I needed momentum down the backstretch.

Yeah, I mean, as you said, kind of funnels off of two. Being from the inside wall all the way back to the outside



wall on exit, I was just kind of hoping that I wasn't four or five wide, not going to get hooked on the outside wall. Did everything I could to get it pointed straight, not put everybody in a bad spot. It's kind of a blur to be honest with you.

**Q. For you as a driver going back to 2023 to now, how do you feel you have most improved your craft to get to this point?**

**COREY HEIM:** Yeah, I think it's just about learning something new every week. I think looking back at 2023, I felt like I had a decent understanding of where I needed to be at in the truck. I had a lot of holes in my development as far as especially like short track and this style racetrack as far as my driving style and everything. I really never figured it out till this year to be honest with you.

I've always felt confident on intermediates, road courses, superspeedways. The short tracks and under one mile racetrack style I've never felt extremely confident. I was able to work with Trevor and Blake on that deal. 23XI also, spending a lot of time in their shop, making sure that I know just what is setting me apart from the competitors and everything.

Put a lot of work and effort into it. I feel like we're definitely the best truck on those style racetracks. I feel like my equipment got better, we got better as a team. I think I was a big part of that in understanding what I was lacking and what I needed to do better at the end of the day.

**Q. Your crew chief talked about the prep work you put in. You talked yesterday about studying Ty Majeski after this race last year. Were you able to apply anything specific to tonight's race?**

**COREY HEIM:** I think that plays right into what I was just talking about as far as the driving style stuff. I just had these tendencies that really stuck out in the data that we looked at.

Looking at Ty, he does a really good job at just kind of optimizing his equipment with his driving style. He's a short track guy. Comes from late models. Looking at that data from SMT, looking at what made him so good at these style racetracks, why he significantly outperforms his equipment most of the time. I was essentially able to copy that. I think that's a resource that I was able to take advantage of, continue to execute on.

He does a great job. I was just able to kind of mirror that tonight and also set my truck up around that as well. We spend so much time on sim. I think it gets to a point where you sort of set your truck up based on someone's driving

style. We had to do a lot of changes to be able to go towards that direction.

Definitely cool to see that pay off, for sure.

**Q. Scott said he had mixed feelings when the caution came out at the end of regulation. At that point you were going to be the champion by finishing second. Riggs was going to win the race and the owner's title. What were your feelings when that caution came out? Were you sad because of the uncertainty or happy because it gave you a chance to win the race?**

**COREY HEIM:** Yeah, I mean, looking back on it, definitely happy it happened and we got a chance to win the race straight up on the same tires.

Yeah, I don't really remember the way I felt when the caution first came out. I definitely think I was like, Oh, boy, here we go again, 2023, we're going to have six overtimes and this is going to be chaos. Luckily we only had two and we were able to kind of weasel our way back up front and execute on those restarts.

Yeah, I mean, my first thoughts were we kind of struggled with our pit box all night. We could get in okay, but launching out of my box cost us several seconds on pit road. I know we're going to pit here. This is going to be tough. Pit crew can be perfect and we're still going to lose several seconds. I was a little worried about that.

Yeah, I mean, I kind of just kept my head down and kept digging. At the end of the day I knew we had a shot at it, knew we had the best truck all night. Gave us an opportunity.

**Q. When Kevin Ray was up there, he was talking about your work ethic. Sounds like you basically live at TPC. Who instilled that in you?**

**COREY HEIM:** Yeah, I think it takes everything. As far as being in physical fit shape, also being able to digest and understand data and everything, I feel like those two are the primaries for me.

It's been hot all weekend. Staying hydrated, staying in shape, making sure you're good to go is a glaring priority. But also just being able to get the other side of that as far as making sure I'm prepared as a driver at the end of the day from a data perspective and input perspective and everything.

Yeah, I mean, I don't know, I feel like I'm a very motivated driver. To be able to have an opportunity to work with what I think is the best truck team that's been ever assembled





with those guys on the 11 crew, I'd feel bad not being able to prepare to the best of my ability and execute on that.

Showing up to the racetrack, not knowing where I'm at, not being prepared, I'd kind of feel guilty, honestly. Having the opportunity we do to work with those guys is a special one for sure. Definitely glad we can execute on that.

**Q. How have you grown through these moments of adversity?**

**COREY HEIM:** Yeah, I mean, I think at the end of the day it just takes the experience to understand how to conquer adversity. To conquer adversity, I feel like you have to be in adversity. You have to learn how to get through those things.

Just being put in a spot where you're in 10th place on a green-white-checkered, having to go get after it, I feel like you had to be on the losing side of that once or twice to understand how to execute on that and actually win.

I've been on the losing side of it a lot of times in my truck career. I've gotten wiped out. I've wiped people out. It takes everything to understand. Sometimes you don't like it at the end of the day. But as long as you can grow and learn from it, I think that's the most important part.

I've been able to kind of digest these tough experiences in past championship races, and I feel like I've been able to apply that, too, at the end of the day.

**Q. What does all of this history mean to you?**

**COREY HEIM:** It's definitely a lot of weight off my shoulders to be able to come and do it at the championship race, for sure. I think everyone has known how good we've been throughout the year, how dominant we've been, how many stage wins and wins and poles, whatever you name it. At the end of the day, coming into Phoenix, we all knew we were the best team. But anything can happen at the end of the day.

I was very stressed, to be honest. I think everyone that's close to me kind of knows that at this point. Yeah, to be able to win and do it for everyone on our crew that's worked so hard those early mornings, late nights. Those guys work their tails off on the 11 crew. Everyone that put effort into it. To be able to see the smiles on their faces after the race really means the world to me.

**Q. You've only had two DNF's in the last three seasons, zero this year. Where does having that stack among those accolades and records that you've racked up?**

**COREY HEIM:** Not super high. I mean, I think when you're able to run top five and run up front most weeks, I think at least in my opinion I feel like I put myself in good positions at the end of the race. I feel like a lot of the DNF's, maybe not all of them, but most of them in my career is us getting wiped out or getting caught up in a big wreck on a speedway.

When you're able to run top five, you're able to stay out of the mess. From the teens, 11th or 20th, that's where all the big wrecks happen. When you're able to stay ahead of that, not be involved in that, it means bringing cutting-edge speed every week, be up front, be out of the mess. That speaks volumes to our race team consistently being able to be up front.

On the surface it doesn't mean a lot. When you think about what it's taken to stay out of the chaos and whatnot, it definitely means a lot.

**Q. You've had your criticisms of the series or others in the series in the past. Do you think the Truck Series is still a good place for young drivers to develop?**

**COREY HEIM:** Yeah, I mean, I think the trucks are probably the most similar to Cup cars. I've driven all three. From a vehicle perspective, I think it definitely resonates the most when you're trying to develop to be a hopeful Cup driver like myself like myself.

Xfinity is great, too. You're comparing apples to oranges at the same time. You race a lot more on the Xfinity side. They're a little tougher to drive at the end of the day. When you want to go Cup racing, you have to come to truck.

It's an important stepping stool for kids. It's definitely healthy. Definitely cleaned up a lot in the last couple years. Glad to be a part of it.

**THE MODERATOR:** Corey, congratulations. Enjoy the off-season.

**COREY HEIM:** Thank you.

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