

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

Saturday, November 1, 2025

An Interview with:

Denny Hamlin

Chase Briscoe

William Byron

Kyle Larson



Q. (Question regarding the pit stall selection.)

DENNY HAMLIN: It is important. I think it's a little bit less than normal just simply because I think fast cars are still going to make their way to the front, especially with this new tire. We have some good falloff. Obviously the timeline got moved back for the first stall.

It's an advantage. It's just small.

Q. Chase, there were a lot of things going on for you in practice yesterday. How did the car feel today? I know qualifying 12th probably isn't what you wanted.

CHASE BRISCOE: Yeah, I mean, yesterday wasn't definitely smooth by any means. Yeah, I would say we definitely I felt like made improvements on it. Yeah, I felt like truthfully it was a really bad lap I ran. Was kind of surprised it was even 12th to a certain extent.

I know they're going to continue to make it better. Like Denny was saying, there is a ton of falloff. Good cars are going to be able to go to the front. I have no idea what my car is going to do in the long run. I think I ran seven laps yesterday. I think if your car is good, you're going to be able to move around.

Q. Denny, seemed to have maybe slight concerns about clutch and brakes. How were they today? Any concerns for tomorrow?

DENNY HAMLIN: Yeah, I mean, when everything is cool, it seems to be okay. Today everything felt pretty normal to me. There was nothing alarming today that got my attention.

Q. William and Kyle, a lot has been made of you guys trying to improve at this track. Do you feel like your cars are better than a year ago here?

WILLIAM BYRON: Yeah, I feel good. I think so far it's kind of what we've been working on and trying to improve. Yeah, I'm optimistic. I think everything so far this weekend has been pretty solid.

KYLE LARSON: I mean, I think for me, like fuel-wise, it doesn't feel way different than normal like I was expecting. I felt like pace-wise it seemed a little bit better than what I have been here in other practices in years past.

It's so hard to get a true judge on things in practice, so you just really got to see how it's going to be tomorrow.

Q. Denny, you've approached Championship Weekend and the eve of a championship race differently throughout the years. How is this weekend's approach as far as what you've done, who you've been around, blocked out? How do you feel going into tomorrow?

DENNY HAMLIN: Good. I mean I think the benefit was winning in Vegas because I was able to get so much work done before this week. That way this week is not crammed so much.

Been treating it really just like I would any other Phoenix week. There's not much different other than there's just more people truthfully.

Q. Chase, this being your first experience at the Cup Series level in Championship 4, are you balancing trying to embrace the moment at all versus like game face on?

CHASE BRISCOE: I mean, yeah, certainly trying to embrace it, right? Yeah, I don't know. Definitely, I mean, like Denny was saying, there's just a lot more people as far as media and cameras and everything else.

Yeah, certainly trying to embrace it. Outside of that, I don't really feel like it feels any different either. We're still trying to do the same thing every weekend.

Yeah, just a lot more people, for sure.

Q. Denny, is everything going too well for you?

DENNY HAMLIN: Oh, gosh (laughter).

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Q. The first pit stall, does that help you not speed?

DENNY HAMLIN: I'm not in the top 10 or even 15, I don't think, of speeding this year.

Q. You've got five.

DENNY HAMLIN: I do? They're not all the same. Some of it when you're crashed, you just test the limits, right? Some of 'em are not real. Like, competitively I feel like I've got a couple.

I mean, I don't know. The pit road, it's got some bends to it, it straightens out, bends again. It's got some different characteristics to it.

Overall, I feel confident that we can execute this weekend the way we should. Yeah, I mean, the number one pit stall, years past, is a big advantage.

Right, Kyle?

KYLE LARSON: Yes (smiling). So is my pit crew, though.

DENNY HAMLIN: That, too (smiling).

It did go away over the last couple years. But it's still, I mean, a fraction better. For myself, it probably takes a little bit of pressure of having to get all of it on my portion rolling, so...

We'll see how it all goes.

Q. Are you getting concerned that everything's going too right?

DENNY HAMLIN: No, I don't think so. You can only help the things that you can control. Obviously we'll just do the best we can tomorrow for 312 laps. I hope it's enough.

Q. Now what do you guys do for the rest of tonight? Do you go to dinner? Watch Xfinity race? How do you process the rest of this days?

WILLIAM BYRON: I mean, I think it's probably different for everybody. Yeah, just have some kind of personal time and some friends and family that are in town. It seems like everyone kind of comes by the weekend. Yeah, just kind of do all that stuff and try to keep yourself in whatever feels normal to you.

KYLE LARSON: Yeah, I mean, I think treating it normal is always good. Yeah, more people in town. I'll get dinner with my friends and family, watch the Xfinity race, watch

Game 7 of the World Series probably. Haven't decided if I'm going to sleep at the house or the bus. I'll fight that battle when it comes (smiling).

CHASE BRISCOE: For me, I'll go back and probably listen from my wife how bad the kids have been, how hard it's been all day. Then maybe change a diaper, potentially. Hopefully not.

Yeah, just go to dinner with my family. Probably look at some data to figure out why I'm so slow (smiling).

Q. You going to sleep at the house, too?

CHASE BRISCOE: No, yeah. Be at the house. Our kids sleep good through the night. I'm sure tonight they'll be up all night, but yeah...

Q. Denny, this is your 40th career pole.

DENNY HAMLIN: 48th.

Q. Eight of those you've won from the pole. What I'm wondering is, that's an overlooked accomplishment, but how do you see that throughout your career on the list of having that consistent speed?

DENNY HAMLIN: Yeah, I mean, the fact we've only won eight of those is not great. I don't know that it directly correlates.

Certainly it's always an advantage to qualify on the pole. There's never a disadvantage to starting first and having the number one pit stall.

Yeah, I don't know. Hopefully it's nine. You just try to do everything you can to execute it. Things have always progressed, too. A lot of it depends on the racetrack.

I just truly believe tomorrow the best cars, whoever it is, it could be someone that qualified 20th, can make their way to the front with the tire and the track surface that we've got right now.

I think it's going to be a battle amongst us four with probably a few others sprinkled in there. Yeah, it's going to be fun to watch.

Q. Kyle, obviously William and Denny have been in the Championship 4 position before. How do you see your weekend right now, your mentality, different from others going into the championship race?

KYLE LARSON: I don't know. I mean, I remember being pretty grounded and laid back in 2021 because we had a



great season to that point. I was pretty content whether we won or lost the championship that we had an amazing year. Then I think the experience that I've had in the Final 4 since then has made me just as calm this time.

I don't know. I felt pretty good about things this week. Felt like I've handled it well, the plannings of family and friends, whatnot, coming out, through the other experiences.

Yeah, just glad we're one day away from finally getting on track to go race.

Q. Denny, you got a big fan base in Mexico City. There's a poll going on. Everybody is expecting you to do marbles and winning.

DENNY HAMLIN: I think it's chatbots that are skewing those polls (laughter).

Q. What do you say to them?

DENNY HAMLIN: Just appreciate the support. Wish I could have seen you guys this year. Didn't work out.

Yeah, Mexico obviously has been a big part of the NASCAR schedule this year, going down there. A great event. All the fans, when we raced down there probably 20 years ago, the fan base was big. They love motorsports down there.

Yeah, just tell 'em thank you and hopefully we can deliver.

Q. Denny, same question asked earlier, but a different way. In the Next Gen era at Phoenix, the polesitter or the best qualifying of the four has won the championship four of the five years. Your reaction?

DENNY HAMLIN: Every time's different. I mean, I don't know. Did William's win from last week just automatically give him all this momentum? I finished last. I don't really...

This sport is so week to week, it's hard to draw. I know there's always connections to statistics. Again, there's just more variables this time around.

It sounds good. It really does sound good. Statistics don't do the work.

Q. Denny and Chase, Coach was right there in the trenches with y'all. Does that extra pressure create intensity or is it nice to have Coach right there with you fighting for this championship?

CHASE BRISCOE: I mean, for me, obviously I'm newer than what Denny is, right? For me, just to get to see how

dedicated Coach is, he's been at every practice, qualifying session. I mean, he flew to Mexico City by himself just to come watch us race. It's pretty cool just to see how involved he is, how invested he is.

Yeah definitely I noticed him in the garage yesterday. I think it just says a lot about how dedicated he is to NASCAR and how bad he wants to win, too.

Q. Denny?

DENNY HAMLIN: He is. I mean, he's a workaholic. You could just drive by JGR any given 8 a.m. during a weekday, his car is out there. He leads by example. I think that's how he gets the most out of his people, is he leads by that example of his work ethic. The guy's invested. He's walking that shop floor each and every day, figuring out how we're going to make our cars faster, going to each and every department.

Q. William, the 24 car, it's been 24 years since it last won a championship, got a scheme that calls back the championship drought. What can you say to fans? What would it mean to you to be able to break that championship drought?

WILLIAM BYRON: I think it's awesome that I drive such an iconic car, such a cool paint scheme. It looks like a Hot Wheels car. Yeah, it always looks great on the racetrack. You always kind of know Axalta is going to do their best to give you something that is the best looking car out there. So it's nice.

Q. What would it mean to you if you did break that drought on Sunday?

WILLIAM BYRON: Yeah, I mean, it would be cool. I think Jeff has been great mentor for myself really since we met in the truck days. Just kind of taken me under his wing, given me a little advice here and there. He's never really one to be overbearing. He's always there. Even before qualifying today he was in the hauler. So it's cool.

Q. Coming from Europe, this extremely hot weather is unusual. Is this a critical factor for the race, these extremely hot temperatures? When you have cooler weather, you have more oxygen, which is better for you and the equipment.

DENNY HAMLIN: I don't know. It's not unusual for this track I don't think. I think usually the spring might be a little bit cooler than what this race in particular is. As the schedule was kind of moved back one or two weeks from when we're used to finish our season, obviously this is a little hotter time for this area.



These cars are pretty durable in that sense. The heat? Yeah, it can play its role on tire wear. It can play its role on brakes and things like that.

Other than that, it's not much different from the cockpit.

Q. What about yourself in the cockpit? How is the heat situation?

DENNY HAMLIN: Talk to the guys that wear the cool suits.

KYLE LARSON: I like the elements for guys who don't wear cool suits, so... (Smiling).

DENNY HAMLIN: Nothing wrong with a little luxury (smiling).

Q. Chase, you mentioned earlier kind of going back later tonight and seeing why you guys are so slow. It's been a tough start to the weekend obviously. What are some positives that you and the team can take away from what's transpired so far this weekend?

CHASE BRISCOE: Yeah, I mean, I said 'slow', I was kind of joking. They're 1-2-3 and I'm 12th, right? Going back and trying to see what I can do for tomorrow. I didn't get a lot of practice laps. I don't really know what my car is going to do on the long run.

That's the big thing, trying to go see how the car drove differently from lap 1 through 5 to 20 on. I don't know how my car is going to drive. Kind of see how they're going to trend. That will be the biggest thing.

Q. You mentioned the lack of track time obviously. Is that something where you can collaborate with the other teams, or does having Denny competing with you for the championship limit that?

CHASE BRISCOE: No, I don't think so. I mean, we still can see everything, right, whether it's the 11 or the 20 or the 54. I think that was the good thing for us, is that after our short practice, we could at least still go see what other guys were doing, what works, what didn't work.

It's not like it's really foreign territory. Maybe we got 20 minutes of practice. That's all we typically get. Yeah, I'm not too worried about that.

Q. It seems like this week, just the last few, the fan sentiment has been overwhelmingly positive towards Denny to get that monkey off his back and win the championship. Jeff did a poll earlier in the week,

Denny got 50% of the vote that people want to see him win. Does that surprise you other three at all?

WILLIAM BYRON: I mean, I don't really look at the app, Twitter, so I don't know.

DENNY HAMLIN: Just so you know, it's called 'X' now (laughter).

KYLE LARSON: No, I mean, honestly I'm not surprised, I guess. I think because, yeah, everybody likes a story like that where somebody nearing the end of their career, all that. It's great.

Yeah, I mean, I can see why people would cheer for him. I'm a competitor. I obviously want to win. But it would be really cool to see somebody who has put in so much time to this sport and been so close so many times. 60 wins.

I agree. I'm going to want to kick his ass tomorrow, but it's not going to kill me if he wins, unless he runs me in the fence again (laughter).

DENNY HAMLIN: Fair enough.

CHASE BRISCOE: It doesn't surprise me. Anybody with common sense knows that Denny is more than capable of being a champion. You don't win 60 races.

I think it would be a shame, right, if whenever he does decide to hang it up, he would be the best ever that's never one, right? I think everyone knows that he is more than capable.

Even myself, right? Like Kyle said, I'm a competitor. Like if I don't win, I want Denny to win just so he can kind of have that on his résumé.

So yeah, I think it doesn't surprise me at all that the fans feel the same way.

Q. Coach Joe Gibbs, who does he want to win the championship? Who does Rick Hendrick want to win the championship?

CHASE BRISCOE: I don't think it matters. It pays the same, whichever one wins (smiling).

DENNY HAMLIN: I agree with what he says. I'm a car owner. I can tell you, I wouldn't care. Either one.

CHASE BRISCOE: Sentimentally he definitely would rather see Denny win. It pays the same (smiling).

KYLE LARSON: I mean, I know which two he does not



want to see win so...

WILLIAM BYRON: I feel like I don't know. I don't have kids. You're not supposed to have a favorite kid, right? Isn't that how it works?

Q. With the engine rule, you're running a used engine this week. Do any of you guys know which engine is in your car and do you care?

KYLE LARSON: I think mine came out of Chase's Martinsville car last week. So, yeah, Cliff and everybody had a long night Sunday night getting it out and getting it ready.

CHASE BRISCOE: I have no clue.

DENNY HAMLIN: I can't believe he knows.

KYLE LARSON: I wouldn't normally know, but Cliff called me Sunday night.

DENNY HAMLIN: Says, We're getting that engine?

KYLE LARSON: Yeah.

DENNY HAMLIN: I have no idea.

WILLIAM BYRON: I had a similar thing to Kyle. They told me on Monday afternoon.

CHASE BRISCOE: I know Denny and I do not have our last week's engine.

DENNY HAMLIN: No (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: Guys, thanks for joining us today. Good luck tomorrow in the championship race.

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