

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

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An Interview with:

Jesse Love

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by the 2025 NASCAR Xfinity Series champion, that is Jesse Love.

We'll get right to questions for Jesse.

Q. How do the tacos taste?

JESSE LOVE: Actually really good. I'm pretty picky. I didn't put any toppings on it because I wasn't looking at it when I got 'em. They're really good. Did a good job.

Q. When you popped out of the car, showed a lot of emotion. What are some different things that were going through your mind in the final laps, since you've walked around and come here?

JESSE LOVE: Yeah, last few laps, kind of thought if I was in that position going into it, I'd probably be emotional. Like, there's probably a couple of drivers that would probably cry like the last couple laps. Chase Briscoe, Southern 500, he was crying the last few laps I think it was. Maybe it was like Denny, too.

I don't know. For me, I was just like I knew a caution was going to come out. I didn't have any emotion. I was honestly thinking the whole last few laps, A, not to put a lap car in a bad position where they get frazzled, but more important when the caution comes out, what I was going to do to get a better restart. I didn't win from the front row all night.

We crossed the start/finish line, takes a while for my brain to shut off. I was just still focused on a restart. It was kind of crazy feeling really.

Q. Early in the race you were frustrated with how it started. Could you just talk a little bit about your own mental state to keep things cool, chill, to be able to rally and do what you did at the end?

JESSE LOVE: Yeah, we were really bad the first stage. I think we fell back to 12th, if you believe it. No drive. Didn't have the feel I needed. We came here with a package that's supposed to be best at night when the lights turn on. Obviously that showed. I had my hands full.



I think we made two rounds down the track bar, worked some of it back up throughout the night. Yeah, we just had a really bad first stage, not sure why. I think the real reason was I got trapped up top. I was racing the 7 really hard, then the 19 really hard. I was probably up top for the first 20 laps of the race. There's no rubber up there, per se. When you fire off from the race, you're the only car up there.

I just probably damn near quartered both right side rear tires. That's probably the main reason we struggled the back half of the run.

Q. (No microphone.)

JESSE LOVE: I definitely was, like, nervous. At that point in the race, the 7 was pretty lights out. 88 drove away from me. We were getting passed by people we weren't even in the same ZIP code with in practice.

Yeah, it was just for me I knew we had to make a big swing at it. Like, sometimes when you're loose off, it's because you're tight in the center. It's about figuring out what is the actual, like, symptom you have to treat.

I just went with my gut that I needed more drive, needed to be tightened up, and it worked out.

Q. Your championship has a lot of angles, but one in particular. I spoke to your mom in Spanish, you're technically the second NASCAR champion with Mexican blood. What does this mean to you in terms of achieving that result?

JESSE LOVE: Everybody is so confused (laughter).

Yeah, it feels great. For those that don't know, my mom was born and raised in Mexico City, lived there all the way till college. Yeah, I guess it is fitting that I'm eating tacos, right?

It was really cool. That's why it was super cool to go to Mexico this year and race. Hopefully we go back after next year. That's definitely special, mostly for like I know how it makes my mom feel, how proud she is of that. My godmother, born and raised in Mexico, as well. Again, 90% of the things I eat are Mexican. Whenever my mom is



... when all is said, we're done.®

in the car with me, it's always Mana and Mexican songs. It is cool to carry two flags, I guess I could say.

Q. She talked about hard work, sacrifices. You've been working hard for a long time. It's special, meaningful to you, right?

JESSE LOVE: Yeah, well, she's worked really hard, too. She sacrificed probably even more than I have. My mom, my sister, have both given up a lot for me to have the opportunity to race at this level. I appreciate that she says that. But she also deserves a lot of credit, as well. So does my dad.

Q. You talked about your mom's role, your dad's role. What role did your dad play helping you get to this point in your life?

JESSE LOVE: Well, the only person that's been with me through, like, every day of it of my life, especially in the racing realm, is my dad, right? I've had a lot of great people in my life along the way that have been there for parts of it. But only one guy has been there for all of it, and that's my dad.

I know how much he sacrificed, how much he's had to dig deep to help me and get me going. Yeah, I can talk about it for a really long time.

I don't know. For me as an athlete, as a driver, sometimes you feel like the only way you can say thank you is to win. Not very good with probably appreciation sometimes. Yeah, it's just a phenomenal feeling and a feeling of relief more than anything.

Q. How has your relationship with Danny Stockman evolved since you first got into the RCR shop?

JESSE LOVE: Was he tuned up in here when he was in here?

Q. Yes.

JESSE LOVE: Yeah, he's going to be a liability tonight (laughter).

Man, Danny is like a brother to me. I feel like we're friends first, then crew chief/driver second, which I've only had a couple times in my life.

But yeah, Danny is great, man. He has the grit and tenacity, which are the two biggest traits. He expects a lot out of me, sometimes more than I can give him from time to time.

Danny has pushed me to be a lot better. We've had really hard conversations, yell and screamed and cussed, this, that and everything. Said things and told each other things when we both didn't want to hear it, but we both knew we needed to say it.

Yeah, it's been a great relationship with him. He calls me like his kid. I feel like he's my brother. Again, when you're really close to somebody, you want to perform for them. You want to win for them, too. I feel like that's a lot of my motivation every day, is to get Danny Stockman another championship.

It's my family, it's my sponsors, it's my crew, my pit crew, all the people in welcome. I don't really think about myself on why I want to succeed. I wouldn't have much motivation if I was kind of just focused on myself.

Q. Does it matter that you won this race kind of straight up versus like a pit call or something crazy at the end?

JESSE LOVE: Yeah, it definitely does. To do it like on speed, right? We didn't just, like, run sixth, then get a crazy pit road or pit call, then go six the first and last lap. That definitely makes it feel more rewarding.

At the same time it wouldn't really change a whole lot, right, I don't think. But I'm not in that situation, so I don't really know. I think for the whole team it's really gratifying. That was the most dominant car we've probably brought all year, with the exception of maybe Rockingham. So that's also a really good feeling.

Q. Will you stay off social media to avoid any reaction of people saying whether you should have won this title or not?

JESSE LOVE: Well, I really don't give a shit what people think. I get a big old trophy, I get a nice check, I get a lot of things that come out of this. Yeah, I don't know. I was wondering who was going to be the first person to bring it up. I'm sure somebody is going to say it more bluntly than you.

At the same time, like, I'm not somebody that devalues what the fans say either, which kind of sounds contradicting now. When I say stuff and people call me out on Twitter or something, I do actually listen. Their opinions are valid. Obviously the world would be kind of a boring place if we all agreed on everything. That's never going to happen.

Yeah, I'm going to look at. I don't really care at the end of the day. But I still like to be a part of I guess the circle of



life and see how people react to certain things. I have my thoughts on it. They're going to have theirs. That doesn't bother me at all.

Q. Do you have to balance at all trying to compare yourself to Connor versus comparing yourself to your own performance?

JESSE LOVE: That's a great question.

It's been really hard this year, right? At the end of the day, I want to walk in the room and feel like the man, right? I did, right? For quite a while, once I had like my breakout ARCA season, I was the hottest thing for the most part with the exception of probably Corey. Then Connor kind of took that away from me. It's been really tough, right? Hard to deal with that.

Just the way that your friends look at you, the way the fans look at you, it's all tough. It was a hard pill for me to swallow. But I knew at the end of the day...

Well, I sat down and I was like I can't control what Connor does, right, but I can control what I do. Every day I woke up, he's motivated me to be better, right? I don't like losing to him. I've woke up every day trying to beat him, probably, more than myself.

As much as tonight makes me feel really good, I'm not going to have Connor to compare myself to next year. I'm going to have to change that mindset pretty quick.

Q. It's funny, kind of like déjà vu looking at you up there on the stage, Mike Forde moderating your championship-winning press conference. Just a few years ago as an ARCA champion, and now you sit here as Xfinity Series champion, first, would that kid that sat at that same spot have guessed that just a few years later you'd be sitting here again Xfinity Series champion?

JESSE LOVE: I could tell you that kid with all that confidence was definitely a believer. There's been versions of myself after that that didn't see this happening. Just now it's starting to sink in.

But yeah, I've just had to (tearing up) push through those hard times, right, wake up every day and refuse to let that shitty voice in your head tell you you're not going to get up here, just get your head down to work and out-run the pack.

Q. Second time I've put you to tears.

JESSE LOVE: It's your beautiful looks (smiling).

Q. How much fun can you have with this with Connor once the dust settles? He wins so much this year, you come with the championship. Cool thing for your friendship.

JESSE LOVE: It is. If Brent wouldn't have blown a transmission in the truck race, I feel like our friend group would have been four for four this weekend.

We got a great friend group back home between me and Brent and Connor and Baldwin brothers and T.J. I'm missing a couple. Some really good friends back home.

But especially in our group chat, the three amigos, me, Brent and Connor, have always expected the most out of each other. Been really hard on each other at times. Always been there for each other.

We've cultivated a really good culture between the three of us. I'm really happy for Brent to start to turn the corner. He had a tough summer. He kept his head down and he kept digging. Now he's starting to really look really good.

Yeah, it's definitely great. We're definitely going to celebrate. I'm not sure how Connor is going to react to all this. He came to me in Victory Lane because he's a great person, but I don't know, again, how he's going to react to tonight. I'm not going to fault him in any way however he decides to react.

Yeah, we'll see. Obviously I'm going to be happy about it 'cause I pulled the long end of the stick or the wishbone. But we'll see.

Q. From my perspective, it looked like when the track was shady and it started to get more towards the night, you looked like you were able to drive it in so much more deeper into three and four. What gave you the confidence, just you self-adjusting to how the track felt and the car was feeling?

JESSE LOVE: Yeah, it's cool you can see that visually, right? Sometimes you have to have like SMT to really tell. But for me, like, again, there's certain parts of the race where things are going to work and some things aren't. I had a sense of urgency the whole race, for sure.

When the 7 started to drive away a little bit, I was like, Well, I'm going to start moving things around, doing things different, go faster in certain areas. All right, we'll start with the entry. I started bonsai-ing the thing off in there, taking shape out of my entries, trying to see if I can win three on entry and only lose two out. That was kind of the case in three and four.

Then the last run of the race, it was the opposite, where I couldn't make that speed anymore. I had to back it up and go a whole different mindset.

It's about being adaptable, being able to move those things around, be dynamic with the racetrack, with your car. That's something that I've worked really hard on this year to be able to move speeds around and move techniques around. Again, that's where Scott Speed comes in for me. We've worked every day of the week from 6 a.m. to 12 p.m. on that right there so that when I came into that moment today, I knew exactly what to do and where to look for more.

Q. On top of the speed, your pit crew was insane. Final pit stop of the night, out first. The broadcast said the first stop of the final stage, fastest stop of the season.

JESSE LOVE: It was?

Q. That's what they said.

JESSE LOVE: Do you know what time it was?

Q. No.

JESSE LOVE: That's okay.

Q. All that said, what can you say about their performance? Do you have anything planned for them as far as a gift to cap this season off?

JESSE LOVE: Yeah, I think I know what they want. I'll keep it to myself for now.

Yeah, they were just stupid good. I mean, like the first stop, we came in sixth and came out in the lead. I was like, oh, my God. Those guys just perform when the lights are the brightest. They thrive on it. It's the culture they've built, Ray Wright has built with all those guys, the camaraderie. Man, they've done a phenomenal job.

Had some trouble with some pit crew stuff. Right now Rader, my fuel guy, is getting surgery on his labrum. We had Doug step in this week. Just goes to show how good our pit department is at RCR, how underrated they probably at times. We can pull somebody like Doug, put him in, still bang 'em out. We got a new guy, too, our jackman, Derby. I don't even know if he was on a good Cup car or Xfinity car ever. He stepped in a couple races ago. We've been lights out with him, as well.

Hats off to Ray Wright and everybody at the RCR pit

department, and mostly my guys who stepped up.

I try to get really close with them over the last two years. They're just amazing. I'm sure they're being very responsible right now (smiling).

Q. A lot of times when a driver wins the Xfinity championship, they have an opportunity to go to the Cup level. With coming back next year, returning to RCR, how do you want to represent this series?

JESSE LOVE: Yeah, that's a good point. I never really thought about that. But I'm the champion now, right (smiling)?

I'm going to try my best to do it like Justin has. Justin Allgaier is such a phenomenal person. He can compartmentalize it really well where he can be the hardest competitor on the racetrack and still get out of the car and be a phenomenal human being first.

I'd say I'm just going to try to be like Justin next year and represent the series like how he has. I learned a lot from him. He's an amazing person.

I actually, like, lean on him a lot more than people probably realize, too. Even now to navigate the championship stuff this year. He's just a great person. That's who's kind of going to be my probably example of who I want to be like next year. Except go back to back (smiling).

Q. When Brent was in here, he talked about how you've helped him with the truck stuff. He's talked about how he's helped you at times. Can you speak on that relationship.

JESSE LOVE: Yeah, I guess it is always like me and Connor, right, 'cause he's at this level, he's a superstar. Connor is my best friend, but Brent is like my brother, right? I'd do anything for him. I'd give my life for the kid. He means the world for me. Almost like a son does.

Yeah, Brent is just an amazing kid with an amazing family. As crazy as it sounds, there's a lot of times where I'm going to him and asking him for help, especially on the road course stuff. He is a very talented road racer. I thought the oval stuff was going to be tricky. But I thought that way about Connor, too. Look at him now.

Brent has been the same way. I mean, I think Brent was the truck to beat last night. He almost won Martinsville. Probably the truck to beat there. He's on a string of three races where he's almost dominated in the truck level.

Yeah, he's really talented. It's really easy for him right now



to get overshadowed by me and Connor because he's younger than we are, probably more quiet and reserved.

But he has all the ability in the world to do exactly what we're doing, if not even better.

THE MODERATOR: Jesse, congratulations.

JESSE LOVE: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Get that speech ready.

JESSE LOVE: That's right.

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