

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

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An Interview with:

Denny Hamlin

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by Denny Hamlin. If you have a question for Denny...

Q. The emotions of this one getting away? Is this the last one that may get away?

DENNY HAMLIN: I don't know. I really don't have much for emotion right now. Just numb about it 'cause just in shock. That's about it.

Q. Your two daughters were crying on pit road after the race. What was the message to them?

DENNY HAMLIN: Something we can't control. You know, certainly unfortunate circumstances. One of those life lessons years down the road.

Q. The NBC pre-race thing seemed to have gotten you emotional before the race. Were you still emotional during the race?

DENNY HAMLIN: No. I got back. As soon as I got back in the car, locked in, for sure.

Q. You said you hoped that your dad could see this one. What are you going to tell him?

DENNY HAMLIN: Did the best I could. Everything I really prepared for happened today. I felt like we responded. Even losing track position at one point, just battling back. Did really well on restarts. Hadn't been good on restarts for the bulk of the year.

Yeah, the team brought a great championship car. I felt like I drove it just right up until two laps to go. Yeah, this is the part that stinks.

Q. Obviously each of these moments are different. How is this time different?

DENNY HAMLIN: Well, I mean, we're 40 seconds from a championship. I don't know. It's just unfortunate.

The only difference before is the cautions came maybe a little sooner than that. I don't know. Gosh, you work so



hard. This sport can drive you absolutely crazy 'cause sometimes speed, talent, all that stuff, just does not matter.

Q. You wrapped your arms around the pit crew. What do you take away from how strong of an effort this was from top to bottom on the 11 team?

DENNY HAMLIN: Yeah, they did a great job. We had one hiccup, but it wasn't their fault. We got fortunate with the left rear tire that was flat under caution. They executed a great day. Man, I really wish I could have got it for them.

While the championship... You know, it wouldn't have changed anything I felt truly about myself. I wanted it so bad for everyone else, all of my supporters, all my friends and family and whatnot, that they want it so bad.

Just not going to happen.

Q. You were most nervous about something that was in your control messing up this day. Obviously this is about as much as it can stink, something out of your control. Does that help soothe anything, that you did your part?

DENNY HAMLIN: Yeah, I mean, Kyle Larson has the trophy, but we dominated. We did our job. We did the best we could.

They're a championship team and a championship driver. They're going to win a hell of a lot more than just these two. When everyone had to bring their best, I think it was evident who was the best today.

Q. You said on TV you were praying no caution. When the caution did come out, did you think it's over?

DENNY HAMLIN: No, I didn't think it was over. I thought, Well, all right, let me see where the other guys are at. Surely they can't jump too far in front of me. I just didn't think there would be that many cars that took two tires.

It's really hard to predict how many cars are going to do what, things like that. But yeah, I didn't think it was over. When I lined up, yeah, row five, I thought, It will be difficult, for sure.

Q. I was shocked with all these tire problems. What

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do you think is necessary, to have a meeting and discuss it?

DENNY HAMLIN: Well, I think they did a great job all season long. It's not their fault that we're running the tires flat. I really applaud them and the tires that they've continued to bring to the racetrack and keep pushing the limits on softer, softer, to try to put it back in the drivers' hands.

It's the teams. They're the ones that come here and we test. There's wheel force test. They keep testing the limits of really how low you can go.

It would be difficult for anyone to build a tire that can withstand what we're doing to it with this car. They're in a really tough spot. Certainly I think, if anything, they deserve credit.

Q. Not the design of the tire?

DENNY HAMLIN: No, it's not the design of the tire. We're just running our tires super low because that's where they perform the best. Everyone is testing the limits. A lot of people found it.

THE MODERATOR: We're joined now also by William Byron and Chase Briscoe.

Q. Obviously we don't know what the Playoff format will be next year. With how close these races are, the points are, would it be beneficial to maybe have the final race end at the scheduled distance?

DENNY HAMLIN: Gosh, I don't know. Golly, in this moment I never want to race a car ever again (smiling). I mean, my fun meter is pegged.

Q. Where do you go from here, the next hour, the next day, week?

DENNY HAMLIN: Yeah, I don't know. The last couple times I've been doing this, either wasn't fast enough, or circumstances. There were some untimely yellows in the last time I did this.

Yeah, I'm not really sure. Just takes all of a sudden everything we did preparing was right, where we guessed was right, and just didn't work out, which is crazy.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Denny. Appreciate you answering all the questions in this moment.

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