

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

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An Interview with:

Kyle Busch

Jim Pohlman

Richard Childress



sure feels good in the moment right now.

A lot of hard work behind the scenes with everybody at RCR, everybody at ECR. It feels good to give this guy another pole down here. Love nothing more than to make history and put ourselves in Victory Lane Sunday night.

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by Kyle Busch; owner of Richard Childress Racing, Richard Childress; and the crew chief of the No. 8, Jim Pohlman. We'll start with questions.

Q. Did you come into the qualifying session thinking you had a shot at the pole?

KYLE BUSCH: This guy did. He had all the confidence in the world. He said this is what we're going to do.

We just set out to the plan that Jim laid out. Had a really good practice. Being able to put some good time on the car, learn a couple things, make the speed we needed in order to come out here and sit on the pole tonight.

Q. No driver has ever earned their first Daytona 500 victory after their 20th start. If you can win, you'd make history. What would it mean to make history in that type of sense?

KYLE BUSCH: Yeah, it's a box we got to check. Here we are. This is an opportunity to be able to do that. I've come down here a lot of years. I think I finished in about every position possible. It would be nice to close out 2026 with a victory here in the Daytona 500.

Q. Kyle and Richard, what kind of boost is this for the race team?

KYLE BUSCH: I think it's a huge boost. Bringing Jim on board and having his passion and determination of what he's done all off-season long, leading his group of guys, having them all believing in him and putting our faith in what he's got to do for our team and being able to give us what we need to go out there to succeed.

This is just a first step of it. This is the beginning of the year, first qualifying attempt of the season. There's a whole heck of a lot more we have to do throughout the season to be good, to be real, to be contenders. But it

Q. (No microphone.)

RICHARD CHILDRESS: Yeah, it's great. Getting Jim on and just watching how he fit into our family at RCR, it's great. I stand back and watch a lot. To watch how they worked this winter, the way they just do everything right now, I'm just happy and proud of all of 'em.

Kyle, we got to get this 500.

Q. This is a heck of a way to start things off. Kyle, I think you were optimistic earlier today. Could you talk about what this means to you to have your first big race here and do that.

JIM POHLMAN: Yeah, I mean, to come out swinging and get a Daytona 500 pole as a first race as a crew chief is pretty humbling for me. There's a lot of hype around it. Feels really good obviously.

But yeah, I think to echo what they've said here, start the season out strong, this is just one small step of it.

Kudos to everybody at ECR, RCR, the whole organization. Made a good plan coming into this. We've executed really well. Nice to see that out of everybody.

Q. How do you balance the benefits and drawbacks of racing for points in the Duel race, especially with the championship format changed now, versus the risks of doing something that could tear up your car?

KYLE BUSCH: Yeah, that's definitely something we have to sit down and talk about, figure out what your game plan is going to be.

There is that plus and minus of it, right? We've got a great opportunity to start on the front row with this race car. We've got to get through the Duel race.

I've been with Richard here three years now, this will be my



fourth, I think we've wrecked two of those years. We'd like to not do that tomorrow night and have a good, clean race to come out and be able to use this car for Sunday and start the race from the number one spot.

Q. Jim, at the end of last year you said that you believe that you and Kyle would have very similar personalities, but you hadn't looked at his analytical chart. Have you done that? How do you feel now with Bowman Gray competition in the books, getting through a competition environment today, that that is going as far as matching personalities and passion?

JIM POHLMAN: Yeah, I mean, I think we're very close on a lot of things. I would say going forward we are probably very passionate together. Hopefully that shines out.

Q. Kyle, every year it's a storyline of haven't won the Daytona 500. Do you just want to yell at us all of can we stop talking about it? What does that do to you every year coming down here knowing that's the topic in addition to how badly you want to win this race?

KYLE BUSCH: We just got to get the job done so we stop talking about it. No better time than right now here in 2026.

It's just the nature of what this race is and what it holds. Being in the right place at the right time, making the right moves when you can. We were just talking about it. It would be nice to lead all 200 laps, stink up the show and win this thing. I don't think you'll make it on fuel if you did that.

There's all kinds of different strategies. There's going to be 30 other guys plus that have that same opportunity that they believe they can win this race as well, too. That's why you got to run the place and play it all out as it comes.

Q. (No microphone.)

KYLE BUSCH: No, I haven't. I was just texting Samantha right now. She was hopeful that I was going over there tonight to then go be with those guys tomorrow. Apparently there's a whole Media Day I have to do now for the Daytona 500 polesitter.

Unfortunately I won't be with him tomorrow. That's because of good things that happened here tonight. It's been a rough stretch. It's no secret, right? Seeing my son and his passion that he has, he really, really is probably my biggest cheerleader. He wants to see me run well. He wants to see me win races. He wants to celebrate in Victory Lane like he sees other drivers' kids being able to do. So there's nothing more that drives me every single weekend than seeing him see me, be proud of me.

Q. (No microphone.)

KYLE BUSCH: I mean, I think so. I don't know. Winning the pole is great, right? Being able to start up front. This is a big pole to win. I think I've only had one other speedway pole here, summer race here in Daytona. Daytona 500 pole is a bigger deal than that one was.

Obviously the real stuff happens on Sunday.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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