

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

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An Interview with:

Anthony Alfredo

THE MODERATOR: We've been joined by Anthony Alfredo. Congratulations on qualifying for the Daytona 500. We obviously saw your TV interview, saw the emotion that you had following that race. Tell us a little bit about what it means. You thought a lot about last year.

ANTHONY ALFREDO: Yeah, the first year I came down here with Beard Motorsports, we made it on time. We were the fastest open car. That's a huge accomplishment either way. The rest of the weekend is stress-free, in a weird way easier for sure.

I certainly wasn't nervous about us as a team, our speed, our execution or anything like that. Quite frankly, I was very confident. I felt like it was the best-case scenario for us, the Duel we were in with other Chevrolets and who we were battling.

There's so many things that can happen out of your control, like we saw at the end of the first Duel. I was just hoping something like that didn't happen.

I was really happy with the car. To be able to drive to the front, lead a lap before hitting pit road, just show our pace pushing, being pushed, leading, in the draft. I think we also learned a lot about our car for Sunday. That's important to do, to show the competition we're here to actually battle.

The green flag pit stop was exactly what we needed to get into this race because you have a caution or something crazy happen, it throws a whole new mix in. But for us, I knew the pit crew would do a good job. We executed with our manufacturer teammates to be there at the end when it mattered.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.

Q. I'm still struggling to know why this one was so much more emotional. You've been here before, two previous starts, done it with Beard. Why is this one different?

ANTHONY ALFREDO: Because I probably took for granted that first one. Coming down here with my rookie



season in the Cup Series, front row, charter, qualifying is important. With that car, it was really way less important than this one. You know you're in the race. It was special.

With the pandemic, there was hardly any fans, we didn't have the camaraderie, the red carpet, all this cool stuff. I come down with my first race with Beard Motorsports. We made the race, we were fast. Awesome. It's kind of the expectation. We come back last year, just face one of the greatest defeats I've ever experienced in my racing career. The first race I ever saw was the Daytona 500 with my dad and my brother, sitting in the stands on the frontstretch. This is what I knew I wanted to do when I grew up. I never knew I would be here.

To have a shot at it is a blessing. To ultimately be in the race is a whole 'nother level. These open teams for the fans that just don't understand, hopefully I showed what it means to be in this race.

But one thing I want to stress is Amie and Linda Beard have this race team to go win. They're not here to be in the race, a part of the race, or ride around. That's why when we go to Talladega, we lead laps, run up front and race for a win. That's exactly what we're going to do on Sunday.

I feel like we actually add value to the race on Sunday and deserve to be in the field. It wouldn't be possible without our partners either. That's part of the story. When I first came to the national series part-time as a rookie, Dude Wipes did one race with me.

Since then we've built it to they cover half the O'Reilly Auto Parts season for me as a primary sponsor. Year-long associate. They're family to me now. We've run Cup races together, led laps at Talladega. Never tackled the Daytona 500. This is a dream of theirs, just as big as it was for me. I wasn't going to let them down.

Q. About being here to win, at the end of the Duel, you lost the draft, going backwards a little bit, was there an issue or cause for concern on Sunday?

ANTHONY ALFREDO: That was my lifting off the gas to get the heck out of there. I heard I had a 15-second gap to the next car I had to beat. I was trying to stay with them as long as possible. Obviously the pack is faster than the



single cars behind us. I wanted to keep growing that gap. They were racing really hard.

They went single file, of course, about the time I bailed out. Usually what happens. It was more about just being smart. At that point you see what happened in the first Duel, you're in a really great spot, not really racing anyone. I think the 99 was second on the bottom. He ended up on a wrecker going home. That was the last thing we wanted to have happen after executing such a flawless race.

Made sure we had enough of a gap to get comfortable. Had to bring it home and focus on Sunday.

Q. Yesterday you said last year haunted you. Still haunts you. Have you erased those demons yet?

ANTHONY ALFREDO: Absolutely. That's certainly a black cloud blown over my head finally. I feel like it's a weight lifted off of all of our shoulders. Not because we did anything wrong last year. We had a solid car. We didn't qualify exactly where we wanted, but we were really solid in the Duel. I felt like the car was just about as good as this one. We drove up to third, got caught in the middle of a manufacturer battle where we were outnumbered tremendously. That ultimately was the deciding factor on us making the race or not.

That's what happens. That's racing. What it comes down to. This time around I feel like we learned some things. Even the Talladega races we went and ran last year, there's a lot of things we built on to come back stronger. I would say this is the fastest car we've had at Beard Motorsports so far. We're in a good position to be very competitive Sunday and surprise a lot of people.

Q. Joey said all the pushes were super sketchy and he predicted a wreck-fest on Sunday. How was it behind the wheel for you?

ANTHONY ALFREDO: Yeah, it's interesting. I think a big part of it is everyone's qualifying balance. You can only do so much before your Duel race to get the car driving better at higher speeds and being pushed or pushing.

I think a lot of people are going to make a lot of adjustments over the next couple practice sessions. We have a few in mind that we're going to do regardless of whether we hit the track, we're just going to try to keep it pretty for Sunday.

I felt like it was actually really calm in our race, probably because we saw a lot of torn-up stuff in the first race. Everyone just wanted to be there at the end. To win you have to finish, so...

I think everyone had that mindset. It almost looked like it got really sketchy there with six or seven to go. Then it's like let's calm down, then it got single file. Didn't get crazy till the tri-oval.

The pushes for me were a little sketchy, but once again I think that has to do with the car balance. And I had Connor pushing me. He was doing a great job helping me get clear of the bottom to get down from my pit stop. Also I don't think he has speedway raced a Cup car yet. I know it took me a little bit to get the hang of the Next Gen car or the Gen 7 car on speedways because it's way different than the O'Reilly Series car.

Q. When you compare the scope and the budget of Beard Motorsports to the other Cup Series team you've driven for, it's interesting to see you've had some of the best runs of your career in the 62 car. What is it about this combination of you and the Beard team that seems to lead to get you in these positions?

ANTHONY ALFREDO: That's a great question. First off, it's their investment to be competitive the few times we go to the racetrack. I think for us as a group, we would rather run three or four races a year and have a shot to win than go to the track seven or eight times and run 30th.

Focusing on the little details to go out there and actually be competitive, have a legitimate shot, is what we do. I think for me personally, since I last raced in the Cup Series, I've just developed a lot as a driver.

I think I bounced around a lot, been with a lot of different teams. I'm excited to be building a home with Viking Motorsports this coming season in the O'Reilly Auto Parts series. Honestly learning how to make the most out of every lap, whatever the car can give you, even if it's not the fastest one, doesn't have the balance you need, I've learned to adapt.

Coming back into the Cup Series, I think I just have a lot more confidence and I want to prove I belong. I look at these opportunities as auditions. Like I said about the Beard family wanting to be competitive, that's exactly what I want to do. We have common goals. We are on the same page when we come to the racetrack. It's an audition to come and prove that I deserve to be racing on Sundays.

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