

# NASCAR Media Conference

## Pit Lane Interview

Sunday, February 15, 2026

## Chase Elliott



**Q. Chase, so close to getting that first Daytona 500 championship. What happened in your perspective on that final lap?**

**CHASE ELLIOTT:** Yeah, I'm not really sure what happened with the first wreck. That's a little further around. But we ended up kind of getting gifted the lead, and the 38 and I had got out by ourselves down the back. He had given me a good shove off into 3 and then it was kind of just he and I, and at that point I just felt momentum shift, like there was going to be another run coming behind us there at some point.

Unfortunately that was accurate, and then at that point in time, you're just on defense. Man, that's a really, really tough place to be, truthfully. Obviously looking back, you can run it through your mind 1,000 times, do you do something different -- I feel like if I had thrown a double block on the 45, probably would have just crashed us at that point in time.

I felt like you had to pick your battles. I thought maybe if somebody would pick me up on the top, you might have one more run to the line, but unfortunately ended up getting turned around.

Appreciate all the effort, everybody at Hendrick Motorsports, NAPA, Chevrolet, thought we had a good Speedweeks down here. Obviously hate to -- this really sucks to be that close and come off Turn 4 with the lead and not finish it off.

But that's part of this event, and unfortunately we were on the bad end of it today.

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