

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

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An Interview with:

Ryan Blaney



THE MODERATOR: We're now joined by Ryan Blaney.

Ryan, it was a day of ups and downs coming back from two loose wheels, but ultimately you start off your first win of 2026 where you ended 2025. Talk about how you accomplished that, were able to complete the weekend sweep for Team Penske.

RYAN BLANEY: Yeah, it's a day of perseverance, that's for sure. Really fast. Really was able to win the stage. Then we had our issue on pit road. Kind of battled back from that. Then had another one. Battled back from that one, too. Were able to overcome a lot of different things today.

All those guys did a good job of learning from, hey, here is what we did wrong, learning from them and moving on, continuing to think about what's the next task, next pit stop, stuff like that. They did a good job of overcoming that.

Jonathan did a good job of throwing two there at the end. Not getting the lead, but was able to get the lead on the last restarts, get far enough away from Bell to finish first.

Definitely a long day, but really proud of everybody for keeping their heads down. It's easy to beat yourself up over that stuff and kind of take yourself out of the game. But those guys just don't do that. Those guys' mentality is unbelievable and on this 12 group is where it needs to be. Mainly proud of the effort for all those guys for fighting back like they did.

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

Q. I know you obviously are highly motivated. But when you have the kind of setbacks like you had today, is there another gear that you put it into that you're fired up?

RYAN BLANEY: Yeah, little bit. Yeah, I think so. It makes it easier or better when, like, our car was really good, right?

But yeah, it does a little bit kick you into another gear. There's a certain extent to it. You can't go crazy on the

racetrack and risk it and get in wrecks. You have to be methodical about how you go about things.

I keep the end goal in mind, how do we get back to where we need to be. It was early enough in the race to where we still had enough left to be able to try to get back up there before stage three. We were able to do that. It's not like it happened with 80 to go. That's tough to recover from. At least it's early.

Yeah, I definitely think there's another gear, not only on my side, but the team's side, too. They kick into another gear, too. We got to step it up here. I think that's just sports, that's just teams, yeah.

Q. On the other side of that, the first one happens, you have to come back down pit road. Then it happens again. You had to go into the stall, fix it. How do you keep it together at that point, not be like you're killing me here? How were you able to be patient enough and calm enough?

RYAN BLANEY: Yeah, it's unfortunate you guys don't get any radio bits from that because I didn't say anything. It sucks for y'all.

Just try to be motivational. I mess up all the time. It's just part of it. Those guys have my back every single week. When it goes the other way, like, we all have each other's backs. Hey, people make mistakes all the time. It's just encouraging to know it's okay, there's plenty of race left, we're going to do it, we can get back in our groove. Just learn from them and move on.

Yeah, I think we did a good job of just keeping everybody, steadying the ship. It's going to be okay, we can dig out of this hole. Our car was fast enough. Let's learn from what we did wrong and move on. They were able to do that very well.

Q. Are you going to make Newgarden wear a Ryan Blaney shirt every race day?

RYAN BLANEY: How about that, Josef wearing a Ryan Blaney shirt. It was awesome.

It was cool to have those guys be on the same racetrack this weekend. Like, that was a fun weekend for us. I love



watching INDYCAR racing. I cheer on Scottie and Josef and David every single week. I just am a fan of that.

Josef put the pressure on us yesterday. He let us know that at our Penske dinner last night. He said this weekend is going to be absolutely ruined if you guys don't do it on Sunday. So he put the pressure on us.

I was happy to do it today. It's always special to win for Roger. On a weekend like this, where he put a lot into having these two series together, and it going the way it did up until today, for us to finish it out today was definitely neat. It was cool that those guys stuck around. All three of those guys stuck around. It was fun to see them in Victory Lane, too.

Q. I don't know if they had a choice.

RYAN BLANEY: Oh, yeah, they could have went home. They wanted to stay. They're race fans.

Q. Did you feel a lot of pressure?

RYAN BLANEY: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. You don't want to mess it up. We had three out of the four boxes checked. We had INDYCAR pole, Cup pole, INDYCAR win. You got to finish it out, right?

Yeah, there's a little more internal pressure because you don't want to be the guys that don't finish out the whole weekend for RP.

Q. You knew the other two were out, your two teammates were out. Did you feel that pressure on you even more? Do you not even know what they were doing?

RYAN BLANEY: I mean, not in the moment. Like, I talk about more pressure on us to go win this race. That's all, like, before the race. During the race, you're trying to do the best you can to finish the best you can. You're not thinking about that stuff.

But yeah, it was unfortunate that the 2 and 22 didn't finish. Even the 21 getting tore up there. I thought all our cars were really, really good, especially me and Joey. I thought me and Joey were top-three cars.

I can't really necessarily say I thought about that in that moment. I just hated it for those guys that they weren't going to be able to finish after they had pretty good days going.

Q. Among some of the other milestones this weekend, you tie Harry Gant, Geoff Bodine, Neil Bonnett, Kasey

Kahne, Ryan Newman on the all-time wins list. Your thoughts on that?

RYAN BLANEY: It's neat. I didn't know that, that I tied those guys. Big fan of those guys. Obviously Neil Bonnett, I got to know a lot about him when I ran for the Wood Brothers. Eddie and Len had a lot of amazing stories with Neil.

Obviously I grew up a huge Kasey Kahne fan. I got to race with Kasey for a long time and loved him in the 9 days, things like that. Just special to be part of the group of those guys with Cup wins. Just happy to be part of a group like that. It means a lot.

Q. With Josef coming into the media center, then you mentioned he came in and pumped his chest, you guys got to step up. Have you had a chance to talk with Josef? What's that interaction going to be like now?

RYAN BLANEY: I didn't see Josef after the race. Scottie and David came to Victory Lane. Yeah, they were just pumped up, right. Good job, stuff like that. They kind of went on their way. They didn't want to hang around too long.

We root for each other. I went to Victory Lane yesterday for Josef, just hung out there. Said good job to him and David, who was third. Saw Scottie. All of us root for each other. It's a pretty cool team dynamic that we have.

Yeah, I'm sure Josef has texted me. I haven't looked at my phone yet. It's cool having those guys hanging around with us, Victory Lane, pumped up for each other. That's a cool driver lineup across series that Roger has assembled, that we're all rooting for each other and get along very well.

Q. When Jonathan came in here, he said it was really neat to be able to give Roger something he hadn't done before. When you look at it, how much more important is this?

RYAN BLANEY: I didn't know that was the first time. That's awesome. I mean, like I said earlier, you always want to win for Roger. It's always special when you do. Especially when he's here, you get to see him and things like that. It was really cool.

Watched the whole INDYCAR race with Roger yesterday up in his suite. He knows everything that's going on. Jumping up and down, these guys are pitting, he knows everything that's going on. That was my first time I did that with him. We don't really have these INDYCAR/NASCAR crossovers. He 100% knows everything that's going on.



I can only imagine today how excited that suite was when he was sitting in his chair and we got the lead. There's not a lot of things that Roger hasn't done. It's really cool to add to it. I was really fortunate to be a part of the Coke 600 and Indy 500 sweep a few years ago with me and Josef. It's cool that we could add another milestone to Roger, especially the 60-year anniversary. It's a special year for everybody. Nice we could get our first win of the year and something new that we haven't done before.

Q. There was 12 yellow flags, which ties the record here. How does that affect you and your strategy on the track?

RYAN BLANEY: Yeah, a lot of varying strategies, for sure. I think for a while we were kind of nervous, at least I was, we might run out of tires. We're going to have to be pretty methodical of how we pit and take tires and stuff like that.

We ended up having to -- we burned our scuffs early in stage two, which I thought it was a good call to have stickers for the end of the race. You just never know when they're going to fall.

I think there were a lot of tire failures today that were a lot of cautions. Restart wrecks were common. It switches up. That's what crew chiefs are really good at, right? They understand this is our pit window, ideal one. If we get a caution at this lap, what do I do? How do we think? Do you want to gamble and stay out. You saw the 6 and 60 stayed out one run. It actually wasn't very good. I think they were trying to save a set. You saw guys do two at one point and actually held on pretty good.

I think it really benefitted us to do two at the end because we saw how good a handful of those guys who did two earlier, they kind of hung on. It gave us more confidence.

It's funny, this stuff, like you have your plan initially, your perfect race strategy, but it never goes that way. You have to audible all the time. That's what Jonathan does a really good job at, is thinking outside the box, not get too locked into anything. He's very open-minded.

Q. You mentioned the tire situation and the worries about possibly running out. How much of that would you attribute to the increased temperatures on the track versus the increased horsepower in the cars?

RYAN BLANEY: They would drive pretty bad, like you could wear them out pretty easy. I know at the end of that first stage when we went 60 straight, you got guys hanging on. I was hanging on and I was leading. They were pretty

tough to drive. Tire management was a big part of it.

As far as the tire failures go, that's just people pushing air pressure. When tires wear out a lot, people are going to push air pressure. How low can we get? You're going to see blowouts. What's the basement without having a problem.

It was a great tire. The added horsepower was good. We're creeping up on it. Hopefully we get a little bit more going forward. I always think that's good. You have comers and goers and stuff like that.

I say the tire was pretty good. I didn't have a blowout today. I bet the guys who blew tires out would say it was shit.

I thought it wore really good. You could make it angry and pay a penalty for it at the end of the run. I thought that added horsepower stepped that up, too. You could really buzz the right rear if you weren't careful.

Q. You've mentioned race strategies, making adjustments. Obviously you have your team in your ear. When it's that moment and you're in the car and it's just you, how do you mentally prepare for making those split-second decisions?

RYAN BLANEY: As far as making adjustments to the car and stuff?

Q. Making adjustments with your team, but thinking it's just me in here, my job.

RYAN BLANEY: Yeah, I mean, Jonathan and I have always had a good conversation of I can only give him what I'm feeling, right? Hey, I need more of this. I need my car to turn better. I need it to have more rear grip in these certain parts of the racetrack. Here is how much I need.

That stuff gets better with time. He kind of understands the strain in my voice, he needs more than maybe other instances.

All I can do, I just give him information of what I need, then he goes to work on figuring out what he want to do. Is it air pressure, is it wedge, are you going to put a round in the right rear, left rear, something like that.

I'm just an information giver, trying to tell him how much I need, then he is the adjustment guru. It's a fun dynamic going on that.

Like I said earlier, it gets better with time as you work with

a crew chief like that because you understand each other's kind of vocal tones. He'll know if I say like, I'm a little free, but I'm kind of frustrated saying it, he knows I need a bigger change than what I'm actually saying.

That stuff is a fun thing to work out with driver and crew chief of figuring out what you need to change when it comes down to it. It's very important, yeah.

Q. First win as a father. Did you get a call, FaceTime, from your family?

RYAN BLANEY: I'm sure I have. I don't have my phone with me. It's in the bus.

You know what, you just reminded me. I'm in trouble. I forgot to FaceTime Gianna in Victory Lane. I'm going to load here when I get back to my phone. Just run back there really fast (laughter). Oh, my God I'm in trouble. Yeah, cool. Just processing this...

Yeah, I mean, it's unfortunate they're not here. Obviously it would have been cool to have Gianna and Charley here, just to be with them, have a photo.

Looking forward to getting home tonight and seeing them. It just changes your perspective. Whenever I get home Sunday nights and see her and him, it just completely changes everything.

For days like today, it's just the cherry on top. Really, really lucky to have a healthy son and a healthy wife. Hopefully we can do it at some point where they're here. Yeah, pretty cool.

THE MODERATOR: On that note, Ryan, congrats on the win today.

RYAN BLANEY: Thanks.

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