

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

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An Interview with:

Denny Hamlin

Billy Scott

THE MODERATOR: We have now been joined by a familiar face here this season, Billy Scott. Billy, congratulations on that win. It will say that you guys started on the pole and finished obviously first, but there was so much that happened in the middle of this race. From your perspective as a crew chief, talk a little bit about how you approached the challenges you guys had today and how you kept everyone calm in the process to be able to come home with the win despite all of that.

BILLY SCOTT: Yeah, we just took it one run at a time. That's all we really could do. Well, lap one we realized we had some alternator issues, some challenges on the first stop. So it certainly was a long day, a battle, like you said. Not as easy as the numbers on paper might show.

Yeah, just trying to evaluate whatever was in front of us, one thing at a time. And Tyler stayed focused, never gave up, made excellent work in traffic of passing cars all day and being able to literally drive through the field by the end of it. It was incredible.

THE MODERATOR: We'll go to questions.

Q. How did the electrical issues affect what was going on in the car? I assume that he turned pretty much everything off, including the air-conditioning, et cetera. When you replaced the battery, did you replace it with a more robust battery?

BILLY SCOTT: Yeah, so the issue was never really the battery. I think it was -- we believe it was a charging issue. We tried to diagnose that through stage one. Believed the alternator for some reason when he hit that bump off turn two quit working.

From that point on, it was just a matter of managing the amount of amperage the battery had. So, yes, the battery we replaced it with was a bigger battery, heavier. It had more capacity. That enabled us to get to the end.

Yes, he had to start turning things off. We went through the first two stages of his running his cool shirt, not his air



conditioner, and a back-flowing fan.

Then when we got to stage three, evaluated where our voltage was at that point. Left it up to him: Just cut everything off and battle from fifth to try to win and get to the end on the battery we have left, or come in and change batteries one more time and go to the back in 25th and be able to cool himself.

He ultimately elected to, No, give me the track position, I'll turn everything off and deal with it.

And it worked out.

THE MODERATOR: We've also now been joined by our race-winning team owner, Denny Hamlin. Denny, welcome back here with another victory by Tyler Reddick. Congratulations to 23XI. I think this is the most wins the organization has won since you guys started the process of 23XI, but also it's March. So just talk a little bit about the goals for this season for the team, but also just how great Tyler Reddick is as a driver as well.

DENNY HAMLIN: Well, you said it. I tell you, there's usually two checkered flags, one to the -- one at the start/finish and then one to the airport. Yeah, five out of six weeks I've been in here at the end of races, so this is quite the start.

Awesome to see what they're doing. This is really a proud week for me to see what 23XI brought to this weekend, right? Because everyone had to guess. And these are blind guess on setup and things like that. It's just everyone gives it their best shot with the information that they got, and they clearly had the right answer. They came up with it on their own, and they brought the speed this weekend, and Tyler showcased it.

I hate it for the other guys. Riley battling in the top 10. Bubba had another issue, it looked like. But they were fast. I just thought all the cars were the class of the field.

THE MODERATOR: We're going to continue with questions.

Q. Denny, what could Tyler's car do that yours and others couldn't?



DENNY HAMLIN: It was faster on the entry, the middle, and the exit (smiling). You know, I don't know. I'm right out of the car, so I do not know.

I really didn't even get to run around him that much. Like we were always kind of -- our paths were going different directions when we were changing positions. I'll look at it and I'll study it and try to learn something from it, because clearly they got it figured out.

Q. Billy, the draining of the fire suit there, the contraption used, is that new? I haven't seen somebody use that before during a race.

BILLY SCOTT: We've had it around for a while, but we've never used it in particular. So, fortunately, that worked out.

Q. First for Billy, can you kind of give me some insight on the way that late calls to get down pit road trying to cover someone, if you're not the leader and you're trying to see what the leader does or you are the leader and you're trying to project what others do, what all goes into that call that kind of leads into a situation like you guys in the 17 had?

BILLY SCOTT: Yeah, you just try to look at all the information available, and really we're all trying to predict where that's going to play out 50, 60 laps later.

Ultimately, in our case, we had a lap that we did not want to come before in any case. Just not knowing where we would end up on the very long run. Honestly, not having had a chance to find that out the way the race played out for us and where we pitted on the green before kind of played into that.

We knew what we had at those length runs, and we elected to kind of stick to our guns. Once the 6 decided to pit, I think the 17 was trying to pit first, and that's where we got into the back of them with that late move to pit road.

Then once the 6 did, you either try to pit with them and hope you have a better cycle or try to outrace them, which we probably could have. But at the same time, we saw how it played out in stage one when we ran him back down after an unfortunate pit road error that we felt really confident we could get back with a lot of laps left and then kind of be in control where we could ride with better laps with less lap on tires.

Q. Denny, unfortunately you were in traffic for a lot of the races of your woes, but when you were in traffic, how did this package change what you guys experienced coming through the field?

DENNY HAMLIN: It wasn't drastically different. It was still very difficult to pass. This is a narrow track, so there's just not many places to go to avoid the wake of the car in front of you. I thought the good cars could pass, and the mediocre ones were hanging on.

But it still was, you know -- we're still in track position-type racing. I just don't know whether you're really going to get away from that no matter what you do. Especially with as close in speed as all the cars are. You need a good 3/10 advantage to overtake here at this track. Maybe two. That's a lot of difference in speed.

That's why you see a lot of people pit on different laps, is that they're trying to gain either the track position to have one lap better on tires or they're trying to stay out two more laps to get a better entire run. I just didn't notice that much. It just felt a little bit more out of control on the old tires, but everyone kind of adapted to it.

Q. Two sort of geeky questions for Billy. Number one, how is the cool suit dumping mechanism supposed to work? Number two, I'm sure you must have checklists or something for unexpected events like your battery. Could you give us a little more insight into how does that work, how do you juggle that while still trying to run the race?

BILLY SCOTT: Yeah, first the cool suit. It simply just tries to get the water out, because if you're not circulating any longer, and you probably experienced it, the water stays in there. So you have to plug into the same mechanism.

DENNY HAMLIN: I have not experienced it. I don't run that stuff.

BILLY SCOTT: That's right. You don't use it at all. He wouldn't have had nearly as big of a problem.

Yeah, so basically you plug into the same mechanism that pumps it through there inside the car. You plug into the same port. Instead of pumping it, you just dump it out so there's no water, so now it's just having a regular shirt.

Q. (Off microphone)?

BILLY SCOTT: Yes.

DENNY HAMLIN: There's a valve. When that opens the valve, there's then nothing -- one valve opens and the bottom is open, so it's just draining out.

BILLY SCOTT: Yeah, you get it plugged in. It's pressurized, and you have a contraption. I had never really seen it until they were showing me what to tell him

before we gave it to him. Interesting deal.

Then on the other side we have so many people helping us out back at our Xfinity Speed Centre at Airspeed. Guys on other pit boxes even. Everybody was contributing to variety of problems we faced today.

You're just trying to use your knowledge to understand how many amps are being used at that time, at any particular time in the car, and then how long the battery capacity has at that before it goes dead.

So we were just getting voltage feedback from him, making sure we were tracking on our curve for the battery, and then we were able to make it to the end.

Q. Denny, I know this was the dream to build this competitive, consistently competitive team, but ever in your wildest imagination did you ever realistically, as tough as this is, think you could ever win four of the first five races?

DENNY HAMLIN: I mean, it was a dream, but it's hard. Even legacy teams dream of starts like this. For a start-up team to think about it, it's probably a little pie in the sky, but it all comes together.

I mean, eventually you just keep putting really good people together, and you're going to have these type of results. Again, I think this was the most impressive weekend I've seen from 23XI, because everyone came in here with so many unknowns, and they figured out the Rubik's Cube for anyone else.

Q. When you look at this organization and where it's at, what does it need to do to continue to push forward and become one of those upper-echelon teams that everyone else is measuring themselves against?

DENNY HAMLIN: Again, it's the short tracks. The short tracks is the only place where I think 23XI as a whole could get a little bit better. But I know they're all working on that. But I don't know. We just don't have any weaknesses right now. I have far more weaknesses in the 11 than the 45 has when it comes to the schedule.

I think that, yeah, I don't know, we certainly would say right now that there's not a whole lot more to do to be at that level. They're there right now. They're at that level.

Q. Billy, I was just curious if the setup work when you -- knowing how the new rule package benefited the team today, when you come back here in September, considering the weather will be different and it will be a pivotal time in the season?

BILLY SCOTT: Yeah, we'll evaluate all that stuff. Certainly off to a better start than if not. We'll be using all the same resources to try to evaluate what it will be like there.

Denny talks about where the team is at and what our aspirations are and how we continue to be operating at this level. We just have to give kudos to them because really behind the scenes it's amazing of the steps they've taken to keep building that infrastructure behind the scenes. And our relationships we have with JGR and Toyota are a big part of that.

We relied on every aspect of that to get to this point this weekend. We needed everything they've ever given us for resources to, like he said, work on this Rubik's Cube, because we were literally evaluating things right up until the trucks loaded.

We just use the same resources we did to get to the conclusion today, and hopefully that works out again when we come back.

THE MODERATOR: Billy, Denny, thank you guys so much for coming in. We really appreciate it. Congratulations again.

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