

# NASCAR Media Conference

## Press Conference

Sunday, April 26, 2026

An Interview with:

**Jeff Dickerson**

**Luke Lambert**



**THE MODERATOR:** We have now been joined by our race-winning team, Jeff Dickerson, Luke Lambert.

Congratulations, gentlemen. Obviously a big victory for Carson, being his first win. A big victory for the organization. Jeff, if you don't mind, give us a little bit of thought. You hired Carson and really believed in him. Just talk a little bit about the path to get to today.

**JEFF DICKERSON:** Look, there's a lot of guys on that 77 team that were with us. That entire crew, other than Luke and Carson, were with us when we were running 34th or running in the back. It's just, like, I can talk about the faith that we put in Carson, but I really am humbled and touched by the faith that group put in us to get us to this day.

It wasn't easy. We had the ups and downs obviously with Carson. More relieved than anything. We've been knocking on the door, contended for wins for a couple years. Just felt like it wasn't our time, we screwed something up or something.

I'm proud of Carson. Proud of him for also just like putting his trust in us. Luke and I have had a lot of conversations with him to try to prepare him for this moment. It paid off putting him in that high-pressure spot with three to go. He made all the right moves.

Yeah, I mean, that's what I'm thinking.

**THE MODERATOR:** Luke, what does it mean to have the opportunity today to lead this team to victory?

**LUKE LAMBERT:** It's a very special moment. I've been blessed to have a few opportunities to see Victory Lane before. This one truly does feel more special in a lot of ways.

I think what makes this feel so special to me is it is an opportunity that I got to be a part of a long-term plan that really involved commitment. It comes from Jeff and the folks that he's partnered with.

Jeff Dickerson saw an opportunity that putting me in the position that I'm in, putting Carson in the position he's in, and the rest of the team was something that he could lean into. Having that backing and support and feeling like a partner in the deal from day one, and recognizing that it's not a one-week thing. We're not racing to the end of the day; we're racing to our long-term plan, which we know takes time.

And that recognition of where we have been along that journey and where we are currently I think has been the key to our success. I know that's a long way to say how I feel. It makes this moment feel really special because I know this moment is the culmination of so many days and nights and weekends and phone calls and time at the shop, time having hard conversations, and just being relentless, but while being relentless also trusting each other and recognizing we have the right players involved within our group and within our team.

We've moved the ball for the last two years. We started out being able to be consistent. Then we wanted to be better and be fast. Then we couldn't be consistent and fast at the same time, but we could be fast.

This year I feel like we've harnessed both of those things and we're on the path to being relatively fast and consistent. We're not as fast as we want to be or consistent, but we're close.

It's special to put it all together here today. Really coming off of three weeks in a row where we foreseeably had a path to victory one way or the other, Kansas and Bristol. And to come here and to put it all together, it's very sweet and feels like it's on purpose.

I'm just blessed and thankful to be a part, a small piece of it.

**THE MODERATOR:** We'll go to questions.

**Q. Jeff, all weekend the talk has been about the future of the sport, leadership. How much of the future the sport is up to drivers like Carson?**

**JEFF DICKERSON:** I think it's obviously a big part of it. I mean, you guys have seen it. There's kind of like this big juxtaposition of how sometimes the garage looks at



Carson, then you see the crowd up there going ape-shit while he's hanging out the window. It's going to take stuff like that.

That personality connects. Obviously it's on the drivers. They're the biggest part of it. It's going to take the teams and it's going to take NASCAR itself. I mean, obviously big changes this week. We're undefeated with O'Donnell now as the CEO (smiling). We were happy for the change, I guess.

Seriously, I mean, it sounds stupid, but it's kind of like what we're done here at Spire. It's going to take everybody in there to keep pushing this forward. I know Carson will do his part, for sure.

**Q. Jeff, did you know he was going to do that celebration? Did you talk about that before?**

**JEFF DICKERSON:** No. We were all trying to find him. Looks like Shamu hanging out the window at SeaWorld. We're going to get fined in our first win (smiling).

No, I had no idea. Sure, I mean, he's such an entertainer, I'm sure he had it thought out. I didn't know about that.

**Q. You weren't surprised?**

**JEFF DICKERSON:** No, no, no, not at all.

**Q. What is it about this kid? We see the stuff he comes up with, the moves he makes on the track. What do you see in him?**

**JEFF DICKERSON:** This kid knows how to stand on the gas, right? He has probably the most irrational confidence of a driver I've ever seen. That somehow pays off, right?

Look, I mean, you guys have seen him kind of grow up a little bit - a little bit - in front of you. You put that kid in that spot... Again, he didn't have a ton of Truck wins or Xfinity wins, right? He doesn't care. I don't want to say it like that, but he doesn't care that's some hero that he grew up watching next to him. He just wants to race 'em, right?

I think that combination is hard to find. With an organization like ours, it's exactly what we needed because we just had to have somebody I don't want to say didn't care, but we were going to pour into him as much as he was pouring into us.

Look, we certainly saw a star in the making. Today it looks like we knew what we were doing.

**Q. Jeff, we've heard a lot about Spire since 2019. Did**

**you ever question whether it was actually going to happen? For the people that may have doubted you, what would you say to them?**

**JEFF DICKERSON:** I didn't question it. I think we were able to fumble so many, that, I mean, seriously -- we were super happy when we won, but I'm also like incredibly relieved, because I think everybody, for kind of pointing out when we were improving, but we had to cash in.

Look, I can say that when we first started this deal, there was tons of questions on what the hell we were doing and why. I mean, shit, last time I was in this press room, press center, everybody was like, What the hell are you guys doing? You guys are buying Kyle Busch.

Like I said before, I think some skepticism is obviously healthy. I know I can stand in front of this whole group, the sport, and say we did and have done everything we said we were going to do when we first bought that Furniture Row charter. That's just the facts.

We're not done. We're not done. We want to put a couple in the Playoffs this year, or hope we do, good from there. I think we can take these guys on.

**Q. Luke, from the crew chief's perspective, how did you feel stage one went with the elongated number of laps there, fuel strategy? Did you like how that played out?**

**LUKE LAMBERT:** I think for me, my standpoint, it's not probably my favorite. I think from the fans' perspective arguably it's good and bad.

It did have the result that we expected, that it was going to break things up a lot, you were going to have multiple strategies going back and forth.

One thing it forces from a competitor standpoint, it forces you to truly have to rely on who you're working with because there's so many options the way you can play that stage out now. When it was a short stage, there was only a certain amount of fuel, we all had the ability to guess what people were doing. Teams had the opportunity to kind of jump in on anybody's strategy and know what they were going to do when they came down pit road and pitted with them.

Now we don't know what other people are going to do. You have to have buy-in from the folks you're pitting with to be able to commit to do your strategy, because otherwise you could put yourself in jeopardy when you come out on an island.

Yeah, from a spectators' standpoint, it creates an interesting strategy scenario, if that's what fans are interested in seeing. I'm happy to race under whatever rules they put it under. The only thing I'm not crazy about is it does require us as race team competitors to truly rely on others to make our strategy, and that's difficult.

**Q. There were a lot of teams that had issues on pit road in stage one. Is that coincidence or because of the circumstances?**

**LUKE LAMBERT:** I was surprised to see the volume of that that we saw. We do normally see it when we come here. There was a lot more than normal.

For one, most of the field pitted twice, so it doubles your opportunity for it. Outside of that, I think there was still an uncharacteristically high number of mistakes guys made the first time they came down pit road. That was a little bit after surprise to me.

First and foremost, we just wanted to survive stage one, get through there on the lead lap, capture some stage points, which we unfortunately didn't do. We wanted to get through there and put ourselves to be in position to pass at the end and be in position to win.

**Q. Since you left JR Motorsports, it hasn't been easy. Was there ever a time where you were like, Man, why am I doing this again when I was dominating in different series? How did you keep going?**

**LUKE LAMBERT:** That's a great question.

So just a little bit about myself. I've been in the Cup garage now for close to 20 years, not quite. I've taken a couple brief sabbaticals to the Xfinity Series, which were really fun. Both of the years that I spent in the Xfinity Series came with a lot of wins and a shot to win championships.

But I want to be a Cup champion. That's my personal goal. That's what I want to do. As much fun as I had in the expert series, really enjoyed those experience, I'm grateful to Richard who gave me those opportunities originally, RCR, Dale Jr. Those were great times.

This is where I want to be. I really felt like when I had the opportunity to work with Carson just shortly before we came here to Spire and had the opportunity to get on board with Jeff, there was a special opportunity in the making.

The main thing that we tried to do from day one is set our expectations square to where we were on our journey, knowing we were on a journey that wasn't about year one,

year two or year three. We're into year three now. We've tried to be honest where we are in on that path.

That's allowed us to keep putting one foot forward because we're not so focused on the feeling of defeat that you get and the crushing feeling of not getting the ultimate goal you want right now. Knowing that we're part of building something is way more rewarding.

Since I've been at Spire Motorsports, being a small piece of that building process is truly about the most rewarding things I've ever done and the most fun in the Cup garage.

I've truly enjoyed every day at Spire. I wanted to be in Victory Lane sooner than now. Hope to be here a whole lot more. I'm thankful that we got here and I really feel like it's special to me right now because I know of all the work that so many men and women at Spire Motorsports have been putting in for years to get us to this point.

I say it to the team a lot. We just got to put ourselves in that position enough times and we will do it. There's always four or five guys that have the chance to win the race. We have to be one of those guys enough times and we'll do it. It's cool that Spire has been able to put us in that spot and Carson making it happen.

**Q. Jeff, you said first win. If you go back to Daytona, how is this different or similar compared to that day?**

**JEFF DICKERSON:** I mean, that one was the longest hostage situation in NASCAR history (smiling).

But, I mean, we won that race, right? We don't want to apologize for it. But this one was obviously settled on the racetrack. You had to execute through all the pit stops in that first stage.

There's so many moments on the intercom where we're talking and it's like there's so many moments that can trip you up. It was funny, when we stopped screaming at each other, telling each other how happy we were, we executed for 500 miles. With our team, if we can execute for 500 miles, it's so cliché and so true, we know we can win these races.

You guys have watched us shoot ourselves in the foot so many times. I mean, we were in Victory Lane. I mean, everything is different about it, right? We had a proper Victory Lane. We had a proper burnout, all these things, right?

Everything's different. I mean, we're obviously a different team now, too. But it's a real good question, but everything is different.



**Q. Jeff, you now have a top 10 championship standing car, have won a race. Do you have a list of this is a checklist moment, then another one and another one? Where are you on that? When it comes time to race it out in the Chase, are you at the point where you can start to make noise for the final 10?**

**JEFF DICKERSON:** I really believe that. We don't have the checklist on the wall. Spire is made up of a lot of men and women. I mean, we race, right? Racers race. It's always about executing, always about the next race.

Even in Victory Lane, me and Matt were already talking about Texas, right? But I do think that certainly the hope is to get a couple in the Playoffs, right? The 71 got crashed. It looked like he made it through the big one. It was like, Oh, my gosh, if we can get that across, reset where he was in the points, at least we're fighting for something.

We have a shot to get two in the Playoffs. We look at that 77 team who have been battle-tested now, right? Now Carson and the whole teams sees when we do X, Y and Z, we can do this. I hope this isn't the last final we're in here this year.

I don't think it's hyperbole -- I don't think our organization has hit on all cylinders this year, and I don't think the 77 has hit on all cylinders this year. When we can finally put it together and if we put it together at the right time, I'll be more than happy from Labor Day on. We can make noise in this championship.

**Q. Carson said recently he thinks one of the biggest things for Spire as a whole is there hasn't been, as he called it, the distraction of why is the 7 car or just one car out of the three slower than the rest. It's really helped everybody pull in the same direction, focus on what can we do to get our cars better instead of wondering what's going on. How big has that dynamic been for how good all three teams and cars have been, the dynamic in the race shop?**

**LUKE LAMBERT:** Yeah, so before the season started, the competition group, leadership, did a little off-site thing. Daniel was new. It was our first opportunity to get to know him. In the process of doing some leadership training and some self-evaluation, some work together to understand each other and push ourselves to new levels, I felt like our group gelled.

Unfortunately we weren't able to bring everything single man and woman of the company to this event. The leadership group, particularly the people that travel to the racetrack, were all there.

That forged us as a group rolling into the season as a team that felt like we had been together for years, even though we had just known Daniel for just a few months.

It has put Daniel and Ryan Sparks and that whole 7 team on the fast track to integrating what we do.

I can't say enough what Daniel Suarez has done coming into our organization, being a teammate, being an example, really just being there for all of us.

I think that was a piece that really elevated our program. Those guys and girls on that team, Ryan Sparks, they're doing a great job putting a fast car on the racetrack. That was a piece that really has taken a big step up this year. That has got all three of our teams to where it's a force multiplier because we go to the racetrack and we have another data point of a really solid piece of information we can work on, make adjustments from.

So much of what we do here at the racetrack on the weekends is use the information we've got. We have a huge piece to make us better.

**Q. You mentioned the relief about what this feels like. I've been as guilty as anybody, asking when is Spire going to win, you keep talking about it over the last couple years. How validating do you think it is for everybody in the building now to get a win early in the season?**

**JEFF DICKERSON:** I think we're going to be dangerous. I can't tell you enough about the conversations that we have in our shop, how we've been building to this moment, how we've been believing in each other.

Kind of like our way, if you will, is now validated. There's 175 people in that building now that see what it looks like. I don't know if you guys saw, it's like our whole company was in Victory Lane, right? Everybody had a touch of that. When you said 'Daniel,' I thought Daniel was happier than Carson for a minute.

Again, it's a great word or term that he used, it's just a force multiplier. You already have Carson's irrational conferred. He's going to show up in a fur coat on Monday, right (smiling)?

I mean, it's crazy, but confidence is contagious. When Luke's talking about these conversations we're having on Monday, it's like Groundhog Day because we're talking about if we're in the mix, we just didn't do this, we should have done this, taken four, stayed out, put 'em on offense. Luke and I are always like, Put 'em on offense.

It's the truth. Now it's real. That's where I really think we're going to be dangerous. I really don't think it's hyperbole if we can just with the help we get from Hendrick and the Hendrick engine shop. We've got a really good group.

I also want to give a shout out to Matt McCall. He brings a level of intensity and discipline in that competition director's role, that is something we've been missing. We had Sparks in that. Sparks was doing a couple jobs.

Matt McCall shows up, I mean, he's the first guy there. I don't know if he goes home. It's that attention to detail and that intensity. You guys are watching us kind of like, I do think we're going to be a dangerous group because now we really have that validation that we can do it.

I know it's a plate race. I'm not putting it against it's winning a plate race. I'm more happy with how we won it than winning it, right? Made no mistakes. I think we just need to keep it rolling here, get a couple other ones in here.

**Q. Jeff, you mentioned the way the crowd reacted to Carson. Even before he got out of the window and started on the frontstretch, the reaction they had was almost instantaneous. There are only a select few of drivers that get that sort of reaction. Why do you think Carson resonates with the fans to that level and that extent?**

**JEFF DICKERSON:** I mean, that's a good question.

I think all of us, you see kind of like this homegrown story. Everybody pulls for the underdog. Carson, I mean, he goes up and watches the races in the crowd. Carson is more like those people, I can say it, than a lot of the guys he races with. People see the genuineness of it.

It's not an act, right? They see the genuineness of it. All these guys up in the crowd, it's just like they have their favorites, they have a lot of the guys they hate. It seems Carson hits or beats the guys they hate.

You get that connection. The other part is, I said it earlier that racers race. We as a team, but certainly with Carson, we go and meet the fans where they're at. Not all of them can make it to a Cup race. We'll put him in a late model, the idiot goes to the Chili Bowl when he doesn't have to. He just loves to race.

It's also kind of that way where he throws caution to the wind. I mean, I don't think we hit anybody today. Maybe Erik. That wasn't really his fault. He's always in the mix. He's always doing something that gets their attention, and I

think they appreciate I.

Like I said earlier, that's the stuff. That's the secret sauce.

**LUKE LAMBERT:** If I was going to add one thing, the genuineness I think is 100% it. There's no mold for Carson Hocevar. Nobody had a focus group to decide what a driver should look like and came up with Carson Hocevar.

He's is unapologetically himself. He's unique. Never met anybody that's exactly like him. He brings that to the fans and is open to the fans like that. I think it's really refreshing. I think people see their sons, their friends, people they know in the real world and can relate to him when he was raw to the general public.

**Q. On a bigger picture, in the last three weeks we've had a couple 23-year-olds get their first victory. How important is that to the sport?**

**LUKE LAMBERT:** I think it's huge. It's a great thing to see a new class of superstars come in and usher themselves into the sport. It's a great thing to look forward to because we've seen with Denny and Kevin Harvick recently, Kyle Busch, other guys that have had amazing, long careers, they become a mainstay, you're trying to figure out are they ever going to time out.

It's impressive to see these young guys go up against people that are in that class. It takes their talents, the right team and atmosphere around them, then the right amount of experience to be able to go toe to toe with those guys that are truly Hall of Famers that have years of experience and still have all the talent and all the makings of a phenomenal race car driver.

To see the young guys start to be able to break into that, I think it means great things for the sport. It certainly comes along with some interesting personalities.

**Q. Seems to me when you're in news class you learn when dog bites man, that's not news. When man bites dog, that is news. That seems to be Carson. When he was going to like a Good Morning America or Fox and Friends, how do you think he would play riding in the window, them playing the coverage, his personality? Seems like it might be Carson mania or something out there.**

**JEFF DICKERSON:** That's what we need, guys, is Carson mania (smiling).

It's going to be the same. When he comes in here, I'm sure on a bigger scale if he's on any of the morning shows or anything, I think it will play well 'cause he's obviously not

scripted.

You know what, it's kind of funny, it's just like when these young guys win their first ones, I mean, it's all still like the wonderment of it. You know what I mean? It's been a while since I've been in a Cup. I forget how long it takes. It's not like it's monotonous or something.

Like I was happy for Ty. You see these kids get their first ones. I takes you back to your first one. There's no feeling like it.

Again, it's like you think about everybody that helped you along the way. You think about, man, all the sleepless nights, riding in the truck overnight or something like that.

I don't care who you are in that garage, you kind of have that story. So I think that's why it's so popular. Even Kyle came. I just think that's why it's a popular thing where these guys all show up for somebody's first win because it takes them back to theirs.

Not to take away from your question, but that's the stuff. They put him on tomorrow, they're going to see the happiest kid in the world. I hope they do.

**THE MODERATOR:** Jeff, I wanted to ask you, being Carson's first win, this is also Chili's first win. Your organization brought them in, and they've had some fun promotions. You have fun fire suits, different things. What does it mean to be able to celebrate with Carson but with their organization, as well?

**JEFF DICKERSON:** I mean, I don't know if you guys saw, everything was happening so fast, because you're hugging all the team guys, all of a sudden there's 20 Chili's people on pit road. Cars are still on the racetrack. It was unbelievable.

Again, that's kind of the thing. When you see that proof of concept, again we're talking about the competition staff, I'm glad you brought that up, our sales group is the best sales group in this whole garage. I mean, the ideas they come up with, the desperation they show up with every day. They just attack the stuff. They are relentless. They are as relentless as the competition group.

You go to these companies, Just come and sponsor us, we're going to do all these things together.

They say, Shit, we are riding bulls and having rhinestone capes and all that.

You're like, Cool, c'mon.

But you tell them we're going to win. We tell them we're going to win. They were as happy as the pit crew. Just like we were selling them, they probably had to sell somebody at their place, too.

This is a win for all of us, all of our sponsors. Those Chili's guys are going to party maybe harder than us tonight.

**THE MODERATOR:** Jeff and Luke, congratulations again. Thank you for coming in and spending time with us.

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