

NASCAR Media Conference

Press Conference

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An Interview with:

Chase Elliott

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by the winner of today's Wurth 400 Presented by LIQUI MOLY at Texas Motor Speedway and driver of the No. 9 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet, Chase Elliott.

Obviously this is your second win of the season. You've become the second driver to notch multiple wins throughout this year. This is also the first time in your career that you've notched multiple wins in the first 11 races of the season. Speak on ultimately what led to -- what has led to today's success and also just what you have found over this first portion of the year to start off on such a high note?

CHASE ELLIOTT: I think, to start, to answer your question, I feel like just a lot of hard work from the entire team. Not just the people here at the racetrack, but the people that work in the shop every day and all week. We fired off the year, and truthfully, I think as a group haven't been as strong as we want to be or expect to be. Have just dug in and put our heads down and gone to work.

We tested at Wilkesboro earlier in the year, and then Kyle tested at Chicago last week, or maybe a couple of weeks ago. Nonetheless, in the last couple of weeks. I think all those things, you start putting pieces together and improving and getting to a good place.

Then you combine that with just a really good day of execution for our team in particular and wound up with a great result. Really proud of that.

Like you mentioned -- and I knew it right at Martinsville. We've never won a race this early, much less to now have two this early in the year I think is really -- I'm really proud of that, and I'm proud of our team for that, because anytime you can check off new boxes in this sport when you've been doing it for ten-plus years is cool, and it's hard to do.

It's hard to win. So I'm really proud of our team for that and just proud of the day that we had. It was, I would say, one of our strongest races that we've had in quite some time. When you look at just all of the different factors of the event, from restarts to pit road to race strategy to me behind the wheel, just all of it I thought was elevated. And



it was really performing at a high level, and super proud of our team for that.

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

Q. It seemed like maybe one of the key moments was you were on tires restarting behind a bunch of guys that had stayed out or had various different strategies, and you were able to get through that traffic pretty quickly compared to the others you were racing. What was your perspective of that situation there?

CHASE ELLIOTT: Yeah, I didn't know -- it was so early in the race. A lot of times when you get in those situations and it's later in the race, you know, like, hey, I got to be the first one through this to have a really good shot at winning.

At that particular point in time obviously I wanted to do my best to get through there as quick as I could, but it just seemed like there was still a lot of the story left to be told at that point. So I didn't think the intensity was, like, 100% at that point for, like, having to press through there and just do everything perfect.

But the way it ended up working out was great. We got to second there behind Corey, and he was setting a good pace. They told me he was short. So at that point I was trying to just manage the gap to the person behind me, I think was the 45 for a period of time, and then it turned into the 11.

Then, yeah, I think that's what I was referencing a minute ago and I'm super proud of our team for and also myself in going out there and being able to execute and control the race from there. I think that's a really important piece of this series in long-term and consistent success is when you do have opportunities to get the lead like that, to be able to control the event and make it your pace and do the things out there to lead laps and keep yourself in good position.

I thought we did as good of a job of that today as we've done in quite some time and at a racetrack that has historically been really tough for me. All that was a lot of fun. Really proud of our team, and yeah, glad it worked out the way it did.

Q. It's the first time -- your previous most multiple wins was 17 races in 2022. This is obviously the 11th



race. How important is it to turn that consistency into race wins?

CHASE ELLIOTT: It is. I mean, race wins are certainly what we show up each week to do. Yeah, I mean, obviously that's the goal every time we come to the racetrack.

I think having a win early at Martinsville, and I said it -- I think I said it to you guys then and there. It's like -- it's not like, oh, hey, the pressure is off, we have a win. It's, man, we have a lot longer period of time to build on that. That's genuinely where my mind was at.

To be able to come out here and to perform like we did, I thought our car was solid yesterday. I thought that I probably underperformed our qualifying effort. I was disappointed in that from just my perspective.

Again, great changes overnight. Just the whole day was executed really well throughout our whole team in the things that we can control, and those are the kind of things you have to do I think to be successful and use that longer runway that we've earned by having a win early into compounding and hopefully adding to it beyond here, I hope.

Q. You talked after the race about not being a fan of the track. What was it specifically that you were referencing? With two wins in the last three years here, what's kind of led to the success you've had at this track?

CHASE ELLIOTT: Yeah, Alan came on the radio and said two-time Texas winner. I thought, I'll be damned. I'd have never thought.

Yeah, you know, I've trashed this place for years, and I didn't like what they did to the racetrack in reconfiguring turns one and two. And it was so fun for me, and obviously there's some selfish opinion in that too because I thought it was a really strong track, and then it turned into not a strong track at all. Those things combined I think just put a bad taste in my mouth.

But when you run better, it grows you on you little by little. And I think the fan reception over the last couple of years has been strong. I think the energy has been really good out here having one race and whatnot.

Yeah, you know, for as hard of a time as I've given it, for some reason it likes me. It loved me back. I didn't like it, but it liked me. So I'm learning to come around a little bit. I wish it would share some of that love with some other tracks on the schedule that I want to like (laughing).

No, it's one of those things that it's so hard to win in this series, and it's so hard to have success. Anytime wherever you go on the schedule, no matter what it is or where it is, to be able to compete at a high level, I think is a really difficult thing to do and something to be proud of.

Again, I think the crowd reception today and it ended up being a good race, all those things I think help make my opinion better and enjoy coming out here. I hope that everybody had a good time because it seemed like it was a good race.

They got a late caution and all the excitement that you hope for when you watch a race from home or in person. I appreciate all the folks making it fun for me.

Q. There were multiple issues on pit road, but later in the broadcast they talked about how your pit crew pulled off three of the best stops for your season. Talk to me about the importance of your pit crew and the success they had today and how it helped you to victory.

CHASE ELLIOTT: Yeah, man, they were phenomenal. The thing of it is is they've been really good for years. The truth of the matter is I haven't done a good enough job to put them in a position to have their talents on display all the time.

When you look at that and you're leading the race and you're coming down pit road and you're leading under green or coming down for that last pit stop and you have the lead, you have eyes on. You have cameras on, right? You talk about it.

So they get that recognition that they deserve in those moments, but yeah, again, the truth of the matter is they've been like this for a long time. I've had the privilege of seeing it and working with them, and they've kept us in races that we didn't deserve to be in, large in part to a poor job on my behalf. They deserve a lot of credit for keeping us in the game.

But today, you know, they answered when we called. We had a great opportunity. I thought made good changes. Things were kind of flowing from my perspective, and they answered the call then too. Really proud of them, and glad you guys got to see it.

Q. You mentioned the late race caution. When you came out, you got the lead coming out of turn two. Denny was a half a car length behind you. Did you know that this was it for you, that you would get your second win here, and the second win of the season?



Were you confident?

CHASE ELLIOTT: I mean, no, you don't know you're going to win until the checkered flag falls, but certainly from my perspective, to kind of go into what was I was thinking on the lane choice and all that, I just thought the bottom was going to be the lane to be in throughout turns one and two.

I thought after that the top was probably going to be preferred. We had just had that long run, and we had all moved straight to the top. I was running the top. Denny was running the top. I was having a hard time passing the 6 before the caution came out. I finally got to his left rear. I was, like, all right, you know, finally got a shot here. Then the caution comes out. I went, great.

But yeah, I just felt like I didn't want to give him the opportunity to run me wide off of two or something, ultimately, or really paint the line and put me in a tough spot at the exit of that turn. I just thought it was worth the risk to choose bottom and try to execute a good turns one and two.

Alex gave me a good shove. I was able to stick the line there through one and two and get clear, and then from there I was just trying to manage the gap and the lane choice the best I could with him behind.

Q. Did you feel like you had enough buffer on the guys who had taken tires there on that final caution? Did you feel like it had come down to those who had stayed out?

CHASE ELLIOTT: Yeah, for one. Yeah, for one. I think those are always the really tough situations because it's, like, how many cautions are we going to get? That's where those calls can be super impossible, right? You can make the right call for a green-white checkered that goes right through; and it could be the wrong call if we have two cautions and those guys gain two rows in the first corner, and the caution comes out, and now they've netted four spots. Now they're two rows closer to the guys up front. That's when it can not look so pretty.

For one restart, I felt like it was between us and the 11, or anybody in the front two rows, depending upon how the lanes went and moved forward. Yeah, I guess that covered about all of it.

Q. Kind of a similar question, I guess. In that moment when everyone is pitting behind you, and you see some guys are staying out, are you counting the cars that are staying out? When you see that amount, do you kind of -- can you let yourself get some kind of

relief, like, okay, I don't have to...

CHASE ELLIOTT: Well, first off, yes, I'm watching. Second off, it's hard for me to tell, because there was some lap cars in between us and some of the other guys that stayed out. So really hard for me to count cars in that situation.

I knew we were staying. I had a pretty good feeling the 11 was staying. I thought staying out was the play, you know, at that point in time, but totally left it up to Alan and what he wanted to do, and whatever he chose, I was going to support that. I felt like, yeah. When he said we're staying out, I said, all right, here we go, I'm going to do the best I can to execute this restart and try and get a good launch and get through one and two the best I can and put together the best four laps I've ran all day and hope for the best.

In those moments it's kind of out of your hands when you decide not to turn left down pit road and just control the things that are in your hands at that point.

Q. You won here with Hooters. Kind of did a Polish victory lap, a special celebration. Carson did one last weekend. Can you walk us through what it means to get one with Prime right before going back into their season, your partnerships, and what that is with them?

CHASE ELLIOTT: Yeah, really cool. I was thinking about that after the race, which you know, they chose the races they chose because it is right before they get their broadcast back.

Certainly in those moments, yeah, it's like, man, when you perform well, that worked out really well. Great timing for them. I thought they did a really good job covering our races last year. I heard nothing but really good things about it.

I know we have some great broadcast partners, for sure, but from my perspective, obviously being a little closer to home with Prime, certainly proud to get them a win. I guess that's our first win together, yeah, so that's really cool.

Yeah, great timing. We're happy to have them back in Charlotte here in a couple of weeks. I have no doubts they'll be bringing their A-game and put on some good broadcasts again.

Q. The No. 9 crew has been building momentum over the past few weeks. How much of today's win reflects the progress you've seen behind the scenes?



CHASE ELLIOTT: A ton. I mean, I think it's always about the effort and the conversations that go on during the week and during the weeks leading up to the races and how that work is put into our race cars at the shop.

These races are certainly -- yes, they're won on the racetrack and how well you execute and all those things, but you sure are hedging your bet a lot by how you prepare and what your car is like before it loads up in the truck.

You can't emphasize that enough. I understand that. I don't know that a lot of people understand just how important that is to the overall performance, but it is a huge piece. Really fortunate and proud of everybody at Hendrick Motorsports for their continued efforts to just dig in.

We have a gritty group back home that they just don't take no for an answer. They'll just work and work and work. Whatever has got to be done, get done. Friday, Saturday, midnight, 2:00, whatever. They want to win, and boss wants to win, and we'll do whatever we got to do to try our best for that.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

