

# NBC Sports Group Media Conference

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**Sam Flood**

**Rick Allen**

**Jeff Burton**

**Dale Earnhardt Jr.**

**Steve Letarte**

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you so much for joining us for the NBC Sports NASCAR media conference call as NBC Sports takes over the remainder of the 2021 NASCAR season beginning this weekend with the series return to Nashville.

In just a moment we'll be joined by our lead NASCAR team of Rick Allen, Jeff Burton, Dale Earnhardt Jr., Steve Letarte, as well as by NBC Sports executive producer Sam Flood.

Let's begin our call with opening remarks from Sam Flood.

SAM FLOOD: Well, thanks, Chris, and thank you all for joining us today. We're really excited to get this season started. It just feels like in the last month, the world is coming back to the way it needs to be with fans in the stands and the energy of live sporting events with people at the venues.

Having been to the Kentucky Derby and the Indy 500 for our shows over the last month or so, it really felt right. It felt like life was back to the way we want it to be, and for this NASCAR and NBC Sports team to be able to engage with the crowd at the racetrack, to be at the track, to be at the place these four guys and the rest of the team love more than anything else in the world is being at the racetrack, and we saw last year how special it was when they got back to the track for the last five or six races of the season and the engagement, being around the sights, the sounds, the smells, the energy of a NASCAR race. It made it special, and it's even more special and more important now that the fans are back in the stands. It just turns a race into an event, and we love events, and no one makes big events bigger than NBC Sports and the team



we have here.

This very first opening weekend in Nashville, to think that Brad Paisley and Dale Earnhardt Jr. are going to be hosting this pre-race show from an amazing venue back where it's all going on in Nashville, a place that should have racing, and it's finally back where it belongs in Nashville.

This group is ready to roll. The team on pit road, can't wait to get going, pre-race show, across the board. Big time, big energy, big event, leaning into Nashville, leaning into the start of our half of the season.

Our hats go off to our friends at FOX; what a great job they did getting the first half of the season going. They had a spectacular season. The numbers looked very good. The ratings were where we like to see them heading in a positive upward direction. So we're ready to take that mantle, carry it to the finish line, finish off this regular season and lead into the playoffs.

We can't wait to get going. Rick, I'll pass it off to you. Have some fun.

RICK ALLEN: Thanks, Sam. To echo what Sam was saying, a capacity crowd expected at Nashville Superspeedway. We feed off that, the crowd, the electricity, just the excitement that these events bring, and like he said, FOX I think has done a wonderful job. They've touted it as the best season ever.

We're picking off where one driver has incredible momentum, Kyle Larson, what a story he has to tell from being suspended a year ago to now being the favorite for a championship. He's really hot right now.

We're excited to pick this up, excited about coming back to Nashville. It's been 37 years since the Cup Series has raced there. The likes of Petty and Pearson and Waltrip were the big names when the Cup Series was there. Now you've got Larson and Hamlin and Harvick and Busch and all these other superstar names that want to make a name for themselves in Nashville, in Music City USA.

We're really fired up to get going. As a team we have been chatting and texting and talking every single race throughout the entire season. We have a great line of



communication that we're able to just enjoy these races all throughout the first 16 races, and now we get to enjoy them shoulder to shoulder, side by side, in the booth and call and do what we love to do, and that's watching NASCAR racing and enjoying it with the fans.

It's going to be a lot of fun. I'm going to hand off now to Jeff Burton, the mayor.

JEFF BURTON: Hey, everybody. I think the word "excitement" may be overused today, but that's okay because that's how we all feel, not only to get back to the racetrack but to do it with friends, we all get along just unbelievably well, have a great time doing this together. That energy that comes from the fans that Sam and Rick just talked about, that's real.

Going to races where we didn't have fans, oh, my gosh, I so appreciate it now more than ever, that energy, that excitement, that enthusiasm they bring.

This town is ready for it. I was there a month ago or so doing a shoot with Mario Andretti, and the people in that town are fired up about this race, and that makes me fired up even more.

On track I've got to tell you, I think the drivers and the teams, they have been bringing it. It has been a really good year, a lot of on-track excitement. Clearly Kyle Larson has taken charge at this point in the year, but that's not -- we know that that doesn't always just go like that. Who can knock him off? Who can go and take that away from him? That's going to be fun to watch.

It's been a great year. I don't see any reason why that's not going to continue.

Our first race is a track that many of these drivers haven't run on. Some drivers have in the Xfinity Series and in trucks. A lot of unknowns going into this weekend, and really in our first half of our year where we've got 10 races before the playoffs, there's a lot of interesting racetracks coming up, and that uncertainty only adds to the pressure of the playoffs. That makes our broadcasts that much more fun, makes it more difficult on the teams, and as race fans and as sports fans, we all know the more difficult it is on the teams, the more fun it is to watch.

Can't wait to get there this weekend, have a great time, feel that energy from the fans, and Jr., I'm going to turn it over to you.

DALE EARNHARDT JR.: Yeah, I'm looking forward to getting back on the road and being back at a racetrack. When you go for a good period of time without being at a

track and you come back and drive in and you hear cars running and carrying on, it feels like home, and you kind of remember all these -- you have all these great memories that come rushing back, and you just get excited about what you're going to see when the green flag drops.

It's something that I need in my life, and lucky for me, I get to work with a great group of people that love to talk about racing and enjoy the same thing for the same reasons.

Yeah, it's just a lot of fun to be able to go to the track and be a part of this broadcast. We've got an amazing season that's starting to unfold. It's kind of a good challenge and a unique challenge to pick the season up when we do. A lot of the playoff conversations are going to start happening, who can maintain not only the momentum that they have and the teams that are winning but also where that cutoff is and who might make or miss the playoffs. All that stuff starts to really become part of the conversation. A lot of storylines start to really develop.

It's a really fun part of the year as we close in on the playoffs. The playoffs have really brought a lot of good excitement and drama. They've delivered every year, and from a fan's perspective, I guess I'm a broadcaster but I'm really just a fan to be honest with you. From a fan's perspective, it's been a great run here for the last several years, and we've got a lot of great momentum in the sport and a lot of energy in the sport. I'm excited to see how the season turns out.

Like Jeff said, we have teams that are really dominant right now, but I've seen this before. We see it time and time again, where there's sort of an organization who comes out of the box strong and they have a great regular season, but then there's someone that jumps out -- comes out of nowhere and surprises -- there's a turning of the tide a little bit when the playoffs happen, and there's a lot of reasons for that, and it's a little bit different each year.

Some of these teams are going to change their performance a little bit and improve and bring the fight to HMS. I don't think this is going to be an easy cakewalk for them in terms of crowning nor champion in that organization like they did last year with Chase Elliott.

It's absolutely theirs to lose, but I believe that they're going to have plenty of competition when it comes down to it.

I'm going to pass it on to my favorite crew chief and broadcasting buddy, Steve Letarte.

STEVE LETARTE: Appreciate it, Jr. It's been an amazing six months. I was able to be a part of the Rolex broadcast and I was able to go to Indianapolis and see my first ever



Indy 500 in person, and those were both breathtaking events. There's nothing like kind of returning home to your NASCAR family.

As you guys the three boothmates, have mentioned, we communicate and talk about racing all the time, but there's nothing like standing above a full grandstand full of people covering the races live. I'm looking forward to that.

I would lie if I wasn't -- I really look forward to walking in the Xfinity garage on Friday and the Cup garage on Saturday. That's a part that was taken from us through this crazy pandemic, and it's the part of my job that I probably love the most. I appreciate the competitors' commitment to Zooms, but I can't wait to lean on a set of tires and see the competitors face to face and discuss their challenges, their opportunities and their approach to the weekend and then convey those storylines to the fans.

We're also blessed to have a great summer schedule. I've been to Nashville Superspeedway many times. Never seen a race there in person. I'll get to see Road America for the first time and I get to go to Indianapolis for the first time and see cars on the road course. Last year we covered that one remotely, so it'll be good to be there.

These guys cover the storylines on the track. I think we're very lucky to have not just storylines on the track, but like I mentioned, the track and the schedule itself is another storyline all in itself. We have a little sprint here to an Olympic break, and then when we get back from the Olympics the heat will be turned on completely for the NASCAR playoffs on who's going to make it. And with already 11 different winners and some huge names yet to win, Harvick and Hamlin come to mind, I think that that playoff leaderboard is only going to continue to get tighter, and as the pressure increases, the entertainment increases.

It's been a lot of fun to watch, but watching is a little bit of fun. It's a lot more fun to cover, so I can't wait to get there in person and do it again this weekend.

**Q. Dale, I think you've been heavy in the promotion for the Cup race and you're part of the group on the INDYCAR race. Nashville is really hot right now. Everybody is talking about racing in Nashville again. I'm wondering why you think that the Nashville market will work for all this racing, and then there's talk of the Fairgrounds, as well. How does the speedway differentiate itself from all this other racing talk and activity going on in the city?**

DALE EARNHARDT JR.: Well, it's such a unique track compared to the Fairgrounds and obviously the street

course for the INDYCAR. I think the way that -- physically they're all different. They're all going to provide a different type of entertainment, a different style of race, and I think that the town is big -- there's enough energy and a enough entertainment to go around for everybody.

You know, I think a rising tide lifts all boats kind of thing, and the success from each event is a plus for the rest of them. They each can learn off each other and play off each other, and so I don't see how it can't work.

I think it is pretty interesting how all this -- everybody is going to Nashville. Yeah, INDYCAR and NASCAR, everybody is kind of coming to Nashville and focusing on Nashville, honing in on Nashville as a place to be. I think it's a long time coming to be honest with you. It should have happened years and years ago.

Nashville is a great fit. The town does have a lot of energy. When we were there in -- when we were doing the Burnout on the Boulevard, that was a moment for me, I was upstairs in one of those building looking out the window watching all that happen, and it was clear as day that this was a great relationship and a great partnership with NASCAR and the city of Nashville. It just felt normal. It didn't even feel new. It felt like an old friend and a buddy you hadn't hung out with in a long, long time. I like it a lot, and I love the fact that we're celebrating our champion there.

Vegas was a great time, New York was a great time. Very long way to go, but still a lot of fun any time you can get to Vegas. But Nashville for me can provide and be that same experience to where we feel like the crowning of the champion is the most important day in the sport in my opinion where we celebrate the year and we acknowledge all of the things that happened in our sport in that one night.

I think that the fit for the city is a good one, and we need to be racing there. We need to have our product there. So now that's happening. All of this seems to be coming full circle. It all makes sense to me.

I think it'll be fun to see how it all works together. Like you say, with INDYCAR and NASCAR both trying to get into Nashville and make things happen, I think it'll be fun to see how they might can work together to make things better for everybody.

**Q. Just to be clear, you're talking about the burnouts during the awards ceremony, you watched those from up in a building?**

DALE EARNHARDT JR.: Yes.



**Q. My question is for Steve Letarte on the crew chief side. Of course you have Daytona and Talladega coming up on the schedule and just earlier this month there was the announcement that NASCAR is going to implement new safety precautions for the superspeedway, including they'll reduce the whole spaces in the tapered spacer as well as the wicker on the spoiler being removed and the additional roof bar being mandatory, this of course coming after Joey Logano's scary crash. I was curious, when fans watch Daytona and Talladega on NBC, what effect do you think this will have on the races and what do you think fans can expect when they watch the superspeedways?**

STEVE LETARTE: So when we talk about the safety improvements to the race car, a bar was added to the car. I don't think the fans will be able to see that. They'll have no idea. It's just continuing the improvement towards the safest product possible. NASCAR has done that for years and decades and they're just continuing.

There has been an adjustment to the power, to the speed, and I will be a hundred percent honest, I'm not sure from the grandstands or on TV you're going to see the difference in the six or eight miles an hour that it may slow them down. I think the aggression from the pack and from the second-place driver will be just as high. I think the leader will have to work just as hard to try to protect that lead.

It's a small adjustment that's needed just for safety. The physics of a car getting airborne has a lot to do with the speed when it turns backwards and sideways, and NASCAR obviously felt like they needed to make an adjustment, but I honestly think that the product on track is going to be just as exciting as it has looked. The plate races recently have been a great balance of aggression and strategy, and I think that's continuing -- that's got to continue.

I will say Daytona we learned a year ago as the cutoff to the regular season has a completely different feel than I ever remember the night race at Daytona in the summer having. That last-ditch effort for everyone to find a seat at the table when the playoffs start a week later I think has a completely different energy to it. There's a new level of desperation, and then as you go into the playoffs and you see Talladega, it's kind of the same way. It has a different feel than the spring race at Talladega because of what's on the line.

There are some big names protecting their playoff positions and other people looking for that win needed to

continue.

I think that's the beauty of the two speedway races you're going to see on NBC is their position within the schedule. I think to end the regular season is great, and then being placed where it is in the playoffs, it makes Talladega even more vital.

**Q. Steve, you were saying on Nate's podcast, don't worry about any of the data from all those test sessions back eight or ten years ago, but Chase Briscoe did say that he watched some video before he went and did the tire test there and he felt like it helped him some. I'm kind of curious, do you feel like these races will be anything the same from what we saw in Xfinity and trucks in the past? Or do you feel like these teams should just not look at anything from 10 years ago?**

STEVE LETARTE: Well, I think it's two sides of a question. If I'm a competitor trying to prepare, I would absolutely look at the prior races. I would look at the data of the track. I would try to understand what made a good car good and a bad car bad, what point of the racetrack does your car have to perform the best. If I was a Cup driver and crew chief, I would be there on Thursday to watch Xfinity practice in person, watch cars go around the racetrack, understand as much as I can about that racetrack before going on the racetrack.

Now, flip that same question, if you're asking me as an observer, I don't believe that what happened over a decade ago really relates to what we're going to see on the racetrack right now. I'm a true believer that you could race the same racetrack five times in a row and get five completely different products because every race seems to be its own kind of living, breathing thing and the way people approach it and who may be good or who may not be good.

I know that's a two-parted answer, but I think the history of the racetrack is very important to the people competing. I don't believe the history of the racetrack is fair in any way to have any idea what we may or may not see. I'm thankful there's some practice and qualifying to be honest. It's going to give me kind of a good idea by the end of practice I think what the challenge of that track is for this type of car in this realm of technology, but until we line them up there -- double-file restarts, that comes to mind. 10 years ago there were no double-file restarts. There's so many things that have changed, I don't think we have any idea really what the product is going to be, and I think some of the unknown is a little bit of the charm. I'm looking forward to it without a big notebook full of expectations.



**Q. For Dale Jr., I'm curious, do you feel like it was important to get this race, get a Cup race in Nashville at this track just to build on that momentum on the vibe from the awards ceremony? And I think Jerry Caldwell told the Nashville politicians that he believes both tracks could coexist on a Cup schedule, that that market could certainly be a two-race market.**

DALE EARNHARDT JR.: Yeah, I think that it absolutely can exist in the same season, and there's a lot of different ways that can happen. The fact that the tracks are so uniquely different, it really helps that argument a little bit because you won't see the same product or the same action at either one.

You know, there's a lot of hurdles between that becoming a reality.

I think that there's a lot of work that's went into bringing back the speedway. There's so much effort going into it.

I think that it's important for us to be in Nashville. It absolutely builds on -- imagine -- I guess when we celebrated the banquet in New York City, it's the big apple, it's New York City, yes, it's an amazing place, but we weren't racing there, and so it was quite different as far as the vibe for me when we went to Vegas and we had a race in town. You could see us race and then we were going to be back to crown our champion. It seemed to make sense. The town embraced it.

I feel that same thing from the city of Nashville as far as how they -- you want to feel welcomed or you want to feel wanted, and I absolutely feel like Nashville is eager to have NASCAR there, whether it's the banquet, whether it's the race, and they're embracing that, and it's a good feeling.

It opens up so many possibilities, so many possibilities for the banquet to grow into the marquee event that it is and for our NASCAR event to be an entertainment event, as well.

We have the race that happens on Sunday, but there's so many other things or possibilities or opportunities to provide fans with an amazing weekend, things that can happen on Friday and Saturday outside of the racing events of the Truck and Xfinity and Cup Series, the entertainment side of that and the opportunities there are endless, especially in a town like Nashville that provides so much entertainment. It's a hub for the music industry, and we can take advantage and tap into that and do so many crossovers with our athletes and musicians and so forth.

It's just a great opportunity going forward to bring a ton of energy, and really our sport can take advantage of that.

So I'm pumped up about the connection to Nashville, this new sort of renewed relationship that we have with the city.

**Q. I don't know who wants to take this. I've got some big personalities on the call, including a many times over most popular driver. Chase Elliott is both the most popular driver and the champion, and yet he often is not in a very good mood after a race. I'm wondering how long you guys think that the way he sort of projects himself on TV and in those situations will work and if that's a good look for the ambassador of the sport.**

DALE EARNHARDT JR.: I guess I can take that. I've seen Chase in a lot of different moods, and we often sort of criticized him about how hard he was on himself and then he started winning races and started feeling like some of the attention was deserved. He seemed more comfortable when he started having the success that he thought he should be having.

Now he's a champion, and I think that all of this is kind of happening so fast. He's pretty young and still has a lot to figure out, and I think that to win a championship and have success and be thrust into this position that he's in at such a young age, I don't expect him to have it figured out. I don't expect him to be perfect. I don't expect him to know exactly how his personality rubs people, whether it's the right way or the wrong way.

It's all kind of trial by fire, and he's kind of learning as he goes. He'll make mistakes. He won't get it right every time. I know that I didn't. I think I guess what I'm saying is I can give him a lot of leeway and a lot of time to sort of figure out who he wants to be. He's kind of struggling, I think, with really where he fits in.

We've been working on this piece with him. I have been working on this piece with him to know more about him and learn more about him and understand really who he is, and when you really get to know who Chase is, the thing about him wanting to stay connected to his roots, to his hometown so he's not lured away from there by the need to feel -- the feeling of needing to be in Charlotte near the race team and all this, he does his own thing.

I think once -- he just does his own thing. It's good enough for him, and like it or you don't like it, it doesn't really matter. I think when he wins, he's happy. You get great reaction, and so far I guess -- he's got a long way to go. I think a lot has happened to him in a very short time at a very young age.

JEFF BURTON: I'll add to that. I think that Chase has a real sense inside of himself as accountability, and I think

that some of his comments and some of his body language is just a way that he -- if feels like to me he holds himself accountable to whatever happens: Good, bad, and especially the bad.

I think that that comes across as negative to some people, when in fact I think he's just saying, I need to be better. Like I'm not pointing the finger at somebody else saying, they need to do it. He just seems like he's a very self-aware, I can impact this, and some of those post-race comments come across as really negative, but I just believe that he's holding himself accountable.

I also think -- Steve and I were in this conversation this morning talking about a lot of drivers. These guys are young, and they change. We all change in life, and we're not the same people at 20 that we are at 30 and then again at 40. I think that we put the camera on these guys and we show them -- what's great about the sport, we have this unbelievable access to them, and right out of an event when you're hot, mad, happy, whatever that emotion is, your life revolves around that stuff, we're right there.

Everybody handles that differently, and they change and they grow and they mature. I think he's actually -- when you sit down and get away from everybody, he's a very positive guy. He's a very engaging person. But I think he's very reserved around other people, but I believe that for my view of that is that's for good reasons, and I think it's all about self-accountability.

RICK ALLEN: I just wanted to reiterate, 25 years old. You look at athletes that come out of college that are 22, 23 years old, they're thrust into the NFL, it's a hard transition. You've got a kid who's 25 years old who grew up in a household where his dad is a Hall of Famer, most popular driver forever until Jr. came along, and you just have great expectations. I'm sure he has unbelievable expectations for himself, and at the age of 25 he's still trying to figure out how do I show these emotions, what do I give to people that are asking for so many things like Jeff says, right out of the car, just out of competition.

He's going to learn, and at 25 years old, I think he's done a pretty impressive job of showing us what a champion looks like in NASCAR. I think he's a pretty exceptional young man.

**Q. Sam, with INDYCAR you'll see very limited commercial breaks and side by side instead of just full traditional breaks. Given that INDYCAR does this almost every break, why isn't that somebody we could bring in with NASCAR?**

SAM FLOOD: We've been doing that for the last six years.

We have a very similar pattern. NASCAR races are longer and there, are a certain number of races that are on broadcast TV that have to be full screen. They're called station breaks, and those will always be full screen commercials. When cautions happen we try to get in our national full-screen commercials.

But the last hour and a half to two hours of race it's always side by side. We've got a great structure in place. Our advertising community has embraced the technique and the policy, and that's what we've been going with for a long time.

We're on board with you, and we're executing that.

**Q. Steve, this is probably something you might better understand as a crew chief. Chase Briscoe during the Goodyear tire test a few months ago said that the tires were cording after 20 to 25 laps in. Given that some tracks even with older surfaces we don't see that happening, what exactly causes tires to cord during a tire test?**

STEVE LETARTE: Well, I would assume a big issue with the tire test is just a lack of track activity. When you look at any surface, asphalt or concrete, it really makes no difference, it has a certain amount of coarseness to it, kind of like a piece of sandpaper, and if you can imagine a piece of sandpaper and you rub it on a softer surface like a tire, it actually fills in some of the ridges on the surface and actually makes that piece of sandpaper less course, and that's what laps do. The more a car runs around a racetrack, it over time fills in some of the deeper and more aggressive areas of the track, and as it does that, the next time by and the next times it wears less and less and less.

This is a major facility; it's a huge amount of concrete, and it's going to take more than three or four cars at a tire test to see a big shift, plus Goodyear has to bring back a tire and try to guess a little bit at these tests of what kind of car versus track, and now that they have that data, I'm sure the tire they're going to bring back this weekend is going to give the teams a great opportunity to put on a good show, and that's really what we're looking for. So not a big surprise that wear was very high at the tire test.

**Q. Rick, can you talk a little bit about the atmosphere of calling the race now that the fans are back in the stands?**

RICK ALLEN: Well, I think one of the greatest things that happened last year during the pandemic was when we got the call from Sam and Jeff Behnke that said we're sending you guys back to the racetrack. We really appreciated Marcus Smith and him allowing us to call the races from



Charlotte Motor Speedway, but there was just -- it was really vanilla to be in a booth at a racetrack but not hear the crowd and not feel that energy and not hear the cars and smell the smells that you smell at a racetrack.

So when we were able to go back to the racetrack, it was an amazing transformation. We really appreciate being able to be right in the mix of what's going on.

Our booth automatically has an energy because we love the sport so much, but that energy, it's exponential when you add the crowd. When you see the crowd jumping to their feet and you hear them roar and you just feel that, we feed off of that. That's something that we love as a broadcast team, just to feed off of that energy that the crowd gives us.

That's why we're so excited to go to Nashville this weekend, a sold-out crowd, capacity crowd. We're going to feed off of that just like everybody in America is feeding off of it right now, being able to enjoy sporting events like we used to be able to. So we're looking forward to this weekend.

**Q. Since you've been there before, what advice or message have you given your drivers at JRM about maybe what they can expect or what to look for coming up this weekend at the track?**

DALE EARNHARDT JR.: Well, they will watch some videos of the races from the past there to be able to get an idea what the line is and where guys are making passes, how guys are setting passes up. But this track is pretty unique, and due to the concrete surface and the difference in how the tires grip the concrete versus an asphalt track, you think you can driveway deeper into Turn 1 than you can. You have to lift pretty early for that corner to have the grip you need in the middle of the corner. It's easy to over-drive Turn 1.

That's probably the first thing they're going to learn, and they'll figure that out.

And then the real challenge for a concrete track, especially a mile-and-a-half where you're just constantly turning the wheel, is trying to get the car to rotate, getting the front to work without chattering the right rear tire because if you chatter the right rear tire or get loose at this track, you're going to be really slow. It's just going to be a balance of trying to get the car neutral to where you've got to -- you've got the car turning but you've not enough rear grip to lean on the right rear.

It's a bit of a challenge. It's very kind of frustrating to be honest with you. I always found the concrete surfaces to

be super frustrating.

Now, I've had some fun and good races at Dover and Bristol, but those surfaces are aggravating as heck, and I think this one is going to throw a lot of challenges at the teams because it's going to change so much throughout the weekend as more and more cars run on it, more laps are ran on it.

**Q. Harrison was talking about how he leaves a lot of the business stuff to you, and I'm curious when you're trying to kind of manage or figure out what your son or driver should do, how do you do it when it seems like there's all these talks of new owners and teams being bought out? How do you even know who to talk to and what's going to -- how to kind of try to set a path when you really don't know potentially what teams are going to be out there in two or three years?**

JEFF BURTON: Yeah, I think as a sport in general, and we talk a lot about this, this new car is changing the Cup level, and I think that's going to change Xfinity as well as trucks. The big question is how. There's a lot of unknowns in regard to what does next year's Cup -- how does their business affect what happens in Xfinity, trucks, and then what opportunities get created by that.

So I think for Harrison, and I think it's no different than for any young driver or experienced driver that's looking for what is his opportunity next year is quite simply what's available. What's out there, what's available? That all has to get sorted out.

Then does the new car create an opportunity that would not have been there? Does it take away an opportunity that would have been there?

I don't know of a time in the sport where there's been so many unknowns, and that's not just for drivers, that's for crew members, that's for car owners, that's for the industry in general. I think there's a certain amount of wait-and-see that has to happen. I think there's also a certain amount of when you do see it and it looks right, I think you need to act. I think that's going to be important, as well, because I think when things start happening, they're going to happen rapidly.

Not just for Harrison, I look at it as a person that's been around the sport a long time, is in many different roles, there's just -- next year I think is going to be crazy, and leading up to next year I think this silly season, as we call it, is going to be pretty intense.

I just think you have to look at what's there. I think you have to respect the relationships that you have. I think you

have to respect those relationships. I think you have to look at opportunities. It's just eyes wide open, peek over and see what's over there and see where you are, and that's all you can do. I think that's all everybody can do.

I think there's just so much happening right now in the sport, and even though there's so much happening, it's hard to say right now these are all the opportunities. Some bit of patience I think is important, but at some point people are going to start to lose patience and start making decisions really quickly, but you just have to position yourself to see what's available.

Again, I want to be clear, that's not just for Harrison, that's for everybody. That's for every single person involved in the sport right now.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, everybody, for joining us today.

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