

# Ryan Blaney Wins NASCAR Cup Series Championship As Ford Sweeps All Three Titles

HOW MUCH OF THE STORY OF THIS 12 TEAM THIS YEAR IS ABOUT NEVER GIVING UP AND OVERCOMING ADVERSITY? “Yeah, I think we did an amazing job on that. It was somewhat of an up and down year, but you’re gonna have those moments and through the summer we just worked really hard to get back to where we needed to be and set a deadline for the playoffs and we met that deadline. I’m just super proud of the effort by everybody at Team Penske who put in tons and tons of hours of hard work and nobody really got down. They just put their heads down and decided to really put in a lot of work and it showed up, especially these playoffs and especially the last five weeks. It’s so cool to have all of their hard work pay off, so they should be proud.”

WHAT ABOUT YOUR DAD. HOW MUCH HAS FAMILY MEANT TO YOU? “It’s been everything. Obviously, I come from a family of racers – my grandfather and dad and uncle. Dad is obviously who I grew up watching and admiring and wanted to be like, so to be able to do what he did because as a kid I just wanted to do what dad did, so to be able to race and let alone compete for wins and championships and still have my parents around and people that you look up to that are still around it makes it even more special.”

HOW ABOUT THE JOB JONATHAN HASLER DID FOR THIS TEAM? “He’s been amazing. It’s been a fun two years. We had a shot to get here last year and I made some mistakes that kept us out, so we worked really hard in the winter to try to get back to where we know we can be and he’s such a dedicated hard worker. Every single person on this 12 group is, from the pit crew to the mechanics and truck drivers. Everyone has a part in it and they work their asses off, so it’s cool to see all that stuff pay off. It’s fun to work with Jonathan and hopefully we can get some more.”

HOW ABOUT ROGER PENSKE. WHAT HAS HE MEANT TO YOUR CAREER? “It’s been amazing. It’s been over 10 years when I

walked through the doors of that place. It’s hard to believe. It’s gone by so fast. I was telling everybody all week that having the opportunity to go back-to-back Cup champions for Mr. Penske hasn’t been done. He hasn’t done that and it’s not very often you get to do something in motorsports that RP hasn’t done because he’s done everything and accomplished everything, so to be able to be a part of this and bring him another championship and be a driver that’s brought him a championship is very special, so it’s been a fun decade and hopefully another fun decade ahead.”

KEVIN HARVICK, No. 4 Busch Light Harvick Ford Mustang – WHAT ARE YOUR EMOTIONS? “It’s kind of a relief, to be honest with you. There was just so much going on before the race and this week, but it was pretty cool to lead some laps there in the last race. I’m just proud of everybody at Stewart-Haas Racing, everybody that works on this car and has worked on this car for a long time. I’ve just got to thank all the fans and NASCAR and my family and everybody for all of the support. It’s been a great ride and I can’t complain.”

WHEN YOU TOOK THE LEAD COULD YOU HEAR THE ROAR OF THE CROWD? THEY WERE ON THEIR FEET. “I figured. The fans have been great wishing us well to do the best that we can on the racetrack. It’s been an up and down year, but we’ve had some good runs and we were at least competitive. We didn’t ride around in the back, so that’s the main thing – just doing all that we can do.”

WHAT DO YOU FEEL? “Relief now. The emotions are kind of over at this particular point. This was a tough week with everything going on and lots to do. I think, for me, it’s been a great ride, so I don’t have anything to complain about. I’m just happy that we got to this point and kind of closed the book on our own.”

IT LOOKED LIKE YOU MIGHT WIN. “Yeah, as the sun went down we kept getting tighter in the corner and then we lost a few spots



on a pit stop and the cars are so even you couldn’t really make it back up, but we just got a little bit too tight. We were OK. We were right in the middle of where we needed to be, but just on the wrong side of that front group.”

HOW DO YOU WALK OUT OF THIS TRACK? “This whole year has been incredible with the fans and the garage and everybody for all the support. We wanted to tell a story for 30 years and I think we did a pretty good job with that.”

YOU SAID TO KEELAN, ‘WHAT NOW?’ WHEN YOU GOT OUT OF THE CAR. WHAT NOW? “Yeah. Everything is already in place with everything that we have going on with television and businesses and Keelan’s racing and school. We’ve got so many things in motion with the next couple of years with plans and what we want to do, so we’re gonna go back to work. I do already have calls next week with the folks from Fox and starting to work on end of the year things for what we want to do there, but I still think the responsibility is just as big to go up there and try to give the fans as much information as possible and do a good job for Fox and everybody with this sport to tell the best story that we can. We have a lot of great drivers, a lot of great personalities and I

hope everybody gets to see that.”

YOU’RE LEAVING ON YOUR OWN TERMS WHILE STILL COMPETITIVE. WHAT MORE COULD YOU ASK FOR OTHER THAN A WIN OR TITLE? “It really hasn’t been about wins or losses, but you never want to flop around, so to be able to lead laps in the last race kind of tells you how competitive we still are and I think with some tweaks and adjustments to some of the things at Stewart-Haas, you could go right back out there and be where you need to be with everything that we have going on. Josh is gonna do a great job. I can’t wait to see Josh drive this car around. Busch is still in this sport. Mobil is still in this sport. It gave everybody time to do and evaluate what they wanted to do and that’s really what I wanted. I wanted to leave here and be able to look at all you guys, look at the fans, walk in the TV booth and walk into any trailer in that garage, whether it’s a driver, a crew chief, NASCAR, whoever it is, and be able to end on good terms and I think we did that.”

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