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## **MIKE SHIPLETT: Crew Chief, No. 41 Ford Mustang**

**Birthdate:** May 17, 1972  
**Birthplace:** Amherst, Ohio  
**Hometown:** Amherst, Ohio  
**Residence:** Denver, North Carolina  
**Spouse:** Brooke

When Stewart-Haas Racing (SHR) promoted Cole Custer from its NASCAR Xfinity Series team to its flagship NASCAR Cup Series program for 2020, crew chief Mike Shiplett earned a promotion too.

Shiplett has been a crew chief for more than 300 races across the Xfinity Series and Cup Series, and it was his 2019 season with Custer that proved to be his most productive. In Shiplett's first year at SHR, he guided Custer to a career-high seven wins and six poles, with 17 top-five and 24 top-10 finishes and a total of 922 laps led. It was a breakout year for Custer, who entered 2019 after consecutive single-win seasons in 2017 and 2018.

Shiplett came to SHR from Chip Ganassi Racing, where in 2018 he earned six Xfinity Series wins, steering Kyle Larson to four victories and a win apiece for Ross Chastain and John Hunter Nemechek. It was a standout year for the veteran crew chief, but it ended up being short lived when Ganassi's Xfinity Series team was unexpectedly shut down before 2019 even began. But as the door to Ganassi closed, another opened at SHR, whereupon Shiplett's pairing with Custer delivered almost immediately. The duo scored the first of their seven victories in just the third race of the season at Auto Club Speedway in Fontana, California.

Shiplett, now in his 12<sup>th</sup> year as a crew chief, built his racing career from the ground up. The Amherst, Ohio, native was raised around short track racing with his uncle, who owned a pair of street stocks that competed at local tracks. Shiplett helped around the shop and on the road as part of his uncle's crew. At 15, Shiplett's uncle rewarded his effort and attention to detail by giving him a street stock to race, but a local rule kept him out of the driver's seat until he turned 16. But once Shiplett did turn 16, he started racing his street stock throughout Ohio, eventually moving up to faster, higher-horsepower late model stock cars. When not driving and working on racecars, Shiplett attended the University of Northwestern Ohio, where he graduated in 1992 with a degree in diesel technology.

After racing street stocks and late models for seven years, Shiplett began working as a mechanic in 1995 with Liberty Racing in the American Speed Association (ASA) and stayed with the team as it transitioned to the NASCAR Truck Series. At the end of the 1998 season, Shiplett moved to the heart of NASCAR in North Carolina, joining the No. 75 team of Butch Mock Motorsports in the Cup Series. Shiplett was the car chief for the No. 75 team through the 2000 season, working with drivers Ted Musgrave (1999) and Wally Dallenbach (2000). Shiplett moved to Ultra Motorsports in 2001, serving in the same role and in the same series. He worked with a handful of drivers until earning a new opportunity with Evernham Motorsports in 2003 that helped propel his career to the next level.

Shiplett's first stint as a crew chief began in 2007 when he oversaw Evernham Motorsports' Xfinity Series program. Juggling eight different drivers, Shiplett scored two wins with Kasey Kahne and earned three top-fives and eight top-10s. As Evernham Motorsports morphed into Gillett-Evernham Motorsports and eventually Richard Petty Motorsports, Shiplett adapted to the changes, becoming a Cup Series crew chief in 2008 and working with five different drivers through the 2011 season.

Shiplett returned to the Xfinity Series in 2012 when he joined Turner Motorsports, where he also performed crew chief duties in the NASCAR Truck Series. In fact, it was at Rockingham (N.C.) Speedway on April 15, 2012 where Shiplett directed Kahne to victory in the Truck Series race, earning Turner Motorsports its first win in that division.

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Shiplett came back to Richard Petty Motorsports for the 2013-2014 seasons, working within the organization's research-and-development team. But the desire to be a crew chief beckoned, and Shiplett arrived at HScott Motorsports with Chip Ganassi in 2015. The Xfinity Series team had a technical alliance with the Cup Series team of Chip Ganassi Racing, and it paired Shiplett with Larson. In 14 races together, the duo scored nine top-10s, highlighted by a victory in the season finale at Homestead-Miami Speedway. Shiplett also worked with drivers Justin Marks and Brennan Poole.

Ganassi took full control of HScott Motorsports in 2016 and Shiplett proved his worth, winning with each of the drivers he worked with – Larson (twice) and Marks (once). Shiplett continued to deliver in 2017, as he knocked down more wins with Larson (three) and a victory each with Tyler Reddick and Alex Bowman. Shiplett's six-win season in 2018 trumped them all, providing the perfect segue to his current home at SHR.

Shiplett resides in Denver, North Carolina, with his wife Brooke.

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