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BUILT *Ford* PROUD



CLINT BOWYER **'Built Ford Proud' in Bristol**

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina (May 29, 2020) –The slogan “Built Ford Proud” is three simple words that hold so much history and meaning.

“There are hundreds of thousands of Ford employees and millions of customers all over the world who know exactly what ‘Built Ford Proud’ means,” said Clint Bowyer, whose No. 14 Ford Mustang for Stewart-Haas Racing (SHR) will carry blue and white “Built Ford Proud” decals Sunday in the 500-lap NASCAR Cup Series race at Bristol (Tenn.) Motor Speedway.

For most race fans the “Built Ford Proud” slogan creates images of the Mustang – Ford’s sporty coupe that Bowyer races in NASCAR – or the Ford F-150, the company’s popular pickup truck. The F-150 has been America’s best-selling truck for 43 consecutive years and the best-selling vehicle overall for 38 consecutive years.

“Built Ford Proud” represents the decades of hard work, consistent determination to be the best and ultimately, it represents the American spirit. When America faces a challenge the Ford Motor Company has a strong heritage of help.

The story of the “Arsenal of Democracy” and Ford Motor Company’s contributions to the war effort during World War II is one that is well known. Tanks, jeeps, and planes were rolling off Ford assembly lines. On the civilian front, Ford was providing resources for successful Victory Gardens as an answer to widespread food rationing.

In 1941, one of the greatest causes of infant mortality was premature birth, especially in rural areas of the country where the only substitute for the warmth of the mother’s body, the incubator, was seldom available. Henry Ford overheard a conversation about the development of a portable incubator, then had his experts and production line workers address the problem. Soon, infants were in Ford incubators across the country. By the late 1940s, the Polio crisis was rising in the U.S. Ford plastics plant, production engineering facility, and tool & die departments combined talents to produce an iron lung for polio victims.

The examples are many and still apply today as Ford is once again answering the call to help America amid the COVID-19 virus. Ford joined forces with firms such as 3M and GE Healthcare to quickly expand production of urgently needed medical equipment and supplies for healthcare workers, first responders, and patients. From leveraging its in-house 3D printing capability to produce components for use in personal protective equipment, to beginning the production of urgently needed ventilators, Ford is stepping up.

“We are all in this together,” said Bowyer, whose No. 14 Mustang will carry an in-car camera Sunday at Bristol. “I’m proud of the way NASCAR, Ford and SHR are helping everyone out. This is bigger than racing.”

Since the onset of the pandemic, SHR has been building intensive care unit webcam carts for Novant Health. The team began building a prototype cart in mid-April for use in hospital ICUs. SHR recently delivered 10 of its ICU webcam carts to Novant Health with the plan to build 110 units over the coming weeks for use across Novant Health’s integrated system of physician practices, hospitals and outpatient centers.

NASCAR has led the way in the return of sports in America. Sunday will continue to see NASCAR operate under a comprehensive health and safety plan that permits no fans, limited crew, strict social distancing, and mandated personal protective equipment and health screenings for all, just as it did for each of the two races held in both Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway and Darlington (S.C.) Raceway.

It’s been rough sledding for Bowyer since NASCAR’s return to racing after the pandemic suspended competition for 10 weeks. He’s been consistently shown having one of the fastest cars on the track in the four races, but accidents penalties and bad luck have plagued his finishes.

He enters Sunday’s race 14th in points after finishing 16th in Thursday night’s 500-kilometer race at Charlotte despite three penalties on pit road. A few days before, in Sunday night’s Coca-Cola 600, Bowyer moved from 20th to 11th-place before a mechanical issue sent his No. 14 Mustang into the wall on lap 96 of the 400-lap race, leaving him with a 40th-place finish.

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Bowyer finished 17th and 22nd in the two Darlington races the previous week. He ran in the top-six most of the May 17 race before problems in the final stage dropped him to 17th. On May 20 at Darlington, he won the first two stages – a first for a driver in 2020 – and led 71 laps to surpass the 3,000-laps-led mark for his career. But, once again, very late-race trouble that saw wall contact and a spin resulted in a disappointing finish.

Bowyer hopes Bristol is the track where he can turn it around. He owns seven top-five finishes in 28 starts there, including four consecutive top-10s. In last year's April race at Bristol, Bowyer started eighth and finished second in Stage 1, and eighth in Stage 2. He took the lead with 125 laps remaining, but contact with Joey Logano with 60 laps remaining ruined his bid for victory, leaving him with a seventh-place finish.

Bowyer jokingly wished it would rain in Charlotte this week so NASCAR would schedule doubleheaders at Bristol. That could be because he has finished in the top-eight at Bristol in seven of the last nine races.

"I just like the place," he said. "I'm a short-track racer and have a lot of confidence on these short tracks coming up. I hope it starts Sunday."

There isn't much rest planned for the days after Bristol. The Cup Series will return to action at Atlanta Motor Speedway on June 7, Martinsville (Va.) Speedway on June 10, Homestead-Miami (Fla.) Speedway on June 14, and Talladega (Ala.) Superspeedway on June 21.

CLINT BOWYER, Driver of the No. 14 "Built Ford Proud" Mustang for Stewart-Haas Racing:

What has it been like to be part of the Ford Family?

"What a treat. There are certain things in life, and I guess it all depends on how you grew up, but there are certain things that just hit you. Those surreal moments. I was texting my father, and a guy who means a lot to me and is really close to him and has been around hot rods and drag racing all my life, my whole upbringing. I was like, 'You are never going to believe this. I am at Henry Ford's estate with his great-grandson Edsel as a host at dinner.' Did you hear what I just said? I am from a little town in Kansas and here I am at Henry Ford's estate, looking at a power plant that he built off the river that charged his estate with the help of Edison. Edison, yes, that guy. It is unbelievable. It was just, my gosh. The pride that Edsel has in his family's history. It was super cool to sit across the table from Edsel and hear him speak about the history and impact it has made in his life and in our country. It really was a surreal moment that hit me in a big way and I very much appreciated it. It was a very cool night."

What are your thoughts on Bristol Motor Speedway?

"Anybody who hates Bristol shouldn't be in racing because this is the mecca of all racetracks. This is the granddaddy of them all. There's no question. Look at this place. Look at the grandstands. I mean, there's nothing like this place, and tracks like this we need all across the country. A fan, if they want to be a fan of this sport, they need to learn short-track racing and they need to learn of Bristol Motor Speedway. There's not a fan, a family member, a friend, anybody that I know that I wouldn't point in the direction of Bristol Motor Speedway so, as a racer on the racetrack, it's no different."

What makes Bristol so special?

"Just the unknown, being able to go for it, being able to not worry about an aero push or horsepower deficit or whatever the case may be – get ahold of the steering wheel, get ahold of the gas pedal and make something happen and this is a track where you can do that."

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