



# CLINT BOWYER

## Time To Wind the Grandfather Clock

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina (June 9, 2020) – It’s the time of the year Clint Bowyer, driver of the No. 14 Rush Truck Centers/Cummins Ford Mustang for Stewart-Haas Racing (SHR), likes to wind the grandfather clock in his house. Of course, with most things involving Bowyer, there’s a good story behind it.

Race fans know by now the winner of Wednesday night’s NASCAR Cup Series race at Martinsville (Va.) Speedway will take home a longcase grandfather clock made locally in Southern Virginia. Every stock car driver dreams of standing in victory lane at the flat, half-mile, paperclip-shaped track posing next to the clock – one of the most unique trophies in sports.

Bowyer ended a 190-race race losing streak by leading 215 of 500 laps capturing his only Martinsville victory on March 26, 2018. So, the sound of his clock’s chimes echoing through his household was music to his ears – at least for a while.

“You listen to that damn thing for a month out of pride,” Bowyer recalled. “Come hell or high water, you are going to stop and listen to it chime every single time.”

Bowyer said each time he heard the clock chime, it reminded him of a dream come true. It also woke up the children.

“Your wife is like, ‘Shut that thing off,’ because it went off on the hour every hour,” he said. “At midnight, it’s chiming in our house. I’m like, ‘No way, man. I have wanted that thing my whole life and we are going to listen to it.’”

But even he had to give in.

“After about a month, even you get to a point and are like, ‘I think we better just let it go dead,’” Bowyer said. “So now the weights are all the way down to the end of it and the damn clock isn’t even working.”

But there are two weeks each year Bowyer admits he goes and winds the clock just to hear at chime again.

“Usually, the week leading into Martinsville, I’ll go up and fire that baby up again just to remind myself what it takes to win at that place,” he said. “I think I’m going to fire that clock off as soon as I get home this week.”

Bowyer and his fellow Cup Series drivers will race Wednesday night in Martinsville in the third midweek race since NASCAR returned from a 10-week hiatus due to the pandemic virus. As it did in Darlington, Charlotte and Atlanta the last three weeks, NASCAR will operate under a comprehensive health and safety plan at Martinsville that permits no fans, limited crew, strict social distancing, and mandated personal protective equipment and health screenings for all.

Bowyer arrives at Martinsville 12th in driver standings after leading 58 laps but finishing 20th Sunday at Atlanta Motor Speedway. A late pit stop for tires ruined a top-10 finish for Bowyer.

Bowyer’s No. 14 Ford Mustang will carry Rush Truck Centers and Cummins decals at Martinsville, as well as the special social media hashtag #ThankATrucker. The hashtag calls attention to the men and women transporting goods and providing a public service. Rush Truck Centers is considered an essential business by the government with its more than 100 dealerships operating across the country. Cummins, the global leader in power technology solutions, points out more than 80 percent of the nation’s communities depend exclusively on truck drivers to move supplies that are necessary for us to recover from this difficult time.

Rush Truck Centers has been the primary partner for the No. 14 team since Bowyer arrived at SHR in 2017 and has been with the organization since 2010. With Bowyer’s background working in his dad’s towing service in Emporia, Kansas, Bowyer understands the importance of keeping trucks up and running. That is why Rush is proud to partner with Bowyer and support the trucks that haul the racecars, as well as customers across the country with its total service management package, RushCare Complete. This all-inclusive solution provides dedicated concierge service, vehicle telematics, mobile service, express routine maintenance, real-time service updates and a comprehensive source for all-makes parts.

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The Martinsville race is Cummins' first appearance of 2020 with Bowyer. The company is no stranger to victory lane with its racing lineage dating back to the inaugural Indianapolis 500 in 1911, when company founder Clessie Cummins was on the pit crew of the race-winning Marmon Wasp of driver Ray Harroun. Since its founding in 1919, the company now employs approximately 61,600 people and serves customers in about 190 countries and territories through a network of some 8,000 wholly owned and independent dealer and distributor locations. While Cummins is a corporation of complementary business segments that design, manufacture, distribute and service a broad portfolio of power solutions, it is best known for its diesel truck engines.

Bowyer hopes to take Rush Truck Centers and Cummins to victory lane at Martinsville where, in addition to the 2018 victory, he owns six top-five finishes and 16 top-10s in 28 Cup Series races. Martinsville is also a historically good track for Kannapolis, North Carolina-based SHR. The organization owns four Martinsville victories – Ryan Newman in April 2012, Tony Stewart in October 2011, Kurt Busch in March 2014 and Bowyer in 2018 – 10 top-five finishes and 29 top-10s in 70 starts at the track, and SHR cars have led 720 laps there.

Martinsville marks the seventh race since May 17 for the Cup Series and there isn't much rest planned for the days after Martinsville. The Cup Series will return to action at Homestead-Miami Speedway on Sunday, and Talladega (Ala.) Superspeedway June 21, a doubleheader at Pocono (Pa.) Raceway June 27 and 28, Indianapolis Motor Speedway July 5, Kentucky Speedway in Sparta July 12, the annual non-points All-Star Race on July 15, Texas Motor Speedway in Fort Worth July 19, Kansas Speedway July 23 and New Hampshire Motor Speedway in Loudon Aug. 2. The All-Star Race is a Wednesday-night event and Kansas is a Thursday-night race.

Despite the ramped-up scheduling, Bowyer isn't worried about rest. Especially if he brings home another grandfather clock Wednesday night.

"I'll gladly listen to two of those clocks chime for the next month or two," he said.

***CLINT BOWYER, Driver of the No. 14 Rush Truck Centers/Cummins Ford Mustang for Stewart-Haas Racing:***

#### **What has it been like racing so often since the return?**

"It's been extremely challenging on the teams. Your crew chiefs, engineers, mechanics and pit crew. Trying to get everything ready for such a quick turnaround. There is so much that goes into these races. They are the ones who have had to really go hard, of late. That being said I love the midweek stuff."

#### **What does it take to be successful at Martinsville?**

"You acquire a driving style there. Nobody in the history of the sports has shown up at Martinsville and instantly knew how to drive the place, let alone set the world on fire. You've got to learn it, appreciate it, put in your time. Eventually, you perfect it by trial and error. You don't perfect a track like Martinsville through natural talent. You've got to get out there and learn from them damn mistakes. You don't want to make the same mistake lap after lap, year after year. The same principals of speed don't apply there. If your crew chief is in your ear saying he needs a tenth (of a second), you think, 'Let me get on the gas quicker, let me drive it in deeper.' Those are all the things it normally takes to go faster at any other place. Those do not apply at Martinsville. You just have to learn that place."

#### **When did you realize you were figuring out Martinsville?**

"I think, over the course of my career dating back to 2012, when I was with (former Michael Waltrip Racing crew chief) Brian Pattie, we were knocking on the door pretty hard at Martinsville. We could never punch it through. Got close a couple of times, even ended up wrecking half the field once, going for the win. I hate to say it owed me one, but it owed me one and I finally got that clock and punched that ticket. Because of that, I feel like it put a level of confidence in me that I can go do it again. I feel like we as an organization can do it again and again. We've been fast at Stewart-Haas Racing and again, been knocking on that door. I'm looking forward to getting there. I feel like we are capable of putting another grandfather clock right next to the one I have. It could be Wednesday."

#### **What is so special about the paper-clipped shaped track?**

"It's short-track racing, it's where our sport came from, it's where our country came from. It's old school, it's, I don't know his name, but ole Fred on the backstretch, his house is right there. There's train tracks on the backstretch, people live at the racetrack. It's like a town grew up around it. It's like a lot of small towns across America. When you go to that place, you feel like you are a part of an old-school generational thing that is timeless. That's true whether you are a fan or competitor, or a fan sitting at home just watching. It's America at its finest. Plus, I love the drive to Martinsville from my house. It's a real pretty and peaceful drive. Old, two-lane road, gorgeous farm with a horse painted red, white, and blue. All the rolling hills as you go up through there. You are calm and just get ready to do battle."