



CLINT BOWYER

Everything Is Bigger in Texas

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina (July 16, 2020) – They say everything is bigger in Texas.

Texas Motor Speedway president Eddie Gossage said four-and-a-half footprints of the Dallas Cowboys' NFL stadium fit in his track's infield and the track's grandstands are as massive as any on the circuit.

So, when Texas Gov. Greg Abbott issued an executive order allowing the Fort Worth track to operate at 50% spectator capacity during Sunday's 500-mile NASCAR Cup Series race, it was billed as the "first major league sports event in Texas open to fans since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic."

For Clint Bowyer, driver of Stewart-Haas Racing's (SHR) No. 14 Rush Truck Centers Ford Mustang, it means the 2020 season is getting a little bit closer to normal.

"The weirdest thing in 2020 has been not having fans in the stands and in the infield," said Bowyer, who finished 15th in Wednesday night's NASCAR All-Star Race at Bristol (Tenn.) Motor Speedway. "I miss their energy, their excitement, hearing them cheer or boo, or just have a reaction to what's going on. The fans at Bristol Wednesday were great, and then with fans at Texas on Sunday means we are getting that atmosphere back at the track."

There will be many safety measures in place.

Anyone in attendance over the age of 10 is required to wear a facial covering when 6 feet of space cannot be maintained from other people not belonging to the same household. Fans won't be granted access to the infield, and payment for concessions purchases will be limited to credit cards. The track has posted nearly 10,000 signs reminding fans of the importance of social distancing

It's the same for competitors. Sundays' race is the NASCAR Cup Series' 14th since the Cup Series returned from a 10-week hiatus on May 17 due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. As it did at the previous 13 races, NASCAR series and team personnel in the infield will continue to operate under a comprehensive health and safety plan at Texas that permits limited crew, strict social distancing, and mandated personal protective equipment and health screenings for all.

Once he climbs into the car, Bowyer will be all business. He arrives at Texas after Wednesday night's All-Star festivities at Bristol, which included a second-place finish in the non-points NASCAR All-Star Open and his advancement into the All-Star Race via the fan vote.

Since its return in May, NASCAR has used a random draw to determine the start order each week. Positions 1 through 12 are determined by a random draw among charter teams occupying those positions in team owner points. The same is true for positions 13 through 24 and 25 through 36, while positions 37 through 40 are filled out by open, non-chartered teams in order of owner points.

Bowyer is 13th in points just 21 markers outside the top-12 drawing for starting positions each week.

"Aside from the obvious of winning the race each and every week, right now our goal is getting back into damn 12th place," Bowyer said. "Gosh, it has been tough – since Talladega. We were in 12th, would have been just fine. Look at my teammate Aric Almirola and myself. He was 13th and I was 12th at Talladega. I got wrecked on the last lap. He finished third and I was like, 'No big deal, we will race it out.' We were within striking distance of others, too. He sat on pole the next week and won two stages and put 50 points on me in three races where we have been starting 21st, 22nd or worse and struggling and started digging ourselves out of a hole. Just that difference in that one spot and one particular race, that is a wildcard race at Talladega.

"No excuses or anything else, but it is just a prime example of how quickly things can change in this world. That shoe can be on the other foot and it will be. The biggest thing is, we need to get back in the top-12 if we are going to continue to draw for positions."

-more-

Not that he needs any incentive to do well in Texas, but Bowyer has added reasons for success. His cornerstone partner Rush Truck Centers is headquartered near San Antonio.

Rush Truck Centers has been the primary partner on the No. 14 team since Bowyer arrived at SHR in 2017 and has been with the organization since 2010. The Texas-based company has used Bowyer and the team to appeal to NASCAR fans as one way to recruit the technicians it needs to operate the largest network of commercial truck and bus dealerships in the country, with locations in 22 states.

“Rush Truck Centers keeps our trucks and transporters in great condition, and you could argue those are the most important parts of our race team. Without them, our cars never get to the racetrack,” said Bowyer, who before Covid-19 normally spent time with Rush customers and guests each weekend. “The employees of Rush Truck Centers are as detail-oriented as we are, and their technicians are the heartbeat of their dealerships. They play a critical role in the success of our race team.”

The team from Rush Truck Centers and Rush Enterprises Chairman, CEO and President Rusty Rush can frequently be found at the track hosting customers and supporting Bowyer and SHR. Bowyer considers them to be among his closest racing friends. He’d love nothing better than to deliver a victory for Rush Sunday in Texas.

“We love seeing our friends from Rush Truck Centers and spending time with their customers,” he said. “Plus, Rusty knows our entire crew, and the leadership and inspiration he provides truly help motivate all of us. I miss seeing those guys at the track and I hope we can get everyone back soon.”

If Bowyer does win at Texas on Sunday then you’ll see how big they party in Texas.

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

NASCAR sent a memo last week reminding everyone in the sport to keep following the safety guidelines. Is it getting harder to follow those guidelines?

“I don’t think it is getting harder to follow. I think everybody needs a reminder whether you are at the racetrack or home. It is just life to get lax with things. You always need reminders. Certainly them coming out with a memo was nothing more than an opportunity. Again, I feel 100-percent safe in here. We are a family that travels together and have for a long time. We look out for each other and I think that our track record is proving itself. We are the only ones that have been doing this for 10-plus races. There are some other sanctions that are trying to start back up and, make no mistake, they are starting back up following the lead of NASCAR and the job we have done. Have there been instances where we have to learn and bob and weave? Absolutely. But show me anywhere in this COVID deal – there is no handbook that comes with it. You have to create it and you have to learn from your mistakes quickly and put them to use, and certainly we have done that with NASCAR.”

-TSC-