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## CLINT BOWYER

### No. 14 DEKALB Mustang Racing in Ford's Backyard

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina (Aug. 3, 2020) – It's 65 miles from Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn to the Ford Motor Company's worldwide headquarters in Dearborn. Clint Bowyer would walk every mile if he could hand deliver the speedway's Heritage Trophy to Ford executives after sweeping Saturday's and Sunday's NASCAR Cup Series races at the 2-mile oval.

"I know how important winning in their own backyard is to Ford because we've done it before at Michigan," Bowyer said. "I'd love to hand that trophy to Mark Rushbrook (Ford Performance Motorsports' global director) again this weekend, especially since it's Michigan's first doubleheader weekend."

The Michigan Heritage Trophy, created in August 2013, is awarded to the winning manufacturer of each Michigan Cup race. Each manufacturer and the track donates \$10,000 to a youth-related, STEM-related charity in Michigan. Since its inception, Ford and Chevrolet own six Michigan victories each while Toyota has one. The trophy will be awarded on a points system if different manufacturers win Saturday and Sunday.

The trophy, inspired by the NHL's Stanley Cup trophy, is 3 feet tall, weighs about 30 pounds and features an original sculpture similar to the Greek goddess of victory, Nike. The original bronze artwork sits atop a wooden base, like the architecture of Detroit landmarks such as the Fisher Building and Guardian Building.

"I've been able to drive for every manufacturer in the Cup Series and know how much each one of them means to our sport," said Bowyer, whose 10 career victories include two in Fords, three in Toyotas and five in Chevrolets. "We don't race without our manufacturers and I know how much each takes pride in their results on the track, especially at Michigan."

Bowyer fondly remembers winning the Heritage Trophy for Ford on June 10, 2018.

His No. 14 Haas Automation Ford Fusion had just taken the lead during the break before the final stage of the race. Rain clouds out of the northeast drew closer, spitting a fine mist with most of the 39-car field suspecting the race wouldn't last much longer.

Bowyer held the lead but only because his then-crew chief Mike Bugarewicz elected to take two tires while most of the field took four. It was up to Bowyer to hold the position just ahead of his Stewart-Haas Racing (SHR) teammate Kevin Harvick, who had led 49 laps, more than any other driver.

"I looked in the mirror – everybody behind me is on four tires," Bowyer said. "(I'm thinking that) I don't know what you're looking at, but there's an army of people on pit road who saw the same forecast, same radar, they took four."

The green flag waved and Bowyer drove as hard as he could for three-and-a-half laps. He edged just ahead of Harvick before the rain fell hard enough for NASCAR to end the race with 67 laps remaining, giving Bowyer his 10<sup>th</sup> career victory and second of the 2018 season. Then-teammate Kurt Busch's was third to give SHR its first 1-2-3 finish.

Ford has swept all three races since Bowyer's victory at Michigan.

He hopes for a repeat this weekend as he pilots the No. 14 DEKALB Ford in Michigan. DEKALB has been helping farmers ensure a future of performance with industry-leading corn seed products for more than 100 years.

"I grew up in farm country and saw firsthand the hard work that goes into growing crops and taking care of livestock," said Bowyer. "Farming takes time, energy and incredible attention to detail. DEKALB understands all of that, and they know what farmers need to take care of their crops. It really is an honor to represent DEKALB."

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Bowyer operates a 650-acre farm in North Carolina and points out the similarities between farming and racing.

“Winning is more than a goal, it’s a state of mind,” he said. “Just ask any farmer or NASCAR driver pushing themselves. You are always trying to improve performance each and every season. Once you get a taste of success and winning, that mindset takes hold, it drives everything you do, shaping families and defining who you are. Winning has roots.”

Bowyer could use a victory Saturday or Sunday at Michigan. He arrives 12th in the season’s point standing after an 18th-place finish Sunday at New Hampshire Motor Speedway in Loudon. He earned nine bonus points by finishing seventh and sixth in the first two stages before handling issues plagued his final stage.

Bowyer is 14th in the playoff standings with a 43-point cushion over the final transfer spot into the 16-driver playoff field. A win in either Michigan races secures a spot in NASCAR’s postseason, but a good run helps in padding his points cushion.

It will be a busy weekend with late-afternoon races both Saturday and Sunday in Michigan. And for Bowyer, if he wins both, a long hike to Dearborn on Monday.

***CLINT BOWYER, Driver of the No. 14 DEKALB Ford Mustang for Stewart-Haas Racing:***

**How excited are you for this weekend’s doubleheader in Michigan?**

“Definitely looking forward to Michigan. Fast racetrack and, when you talk about a fast racetrack you need fast hot rods, and our Ford Mustangs have been extremely fast up there. You know that Roush-Yates horsepower is second to none when you’re talking about up-on-the-pipe, baby, and that track keeps it up there. You are sailing around that place and I look for that track to be a track that we can contend for a win at and get back in the right swing of things for these stage points.”

**What is the strategy at Michigan?**

“At the end of the day, Michigan is about track position. If you lose that track position, it’s a fight to try and get back up there. You look at the restarts, they are wild. We are four-wide, gouging, trying to get every spot you can. If you’re going to gain spots, that’s where you’re going to gain the majority of them. Throughout the fuel run, you might gain one or two. Keeping the track position, I think, is key all day long.”

**What is it like to drive for Ford?**

“You know, every business says it operates as a family but, when you drive for Ford, you really are driving for the family. Before the race, you look over and Edsel Ford is standing there. That means a ton. Think about it, since the very first race there was a Ford in it. They treat everyone like family and we appreciate that. The thing I’ve noticed in my years at Ford is how often you are talking to the head honchos. Whether it’s a meeting at the shop or going over to Ford Performance, the top guys are the ones you talk with, making sure you have what you need to be successful at the racetrack. That means a lot to a racecar driver.”

**What is the secret to Ford’s success?**

“It is all about people. I am at home here with Ford. It is a family atmosphere. It literally is a family with the Ford family. It is all about people. The Ford Performance organization and program are a ton of fun to work with. They are all in. You want to be with the ones who are investing the most and pushing the hardest to get the results, and I don’t think anyone is doing more than Ford these days.”