

The number 14 is displayed in a large, bold, white font with a red outline and a black drop shadow, set against a black background.The word "HAAS" is written in a stylized, white, italicized font with a black outline, set against a black background.

CLINT BOWYER

Important Weekend in Dover

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina (Aug. 17, 2020) – Clint Bowyer would love nothing better than to win one or both of the NASCAR Cup Series races Saturday and Sunday at Dover (Del.) International Speedway. But, if he can't win, he'd probably settle for leaving Dover Sunday night having mathematically secured a spot in the 16-driver playoffs as the series then heads to the Aug. 29 regular-season finale on the Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway oval.

Bowyer said he and his No. 14 Stewart-Haas Racing team are focused as much on using the next two weeks in preparation for the opening round of the playoffs that begin Sept. 6 at Darlington (S.C.) Raceway as they are on securing the playoff berth this weekend at Dover.

"Yes we want to clinch a playoff spot as soon as possible, but we also want to go into the playoffs with some momentum," he said. "So I'm focusing on running well this weekend in Dover and making sure we are ready for the playoffs. We pay attention to the other guys around us in points, but the best way to get into the playoffs and have the success we want is to make sure we are running good."

After finishing sixth in last Sunday's race on the road course at Daytona, Bowyer is 14th in the playoff standings with a 66-point cushion for the final transfer spot into the 16-driver playoff field. Without winning, drivers can score a maximum 50 points in a single race, so any lead better than that come Sunday night secures a spot for Bowyer in the playoffs.

He couldn't pick a much better track than Dover to host a doubleheader of racing at such an important time in the season. The mile-long, high-banked, concrete oval in Delaware has been good to the Emporia, Kansas native over the years.

In 28 starts there, he owns three top-five finishes and 16 top-10s and has led 83 laps. He owns two NASCAR Xfinity Series victories there. He led 70 laps and beat Matt Kenseth by .547 of a second on Sept. 23, 2006 to win his third of eight career Xfinity Series victories. His most recent Xfinity Series victory also came at Dover, on Sept. 26, 2009, when he led 83 laps and beat Mike Bliss to the checkered flag by 1.319 seconds.

"Ever since I've been at SHR, we've seemed to have some really good cars at Dover," Bowyer said. "We've been so close to taking home that Miles The Monster (a replica of the track's 46-foot mascot) trophy. I hope we are just as good this weekend. If we are, then we have as good of a chance as anyone. You've got to fight this 'monster' every lap. I won a couple of Xfinity races there – haven't won a Cup race – but love this racetrack."

As he did the last two races at Michigan and Daytona, Bowyer hopes to start off well this weekend and keep earning bonus points. He finished second and fourth in the first two stages at Daytona, upping his 2020 bonus point total to 106 – 11th best among all drivers. He's also won three stages in 2020.

"That's what we need to do this weekend and carry that over into Daytona and the start of the playoffs," he said. "Once those playoffs start, every point counts. With no practice or qualifying, to get bonus points we're going to have to be really good when we roll off the truck."

Bowyer will carry the black-and-red colors of Haas Automation on his No. 14 for both races this weekend. Haas Automation is America's leading builder of CNC machine tools. Founded by Gene Haas in 1983, Haas Automation manufactures a complete line of vertical and horizontal machining centers, turning centers and rotary tables and indexers. All Haas products are built in the company's 1.1 million-square-foot manufacturing facility in Oxnard, California, and distributed through a worldwide network of Haas Factory Outlets.

"I hope good runs at Michigan and then last week at Daytona have us on a roll we can carry into Dover this weekend," Bowyer said.

If he's correct, he could leave Delaware Sunday night with a spot in the 2020 Cup Series playoffs.

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

Do you enjoy Dover?

“This is a fun racetrack. This is a challenging racetrack, a very competitive racetrack, one of the most competitive and challenging tracks I think we go to. The balance of your car is just so important, balancing those front tires to the rear. You’ve got to enjoy places like this. If you don’t, it’s a long day. Dover is always a cool track that I think every driver looks forward to because it’s a driver’s track. You’ve got to man up, get on top of that wheel and make things happen. There are just so many things going on there on that concrete surface and high banks. It’s a lot of fun. If you win there, you’ve earned it.”

How important is experience at Dover?

“I’m telling you, this is one of the toughest tracks. Here’s the thing about this track – it’s hard enough to get around there by yourself, then you get to racing somebody and now you get frustrated and it’s so easy to get yourself in trouble on that racetrack. That being said, I think younger drivers get themselves in trouble in racing conditions on this demanding racetrack.”

Is there more pressure at tracks where you’ve had success?

“I think so – there’s a little bit more pressure. There’s a reason there’s some pressure – it’s because we have performed there and we need to do it again. I feel like we can back that up and I’m fairly confident in that. You don’t take anything for granted, but this is one of those tracks where you kind of just go in and usually things work out.”

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