



CLINT BOWYER

Advancing in Playoffs Boils Down to Charlotte Roval ... Again!

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina (Oct. 5, 2020) – Clint Bowyer might be in 11th place and 38 points below the eighth-place cutoff to advance to the Round 8 in NASCAR's 2020 playoffs, but the No. 14 Ford Mustang driver has a not-so-secret weapon left in his arsenal that has worked for him in the past, and he hopes to employ it again Sunday.

Bowyer's weapon is the "roval" road course at Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway, where he has third- and fourth-place finishes, plus a bunch of bonus points in the first two races run on the 2.28-mile, 17-turn circuit that utilizes the infield as well as parts of the Charlotte oval.

The Stewart-Haas Racing (SHR) driver will need an even better performance Sunday if he is to advance beyond Sunday's third and final Round of 12 playoff race when four drivers will be eliminated from 2020 championship contention. In fact, he most likely has to win.

"We know what we have to do Sunday on the roval," Bowyer said. "We will go there to win. That place is tricky as heck, but it has been good to us the last two years, and we need to do it again."

Bowyer is on the outside looking in because of a 12th-place finish at Las Vegas Motor Speedway on Sept. 27, followed by a 33rd-place finish at Talladega last Sunday.

Bowyer has leaned on his road-course prowess before in Charlotte. Last year, he entered the final race in the Round of 16 on the Charlotte roval four points shy of the final transfer position. He racked up 16 bonus points in the first two stages of the race while surviving three- and four-wide racing before finishing fourth. It boosted him to ninth in the final Round of 16 points and easily advanced him to the next playoff round.

In 2018, Bowyer entered the opening round's final race 13th in points, just four markers outside the top-12 cutoff. A third-place finish was enough to propel Bowyer to the Round of 12.

Bowyer will have his work cut out for him on one of the sport's newest layouts.

"From the time you pull out on the track to the time you get off, it's just sketchy," he said. "You are just tip-toeing. There's no room for error at all. The grip level isn't great, like in turn three. If you get to sliding a little bit getting in there and you look over at them tires, you realize there's no room. If that thing gets out from under you, you are going to be in the fence and you are going to be in it hard. It's not something you are going to limp (the car) away from."

Now, for an even bigger scare for the drivers whose title bids will be on the line Sunday, tire manufacturer Goodyear has made wet-weather tires available in the event of rain, making it even more challenging to navigate the high-speed oval portion of the track and the low-speed, twisting, left- and right-hand turns in the course's infield. Wet-weather tires were last used in the NASCAR Xfinity Series event Aug. 4, 2018 at Watkins (N.Y.) Glen International.

Bowyer thrives on road courses.

In the last 10 Cup Series road-course races, he's scored the fourth-most points of any driver. In his 31 career starts on the road courses at Sonoma (Calif.) Raceway, Watkins Glen (N.Y.) International, Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway and Charlotte, Bowyer has earned a victory, 12 top-five finishes and 18 top-10s and led 85 laps.

Bowyer's No. 14 Ford will carry a Rush Truck Centers/Cummins paint scheme for the most important race of the season Sunday.

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.

Cummins makes its fourth appearance of the 2020 season with Bowyer. The Indiana-based company from car owner Tony Stewart's hometown of Columbus 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.

If Bowyer climbs into the top-eight of the playoff standings by the time the checkered flag falls Sunday, he'll advance to the next round that begins the following weekend at Kansas Speedway in Kansas City. While some of the 12 playoff drivers hold their breath this Sunday, wondering whether the roval brings salvation or elimination, there's one group of folks who are in for an exciting show – the race fans.

"This is what the playoffs are all about," Bowyer said. "It's going to come down to the final laps on the roval and hell is probably going to break loose. Somebody is going to be really happy, and a lot of folks are going to be really mad."

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

Has your mentality changed to the must-win way of thinking?

"It's kind of a must-win situation at all times. In life, if you wake up and say, 'I don't really need to win today,' you're probably going to suck."

What is your roval strategy?

"Just win."

Not as a driver battling to advance to Round of 8, but as a race fan, what do you think of the roval?

"I'd buy a good ticket or get in front of a television and get that popcorn and whatever else out, because I expect those final laps Sunday are going to be some of the most memorable of the season. It's probably going to be really calm for a while, but there will be a few late cautions, and then it will be chaos. We hardly ever see anything like we are about to see. Like the last two years on the roval, nobody has any idea what to expect."

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