

A large, stylized number '14' in white with a red outline and a black drop shadow, set against a yellow background.

CLINT BOWYER

A Lot To Race For in Remaining 2017 Races

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina (Sept. 11, 2017) – Two weeks ago, Clint Bowyer stood by his stricken car in the Darlington (S.C.) Raceway garage thinking about his diminishing Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series playoff chances after mechanical problems ended his race in just 18 laps.

After receiving the condolences of Stewart-Haas Racing (SHR) crew members and giving the obligatory media interviews, Bowyer walked to his motorhome admittedly “ready to throw things.”

But his 2-year-old son Cash greeted him at the door and told his father, “I’m sorry Daddy, you’ll get you a new car next week.”

Bowyer said his child’s counseling instantly put that evening’s disappointment versus the optimism surrounding his racing future in perspective.

“It really does ground you,” he said with a smile. “I put the whole family in the truck and drove home from Darlington. At the end of the day, I’m as happy as I have ever been enjoying this sport as much as I have. I look forward going to the racetrack.”

He’ll go to 10 more tracks in the 2017 season. He has a lot to accomplish.

Although he’s not part of the playoffs, there’s plenty of work to do for he and his Mike Bugarewicz-led team. This season is Bowyer’s first at SHR, his first with Bugarewicz, and it’s SHR’s first with Ford. Despite all the variables, the No. 14 team owns the 10th-best average finish of any full-time team in 2017. That’s better than five of the 16 teams in the playoffs.

Both the No. 14 driver and crew know there is work to be done to make sure they are part of the playoffs next season.

“I’m focused on getting better,” Bowyer said. “We have got to get to where we are consistently running at the front week in and week out. We have sniffed the front with three second-place and two third-place finishes. But we haven’t consistently run in the top-five and been part of that elite group. We know we can do it with this organization. We have the staff behind the 14 car, Ford and SHR that we know we can do it. Playoffs were important but establishing us at the front and leading laps week in and week out is our priority.”

That process begins this weekend at Chicagoland Speedway in Joliet, Illinois, where Bowyer will drive the No. 14 Ford Fusion carrying a Rush Truck Centers paint scheme. Bowyer owns one top-five finish and seven top-10s in 12 career starts at the 1.5-mile track.

“Success is measured by winning – that’s goal number one,” he said. “We still haven’t accomplished that, so that’s our priority. Whether that’s this weekend in Chicago or the final race at Homestead, we have got to get a race win this season and, if we don’t, I’ll be disappointed.”

Bowyer said it’s been a comfortable fit ever since inking the deal with SHR in 2015 to replace three-time champion Tony Stewart. Bowyer drove for another team in 2016 before climbing in the No. 14 in 2017.

“The cool thing about SHR is that every conversation I’ve ever had there has been only about how we get better,” said Bowyer, who has finished in the top-five in points three times in his 12 full seasons behind the wheel of a NASCAR Cup car. “That’s what gives me confidence to know we are going to get where we want to go.”

A good first step begins this weekend with a trip to victory lane at Chicagoland.

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

Do you have a serious side?

“Oh yes. It’s come out a lot in the last few weeks. When you are racing the likes of the guys we do, who can get the job done, the serious side is always there. You have to be able to have fun and enjoy this. This is a grueling schedule on everybody, not just a driver.”

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