

**Toyota Racing – Martin Truex Jr.
Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series (MENCs)
New Hampshire Motor Speedway – July 20, 2018**

Furniture Row Racing driver Martin Truex Jr. was made available to the media at New Hampshire Motor Speedway:

MARTIN TRUEX JR., No. 78 5-hour ENERGY/Bass Pro Shops Toyota Camry, Furniture Row Racing

What was it like to be honored at the ESPYs?

“Yeah, sure. It was – yeah, a huge honor. Really definitely excited for that and the team to be recognized and definitely a great list of drivers that were up for that award, so to win it was quite a thrill for me and definitely a big honor and something hopefully we can use for a little motivation and keep the roll going.”

What’s your vision for where the sport should be racing?

“I’m not sure. I mean, I’d be okay racing all those different things. I’m no dirt track expert by any means, but I think it would be a fun to try. You know, maybe we can have the All-Star Race at the dirt track at Charlotte or something to try it out. Who knows? But certainly a lot of excitement around the Truck race that they had this week at Eldora and, you know, it’d be fun to try it. I don’t know if it fits for what this series is or what it means, but people smarter than me can figure that out and short tracks I think’s a good thing. I think more short tracks would be good, but problem is where are they, you know? What tracks do we go to and is somebody going to build new ones or are we going to change tracks? We already have 36 races and going to be hard to fit more in, so, yeah, so I think it’s a more complicated problem than just saying we need to go here and we need to go there.”

How cool is it to see Ryan Preece racing at the NASCAR Xfinity Series level?

“Well, it’s been really neat to watch and obviously he’s a great talent and has worked hard to get where he’s at and it’s been good to see him have success, so, you know, it really – what he’s doing reminds me of when I first started running down south and, you know, running full-time in the North Series and dabbling in the Busch Series a bit, working on my own cars during the week and then, you know, going racing a few times a year getting to drive somebody else’s car and have success. So it’s been good to see what he’s been able to do and he’s obviously made a name for himself – well, he made a name for himself up here first, but now he’s showing that he can get it done anywhere with winning at Bristol and all he’s done, so, you know, hopefully he can kind of get more races and get a full-time deal going and extend – move his career to kind of a full-time driver status.”

Where you surprised by the 5-hour decision and will Furniture Row replace them on your Camry?

“I don’t know that I was surprised. I felt like it was – they were kind of – they’ve been on the fence for a kind of a while and we’ve kind of been waiting on a decision and so I don’t know that I was surprised, but I guess I wish it didn’t take quite as long as it did and, you know, kind of puts us in a tough spot now, but I’m not really, really worried. I mean, I think something good can come out of this. Obviously it’s not great timing with all that’s going on, but I’ve got confidence in my team and what we’re doing and hopefully we can find a replacement for that. I don’t see Barney (Visser, team owner) putting Furniture Row back on the car and doing that. I don’t know that he can make that work anymore, so we’ll see where it goes from here, but, you know, obviously committed to the team and trying to figure out how we can continue moving forward and hopefully there’s a company out there that we can do a great job representing and hopefully they’ll come out and show their support here shortly.”

Were you surprised you won the ESPY given your competition?

“Yeah, honestly, it was a big surprise. I didn’t have any expectations. I thought it was cool to be nominated and I really didn’t think about it much more after that and then somebody actually texted me the other night and was like, ‘Hey, you won the ESPY,’ and I was like, ‘What, seriously?’ I was definitely really surprised and it was pretty cool. Yeah, obviously, like I said, a great honor. A lot of great drivers on that list, so a lot of people I respect and enjoy watching and pretty cool to be able to win that.”

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MARTIN TRUEX JR., No. 78 5-Hour ENERGY/Bass Pro Shops Toyota Camry, Furniture Row Racing (continued)

Is it still new to you to be a part of the group of top drivers?

“That’s such a hard question to answer. I think I haven’t really thought about it much. I think a lot of people talk about it and especially here lately it’s been a big topic of conversation, but for me I’m just honestly living in the moment, trying to enjoy myself, but also staying focused and not taking it for granted. It’s really hard to continue what we’ve done and I realize how much work it takes and how many people I owe it to, so, you know, for me just trying to stay focused, kind of block all that out and keep getting the job done is what’s most important. Certainly been really the last couple years, I talk about it a lot, it’s been amazing and I don’t want it to stop any time soon, so got to continue to work hard to stay on top and, you know, got a great team obviously and that’s what it takes at this level. You’ve got to have every piece of the puzzle and everybody’s got to be working hard and working together, so we have a great group and hopefully we can continue it.”

Has the cost of Cup Series racing gone up in recent years?

“I don’t know that it’s really changed that much in the last couple years. I think obviously it probably goes up a little bit each year, but I don’t think it’s changed drastically. I think perfect case scenario is we find somebody to replace 5-hour and try to do it that way. You know, I’m not sure – we haven’t really had conversations about that, so I’m not sure where Barney’s (Visser, team owner) at, you know, but we’ll just see what comes of it.”

Can you move forward with your contract extension without 5-hour?

“I think so. I think we can. Certainly makes things more difficult, you know, but we’ve been talking about it and honestly it’s not like we were just waiting on this to happen. It just was more of – we’re just trying to figure everything out, what’s the best direction to go, get all the details and honestly we haven’t really worked that hard on it. It’s been something that’s like – it’s not really a pressing issue for me. I know what the team wants. I know where we’re all at, you know, it’s not like I’m nervous they’re going to sign somebody else or I’m going to be searching for a ride. It’s nothing like that. It’s more just trying to focus on racing and feeling like it will get done when it gets done.”

What does it take to win at New Hampshire?

“Unfortunately, I don’t know what it takes to win here. It’s been a long time – it’s been since ’05, so trying to figure that out. We’ve been so strong here the past few seasons. It’s always been a really good track for me over the years and, you know, winning K&N races here, winning Xfinity in ’05 and I really want to get that Cup win because this is a special place for me. I’ve been coming here a long time since I was a teenager and this place was really a big springboard for my career, you know? Winning here in front of the Cup and Xfinity guys really was a big part of the reason I got an opportunity to drive cars for a living, so it’s a special place for me. I really love coming up here and really just trying to figure out how to get that Cup win. Led the most laps a few times in this race the last few seasons and it seems like the last 75 or so we’ve not been able to somehow be in the front, so try to figure that out this weekend hopefully. It’s time.”

How does it feel to be racing a Camry as Toyota has been so strong of late?

“Well, it’s definitely a great team to be a part of. Toyota does so much for the teams, for us, you know, it’s – their passion for racing and what they put into the Cup Series, it’s amazing and it’s really cool to be a part of that, so, yeah. I mean, the last couple years, our cars have been really good and they’ve done a great job on the engine side of giving us what we need and reliability and everything that comes with that, so it’s been unbelievable. They’re great supporters. I think if you look at it as a whole, great drivers, great race cars and, as I mentioned earlier, it takes all those puzzle pieces in the right spot and working together to make it happen, so for whatever reason this has been a good track for that group and we’ve definitely benefitted from that in learning how to make our cars be good at this race track, so being part of that team and, you know, having cars from JGR (Joe Gibbs Racing) and all that, it’s definitely been a big bonus for us at this race track.”

How big would it be for you to win at this track?

“Well, I don’t know that it’s crucial for our team or our season, but I think for me it’s such a big one. It’s one I want so bad. Winning here would be for me like winning at Daytona. I mean, it truly is, so just see if we can get it done. I know the team’s fired up and ready to go and worked hard to be prepared to come here like they always do and they’re excited and optimistic, so that always makes me feel good and feel like we’ll have a shot at it and certainly we have a lot of momentum right now so hopefully we can take advantage of it.”

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Can you talk about your organization and the recent large donation?

“Yeah, I mean it’s been an amazing to be able to be a part of that and honestly when we started the foundation it was just trying to do good and give back and help people and it’s since just become a part of our lives a lot because of what Sherry (Pollex) has been through, but a lot because of the families we’ve met and got to kind of see the impact we’ve been able to make and, you know, I think we’re surprised all the time at just how big of an impact we can make, so we’ve got some more events coming up and a lot of big news coming. We’re working on some big projects and, you know, hopefully we can continue to make a difference and without the NASCAR fans and really everybody in the industry pitching in, it would be impossible, so a lot of people around here do a lot of good and it’s really neat to be a part of that.”

How have you led over 500 laps here in recent years and not won?

“Yeah, you know, last time – last, I can’t remember if it was July or the second race last year, we were – we won the first stage and we were leading in the second stage coming to one to go and we got caught up in that wreck on the backstretch and then we battled back all day and I think we ended up finishing fourth or something, so it’s just been one of those deals where just wrong place, wrong time sometimes and for whatever reason it’s just been a tough one for us to get. We’ve certainly performed well enough and been fast enough as you mentioned, so sometimes the biggest ones are the hardest ones and I guess for me this is a big one, so it’s been difficult, but look forward to the challenge this weekend of trying to finish the deal.”

What advice do you have for young drivers in the modifieds this weekend to parlay their success this weekend?

“Yeah, you know, I think it’s – a lot of it is just about timing, you know? Some of it’s luck. You work hard, you race hard and you try to do the right things on the race track and hopefully, you know, somebody will step in and help you out. For me, that’s how it worked. I know today maybe it’s a little bit different. It’s a little bit harder I would say to parlay that short track or that touring series success into the next level. It’s definitely harder today than it’s ever been, but for those guys, I mean, at least for me when I raced, I never even thought about getting hired to drive race cars honestly. I was just racing and loving what I was doing and working at the shop and being around a cool group of guys to just try to win races and have fun honestly. That’s what I did and it just caught me by surprise when I heard people were starting to talk and people were talking about me maybe giving me a shot to drive their cars and things like that,

so, yeah, I guess I was a little bit naïve at the time or wasn't – it wasn't really on my radar. I just went racing and had a good time with it."

What does it say about the state of sponsorship that 5-hour is leaving after a championship?

"Yeah, I don't know. A lot of things go into those decisions, you know? I don't know a ton about their business and how it's doing or anything like that. Obviously, you'd think that with the success we've had and kind of how the last two years for us have went that – it's certain we delivered on our end of the deal. We gave them a lot of exposure – a lot of value in their sponsorship – but, you know, you never know the reasons why people like that want to go do something different or, you know, maybe advertise less in general. It's hard to say, so, you know, I'm going to make assumptions. I don't know the reasoning. I just know for us, it's something that we have to overcome."

Does your approach change when you come to New Hampshire?

"Yeah, it's very a competitive track. Very difficult track, you know? We know it's flat and it's somewhat of a short track at a one-mile, but difficult to pass and it's really changed a lot, especially since last year when then they started using the VHT traction compound, so it's totally changed the way we race here. It's changed the setup quite a bit and really the approach through the weekend had changed a lot from what it used to be before they started using that, so I think a lot of people are still trying to figure it out. I feel like we have a pretty good feel on what we need to do this weekend, but the hard part of the VHT is it's ever changing. You never know what you're going to get, especially Saturday after the modified race and they reapply the stuff usually Sunday morning and sometimes it's just a little bit different, so it's a challenging weekend from that aspect with a lot of different cars on the track, a lot of laps being run and that VHT wearing out and getting reapplied and how that affects your car and the changes you have to make to kind of keep it underneath you."

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Why didn't you go to the EPSYS?

"As far as I know, I didn't get an invite. I'm not sure. Yeah, I went fishing, so I was up out at the Cape yesterday fishing with some family, so."

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