

Clint Bowyer Will Tackle Daytona 500 with New Car and Crew Chief

When Clint Bowyer starts the Daytona 500 this Sunday afternoon, BB&T will be along for the ride as a major associate sponsor of the No. 33 Cheerios/Hamburger Helper Chevrolet. It's the first Daytona 500 for BB&T, but it will be Bowyer's fourth, and he has been part of some fantastic finishes.

"We were leading with 16 laps to go last year," Bowyer said. "The caution came out and we got wrecked on the restart. The year before that we finished the race on the roof. It's frustrating. Not only to get wrecked, but there's so much hype, so much testing, we spend so much time down there and it's all coming to the end, and you're that close only to be taken out. But, that's what the Daytona 500 is all about. You've only got one shot at it and it means a lot to go out there and win it."

The NASCAR Sprint Cup Series appears in Daytona twice each year, and Bowyer has an average finish of 12.6 in six previous events. However, he will appear for the first time with the No. 33 on his car. The new number comes with a new crew chief and a new crew.

"Well, I guess if you're going to change you might as well do it from the ground up! We've definitely done that," Bowyer said about the changes. Looking at this season, I am looking forward to it. All kidding aside, I see a lot of great things that are happening within this Cheerios/Hamburger Helper team and a lot of possibilities. I think the possibilities are high and I think the future is bright. I know there's going to be a learning curve and a transition period but I think because of the talent within this team, the guys that are working on these cars, there's a lot of talent there. We were able to bring a lot of good guys up through the organization at RCR, and take advantage of what we already had internally."

Bowyer's car has been strong during the "Speed Weeks" activities in central Florida. On Saturday, Feb. 7, Bowyer posted the seventh-fastest time during the first practice session of the season and the 17th-fastest time during the second session later that afternoon. On Sunday during qualifying, Bowyer posted the 22nd-fastest time.

The results do not seem to surprise Shane Wilson, crew chief of the No. 33 Chevrolet.

"I really expect this Cheerios/Hamburger Helper team to come out of the box strong at Daytona," Wilson said. "We've got a strong group of guys assembled here on the No. 33 team, some of whom came up from the Nationwide ranks and others from different teams. We know we've got a great driver in Clint Bowyer, and we've got everything we need to succeed here at RCR. We're really looking forward to getting the 2009 season underway."

Expect Bowyer, who is one of only two drivers to finish in the top five in the final standings each of the past two seasons, to display an aggressive driving style at the appropriate times.

"You can't go into the Daytona 500 thinking if I get out of here with a top 10 that will be fine and that will be a good day," Bowyer said. "You want to win this race. You want to go for broke and do whatever you can do to win it. Practice - you've got to be careful. If you go out and crash your hot rod, somebody's going to be pissed and it's probably going to be your boss. Somebody's going to be mad about that, but you know, you have to go out there and put it in situations that it could potentially be in during the race so you know what it's going to do and how it's going to react. You're not going to go out there and be stupid. If somebody is out there racing hard three wide and beating and banging, you need to get out of Dodge."

Television coverage of the Daytona 500 on Fox begins at 2 p.m. ET on Sunday, Feb. 15. The race will begin at approximately 3:30 p.m. ET.