

Top-Five Performances Could Vault Clint Bowyer into Chase Position

BB&T Racing driver Clint Bowyer needs to eliminate a 115-point gap that stands between him and the 12th position in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series standings, which is the final spot guaranteed to make the Chase for the Sprint Cup playoffs. All of the drivers continue to compete during the playoffs, but only the top 12 are eligible to win the Sprint Cup Championship. Bowyer has made the playoffs the last two years, finishing third in the final standings in 2007 and fifth in 2008.

Five races remain for him to close the gap, including this Sunday's race in Watkins Glen, N.Y., and it will take more top-five finishes like Monday's third-place effort at Pocono Raceway to achieve the goal.

Bowyer, ranked 15th in the standings, said he likes his chances to continue his positive trend at Watkins Glen.

"I feel like I've come a long way at Watkins Glen. Kevin Harvick always seems to run well there, so that tells me that our equipment is pretty good. Road courses were not in my growing up path, so I've had to learn a lot about them. It seems like I've always been comfortable at Infineon, but for whatever reason I seem to struggle a little bit more at the Glen. But, I've kind of settled in there. I've found my way around there and I feel much more comfortable racing there now."

In three starts at Watkins Glen, Bowyer has a 14th-place finish, which came in his first start in 2006, to call his best. Additionally, the 30-year-old driver has an average starting position of 12.3, an average finish of 17.7 and has completed 100 percent of the laps contested (270 of 270). According to NASCAR statistics, Bowyer is tied with Kyle Busch for fifth best among closers at Watkins Glen. He has gained 13 positions in the final 10 percent of laps in the last four races, trailing Dale Earnhardt, Jr., Jimmie Johnson, P.J. Jones and Ryan Newman.

After Watkins Glen, Bowyer will compete in Michigan, Bristol, Atlanta and Richmond as he competes with Matt Kenseth (11th), Greg Biffle (12th), Kyle Busch (13th), Brian Vickers (14th) and David Reutimann (16th) for the final spot in the Chase. Bowyer will drive the No. 33 BB&T Chevrolet in Atlanta for the first time since the all-star race.

Live coverage of the Heluva Good! Sour Cream Dips at The Glen will be televised on ESPN Sunday, August 9, beginning at 1 p.m. ET. The race will also be covered live on the Motor Racing Network and Sirius/XM Satellite Radio. Qualifying will be televised live on ESPN2 Friday, August 7, beginning at 3 p.m. ET.