



S.C. Hall of Fame Transcript

Cale Yarborough

It kind of took off from there...I started following you know.....going to the race tracks....and following...and I got better rides and better rides and uh...it finally ended up that I was three (3) times National Champion.

Question:

How did you pick out your number?

Cale Yarborough:

My number was number 35. That was my High School Football Jersey Number.

Question:

And then, ultimately you were like 11 and 28 and along the way...or were you always 35?

Cale Yarborough:

No.....No...No...Uh....I had a lot of different numbers coming up...but...my first big number was of Banjo Matthews, and he was number 27. And then I went from Banjo to The Wood Brothers....who was number 21. And uh....from The wood Brothers, I ran The Indianapolis Cars for two (2) years. And when I came back to NASCAR, uh, Junior Johnson was looking for a driver and I was looking for a "ride". So, we hooked up, and he was number eleven (11), and that's where we started winning all the races and won the three (3) consecutive championships.

You know, I got a...I had a commentator telling me...he says...you know...Babe Ruth's home run record stood for thirty (30) years. And he said...your three (3) consecutive championships stood for thirty (30) years. That's pretty good company.

Anyway uh....I decided I uh....wanted to spend more time with my family. And I had gotten into the Business World too, and uh...I just didn't need to be gone all the time, I needed to be at home, and more like you say...spend more time with my family. So, I switched rides...I told



Junior that I didn't want to run but about a "half" a schedule. And So M.C. Anderson offered me a "half-a-schedule" ride...that was number 27. So I ran for him for two (2) years, then he wanted the championship, and I said "no...that wasn't the deal"....so, Harry Rainier came along in car number 28, so I went to the 28 car and...we had a lot of success with that car.

Later on, I decided that I was going to be a "team owner", so I started my own team. And I would drive a few races and I had Dale Jarrett driving for me, and several of the other young drivers. John Andretti won the Daytona Race for us. And then, uh...I decided that uh....it was a twenty-four (24) hour job looking for sponsors all the time. So I said...I need to get rid of this...and uh....just be a business Man from here on out. And so...that's what I'm doing.

Question:

So, you're saying you won The Winston Cup three (3) years in a row?

Cale Yarborough:

Three years in a row, records have stood for thirty (30) years.

Question:

Uh...who is the one who broke that?

Cale Yarborough:

Jimmie Johnson.

Question:

Um...I was looking at this Darlington program. Can you give us some highlights...uh...I saw where in 1965, you flew over a guard-rail. Can you talk about that a little bit, and then talk about other "close calls", you have had in your career?

Cale Yarborough:

Over the wall at Darlington

Well, everybody in the racing business has "close-calls". And....I had my share of 'em. In 1965, I was racing with Sam McQuagg, who was another young driver coming along. And, Sam was



leading the race and I was running second. And I tried several times to pass him, and I uh, coming down the front stretch, I got long beside of him, and uh...and going into the first turn, it was a one groove race track, you couldn't go in but one car at a time, so I held my ground, and he held his ground. And we tangled a little bit, and my car got airborne. Went over the top, went over the hood of his car, over the guard-rail, and I ended up side of a telephone pole out in the parking lot. So that was uh...that was quite...quite a ride.

Uh, I've had a lot of...lot of "close calls"

Flip at Daytona

At uh...Daytona [1983], when I was driving the 28 Hardees Car, qualifying, we were the first driver to run over 200-miles per hour in Daytona on the first lap. In the second lap, looked like it was gonna be about 203-miles per hour, and into the third (3rd) turn, the car just floated like a leaf. And even flipped backwards, didn't flip the other way, flipped back this way, and uh....course we uh...Thank goodness we came out of that one in good shape. And Hardees was the sponsor at the time, and we had a show car at one of the Hardees around Daytona, so...that car was totaled. So, we went and picked up the show car, brought it back to the race track, and got it ready to qualify, got it ready to race, and won the Daytona 500 with it.

Question:

Tell us...what's been some of your best victories?

Cale Yarborough:

Best victory

I've had a lot of good victories. Uh....you can't get much better than The Daytona 500. I've won it four (4) times. And...I've won on every race track that we were running on, when I was racing. But my number one (1) victory is the 1968 Southern 500 in Darlington. That's where my racing career started, and it's only a few miles from where I was born and raised. And uh, it was the last race on the original Darlington Race Track. After that race, they uh....they changed the configuration of it. And uh...having won that 1968 Southern 500, one of the greatest days of my life.

Question:



I bet. Um...let me ask you some things about the early days of racing.

I know when you started driving, you were just a fan. I'm trying to remember, back to about the late 50's...I remember the first Race Driver I ever hear of was Fireball Roberts. And then, it seemed like his name came up, and then all of a sudden, he died. Talk a little bit about the early days. How did NASCAR really get to the people?

Cale Yarborough:

Well, you know...I would certainly like to be racing today because of the money they make. They make a tremendous amount of money now. Of course,

Early days of NASCAR

I wouldn't take anything for having been part of NASCAR in the early days. I got to race against people that these young people, drivers today uh...never saw, or never raced against. I ran against Fireball Roberts, Curtis Turner, and Junior Johnson and Lee Petty, and then I ran with the second group, too. I think the greatest group in racing...The Pearsons, and the Allison's, and Richard Petty and uh, so I wouldn't take anything for having...to have been, an early part in making NASCAR the success it is today.

Question:

Tell me what it's like going two-hundred miles an hour, and bumping into people, and scraping against the wall?

Cale Yarborough:

Well...there are only a few that can do it. [Retake below?]

What's it's like in the car

Only a few people can race at two-hundred miles per hour, and do it for four hours, with uh...115-20 degree temperature inside the car and uh....it's a game of concentration. It's as much mental strain as it is a physical strain. And it's a tremendous physical strain. Running that long...it's the sport that says..." coach...take me out....let me sit on the bench for a little while. When the race starts, you're there for the whole race.



You know, driving a race car at two hundred...at over two-hundred miles an hour, bumper to bumper and uh....in a big crowd...there's only a few people that can do it.

Question:

And it's life and death too, if you lose your concentration. I imagine?

Cale Yarborough:

Absolutely. If you lose your concentration, one second, you're in trouble.

Question: You think about Golf, and people say it's you against the Golf Course. And you're playing against other people. In racing it's like that too, but, like I say, it's the consequences of making a mistake in that, they're different.

Cale Yarborough:

Yeah...if you uh...if you miss a putt, or didn't catch a pass or...struck out...not nearly as bad as hitting a wall at 200-miles per hour.

Question:

Tell me a little bit about NASCAR today. Like I say, it's become really popular. Seems like about 15 or 20 years ago, it really started to take off. And uh....you know for a while there...when they took the Southern 500 away from Darlington, I mean, that upset me...I'm not a big race fan, but I knew how important it was. Just talk about how...what it's like in the modern era.

Cale Yarborough:

Well it's uh...it's a lot different. You know...for a long time...it was more a Southern sport than it was a nationwide sport....but uh...people got an interest in it....Corporate America got involved in it as big sponsors, and that uh....in that you had to go nationwide, if you wanted corporate America involved, 'cause they wanted to be nationwide. So one of the racetracks like Darlington, lost one of their races, and moved it to California, but they're all over the nation now. So it's a national sport, worldwide sport, really.

Question:



What do you think of...well...it's a controversial question but...what do you think about "women drivers"? What do you think about that?

Cale Yarborough:

Well, there are some good women drivers. And uh, got a lot of talent. But the problem with a lady is the "physical strength" to go all day long in a race car the way we have to do it. And even though they can have uh...have a lot of talent...it's uh...it's "physically tough".

Question:

There's a legend about how racing was started...about people trying to deliver Moonshine and that sort of thing. Is there any truth in that?

Cale Yarborough:

That's absolutely true. Yeah, the uh...

How racing began

The moonshiners had fast cars you know...'cause they had to out-run the law with the load of moonshine and they would do that during the week...then they would brag about how fast their cars were so...they decided to start having contests with 'em. And I think it really started out in a big old cow pasture ...with the bootleggers ganged up...and it went from there.

Question:

When you were talking about the physical part...wasn't there a race where you didn't have power-steering...and you had to do the whole race...

Cale Yarborough:

Oh...we were...that was when we were running The Southern 500...Bill Elliott was up to win a million dollars if he won that race. And uh...about 50-laps to go...I was leading the race...and my power steering went out on me. And uh... so we came in and Wardell Wilson was my chief mechanic and he cut the belt off the power steering. And if you've ever driven a car and your engine dies in your power steering, you know how hard it is to turn. Well we went back out and we only had about fifty (50) laps to go and uh...I ran the rest of that race with no power



steering. And if I had one more lap...I had run Bill down...and...one more lap, I could have got him. But uh...we almost won it with no power steering.

Laughs..."There's no lady who could have done it..."

Question:

How fast did that '35 Ford of yours go?

Cale Yarborough:

Oh...that was a quarter-mile dirt track.

[Add to first race car]

We were probably running 70-miles an hour....down the straight-a-ways.

Cale Yarborough:

Yeah...it's a great honor...and you did...you did good questions. A lot of these things...you get people that don't know what they're talking...don't know what questions to ask...that's terrible....(laughs)...you did good.