

Setting Records

Alex Bowman takes pole position with record-breaking qualifying run

Alex Bowman continued his front-row qualifying magic for the 2021 NASCAR Cup Series season-opening Daytona 500, taking the pole position and breaking an all-time record behind the wheel of the Chevrolet No. 48 for his first qualifying session in the car.

For the fourth time in as many years, Bowman qualified for the front row, something no other NASCAR driver had ever achieved.

Bowman, who has locked down front-row spots for the Great American Race for the past four years, sped into pole position with a lap speed of 191.261 mpg (47.056 seconds). Hendrick Motorsports teammate William Byron followed Bowman in second place for the 63rd annual running of the race. Byron qualified with a lap speed of 190.219 mph (47.315 seconds) around the four-turn, 2 1/2-mile high-banked oval track at Daytona. Stewart-Haas Racing's Aric Almirola was third fastest in the No. 10 Ford, rounding out the front row.

"It doesn't really have a whole lot to do with me, right," Bowman said on pit road after qualifying. "It's a testament to these guys and everybody back in the shop at Hendrick Motorsports. They work so hard on these superspeedway cars. They are beautiful when they get to the race track. Our Ally Camaro has been really fast since we unloaded and they focused a lot on trying to get the pole for the Daytona 500."

Bowman has been inching toward pole position for years, qualifying last year in second place for the second consecutive year behind Ricky Stenhouse Jr.

His record-breaking feat topped qualifiers with three straight years, including Daytona legends Fireball Roberts, Richard Petty, Bill Elliott, Ken Scharder and Dale Earnhardt.

Bowman has been winning in the seats of racing greats since 2018, when he took the wheel of Dale Earnhardt Jr.'s No. 88 Chevrolet. Last year, he was named successor to seven-time Cup champion Jimmie Johnson's No. 48 Hendrick car.



Position	Driver	Car
1	Alex Bowman	48
2	William Byron	24
3	Aric Almirola	10
4	Bubba Wallace	23
5	Ricky Stenhouse Jr.	47
6	Kevin Harvick	4
7	Christopher Bell	20
8	Ryan Preece	37
9	Austin Dillon	3
10	Daniel Suarez	99
11	Chase Elliott	9
12	Denny Hamlin	11

Racing During a Pandemic

The Daytona 500 has always been an iconic race for fans. Victories are life-changing and career-defining. Fans come from around the world to witness the race and take in the energy and excitement amid the beautiful Florida weather.

But as with every professional sporting event, the pandemic has changed the rules. Hosting the event safely has meant implementing policies and procedures that include limiting venue capacity for socially distanced seating.



Sasha Banks

While the stands may not be 101,500 strong, organizers are committed to delivering a world-class experience for those attending the Great American Race this year.



Luke Combs

WWE Wrestling champion Sasha Banks will wave the green flag for 2021 race. Banks is the second woman after Charlize Theron to be honorary starter for the prestigious 500.

Also on hand will be country music star Luke Combs, who will perform a pre-race concert to air live on FOX at 1 p.m. ET before the race.

From the awe of the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds flyover, to the rumble of 40 engines roaring around the high banks on the biggest stage in motor-sports, the Daytona 500 is sure to once again deliver the pageantry, thrills and drama for all fans.

WHAT: Daytona 500

WHEN: 2:30 p.m. EST, Sunday, Feb. 14

COVERAGE: FS1, Fox Sports Go, MRN