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Before and After



Michael McDowell Drives Through the Carnage to Win 2021 Daytona 500

Michael McDowell's victory adds to the unpredictable lure of the Daytona 500

DAYTONA BEACH, FL – First there was fire. Then rain. Followed by even more fire.

Sunday's Daytona 500 had two massive crashes that involved a total of 24 cars, a six-

hour rain delay and a surprise victory by Michael McDowell that was another unexpected, yet predictable, ending to one of stock car racing's most bizarre days.

The season-opening race at the Daytona International Speedway once again proved to be elusive, eccentric and certainly entertaining. The only certainty at Daytona is its ability to be problematic for some of the sport's elites and plausible for the most-desperate of longshots.

Like McDowell.

It took McDowell 358 Cup Series races in 14 years to win for the first time. His surprising last-lap run to the checkered flag was just his fourth top-five finish. All four came at either Daytona or its sister track at Talladega, Alabama.

All of the slow cars, frustration and impossible challenges suddenly seemed worth it after he drove around a crash between race leaders Joey Logano and Brad Keselowski in the third turn of the final lap.

"I love this sport. I love being in NASCAR and I love the challenge of it and how difficult it is," McDowell said. "The sacrifice it's worth it because this is what I've dreamed about doing and to win, yes, for sure. That's what it's all about. We all show up on Sunday for one reason, we want to win the race, but even if you didn't it's still worth it. This is such a great sport and I'm so thankful to be one of 40. I think it's so easy to take that for granted how many race car drivers there are in the world and to be one of 40 that gets to start on Sundays, that's amazing so it's definitely worth it."

McDowell now joins a list of other improbable Daytona 500 winners like Derrike Cope, Trevor Bayne and Ward Burton. Former champions Keselowski, Kyle

Busch, Chase Elliott and Martin Truex Jr. still haven't won the 500. Neither did Rusty Wallace, Tony Stewart and Terry Labonte.

There was a 16-car crash on the 14th lap that started when Busch gave Christopher Bell a hard bump in Turn 3. Bell rammed into Aric Almirola twice, and the second shove sent Almirola into the outside wall.



DON COBLE

In a blink, contenders like Truex, Alex Bowman, Ryan Blaney, Kurt Busch, Ryan Newman and William Byron essentially were eliminated.

Then came the rain. Lots of rain.

The race finally resumed shortly after 9:30

p.m. Denny Hamlin, who was seeking to become the first driver to win the 500 three years in a row, won the first two segments.

The intensity boiled in the closing laps. Like a ticking timebomb, it seemed certain a lot of cars would finish on the wrong end of a wrecker's hook. It boiled over with Keselowski and Logano, teammates at Team Penske, crashed when Logano aggressively blocked Keselowski, sending both into the wall. Kyle Busch, Chase Elliott, Bubba Wallace and Austin Cindric all were involved in the fiery pileup.

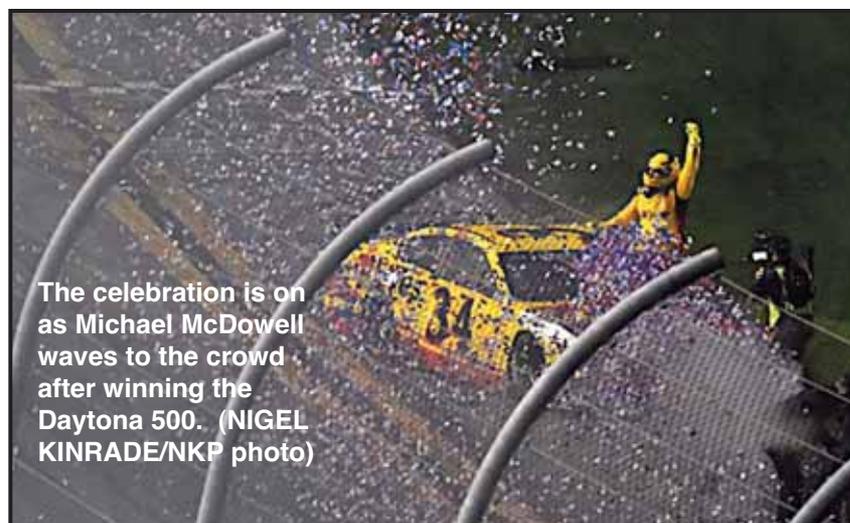
"I don't feel like I made a mistake, but I can't drive everybody else's car, so frustrating," Keselowski.

McDowell's victory also was a victory for one of the smaller, underfunded teams. Front Row Motorsports often buys used parts just to maintain a meager existence in NASCAR.

Hamlin was clear: McDowell's victory was no fluke.

It was Daytona, where engine and aerodynamic restrictions creates a unique level playing field.

"I think we are underdogs, but when we come to Daytona, I would consider us a top five contender every time, and I don't say that because I'm being boastful," McDowell said. "I just say that because a majority of these races we're in the top five when it comes down to those last five laps – no different



The celebration is on as Michael McDowell waves to the crowd after winning the Daytona 500. (NIGEL KINRADE/NKP photo)

than Denny and Joey and there are a handful of guys that seem to be able to get themselves in those positions. But the difference is I haven't been able to close. I haven't been able to get to Victory Lane. I've been able to get in that Top 10 and that top five, so I do feel like we are underdogs from that standpoint.

"I agree with Denny, and I really appreciate what he says. That means a lot. I don't think it's a fluke because we do run up front at these races quite often and last night just worked out perfectly."

McDowell knows when the Cup Series moves to the Daytona road course on Sunday and the Homestead-Miami Speedway a week later, he's probably destined to race in the back-half of the field. But for one night, one special night on the sport's grandest stage, he had the rest of the sport in his rearview mirror.

"I think that you always have the fire for that and no doubt when you win that fire gets deeper, but we all

know that's not an every-week thing for us and our race team right now," he said. "We've been making great gains, and I'm so proud of our Front Row organization. But we know that on 26 of the racetracks we'll be happy to be in that Top 10. But I think when we go to the superspeedways, when we go to the road courses and we go to some of the short tracks that we can definitely contend. We're getting better and better every year, so the hunger is there for sure.

"I think this definitely gives us a lot of confidence and you want more. You always want more, but I am so thankful that I am not gonna go my Cup career without a win. I mean, it's such a relief to me know that I won't go 400 starts without a win. I've always said I want one and I've got one now and obviously we want two, right? We want to win the road course next week, but if we don't, believe me I'm gonna be very happy. I'm very happy with what I've done in my career and what we were able to accomplish."

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Daytona and Underdogs

While watching the races from Daytona International Speedway last weekend, I kept noticing how many drivers were having “career days”. It seems as though every year, drivers in the Camping World Truck, Xfinity, and Cup Series score their best career finish and, sometimes, their first career major

NASCAR

win at The World Center of Racing. So, I decided to do a little research to confirm my thoughts.

When I looked at the Camping World Truck Series results from Daytona, I was not surprised to find some surprises in the top ten finishers. Of course, there are many young drivers in the CWTS that

have little or no experience at Daytona or making their first career Truck Series start this year.

Veteran CWTS driver Ben Rhodes captured the win, but several other “underdogs” posted outstanding finishes. In fact, Jordan Anderson, a veteran of 125 career truck starts, finished second for the second consecutive year. It’s the only top five finishes in his NASCAR career. Cory Roper posted his first career CWTS top five finish with a third-place run. His previous best career finish was 9th at Texas in 2019 in his 28 career races.

Ryan Truex, who finished 2nd at Daytona in 2016, finished 4th. Michigan driver Carson Hocevar earned his best career Truck Series finish with a 5th in the NextEra Energy 250. It was his first career top five finish.

Codie Rohrbaugh, a West Virginia native with 29 career CWTS starts, posted an 8th-place run to earn only his fifth career top ten. Nineteen-year old Chandler Smith finished ninth for his best Daytona career finish.

Probably the two best success stories from the CWTS NextEra Energy 250 at Daytona are Drew Dollar and Kris Wright. Dollar finished tenth in his first-ever CWTS start. Wright, a CWTS Rookie-of-the-Year candidate in 2021, finished 12th in only his second career start. Wright’s only other CWTS race was Daytona last year

when he finish 25th.

When you look at Daytona history for the CWTS, four drivers posted their first career win at the 2.5-mile superspeedway. Austin Hill earned his first of six career wins at Daytona in February, 2019. Kaz Grala won his first and only CWTS victory at Daytona in 2017. Tyler Reddick won his first of three career CWTS wins at Daytona in 2015. And, who remembers John King in February, 2012 when his won his first and only CWTS race at Daytona.



DENNIS PUNCH

The NASCAR Xfinity Series also had a number of drivers with impressive runs at Daytona in the Beef, It’s What For Dinner 300. While the victory by Austin Cindric, who was the fastest qualifier, was no shocker, several other competitors had memo-

orable finishes. Second-place Brett Moffitt posted his career best finish and only his second career Xfinity top five.

Brandon Brown finished 6th for his Daytona career best. Virginia driver Brandon Gdovic scored his first career Xfinity top ten with an 8th-place run. And, Jason White finished tenth to earn his second career top ten in 52 career races.

Two Xfinity drivers, Joe Graf Jr. and Caesar Bacarella earned their career best finish last Saturday at Daytona. Graf Jr. finished 11th and Bacarella 12th. Kyle Weatherman, Matt Mills, Jesse Little, Ryan Vargas all posted top twenty finishes to start their 2021 season on a positive note. And, New Jersey driver Danny Bohn, making his first career Xfinity start, finished 19th.

When you look at the history of Daytona Xfinity races, the last five seasons have found first-time Daytona victors. Austin Cindric’s win Saturday was his second at Daytona. He also won the Road Course event at DIS in ’20. Noah Gragson won his first career Xfinity race in February, 2020, and Justin Haley won his first of three career Xfinity wins.

Ross Chastain won his first Daytona race in July, 2019, and Michael Annett won his first and only career Xfinity win at in February, 2019. Kyle Larson, Tyler Reddick, and William Byron all won their first and only Daytona wins in 2018 and 2017. Of course, all three

earned other Xfinity victories, but only one each at Daytona. And, Ryan Reed, driving for Roush Racing, won twice during his Xfinity career – both at Daytona (2015, 2017).

When you talk about underdogs and memorable victories at Daytona, the NASCAR Cup Series certainly comes to mind.

Certainly, the Daytona 500 victory by Michael McDowell has to rank among the best stories in the history of the speedway. The 36-year old Phoenix, Arizona driver has been racing in the Cup Series for 14 years and competed in 358 races. Prior to Sunday, his best career finish was fourth at Daytona in July, 2017, driving for Leavine Family Racing. Although he only led one lap (actually about one mile), the Front Row Motorsports driver scored the biggest win of his racing career. Truly, a storybook ending to the 2021 Daytona Speedweek.

It should be noted that Ross Chastain and Ryan Preece posted their career best Daytona Cup Series finishes in the 500. Chastain earned a 6th-place finish that was also his career Cup best in 80 career races. Preece was seventh to

victory in the Daytona 500, certainly an historic day. Michael Waltrip scored his first career Cup Series win in the 2001 500. Ironically, that’s the race that Dale Earnhardt tragically lost his life in a last-lap accident. Jamie McMurray (2010) and Ward Burton (2002) scored Daytona 500 victories that were certainly considered underdog triumphs at the time.

I would be remiss if I didn’t mention that Daytona has been “golden” for several Cup competitors as well. Justin Haley won his first and only career Cup Series race in July, 2019 and Greg Sacks scored his first and only career Cup victory in July, 1985 driving an R&D car for DiGard Racing. Eric Jones (’18), Aric Almirola (’14), and David Ragan (’11) all scored their first wins at Daytona in July races.

No mention of Daytona and NASCAR races at the World Center of Racing would be complete without a discussion about the 1998 Daytona 500. After winning numerous other races at DIS (Busch Clash, IROC, Busch Series, Twin 125s), Dale Earnhardt finally won the Daytona 500 in February, 1998. So many fond memories from that day include the



Michael McDowell (34) works the traffic with the leaders at the end of the Daytona 500. (NIGEL KINRADE PHOTOGRAPHY photo)

earn his best Daytona Cup finish.

When you look at “so-called underdogs” who won at Daytona, two come to mind immediately. Most race fans will remember in February, 1990, when Derrick Cope won the Daytona 500 for his first career Cup victory. Cope battled Dale Earnhardt during the final stages until Earnhardt had a tire issue on the last lap, enabling Cope to race to the win.

Although he drove for the legendary Wood Brothers, Trevor Bayne was certainly not one of the pre-race favorites in February, 2011. However, the Tennessee driver scored his first and only career Cup Series win at the historic Daytona event.

Several other memorable 500 victories come to mind. In 2018, Austin Dillon drove the iconic #3 to

crewmembers of Cup teams lined up on pit road to welcome Earnhardt and the #3 car after the race. Then, Earnhardt did a modified burnout on the infield grass which turned out to resemble the #3 when he finished. And, the victory lane ceremony may be one of the best ever.

Winning at Daytona has been known to change the life of a driver forever. Certainly, it takes a strong team, car, and crew to earn that prodigious victory. And, yes, sometimes a little luck is involved along the way. Regardless how it’s accomplished, winning the Daytona 500 is a “bucket list” item for every competitor who has ever climbed in a race car. Now, Michael McDowell knows that feeling! You will now be introduced as Daytona 500 Champion. Congratulations!

Michael McDowell Pulls Off a Stunner with Last-Lap Daytona 500 Victory

In a stunning upset at the end of an action-filled, rain-interrupted Daytona 500, Front Row Motorsports driver Michael McDowell claimed his first NASCAR Cup Series victory after charging into the lead during a brutal multicar wreck in Turn 3 on the final lap.

"I can't believe it," McDowell said. "I've got to thank God. So many years of just grinding it out, hoping for an opportunity like this. I've got to thank (team owner) Bob Jenkins for giving me this opportunity. I'm so thankful.

"What a great way to get a first victory—in the Daytona 500!"

In fact, McDowell, who led only the final lap at 2.5-mile Daytona International Speedway, is the eighth driver to get his first Cup win in the Great American Race. His victory is the third for Front Row Motorsports—all coming in the No. 34 Ford with three different drivers: David Ragan at Talladega, Chris Buescher at Pocono and McDowell at Daytona.

Reigning series champion Chase Elliott finished second after contact between the Team Penske Fords of Brad Keselowski and Joey Logano ignited the final wreck, sending the Toyota of Kyle Busch rocketing into the outside wall. When NASCAR illuminated the caution lights, McDowell was in the lead over Elliott by a car-length.

"I saw the lights come on (for the caution), and I knew it was over right then," Elliott said. "We had a fast car. We weren't as good as I thought we were on Thursday (in the Duel 150-mile qualifying race). I thought we did a really good job of executing today, staying out of trouble.

"That's not something I've done a very good job of here in this race, so I'm glad we could at least finish this race and have something to build on for when we come back and try to do better."

Austin Dillon ran third, followed by Kevin Harvick and Denny Hamlin, who fell short in his attempt to win a record third straight Daytona 500. Hamlin won the first two

stages but lost the lead during the final cycle of green-flag pit stops when the small contingent of Toyotas got separated while exiting pit road.

Hamlin took the lead in the second stage after a cycle of green-flag pit stops and held it through the fifth caution of the race, which waved when Joe Gibbs Racing teammate Christopher Bell cut a left rear tire and spun into the Chevrolet of Ricky Stenhouse Jr.

At that point, Hamlin had led 58 laps, bringing his total of laps led in the Daytona 500 to 434, fifth-all-time and one ahead of Bobby Allison. Hamlin had led 34 consecutive laps to win Stage 1 after racing resumed on Sunday night. He finished with a race-high 98 laps led.

On Lap 14, before a long rain delay, off-center contact from Bell's Toyota to the rear bumper of Aric Almirola's Ford sent Almirola spinning near the front of the field, triggering a massive 16-car pile-up that inexorably altered the complexion of the race.

"We were just getting pushed too hard too early," Almirola said. "It's a long, long race. Man, we were in a fine position, just sitting there riding around in the top two, three, and the 20 (Bell) just came with a big run and hit me really hard in a bad spot and it turned me to the right and tore up our race car and ended our Daytona 500 way too early."

Collected in the wreck were: Ryan Newman, making his first Daytona 500 start since the devastating last-lap wreck that put him in the hospital a year ago; Erik Jones, in his first start in a points race for his new team, Richard Petty Motorsports; Daniel Suarez, in his first run with newly formed Trackhouse Racing, a joint venture between Justin Marks and rapper Pitbull; and pole winner Alex Bowman, whose No. 48 Chevrolet was wiped out when Almirola shot up the track into the side of his car and rammed it into the wall.

"It looks like the No. 10 (Almirola) kind of got turned sideways there, and I was the guy that got ran into," Bowman said after an obligatory trip to the infield care center. "Bummer — I hate it for (sponsor) Ally. Obviously, we had a really fast Camaro. The Chevrolets were working good together; hopefully, a Chevy still ends up in Victory Lane.

"Hats off to everybody at Hendrick Motorsports; they built some

really fast race cars. Hate that superspeedway racing works out that way sometimes, but that's just part of the game."

Also heavily damaged in the melee were the cars of William Byron, Kurt Busch, Tyler Reddick, Ryan Blaney, Chris Buescher, David Ragan, Jamie McMurray and Matt DiBenedetto. To add insult to injury, nearby lightning strikes delayed the restart of the race, and heavy rains followed shortly thereafter.

Five hours and 40 minutes later, after the rain abated and the track dried, engines were re-fired at 9:07 p.m., and the race resumed with 24 cars on the lead lap.

Notes: In his first points race for the new 23XI Racing team co-owned by Denny Hamlin and Michael Jordan, Bubba Wallace ran near the front of the pack throughout the race but lost a lap with an unscheduled pit stop for a vibration on Lap 178 of 200. Wallace was caught up in the last-lap wreck and finished 17th... Kyle Larson ran 10th in his first trip in the No. 5 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet... Austin Cindric's strong Cup debut ended in the last-lap wreck that claimed three Team Penske cars... Ryan Preece, Ross Chastain, Jamie McMurray and Corey LaJoie claimed the sixth through ninth finishing positions, respectively.



Michael McDowell is all smiles as he celebrates his winning of the Daytona 500 early in the Monday morning hours. His win came after a massive wreck on the last lap coming to the checkered flag. (NIGEL KINRADE PHOTOGRAPHY photo)

Kyle Busch Wins the Busch Clash at Daytona in Wild Finish

BEACH, FL - Two-time NASCAR Cup Series champion Kyle Busch may carry the nickname "Rowdy" but it was a couple of his competitors acting that way that allowed him to move into the lead out of the final turn and earn his second

career Busch Clash victory Tuesday night.

Busch's No. 18 Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota led only the length of a football field en route to the checkered flag – the only time he was out front all night at the exciting 14-turn Daytona International Speedway Road Course. But it was enough – earning the former champion his first victory with new crew chief, Ben Beshore in the annual non-points exhibition that kicks off Daytona Speedweeks.

Race runner-up Chase Elliott had been fighting with then-race leader Ryan Blaney for the lead as the cars went into the final sequence of turns – called the bus stop. They collided. Blaney's pole-sitting No. 12 Ford hit the wall. Elliott was able to recover enough to head to the finish line but Busch had already gotten around them both to take a .765-second victory.



Kyle Busch (18) takes advantage of the mix-up between Chase Elliott (9) and Dave Blaney (12) to charge ahead and win the Busch Clash. (NIGEL KINRADE/NKP photo)

to the front after a late race pit stop. Alex Bowman, Erik Jones, Ricky Stenhouse Jr. and Matt DiBenedetto rounded out the top 10.

"I kinda felt like there was an interesting opportunity that was de-

veloping there," Busch said of the Blaney-Elliott situation, adding "When that started happening I was hoping they would wreck long enough I could get up there and get

center at the same time as well for post-race interviews. Blaney said he was surprised Elliott was able to even make the race as close as it was, consider-

ing Blaney's Ford had fresher tires. "I hate it happened too, it didn't work out for either of us," said Blaney, who started from the pole position and ultimately ended up 13th. "We were just racing hard and I had a little bit fresher tires there.

We saved a set [of tires] and got back to second there. His car was really good, I had to use up a lot to get to him. I tried to protect and drove into that last corner really deep to make sure I didn't get dive-bombed like that. But we just came together."

"Of course he didn't mean to wreck me, but I ended up wrecked," Blaney said later, in the post-race media conference.

"I told him if you're going to make a move like that, at least win the race."

Elliott, the reigning NASCAR Cup Series champion, was apologetic for the hard contact – especially because it cost them both a victory. But he said he would do it again to win a race.

"Neither one of us won, that's the big one," Elliott said. "I was close enough to drive it in there. I feel like I'd be mad at myself for not at least trying. Obviously, I don't mean to wreck anybody, especially him – some guys I wouldn't mind, but he's not one of them. Hopefully he's not too mad at me. I feel like you have to go for it in an event like this.

"I can't be sorry about going for the win, but certainly didn't mean to wreck him."



Kyle Busch is more than happy to start the 2021 Cup season with a win in the Busch Clash. (JOHN HARRELLSON/NKP photo)

Joey Logano, Tyler Reddick and William Byron rounded out the top five. Denny Hamlin, who led a race best 21 of the 35 laps, finished sixth, unable to make his way back

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Alex Bowman and William Byron Qualify on the Front Row of the 2021 Daytona 500

Alex Bowman swapped car numbers for the 2021 season – from 88 to 48 - but has certainly retained his Daytona magic, earning the pole position for Sunday's Daytona

500 (2:30 p.m. ET on FOX, MRN and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio), giving the Hendrick Motorsports driver a record fourth consecutive front row start in the NASCAR Cup Series season-opener.

Bowman, 27, went out late in the qualifying order (38th of 44 drivers) Wednesday night – the first nighttime pole qualifying session in race history - but his Chevrolet handily set the pace with a lap of 191.261 mph (47.056 secs.), taking the top-spot from Hendrick Motorsports teammate William Byron by more than a quarter-second.

"It was fast," Byron said, smiling about Bowman's pole-winning lap.

The Hendrick teammates also started alongside one another in 2019, when Byron edged Bowman for the pole position. Bowman earned his first Daytona 500 pole in 2018 and started second last year. Hendrick Motorsports now has 14 Daytona 500 pole positions.

"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.

"It means a lot to us and we were able to achieve that."

And, he added, "It's more about the people that make it happen. I floored it, but I'm pretty sure everyone else did too. I'm just appreciative my race car is fast."

Stewart-Haas Racing's Aric Almirola was third fastest in the No. 10 Ford followed on the speed chart by Bubba Wallace, who earned rave reviews in his debut driving the No. 23 23XI Racing Toyota, which is co-owned by three-time and defending Daytona 500 winning driver Denny Hamlin and

NBA Hall of Famer, Michael Jordan. Wallace's lap was good enough for the top spot only to be taken by Byron three cars later.

Wallace was fastest in an hour-long practice Wednesday afternoon – his first official laps with the new organization and he was clearly feeling optimistic about the week. He finished runner-up in his very first Daytona 500 in 2018.

"Everything's shaping up to be a great ending for us, we just have to get through it," Wallace said. "It's kind of the same feeling I had in 2018, my first 500. The speed was there, we qualified decent and had a really good Duel and finished second in the 500.

"I think the way things are going, we just have to keep it going, keep the positive momentum going. Everything's kind of going well in the car. I'm confident. Still getting things worked out but all in all it comes pretty natural when you have a great team behind you."

Wallace said he got a "very positive" text from Jordan after qualifying and said the basketball superstar arrives in Daytona on Thursday in time for the Bluegreen Vacation Duels (7 p.m. ET on FS1, MRN and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio) that will ultimately set the starting lineup for Sunday's Daytona 500.

Hamlin, the three-time defending Daytona 500 winner was 12th fastest in qualifying. The two joked about Wallace being faster.

"I'm aware," Hamlin said with a smile, adding, "It's actually a pretty solid qualifying effort certainly for our FedEx team, just barely out of the top 10 there so that's a good starting spot for us and we're excited about it.

"Obviously that was a great run by the 23-team. They just barely missed it there by a tenth or so to get that locked in spot (on the front row). But now they get to go out there and race and get the experience they need to get a good finish on Sunday."

Speed wise, last year's polesitter Ricky Stenhouse Jr. proved fast again – fifth quickest in the JTG Daugherty Chevrolet. Kevin Harvick (No. 4 Stewart-Haas Racing Ford), Christopher Bell (No. 20 Joe



Alex Bowman (right) made it to the Daytona 500 pole with his new car number 48. Teammate William Byron making it to the outside pole. (CHRIS GRAYTHEN/GETTY IMAGES photo)

Gibbs Racing Toyota), Ryan Preece (No. 37 JTG Daugherty Chevrolet), 2018 Daytona 500 winner Austin Dillon (No. 3 Richard Childress Racing Chevrolet) and Daniel Suarez (No. 99 Trackhouse Racing Chevrolet) rounded out the top 10.

Preece and 13th-place qualifier David Ragan were quickest among

Open car teams needing to qualify based upon time. The rest of the Open car team drivers - Austin Cindric, Kaz Grala, Timmy Hill, Noah Gragson, Ty Dillon and Garrett Smithley - will have to battle it out in the Duels with the highest finisher among them in each Duel earning a spot in the Daytona 500.

Floridian Aric Almirola Dominates the Bluegreen Vacations Duel 1 at Daytona

DAYTONA BEACH, FL - Florida native Aric Almirola drove to a convincing victory in the opening Bluegreen Vacations Duel at Daytona qualifying race Thursday night at Daytona International Speedway.

Almirola's No. 10 Stewart-Haas Ford led a dominating 52 of the 60 laps and held off Christopher Bell's No 20 Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota by a mere .041-seconds for the Tampa native's first victory in the Daytona 500 field-setting race.

Ryan Newman, who was involved in a frightening last lap crash in last year's Daytona 500, finished third, followed by Joey Logano and Ryan Preece, whose fifth place effort was important regarding the transfer positions into the 40-car Daytona 500 lineup.

Preece edged Ty Dillon by a scant .04-second at the finish line to race his way into the Daytona 500. That gave reigning NASCAR Xfinity Series champion Austin Cindric a starting bid based on qualifying speed - despite his 16th-place finish in the Duel – and sent Ty Dillon home.

Three of the four transfer position were evident after the first Duel - with Preece, Cindric, and David Ragan (who qualified on speed). Another will be determined in the second Duel.

"First of all, I get the bonehead of the race award for speeding on the last section of pit road when I nailed everything else the whole night that I didn't know how to do," the Team Penske driver Cindric said of receiving a speeding penalty after a mid-race pit stop.

"I'm obviously really happy to get the Verizon 5G Ford Mustang into the big show. Obviously, a lot for me left to learn, but racing on the biggest stage against the best drivers, it's an amazing opportunity."

The Fords – specifically Almirola - dominated Duel 1, spending most of the race bumper-to-bumper in varying order out front. Almirola and Logano, the 2015 Daytona 500 winner ran 1-2 for most of the race. There were nine lead changes among five drivers.

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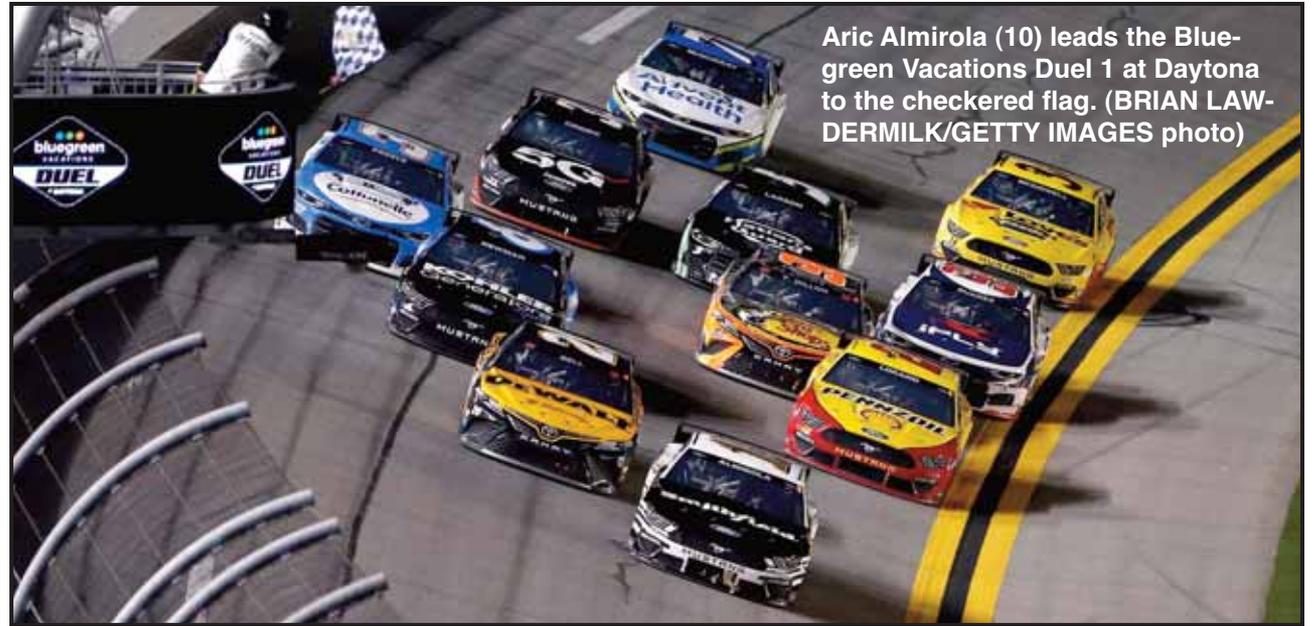
After the race, the Tampa native Almirola smiled and mentioned the good run for Tampa sports – a nod to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers Super Bowl win.

“Great way to start Speedweeks,” Almirola said. “This thing is really fast and I can’t wait until Sunday. Just proud of everybody back at the shop, Doug Yates, Ford and sponsors.

“It’s been a long time since I’ve gotten to sit here and do an interview at the start/finish line.

And he added a message for FOX Sports race announcer, Kansas City football fan Clint Bowyer, “Things are going right for Tampa Bay, right Clint Bowyer.”

Daytona 500 pole-winner Alex Bowman played it safe early in the



Aric Almirola (10) leads the Bluegreen Vacations Duel 1 at Daytona to the checkered flag. (BRIAN LAWDERMILK/GETTY IMAGES photo)

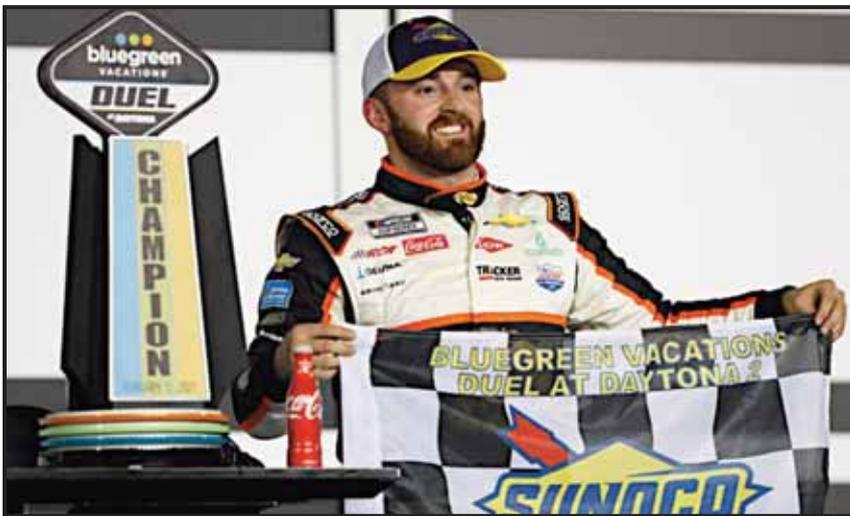
race, hanging toward the rear initially. He ultimately had to pit several times for his crew to look under the hood of his No. 48 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet. He finished 20th out of 24 cars in his race, four laps down.

Two-time defending Daytona 500 winner Denny Hamlin, who is

trying to become the first driver in history to win three consecutive versions of NASCAR’s Great American Race, finished 13th. Hamlin had to push his No. 11 Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota back into the pits after the race because he ran out of fuel on the final lap - after taking the white flag in fourth position.

Kyle Larson, who is making his first start in the Hendrick Motorsports No. 5, finished seventh. Daniel Suarez finished eighth in the No. 99 Chevrolet marking his Trackhouse Racing team’s debut. and Erik Jones finished 17th in his first Daytona points race with Richard Petty Motorsports.

Austin Dillon Wins the Bluegreen Vacations Duel 2 at Daytona



Austin Dillon is all smiles after winning Bluegreen Vacations Duel 2 at Daytona. (JOHN HARRELLSON/NKP photo)

DAYTONA BEACH, FL - As racing resumed at Daytona International Speedway following a two-hour plus rain delay Thursday night, there was a definitive sense of urgency in the field for the Bluegreen Vacations Duel 2 at Daytona as the clock passed midnight.

While the Toyota contingent of Martin Truex Jr., Bubba Wallace and Kyle Busch pushed to the front on the restart with two laps remaining in overtime, it was Austin Dillon – with a well-timed shove from former teammate Kevin Harvick – who rallied to the front, dropped low

on Wallace and then won the drag race to the checkered flag for his first career Duel victory - a mere .057-seconds over Wallace.

It is the first Daytona qualifying race Dillon has won and he did it leading the only two laps on the night, lap 33 and then the last lap (63). It was similar to what he did in winning the 2018 Daytona 500 in the famed Richard Childress Racing No. 3 Chevrolet when he led only the last lap – finishing a quarter-second ahead of Wallace then too.

“I was talking to spotter before

the restart and he was like, ‘we’ve got the 4 (Harvick) behind us and he’s been pushing well all night’. He had the 12 [Ryan Blaney in a Ford, like Harvick] so I knew the manufacturer thing was going to be tough,” Dillon said.

“I made a decent block on the backstretch and just a heckuva push through three and four. I knew Bubba was going to try and block, but I just whipped the wheel and it worked out well.”

The race marked the debut of Wallace’s 23XI Racing team, the No. 23 Toyota co-owned by three-time Daytona 500 winner Denny Hamlin and NBA legend Michael Jordan. Wallace was fourth fastest in pole qualifying and finished runner-up in the 2018 Daytona 500 – so this is a venue where he is particularly optimistic about delivering for the new operation.

“A lot of mistakes,” Wallace said after climbing out of his Toyota. “Good debut but nothing to be really happy about for myself. It’s okay for drivers to be hard on themselves, that’s how we motivate ourselves to go out there and be better.

“Hats off to my guys at 23XI for a great DoorDash Toyota Camry. I tried to do all I could to help [Martin] Truex there get Toyota a win. I appreciate Kyle [Busch] for cutting me a lot of breaks.

“I know I have a lot to learn here, but all in all it was a good night. I’ve got some learning to do.”

A five-car accident with four laps

of regulation remaining forced the overtime period. Garrett Smithley – who needed to race his way into the Daytona 500 field – made contact with former NASCAR Cup Series champion Brad Keselowski triggering a chain-reaction accident.

Outside pole-sitter William Byron, who led a race best 35 of the 63 laps, was also caught in the melee and his Hendrick Motorsports team will have to use a back-up version of his No. 24 Chevrolet in Sunday’s Daytona 500.

Harvick, a former series champion who won a series-high nine races last year, helped push his former RCR teammate Dillon to the front. He finished third, followed by Joe Gibbs Racing driver Kyle Busch and reigning NASCAR Cup Series champion Chase Elliott.

Veteran David Ragan finished eighth – best among the Open cars, needing to earn a position in the Daytona 500 field. Kaz Grala finished 14 and took the last open position in the 40-car field.

The NASCAR Cup Series will have two more practices prior to the Daytona 500 – a pair of sessions on Saturday. The Daytona 500 is set for Sunday (2:30 p.m. ET, FOX, MRN and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio). Nine times previously a winner from the Duel qualifying race has gone on to win the Daytona 500. Denny Hamlin is trying to win a record third consecutive Daytona 500.

Austin Cindric Pulls Off Overtime Xfinity Victory at Daytona

] Austin Cindric took up where he left off in 2020.

The reigning NASCAR Xfinity Series champion held off Brett Moffitt and Harrison Burton in a two-lap NASCAR Overtime dash to win Saturday's action-filled

Beef. It's What's For Dinner. 300 at Daytona International Speedway, the season-opener.

Cindric, who locked up the Xfinity title by winning in his last outing at Phoenix Raceway in November, picked up his first victory on the 2.5-mile Daytona oval and the ninth of his career in the No. 22 Team Penske Ford.

"What an awesome race," said Cindric, who will make his NASCAR Cup Series debut in Sunday's Daytona 500. "What a really fast Verizon 5G Ford Mustang. Unbelievable effort by everyone at Team Penske.

"Obviously, coming off a lot of momentum winning that championship last year, but nothing is guaranteed and keep working hard. Congrats to my man, (spotter) Coleman (Pressley) up on the roof. He puts in just as much effort or more as I do. I'm proud of him, and we'll try to go do it again tomorrow,

I guess."

The runner-up result was a career-best for Moffitt, who previously had one top five in the series, a fifth at Talladega.

"Once the 22 (Cindric) got up front, every time I got within a car length, I'd just push him farther forward," said Moffitt, who chased Cindric in overtime time after taking over second place from Burton, the third-place finisher.

Jeb Burton, Harrison's cousin, ran fourth, despite sustaining minor damage to the nose of his No. 10 Chevrolet in a three-car incident that caused the ninth caution on Lap 114 of a scheduled 120 and set up the overtime.

AJ Allmendinger was fifth, followed by Brandon Brown, Myatt Snider, Brandon Gdovic (first career top 10), Daniel Hemric and Jason White.

With 15 laps left, contact between the Joe Gibbs Racing cars of Ty Dillon and Daniel Hemric rewrote the story of the race. Dillon moved up the track between cars running in the inside and outside lanes, but when he tried to complete a pass of Hemric, he turned across the nose of Hemric's No. 18 Toyota and spun, igniting a chain-reaction wreck that eliminated a handful of potential race winners and probable championship con-



Austin Cindric is all smiles after winning his first Xfinity Series race at Daytona International Speedway Saturday night. (JARED TILTON/GETTY IMAGES photo)

tenders.

Destroyed were the JR Motorsports cars of Justin Allgaier and Josh Berry and the No. 11 Kaulig Racing Chevrolet of Justin Haley, who was trying to win his fourth straight Xfinity Series superspeedway race—an achievement only Dale Earnhardt Jr. had accomplished previously.

"The 18 (Hemric) hit me so hard in the left rear, it drove me up the track," said Dillon, who is racing in the Xfinity Series after four full seasons at the NASCAR Cup level.

Allgaier saw it differently. "He wrecked the whole field," Allgaier said. "He had to make a statement... Unfortunately, guys were trying to make moves—veterans who should know better—and making bad decisions."

On Lap 75, nine circuits after a restart to begin the final stage, the pit window opened, and all hell broke loose off Turn 4 as Cindric slowed at the front of a group of cars headed for pit road. Michael Annett was turned sideways across traffic in a nine-car wreck that wiped out Annett's No. 1 Chevrolet and the No. 9 of JR Motorsports teammate Noah Gragson, the defending race winner.

The cars of Bayley Currey, Gray Gaulding and Colby Howard also suffered race-ending damage.

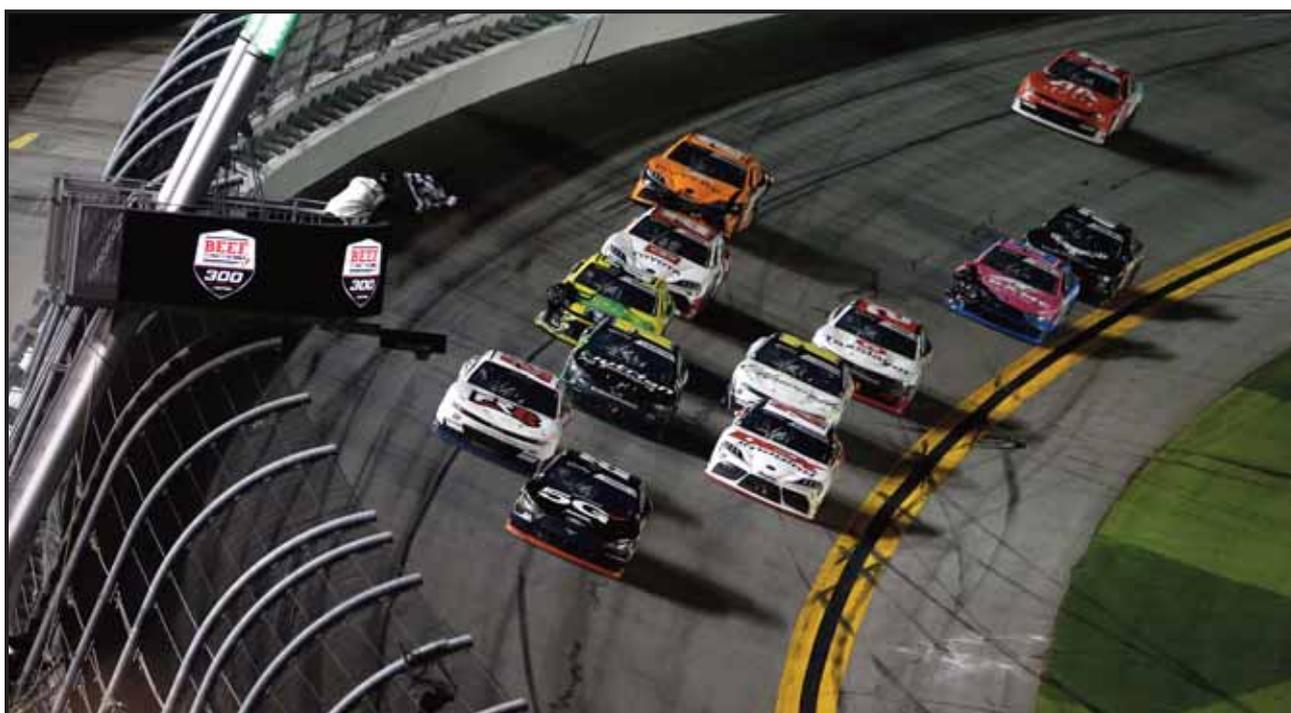
"I got wrecked coming to pit road," Annett said. "I waved them off 10 friggin' times."

Stage 1 winner Brandon Jones saw his fortunes change dramatically coming to the checkered flag to end Stage 2. Jones steered his No. 19 Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota up the track to side draft the outside lane, but when he returned to the bottom lane, his attempted block on Myatt Snider's Chevrolet came too late, and Jones spun across the nose of Snider's car.

After a wild slide through infield grass soaked by rain earlier in the day, Jones rocketed back onto the track and slammed nose-first into the outside wall. Cody Roper's Camaro smashed into Jones' car at high speed, and the spinning Toyota clipped the Chevrolet of Alex Labbe. All three cars were destroyed, and NASCAR red-flagged the race to clear the debris from the track.

Moffitt won the second stage, with Dillon and Cindric second and third behind him.

Only 22 of the 40 cars that started the race were running at the finish of a race that featured nine cautions for a total of 43 laps.



Down to the wire in an overtime run, Austin Cindric (22) battles Brett Moffitt (02) and Harrison Burton (21) to reach the start-finish line first to win the Beef, It's What's For Dinner 300. (BRIAN LAWDER-MILK/GETTY IMAGES photo)

Ben Rhodes Charges to Dramatic Overtime Victory at Daytona

With a gaggle of trucks wrecking behind him as the field approached the finish line, Ben Rhodes shot past Cory Roper in the tri-oval at Daytona International Speedway to win Friday night's NextEra Energy 250, the 2021 season-

opener for the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series.

With a decisive push from ThorSport Racing teammate Matt Crafton on the final lap of an overtime shootout, Rhodes had more than enough momentum to charge past Roper in the final 400 yards. Likewise, Jordan Anderson blew past Roper into second place, .036 seconds behind the winner, as Roper held third for a career-best result.

"This is so special—the biggest win of my career," Rhodes exulted after climbing from his truck. "I can't even believe this. As a driver, you're always asked about what

your biggest accomplishment is... This is it. This is hands-down it. This is the place to be. I can't even believe it."

The win was the first for ThorSport after an offseason switch from Ford to Toyota.

"We came back to Toyota and we won in our first race with them at ThorSport," Rhodes said. "I can't thank (owners) Duke and Rhonda Thorson enough for this opportunity. This is special. I'm going to soak it up for as long as I can. I'm going to enjoy this night. Best night of my life right here."

Without Crafton's help, Rhodes said, he couldn't have claimed his first win at Daytona and the fourth of his career.

"Thanks goodness I had my teammate Matt Crafton behind me, because he's a stud," Rhodes said. "He's been around a long time, and he knows what he's doing."

Anderson was a close runner-up for the second straight year, matching his career-best finish.

"I'm almost speechless," said an



Ben Rhodes celebrates his first Daytona International Speedway win Friday night in the Camping World Truck Series. (JOHN HARRILLSON/NKP photo)

elated Anderson, who was anything but tongue-tied. "So much energy, so much emotion..."

A multicar wreck on Lap 95 of 100 ended the winning chances of a handful of contenders.

Chandler Smith spun into the infield, and behind him, a vicious crash ended the race for Tyler Ankrum and heavily damaged the trucks of Timothy Peters, Austin Hill, and three-time Daytona winner Johnny Sauter.

The trucks of Sunoco rookie Carson Hocevar and John Hunter Nemechek also were victims of the

crash, but they recovered to finish fifth and seventh, respectively. Ryan Truex ran fourth, followed by Hocevar, defending series champion Sheldon Creed, Nemechek, Codie Rohrbaugh, Smith and Drew Dollar.

Crafton, a three-time series champion, was collected in the overtime wreck and finished 15th. Twenty-eight laps earlier, he was part of a wreck that eliminated a pair of strong entries.

With trucks running in a perilous four-wide array on Lap 72, Crafton nosed up the track after a slight tap from Nemechek and bumped the left rear quarter of Todd Gilliland's Ford. Gilliland spun and collected the trucks of Stewart Friesen and Tate Fogleman behind him, and in the process, Brett Moffitt's Chevrolet was pinched into the outside wall.

The trucks of Gilliland and Friesen were wrecked too severely to continue.

Racing for the first time in six years, 2012 series champion James Buescher was out of the event before he reached the start/finish line to begin the race. With his No. 44 Niece Motorsports Chevrolet destroyed in a four-truck wreck right after the initial start, Buescher exited without completing a lap.

Joining him on the sidelines were Tanner Gray, who spun during the early incident, and Gus Dean, whose truck was damaged too badly to continue. Derek Kraus recovered from a spin in that early crash in what was to become an adventuresome night for the driver of the No. 19 Toyota.

Kraus caused two more cautions with spins and collided with the truck of Sunoco rookie Kris Wright on pit road before taking his truck to the garage in 33rd place.



Ben Rhodes (99) powers past Jordan Anderson (3) and Cory Roper (04) to win the NextEra 250 as the field is crashing behind him. (NIGEL KINRADE PHOTOGRAPHY photo)



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Corey Heim Starts 2021 ARCA Menards Season With Win at Daytona

DAYTONA BEACH, FL - Venturini Motorsports last month pinned Corey Heim as its full-time driver in the ARCA Menards Series for 2021. His first task was to attempt to extend the team's four-race winning streak at Daytona International Speedway with a victory in Saturday's Lucas Oil 200 Driven by General Tire.

He did just that.

The 18-year-old Heim held off his VMS teammate, pole-sitter Drew Dollar, on the last lap to win the ARCA Menards Series season-opener at the 2.5-mile tri-oval in Daytona Beach, Florida.

Heim, who won last season's finale at Kansas Speedway to earn his first series victory, picked up right where he left off driving the No. 20 JBL Toyota.

"I gotta give it all to (crew chief) Shannon Rursch," said Heim of the final restart with one lap to go Saturday. "He made the perfect call, executed this race perfect. He dialed this JBL Camry in perfect.

"Can't give enough thanks to Toyota Racing, Venturini Motorsports, JBL, all the guys who make it happen."

A caution with four laps to go set

up Saturday's overtime finish. With Heim, the leader, taking the top lane and Dollar on the bottom, the latter let the former move to the inside so the duo could work together in the draft.

Even with Dollar's car damaged and lacking power steering, the plan worked to perfection, and VMS ended the race with a 1-2 finish.

"I felt like that was really all we could do there," Dollar said of the last lap. "We had a super fast Camry today; just didn't really have what it took to win once we had damage. Had a little bit of a tire rub and just wanted to get to the end. It was tough without any power steering."

Including last summer's ARCA Menards Series race at the Daytona International Speedway Road Course, a VMS Toyota has now won five consecutive races on the platform at the World Center of Racing.

That also means VMS has won four straight ARCA Menards Series season-openers on the famed Daytona oval.

"I gotta give a lot of props to Drew Dollar," Heim added. "He really helped me there at the end, just him being right behind me. I know he's got a little bit of experience and just raced (Friday night's NASCAR Camping World) Truck



Corey Heim, driver of the No. 20 JBL Toyota, celebrates winning the Lucas Oil 200 Driven by General Tire for the ARCA Menards Series at Daytona International Speedway in Daytona Beach, Florida, on Feb. 13, 2021. (Adam Glanzman/NASCAR photo)

(Series) race, too. Really trusted him, and it paid off."

Defending series champion Bret Holmes finished third ahead of Ty Gibbs in fourth and Kyle Sieg in fifth.

Derrick Lancaster, Tanner Gray, Andy Jankowiak, Jack Wood and Sean Corr rounded out the top 10.

Heim and Dollar's VMS teammates, Derek Griffith and Gracie Trotter, finished 30th and 23rd, respectively, after getting caught up in incidents.

While leading, Griffith was knocked out of the race on Lap 27 when Trotter got into his rear bumper.

Trotter found more trouble later

in the race when she ran into the back of Chuck Hiers' car as it slid into the outside wall.

Including the scheduled race break on Lap 43, the race featured four cautions for a total of 31 laps. There were five lead changes among six drivers.

The ARCA Menards Series will return to action on Friday, March 12 at Phoenix Raceway. That race will be a combination event with the ARCA Menards West and will mark the West Series' season-opener.

The Phoenix 150 is scheduled to start at 5:30 p.m. MT / 7:30 p.m. ET and broadcast live on MAVTV while streaming on TrackPass on NBC Sports Gold.

An advertisement for Five Star RaceCar Bodies UltraGlass. The top half features the brand name "ULTRAGLASS" in large, stylized red and white letters, with "DESIGNED TO WIN!" in yellow text to the right. Below this, a yellow banner reads "BODY PANELS THAT DEFLECT 300% FURTHER BEFORE BREAKING=LESS DEBRIS ON THE TRACK!". The bottom half shows a white and red Phoenix race car with the number 7 on its side, driving on a track. The car has "PHOENIX" and "7" written on it, along with various sponsor logos like "FFFE" and "SWIFT". In the bottom right corner, it says "THE DIFFERENCE IS QUALITY!" and provides the website "www.FIVESTARBODIES.com" and phone number "262.877.2171". There is also an ISO 9001:2008 Quality Certified logo.

Rookie Max Gutiérrez Earns First ARCA Win in Photo Finish at New Smyrna

With just five laps to go in Monday night's Jeep Beach 175 at Florida's New Smyrna Speedway, a red flag for rain paused the action on the half-mile oval for well over an hour.

And the long wait for the last few laps was worth every second, especially for

Max Gutiérrez.

The 18-year-old ARCA Menards Series East rookie from Mexico City, Mexico, passed both Taylor Gray and Sammy Smith on the final stretch of the last lap of the 2021 opener to win a three-wide photo finish. Not a bad way for one to earn his first victory on the ARCA Menards platform.

"The last corner, they were battling for first," Gutiérrez said after the race of his move to steal the win from Gray and Smith, the latter of whom was attempting to pass the former in Turn 4 before the No. 30 entered the equation. "I saw an opportunity, and I took it.

"I'm very happy, very proud of the team. That's a great, great win to start the championship."

Gutiérrez, who plans to race the full ARCA Menards Series East season for car owner and crew chief Mark Rette, is a six-time Super Kart Champion (2008-13) who won Rookie of the Year honors in Mikel's NASCAR Truck Series in Mexico in 2017 before capturing the series championship a year later in 2018.

In 2019, he advanced to the NASCAR Mexico Challenge Series, where he won two races in 10 starts while also competing in select Late Model Stock Series events. Last season in the NASCAR Mexico Challenge Series, he won five of his 12 races and earned 10 top-five finishes.

Now he is an ARCA Menards winner — in epic fashion. His margin of victory over Smith on Monday night was 0.046 seconds.

"Just a last lap deal," said Gray, who finished third Monday night after starting on the General Tire pole. "(Smith) tried to move me and didn't do it right."

Smith, though, did not have enough to cross the stripe first after Gutiérrez had stolen the inside lane on the final stretch.

"I can't believe it," said Rette, the co-owner of Rette Jones Racing. "I'm so proud of Max and his determination, not to mention the work by everyone on this Rette Jones Racing team. I knew we had a shot if we timed it right and Max did his job when it counted most, and we're winners again in the ARCA Menards Series East."

Gutiérrez's win was the product of the second of two overtime attempts at the end of Monday night's East Series season-opener, the first of which ended in Turn 1 of the first lap when Mason Diaz spun.

The final lap was the only one Gutiérrez led.

Smith ended up second after leading a race-high 78 laps. He finished ahead of Gray in third. Mason Diaz and Joey Iest rounded out the top five.

The second race of the 2021 ARCA Menards Series East season also will take place at 5 Flags Speedway. The Pensacola 200 is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 27 at 5 p.m. CT / 6 p.m. ET and will broadcast live on TrackPass on NBC Sports Gold.

NASCAR Pinty's Series Returns with Full Schedule for 2021

DAYTONA BEACH, FL - Following an abbreviated six-race season under the "Pinty's Fan Cave Chal-



Max Gutierrez, driver of the No. 30 Tough Built Ford, passes Sammy Smith (No. 18) and Taylor Gray (No. 17) in the final stretch to win the Jeep Beach 175 for the ARCA Menards Series East at New Smyrna Speedway in New Smyrna Beach, Florida, on Feb. 8, 2021. (Adam Glanzman/NASCAR photo)

lenge" banner the NASCAR Pinty's Series will run a full slate of events and once again crown a season-long champion in 2021.

The return to a full schedule features 12 races at 8 tracks culminating with the championship race at Jukasa Motor Speedway on Saturday, Sept. 25. Jukasa has hosted the season finale every year since its return to the schedule in 2017.

"Our team has worked hard to put together a full schedule that will showcase the exciting, door-to-door racing Pinty's Series fans have come to expect," said Chad Seigler, NASCAR Vice President, International Business Development. "Out of an abundance of caution, we are focusing on stand-alone events, especially as we kick off the season. Though we are unsure of when we can welcome fans back to the race track, we will continue to work with local and provincial officials to put on as

safe an event as possible. The health and safety of our competitors, officials and fans are our top priority."

Other highlights include:

- The series' long-awaited debut on dirt. Ohsweken Speedway will host its first Pinty's Series race on Tuesday, Aug. 17 after being featured on the initial 2020 schedule.

- A Quebec swing in late August featuring three races at two tracks in two days. Circuit ICAR will host its first series race since 2017 on Saturday, Aug. 28 followed by twin events at Autodrome Chaudière on Sunday, Aug. 29.

- The Pinty's Series will again serve as the opening act for the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park (CTMP) with two races on Sunday, Sept. 5.

All races will air on TSN and RDS. Start times will be released at a later date.

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LOWER LAP TIMES

Late Model Racers Across Region Already Preparing for Big April

WATERBURY, VT - Even with snow still on the ground, the American-Canadian Tour (ACT) and Pro All Stars Series (PASS) seasons are coming up fast. Racing gets underway just after the calendar turns to April, with a doubleheader at North Carolina's Hickory Motor

Speedway on April 2 and 3 followed by the inaugural Northeast Classic at New Hampshire Motor Speedway (NHMS) on April 17.

The triplet of events is a big way to kick off the 36th season of ACT competition and 30th for the ACT Late Model Tour. The first-ever visit for the series to the historic Hickory oval -- known as the "Birthplace of the NASCAR Stars" -- will be followed by the start of the point-counting season at New England's most widely-recognized racetrack.

It's no surprise that some of the biggest names in Northeast Late Model racing are signing up for these events. They will take advantage of the opportunity to compete on two of the country's most meaningful stages for short-track warriors. The entry lists for each event should only grow bigger as the dates near.

A who's-who of touring and weekly racers are registered for either or both tracks. Some of the drivers currently slated to compete at both Hickory and NHMS include multi-time Pro All Stars Series (PASS) champion Ben Rowe of Turner, ME; defending Monadnock Speedway champion Aaron Fellows of Croydon, NH; former Riverside Speedway champions Jeff

Marshall of Gilman, VT and Shawn Swallow of Lancaster, NH; and rising star sisters Reilly and Peyton Lanphear of Duxbury, VT.

Meanwhile, three-time ACT champion Wayne "The Punisher" Helliwell Jr. of Dover, NH has committed to the Hickory doubleheader. So are Thunder Road standouts Jason Corliss of Barre, VT and Bobby Therrien of Hinesburg, VT, who've combined to win 3 of the last 4 track championships. Drivers ready to start their season at NHMS include defending ACT champion Jimmy Hebert, former Rookie of the Year Ryan Kuhn, and multi-time Thunder Road and White Mountain Motorsports Park winner Stephen Donahue.

The PASS Super Late Models are also part of both events. Like ACT, their Hickory and NHMS entry lists are loaded with notable racers. The Northeast Classic registration list alone is more than 30 names long as of press time. Former champions Ben Rowe, Center Conway, NH's D.J. Shaw, Farmingdale, ME's Johnny Clark, Belfast, ME's Travis Benjamin, Farmington, ME's Cassius Clark are among the early highlights. Recent New Smyrna Speedweeks winner Derek Griffith is entered for NHMS as are Kuhn, Snowflake 100 winner Jake Johnson, and Oxford 250 winner Curtis Gerry.

Rowe, Shaw, Griffith, and Johnson will all travel to Hickory Motor Speedway in early April for the 15th and 16th annual Easter Bunny 150s. They'll be joined by Canadian Super Late Model standout Cole Butcher and youngsters Trevor Sanborn, Gabe Brown, and Evan Hallstrom among others.

Both events at Hickory as well



Thunder Road Late Model champions Bobby Therrien (#5VT) and Jason Corliss (#66VT) are two of the drivers registered for the ACT doubleheader at North Carolina's Hickory Motor Speedway. (Daniel Holben photo)

as the Northeast Classic count towards the 2021 PASS National Championship.

As such, a lot will be on the line over those two weeks, with the national title frontrunners likely emerging as the checkered flag flies at NHMS.

ACT opens its 2020 season at North Carolina's Hickory Motor Speedway on Friday, April 2 and Saturday, April 3. The ACT Late Models will run the Hickory 125 on Friday and the Easter Bunny 125 on Saturday. The PASS Super Late Models have a pair of Easter Bunny 150s with one each day. Ticket prices and other information are to be announced.

The first point-counting event for the ACT Late Model Tour will be the Northeast Classic at Loudon's New Hampshire Motor Speedway on Saturday, April 17. The card includes \$5,000-to-win events for the ACT Late Models, PASS Super Late Models, and Tour-Type Modifieds. The North East Mini Stock

Tour, EXIT Realty Pro Truck Challenge, and an 8-cylinder Street Stock Open are also part of the program. An optional practice day is scheduled for Friday, April 16.

Registration is still open for each event. The entry forms for the ACT Hickory 125 and Easter Bunny 125 are available at www.acttour.com/forms. The latest on the Northeast Classic can be found at www.acttour.com/northeast-late-model-classic.

For technical information concerning all PASS divisions, and for media or marketing questions, please contact passracing@roadrunner.com. Don't forget to "Like" the Pro All Stars Series on Facebook or follow on Twitter @PASSSLM14 to keep up with breaking news as it happens.

For more information, contact the ACT offices at (802) 244-6963, media@acttour.com, or visit www.acttour.com. You can also get updates on Facebook and Twitter at @ACTTour.

Southern Modified Auto Racing Teams Tour

Bobby Labonte Joins 2021 Southern Modified Auto Racing Teams Tour

CHARLOTTE, NC - Just a year after his induction into the NASCAR Hall of Fame, legendary NASCAR Champion driver Bobby Labonte will be chasing the checkered flag once again in the Southern Modified Auto Racing

Teams Tour (S.M.A.R.T.). It will be a new challenge for Labonte, who will be driving the No. 25 Cook Out Tour Modified for the 2021 season, set to begin March 14 at Caraway Speedway near Asheboro, N.C.

Labonte's commitment comes a year after the tour's rebirth in 2020. Last October, he filled in for the driver of the No. 25 car at the S.M.A.R.T. race at Florence Speedway, went on to set a track

record in qualifying, started on the pole and finished fourth.

"The race in Florence was awesome and everyone with Team 25 is top notch," said Labonte. "I really like the way the car is put together and the way the team operates. The experience at Florence got me thinking and talking with the team, and we decided to do this together for the 2021 season."

Labonte first drove a modified competitively at Bowman Gray Stadium in 1919, and kept himself sharp with iRacing last year when the COVID-19 pandemic forced the cancellation of races across the country.

Tour Director Chris Williams and Team 25 are looking forward to welcoming Labonte to the 10-race series, set to be held at some of the newest venues in motorsports.



More than 30 PASS Super Late Models are registered for the NHMS Northeast Classic, which is part of the PASS National Championship series. (Norm Marx photo)



MARCH 15 - 20

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Devin Moran Claims First Big Gator Championship

CONCORD, NC - A trip to Volusia Speedway Park for the 50th DIRTcar Nationals wasn't initially on Devin Moran's 2021 itinerary. His new gator-wide smile signified his joy of that change.

Moran, 26, of Dresden, OH, claimed his first DIRTcar Nationals Big Gator championship on Saturday after an impressive display of consistency through the five rounds of Late Model races. If it wasn't for a broken driveshaft on Wednesday, he could've finished on the podium in each event – he had finishes of third, second, 31st, first (his first Volusia win) and second.

"It's pretty cool," Moran said about claiming his first Big Gator title. "It's pretty unexpected, to be honest. At the start of the week, we weren't even planning on coming down here. Then to run top three even night, except for that one DNF, which I think we had a shot to win, it just gives us a lot of confidence... To start out the year the way we have, it's been a lot of fun and like I said, it gives us a lot of confidence."

If it wasn't for Florida-residents Terry and Marry Ann Wright – who have been friends with Moran's car owner for a while – Moran and his team would've skipped the prestigious event. They've been trying to get the team to come down for a couple of years and this year helped make it affordable for them, Moran said.

"I'm glad they did because it definitely paid off," he added.

Bobby Pierce was his closest competitor in the championship hunt going into the final race – before Saturday's event was canceled due to rain. He entered the night only nine points behind Moran and was on track to cut into that lead after setting Slick Woody's Quick Time and starting on the outside pole of the Feature.

However, as fate would have it, he suffered a motor issue and the team was unable to get a new one in before the Feature started. Pierce hoped in Reid Millard's car for the Feature but pulled in early and was unable to finish, unofficially handing the Big Gator championship to Moran who finished second that night. He earned his

first golden gator trophy the night before.

Defending Big Gator champion and three-time defending World of Outlaws Morton Buildings Late Model Series champion Brandon Sheppard finished second in over Big Gator points.

"Like I said, it's so unexpected," Moran said. "First of all, with us not coming and then winning the whole week. It sucks with what happened with Bobby that he had to change motors and couldn't... It's a bummer that he couldn't race. But we had a really consistent fast car all week. It's a special thing to take home this gator with as unexpected as it was."

UP NEXT: The World of Outlaws Morton Buildings Late Model Series, on Friday, March 5, will return to Duck River Raceway Park in Lewisburg, TN.

If you can't make it to the track, you can watch all the action live on DIRTVision.

Rain Showers Force Cancellation of DIRTcar Nationals Finale at Volusia

BARBERVILLE, FL - Heavy morning showers creating a high-water table and saturated grounds at Volusia Speedway Park, along with persistent rain throughout the day, have forced World of Outlaws Morton Buildings Late Model Series, Super DIRTcar Series and track officials to cancel Saturday's event during the 50th DIRTcar Nationals at the speedway.

Those who purchased a ticket in advance to Saturday's event at Volusia will receive a face-value credit



Devin Moran won his first Big Gator Championship after a consistent run at Volusia Speedway Park through five rounds of racing. Moran was awarded his gator after the final night was cancelled due to rain. (WoOLM photo)

to their MyDirtTickets.com account to be used towards any World of Outlaws event available at WorldofOutlaws.com/tix.

If you bought the ticket at the track, you can mail your ticket and/or wrist band back to our Concord office with a return address: 7575 West Winds Blvd. Concord, NC 28027.

With the cancellation, that awards two first time Big Gator champions. Devin Moran is the new champion for the Late Models and Max McLaughlin is the champion for the Super DIRTcar Series.

The World of Outlaws Late Models will continue their high-octane show on Friday, March 5, at Duck River Raceway Park and the Super DIRTcar Series' season will continue on Saturday, April 10, at Can Am Speedway.

For the latest on the World of Outlaws Late Models and Super DIRTcar Series, follow on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. And at WorldofOutlaws.com and SuperDIRTcarSeries.com.

If you can't make it to the track, you can watch all the action live on DIRTVision with the annual Platinum FAST PASS subscription for \$299/year or the monthly FAST PASS subscription for \$39/month.

Brandon Overton Claims First DIRTcar Nationals Victory

BARBERVILLE, FL - The dread that flowed through Brandon Overton's veins like snake venom was extracted Friday night with the help of a golden gator.

Overton, who historically hadn't run well at Volusia Speedway Park and had bad luck throughout the first few races of the 2021 50th DIRTcar Nationals – breaking a motor and wrecking a car – found his anti-venom and dominated the 40-lap World of Outlaws Morton Buildings Late Model Feature. The event was round three for the Series during the DIRTcar Nationals and round five for the Late Model Big Gator championship.

He drew the fourth-place starting position but got to move up to the outside pole when Bobby Pierce – initially supposed to start second – had motor issues and moved to the rear in Reid Millard's #14 car.

Once Overton saw the green flag, he never saw his closest competitors again. He didn't even feel their pressure as he had a half-a-track lead for most of the race with his #76 car. Overton led from green to checkered, picking up his 14th career World of Outlaws victory and first at Volusia Speedway Park.

"Hell, man, I'm excited. I've been wanting one of these gators (trophies) for a long time," said Overton, commonly known as Big Sexy. "I finally got me one."

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Brandon Overton raced his way to victory lane on Friday night at Volusia Speedway Park. (Paul Arch photo)

Continued...

"I've had the lowest of lows here driving other people's cars and my own stuff. I've never been really good here. So, to finally get it is a relief, I'm telling you. I dread every time I look at that schedule and see Volusia. I'm like, 'God, I suck there.' I don't want to go there. But we keep working on it and working on it and we finally got it."

While Overton dominated, Devin Moran began dusting the Big Gator championship throne for himself to sit on. He had another impressive run, charging from eighth to second, powering around the outside of those in front of him. With that run, he's nearly clinched the Big Gator championship as Pierce – his closest competitor – didn't finish the race.

Moran initially wasn't even sure he was going to come to Volusia for the DIRTcar Nationals. His decision to come and play earned him his first Volusia Speedway Park win on Thursday and a strong chance of securing his first Big Gator trophy.

"It really sucks for Bobby," Moran said. "He was a lot better than me in that Heat Race. He was probably going to have something for Brandon there in the Feature. We just missed it a little bit. Got in the wall there a little bit halfway through and took me out of contention there... All in all it was still a good night."

Florida-native Kyle Bronson ran second for the majority of the event with Brent Larson having a career run in third behind him – looking to claim his first podium finish. The two began to cut into Overton's four-second lead while the leader was stuck in traffic. But with five laps to go, hearts broke around the half-mile speedway when Larson's left rear tire blew. He was able to finish but had to settle for a 16th-place finish.

While Larson had to bear the weight of disappointment once again, he was still able to end the night with his head held high. Especially having won his second career Drydene Heat Race and beating current Series points leader Kyle Strickler to get it.

"Strickler is leading point and undoubtedly the star here the past couple of weeks," Larson said. "To be able to beat him going into (turn)



Devin Moran celebrates in victory lane after winning at Volusia Speedway Park during the World of Outlaws Morton Buildings Late Model's DIRTcar Nationals. (Jacy Norgaard photo)

one and beat him in that Heat Race is a big confidence builder."

Bronson, who won the Series' season-opening race at Volusia during the Sunshine Nationals ended up settling for third. However, his run moved him up to second in Series points – currently 68 points behind Strickler, who finished sixth – his worst finish in the first five races of the season.

"Our car has been good all week," Bronson said. "We've just had stupid stuff happen. Broke a distributor cap. Should've ran in the top-five the other day and a tire blew out. Things just haven't gone our way. We had a pretty fast car all week. Things just haven't been great. Overall, these guys have been working hard and his Longhorn car has been good all week. We just have to be a little bit better."

While Overton was able to find his anti-venom at Volusia, three-time defending champion Brandon Sheppard is still looking for his. He finished 11th and fell to sixth in points – 80 points behind Strickler. He's yet to secure a top-five finish this season. His championship rival last year, Ricky Weiss, was involved in a crash on the front stretch with six laps to go. It dropped him to a 22nd-place finish.

Moran Finds Redemption with DIRTcar Nationals Win

BARBERVILLE, FL - Victory flirted with Devin Moran throughout the week, only to keep him wondering if love was ever really there.

The biggest tease was on Wednesday night – during the World of Outlaws Morton Buildings Late Model's DIRTcar Nationals opener at Volusia Speedway Park – when Moran made a charge to the front and saw his date with Vic-

tory Lane laps away. Then, his driveshaft broke.

On Thursday night – into Friday morning – after a rain shower halted racing action for a couple of hours, Moran was no longer for playing games. He was confident. He was taking his shot.

From the fifth starting position, Moran charged his way to the front past the likes of Chris Madden and Dale McDowell to finally secure his date with Victory Lane during the 50th DIRTcar Nationals – his fifth World of Outlaws victory, tying him for 25th on the all-time wins list with his dad, Donnie Moran.

"This is awesome," an out of breath Moran said in Victory Lane. "We've had just a fast race car all week and we haven't been able to quite get there. I was bummed when I got that pill draw (to start fifth) but congrats to the track crew. They did an awesome job. We got rain and I honestly didn't think we were going to race. Everyone back there was complaining, not wanting to race, but we're here to race. So, that's what we were going to do. They did an awesome job, and this is probably the raciest it's been all week.

"It's awesome to finally get a gator (trophy). We didn't think we were going to come here, but it's all happening and it's pretty cool."

At the start of the 40-lap Feature, on Friday morning, McDowell launched ahead of the field to lead the first lap with Madden following his tire tracks in second. By Lap 3 Madden sucked the right-side stickers off McDowell's car as he rocketed past him off Turn 4 to claim the lead. McDowell fought back and the two raced side by side for a lap before Madden got into a rhythm and pulled away.

The second caution of the night came out with 31 laps to go and al-

lowed Moran, in third, to line up next to McDowell on the restart. The young Dresden, OH native showed the night before that he's not afraid to throw the holiest of Hail Mary slide jobs into the corner for a pass, too. However, he didn't need it.

Moran bested McDowell on the restart and secured the runner-up spot by the first corner. He then began his pursuit of Madden.

With 19 laps to go and a run down the backstretch, he threw his #9 machine to the bottom of Turn 3, underneath Madden, and allowed the momentum to send his car up the track in front of his new rival. Madden was ready for the move, though, and cranked his steering wheel to the left by the center of the corner to turn underneath Moran. They went side by side down the front stretch before Madden cleared him for the lead by the flag stand.

Moran wasn't done, yet. This was the time to shoot his shot. He pulled even with Madden down the backstretch and tried another slide job attempt into Turn 3. This time to perfection. Madden didn't have the grip to hang with Moran off the corner and had to watch the 26-year-old drive away.

While Moran was on his way to holding hands with victory, a new challenger emerged in the late stage of the race. From the ninth starting position, Bobby Pierce navigated his way to second with nine laps to go.

He put the pressure on Moran in the closing laps, but it wasn't enough to hinder his confidence. Moran held a steady wheel to win his first-ever DIRTcar Nationals win – and increased his points lead over Pierce for the Big Gator championship with two races remaining.

Pierce was only supposed to run the first two DIRTcar Late Model races of Late Model week during the DIRTcar Nationals, but after a win on Tuesday, he decided to stay. The decision has paid off, so far, with him still in contention for the Big Gator.

"Last night (when he blew a tire) was a heartbreaker," Pierce said. "We'd have so many good finishes if it wasn't for that. Congrats to Devin on the win there. I think he snookered us on tires. That explains why he was pulling away there pretty good. The car is really good. I was driving my butt off to catch him. I guess we needed so green flag runs to catch him."

McDowell worked his way back by Madden with five laps to go to

(Continued Next Page)

Continued...

round out the podium.

"We've been working and been right there," McDowell said. "Just have to drive harder in these conditions. Just out of my wheelhouse."

Three-time defending champion Brandon Sheppard earned the hard charger award with his run from 23rd to sixth. That helped move him

from ninth to third in the championship standings. He's currently 70 points behind points leader and rookie contender, Kyle Strickler – who earned his fourth top-four finish in a row with the Series.

For Moran, he's already thinking of beating his dad's win record when the Series returns to action Friday night at Volusia.

"I want to say thank you to him so much. He was supposed to come out tonight but with all of the rain tonight he stayed at the hotel," Moran said. "I texted him and said, 'Hey, we're racing.' He said, 'Oh, I'm not coming out tonight but go win that bitch. So, we did.'"

Show-Stopping DIRTcar Nationals Late Model Action Results in Strickler Win

BARBERVILLE, FL - We fall to learn how to pick ourselves back up.

When the trap opened on Kyle Strickler at the start of the World of Outlaws Morton Buildings Late Model Series DIRTcar Nationals opener Wednesday night at Volusia Speedway Park, he did just that.

He fell from fourth to eighth in a lap, but with an injured finger, found a ledge to grab before his descent continued. On the next lap, he began his rise.

By Lap 5 he was seventh. By Lap 20, sixth. By Lap 23, fifth. By Lap 34 he found himself back inside the top-four and challenging for a podium finish. Then, with three laps to go, as the leader slowed to the wall, he reached the peak. Minutes later, the win was his – his second World of Outlaws victory (in 12 starts), his second in a row, and second in a row at Volusia.

"We took that green, I went straight backward," Strickler said with a chuckle. "I was like, 'Man, we messed up and picked the wrong



Kyle Strickler raced his way to his second World of Outlaws Late Model Series win in a row at Volusia Speedway Park. (Paul Arch photo)

tire or made the wrong adjustment or something. Got to lap traffic there and all the leaders went to the top and the car really came to us. I said, 'I'm not going to let a Modified guy beat me, I'm going to the front.'"

What ensued during his climb back to the top created one of the best shows during the 50th DIRTcar Nationals, so far.

Bobby Pierce and Tim McCreddie – who each won a DIRTcar Late Model event to kick off Late Model week during the DIRTcar Nationals – started on the front row of the 40-lap Feature. While Strickler fell on the opening lap, Pierce catapulted ahead of the 33-car field. McCreddie kept a tight hold on the runner-up position until a suspension failure took him out of the race four laps in.

The next 29 laps went caution-free and were 29 laps of pure dirt track ecstasy. Pearce led, with Ricky Thornton and Devin Moran close enough to be annoying the entire time.

Thornton tortured Pierce's heart lap after lap, showing his nose multiple times through Turns 3 and 4. But Pierce put his #32 machine through a workout, sending it into each corner as hard as he can around the top, lifting the left side of his car off the ground at times to get the better momentum off the corner.

That lasted until Lap 12 when Thornton's patient work paid off as he got the advantage on Pierce off Turn 2. Pierce battled back but soon found himself having to fend off Moran for second.

Their war came to a halt when Kyle Bronson suffered a flat tire and brought out a caution with seven laps to go. When it resumed, Moran tried a Tom Brady-level Hail Mary pass into Turn 1, going from third to first by the middle of the corner. His slide job made him look like a hero until the exit of Turn 2 when Thornton split the middle be-

tween Moran – up top – and Pierce – on the bottom – to reclaimed the lead.

And at this point, Strickler had fought his way to fifth, slowly digging his fingers in the dirt and crawling back to the front.

Then, jaws dropped when Moran had a driveshaft issue going down the front stretch and got rear-ended by Brandon Overton, ending both of their nights.

On the restart, the trap door that plagued Strickler found Thornton as he fell from first to fourth in a lap. Pierce reclaimed the lead while Strickler and Hudson O'Neal found themselves inside the podium, battling for second. With three laps to go, Strickler passed O'Neal for second, just in time to watch Pierce slow with a flat tire.

Strickler's rise was complete. It wasn't an easy climb, reminding himself how to drive a Late Model versus a UMP Modified – which he drove last week. But his exuberant celebration showed it was worth the effort.

"Man, I never would've thought I'd fall back to eighth and then charge to the front," said Strickler, of Sinking Spring, PA. "Sometimes it's better to be lucky than good. This is awesome.

"This is one right now, of course, this is probably my favorite race of my career. That's so much fun to go back and forth like that."

Strickler, a rookie, maintains the Series points lead – 34 points ahead of Ricky Weiss – as he's decided to join the World of Outlaws 2021 tour full-time with the PPC Motorsports team.

O'Neal finished second with his own rise to the front from eighth.

"We were just a little too free there from the git-go," O'Neal said. "I didn't think I had a second-place race car. Just took advantage of some of the bad situations for the other guys."

Thornton, after leading 23 laps, had to swallow a third-place finish.

"We were good. I wish that yellow didn't come out," Thornton said. "I don't really have enough experience here to know what to do on the restart and let Bobby get by that one time... We'll take a third and move on tomorrow."

Defending Series champion Brandon Sheppard was on track to have his best showing of the year, so far, with a potential podium run, but had an incident with Mike Norris and suffered a flat tire with two laps to go. He fell to 20th – now currently sitting ninth in points.

But what applied to Strickler, could also apply to Sheppard in the three remaining days of the DIRTcar Nationals.

We fall to learn how to pick ourselves back up.

Sunshine Nationals, DIRTcar Nationals 2022 Dates Set for Action-Packed Openers

BARBERVILLE, FL - Two of the biggest season-opening events at Volusia Speedway Park for the World of Outlaws and DIRTcar will act as the perfect bookends for the series' 2022 Florida events.

The Sunshine Nationals, featuring the World of Outlaws Morton Buildings Late Models, will kick off the Late Model season with another thrilling Late Model-Palooza, on Jan. 20-22.

Then, after a couple weeks of more exciting dirt racing around Florida, the 51st DIRTcar Nationals will commence, Feb. 8-19, featuring the World of Outlaws NOS Energy Drink Sprint Cars, DIRTcar UMP Modifieds, All Star Circuit of Champions, DIRTcar Late Models, World of Outlaws Late Models and the Super DIRTcar Series.

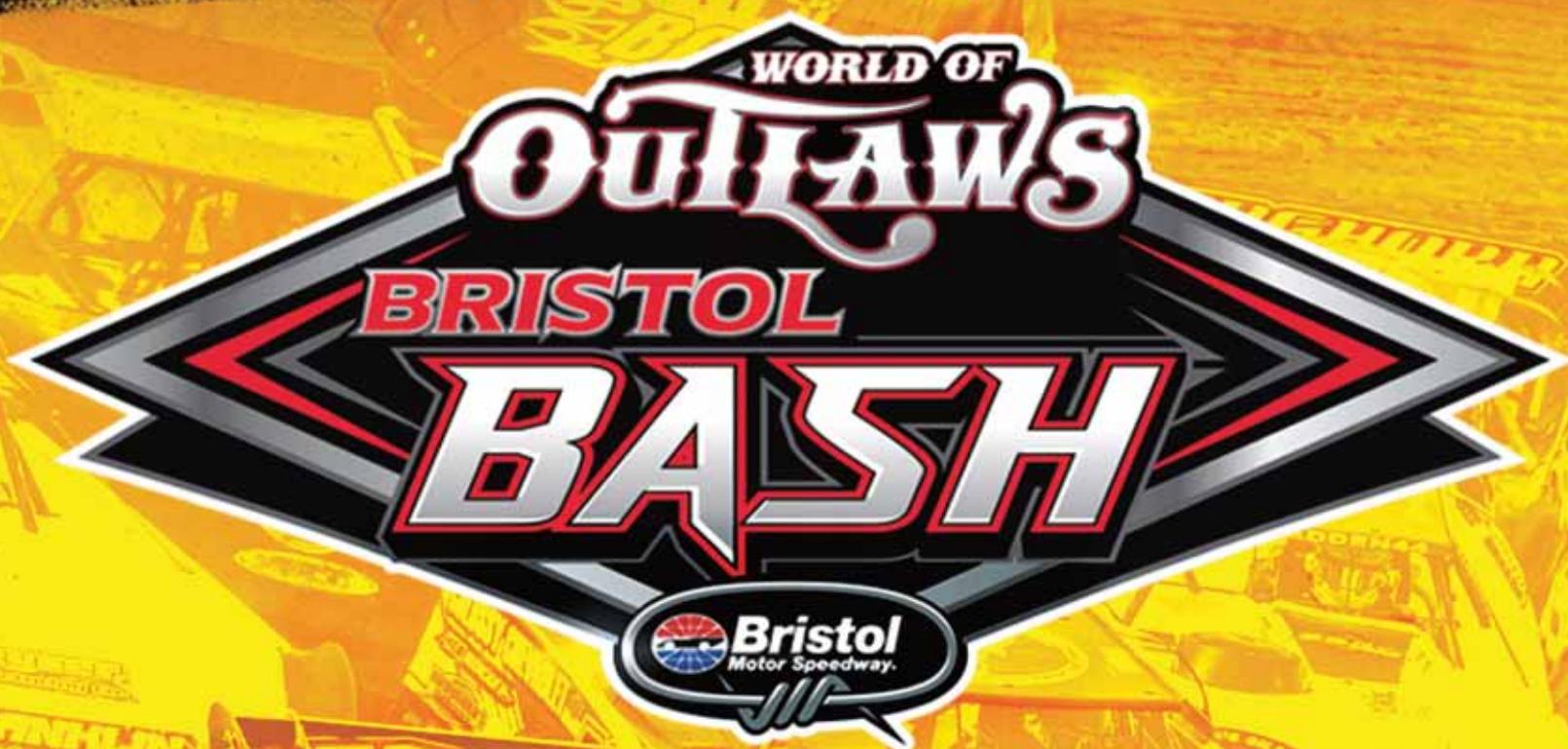
"Dirt racing in Florida is going to be bigger and better than ever at the start of 2022," said Brian Carter, World of Outlaws and DIRTcar CEO. "Demonstrating our commitment to our fans and drivers, we've coordinated with the Lucas Oil Late Model Dirt Series so there is no overlap of events."

The 2021 Sunshine Nationals set a high bar for the World of Outlaws Late Model season, producing two eye-widening events and a first-time winner.

Ticket's for 2022's Sunshine Nationals and DIRTcar Nationals will be available there at a later date.

If you can't make it to the track, you can watch all the action live on DIRTVision with the annual Platinum FAST PASS subscription for \$299/year or the monthly subscription for \$39/month.

#ItsDirtBaby



APRIL 8-10

GET TICKETS

2021 Lucas Oil American Sprint Car Series Season Kicking Off at Kern County Raceway Park

BAKERSFIELD, CA - There has been a change in the opening venue for the 2021 season with the Lucas Oil American Sprint Car Series presented by the MAVTV Motorsports Network. Originally slated to begin in

Arizona, management changes at Canyon Speedway Park have caused the cancellation of events on February 26 and 27. Local event restrictions at other facilities kept the tour from moving the event to another location.

The Dirt Track at Kern County Raceway Park in Bakersfield, Cali. will be the site of the 2021 Lucas Oil American Sprint Car Series presented by the MAVTV Motorsports Network opener on Friday, March 5, and Saturday, March 6. A new stop for the National Tour, the Dirt Track at Kern County Raceway Park, will be the seventh California oval to host the series.

Four overall events are scheduled on the California swing with the series returning to Stone Chevrolet, Buick, GMC Thunderbowl Raceway in Tulare for the first time since 2011 on Friday, March 12 and Keller Auto Speedway in Hanford on Saturday, March 13; a track that has been absent from National Tour competition since 2012.

Nine overall events in the month of March, rounds five and six will be the Devil's Bowl Spring Nationals in Mesquite, Texas on Friday, March 19, and Saturday, March 20, with the series making a first-time visit to Superbowl Speedway in Greenville, Texas for Round 7 on Thursday, March 25 with the month closing out on Friday, March 26 and Saturday, March 27 at I-30 Speedway in Little Rock, Ark.

The 2021 season is the 30th year of competition for the Lucas Oil American Sprint Car Series presented by the MAVTV Motorsports Network

For the first time, the series can be seen live on two platforms, with Racinboys.com and FloRacing.com both featuring National Tour events in tandem. Both are subscription-based sites. FloRacing.com is \$20 per month, billed annually at \$150 per year. Racin-

boys.com is \$29.99 per month.

For other news, notes, and information on the American Sprint Car Series, from the National Tour to any of the Regional Tours that make up ASCS Nation in 2021, log onto www.ascsracing.com, follow on Facebook, on Instagram, and Twitter (@LucasOilASCS).

American Sprint Car Series Moves To Dual Streaming Platform

TULSA, OK - The Lucas Oil American Sprint Car Series presented by the MAVTV Motorsports Network is gearing up for its 30th season of competition, and with the start of the 2021 run to the National Tour Championship comes a change in broadcast viewing options to a dual streaming platform.

The official streaming services of the American Sprint Car Series since 2009, Racinboys.com will continue to offer their subscribers live video coverage of the Lucas Oil American Sprint Car Series presented by the MAVTV Motorsports Network with their broadcast now being co-streamed on FloRacing.com.

"When the announcement was made about the Tulsa Shootout, Chili Bowl, and ASCS all being on FloRacing.com this year, we had a lot of questions about RacinBoys and their involvement. A lot of people subscribe to Racinboys.com and we want to make sure that everyone knows that Scott [Traylor] and his team are not going anywhere," explained ASCS National Director, Matt Ward.

"When Emmett [Hahn] was working this deal with Flo, he wanted to make sure they worked with Scott to where everyone could exist. Where no one was getting shut out, and fans were not having to scramble and pay for yet another streaming service."

Founded in 2006, FloSports currently streams over 25 disciplines. From Basketball and Baseball to Wrestling and Mixed Martial Arts, the brand expanded into Motorsports in 2017 with the launch of FloRacing.com. Their first live event took place on March 9, 2017, at the 2nd Annual Pro Circuit Open presented by Kawasaki in Tampa, Fla.

Joining tours like the United States Auto Club (USAC), All Star Circuit of Champions (ASCoC), and Interstate Racing Association (IRA) as the latest major Sprint Car sanctioning body to join the FloRacing.com family, fans will be able to enjoy all these events along with the Lucas Oil American Sprint Car Series presented by the MAVTV Motorsports Network under the same subscription.

FloRacing.com offers annual subscriptions at \$150 per year, a great value with over 1,000 motorsports events streamed live each year. Racinboys.com is \$29.99 per month.

Fans who currently subscribe to the Racinboys.com platform will also receive expanded coverage of ASCS Regional events, with nearly all Regional Tours covered throughout the 2021 season along with select tracks, and other sanctioning bodies like the Lucas Oil NOW600 series presented by Hi-Plains Building Division.

For more information on FloRacing, log onto <http://www.floracing.com>. For more information on RacinBoys, you can find it on <http://www.racinboys.com>. Select events during the 2021 season will be featured on MAVTV Plus and may be excluded from FloRacing and RacinBoys platforms.

For other news, notes, and information on the American Sprint Car Series, from the National Tour to any of the Regional Tours that make up ASCS Nation in 2021, log onto www.ascsracing.com, follow on Facebook, on Instagram, and Twitter (@LucasOilASCS).

ASCS Elite North Non-Wing and New Great Plains Tour Revealed

TULSA, OK - Setting sights on their second season under the ASCS banner, the Elite North Non-Wing Series will encompass 12

dates across Colorado and will work with the newly formed ASCS Elite Great Plains Non-Wing Series that brings eight events to Nebraska, South Dakota, and Wyoming.

"It's a good thing they've set up for the area. With the tracks being so far apart, it's nothing for races to be six to ten hours away from each other when you start talking about crossing state lines, so this way, it gives the drivers further north something to run for and gives the option to travel if they want too," stated ASCS Scheduling Coordinator, Terry Mattox.

Both tours will have their own separate point fund, with a two-day weekend at Phillips County and I-76 Speedway in Colorado bringing everyone together on Friday, June 18, and Saturday, June 19.

Looking at the ASCS Elite North Non-Wing lineup, the season runs from April through September with dates at four Colorado ovals. Calhan's El Paso County Raceway will see the bulk of the shows with seven. I-76 Speedway in Fort Morgan is set for a trio of nights with Phillips County Raceway in Holyoke and Pueblo Speedway in Pueblo each with a single night.

Moving up to the ASCS Elite Great Plains, Black Hills Speedway in Rapid City, S.D. will open the 2021 slate on June 11 with partner track, Gillette Thunder Speedway in Gillette, Wyo. following on June 12. Moving to Casper Speedway the following night, the tour's combined showing with the ASCS Elite North will be the next event. Independence Day Weekend at Sweetwater Speedway in Rock Springs, Wyo. on July 3 and July 4 gives way to the tour's final show at Lincoln County Raceway in North Platte, Neb. on July 17.

Both tours are under the supervision of Jeremy Lovelady who can be reached with questions about scheduling, rules, and procedure at (806) 676-2992.

2021 ASCS Elite North Non-Wing Lineup:

04/24 . . .El Paso County Raceway
 05/22 . . .El Paso County Raceway
 06/18 . . .Phillips County Raceway
 06/19 . . .I-76 Speedway
 06/26 . . .El Paso County Raceway
 07/24 . . .El Paso County Raceway
 07/31 . . .I-76 Speedway
 08/21 . . .I-76 Speedway
 08/28 . . .El Paso County Raceway
 09/04 . . .Pueblo Speedway
 09/11 . . .El Paso County Raceway
 09/25 . . .El Paso County Raceway

2021 ASCS Elite Great Plain Non-Wing Series Lineup:

06/11Black Hills Speedway
 06/12...Gillette Thunder Speedway
 06/13.....Casper Speedway
 06/18Phillips County Raceway
 06/19I-76 Speedway
 07/03Sweetwater Speedway
 07/04Sweetwater Speedway
 07/17Lincoln County Raceway

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APRIL 22-24

GET TICKETS

Racing in America presented by General Motors to Open Inside Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation

DEARBORN, MI - Driven to Win: Racing in America presented by General Motors, the first comprehensive exhibition covering various forms of American auto racing, including stock car, sports car, drag racing, Indy car, hill climb and land-speed racing, will open March 26th for members and March 27th for the general public inside Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation. This 24,000 square-foot exhibition provides visitors with an in-depth look at the people, the experiences, the culture, the spectacle, the risks and the innovations centered in the world of American auto sports.

"This is the first exhibition of its kind, giving our guests a front row seat to the world of racing," said Patricia Mooradian, president and CEO, The Henry Ford. "From the smell of the tires, the sound of the vehicles starting their engines, the innovative advancements that have been made over the years to the various tracks these vehicles have raced on, our staff and partners have certainly brought this exhilarating sport to life on our museum floor."

Built on The Henry Ford's unparalleled collection of historically significant race cars and artifacts, Driven to Win explores over a century of auto racing history throughout multiple interactive zones. The exhibit tells the authentic, compelling stories of the passion, inspiration and innovation that propels drivers, their cars and teams to victory, including those of racing legends Dan Gurney, AJ Foyt, Wendell Scott, Lyn St. James, Bobby Unser, Barney Oldfield, the Wood Brothers and more.

"Racing is the embodiment of American innovation in the world of sports, but its reach has long stretched beyond the track to our showrooms, our roads and our culture," said Mark Reuss, president, General Motors. "Driven To Win documents and celebrates those contributions, with an exciting and comprehensive presentation of the past, present and future of motor-sports, and General Motors is

pleased and proud to help bring it to members and guests of this great museum."

Each of the exhibit's interactive zones gives visitors an insider's pass to the various worlds of auto racing. Inside the Sports Car Performance Center presented by Multimatic with support from Ford Motor Company and Brembo, visitors will see actual data used from race day that helps engineers problem-solve and plan for next year's race, the evolution of the design process from clay model to race day ready, and how closely the Ford GT production car resembles the one on the track.

Visitors can test their skills in the Motorsports Performance Training zone where they can see the physical and mental training drivers go through before getting behind the wheel.

Sure to inspire all who see it, "Fueled by Passion," is a 15-minute cinematic experience that gives an all-access look into the hopes and dreams, successes and failures of those who live and breathe racing every day. The film includes exclusive footage and interviews with the actual drivers and crew members from the worlds of stock car, drag racing, Indy car, hill climb and land-speed racing. Inside the multisensory theater, visitors will feel they're at the actual tracks, inside the vehicles, in the pits, and at the starting line as they follow each journey before, after some of the most pivotal and notable races of the season.

The In the Driver's Seat Simulators presented by Brembo, allow visitors to drive the world's fastest cars on the planet's most challenging tracks during a 15-minute virtual ride on six interlinked full-motion racing simulators. Visitors will experience all the realism without the risks during a five-minute qualifying session followed by genuine, wheel-to-wheel competition. In The Winner's Circle presented by Rolex® celebrates driver achievements and the vehicles that embody stories of key moments in American auto racing.

Driven to Win is a permanent exhibition that is included with museum admission. The In the



The Racing in America presented by General Motors is opening in the Henry Ford Museum on March 27th. (Henry Ford Museum photo)

Driver's Seat Simulators require an additional fee. For more information please visit thehenryford.org or follow us on social media @thehenryford.

Located in Dearborn, Michigan, The Henry Ford, a globally recognized destination, fosters inspiration and learning from hands-on encounters with artifacts that represent the most comprehensive collection anywhere focusing on innovation, ingenuity and resourcefulness in America. Its unique venues include Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation, Greenfield Village, Ford Rouge Factory Tour, Benson Ford Research Center and Henry Ford Academy, a public charter high school.

NASCAR Expands International Reach to Nearly 200 Countries and Territories

DAYTONA BEACH, FL - When the engines rev for the 63rd running of the DAYTONA 500, more fans than ever across the globe can experience the sights, sounds and action of NASCAR.

NASCAR, along with broadcast agency partner IMG, has made NASCAR content available to nearly 200 countries and territories in over 25 languages for a household reach of over 500 million to start 2021. This reach represents a high-water mark for the sport.

"NASCAR is a strong global brand, and we take great pride in growing the sport to every corner of the world," said Nick Skipper, NASCAR senior director, media strat-

egy. "It's a pleasure working with best-in-class partner IMG to deliver NASCAR entertainment to new and existing audiences internationally."

Live NASCAR races can be seen in some of the largest countries in the world, including China, India, Brazil and Russia. Additionally, live broadcast coverage reaches key markets across the Americas and Europe, such as Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy and Spain.

NASCAR has forged partnerships with some of the biggest broadcasters in the world, including China's Tencent, Discovery in India, Sweden's Viasat, TSN in Canada and ESPN in Latin America.

This season marks the second year of NASCAR's partnership with Tencent, which will air nine NASCAR Cup Series races live, including the DAYTONA 500.

In addition to live racing, the NASCAR International Production group delivers nearly 200 hours of on-demand content to partners annually. During sports' hiatus at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, NASCAR's ability to deliver content to international partners allowed them to fill hundreds of hours of programming time. The eNASCAR iRacing Pro Invitational Series, which set records for televised esports viewership, was shown in 160 countries and territories.



Daytona Int'l Speedway

DAYTONA BEACH, FL - Denny Hamlin finally got the goods from capturing the 2020 DAYTONA 500.

Hamlin, along with crew chief Chris Gabehart and Coy Gibbs, who was representing his Dad, Joe Gibbs, were honored Thursday for their accomplishment a year ago for winning the Great American Race.

As a result of several factors from a challenging 2020, the presentation was delayed until Daytona International Speedway President Chip Wile presented the trio with traditional gifts that are annually awarded to the Champion team of the DAYTONA 500.

Each received their customary DAYTONA 500 Champion rings and black leather jackets while Gabehart was awarded the Cannonball Baker Trophy as the Champion crew chief. Hamlin, meanwhile, claimed his third Rolex Oyster Perpetual Cosmograph Daytona watch, and also posed with his concrete "squish" that features his handprints and footprint that will have a permanent place on the Champion's Sidewalk in front of the track's Ticket and Tours building.

"It's great to finally come back and get these incredible gifts, all that are so important to me," said Hamlin, who will go for a record third consecutive DAYTONA 500 triumph in Sunday's 63rd Annual event, and fourth overall. "I have all my jackets lined up in my closet so I can see them, and my rings are in a special place also."

While three are okay, he wants a fourth Rolex, along with another ring and leather jacket. Having another slab of concrete with his handprints as part of track property sounds good, too.

Bristol Dragway

BRISTOL, TN - When historic Thunder Valley opens its gates in 2021, it will once again be one of the busiest drag strips in the country as it will offer fans a wide variety of compelling events guaranteed to satisfy every type of hot-rodding enthusiast.

There is so much action on tap this season at Thunder Valley it will certainly knock the peg in your thrill-meter to the maximum level. There are so many reasons for

high-performance enthusiasts to be super excited about what Bristol Dragway has in store in 2021.

"Whether you are a fan of big-dollar bracket races, enjoy watching street cars go fast or love the wild rumble of Top Fuel Harleys, Thunder Valley has something special in store for you in 2021," said Jerry Caldwell, executive vice president and general manager of Bristol Motor Speedway and Dragway. "We can't wait to light the Christmas Tree for what promises to be a thrilling season of drag racing at iconic Bristol Dragway."

The legendary Bristol Chevy Show will once again return to Thunder Valley, and will move to a brand-new date, Aug. 5-8. The Bristol Chevy Show showcases the best classic and modern Chevrolts in the region, both on the track and in the famed car corral. Fans can witness drag racing, take in a car show, score some hard to find merchandise at the swap meet and much more.

One of the most anticipated events of the season is the popular Street Car Takeover, the premier national street car lifestyle drag racing, roll racing, night meets and car show event, will visit Thunder Valley April 30-May 1.

The next generation of drag racers (ages 6 to 17) will once again descend upon Bristol Dragway in July. The region will welcome more than 500 young racers and their families for a week full of racing activities beginning July 9 with the Huddleston Performance Jr. Dragster Nationals presented by Mike Bos Chassis Craft, and culminating July 15-17 with the NHRA Jr. Drag Racing Eastern Conference Finals. Bristol Dragway has played host to the Eastern Conference Finals since 2004, with the exception of last year when the event had to be relocated to BD sister track zMAX Dragway due to revised scheduling conflicts during the pandemic.

Bristol Dragway will welcome for the first time the powerful American V-Twin Motorcycles of the American Motorcycle Racing Association with an assortment of featured classes, including Top Fuel, Nitro Funny Bike, Pro Fuel, Pro Gas, Pro Mod, Modified, Outlaw Street and more. The Inaugural Thunder Valley Nitro Nationals & Rally will be held Aug. 20-22 as part of the circuit's six-race U.S. tour.

During the latter half of the season, Bristol Dragway will be home to four of the most prolific bracket races in the USA, offering participants their chance to win some mega bucks and experience the

famed strip in Northeast Tennessee.

The BTE World Footbrake Challenge XV returns on July 1-4, while the BTE Labor Day 250K will be held Sept. 2-5. Racers in both of those events will duel for the largest payouts in Thunder Valley history.

Long revered as one of the most popular bracket racing events in the country, the Sparco Fall Fling presented by Optima Batteries returns to the Thunder Valley schedule for the 12th time, running from Tuesday, Sept. 28 thru Sunday, Oct. 3. The most successful Super Pro racers in the country will converge at Bristol Dragway for the special opportunity to win life-changing money.

The popular DER Bracket Racing Series is set with six weekend dates in 2021, including May 14-16, May 28-30, June 25-27, July 23-25, August 27-29 and Sept. 24-26. It is the 12th consecutive season for the DER Bracket Racing Series, which offers a variety of classes from Super Pro to Junior Dragster.

Five dates have also been added to the calendar for the popular Thunder Valley Street Fights, and those include April 17, May 8, May 22, June 4 and July 31. The Thunder Valley Street Fights allows hot-rodding enthusiasts to race their street-legal vehicles on the legendary Bristol Dragway strip.

Bristol Dragway officials are continuing discussions with NHRA regarding the 2021 NHRA Thunder Valley Nationals.

For more information on events at Bristol Dragway and to purchase tickets, please visit BristolDragway.com or call 423-BRISTOL.

Texas Motor Speedway

FORT WORTH, TX - The SpeedyCash.com 220 NASCAR Camping World Truck Series race on June 12 opens a packed and historic weekend schedule of on-track activities at Texas Motor Speedway culminating in the June 13 NASCAR All-Star Race.

Speedy Cash is in the second year of a multi-year agreement as the entitlement partner of the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series SpeedyCash.com 400 at Texas Motor Speedway. In February, 2020 the Wichita, Kansas-based company was also named the entitlement partner of SpeedyCash.com Victory Lane. Its relationship

with the track began in June 2019 with a one-race sponsorship of the SpeedyCash.com 400.

"Speedy Cash has become an important and valued partner over the past two years so the SpeedyCash.com 220 will be the perfect start to a busy schedule of racing leading up to the first NASCAR All-Star Race at Texas Motor Speedway," said Texas Motor Speedway President and General Manager Eddie Gossage.

Last year's race, moved to Oct. 25 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, saw eventual 2020 series champion Sheldon Creed dominate the field but it took two overtimes and a final-lap caution for him to finally earn the victory.

Coverage of the 147-lap/220.5-mile SpeedyCash.com 220 begins Saturday, June 12, at 12:00 p.m. CT on FS1 and MRN. Stage lengths for the halfway point of the 22-race NASCAR Trucks schedule are 35/35/77 or Laps 35/70/147.

TICKETS: Tickets for Texas Motor Speedway's 2021 major event season, including the June 13 NASCAR All-Star Race, on are sale now at <https://www.texasmotorspeedway.com/nascar-indycar-tickets/>.

Keep track of all of Texas Motor Speedway's events by following on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Keep up with all the latest news and information on the speedway website and TMS mobile app.

Daytona Int'l Speedway

DAYTONA BEACH, FL - While this year's version of Speedweeks Presented by AdventHealth kicks off today and will culminate with Sunday's 63rd annual DAYTONA 500, fans now have the opportunity to make plans for the Great American Race for 2022.

Tickets for the 64th annual DAYTONA 500, set for its traditional Presidents Day Weekend next year on Feb. 20, are available through a pre-sale.

Race fans can purchase by calling 1-800-PITSHOP and visiting www.daytonainternationalspeedway.com.

