

J.R. Todd Wins, Jumps to First in Points

October 29, 2018



Camry driver J.R. Todd proved a true championship contender, posting his fifth Funny Car victory this season to take over the points lead at the NHRA Toyota Nationals. Meanwhile, Derek Kraus completed a season sweep at Kern County Raceway Park in the NASCAR K&N Pro Series West (NKNPSW) season-finale this weekend.

NHRA

J.R. Todd drove his Toyota Camry to his fifth Funny Car victory of the season at the NHRA Toyota Nationals at The Strip at Las Vegas Motor Speedway on Sunday. With the win, Todd takes over the series point lead with a 74-point advantage over Robert Hight heading into the season-finale in Pomona on November 10.

Todd turned in a dominating performance on Sunday with a final round battle against Matt Hagan. Hagan had a slight advantage off the line, but Todd pulled almost even by the 60' mark and pulled away for the victory to win by .145 seconds.

“It’s so awesome to drive a car like that when it’s so consistent that you don’t have to worry if you have to go out and pedal it,” said Todd. “You just go up there and smack the tree as hard as you can and get after it. It’s a lot of fun to drive, but we still have some unfinished business in Pomona. Hopefully, we can go out there and win two trophies.”

The victory marked the sixth for a Toyota Funny Car in 2018, a season-best for the manufacturer.

NASCAR

Camry drivers took three of the top-four spots in the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series event at Martinsville Speedway with Denny Hamlin, Martin Truex Jr. and Kyle Busch finishing second through fourth, respectively.

Truex led 18 laps (of 500), including the penultimate lap before an on-track incident with race winner Joey Logano resulted in a third-place finish.

“I had an awesome Camry all day long and did what we had to do to put ourselves into position to win our first time here at Martinsville, our first short track,” said Truex. “Honestly just proud of my team, proud of all our guys. This is the kind of day we had to come here and have. I really wanted to win that race and feel like we definitely deserved it.”

Truex and Busch are first and second in the point standings, respectively, with two races remaining in the Round of 8.

In the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series (NCWTS), Tundra teammates Todd Gilliland, Harrison Burton and Noah Gragson swept the top-three starting positions, respectively, at Martinsville Speedway.

It was championship contender Brett Moffitt, however, who was the highest-finishing Toyota driver at the end of the day as he finished in the runner-up position to race winner Johnny Sauter.

“From where we started the day, I thought we were really good,” said Moffitt. “We didn’t unload the best, we didn’t qualify the best, but we got better by the end. It’s a bummer that we didn’t get a bunch of stage points like we needed to, but we got a second-place finish.”

Kyle Benjamin (fifth) and Kyle Busch Motorsports drivers Gragson (seventh), Burton (eighth) and Christian Eckes (ninth) also finished in the top 10.

Gragson is second in the point standings while Moffitt is third.

NKNPSW

In the NKNPSW season-finale at Kern, Kraus captured the fifth-consecutive Toyota victory, winning his third-consecutive event at the California oval as Todd Gilliland won the two previous races. It was Kraus’ fourth win this season as he finished fourth in the point standings with teammates Cole Rouse (third) and Hailie Deegan (fifth) also in the top five.

“Our NAPA Toyota was really good,” Kraus said. “It had really good drive off the corners and fired off on the restarts really well, too. It’s great to get the last win of the season and go into the off season with a lot of confidence and momentum.”

Deegan became the first female driver to win rookie of the year honors in a NASCAR touring series, closing out the season with one win, two pole awards and five top-five finishes. She made history earlier this season in becoming the first female driver to win a NASCAR K&N Pro Series race and the first woman to win a pole award in the series.

What’s Next

NASCAR holds a triple-header race weekend at Texas Motor Speedway where the Truck Series kicks off racing

action on Friday, November 2 at 8:30 p.m. ET on FS1. The NASCAR Xfinity Series follows on Saturday, November 3 at 4:30 p.m. on NBCSN with the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series closing out the weekend on Sunday, November 4 at 3 p.m. on NBCSN.

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