Toyota Wins NHRA Title, Sweeps Phoenix NASCAR Race Weekend

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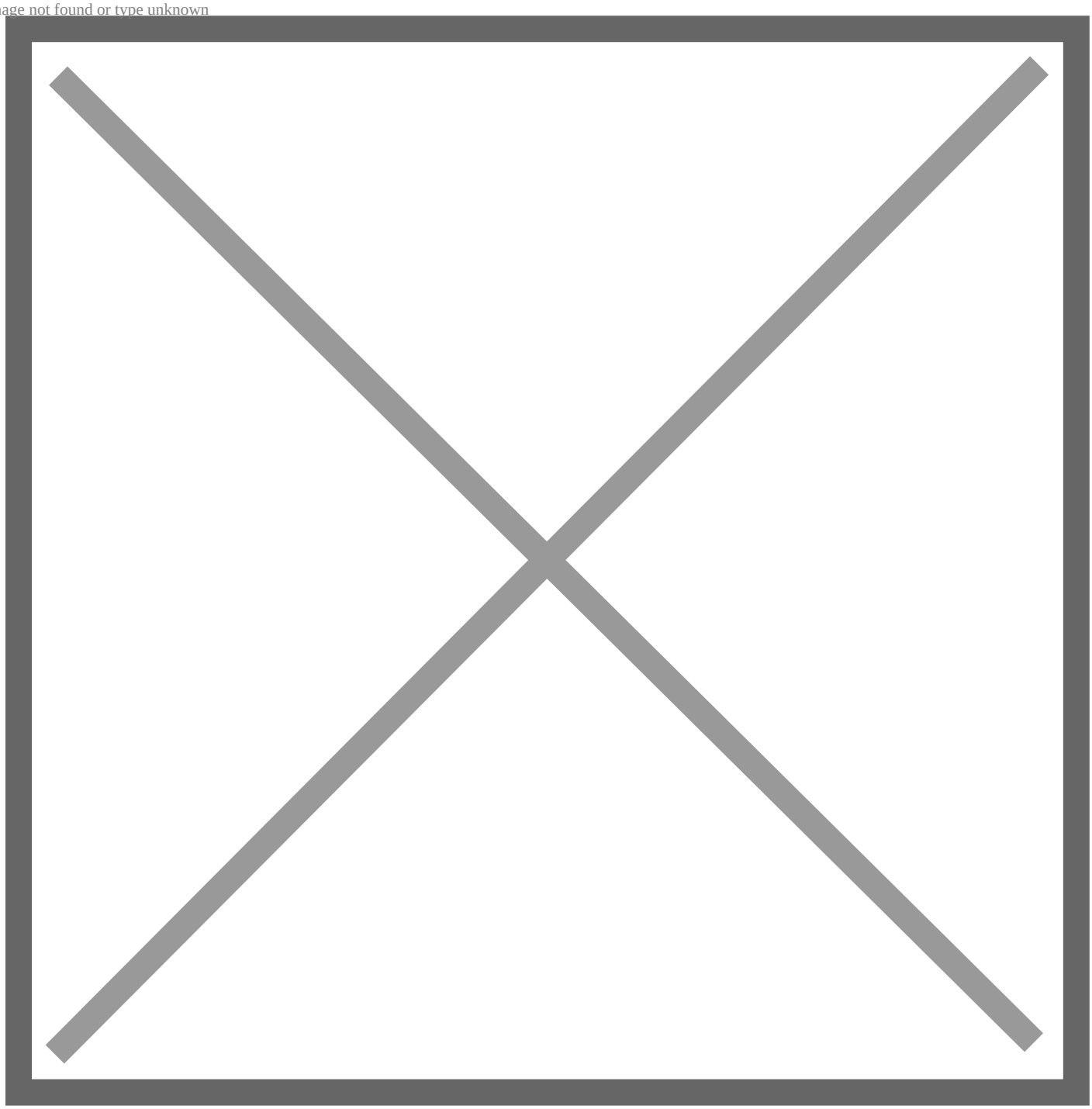

NHRA
J.R. Todd drove his DHL Toyota Camry Funny Car to his sixth victory of the season at the Auto Club NHRA Finals to capture his first Funny Car world championship in Pomona on Sunday. The title is the second for a Camry Funny Car driver in the last four years and the third since 2008.

"The DHL Toyota guys are great at what they do," said Todd. "Todd Smith and Jon Oberhofer really have a handle on the tune-up. In the finals, I had it way out of the groove. I thought for sure I was going to smoke the tires. Then the win light came on and I thought to myself, 'You've got to be kidding me' and then to see that we ran an .87. That was a big-time run. They just have a really good handle on the car, racing smart. The Yella Fellas just do a great job of preparing our Camry."

Todd became the first African-American Funny Car champion and just the second African-American driver to win a major U.S. auto racing championship, joining fellow Toyota NHRA driver Antron Brown. In Top Fuel at Pomona, Brown advanced to the second round.

NASCAR
Toyota drivers swept the NASCAR race weekend at ISM Raceway in Phoenix with Kyle Busch capping off the weekend with a win in Sunday's Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series (MENCS) race. With the win, Busch clinched a spot in the Championship 4 at the season-finale at Homestead on Sunday.

"Being able to do what we did here today was certainly beneficial," said Busch following Sunday's race. "I didn't think we were the best car, but we survived and we did what we needed to do today. It's just about getting to next week (Homestead) and once we were locked in, it was 'all bets are off and it's time to go.'"

Busch led a race-high 117 laps (of 312) en route to his eighth win of the season and looks to claim his second MENCS championship after earning the first for Toyota in 2015.

Martin Truex Jr. joins Busch in the Championship 4 in Miami and looks for back-to-back Cup titles after a 14th-place finish at Phoenix.

Christopher Bell was victorious in Saturday's NASCAR Xfinity Series (NXS) race in Phoenix, leading a race-high 94 laps (of 200). Bell started from the back of the field in a must-win situation to claim his spot in the NXS Championship 4 at Homestead.

"For me going through traffic, you just have to take advantage of your strengths and today our pit crew was a huge strength," said Bell. "I just get to drive really fast race cars and that's why I'm able to win races and it was more so the team coming through than me this weekend. Our backs were against the wall and they came with arguably one of our fastest race cars we've brought to the race track all year. That's why we got the results we did."

In the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series (NCWTS), Brett Moffitt won his fifth race of the season. He joins fellow Tundra driver Noah Gragson in the Championship 4 competing for the Truck Series title on Friday night in Miami.

Moffitt led 19 laps (of 150) in the NCWTS event, also winning the first stage of the race.

"We had a really good KOBE Toyopet Tundra all night long," said Moffitt from victory lane. "This HRE team has been strong pretty much everywhere we go I feel like we have a shot to win the race (at Homestead) if we execute. (At Phoenix) we executed like we need to and we need to do that next week. Homestead is a fun track

for me.”

Toyota drivers swept the top-three finishing positions during Friday’s event with five Tundras placing inside the top-10, including 17-year-old Derek Kraus who earned an eighth-place finish in his NCWTS debut.

POWRi

Tucker Klaasmeyer captured his first POWRi championship following the cancellation of the season-finale event at Kennedale Speedway Park due to rain. Klaasmeyer posted a season-best six victories in his Toyota-powered midget car, registering 13 top-three podium finishes and 18 top-five showings. The 23-year-old Paola, Kansas native held a 590-point advantage over second place driver and Toyota teammate Ryan Robinson.

What’s Next

NASCAR closes out the 2018 season with a triple-header race weekend at Homestead-Miami Speedway with five Toyota drivers vying for three NASCAR championships. The Truck Series kicks off the racing action on Friday, November 16 at 8:00 p.m. ET on FS1. The NASCAR Xfinity Series follows on Saturday, November 17 at 3:30 p.m. ET on NBCSN with the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series season-finale on Sunday, November 18 at 3 p.m. ET on NBC.