

Truex Leads Toyota To Winning Weekend

June 25, 2018



Toyota Racing drivers captured two wins over the weekend with Martin Truex Jr. winning Toyota's second entitlement race of the season in the Toyota/ Save Mart 350 at Sonoma Raceway and Sheldon Creed winning Toyota's 10th-consecutive ARCA Series race this season.

NASCAR

Toyota's Martin Truex Jr. captured his third race win of 2018 when he won at Sonoma Raceway in California's wine country Sunday.

The defending Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series champion led a race-high 62 laps (of 120) in the contest. Truex and his crew chief, Cole Pearn, utilized pit strategy and a little bit of acting to help lead them to the win.

"You know honestly all you're doing is begging, hoping that the caution doesn't come out because then you're going to have to pit and you never know what could happen," Truex said. "It mixes the field up and stuff. Just hoping for no cautions and don't make any mistakes, hope the engine stays together. Thanks to TRD it did this year."

In the race's final stage, Truex and Pearn prepared to pit, but feinted the maneuver and stayed on the track. With little time to react, Truex's closest competitors continued to pit road as the Toyota Camry driver then waited to

pit laps later, leaving Truex with fresher tires for the finish and resulting in a 10-second victory over Kevin Harvick. He sits fifth in the driver standings after 16 races this season.

All Toyota Racing drivers finished inside the top-15 with Truex (first), Kyle Busch (fifth), Erik Jones (seventh), Denny Hamlin (eighth), and Daniel Suárez (15th) all logging strong performances at Sonoma.

At Gateway Motorsports Park, Toyota had four NASCAR Camping World Truck Series drivers place inside the top-10 including Noah Gragson, who led a race-high of 63 laps (of 160) in the contest. Gragson would place 10th after a tire issue on a restart with seven laps remaining.

“Well the second-to-last restart, we had a long green flag run. I was running first and we started getting loose,” Gragson said. “I asked my crew guys with one to go how it looked and I took the green as the leader. I went down into Turn 1 and I was really loose. I made contact with someone and then ended up coming down pit road and getting four tires. I had a flat right rear tire which had a slow leak. We led the whole race when it mattered. We were definitely in contention. I felt like we got robbed there tonight.”

Todd Gilliland was the highest-finishing Toyota driver and would go on to finish second.

“Before this race, we talked about maximizing our race. I did feel like we maximized our day and that’s something to be proud of,” Gilliland exclaimed. “We could have been a little bit better but that’s what it’s about. It’s all about teamwork and we have to keep working on it.”

In their Truck Series debuts, Zane Smith (fifth) and Riley Herbst (eighth) both had top-10 efforts.

In the NASCAR K&N West race at Sonoma Raceway, Toyota had four drivers place inside the top-10 including Cup Series drivers Daniel Suárez (fourth) and Erik Jones (sixth).

In her first visit to Sonoma, Hailie Deegan qualified third and placed seventh – giving her six top-eight or better finishes this season in the NASCAR K&N Pro Series West.

NHRA

J.R. Todd continued his recent strong run by driving his Toyota Camry to the Funny Car semi-finals as the top Toyota the Summit Racing Equipment Motorsports Park on Sunday.

Todd’s result marks the third-consecutive week that he has advanced to the semi-finals and the sixth time in the last nine races, including a pair of victories. Todd opened the NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series event with a victory over Bob Tasca and then knocked off Jack Beckman in the second round to advance to the semi-finals. He ran a strong 4.031-second pass, but it wasn’t enough to move past eventual race winner Matt Hagan.

"It’s not the end result we wanted for this DHL/WIX Filters Toyota team, but it was a good day for points,” Todd said, who closed to within 21 points of second-place. “We are making up ground on the cars in front of us, and hopefully we can keep moving forward."

Todd was one of three Kalitta Motorsports drivers to register at least one round win in Ohio on Sunday, as Shawn Langdon advanced to the second round in his Camry Funny Car, while Richie Crampton advanced in Top Fuel.

In Top Fuel, Crampton advanced to the second round today with a victory over Pat Dakin before eventually falling to Terry McMillen. Both Antron Brown and Doug Kalitta were eliminated in the first round by the narrowest of margins.

Brown lost in his opening run to overall race winner Blake Alexander, who had a margin of victory of just .003 of a second, while Kalitta lost later in the round by just .008 of a second to Leah Pritchett.

ARCA

Toyota won its 10th-consecutive ARCA Series race of 2018 when Sheldon Creed captured victory at Illinois' Gateway Motorsports Park from the pole on Friday night.

Creed has now won two of the last three ARCA Series races after claiming his first win of the season coming at Michigan International Speedway a couple of weeks ago. He would go on to lead 85 laps (of 120) in the race at Gateway.

“We had an absolutely amazing Camry tonight,” Creed said. “I am pumped for this second win of the season tonight at Gateway. My entire family and team are the reason I am here right now. We work so hard to get to a win each week. It feels great.”

Toyota drivers captured the top-five finishing positions in Friday night's contest at Gateway led by Creed (first), Chase Purdy (second), Burton (third), Eckes (fourth) and Riley Herbst (fifth). Toyota drivers have won every ARCA Series race so far this season with Creed (two wins), Zane Smith (three wins), Chandler Smith, Brandon Jones, Christian Eckes, Harrison Burton and Michael Self all collecting victories.

What's Next

Toyota Racing drivers will compete in six racing series in the upcoming week with a majority of the racing taking place at Chicagoland Speedway, where the Cup Series, Xfinity Series, Truck Series and ARCA Racing Series all heading to the Joliet, Illinois track this week.

The Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series will compete at Chicagoland Sunday, July 1 at 2:30 p.m. ET on NBCSN.

The NASCAR Xfinity Series is slated to race at Chicagoland Saturday, June 30 at 3:30 p.m. ET on NBCSN, while the Truck Series will compete Friday, June 29 at 9 p.m. ET on FS1. The ARCA Series will run a day before on Thursday, June 28 at 9 p.m. ET on FS1.

The NASCAR K&N Pro Series West will compete for the second-consecutive week at Douglas County Speedway on Saturday, June 30. The race will air tape-delayed on Friday, July 6 at 1 p.m. on NBCSN.

POWRi drivers will race at Macon Speedway on Saturday, June 30 and Sunday, July 1.