

# Toyotas Flex Speed, Strategy at Atlanta

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**ATLANTA, Feb. 26, 2018** – It was a weekend of speed for Toyota at Atlanta as all three NASCAR national series poles were captured by Toyota drivers at the 1.54-mile track. Tundra driver Brett Moffitt claimed Toyota's first points win of the year in the NASCAR Trucks Series, while Shawn Langdon advanced to the semi-finals in

his second-ever Funny Car race at the NHRA's Arizona Nationals.

## **MENCS**

Camry driver Kyle Busch kicked things off in a hurry at Atlanta Motor Speedway by winning the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series (MENCS) pole Friday. It was a special pole for Busch, as he made his 350th MENCS start in a Camry and revisited the site of Toyota's first Cup Series points victory in 2008 that he won.

When asked about capturing Toyota's first-ever MENCS victory in 2008 and how big it was for everyone involved, Busch did not shy away from its significance.

"It was a big win, and on that day it was huge. It was the biggest one of my career," Busch said. "From transitioning from Hendrick Motorsports to Joe Gibbs Racing and Chevy to Toyota and kind of figuring out where my new home was going to be. It obviously was a scary situation for me to be in not knowing a lot of my surroundings. Overall was just really happy in that situation to get that relief of being able to win so early in the season, not only for myself, but for Toyota and the relationship I picked up with Joe Gibbs Racing and M&M's Mars and Snickers that day too."

In the MENCS race at Atlanta Motor Speedway, a trio of Camrys scored top-10 finishes including Toyota's highest-finisher Denny Hamlin in fourth, Martin Truex Jr. in fifth and Busch in seventh. Hamlin and his No. 19 Camry team utilized a unique pitting strategy that helped him stay up front majority of the race. He led 23 laps.

"It panned out good for us, but obviously the caution fell there and we were still up front," stated Hamlin on the strategy. "I think we had about a 10-second gap to the next one and I thought that maybe one other car was going to catch us there, but our long run speed was so good that we felt like we needed to stay out there and have less stops and spend more time on the race track. Either way we ended up where we should have and it was a good day for our FedEx Ground Camry team. We'll just move onto the next race track and see if we can't improve."

Truex Jr., who started the race 35th, clawed his way back all race for a top-five finish.

## **NCWTS**

Brett Moffitt delivered Toyota its first NASCAR points win of the young racing season when he captured victory in the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series (NCWTS) race at Atlanta. The win was the second of Moffitt's career and in a Tundra.

"First of all I have to thank Shige (Hattori, team owner), AISIN, TRD (Toyota Racing Development) and Mark Cronquist and JGR (Joe Gibbs Racing) engines and just everyone out here," Moffitt joyfully expressed. "This is unbelievable to even be in a race car at this point let alone in victory lane. We had a really good truck all night and Kyle (Busch) spun his tires earlier and that put us back, but I knew the 13 (Myatt Snider) was a sitting duck (on the final restart) and I just wanted to get a good restart. Hopefully they got into a battle behind us and they did – it's pretty surreal."

Running double duty and starting in his first NCWTS race of 2018, Busch started on the pole – giving Toyota the weekend sweep on the front row.

## **NXS**

Camry driver Christopher Bell had a rebound weekend at Atlanta Motor Speedway after experiencing an early exit at Daytona a week ago. Bell captured his first NASCAR Xfinity Series (NXS) pole of the season at Atlanta and would go on to finish third. Bell was the highest finishing NXS driver in the race.

“Our Ruud Camry was really fast all day,” Bell said. “We just weren’t quite good enough to catch up to the 98 (Kevin Harvick). I felt like the 22 (Joey Logano) and I were pretty equal – at times ,I’d be better, at times he’d be better. Probably just used it up too much on that last one. I hope the all fans enjoyed watching the race on their Xfinity X1 app and tune in next week for a good one at Vegas (Las Vegas Motor Speedway).”

In his first NXS race with Joe Gibbs Racing (JGR) in the No. 18 Camry this season, Kyle Benjamin did not waste his opportunity at Atlanta. He finished eighth – scoring his second-career NXS top 10. Brandon Jones captured his second-consecutive top-10 finish after placing 10th for the second week in a row.

### **NHRA**

Shawn Langdon defeated a pair of past world champions to advance to the semi-finals in just his second-ever Funny Car race to lead Toyota before a sell-out crowd at Sunday’s NHRA Arizona Nationals at the Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park in Phoenix. Langdon ran three of the top eight Funny Car passes overall on the day.

He ran the third-quickest pass in the opening round as he defeated fellow Camry driver Cruz Pedregon. Langdon then matched up with Ron Capps in the second round, taking a 0.027 advantage at the light and never trailed as he advanced to the semi-finals.

“We tried to play it smart and we ended up getting lane choice in the semis,” said Langdon, the 2013 Top Fuel world champion. “We moved the Global Electronic Technology Camry to the right lane. We had run in the left lane all day and had the tune-up for that, but we thought the right lane was better and it was. It was just even better than we expected and we lost in the semis. We are making gains and I am growing as a driver. We are learning as a group. It was a good weekend. We can't complain about it much – just lost a good race.”

### **What’s Next:**

The Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series heads west to Las Vegas Motor Speedway this Sunday, March 4 at 3:30 p.m. ET on FOX.

The NASCAR Xfinity Series and the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series will both join the Cup Series in Vegas. The NCWTS will race Friday, March 2 at 9 p.m. on FS1 and the NXS will crank em’ up Saturday, March 3 at 4 p.m. ET on FS1.