Toyota Set for NASCAR, NHRA and Midget Races this Week

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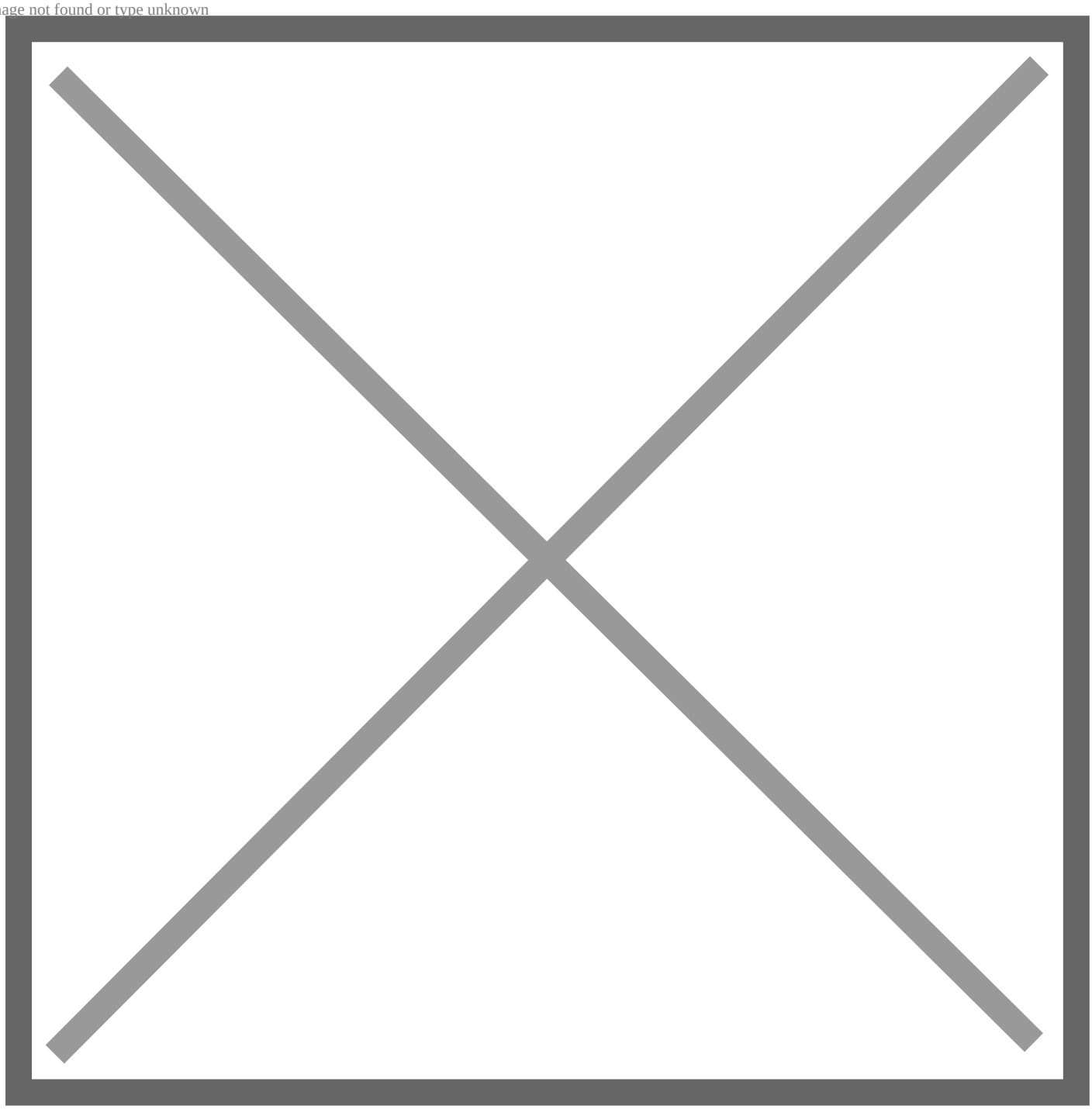

NASCAR
NASCAR racing moves to New York's Watkins Glen International for one of two road course race weekends on the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series' schedule this Sunday.

Camry driver Denny Hamlin returns to the 2.45-mile, upstate New York road course as the defending race winner on a track where Toyota racers have combined for three Cup wins.

Hamlin and Kyle Busch, who won at Pocono Raceway a week ago, secured their NASCAR playoff berths with victories in July. They join Camry driver Martin Truex Jr., who is first in points with three wins this year, as Toyota drivers who have locked in spots in the playoffs by virtue of a win. Meanwhile, Camry driver Matt Kenseth is 16th in the NASCAR playoff standings – one position and 17 points above the cut line.

Busch has two Camry wins at Watkins Glen in 2008 and 2013, while Kenseth's best finish at the track was a fourth-place result in 2015.

The MENCS races at Watkins Glen on Sunday, Aug. 6 at 3:00 p.m. ET with the race broadcast live on NBCSN.

The NASCAR XFINITY Series (NXS) and NASCAR K&N Pro Series East (NKNPSE) accompany the MENCS at Watkins Glen this weekend.

In addition to competing in the Cup Series race, Busch joins Joe Gibbs Racing's (JGR) NXS full-timer Matt Tifft in one of the team's Camrys at the Glen. With Busch in the No. 18 NOS Rowdy Toyota Camry for JGR, Cup rookie Erik Jones will complete the lineup in the No. 20 Hisense Toyota Camry. Jones finished 12th in his NXS debut at the track a year ago.

The NXS race at Watkins Glen will be broadcast live on NBCSN at 2:00 p.m. ET on Saturday, Aug. 5.

The Watkins Glen race weekend will kick off with the NKNPSE event on Friday where Todd Gilliland will continue his pursuit of both the East and West Series titles. The 17-year-old Toyota driver is coming off a win in a combined East/West event that added to his West points lead and cut fellow Toyota driver Harrison Burton's East lead as Gilliland trails by just six points.

The NKNPSE races at Watkins Glen on Friday, Aug. 4 at 4:45 p.m. ET. The race will be tape delayed for broadcast on NBCSN on Wednesday, Aug. 9 at 6:00 p.m. ET.

NHRA
Toyota's Antron Brown arrives in Seattle this week as the defending champion of a NHRA race he actually won 1,560 miles away in Brainerd, Minnesota a year ago.

The NHRA races at Pacific Raceways in Seattle this weekend, but rain postponed last year's final round. The event was completed at Brainerd International Raceway, the site of the next event two weeks later, where Brown won.

"It was great to win the race last year, but I wish we could have finished up in Seattle for all the fans that came out," Brown said. "Our Matco Tools/Toyota dragster was really there and in the final we had a great race versus Steve Torrence, who we have matched up with a lot this year. Seattle's always been good to us. I can't wait to get up there again and try to end the Western Swing on a good note. There are only two races left in the regular season, so hopefully we can start to build some momentum in Seattle this weekend to try to get that number one seed heading into the Countdown."

Brown defeated Steve Torrence in the final round with a 3.737-second pass for his fourth victory of the 2016 season on the way to his third Top Fuel title (2012, 2015-16).

In Funny Car, J.R. Todd heads to Seattle after registering a historic victory in the Toyota NHRA Sonoma Nationals this past Sunday. Todd earned his first career Funny Car win to become just the 16th driver in NHRA history to win in both Top Fuel and Funny Car, as well as the first African-American driver in history to win in Funny Car.

The NHRA races in Seattle at Pacific Raceways from Friday through Sunday, Aug. 4-6. Qualifying will air live on FS1 on Friday, Aug. 4 at 10:00 p.m. ET, and a taped segment will air on Sunday, Aug. 6 at 2:00 a.m. ET. Eliminations will air live on FOX at 4:00 p.m. ET on Sunday, Aug. 6.

Formula Drift
Coming off a milestone win in Montreal, Fredric Aasbø leads the Toyota contingent into the Seattle area for Formula Drift's sixth event of 2017, 'Round 6: Throwdown,' at Evergreen Speedway this weekend.

Aasbø captured a victory at Montreal in his Toyota Corolla iM to becoming the winningest driver in Formula D history with 10 triumphs – all in a Toyota vehicle. The 'Norwegian Hammer' now sits second in the point standings and his Toyota teammate Ryan Tuerck ranks fifth with three races remaining to determine the 2017 champion.

Aasbø, the 2015 Formula D world champion, now has two victories in 2017 in his new Corolla iM that his team, Papadakis Racing, surprise unveiled just prior to the season's start.

Aasbø, Tuerck and the Toyota drifters compete at Evergreen Speedway in Monroe, Washington on Friday and Saturday, Aug. 4-5. The race will be tape delayed for broadcast on CBS Sports Network on Sunday, Sept. 17 at 5:30 p.m. ET.

POWRi/USAC
One of the biggest weeks of the midget racing season takes place over the next five day, and culminates with the 40th-annual Belleville Midget Nationals in Kansas on Friday and Saturday.

Before Saturday's feature, the USAC National Midget Series kicks off the week on Tuesday at Nebraska's Jefferson County Speedway in Fairbury, where Toyota-powered driver Spencer Bayston will take the championship lead into this week's action. The series then races at Solomon Valley Raceway in Beloit, Kansas on Wednesday.

The POWRi Lucas Oil National Midget League also is in action with a pair of races at the Federated Auto Parts Raceway at I-55 in Pevely, Missouri, on Friday and Saturday night. Zach Daum will bring a 450-point lead over fellow Toyota drivers Logan Seavey and Tucker Klaasmeyer into the race weekend.

Toyota-powered drivers have captured 19 national midget feature event wins this season.