

Midweek Action Starts Toyota Race Week

August 15, 2017

Image not found or type unknown



NASCAR

The NASCAR race week starts Wednesday night with a NASCAR Camping World Truck Series race at Bristol Motor Speedway where Kyle Busch will attempt another weekend sweep at the heralded Tennessee track.

The Toyota driver swept all three NASCAR national series races at Bristol in 2010 to become the first driver in NASCAR history to win Cup, XFINITY and Truck races in a single weekend. This year, Busch begins the race week in the No. 46 Toyota Tundra for his namesake team, Kyle Busch Motorsports, to start the sweep attempt in Wednesday's Truck Series contest.

"We haven't run the Truck Series race at Bristol in a couple of years, so I'm looking forward to being able to do that again," Busch said. "It's my last race in the series this year and we're running all three this weekend, so it's the last chance to try to complete the triple this season. I'm always up for the challenge of racing, running all three series and trying to win."

Busch will then race in the No. 18 Toyota Camry for Joe Gibbs Racing in the NASCAR XFINITY Series on Friday before finishing the weekend sweep attempt in his No. 18 Camry in the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series on Saturday.

In the Cup Series, Camry drivers have amassed eight wins at Bristol since 2009, including four by Busch. Camry driver Matt Kenseth currently sits 16th in the playoff standings just above the cutoff line and comes to a track where he has two Camry wins and ranks sixth in average finish among active drivers (13.9).

While a Busch win may go towards another weekend sweep at Bristol, a Truex Cup win would guarantee the Camry driver the regular season points championship. Truex enters Saturday night's race with a 121-point margin over second place in the standings and needs to leave with just a 121-point lead to secure the regular season title.

"It might appear that we have a safe margin, but I've been around long enough to know that points can dwindle fairly quickly," Truex said. "The next three races – Bristol, Darlington and Richmond – are at tracks where the odds are higher of your day ending prematurely, so that's why I am not looking ahead or counting points. All the focus right now is getting a good result in Bristol."

The Cup Series races at Bristol on Saturday, Aug. 19 at 7:30 p.m. ET and the race will be broadcast live on NBC.

Cup rookie Erik Jones is the most-recent XFINITY winner at Bristol after triumphing at the track in the No. 20 Camry in April, but fellow Cup rookie Daniel Suárez will pilot the No. 20 Joe Gibbs Racing in this weekend's race. Along with Busch in the No. 18 Camry, XFINITY Series full-timer Matt Tifft will round out the team's lineup for Friday night's race in the No. 19 Toyota Camry entry.

Busch has seven of Toyota's 10 XFINITY wins at the track.

The XFINITY Series competes on the 0.533-mile track on Friday night, Aug. 18 at 7:30 p.m. ET. The race will be televised live on NBCSN.

Like the Cup and XFINITY Series, Busch leads Toyota drivers in Truck Series wins at Bristol with four of the manufacturer's seven Tundra triumphs at the track.

Busch's No. 46 Tundra is one-of-four entries for his team, including points leader Christopher Bell leading the way in the No. 4 Tundra. The team owner will also field Tundras for 19-year-old Noah Gragson and 16-year-old Harrison Burton, who will make his debut at the famed short track.

Tundra driver Matt Crafton sits third in points with the No. 88 Tundra for ThorSport Racing entering Bristol, where he is yet to win, but ranks third in average finish (11.5) among drivers with more than three starts at the track.

The Truck Series kicks off the NASCAR race week on Wednesday, Aug. 16 at 8:30 p.m. ET. The race will be broadcast live on FS1.

NHRA

Coming off a near sweep of the NHRA's 'Western Swing' with two wins and a runner-up result, Toyota's Antron Brown now comes to Minnesota's Brainerd International Raceway with the Top Fuel points lead.

With his win in the most-recent event in Seattle, Brown reclaimed the top spot in points and now comes to Brainerd where he won in 2011, as well as in 2016 in a makeup final that was postponed from Seattle due to rain.

Brown has four wins in 2017 and 65 Top Fuel wins in his career – three victories below Joe Amato for third on the all-time Top Fuel wins list.

Toyota's Del Worsham also competed in a pair of finals at Brainerd in 2016 due to the Seattle rain out. He lost to Ron Capps in the rain-delayed Funny Car final from Seattle on Saturday and then defeated Matt Hagan in the regularly scheduled Brainerd final Sunday of last year's event.

"Looking at least year, half of it was good and half of it was bad – to lose one and then win one, I felt a little redemption," Worsham said. "It was a little sad because we had run so well in Seattle that I was just sure our Camry was going to win and then to have it finish up at Brainerd and lose that final was a little disheartening. But we pulled it together and we were able to get the win at the Brainerd race and it made up for it. It's a cool race – one of the last ones before the Countdown."

Worsham is one-of-five drivers separated by just 49 points fighting for the final Funny Car playoff berth. Toyota drivers Cruz Pedregon, Worsham and Alexis DeJoria all are eying the final position with Pedregon currently holding down the tenth spot with an eight-point advantage over his closest contender. Worsham is just 28 points behind Pedregon, while DeJoria is 49 points out of tenth. A total of 310 points are still available through the final regular season races.

NHRA competes at Brainerd from Friday, Aug. 18 through Sunday, Aug. 20. Qualifying will be taped for broadcast on Friday, Aug. 18 at 9:00 p.m. ET and Saturday, Aug. 19 at 7:00 p.m. ET on FS1. Eliminations will be broadcast live on Sunday, Aug. 20 at 5:00 p.m. ET.

USAC/POWRi

Toyota's Chad Boat won in USAC's 'Pennsylvania Midget Week' on Monday night and the week of midget racing continues on Tuesday night at Clyde Martin Memorial Speedway before concluding at Linda's Speedway on Thursday.

Boat took advantage of a late restart to take the lead on lap 29 (of 30) to claim the Monday victory in the second night of 'Pennsylvania Midget Week' at Path Valley Speedway Park. The triumph was Boat's second in the last four USAC National Midget Series events and gave Toyota its 25th national midget feature win of the year.

Points leader Spencer Bayston finished 19th after an accident, but the Toyota driver continues to lead the USAC point standings by 55 points heading into Tuesday night's race in Newmanstown, Pennsylvania.

Following the USAC action, midget racing continues this weekend when the POWRi Lucas Oil National Midget League heads to Illinois' Macon Speedway for a Saturday night race.

Toyota's Zach Daum holds a commanding lead in the POWRi championship standings as he pursues his fourth title in the past five seasons. Fellow Toyota driver Logan Seavey sits second in the championship and is a leading contender for Rookie of the Year honors.