

NASCAR, NHRA Drivers Prepping for Postseason, TORC at Crandon

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NASCAR

With just two races remaining before the playoffs, the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series (MENCs) moves to South Carolina's Darlington Raceway where many drivers will look for strong outings in a marquee race to buoy their postseason aspirations.

Camry drivers Kyle Busch, Denny Hamlin and Martin Truex Jr. have secured their playoff position for a championship run with wins this season, while others are fighting to make the postseason. Matt Kenseth currently sits eighth in points and 15th in the MENCs playoff standings – one spot and just three points above 16th place, the last position to make the playoffs – but a victory in South Carolina would lock the former Cup champion into the postseason title hunt. In his last five appearances at Darlington, Kenseth has four top-10 results.

Camry drivers Erik Jones (16th in points) and Daniel Suárez (17th) need a victory to make a playoff run. Jones won his first-career MENCs pole at the last race at Bristol and has four-straight top-10 finishes, while Suarez recently finished a career-best third to cap his own string of four-straight top-10s.

Toyota has won two-straight Southern 500s at Darlington Raceway and three of the last four with victories by Kenseth (2013), former Camry driver Carl Edwards (2015) and defending race winner Truex (2016).

“Darlington might be one of the most fun racetracks we compete on, but it's also one of the toughest,” Truex said. “As we all know there's not much room between the track and the concrete wall. I seem to have run well there over the years. Getting that win there last year was incredible – a special moment in my career. When it comes to Darlington, you have to race the racetrack and attack it without stepping over the line.”

Toyota has five total MENCs wins at Darlington with Busch claiming the Camry's first Cup win at the historic track in 2008 and Hamlin winning at the track in 2010.

In the NASCAR XFINITY Series (NXS), Camry drivers have six victories at Darlington, including two by Hamlin, who has four total NXS wins at the 1.366-mile track, and will pilot the No. 18 Camry for Joe Gibbs Racing in South Carolina. With nine starts at the track and nine top-10 results, Hamlin has the highest average Darlington finish among active NXS drivers (2.8).

The MENCs and NXS races will be broadcast live on NBCSN with the XFINITY event airing on Saturday, Sept. 3 at 3:30 p.m. ET, while the Cup Series will be broadcast on Sunday, Sept. 4 at 6:00 p.m. ET.

The NASCAR Camping World Truck Series (NCWTS) heads north to Canadian Tire Motorsports Park for its lone road course event of the year. Two years ago, Jones drove a Tundra to victory lane in Canada en route to earning the 2015 series championship. This year, Christopher Bell leads Tundra drivers with four triumphs and looks to earn his first-career road course victory after finishing fifth in last year's Canada race.

The NCWTS runs in Canada on Sunday, Sept. 3 at 2:30 p.m. ET with the race airing live on FS1.

In the NASCAR K&N Pro Series East (NKNPSE), just three races remain in the championship battle as Toyota drivers Harrison Burton and Todd Gilliland battle for the title and take the fight to Virginia's historic Langley Speedway on Saturday.

Burton leads Gilliland by just three points as the NKNPSE heads to Langley, where the race winner has gone on to claim the series championship each of the last three seasons. This year's race marks the first NKNPSE start for each driver at the track and Burton leads Gilliland with four wins to three in the East Series, while Gilliland

also leads the NASCAR K&N Pro Series West standings with six victories.

The NKNPSE races at Langley on Saturday, Sept. 3 and the race will be taped for broadcast on NBCSN on Thursday, Sept. 7 at 7:00 p.m. ET.

NHRA

Toyota's Antron Brown will take a 31-point lead into the NHRA regular season finale at Indianapolis' Lucas Oil Raceway as he attempts to secure the Top Fuel number one seed for the playoffs in pursuit of his third-consecutive world championship and his fourth in the last six seasons.

Brown has won the U.S. Nationals in more than one category (Top Fuel and Pro Stock Motorcycle) – one of only four drivers to have done so. He has four wins to his credit this season and has reached the final round in eight of the last 10 Top Fuel races.

Fresh off a victory in the most-recent Funny Car final, Camry driver Alexis DeJoria will look to earn her second U.S. Nationals victory after previously winning in 2014.

With her triumph at Minnesota's Brainerd International Raceway two weeks ago, DeJoria jumped to the top of a five-car battle for the final Funny Car berth in the Countdown to the Championship playoffs and now sits 10th in the standings.

“Winning Brainerd was a huge morale boost for our team,” DeJoria said. “It definitely gave us a step up in confidence and came at a great time. Obviously, we're not safe in the Top 10, so we're just going to be focused on putting one foot in front of the other. It's very exciting to go back to the U.S. Nationals and having a win under our belt there always helps. A lot of people are gunning for that 10th spot right now so we'll see what happens.”

She holds a 12-point advantage over fellow Camry driver Cruz Pedregon, a three-time U.S. Nationals champion, while three additional drivers are all within 60 points and still alive heading into the regular season finale, including Toyota's Del Worsham.

The NHRA races at Lucas Oil Raceway in Indianapolis from Friday to Monday, Sept. 1-4. The action will be broadcast live on FOX and FS1 with eliminations on FS1 on Sunday, Sept. 3 at noon and 5:00 p.m. ET. Eliminations will be televised beginning on FS1 on Monday, Sept. 4 at 11:00 a.m. ET before moving to FOX at 1:00 p.m.

TORC

More than 50,000 fans are expected at Wisconsin's Crandon International Off-Road Raceway for a weekend of TORC: The Off-Road Championship racing at the 'Big House,' where the Greaves Motorsports Toyota Tundras will look to add to their combined eight wins this year.

The Crandon race weekend will feature Round 11 of TORC action on Saturday, in addition to the non-points PRO 4 World Championship and AMSOIL Cup race, featuring the top PRO 4 and PRO 2 racers battling it out for the largest purse of the season Sunday.

Father-and-son Toyota drivers Johnny and CJ Greaves have combined for eight wins in nine races this season and are tied for the PRO 4 lead with just four points races remaining.

TORC races at Crandon on Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 2-3.