

Truex and Gibbs Score Toyota Victories

June 24, 2019



NASCAR

Martin Truex Jr. claimed his fourth win of the season as he added another Toyota/Save Mart 350 victory after the Toyota driver dominated at Sonoma Raceway on Sunday. Truex led 59 of the 90 laps to claim the win over his Joe Gibbs Racing teammate, Kyle Busch.

“Luckily, I was able to have a big enough gap where I could settle in and not feel so much pressure,” said Truex. “It was definitely difficult, that was the longest run of the race there at the end for us on tires and it felt terrible the last 20 laps. What a season we’ve turned this into.”

Toyota earned four of the top-five finishing positions, and five of the top-eight overall. Matt DiBenedetto earned a career-best result with a fourth-place finish, tying the best result for Leavine Family Racing. Denny Hamlin finished fifth and Erik Jones was scored eighth.

After finishing second in the ARCA event earlier in the evening, Christian Eckes started first for the second time this season in the NASCAR Gander Outdoors Truck Series (NGOTS) race at World Wide Technology Raceway at Gateway. Eckes was strong throughout the race and led a race-high 57 laps (of 160), but spun battling for a top-three finish on the final lap and finished 14th.

“I made a mistake down in (turns) three and four and we lost some track position there,” said Eckes. “The 4 (Todd Gilliland) got by me and I was looking to make a crossover move and I’m not really sure what happened. Man, it’s unfortunate. I honestly felt like we had the best truck there at the end.”

For the second-straight season, Todd Gilliland just missed his first NGOTS win as he crossed the finish line in second. Sixteen-year-old Chandler Smith came from the back of the field after qualifying was cancelled to finish fourth in his second-career race.

NHRA

Four of the five Toyota-backed NHRA machines achieved first round wins at the Summit Racing Equipment NHRA Nationals in Norwalk, Ohio. Doug Kalitta and Antron Brown earned opening round wins in Top Fuel, while J.R. Todd and Shawn Langdon joined them in the second round in Funny Car.

All five Toyota teams continue to hold down Countdown positions as the series goes into an off weekend.

ARCA

After three second-place finishes, Ty Gibbs scored his first-career ARCA win at World Wide Technology Raceway at Gateway on Saturday night on a last-lap pass. Gibbs was leading when a late race caution led to varying pit strategies. When the race restarted with six laps to go, Gibbs was in eighth. He quickly drove through the field, and when the leader went wide on the final turn, Gibbs was able to take advantage and score his first win.

“I had a pretty big gap coming to the white flag and I gained on him in turns one and two,” said Gibbs. “He overdrove it into three and four and gave me that shot and we’re at a short track so you might as well take it. It’s for the win and that’s pretty big.”

Michael Self suffered transmission issues late in the race and finished 13th, but was able to maintain the championship lead by 30 points.

NKNPSW

Hailie Deegan earned her second pole of the season at Saturday’s NASCAR K&N Pro Series West event at Sonoma Raceway, besting many NASCAR Cup and Xfinity series regulars. Deegan continued her strong performance as she was the highest-finishing Toyota driver in eighth. That result, combined with teammate Derek Kraus’s troubles on track, allowed Deegan to close to just one point out of the championship lead behind Kraus.

What’s Next

Chicagoland Speedway hosts five racing series this weekend. The Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series airs live on Sunday, June 30 at 3:00 p.m. EDT on NBCSN; the Xfinity Series on Saturday, June 29 at 3:30 p.m. EDT on NBCSN and the NASCAR Gander Outdoors Truck Series on Friday, June 28 at 9:00 p.m. EDT on FS1. The ARCA Menards Series opens the weekend on Thursday, June 27 with the race airing at 8:00 p.m. EDT on

FS1. The USAC Racing Series will also compete on Saturday evening at Dirt Oval at Route 66.

On Sunday, the POWRi National Midget League also competes at nearby Lincoln Speedway in Lincoln, Illinois.