

Erik Jones Scores NASCAR Victory in Darlington, Doug Kalitta Wins NHRA U.S. Nationals

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PLANO, Texas (September 3, 2019) – Multiple Toyota drivers were victorious in racing action over the Labor Day weekend with wins in NASCAR, NHRA, ARCA, Off-Road and POWRi competition.

NASCAR

Erik Jones led 79 of the 367 laps at Darlington Raceway and held off a hard-charging Kyle Busch to score his second career Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series (MENCs) victory in his 100th career-series start.

“I was really locked in and really focused and really felt like it was our night once we got out front,” said Jones. “I wasn’t in any shape to relent that lead, so it’s amazing for me to be able to hold off Kyle (Busch). It’s really cool, just with the history we have with Kyle giving me my first opportunity in the Truck Series and getting to race him for a win in such a big race. That’s pretty cool and something I’m never going to forget.”

Jones punched his ticket to the Playoffs with Sunday’s win. Busch finished third, after leading a race-high 118 laps, and clinched the regular-season championship title with only one race remaining before the Playoffs.

Four of the five Toyota Camry Cup Series drivers are now qualified for the MENCs Playoffs going into the final regular-season race at Indianapolis Motor Speedway on Sunday.

In the NASCAR Xfinity Series, Toyota teammates, Christopher Bell (fourth) and Brandon Jones (seventh), finished in the top 10 at Darlington on Saturday afternoon. It was Bell’s 16th top-five finish in 24 starts this season.

“I’m very thankful that we got to work on this Ruud Supra throughout the race,” said Bell. “We took off and I was really tight there in Stage 1. I was like, ‘Okay, we can work on it here and get it a little better,’ and then all of a sudden, I was just wrecking loose the rest of the race. Not what we wanted at all, but really glad to be driving for this team.”

Bell is already locked into the NASCAR Xfinity Series Playoffs as Jones is 22 points above the cutoff line with two races remaining in the regular season.



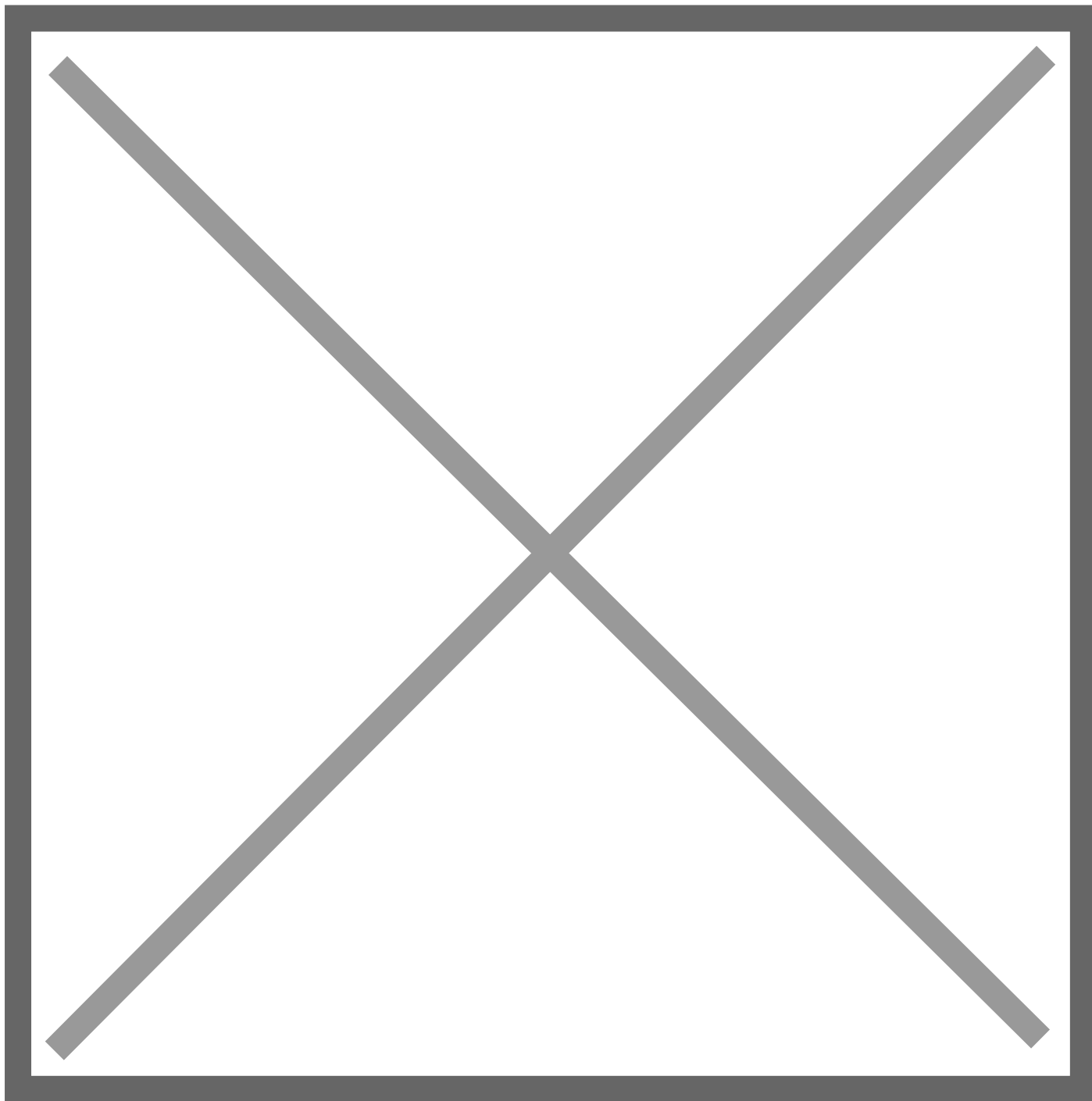
NHRA

Doug Kalitta defeated Billy Torrence in the NHRA Top Fuel finals to win Monday's coveted U.S. Nationals at Lucas Oil Raceway in Indianapolis. The victory gives Kalitta his first U.S. Nationals crown in 22 years of competition and marks the tenth U.S. Nationals title for a Toyota driver.

"This is history," said Kalitta. "Everything that Connie (Kalitta) has done to make this happen. It's just so special. I can't say enough about all the support we've had here. It was kind of ugly in the final. At 800 feet, it

seemed like my car was just coasting with no power. I thought it was over, but the win light came on. At this point, it hasn't settled in that I won the U.S. Nationals."

All five Toyota drivers qualified for the Countdown to the Championship with Kalitta finishing second in the regular-season standings.



In Saturday's ARCA Menards Series event at Illinois' DuQuoin State Fairgrounds, Toyota development driver, Christian Eckes, made his way to victory lane in the final dirt track race of the season. After taking the lead on Lap 10, Eckes never looked back, going on to capture his third victory this season and sixth overall.

"I don't know if you can call me a dirt track expert just yet," said Eckes. "I tried to drive Springfield and DuQuoin like dirt tracks last year and burned everything off the car I could. We tried some new things here tonight and I drove the track more like a pavement track and it really paid off."

Eckes finished in front of his Toyota teammate and defending race winner, Logan Seavey, who made his second series start this season.

Off-Road

Toyota driver, CJ Greaves, won his fifth-consecutive championship with a PRO 4 win at Crandon International Raceway over the weekend. The win concluded the off-road season for Greaves in the Lucas Oil Midwest Short Course League. He closed out the year with four wins and three runner-up finishes.

POWRi

Toyota drivers swept this weekend's POWRi Lucas Oil National Midget League double-header at Lake Ozark Speedway in Eldon, Missouri, as Thomas Meseraull won on Saturday night and Tyler Thomas took top honors on Sunday. Toyota drivers also swept the podium on each night. Overall, Toyota has recorded 30 national feature wins in 2019.

What's Next

The Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series and NASCAR Xfinity Series continue on to Indianapolis Motor Speedway where the Xfinity Series kicks off the weekend on Saturday, September 7 at 3 p.m. EDT on NBCSN. The Cup Series concludes its regular season on Sunday, September 8 at 2 p.m. EDT, which will also be broadcast on NBCSN.

The POWRi Lucas Oil National Midget League will compete in two races with the first feature at Jacksonville Speedway in Jacksonville, Illinois, on Friday, September 6. A Saturday night race will follow with the series competing at Spoon River Speedway in Canton, Illinois, on September 7.