

Toyota Drivers Continue Championship Runs

October 15, 2019

Image not found or type unknown



PLANO, Texas (October 15, 2019) – Toyota drivers extended their championship runs across NASCAR, NHRA and POWRi over the weekend with Denny Hamlin and Doug Kalitta posting strong finishes in rain-postponed NASCAR and NHRA events on Monday afternoon.

NASCAR

Starting from the back and an incident in the first stage didn't stop Camry driver, Denny Hamlin, from making it to the front of the field at Talladega Superspeedway in the NASCAR Cup Series race on Monday afternoon. Hamlin, who started deep in the field, finished in third place as he continues to prove to be a contender in the NASCAR Playoffs.

"I was just trying to play chess out there," said Hamlin. "I knew my odds and percentages with the wrecks. I knew once my competitors started to fall there, I knew that I had to be smart. Once I saw that the percentage was better for me to go race up front for the win versus just taking the end of the lead lap even if we were to crash, I knew it was in my best interest to try to go there at the end and we almost won it anyway."

Following Monday's race, Hamlin, Kyle Busch and Martin Truex Jr. are all more than 40 points above the Playoff cutoff line as the Cup Series moves to Kansas Speedway next weekend for the next elimination race.

In the NASCAR Truck Series, Todd Gilliland captured a runner-up finish in his Toyota Tundra, leading a top-10 Toyota quartet at Talladega Superspeedway. In an overtime finish, Gilliland survived the restart and hung on to the second position to tie a career-best finish.

"We made a lot of good moves and just every time I'd get to the front, I was not fast enough and they'd put me right to the back again," said Gilliland. "It was everything I could do to stay in front of some of those guys. It was fun to run up front there at the end. I wish we could've just been faster the whole race."

Riley Herbst (third), Austin Hill (sixth) and Tyler Ankrum (seventh) also finished in the top 10 with Hill and Ankrum gaining valuable Playoff points as they continue to compete for the 2019 title.

Toyota drivers, Hailie Deegan and Derek Kraus, finished second and fourth, respectively, in the NASCAR K&N Pro Series West race at California's All American Speedway. After starting from the pole position for the fifth time in her career, Deegan battled back through the field following an on-track incident on Lap 28 to finish runner-up.

"It was rough," said Deegan. "We had a good car, but we used it up trying to come back through the field. The tires got hot and we didn't have anything for the end."

Kraus continues to lead the point standings by 40 points with two races remaining in the 2019 season.

NHRA

Doug Kalitta advanced to his 100th career Top Fuel final round before falling to Steve Torrence in the rain-delayed NHRA event at North Carolina's zMAX Dragway on Monday.

"That was a big final round," said Kalitta. "We knew we had to be aggressive and we just overshot it a little. I'm very happy with how this Mac Tools Toyota dragster ran today and has been running the last four races. Three final rounds and a semifinal over four races is pretty good."

Kalitta currently sits second in the point standings, just 30 points behind, with three races remaining in the Countdown to the Championship playoffs.

In Funny Car, all of the Toyota drivers fell in the first round.

POWRi

Logan Seavey set a new POWRi record for the most wins in a season by taking top honors at Sunday night's event at Belle-Clair Speedway. Seavey went straight to the front of the field, leading all 30 laps to win the event. The victory was Seavey's 12th win this season, breaking a tie with fellow Toyota Racing driver, Christopher Bell.

On Saturday night, it was 17-year-old Buddy Kofoid who stole the show as he earned a runner-up finish in his first-ever POWRi start. Kofoid started in 17th and charged to the front in his TRD-powered midget car to place second. The following day, Kofoid finished third, giving him two podium finishes in his first two career starts.

Jesse Colwell continues to lead the POWRi championship standings by 50 points over Toyota teammate Zach Daum with just three races remaining in the season.

What's Next

The Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series and NASCAR Xfinity Series compete at Kansas Speedway on October 19-20. Cup Series drivers will face their second elimination round as the Playoff field will be cut to eight drivers following this weekend's event. The Xfinity Series opens the weekend on Saturday, October 19 at 3 p.m. EDT on NBCSN while the NASCAR Cup Series will race on Sunday, October 20 at 2:30 p.m. EDT on NBC.

The NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series makes their final stop in Texas for the season with a race outside of Dallas at Texas Motorplex. Television coverage is on Sunday, October 20 at 2 p.m. on FS2.

It's time to run for the title in the Formula DRIFT series on Friday and Saturday at Irwindale Speedway in California.

The ARCA Menards Series also heads to Kansas Speedway where they'll compete on Friday, October 18 at 8:30 p.m. EDT on FS2.

POWRi continues on to Little Rock, Arkansas for a race at I-30 Speedway on October 19. Meanwhile, the USAC National National Midget Series will run a pair of races with the first stop at Illinois' Wayne County Speedway on October 17 followed by a race at Indiana's Tri-State Speedway on October 19.