

# **21. Pavement Kid, Dirt Kid, Your Kid: Bound for Glory with the Toyota Driver Development Program**

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Great drivers may be born, not made, but it still takes a lot of dirt, sweat, and rides to the track from Mom and Dad to create a champion.

## Full transcript below.

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**Brittany Zamora:** But when I actually got into mini stocks when I was 14, so I won rookie of the year. I won the championship, I won races, set track records. And I had like grown men, 40-year-olds complaining, like cried in defeat, like saying we're cheating, and doing all this kind of stuff. And I'm like, "Just—just take it." Like I beat you fair and square, you know.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Hey, everyone. It's Tyler. And welcome to Toyota Untold, Motorsports Edition 3.0, Our Motorsports Story Continues. It's a sequel, or a prequel, or a—and because I'm a huge Harry Potter nerd, it's the motorsports version of the Chamber of Secrets. In Season 1, way back in the early days of Episode 3, we had a great time meeting our Team Toyota drivers. And in Episode 6, we got to know the Toyota approach to racing. So, if you haven't heard those episodes, go back and check them out.

First, we talked to Brittany Zamora from Washington State. Like a lot of female drivers, Brittany is from a racing family. Her father, Mike, is a driver and taught Brittany all about cars at an early age. Brittany races with Bill McAnally Racing and the NASCAR Canon Pro Series West, where she had two pole positions this year, plus 6 top five, and 9 top 10 finishes. Let's hear more about Brittany's rise to the top.

All right. So, we're back for another episode of Motorsports Day. And this was actually like our third episode that launched in Season 1: Motorsports Day, and we got such great feedback to it. People loved it. So, we're here today with Brittany's Zamora. You are a racer in our Toyota Development Driver Program, correct?

**Brittany Zamora:** Yes, that's correct.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** All right. So, tell us how you started driving, just in general.

**Brittany Zamora:** Yeah. So, I'm actually a second-generation driver. So, the spark kind of came from watching my dad-

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Yeah.

**Brittany Zamora:** ... and being at the racetrack my whole life. I went to the racetrack when I was four days old because my dad was competing and competing for a championship, so he couldn't miss it.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Of course.

**Brittany Zamora:** And so, it's been in my blood, you know. It's—it's what I've seen. Like as a kid growing up, that's what we went and did as a family. So, it just felt natural. And watching my dad race, I wanted to do exactly that. I got into a go-kart when I was four years old. Did that for nine years. Won national titles, championships, track records. Decided it was time to move up into stock cars. Started starting the mini stock to just kind of get the feel for, you know, a cager round, you know.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Right.

**Brittany Zamora:** And did that for two years, got championships, track records, wins, all that good stuff.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Is it just—it seems like a natural progression for you, right? These are the next things to do.

**Brittany Zamora:** It is. Exactly. Yeah. And I wasn't able to get to this level without Toyota, so I'm very thankful for that. And their development program, I'm one of the lucky few that they selected

**Tyler Litchenberger:** For people who don't know, how does Toyota help?

**Brittany Zamora:** Yeah. So, you know, getting to that next level, the NASCAR series, a lot of it is being able to have the funding to be able to go to each race because it's unbelievably expensive that your normal family just can't afford coming out of your pocket.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Right, right.

**Brittany Zamora:** And so, you know, I had to prove myself. From—from the age of four, whether I knew it or not, I was proving myself all the way up until when I was 18.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah, you just thought you were racing gos—go-karts and having fun.

**Brittany Zamora:** Exactly, yeah. And then, yeah, it turned into fun until about, "This is what I wanna do for career, so you have to prove yourself." And so, all those years, those championships, the wins, the track records, they all added to my resume. All the community service we've done really impressed Toyota. And I actually went to a combine last year around this time and got evaluated. They liked me, so I moved on. Kept doing evaluations, kept doing evaluations. And eventually, it came to a NASCAR K&N tests. And they really liked what I did there, so they offered me a seat for the 2019 season. And, hopefully, that our successes here will, you know, keep bringing—bringing in more years.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah. What happens during these evaluations? Is it simulations in driving? Is it physical? Is it mental evaluate? Like what—what goes on?

**Brittany Zamora:** Oh, my gosh. It's just about everything you could think of. They test you on, you know, whether—how you can do in interviews, whether you get to talking and promoting, and whether—again, feedback on the track, how long can you do that? And then, they take you in a car, and you'll run several different tracks. So, I ran all over California and Vegas. And they do physical aspects. I mean, you're always training.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Right.

**Brittany Zamora:** You train every single day that you can. And so, they take everything into account and it really adds up.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** How do you train for races?

**Brittany Zamora:** So, I do a little bit of both. I, you know, study past races. I'll go to YouTube, and I'll watch races. I'll study lines. I'll study like where—if I could see where they're breaking or lifting, what strategies they use like when they pit. And then, also, besides that, you're trying to—like physically, you're trying to make sure you're given the endurance to run in the heat, the long races. I mean, it's super eye opening on like how much of training goes into the endurance aspect and how much of an athlete you have to be to be able to drive a race car.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** At what age you said—you said, “I decide I want this to be my career.” At what age did you decide that?

**Brittany Zamora:** I think I fell in love with it the minute that I, you know, started racing go-karts.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Right.

**Brittany Zamora:** Like it felt natural. This is what I wanted to do. And then, once we saw that we were becoming successful, when we got the national titles, we’re like, “Maybe we can actually do something with this.”

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Right.

**Brittany Zamora:** You know, turn it more into, then, just like a hobby. Like turn it into a—you know, like a career from—and so, that’s kind of when we took the steps into stock cars, and we’re trying to just see what we could do there and if we could move up through the rings.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Right. I know you said your dad was a driver as well and—and in the biz, so to speak. Did you know—was there a time period where he went from like focusing – obviously, you were there at four days to support him – where it turned and, now, he’s supporting you and what you’re doing?

**Brittany Zamora:** Yeah, of course. And so, when I did go-karts, he was still very competitive in stock cars. And then, it kinda balanced out the weekends, you know. When I wasn’t—my schedule was like primary schedule. Then, when I wasn’t racing, he would go and race his cars.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Right.

**Brittany Zamora:** And then, gone to stock cars. And, you know, he kind of was like weaning out of it, and I was getting more and more into it. And I actually took over his car in 20-

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Oh no.

**Brittany Zamora:** It’s like 2015, he drove the super late model. 2016, it was mine.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** That’s amazing.

**Brittany Zamora:** And so, it was just a big turnaround. He went from racer to crew chief, but he loves it. He says that he would rather be my crew chief than racing any day.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** So, how have you seen your career progress like through the season with the NASCAR K&N Pro Series West?

**Brittany Zamora:** Yeah. So, it’s been—it’s been huge. Whether you’re talking about how I have to adjust driving styles. You know, coming from the super late models in the Northwest tour, just every aspect of it – going into the race track, how you spend your weekend, the driving styles, you and dirt – everything is so different that it was kind of like a whole different world that I stepped into back in February in my first race.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Yeah.

**Brittany Zamora:** And so, you know, it’s hard to like transition from what you’ve learned in the past 15 years of your life, and just throw it out the window kinda, and driving a whole different new way.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah.

**Brittany Zamora:** And so, that's a—that was one huge thing that I had to learn to adjust to. But you have to race like that if you want to be competitive and if you want to be able to compete for wins in the series.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah.

**Brittany Zamora:** Along with that, you know, just the traveling schedule. Like I used to, you know, go to school. I went to college on campus.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah.

**Brittany Zamora:** I would drive to my races. Sunday, I'd drive home. And then, I'd be—I was like student/racer. And now, I'm like 90% racer, 95% racer, then like school when I have time to be there.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Right, right, yeah.

**Brittany Zamora:** And so—and then I'm flying all over the country, going to sponsor events. You know, I'm just having the time of my life. It's fun.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** What are your goals for the next couple of years?

**Brittany Zamora:** So, personally, my goals are just to, you know, keep within Toyota and keep moving up the ranks. I would really—I would absolutely love to be involved in the ARCA series next year. So, that's kind of why there was a lot of like pressure on me this year to do good and prove myself.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Fantastic. Now, Eric Jones told us last year that when he was 12, and he was racing, some guy came, and he was like 40 years old, and like punched him in the face because he won a race, and he was like, "I don't know what happened." You haven't experienced anything like that, right?

**Brittany Zamora:** No.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** And it's no holds bar series.

**Brittany Zamora:** No physical fights. But when I actually got into mini stocks when I was 14, so I won rookie of the year. I won the championship, I won races, set track records. And I had like grown men, 40-year-olds-

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah.

**Brittany Zamora:** ... complaining, like cried in defeat, like saying we're cheating, and doing all this kind of stuff. And I'm like, "Just—just take it."

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah.

**Brittany Zamora:** Like I beat you fair and square, you know.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Well, we're glad you're here. We're glad you're doing well. Brittany Zamora, thank you for joining Toyota Untold.

**Brittany Zamora:** Yeah. Thank you so much.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Next, we talk to Harrison Burton from Huntersville, North Carolina. Harrison is 19, but he started racing at the age of five. His career really got going at 11, and he was discovered at 13. At 13, I was

just really getting and going in basketball in New Jersey, new girl living in New Jersey. Currently, he competes in the NASCAR Gander Outdoor Truck Series in the number 18 Toyota Tundra for Kyle Busch Motorsports. That's a truckfull to say. In October, it was announced that Burton will run full time in the NASCAR Xfinity Series next season. Harrison may be the son of former Cup Series winner and current NBC Sports NASCAR analyst, Jeff Burton, but he still had to learn to drive and pay his dues.

Harrison Burton, welcome to Toyota Untold. Talk to us about how you started driving.

**Harrison Burton:** Yeah. So, I—I grew up watching the sport. My dad was in the Cup Series for 20 years. I kind of was born right in the middle of his prime, I guess. So, I—I got to see the good, and the bad, and—and how much work he had to put in. Growing up going to the race track, I—I kinda had that—that work ethic kind of instilled in me from my dad.

And then, I just wanted to—to try it. When I was five years old, I—I started racing. And, it was not—you know, I was five. So, I wasn't thinking, you know, I want to do this for a job. It was just something fun to do.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Right.

**Harrison Burton:** But as I got older, and started winning, and—and kind of found success from working harder and getting better, I enjoyed that feeling of—of working, and then having it pay off-

... and getting better and better as you go. So, I started taking it more serious. And—and when I was 11, I started getting into stock car racing. So, I ran my first late model race when I was 11. So, yeah, I've—I've just been plugging away for a long time and—and making my way up

**Tyler Litchenberger:** So, talk about the Toyota Driver Development Program, and how you were introduced to Toyota.

**Harrison Burton:** Yeah. So, actually, I was running a super late model race, and I was 13, and I wasn't supposed to be running it. You're supposed to be 14, and—and somehow, I slipped through the cracks. I was racing at 13. And I won a race. And—and these two guys in suits walked down, and they said, "Oh, we'll be in touch. Nice to meet you." And I'm 13 years old, and I'm shivering. I was scared, right? It turns out it was—it was, you know, Jack Irving and—and Tyler Gibbs from Toyota that were in Daytona for the cup race-

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah.

**Harrison Burton:** ... who came down to watch the late model race and won that race. And then, I kinda slowly got introduced to the Toyota Driver Development Program over—over that. Kind of slowly started building that relationship more, and more, and more. And now, it's—it's developed into something that's crazy. We are—we're working out in a Toyota gym every day, and go on to Toyota simulators, and—and doing all this stuff to help the drivers get better.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** And Kyle Busch told a story about Eric Jones last year when we interviewed him, and how he was like, "I don't want to get beat by that kid again. So, he's going to be on my team or else." And I feel like that's kind of what Toyota does. We don't want to get beat by other drivers, right? And so, why don't we just foster the best drivers-

**Harrison Burton:** It's a big honor to get into Toyota Driver Development Program. There's a lot of work that goes in before you get—to come out for, you know, a Toyota driver, and racing day. And then, once you do get in, you have a structured system around you, and it seems a lot more stable, and comfortable, and you're able to work and get better and better.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** We do love stable systems at Toyota.

**Harrison Burton:** Yeah, absolutely.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** So, what's the lifestyle like as a young driver?

**Harrison Burton:** So, it was really crazy. About a year ago, I was still in high school. So, I—you know, I'd go and—and go to school from, you know, 8:00 to 3:00. And then, from 3:00 to 11:00 or whatever it was, I was either working on racing stuff, or doing homework, or missing class, going to meetings. And—and now, I graduated high school. So, it's strange. Like you go from structured here, here, here, from 8:00 to 11:00 at night, and then, it's like, phew, wide open. And you're like, "Okay, what do I do with my time?"

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Right.

**Harrison Burton:** "How do I manage that and get better at that?" And that's something I'm still learning. I think-

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah.

**Harrison Burton:** ... scheduling is something that's tough about it and—and all that, trying to manage. I race for five different teams this year.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Wow.

**Harrison Burton:** So, I was all over the place, and trying to manage that was tough. But I think the more you do it, the—the better you get at it.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah. Can you name just like a big lesson on the track that you learned as like a student in this program?

**Harrison Burton:** Yeah. I think the biggest thing is—is confidence and—and all the mental stuff that goes with racing. You know, you can study and work as hard as you can, but if you go to the race track, and you don't believe that you can do it, you're in trouble.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Right.

**Harrison Burton:** I've found that over this year. And the more you get down on yourself, the worse you're gonna run.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Right.

**Harrison Burton:** So, it's—it's a very mental sport. And you gotta have confidence to drive a race car 190 mile an hour into a corner and—and know that you're going to be faster than the other guy-

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Right.

**Harrison Burton:** ... and try and beat those people. And—and so, it's—it's tough. And—and I think this year has really made that come prevalent is how big the mentality of being a race car driver is.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah. So, do you have other kids who reach out to you who are like, "Hey, man. I want to do what you did? How do I do that?" And what advice do you have for them?

**Harrison Burton:** Yeah, that's always a—I get like Instagram DMs of people who are like, “How do I become a race car driver?” And it's always so tough because you look and there's like a million different paths people have gone on. It's like, you know, Jimmy Johnson came from off road trucks, and Eric Jones came from, you know, super late models, and we have—Christopher Bell came from dirt racing. And there's all these different ways and avenues that—that drivers have made it to the top level.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Yeah.

**Harrison Burton:** And I think Toyota does a good job of recognizing that we have, you know development drivers from dirt, development drivers from asphalt, development drivers from, you know, anything you could think of that are working their way up and wanting to be in NASCAR. So, that's something that is really good about the development program that Toyota has put together is it's not just you have to be in this series to get in Toyota.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Right.

**Harrison Burton:** It's, you can race anything. If you're good at it, you're in.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Be honest. Did you know about the Toyota Driver Development Program before those two guys in suits reached out to you?

**Harrison Burton:** No. A 100% honest, I didn't. You know, I had, you know, seen people that were in it, and I didn't understand what it was fully. I mean, I was 13. So, I didn't understand what a lot was, but, you know, I—I think that when you get involved in it, you'd know how hands on it is. But before, it's like, “Oh, well, they give them a sticker, and Toyota drivers.”

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Right.

**Harrison Burton:** Right? But when you get involved, it's like, “Dang, we're employees of Toyota.” It seems like we're working all the time trying to get better for them because they're investing time, and money, and energy into us. We definitely want to repay that with race wins.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Yeah. Yeah. Thank you so much for joining Toyota Untold.

**Harrison Burton:** Good. Thank you very much, I appreciate it.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** And then, it was time to sit down with Holly Hollan from Tulsa, Oklahoma. Holly is an 18-year-old sprint car driver with Keith Kunz Motorsports. Nicknamed Hollywood, of course, Hollan is a fourth-generation racer who began her racing career in junior sprint cars at her home track, Port City Raceway, when she was five years old. Five seems like a good age to start, except I can't even imagine my almost eight-year-old starting at that early or that age. Hollan made history this year by matching the Best Ever Finish by a Female Driver in the National Midget Feature Event with a second-place finish in the POWRi Lucas Oil National Midget League. And lucky for me, Holly was very lovely and gracious when it took me many tries to get her last name right.

Welcome to Toyota Untold. So, we were just sitting here talking behind the scenes about your schedule in racing and how crazy it is. How often are you racing?

**Holley Hollan:** All the time.

I race anywhere from Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday. It's November right now, and I've raced 95 times this year. And we've had about 15 rainouts. And so, I should have been at about 90 races by



now.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Right, right.

**Holley Hollan:** And so, you're—it's—it's insane. It's—I'm home for three or four days a week.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah.

**Holley Hollan:** And then, back on the road. So-

**Tyler Litchenberger:** And back on the road. And home is Oklahoma, right?

**Holley Hollan:** Yes. Tulsa, Oklahoma.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Oh, my goodness. So, what do you—you just said you had two weeks off. And what do you do with yourself when you have two weeks off?

**Holley Hollan:** Well, actually, I—I work for my dad still. He—he owns a race team. And so, that's—that's where I came from and what I—I've been racing since I was five. And so, I've always—I've always done it with my dad. And so, I actually had a lot of work to get jump on. We—we assemble cars and stuff like that.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Because I've been wondering as we've been having this discussion with you, with other drivers, and like are there other siblings involved who have this much passion for it too? But it seems like, you know, you and your dad kinda went off on this path like, "I'm going to be a driver," and he supported you. Yes?

**Holley Hollan:** I was five when I decided that I want to start racing. And, obviously, at that point, I wasn't like, "Oh, I want to be a professional race car driver."

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Right.

**Holley Hollan:** I just—I was always around it with my dad racing and stuff like that. And so, it just kind of was embedded in me, and I saw another five-year-old racing. And so, I was like, "Oh, I want to do this," you know. And I was always at the track with my dad, so I was like, "You know, I—I might as well get into this and-"

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah.

**Holley Hollan:** "... and see." And I—actually, I ended up being really competitive. Like I didn't really have any friends at the race track because I was focused on what I was doing. At seven years old-

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Right.

**Holley Hollan:** ... I, like, don't want to go play in the dirt. And my parents totally accepted that. And they never pressured me into racing. I get that question a lot. With my dad racing and stuff, if it—if it was like, "You will be a race car driver, and this is what you're going to do."

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah.

**Holley Hollan:** And it—it wasn't like that at all.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** And I—I totally get that question that people ask because they're like, "If your dad was, you know, a corporate employee, like, obviously, you might not have taken such an interest in it, but he wasn't."

So, you're there at the track with him. What was the first thing that you drove at five years old?

**Holley Hollan:** [] So, they're called junior sprints. And I don't know if you're familiar with [crosstalk]

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Assume everyone knows nothing.

**Holley Hollan:** Okay. So, it's—it's a Briggs and Stratton engine. So, a lawn mower-

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Okay.

**Holley Hollan:** ... engine. And so, that's—that's what I started driving at—at five years old. And I-

**Tyler Litchenberger:** What does the vehicle look like? It's not a lawn mower.

**Holley Hollan:** No, it's not a lawn mower.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** That's what I just pictured, lawn mower racing.

**Holley Hollan:** It's like—so, obviously, you have a full-containment seat. It's not-

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah.

**Holley Hollan:** ... like a go-kart.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Okay.

**Holley Hollan:** So, there's actually like a cage.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Cage, yeah.

**Holley Hollan:** And—and there's wings on it.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Okay.

**Holley Hollan:** You're probably familiar with-

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah, yeah.

**Holley Hollan:** ... with the wing cars. And so, it's just a pretty much miniature, way miniature version of a sprint car.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Okay.

**Holley Hollan:** You know what I mean?

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah.

**Holley Hollan:** It's as small as you can get.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Because a lot of people started out with go-karts-

**Holley Hollan:** Right.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** ... at like five years old. And you—you went full cage at five.

**Holley Hollan:** Yes, I was—so, I raced junior sprints from when I was five-

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Okay.

**Holley Hollan:** ... to twelve.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** All right. So, then, how—how did your career progressed from that to where you are now?

**Holley Hollan:** Well, from when I was like five to nine, I don't feel like my dad really wanted me to be too serious in the racing stuff. Like still wanted me to kind of do other things too. And so, he won't let me race like every weekend that I wanted to race. He was just kind of like, "You know, we'll go to the lake, or do this or that." Well, when I was 10 and like more aware of it, I was like, "I wanna win the championship."

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah.

**Holley Hollan:** I'm not going to move out of junior sprint until I win a championship. So, it took me until I was 12 years old, and I ended up winning the championship. And so, then, I—I moved on and went into—to the full—full-sized micros, and those are motorcycle engines.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Right.

**Holley Hollan:** And so, 600, 636 ccs. And so, I ran those until I was 15. And I still race those on and off, but that's kind of when I got more into the mediate racing and stuff like that. So, it's just gone up from there.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah. And so, talk about how Toyota came into your life and the program, the Driver Development Program.

**Holley Hollan:** Well, they were actually—they were watching me a little bit longer than what I had—what I had thought. So-

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Does that freak you out? Are you like, "Oh, man. I was being watched to--"

**Holley Hollan:** Yes, it did.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** "... to potentially be developed." Yeah.

**Holley Hollan:** It most definitely freaked me out because it came out of nowhere. And it—I feel like it was super subtle. So, I didn't really know like at this moment, they recognized who I was, I guess, because I—I still don't know.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah. You don't know when the exact moment was. Right.

**Holley Hollan:** Yeah. So, it's—it's—I'm lucky to be a part of it. I—I don't know exactly. I—I think it was a product of a lot of things that—that put me—put me in that position, but I'm thankful for that.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Nice. So, what have you had to do for the Toyota Driver Development Program?

**Holley Hollan:** They—I mean, they've definitely done a lot more for me than what I've—what I've done for them, but just-

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Not necessarily. Hold on, hold on. Go ahead. Talk—talk about what they’ve done for you.

**Holley Hollan:** So, they opened a gym in North Carolina. So, just even that, like bringing—bringing a trainer in, nutritionist in, and making the transition from dirt to asphalt has—has been the biggest thing. They’ve supported me a lot. I run full time with Keith Kunz this year in the dirt stuff. So, they’ve supported me a lot through that and—and put me in the position to—to be a part of—of the highest—highest mediate team in dirt racing. And so, that was—that was definitely a bucket list thing for me was—was to race for Keith. And so, they’ve put me in position to do that. And just with the simulator and stuff in North Carolina, the Toyota simulator, making that transition from—from dirt to asphalt, I, definitely, would not have been able to do that without them. So, it’s—I’m slowly making—making that transition and—and testing a few more asphalt stuff, so.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** For people who don’t know, how difficult is the transition from dirt to asphalt?

**Holley Hollan:** It’s polar opposite. Like you can’t take too much from dirt racing to help you in the asphalt stuff, minus, like the only thing that’s helped me is—is stuff to not spin out.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah.

**Holley Hollan:** Like a few times in, they’re like, “Oh, the—the dirt racer in you has come out.” And I’m like, “Okay.” Like I didn’t get into the wall or whatever, but it’s just—it’s completely different. You—you drive completely different. In—in the dirt car, you have to drive that car super hard into the corner. And granted I’ve only really run asphalt on—on shorter tracks.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Right.

**Holley Hollan:** They’re, obviously, like off the gas a lot more. But I don’t—I don’t know exactly really. And I haven’t been really doing the asphalt stuff for long enough to know really what from dirt has helped me and-

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah.

**Holley Hollan:** But they—right now, they feel like two different worlds. Like you just have to change-

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Right.

**Holley Hollan:** ... your mindset when you go from one to the other.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** That’s probably the hardest thing is you completely forget everything that you’ve learned or know-

**Holley Hollan:** Right.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** and get on this different track.

**Holley Hollan:** Yeah, exactly. That’s—that’s 100% how I feel right now, so.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Right, right. What does the future look like with Toyota Racing Development and with your career?

**Holley Hollan:** Well, I’m—I really—I wanna stick with—stick with them, and stick with the program, and stick to what I’m doing. I’m—I’m happy with where I’m at and the route that—that they’ve taken with me.

They're—they're patient, and they're—they don't—like I don't feel like I'm rushed to—to get—get to asphalt and really—I—I feel like that they take the right steps and that's what produces and good drivers.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah.

**Holley Hollan:** So, they're not, you know, rushing getting into the truck series or stuff like that. Like my biggest thing is I wanna be competitive at every level before I just move on, not-

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Right.

**Holley Hollan:** Not taking it too fast. Just kind of—kind of where—where I'm at. And I feel like we see eye to eye on that with—with Jack and Tyler. And that's conversations that they've had with me. And I'm fortunate with my age. I'm still really young. And so, it—it helps with—with things not being rushed because I feel like at some point, your age kind of comes into play on—on kind of what opportunities you get, so.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Do you race people who are similar in age to you, or do you race any age out there?

**Holley Hollan:** Any age. I've-

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah.

**Holley Hollan:** 40-year-old men.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah.

**Holley Hollan:** 14-year-olds. You know what I mean. It's—it's all across the board.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Okay. Well, Holley Hollan, thank you very much for joining us.

**Holley Hollan:** Thanks for having me.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** And last but not the least on Motorsports Day, we talked to Christopher Bell. He's 24 now, but he, too, was once a kid on the dirt track tearing it up and pushing his parents to find a way to focus all of his energy and talent. Christopher is from Norman, Oklahoma. And Oklahoma is a pretty good place to be from if you want to get into racing. Bell is currently a seven-race winner and 2019 Championship Contender in the NASCAR Xfinity Series driving the number 20 Toyota for Joe Gibbs Racing. He'll drive the Levine Family Racing's number 95 Toyota in the NASCAR Cup Series beginning in 2020. And if you have a kid who wants to get into the Toyota Driver Development Program, Christopher Bell is kind of the icon that you look to.

So, Christopher Bell, welcome to Toyota Untold. So, we've heard so much about you in the racing world. We—people talk about you all the time, which is awesome. But I think the big thing is you are kind of like the gold standard when it comes to the Toyota Development Drivers Program. When did you get involved? How did you get involved? And—and how have you been working with the program?

**Christopher Bell:** Yeah, that's a—it's a great question. For me, I started driving for Keith Kunz Motorsports, which is, I think you've just got told a little bit about them

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yea.

**Christopher Bell:** Yeah. They're a—they're a dirt midget car team. And at the time—I started in 2013. And at the time, they were just sponsored by Toyota.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Okay.

**Christopher Bell:** And there really wasn't a driver development program. And I had replaced Kyle Larson. I don't know if you're aware of who he is but a cup driver, who was at Keith Kunz Motorsports the year before me. And basically, Kyle Larson's rise to stardom with Chevrolet because Toyota didn't really have a place to put him, opened the door up for me because they saw how talented he was, what he was able to do in the dirt car, and how well that translated to the stock cars. And the better he did, the more that I got pushed up, and up, and up. And next thing you know, this Driver Development Program has started of trying to put young talent and—and see how they progress and—and where they go from there.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Yeah. Did they ask you for your input on like, “Hey, what—we're thinking of starting this,” or “Do you want to be a part of this? Would you be interested?”

**Christopher Bell:** Honestly, not really.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Yeah.

**Christopher Bell:** They just—they just kept bringing me like, “Hey, we've got a super late model. Would you be interested in testing it?” And I'm like, “Sure.” And then, we went and test it. And then, a couple of months later, we got a couple of races. “Would you like to race it?” “Yeah, I'd like to do that.” And that turns into a full-time season run in super late models a year later. And—and then. all of a sudden, we've got a couple truck races. “Do you want to do that?” So, I think it was kind of fly by the seat of your pants for myself and also the—the guys that are doing the program.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Yeah, yeah. What was it like to finally then join the program, and you're like, “Oh, I get—” Like, this is what you guys have been doing and planning for behind the scenes.

**Christopher Bell:** Yeah. It—it was weird because, like I said, there really was no program before I-

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Right.

**Christopher Bell:** ... got submerged in it. And so, it wasn't like a formal invitation. It was just all of a sudden where there's more drivers behind me. And—and the same people that are putting—supplying me with these races to run are now supplying drivers behind me with, you know, now that I'm in the truck series, they're running super late models and-

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Yeah.

**Christopher Bell:** ... and the—the dirt stuff. So, for me, it never really felt like I was really into the Driver Development Program just because I was kind of the guy, I guess, spearheading it and-

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Yeah.

**Christopher Bell:** ... and creating that path for the younger guys behind me. So, for me, I never really got invited or anything. I was just kind of the guy that, I guess, made the path.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** So, talk about how important is it then to develop that pipeline of drivers? And I feel like Toyota does it. Now, obviously, it's more formalized, and they're investing across series. Kind of doesn't matter what you drive or how you're driving as long as you're winning or succeeding, Toyota is kind of scouting at this point. How important is it for Toyota to be building that pipeline?

**Christopher Bell:** It's huge. And one thing that they've done a great job with is just focusing on building the future. And a lot of the teams and manufacturers in the—in NASCAR, the—the Cup Series right now, they—they keep—once guys get there, they keep recycling drivers. And at some point, those drivers get old. And—and then, all of a sudden, they're like, "Uh-oh, what do we do now? Who's going to replace them?"

So, Toyota is building their future, you know, 10—for 5, 10, 15 years down the road. I starting this program. And I think it's great.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** And for people who don't know, we tend to do that at our plants as well. So, we invest in—heavily in STEM programs in local high schools around plants, so that will have a talent pipeline.

**Christopher Bell:** Yeah, that's—that's great news. I didn't—I wasn't aware of that.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Yeah. So, what is the lifestyle like as kind of a young driver and, now, moving kind of into the top of your game, right? Now, the kids look up to you in this program.

**Christopher Bell:** Yeah, it's—it's really cool, and it's definitely a different lifestyle. For me, I was a professional dirt racer before I became a NASCAR racer. And—and the dirt racing lifestyle was completely different than the NASCARs lifestyle because the dirt racing style, you're traveling, you're traveling by car the majority of the time, and you're driving to dirt tracks all across the United States. There's a lot of time in the car. You're home—not—you're not home very much at all.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Right.

**Christopher Bell:** And then, now, all of a sudden, I'm in NASCAR, which you would think would be on the road a lot, but you're traveling by plane to all the races, and you're home all week long, and then you fly out to the races, and then you fly back as soon as the races are over. So, I—I love it. It's a great lifestyle. It's very demanding by—I don't want to say physically demanding, but there's a lot of pressure on you.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Yeah. Talk about that lifestyle, and—and you said it's different, and is it physically demanding as well like once you're in the vehicle?

**Christopher Bell:** Physically demanding. I would say it's more mentally demanding.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Okay.

**Christopher Bell:** And the hardest part about our jobs is whenever the May, June, July months come, and you're inside these sweat boxes. And-

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Yes.

**Christopher Bell:** ... you have to be in there for hours, and be on top of your game, taking the cars to the limit lap after lap after lap. And it's a hundred degrees outside. Well, inside the car, it can be a 130, 140 degrees.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Yeah.

**Christopher Bell:** So, that—that part of it is the most demanding part is just dealing with the heat.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Yeah. Talk about the Cup Series and how it's going for you.

**Christopher Bell:** I'm really excited about going into the Cup Series. It's—I'm going to be going with a—a new—new-to-me team. I drive for Joe Gibbs Racing in the Xfinity Series right now. And next year, I'm going to

be changing to Lavonne Family Racing, so.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah. What are things that you have to get ready for in making that change?

**Christopher Bell:** Number one is going to be the longer races. The Xfinity Series are typically 300-mile races, where the Cup Series is 400 to 500. And we do have a 600-mile race in the Cup Series. So, that's going to be a big adjustment for me. The rules package right now is quite a bit different from series to series, and obviously there's a lot deeper field in the Cup Series. So, I think the rules package and then the longer race is going to be the biggest adjustment.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** What is some of your goals look like moving in to the Cup Series?

**Christopher Bell:** I just want to be successful. Obviously, winning would be outstanding.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Right.

**Christopher Bell:** I understand that a rookie in the Cup Series is very unlikely to win, so I understand that it's going to be tough for me to win.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah.

**Christopher Bell:** I expect to be competing for wins, and I expect to be competitive with my teammates.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah.

**Christopher Bell:** And—and I think that's my goals

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Perfect. Christopher Bell, thank you for joining Toyota Untold

**Christopher Bell:** Thank you.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** To tell us how the TD2 Program works, we caught with Jack Irving after Motorsports Day. Jack scouts and guides young driving talent for Toyota. And according to Jack, you got to start them young.

So, today on Toyota Untold, I have Jack Irving, who's the Director of Team and Support Services of TRD or Toyota Racing Development. And he is involved in the TD2 or Toyota Driver Development Program here at Toyota. Jack, welcome to Toyota Untold.

**Jack Irving:** Thank you for having me.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Of course. So, how long have you been involved with this TD2 or the Drive Development Program? And why was it created?

**Jack Irving:** So, about nine years ago, I think it was, we—we were in a situation where we had a driver named Kyle Larson, who was racing in dirt for us for one of our development teams, Keith Kunz Motorsports. And—and we were trying to find a path for him to race in—in—in pavement for—for what are the Toyota teams. That was extremely difficult. Part of it was, we didn't have any sort of a formal plan or path, and part of it was just—just understanding from the teams of what our role was and what their role was. We're typically a technical organization doing engineering work.



The Genesis of the program was about eight years ago. And then, it's kind of evolved into what it's become. So, the need of the program was, ultimately, to be in racing. And—and for people to—to know you're in racing, you have to win. So, our whole goal is to win as many races as we can in any series that we're competing in. And one of the ways to do that, besides having great teams with great cars is to have great drivers. So, we—we spent a lot of time making sure that the teams we're with have—have extremely good equipment that were involved technically to make sure that that equipment is very good. We supply a bunch of technical resources to the teams from a bunch of different testing equipment, engineering support, to simulation help, and simulation tools for the drivers to, then, mold into being the drivers themselves as well.

So, we—we got much more involved in the day-to-day scouting and engagement with drivers to try to make sure that no matter if the driver has a little bit of money, or low money, or a lot of money, that there's a way that—that a very talented driver could come into the Toyota program and—and becoming race car driver like somebody like Christopher Bell who came from Norman, Oklahoma and didn't have anything from a financial capacity, but he was very, very talented, and won an awful lot. And so, we were involved with him from a very young age till he made it to the Cup Series, which he's racing in next year.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Was he one of the earlier drivers after Kyle Larson?

**Jack Irving:** Yeah. I mean, Christopher Bell was one of the dirt kids. He was the first official dirt kid we had after Kyle Larson.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Right. So, you mentioned working with the teams and getting in with the teams. Is that how you scout the young drivers, and, you know, knowing them, and they come to you saying, "You got to see this kid." And then, what do you look for when you scout this talent—this talent?

**Jack Irving:** So, we have a few different ways. The teams are the most important part just because there's so many nuances when it comes to a race car driver. But—but initially, it was definitely all team-based. And then, there's timing and scoring that—that we have access to for kids racing all around the world. And we have ways in which we can take in the timing and scoring. And there are certain things that we look for and analyze to see what—what type of drivers may be out there that we're looking for.

So—and then, we've created some software that we can go through the data to try to understand it a little bit better. And then, typically, once we've—if—if it's a team or if it's us that have found a driver, then we start running some tests, and we'll have—we'll invite them to different combines and different tests. The teams get very, very involved at that point, and we get full breakdowns of, you know, what the driver does well, what the driver doesn't do well, things they need to work on, if they have raw speed or not. There's just—there's a lot that comes into just the driver portion of it.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Is there a driver that just has won of these combines? And we talked to a couple of our—our drivers in the development program. But is there one in particular that just blew you away from a, you know, raw talent standpoint?

**Jack Irving:** So, recently, it's interesting. We—we've—we've ran a couple of combines recently, and one of the drivers, Jesse Love has been quite good. We—we've known Jesse for a little while. So, it's—it's not new to us. We've known him for two years or three years, I think now. I think we—we started with him when he was 13. And so—so, he's been quite, quite fast.

We have a—a world-class simulator in—in Salisbury, North Carolina, where we've—we do—typically, it's cup development of cars, and drivers, and driver access just to the tracks. And then, the simulator where we can simulate the exact track condition, tire conditions, all kinds of things on. And with the newer tests that we've done, the stuff that we've done in the last couple of two months, we definitely see a change in the drivers when

they get to track. So, some of the drivers who have very limited track time had done quite, quite well in the—the—the basics of it just because they've been able to use the simulator, and they understand the conditions. The car dynamics are very similar. The physics of the car are very similar.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Right. So, we had the opportunity last year on Motorsports Day to talk with Kyle Busch. And he talked about how he got beat by Eric Jones one time, and he didn't like that. So, he actually reached out to him and he said, "I want that kid on my team because I want to race with him instead of against him." What is Kyle Busch's involvement been with the Toyota Driver Development Program?

**Jack Irving:** So, Kyle is huge piece in the program. You know, I think, ultimately, Kyle's equipment is top-notch. Kyle hires amazing people to work with. And so, his company, as a whole is—is fantastic. And it's—it's really—I—I—when I'm talking to kids about it, when they're—when they're grassroots racing, I—I link it to, you know, it's New York Yankees get in the way of—of motorsports. I mean, you ... you go there, and there's an expectation to win. The pressure is there. Kyle is not nice about it, and the respect that he expects you to win as well, which is what we want. The equipment is—is—is, you know, the best equipment in the garage. So—so you get all the tools you need to win, which is fantastic. And Kyle does—you know, he's—he's a champion. He's—he's extremely neurotic about race cars. All he wants to do is race. So, he's 100% involved in the development of the race cars. He's involved in the day-to-day of the program.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Right.

**Jack Irving:** So, if Kyle Busch is telling you, "You entered too low in turn three," you probably did. So, he just has a certain level to him that—that he brings. And in a focused Kyle on our program, it's—it's one of the reasons why the program has the success it has.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** And talk about that. So, has the TD2 program changed racing for Toyota, and maybe change the face of racing, and who—who's involved?

**Jack Irving:** Yeah. So, TD2's focus, it doesn't matter where you're from, it's just looking for the best drivers. So—so, there is no—there is no—no kind of, you know, preconceived what you should be, where you should come from, what you should have. But the TD2 Program doesn't—doesn't care about that. That's one beautiful thing about—about our ability from Toyota's involvement to be able to find the best in the race car drivers there are and—and bring them through, and see if they can make it.

So, we have access to so many different people. If it's—if it's, you know, people from all different outskirts of—of—of the United States, and where they're racing, and who they're racing with. So—so, that part gives us a bunch of flexibility. It also opens us up to some diversity that we probably wouldn't normally see. So, when we started the program in dirt racing, specifically, which is where one of our phase nine engines is raced in—in midget racing, it's—it was a program where normally it's a good kind of next step. You know, it's a—it's a good next step for—for—for your kind of race car development to go midget racing.

So, there was no female race car drivers that raced in it, not consistently. There was a few here and there, but no one had raced in the national series. And we went from no one racing the national series to, now, we have three girls competing in the national—national series every year. In the last few years, this has been going on. And—and part of that's because of Toyota's involvement-

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Right.

**Jack Irving:** ... because we've actively pushed and found strong female race car drivers who can race. And you're seeing more and more of that coming up. And—and I think that's probably one of the biggest successes of the program is that it opens up the door and there's—there's a path for people to—to go through that may not

have all the means to get there. They know that there's, at least, if they can go, and they can win, that we're paying attention and can help them move along, if that—if they have the talent and the grit to do it.

So, that's probably—probably the—the biggest change for the program, I think, is just the access that—that it—it's not about how much money you have or what kind of car you can buy. It's the fact that we can help you get into a top-level car, and it doesn't really matter what you have. There's all kinds of obligations that come with that from a, you know, sponsorship, participation, team participation, and in all of that with the—with the drivers. But—but that's something, I think, that has changed the—the—the face of our program.

The other groups have done it in different ways. Just we're doing it our way, obviously, and that's just different for us, which I think then gives us this—you know, you'll get somebody like a Christopher Bell who's been a Toyota driver since they were 17 or 16, whatever age it was he started, and that's all he's known. He's known our program, and he's been involved with all of our people. We have all kinds of training mechanisms for them. We have testing mechanisms for them. We work with them every year. There's all kinds of media trainings. There's all kinds of events stuff that we do. So, they're immersed in the Toyota way from a very young age. And then, that translates into what we hope to be as strong race car drivers and good humans as a whole.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah. And we had the opportunity to talk to Christopher Bell, and Brittany Zamora, and Holly Hollen, and Harrison Burton. And I think one of the things that stuck out was, at least, for everyone except Christopher Bell, a lot of them had families who are involved in racing. Does it tend to be a generational thing for kids that are involved with their parents? I think Christopher's kind of an outlier in that, but—or does it seem that there's a mix between people who just started in the sport and generational kids?

**Jack Irving:** So, that's interesting. It's a great question. So, it's different with each kid, which is funny. I will say with—with female drivers, most of the time, a—a—a person race in the family. They were exposed to racing.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Right.

**Jack Irving:** With young boys, it's—it's kind of all over the place. So, Eric Jones, his mom, I believe, read an ad, and decided to give him a chance racing, right? Christopher Bell, same thing. They dirt raced in his area, and his mom decided to—or mom and dad decide to put them into a race car. And then, you have the Harrison Burtons who kind of have this—this—this royalty family blood line that has raced and—and has been quite good.

So, racing is an exposure piece too, right? So, you know, if you grew up in an area where there weren't race tracks, it's difficult to go race. If you grew up in, you know, downtown New York, you probably didn't go to a whole lot of racetracks. And if you grew up even, you know, in Orange County, California, there's not a ton of race tracks that are near you. So, when you grow up in Southern, you grow up in Norman, Oklahoma, and there's a race track around the corner, then—then, you have access to it.

And then, it's the type of racing too, which is—which is also part of it. So, kart racing is big because you can race indoor cards, K1 speedways, and stuff like that. So, there are kids who will—kind of started that way. And then, in—in the Midwest and some of the areas, there's a lot of dirt racing. So, it's just what you have access to. So, what—the difference between if you were a pavement kid or if you're a dirt kid was just demographic from where you grew up.

The ones who've never raced are always the fascinating ones because their stories are always so different. I mean, if it's Eric Jones where his mom was just trying to keep him busy, or if it's Christopher Bell who, you know, they had a dirt track nearby and said, "Hey, we should give this a shot." And the next thing you know,

someone helps him out, and they get to race more. It—it really does show a ton about humanity as well. And people are willing, especially in the racing industry, to help each other. And—and if people see talent, everybody wants to help. It's pretty amazing-

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Right.

**Jack Irving:** ... how that comes through in—in trying to help young kids because they—they see something special in them.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Yeah, definitely. So, what does the future look like for the TD2 Program?

**Jack Irving:** You know, I think, for the most part, we're always looking for the—the—the best out there. And so, my—my hope is that we want to find a competitive female driver. I think that's something that we're—we are actively looking for consistently. And—and I think we will—you know, there's—we have good ones that are in the pipeline that we're still developing. And—and I think, you know, more than likely, there's some eight-year-old racing right now that I'm hoping we're going to find in a few years and that we can work with and—and—and bring to—to NASCAR and—and win at the cup level.

I mean that—that is the ultimate goal. I think everything else is—is kind of what we're currently doing – find the best drivers, put them in the best cars, the best teams, and let them learn, and hopefully become winners and champions for Toyota, and keep them in the program. I mean, a part of it is a car count and—and where we can fit drivers. And—and we're going to bring drivers in, and we're going to lose drivers based on what everybody's needs are.

But our—our kind of—our—our job in the sport is to try to make them work get the sports stronger and better. And—and I think that's what we're doing with—with this program. We're doing our very best to—to train and to find kids to be the best race car drivers they can within, hopefully, our vehicles. But even if they're not in our Toyota vehicles, that they learn a lot about us, and who we are as humans, and—and they take that forward and—and—and have a positive representation of what Toyota brought to them and—and in the future, have good thoughts about us going forward, and hopefully pass that on.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Well, it sounds like I need to get my seven-year-old daughter into some race cars.

**Jack Irving:** I would highly—I would highly encourage that. I know a guy that—that—that would be a very good idea.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** All right.

**Jack Irving:** It's—it's—some of it really is just access. Just give them access to cars. It will—it will all work itself out.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** I did. I asked that question to Martin Truex Jr. last year. I was like, "So, what do I need to do to get my kids, you know, into this?" And he was like, "Just go to a local track. Start with go-karts first."

**Jack Irving:** It's—it's much simpler than people think it is. Now, getting further is hard, but I mean, ultimately, it's—it really is just access. The—you'll see. You'll see what other people see when you watch them race. I mean, there's—there is something definitely special about kids when they get in cars. And if they have it, you—you'd know it pretty quickly. It's pretty amazing.

**Tyler Litchenberger:** Awesome. Well, Jack Irving, thank you so much for joining Toyota Untold.

**Jack Irving:** Thank you. I appreciate it.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Hey, racing fans. As part of Motorsports Day at Toyota and as a bonus for our listeners, I snagged a little time with Martin Truex Jr. for a quick status report on his season going into Homestead and the championship. If you didn't watch the race on November 17th, Team Toyota finished one, two, and three with Kyle Busch winning the Cup, Martin Truex Jr. coming in second, and Denny Hamlin coming in third. So, let's talk to Martin Truex, so we can find out what his approach was going into the race. Go Team Toyota!

So, you've had a pretty good season. You've done what you set out to do. Was this your goal? Was this what the vision was before the season started?

**Martin Truex Jr:** Yeah, for sure. I mean, the vision was to try to win some races and make it to the championship four. So, we won seven races, which is more than anyone else.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Yeah.

**Martin Truex Jr:** This is great. And you are locked into Homestead right now. So, one more race to go till we go down there and race for championship.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** I know. And so, what does that look like going into that race? What is the plan? Is there no plan?

**Martin Truex Jr:** Yeah, I mean, we have a plan. I mean, you know, this year has been really tough because the rules have changed so much-

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Yeah.

**Martin Truex Jr:** ... on the cars and every track is so different. So, Homestead is a very unique race track. And so, we've really been working for weeks to try to figure out, "Okay, what do we take to Homestead? How do we build the car for there? What do we—what is our approach?"

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Right.

**Martin Truex Jr:** And it's been a real challenge to figure it out, but I feel really good about it. I feel like those tracks that are like Homestead have been some of our better tracks this year. Tracks where—to explain it, the tires wear out.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Yeah.

**Martin Truex Jr:** The car slows down as the run goes on.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Yeah.

**Martin Truex Jr:** The more laps you make, the slower you get. The car slides around more. The—those tracks had been good for us. And Homestead is really the most one that's out there that direction.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Yeah.

**Martin Truex Jr:** So, I'm looking forward to it. I think it's going to be good for us and it should be fun.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** So, we're here at Motorsports Day. I thought it was pretty rude that they put Kyle's car right in front of where you are talking to-

**Martin Truex Jr:** My car's in the big museum where all the people walk through.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** That's true.

**Martin Truex Jr:** I've seen it. So, I'm like, "One day or like all year. Which one do you want?"

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Right.

**Martin Truex Jr:** I'm down with being on there all year.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Perfect. Well, good luck this weekend. We'll be rooting for you.

**Martin Truex Jr:** Thank you.

**Tyler Lichenberger:** Yeah.

So, that's the scoop on young overachieving team in the motorsports' world. Racing is pretty much like any sport and that it helps to start young. And support and development are crucial to making it. So, that means I got to get my almost eight-year-old daughter in a car, or a go-kart, or something pretty soon. And it's total life – focus, dedication, obsession, it's all part of it.

So, that's it for this episode of Toyota Untold. Our show is produced by Sharon Hong and Alison Powell. The music you're rocking out to is by Wes Meixner. We are edited and mixed by Crate Media. Thanks again for listening. And if you enjoy our podcast, make sure you give us feedback, hit subscribe, give us five stars on Apple Podcast, and email us your comments to [podcast@toyota.com](mailto:podcast@toyota.com). And if you want to talk to me on social media, make sure you tag Toyota, @Toyota, on Facebook and Twitter, @ToyotaUSA on Instagram and YouTube. Thanks guys.