

RACING THIS WEEK

O'REILLY BURNOUT ALERT! Corey Day celebrates after winning Saturday's Ag-Pro 300 at Talladega. **D. Jensen/Getty**



O'REILLY RECAP

• Saturday's AG-PRO 300, Talladega Superspeedway



WINNER: COREY DAY

Corey Day claimed the first O'Reilly Auto Parts Series victory of his career Saturday afternoon, driving to the yellow and checkered flags in the Ag-Pro 300 at Talladega Superspeedway — his No. 17 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet leading only the last lap to earn his first trophy in his first full-time season.

The 20-year-old Californian sprint car driver delivered the multi-time Cup Series championship-winning Hendrick team its first O'Reilly Auto Parts Series victory at Talladega and this weekend earned a win for a special "guest" crew member, former NFL great Jason Kelce, who dressed out in Hendrick blue and helped transport tires for the team on pit road Saturday.

"I sure as heck didn't think it [first win] would be at a superspeedway," said Day, who also won a sprint car race in Nebraska earlier this week. "My 17 guys just built a rocket ship.

"I feel like we've been close, had a good day at Rockingham and had a couple other good days and just didn't finish it off, so this is super cool."

Rookie Brent Crews finished a career-best runner-up, with Sheldon Creed scoring third in a typical photo finish-type conclusion on the 2.66-mile Talladega high banks. Creed's work was good enough to claim the \$100,000 Dash 4 Cash incentive prize for his effort — the second straight week he did so.

JR Motorsports driver Sammy Smith was fourth in the No. 8 Chevrolet, extending a top-10 streak for the team to 68 races, second best all-time in the series. Owner-driver Jeremy Clements was fifth in the South Carolina-based No. 51 Jeremy Clements Racing team Chevrolet, earning the independent team's best showing since 2022.

Dean Thompson, Jesse Love, Brandon Jones, Parker Retzlaff and Austin Green rounded out the top 10, with JJ Yeley earning the only Ford in the 38-car field an 11th-place finish.

Love started on pole position in the No. 2 Richard Childress Racing Chevrolet, led the most laps (37) and was out front late before getting shuffled backwards with six laps remaining. The field split his car high and low on track, with Creed moving into the lead with five laps remaining.

Creed's HFT teammate Sam Mayer, who had been impressive throughout the afternoon, was scored the leader with two laps to go in a three-wide front row also featuring Creed and Day. And then, as so often happens at Talladega, contact during the final frantic laps of competition shuffled the front pack, slamming Mayer's No. 41 Chevy and two-time Talladega winner Jeb Burton's No. 27 Jordan Anderson Chevrolet into the outside wall.

Mayer settled for 25th despite leading three times for eight laps on the day. Burton, a photo-finish runner-up last year in the race, settled for 26th.

Despite recording the lowest finish of the season (23rd), Allgaier retains the O'Reilly Series championship lead by 105 points over Creed.

Day, Crews, Creed and Smith will be eligible for the \$100,000 Dash 4 Cash award Saturday at Texas.

JACK LINK'S 500

Carson Hocevar held off fierce charges from Chris Buescher and Alex Bowman to earn his first career Cup Series win Sunday at Talladega. The victory marks the first for Spire Motorsports since 2019, when Justin Haley won at Daytona.



Carson Hocevar, driver of the No. 77 Spire Motorsports Chevrolet, captures his first career Cup Series win with a stellar showing at Talladega Sunday. (Sean Gardner/Getty)

Hocevar grabs first Cup win at Talladega

TALLADEGA, Ala. — Fitting for his first career Cup Series win, Carson Hocevar turned in an ultra-original victory celebration sitting on the window ledge of his No. 77 Spire Motorsports Chevrolet while driving around the 2.66-mile Talladega Superspeedway soaking up the emotions that will define and reward his first victory lap.

The huge crowd loved the unique celebration and the 23-year old Michigan native deservedly soaked it all in after earning a .114-second victory over Roush Fenway Keselowski Racing veteran Chris Buescher in Sunday's Jack Link's 500 at the iconic Talladega track completing a solid, no-holds-barred three-lap run to the checkered flag for his first trophy in NASCAR's premier series.

It marks the second time in the last three races a driver earned his first career victory — matching the work of Joe Gibbs Racing's Ty Gibbs two weeks ago at Bristol, Tenn.

"I've had this thought up for a while," Hocevar said of his winning salute. "And I've messed it up every which way to not be able to do it. And I don't care if I took me 20 minutes or whatever I was going to figure out how to do it.

"I'm just so thankful," he said, the grandstand crowd roaring in approval. "This is the biggest dream I've ever thought of. Thank you everybody. I couldn't have done it any better way. Hopefully my grandfather is watching. My grandmother died last year and I'm just so thankful I can give my grandfather a trophy now."

"Just unbelievable, I'm just so thankful," he added. "I knew we were going to win. I really did."

Over the three years he's competed full-time in the Cup Series, Hocevar has taken some criticism for his bold driving style. But on Sunday, Hocevar proved his talent, leading 19 of the final 37 laps in the 188-lap classic and holding the field off on three late race restarts.

"He deserved it for sure and this is a perfect place for him to get it," third place finisher, Hendrick Motorsports' Alex Bowman said of Hocevar.

Buescher, who also scored his career-best finish at Talladega said, "That was a fun race all the way until the end."

Hendrick's Chase Elliott, a two-time

Talladega winner, finished fourth in the No. 9 Chevrolet with Front Row Motorsports' Zane Smith rallying to an impressive fifth place finish in the No. 38 Ford, also setting the fastest lap of the race.

Another former Talladega winner, Hyak Motorsports' Ricky Stenhouse Jr., finished sixth, followed by Trackhouse Racing's Ross Chastain, Team Penske's Austin Cindric, Front Row's Noah Gragson and two-time Cup champion Kyle Busch, whose 10th place showing was his first of the season.

There were 16 leaders and 52 lead changes, with JGR's Christopher Bell leading a race-high 31 laps despite finishing 17th. RFK Racing's Ryan Preece and Ross Chastain were the race's two stage winners.

Half the field was eliminated from legitimate winning contention in a wild 26-car melee in Turn 3 on lap 115 that included championship leader Tyler Reddick among the two-dozen collected. And it all started up front.

Contact between the front cars of leader Bubba Wallace and Ross Chastain triggered the chain reaction incident and brought out a 10-minute red flag stoppage. A handful of those involved — including 23XI Racing's Wallace and fellow past Talladega winners and Team Penske teammates Ryan Blaney and Joey Logano — were no longer able to continue but a sizable number of those involved were able to return to the track.

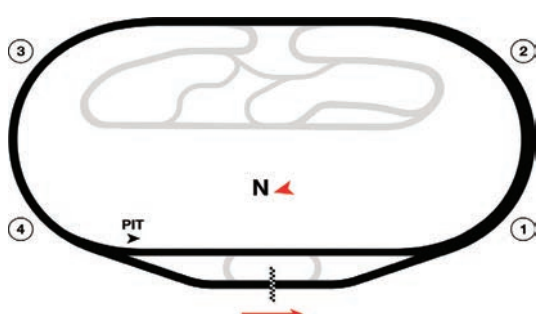
Blaney was frustrated, but like so many of those caught up in the incident, also philosophical about the close-quarter brand of speedway racing that has so often produced NASCAR's version of the "the big one."

"I feel like we all just got pinballing off each other there," Blaney said, adding, "It's not like there's any blame on anybody."

A five-time winner this season, Reddick was also among those whose cars suffered damage in the massive incident. Hoping to win his fifth race from pole position this season, instead he had to recover from damage in both the big accidents and then again after his No. 45 23XI Racing Toyota clipped the wall with 27 to go.

He stayed on the lead lap and managed a 14th place finish in the 40-car field and maintains a commanding lead atop the Cup Series championship standings, 110 points over Joe Gibbs Racing's Denny Hamlin.

NEXT: WÜRTH 400



Texas Motor Speedway
3:30 p.m. ET Sunday, FS1

- **Location:** 3545 Lone Star Circle, Fort Worth
- **Capacity:** 75,000
- **Owner:** Fort Worth Sports Authority
- **Opened:** August 1996
- **Course:** Quad-oval
- **Surface:** Asphalt
- **Length:** 1.5 miles
- **Turns:** 4; 750-foot radius
- **Banking:** 20 degrees in Turns 1 and 2; 24 degrees in Turns 3 and 4; five degrees in straightaways
- **Fastest Cup lap:** 0:27.617; Kevin Harvick, Ford Fusion, 2018 O'Reilly Auto Parts 500



Joey Logano won last May's race at Texas. **GETTY**

2026 CUP SERIES STANDINGS

Top 30 as of April 26

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Tyler Reddick 23XI	484	16 Austin Cindric Penske	226
2 Denny Hamlin JGR	374	17 Chase Briscoe JGR	222
3 Ryan Blaney Penske	344	18 R. Chastain Trkhouse	205
4 Chase Elliott Hendrick	340	19 S v Gisbergen Trkhouse	195
5 Ty Gibbs JGR	322	20 Zane Smith FRM	183
6 Kyle Larson Hendrick	315	21 AJ Allmendinger Kaulig	183
7 Chris Buescher RFK	309	22 Todd Gilliland FRM	181
8 Carson Hocevar Spire	292	23 M. McDowell Spire	179
9 Christopher Bell JGR	290	24 Austin Dillon RCR	163
10 Brad Keselowski RFK	279	25 Ricky Stenhouse Hyak	161
11 Will. Byron Hendrick	277	26 Erik Jones Legacy	161
12 Bubba Wallace 23XI	276	27 Kyle Busch RCR	160
13 Ryan Preece RFK	269	28 Josh Berry Wood	147
14 Daniel Suárez Spire	235	29 Riley Herbst 23XI	144
15 Joey Logano Penske	234	30 Noah Gragson FRM	144

2026 O'REILLY AUTO PARTS STANDINGS

Top 20 as of April 25

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Justin Allgaier #7	544	11 William Sawalich #18	280
2 Sheldon Creed #00	439	12 Rajah Caruth #32	268
3 Jesse Love #2	403	13 Ryan Sieg #39	254
4 Corey Day #17	399	14 Sam Mayer #41	241
5 Brandon Jones #20	353	15 Brent Crews #19	225
6 Sammy Smith #8	352	16 Brennan Poole #44	221
7 Carson Kvapil #9	331	17 Jeb Burton #27	200
8 Austin Hill #21	321	18 Dean Thompson #26	196
9 Taylor Gray #54	302	19 Blaine Perkins #31	181
10 Parker Retzlaff #99	292	20 Jeremy Clements #51	179

NEXT RACE: ANDY'S FROZEN CUSTARD 340, Texas Motor Speedway, 3:30 p.m. ET Saturday, CW

2026 CRAFTSMAN TRUCK STANDINGS

Top 20 as of April 10

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Chandler Smith #38	208	11 Stewart Friesen #52	140
2 Kaden Honeycutt #11	207	12 Tyler Ankrum #18	137
3 Corey Heim #1	204	13 Tanner Gray #15	123
4 Layne Riggs #34	204	14 Brenden Queen #12	120
5 Christian Eckes #91	191	15 Grant Engfinger #9	119
6 Giovanni Ruggiero #17	187	16 Daniel Hemric #19	116
7 Ty Majeski #88	182	17 A. Perez De Lara #44	115
8 Ben Rhodes #99	181	18 Cole Buthcher #13	104
9 Jake Garcia #98	146	19 Dawson Sutton #26	89
10 Justin Haley #16	144	20 Kris Wright #81	83

NEXT RACE: SPEEDYCASH.COM 250, Texas Motor Speedway, 8 p.m. ET Friday, FS1

TALLADEGA WINNER QUOTE

"I'm so thankful. This is the biggest dream I've ever thought of. Thank you, everybody. I couldn't have done it in any better way. Hopefully my grandpa's watching. My grandma died last year, so I'm so thankful that I can give my grandpa a trophy now. Wish my parents were here."

— Carson Hocevar, who grabbed his first Cup win in 91 starts Sunday in the Jack Link's 500



Carson Hocevar in Victory Lane Sunday at Talladega.

ALEJANDRO ALVAREZ/ NASCAR DIGITAL MEDIA



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