

RACING THIS WEEK

XFINITY RECAP

• **Saturday's** BETRIVERS 200, Dover Motor Speedway



WINNER: CONNOR ZILISCH

Lest anyone doubt the all-around natural racing talent of 18-year-old Connor Zilisch, the rookie claimed a series best fourth Xfinity victory on the season in Saturday's rain-shortened BetRivers 200 at the one-mile Dover (Del.) Motor Speedway.

Zilisch led 77 of the race's 134 laps in his No. 88 JR Motorsports Chevrolet before NASCAR was forced to call the scheduled 200-lap race early because of rain. A pair of Joe Gibbs Racing Toyotas, driven by former Cup Series veteran Aric Almirola and Xfinity regular Brandon Jones rounded out the top three.

Although he qualified third – three rookies topped the starting grid – Zilisch ran first or second for most of the race, ultimately taking the lead for good on restart following Stage 2 break.

"We've been showing it lately," a smiling Zilisch said when he was informed on pit road the race was official and he was the winner. "First of all I hate that we couldn't finish the race the right way. Aric [Almirola] was really fast and was going to give me a run for my money. Props to him for making me work for it."

"Still really proud of this Junior Motorsports team. ... We capitalized on all fronts, had good pit stops both stages and put ourselves in a position to be in the right spot when the rain fell. Very thankful."

Zilisch's win total is best in the series. And the North Carolina teenager has been so good this summer that that he's now on an eight-race top-five streak that includes three wins and three runner-up finishes for an average finish of 2.25. He's led laps in 15 of the 20 races.

Even before making his fulltime NASCAR debut this season, Zilisch was a multi-race winner in the sports car ranks with huge victories in the biggest races on the schedule – last year's Daytona 24 hour and Sebring 12 hour endurance classics.

Not too surprisingly, he immediately proved himself a road-course ace when given the NASCAR Xfinity Series opportunity, even winning from pole position in his first series start at historic Watkins Glen (N.Y.) International last summer.

He answered that resoundingly this year as a full-time competitor, hoisting trophies at Circuit of the Americas and Sonoma, Calif. road courses, but also proving his oval-metal winning at the 2.5-mile Pocono (Pa.) Raceway last month and now adding the one-mile to an increasingly broad resume.

Zilisch's effort at Dover's Monster Mile moves him into second place in the championship standings – 56 points behind points leader – and his JR Motorsports teammate, and the reigning series champ – Justin Allgaier, who finished fourth Saturday.

Zilisch's best friend, Richard Childress Racing's Jesse Love, was fifth, followed by Ryan Sieg, polesitter Taylor Gray, Sheldon Creed and rookies William Sawalich and Christian Eckes rounding out the top 10.

Jeb Burton, who finished 20th, now holds a seven-point advantage on his cousin Harrison Burton for the 12th and final Playoff-eligible position in points.

AUTOTRADER ECHOPARK 400

Denny Hamlin got a jump on the field in both overtime restarts and held off teammate Chase Briscoe Sunday. It marks back-to-back wins at the Dover concrete mile for Hamlin and a Cup Series-best fourth victory of 2025.



Denny Hamlin, driver of the #11 Progressive Toyota, takes the checkered flag to win the Cup Series AutoTrader EchoPark Automotive 400 at Dover Motor Speedway on Sunday, his fourth victory of the 2025 Cup season. (Sean Gardner/Getty Images)

Another 'Monster' run for Hamlin at Dover

Denny Hamlin prevailed in Sunday's EchoPark AutoTrader 400 at Dover (Del.) Motor Speedway – a race that featured a 56-minute red flag for rain, late-race strategy decisions, and involved a pair of overtime restarts before the trophy was ultimately settled between a pair of Joe Gibbs Racing teammates.

But the veteran Hamlin got it all right when it mattered most, getting a jump on the field in both overtime restarts and in the end holding off his newest teammate Chase Briscoe who was even on fresher tires. It marks back-to-back wins at the Dover concrete-mile for Hamlin and a Cup Series-best fourth victory of 2025.

"Things were going pretty well there before the rain and then obviously had to endure a few restarts there," said a smiling Hamlin, 44, who collected his 58th career victory and first trophy since the birth of his son, Jameson last month. "It was tough, those guys gave me a run for it, no doubt about it."

"Winning here at Dover is super special to me," he continued. "This is a place I had not been very good at the first half of my career and then to have back-to-back (wins) here the last couple years is amazing."

Briscoe certainly pushed Hamlin on that final two-lap sprint to the checkered flag. The two ran door-to-door on the white flag lap – their cars even making slight contact – before Hamlin's No. 11 JGR Toyota Camry was able to pull around and clear Briscoe's car, racing off to a .310-second victory and become only the 13th driver in track history to win consecutive races.

Hendrick Motorsports teammates Alex Bowman and Kyle Larson finished third and fourth with another JGR driver, Ty Gibbs rounding out the top five.

For most of the day, it looked as if Hendrick's Chase Elliott would continue a summer hot streak and claim his second race win in the last four weeks. He led a race best 238 of the 407 laps – taking his first stage win of the season and overcoming an early pit road miscue. But he just wasn't able to challenge Hamlin.

There was some consolation in Elliott's sixth place finish, however, as it – combined with teammate William Byron's accident with two laps remining in regulation – now gives Elliott a 17-point championship lead over Byron with five races remaining in the



regular season. It's the first time he's led the championship this year.

Elliott led so many laps and essentially controlled race pace, but it was a cycle of pit stops that gave Hamlin opportunity out front. He cycled to the lead when Elliott pit for tires during a caution beating his JGR teammate Christopher Bell on a restart with 60 laps remaining. Hamlin held the lead position when the 56-minute red flag came out for rain with 15 laps to go.

And after all that had to hold off Briscoe on consecutive overtime restarts – ultimately leading the final 67 laps.

Behind Elliott, Bubba Wallace, Ryan Blaney, Chris Buescher and Brad Keselowski rounded out the top 10.

While the top of the championship standings changed with Elliott taking the lead, the four drivers – Reddick, Bowman, Buescher and Wallace – still chasing a points-position in the 16-driver Playoff remained the same. Wallace's seventh-place finish gives him a 16-point edge on Ryan Preece for that 16th and final transfer position. Kyle Busch, who finished 11th Sunday, is now 39 points behind Wallace.

The race also set the "In-Season Challenge" championship round next week at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway with Gibbs and longshot Ty Dillon advancing to the title round.

Gibbs was paired against Tyler Reddick at Dover and Dillon had to beat John Hunter Nemechek in the other bracket to settle the final two positions for \$1 million to-win grand finale of the inaugural incentive program presented by TNT.

In both head-to-head battles, the two drivers ran near each other all afternoon. Gibbs got around Reddick in the closing laps and Dillon benefitted from a "lucky dog" late race pass – he and Nemechek finished 20th and 21st.

Dillon, who drives the No. 10 Kaulig Racing Chevrolet was similarly ecstatic for the opportunity. He was seeded 32nd among the 32 drivers to qualify for the In-Season Tournament and had to race past drivers like Hamlin in earlier rounds.

The Cup Series moves to one of its premier showcases, the historic Indianapolis Motor Speedway for Sunday's Brickyard 400 (2 p.m. ET, TNT, HBO Max, PRN, SiriusXM NASCAR Radio). Larson is the defending race winner.

XFINITY BONUS: ARCA Menards regular Lavar Scott, in the No. 45 Alpha Prime Racing Chevy, preps for his Xfinity debut at Dover's "Monster Mile." He would go on to finish 28th. **M. Oliphant/Getty**



NEXT: BRICKYARD 400



Indianapolis Motor Speedway oval
2 p.m. ET Sunday, TNT

Surface: Asphalt

Length: 2.5 mi (4.0 km)

Turns: 4

The roar of stock cars has been reverberating through Indianapolis Motor Speedway's hallowed grandstands since the **first Cup Series race in 1994**. The inaugural Brickyard 400 became the first race other than the Indianapolis 500 in nearly a century, setting the stage for additional motorsports events to be held at Indy.

Each NASCAR weekend has delivered its own special and memorable moment, with race winners such as Jeff Gordon, Dale Earnhardt, Dale Jarrett, Tony Stewart, Jimmie Johnson, Kevin Harvick, Kyle Busch and Kyle Larson. There have been a few surprise winners, but generally Victory Lane has been visited by the sport's champions.

Most wins: Jeff Gordon (5)

Most wins (team): Hendrick Motorsports (11)

Most wins (manufacturer): Chevrolet (18)

History notables:

• The biggest event occurred in 1994 when NASCAR stormed onto the oval for the first time. A capacity crowd of more than 250,000 attended, and nearly everyone was standing when 23-year-old Pittsboro, Ind., native **Jeff Gordon** took the checkered flag for his second career Cup victory (he won the first earlier that year at Charlotte). The Brickyard win vaulted Gordon into superstardom. Among the 80-plus entries were cars for Indy legends A.J. Foyt, Danny Sullivan and Gary Bettenhausen, and the first two made the race. Rick Mast was the surprising pole winner, and he led the first lap. The race became the first of 11 event victories for Hendrick Motorsports.

• With Gordon and Dale Earnhardt winning the first two Brickyards in Chevrolets, it was time for Ford to win at Indy. **Dale Jarrett** delivered that in 1996 despite not leading until Lap 135 of 160. Jarrett and fellow Ford driver Ernie Irvan had a battle, with Jarrett passing for the lead with seven laps remaining. Jarrett became the first driver to win Daytona 500 and Brickyard 400 in the same year.



Kyle Larson hoisted the Brickyard trophy last July. **GETTY**

2025 CUP SERIES STANDINGS

Top 30 as of July 20

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 C. Elliott Chevrolet	702	16 T. Gibbs Toyota	448
2 W. Byron Chevrolet	686	17 M. McDowell Chevy	423
3 K. Larson Chevrolet	664	18 A.J. Allmendinger Ch.	420
4 D. Hamlin Toyota	663	19 A. Cindric Ford	417
5 T. Reddick Toyota	640	20 E. Jones Toyota	411
6 C. Bell Toyota	635	21 J. Nemechek Toyota	400
7 R. Blaney Ford	576	22 J. Berry Ford	399
8 C. Briscoe Toyota	570	23 R. Stenhouse Chevy	392
9 A. Bowman Chevrolet	547	24 Z. Smith Ford	388
10 C. Buescher Ford	528	25 C. Hocevar Chevrolet	375
11 J. Logano Ford	524	26 S. v. Gisbergen Chevy	374
12 R. Chastain Chevrolet	517	27 B. Keselowski Ford	360
13 D. Wallace Jr. Toyota	500	28 A. Dillon Chevrolet	353
14 R. Preece Ford	484	29 D. Suárez Chevrolet	341
15 Ky. Busch Chevrolet	461	30 T. Dillon Chevrolet	337

2025 XFINITY SERIES STANDINGS

Top 20 as of July 19

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Justin Allgaier #7	730	11 Nicholas Sanchez #48	513
2 Connor Zilisch #88	674	12 Jeb Burton #27	497
3 Sam Mayer #41	652	13 Harrison Burton #25	490
4 Austin Hill #21	647	14 Ryan Sieg #39	467
5 Jesse Love #2	620	15 Dean Thompson #26	435
6 Brandon Jones #20	578	16 Christian Eckes #16	426
7 Carson Kvapil #1	576	17 Daniel Dye #10	412
8 Sheldon Creed #00	551	18 Brennan Poole #44	380
9 Taylor Gray #54	526	19 Josh Williams #11	361
10 Sammy Smith #8	515	20 Jeremy Clements #51	344

NEXT RACE: PENNZOIL 250, Indianapolis Motor Speedway, 4:30 p.m. ET Saturday, CW

2025 TRUCK SERIES STANDINGS

Top 20 as of June 28

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Corey Heim #11	689	11 Stewart Friesen #52	395
2 Chandler Smith #38	546	12 Ben Rhodes #99	394
3 Layne Riggs #34	525	13 Rajah Caruth #71	384
4 Daniel Hemric #19	514	14 Tanner Gray #15	361
5 Kaden Honeycutt #45	491	15 Connor Mosack #81	321
6 Grant Enfinger #9	488	16 Matt Crafton #88	309
7 Tyler Ankrum #18	468	17 A. Perez De Lara #77	297
8 Ty Majeski #98	462	18 Jack Wood #91	287
9 Jake Garcia #13	424	19 Matt Mills #42	273
10 Gio Ruggiero #17	397	20 Dawson Sutton #26	256

NEXT RACE: TSPOOT 200 AT IRP, Indianapolis Raceway Park, 8 p.m. ET Friday, FS1

DOVER WINNER QUOTE

"Winning here at Dover is super special to me. This is a place I had not been very good at the first half of my career and then to have back-to-back (wins) here the last couple years is amazing."

— *Denny Hamlin, who took the checkered flag for the second straight year at Dover Sunday*



Denny Hamlin and crew celebrate in Victory Lane at Dover Sunday.

MEG OLIPHANT/ NASCAR



ALL AMERICAN

SUB + MELT

Declare your freedom from hunger with ham, Smith's bologna, hard salami and cheese on a toasty pretzel bun or piled high on a Barnbuster sub.