

RACING THIS WEEK

BURNOUT ALERT! Justin Allgaier celebrates after winning Saturday's GOVX 200. S. Gardner/Getty



O'REILLY RECAP

• Saturday's GOVX 200, Phoenix Raceway



WINNER: JUSTIN ALLGAIER

JR Motorsports driver Justin Allgaier pushed forward when it mattered most, his No. 7 Chevrolet leading only the last 11 laps of Saturday night's GOVX 200 at Phoenix Raceway to claim his third win at the 1-mile Arizona oval and take over the championship lead in the O'Reilly Auto Parts Series.

Allgaier had to pass the night's most dominant driver, Richard Childress Racing's Jesse Love, to earn the trophy. Love came into the race with the best average finish in the last four Phoenix races and again proved how good he is in the desert, leading a race-best 114 of the 200 laps.

There were no caution periods in the opening two stages of the race — the first stage won by Allgaier's teammate Sammy Smith and the second stage won by Love.

Two late-race yellow flags, however, bunched the field on restarts and allowed Allgaier's team to rally from a slow pit stop earlier in the night. The two former champions went door-to-door following the final restart with 15 laps to go, the 2024 series champ Allgaier ultimately besting the 2025 champ Love with a daring move on the outside and then holding him off by .449-seconds at the finish line to earn JR Motorsports' 107th victory.

"So proud of this team," said Allgaier, praising the team for overcoming a poor stop early. "It wasn't for lack of adversity and it seems like those are the ones that are big for us. I cannot say enough about this team."

"It never gets old winning," added Allgaier, who has now won at least one race for a record 10 consecutive seasons. "This team rallied and never gave up."

As encouraging as the night was — a stage win and fourth consecutive top-10 finish on the season for Love, the 21-year-old was understandably frustrated to finish runner-up after such a dominant showing.

"The car tightening up there at the beginning of stage three put us behind, so just frustrated," said Love, noting that he refused to just walk away happy with a runner-up showing after such a strong effort.

"Obviously not why I'm here [to finish second]. Just beyond frustrated with myself. I don't know what else to say, just upset, upset with myself."

The top finishing 14 cars were Chevrolets. Allgaier's JR Motorsports teammate, Carson Kvapil, who looked strong mid-race and led 22 laps, finished third, followed by Haas Factory Team drivers Sheldon Creed and Sam Mayer.

Sammy Smith, Jeb Burton, Rajah Caruth, Corey Day and Anthony Alfredo rounded out the top 10. It's the third top 10 of the season for both Smith and Day.

The championship standings now mirror Saturday's outcome with Allgaier holding a three-point advantage over Love as the series heads to the 1.5-mile Las Vegas Motor Speedway for next week's The LiUNA! (5:30 p.m. ET, The CW, PRN Radio, SiriusXM NASCAR Radio). Allgaier is the defending winner of that race.

STRAIGHT TALK WIRELESS 500

A pair of pit stop issues put Ryan Blaney at the rear of the field twice early at Phoenix, but the 2023 series champion rallied and took the lead for good with 10 laps remaining.



Ryan Blaney, driver of the #12 Dent Wizard Ford, crosses the finish line to win the Cup Series Straight Talk Wireless 500 at Phoenix Raceway on Sunday. (Sean Gardner/Getty)

Blaney puts on rally cap for Phoenix win

AVONDALE, Ariz. — Ryan Blaney completed a hard-earned Team Penske sweep at the famed Phoenix Raceway in Sunday's Straight Talk Wireless 500 — recovering from multiple early race setbacks to claim his first Cup Series trophy of the 2026 season and answer his Penske organization's Saturday IndyCar win at the track with a spectacular and popular stock car victory a day later.

A pair of pit stop issues — including a penalty for pitting outside his box — put Blaney at the rear of the field twice early in the race, but the 2023 series champion was not to be denied, rallying back in his No. 12 Team Penske Ford and taking the lead for good with 10 laps remaining.

Blaney's team took tires on a final stop on a caution with 12 laps remaining and made his way forward after restarting on the second row.

He got around then-race leader Ty Gibbs with 10 to go and then held off No. 54's Joe Gibbs Racing teammate Christopher Bell, who led the most laps — 176 of 312 — but faced a huge task, moving up from an eighth-place position on the final restart as the first car to take four tires. With the fresh Goodyear rubber, Bell at least kept Blaney honest, cutting into the lead with each lap, but ultimately landed .399 seconds short.

"Just perseverance," Blaney conceded of his afternoon. "I mean, everybody on the 12 group persevered all day. We had a couple mistakes that we learned from, got better, had to come from the back a couple times."

"Obviously, the 20 [Bell] was the best car. But Jonathan [Hassler, No. 12 crew chief] made a great call to take two [on last stop]. We were able to get the lead. Hold them off. I don't know how many more laps I could have held them off."

"Really proud of everybody at Team Penske. We swept the weekend with [Josef] Newgarden winning yesterday (in the NTT IndyCar Series race), us winning today. Can't wait to see Roger [Penske, team owner]. ... Can't say enough about the 12 guys for keeping their head down and doing what they do, and Jonathan again for making a good call at the end."

Bright sun and temperatures near 90 degrees welcomed a huge crowd for

Sunday's second half of the well-received racing doubleheader weekend with both IndyCar and NASCAR marquee events. Many of the open-wheel racers stayed at the track and found spots atop team pit stands to watch the stock cars compete.

And the Penske team made the most of the unique doubleheader opportunity.

It marks the 32-year-old Blaney's 18th career victory and second at Phoenix, which vaults him to second place in the championship standings — now 60 points behind 23XI Racing's Tyler Reddick, who saw his historic three-race winning streak to start the season end with in eighth place.

Reddick ran among the top 10 throughout but never truly challenged for the victory.

"We kind of just hovered around fifth all day," conceded Reddick, whose 23XI Racing team co-owner Michael Jordan was again trackside in support of the organization's record-setting 2026 season start.

Bell, defending race winner, whose own three-race winning streak last season included this Phoenix race, was disappointed to finish runner-up after leading the most laps. The upside, however, is that his No. 20 JGR team dramatically moved up from 24th in the championship standings before the race to now sixth place heading to Las Vegas next week. He and Blaney each won a stage on Sunday.

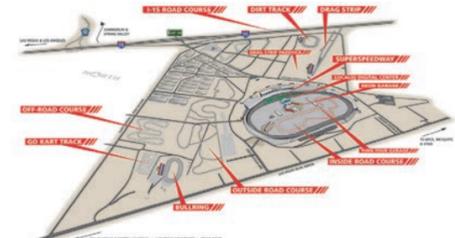
Blaney and Bell, reigning series champion Hendrick Motorsports' Kyle Larson finished third, followed by Bell's JGR teammates Gibbs, who now has back-to-back fourth-place finishes on the season, and Denny Hamlin.

Reddick's teammate, Bubba Wallace, was sixth, followed by Hendrick's William Byron, Reddick, Spire Motorsports' Michael McDowell and Legacy Motor Club's Erik Jones. Popular driver Shane Van Gisbergen — the series road racing ace — rallied to an 11th-place showing even after being involved in multiple incidents on the day.

The race's 12 cautions tied the track record for yellow flags. There were eight leaders and 23 lead changes.

Anthony Alfredo, who was subbing for Hendrick Motorsports driver Alex Bowman, finished 33rd in the No. 48 Chevrolet, collected in a multi-car crash with just under than 100 laps remaining.

NEXT: PENNZOIL 400



Las Vegas Motor Speedway
4 p.m. ET Sunday, FS1

- **Location:** 7000 North Las Vegas Boulevard Las Vegas, Nevada
- **Capacity:** 80,000
- **Owner:** Speedway Motorsports (1999–present)
- **Opened:** May 1971
- **Course:** Tri-oval intermediate speedway
- **Surface:** Asphalt
- **Length:** 1.500 miles (2.414 km)
- **Banking:** Turns, 20°; Frontstretch, 9°; Backstretch, 9°
- **Foreigner** will perform the national anthem
- **First Cup race:** March 1, 1998 — Inaugural Las Vegas 400, won by **Mark Martin**



Josh Berry won last year's Pennzoil 400 at Las Vegas. GETTY

2026 CUP SERIES STANDINGS

Top 30 as of March 8

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Tyler Reddick #45	225	16 Brad Keselowski #6	100
2 Ryan Blaney #12	165	17 Daniel Suárez #7	98
3 Bubba Wallace #23	153	18 Ryan Preece #60	92
4 Chase Elliott #9	128	19 Zane Smith #38	85
5 Shane V Gisbergen #97	116	20 Kyle Busch #8	81
6 Christopher Bell #20	113	21 Ty Dillon #10	76
7 Joey Logano #22	113	22 J.H. Nemechek #42	75
8 Michael McDowell #71	111	23 Ross Chastain #1	74
9 Chris Buescher #17	111	24 Riley Herbst #35	72
10 Kyle Larson #5	109	25 Noah Gragson #4	66
11 William Byron #24	108	26 Todd Gilliland #34	65
12 Denny Hamlin #11	107	27 Ricky Stenhouse Jr #47	64
13 AJ Allmendinger #16	104	28 Erik Jones #43	59
14 Carson Hocevar #77	103	29 Austin Dillon #3	56
15 Ty Gibbs #54	101	30 Austin Cindric #2	52

2026 O'REILLY AUTO PARTS STANDINGS

Top 20 as of March 7

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Justin Allgaier #7	184	11 Brandon Jones #20	95
2 Jesse Love #2	180	12 Jeb Burton #27	94
3 Austin Hill #21	179	13 Taylor Gray #54	94
4 Carson Kvapil #91	146	14 Brennan Poole #44	80
5 Sheldon Creed #00	143	15 Anthony Alfredo #96	79
6 Sammy Smith #8	132	16 Ryan Sieg #39	77
7 Rajah Caruth #32	119	17 Patrick Staropoli #48	71
8 Corey Day #17	118	18 William Sawalich #18	67
7 A. Perez De Lara #44	85	17 Tanner Gray #15	48
8 Stewart Friesen #52	70	18 Landen Lewis #45	47
9 Christian Eckes #91	69	19 Daniel Hemric #19	46
10 Justin Haley #16	67	20 Mini Tyrrell #14	45

NEXT RACE: THE LIUNA!, Las Vegas Motor Speedway, 5:30 p.m. ET Saturday, CW

2026 CRAFTSMAN TRUCK STANDINGS

Top 20 as of February 28

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Chandler Smith #38	152	11 Brenden Queen #12	66
2 Ben Rhodes #99	118	12 Tyler Ankrum #18	64
3 Ty Majeski #88	102	13 Daniel Dye #10	64
4 Giovanni Ruggiero #17	98	14 Jake Garcia #98	58
5 Layne Riggs #34	96	15 Cole Butcher #13	52
6 Kaden Honeycutt #11	87	16 Kris Wright #81	49
7 A. Perez De Lara #44	85	17 Tanner Gray #15	48
8 Stewart Friesen #52	70	18 Landen Lewis #45	47
9 Christian Eckes #91	69	19 Daniel Hemric #19	46
10 Justin Haley #16	67	20 Mini Tyrrell #14	45

NEXT RACE: BUCKLE UP SOUTH CAROLINA 200, Darlington, 7:30 p.m. ET Friday, March 20, FS1

PHOENIX WINNER QUOTE

"... everybody on the 12 group persevered all day. We had a couple mistakes that we learned from, got better, had to come from the back a couple times. Obviously, the 20 (Christopher Bell) was the best car. But Jonathan (Hassler, crew chief) made a great call to take two (on last stop)."

— Ryan Blaney, who held off Christopher Bell to take Sunday's Straight Talk Wireless 500



Ryan Blaney and crew celebrate in Victory Lane Sunday at Phoenix.

MEG OLIPHANT/GETTY

SEAS THE DAY

Reel in your hunger with this fresh catch!
Creamy tuna salad with chopped celery piled high on a fresh-baked roll.



TUNA SALAD sub

Country Fair