

# RACING THIS WEEK

## XFINITY RECAP

• **Friday's** FOOD CITY 300, Bristol Motor Speedway



**WINNER: ARIC ALMIROLA**

Benefitting from a split-second late race strategy decision, veteran Aric Almirola held off a motivated field to claim the win in Friday night's Food City 300 Xfinity Series Playoff opener at Bristol (Tenn.) Motor Speedway.

While running second to the series' championship leader Connor Zilisch when a caution flag flew with 36 laps remaining, Almirola watched Zilisch pull onto pit road for fresh tires and instead of following him into the pits as his crew expected, Almirola pulled his No. 19 Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota back on track at the last moment.

He then had to out-run, out-manuever and out-last the competition – several on fresher tires – in the closing laps to claim his second victory of the season and ninth of his career.

Zilisch's fifth-place finish, however still resulted in a series record giving him 15 consecutive top-five showings. He has a series best nine victories on the season and maintains a 32-point advantage over another JR Motorsports teammate, Friday's race pole sitter and reigning series champion Justin Allgaier, who finished sixth and earned a series best 11th stage win.

Harrison Burton, Christian Eckes, Jeremy Clements and Brennan Poole rounded out a top-10 that included three rookies. The top seven finishers were all Playoff drivers. Ten of the 12 Playoff competitors finished 14th or higher.

## TRUCKS RECAP

• **Thursday's** UNOH 200 PRES. BY OHIO LOGISTICS, Bristol Motor Raceway



**WINNER: LAYNE RIGGS**

Layne Riggs recovered from a first-lap spin at Bristol Motor Speedway and rallied to win Thursday night's UNOH 200, the second race in the NASCAR CRAFTSMAN Truck Series Playoffs.

Grabbing the lead after a restart on Lap 142 of 250, Riggs held off a determined charge by two-time series champion Ben Rhodes to win this third race of the season, second at Bristol and fifth of his career.

With the victory, Riggs earned a berth in the Round of 8 of the Playoffs and won't have to worry about the Sept. 20 Round of 10 elimination race at New Hampshire Motor Speedway.

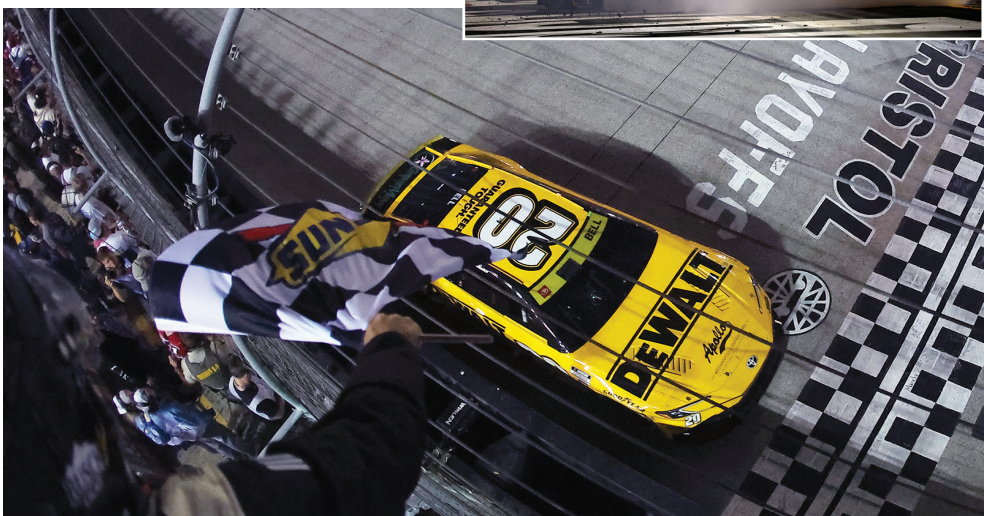
Riggs' victory ended a three-race winning streak for series leader Corey Heim and kept the driver of the No. 11 TRICON Garage Toyota from equaling Greg Biffle's series record of nine wins in a single season.

Playoff drivers Ty Majeski and Daniel Hemric ran fourth and fifth, respectively. Chandler Smith finished the night 10th in the standings, 24 points below the current elimination line for the next round.

Non-Playoff drivers Tanner Gray, Connor Mosack, Andres Perez de Lara, Corey LaJoie and Matt Crafton completed the top 10.

## PLAYOFFS 3: BASS PRO SHOP NIGHT RACE

Joining JGR teammates Chase Briscoe and Denny Hamlin as winners in the Playoff's Round of 16, Christopher Bell advanced to the Round of 12 at one of his best tracks, New Hampshire.



**Christopher Bell, driver of the #20 DEWALT Toyota, takes the checkered flag to win the Cup Series Bass Pro Shops Night Race at Bristol Motor Speedway on Saturday.** (Jonathan Bachman/Getty Images)

# 'Tired out' Bell rings up Playoff victory

**B**RISTOL, Tenn. — With a charge to the lead from fifth place with four laps left in Saturday's Bass Pro Shops Night Race at Bristol Motor Speedway, Christopher Bell kept Joe Gibbs Racing and Toyota perfect in the 2025 NASCAR Cup Series Playoffs.

Bell survived a hard, square shot to his rear bumper from Brad Keselowski in the final corner and steered straight to the finish line, 0.343 seconds ahead of the Roush Fenway Keselowski co-owner and driver.

Joining JGR teammates Chase Briscoe and Denny Hamlin as winners in the Playoff's Round of 16, Bell advanced to the Round of 12, which begins Sunday at one of his best tracks, New Hampshire.

The race marked the end of the Playoffs for the four drivers who came to Thunder Valley below the elimination line—Alex Bowman, Austin Dillon, Shane van Gisbergen and Josh Berry.

Of the four, only Bowman made a charge, finishing 10 points below Austin Cindric, the final Round of 12 qualifier.

Six days after complaining about strategy in a seventh-place finish at WWT Raceway at Gateway, Bell was back on top, scoring his fourth victory of the season, his first at Bristol and 13th of his career.

On fresh right-side tires after a pit stop on Lap 491, the driver of No. 20 Camry took the lead from fifth on Lap 497 of 500 and kept Keselowski, on four new tires, at bay for the duration, even though Keselowski got to Bell's rear bumper on the final circuit.

With new, softer right-side tires supplied by Goodyear for the race, the extent of tire wear was a shock the drivers and crew chiefs.

"Well, I'll tell you what, I was nervous on the twos (tires)," Bell said. "I didn't know if I wanted to be on the bottom or the top, and whenever Brad picked the top (lane) didn't really give me an option. I had to pick the bottom.

"All night long, I don't know, old tires just really, really pushed up in the middle of the corners, so I was hoping that those guys (starting ahead of him) on old tires would push up, and they did. They did, and I was able to get by or get underneath them.

"It wasn't pretty there at the end, but we got her done."

Bell's teammate, Ty Gibbs, led a race-high 201 laps, but overshot his pit stall on the last green-flag stop and finished 10th. Briscoe was out front for 127 laps and finished ninth after a late green-flag stop for fresh tires.

Non-Playoff driver Zane Smith ran third, followed by Team Penske title contenders Ryan Blaney and Joey Logano. Part-timer Corey Heim scored a career-best sixth, followed by non-Playoff driver Carson Hocevar and Bowman.

Most of the Round of 16 eliminations were settled early. On Lap 75, Josh Berry brought his No. 21 Wood Brothers Racing Ford to pit road with smoke from the right-front wheel well filling the cockpit. Berry climbed from the car, finishing last for the third straight event, out of the race and out of the Playoffs.

Austin Dillon, who entered the race 11 points below the cut line, already had experienced severe cording of his right-side tires. Dillon pitted on Lap 28 and compounded his issues with a pit road speeding penalty. Dillon was 30th at the end of Stage 1, the last driver one lap down, with little hope of remaining in Playoffs. By the end of Stage 2, he was two laps down. He was 28th, missing Round of 12 by 14 points.

Shane van Gisbergen, 15 points down at the start of the race, steadily lost ground throughout the first two stages. The coup de grace for the New Zealander was a spin in Turn 4 after a bump from William Byron.

Another spin and a 26th-place finish left the Sunoco rookie 16 points behind Cindric in his first trip to the postseason.

Of the drivers who started below the cut line, only Bowman mounted a threat. Recovering from a spin on Lap 100, he surged forward on new tires and finished third behind Ty Gibbs and Ryan Blaney in Stage 2.

Bowman had come to Bristol 35 points down, but with the eight points he collected in the second stage, he moved to 11 points behind Ross Chastain for the final transfer spot into the Round of 12 for the start of the final stage.

Chastain recovered a lost lap and finished 19th, preserving his berth in the Round of 12, but Cindric had a close call when his right-front wheel well started spewing flames on Lap 457. Cindric lost five laps on pit road, as Bowman closed with a point of the transfer spot, but the gap widened in the closing laps.

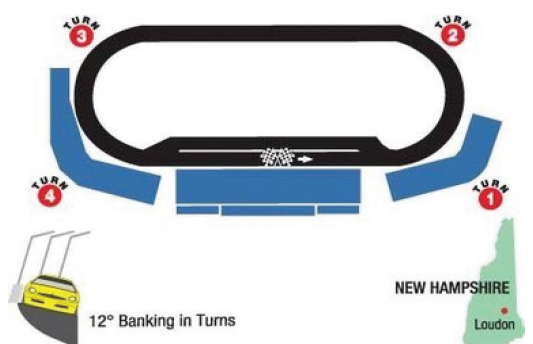
Chase Elliott crashed on Lap 311 after contact with John Hunter Nemechek's Toyota and finished 38th, but the Hendrick driver had enough of a cushion to move on to the Round of 12.

Other drivers advancing to the next Playoff round on points were Blaney, William Byron, Kyle Larson, Bubba Wallace, Tyler Reddick and Logano.

**TRUCKS BURNOUT ALERT!** Layne Riggs celebrates after winning Thursday's UNOH 200 at Bristol Motor Speedway. J. Bachman/Getty



## CUP PLAYOFFS: 4TH RACE MOBIL 1 301



**New Hampshire Motor Speedway**  
2 p.m. ET Sunday, USA

### DETAILS

The speedway, which opened in 1990, is located about one hour north of Boston in Loudon, N.H.

• Oval speedway with asphalt and granite surface.

• Length: 1.058 mi (1.703 km).

• Banking: Turns-variable banking at 2-7 degrees (12% grade); straightaways-1 degree banking.

• Site of the first single-day sporting event in New England to draw over 100,000 guests (July 9, 2000, Cup Series).

## CUP PLAYOFFS 12

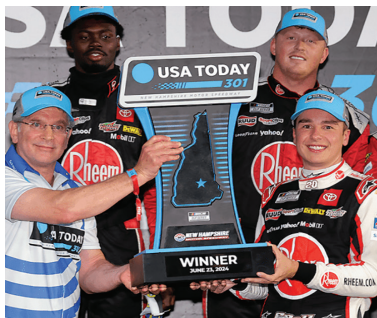
In a topsy-turvy Saturday night showdown, four drivers were cut from championship eligibility in the first elimination of the 2025 NASCAR Cup Series Playoffs.

Christopher Bell survived a 500-lap gauntlet with significant tire wear to win Saturday's Bass Pro Shops Night Race at Bristol Motor Speedway. Bell was among the dozen drivers advancing to the Playoffs' Round of 12, the next three-race portion of the 10-race postseason.

The clock ran out on the title hopes of Alex Bowman, Austin Dillon, Shane van Gisbergen and Josh Berry. All four entered the Round of 16 below the provisional elimination line.

Joe Gibbs Racing teammates Chase Briscoe and Denny Hamlin had already advanced with victories earlier in the round; Briscoe won the playoff opener at Darlington Raceway and Hamlin prevailed at WWT Raceway.

Three more drivers locked up their spots in the next round with mid-race clinchers at Bristol. Kyle Larson and Bubba Wallace advanced at the end of Stage 1. Ryan Blaney sealed a Round of 12 berth after the second stage.



Christopher Bell made it to Victory Lane in the regular season last year at New Hampshire. GETTY

## 2025 CUP SERIES STANDINGS

*Playoff 12 + 18 as of September 13*

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Denny Hamlin #11	3034	16 Josh Berry #21	2010
2 Kyle Larson #5	3032	17 Chris Buescher #17	745
3 William Byron #24	3032	18 Ryan Preece #60	683
4 Christopher Bell #20	3028	19 Ty Gibbs #54	631
5 Ryan Blaney #12	3027	20 Brad Keselowski #6	611
6 Chase Briscoe #19	3018	21 Kyle Busch #8	606
7 Chase Elliott #9	3013	22 J.H. Nemechek #42	582
8 Bubba Wallace #23	3009	23 Erik Jones #43	579
9 Austin Cindric #2	3008	24 Carson Hocevar #77	577
10 Ross Chastain #1	3007	25 AJ Allmendinger #16	574
11 Joey Logano #22	3007	26 Michael McDowell #71	557
12 Tyler Reddick #45	3006	27 Zane Smith #38	519
13 Alex Bowman #48	2056	28 Daniel Suárez #99	483
14 Austin Dillon #3	2052	29 Ricky Stenhouse #47	476
15 S. v. Gisbergen #88	2050	30 Justin Haley #7	472

## 2025 XFINITY SERIES STANDINGS

*Playoff 12 + 8 as of September 12*

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Connor Zilisch #88	2116	11 Austin Hill #21	2018
2 Justin Allgaier #7	2084	12 Sammy Smith #8	2010
3 Sam Mayer #41	2066	13 Christian Eckes #16	625
4 Carson Kvapil #1	2047	14 Jeb Burton #27	617
5 Harrison Burton #25	2040	15 Ryan Sieg #39	588
6 Brandon Jones #20	2039	16 Dean Thompson #26	587
7 Sheldon Creed #00	2038	17 William Sawalich #18	547
8 Taylor Gray #54	2034	18 Brennan Poole #44	543
9 Jesse Love #2	2031	19 Daniel Dye #10	531
10 Nicholas Sanchez #48	2031	20 Jeremy Clements #51	477

**NEXT RACE:** KANSAS LOTTERY 300, Kansas Speedway, 4 p.m. ET Saturday, Sept. 27, CW

## 2025 TRUCK SERIES STANDINGS

*Playoff 10 + 10 as of September 11*

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Corey Heim #31	2177	11 Ben Rhodes #99	558
2 Layne Riggs #34	2116	12 Gio Ruggiero #17	538
3 Daniel Hemric #19	2095	13 Tanner Gray #15	492
4 Ty Majeski #98	2090	14 Connor Mosack #81	443
5 Tyler Ankrum #18	2073	15 Matt Crafton #88	407
6 Grant Enfinger #9	2073	16 Stewart Friesen #52	397
7 Kaden Honeycutt #52	2062	17 A. Perez De Lara #44	396
8 Rajah Caruth #71	2058	18 Matt Mills #42	366
9 Jake Garcia #13	2044	19 Jack Wood #91	346
10 Chandler Smith #38	2034	20 Dawson Sutton #26	341

**NEXT RACE:** EJP 175, New Hampshire Motor Speedway, 4 p.m. ET Saturday, FS1

## BRISTOL WINNER QUOTE

"All night long, I don't know, old tires just really, really pushed up in the middle of the corners, so I was hoping that those guys (starting ahead of him) on old tires would push up, and they did. They did, and I was able to get by or get underneath them. It wasn't pretty there at the end, but we got her done."

— Christopher Bell, who outlasted the field to win Saturday's Bass Pro Shop Night Race



Christopher Bell after winning Saturday at Bristol Motor Speedway.

JARED C. TILTON/GETTY IMAGES

2024 DODGE HORNET R/Te AWD

DRIVE INTO Fall Event

Now Leasing Only

\$199

Only \$995 Out Of Pocket!

HUMES

CHRYSLER•DODGE•JEEP•RAM 814.796.2666

Rt. 19 & 97 WATERFORD • 9 MILES SOUTH OF MILLCREEK MALL

HOURS: MON & THURS 8:30AM-8:30PM  
TUES, WED & FRI 9:30AM-6:00PM • SAT 8:30AM-2:00PM

STOP IN TODAY!

\*PAYMENTS BASED ON STOCK #R0065. ON A 24-MONTH, 20,000 MILE LEASE. PA TAX, PLATES AND DOC FEE EXCLUDED. INCLUDES ALL FACTORY INCENTIVES, LEASE LOYALTY, MILITARY OR FIRST RESPONDER. TOTAL DUE AT LEASE INCEPTION: \$995. INCLUDES FIRST MONTH'S PAYMENT. BASED ON APPROVED CREDIT. OFFER GOOD TIL 9/30/25. IN-STOCK UNITS ONLY.