

RACING THIS WEEK

XFINITY RECAP

• **Saturday's** UNITED RENTALS 300, Daytona International Speedway



WINNER: JESSE LOVE

In a typically wild finish at Daytona International Speedway, Jesse Love won the United Rentals 300 season-opener in overtime – taking the white flag moments before a massive multi-car accident behind him brought out a caution officially ending the race.

Love emerged from his No. 2 Richard Childress Racing Chevrolet's roof hatch on the Daytona International Speedway infield to the cheers of his team celebrating the 20-year old Californian's second career win.

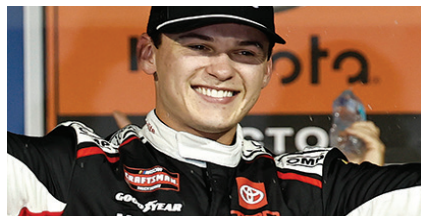
Love put his Chevrolet out front on the final three re-starts, exchanging the point briefly with Haas Factory Team's Sheldon Creed before taking the position for good with 18 laps remaining and holding off the Haas drivers Sam Mayer and Creed. Rookies Carson Kvapil and Taylor Gray were just behind rounding out the top-five.

As Love indicated, for most of the early race, it looked as if his teammate, three-time defending race winner Austin Hill, was going to turn in an incredible fourth straight win in the season-opener. He won both Stage 1 and 2 and led 56 of the opening 82 laps – the most laps out front on the night. Together Love and Hill led all but 40 of the race's 126 laps. Hill had engine issues shortly after the second stage.

Harrison Burton finished sixth in his return to fulltime Xfinity Series racing. Jordan Anderson, Dean Thompson, Jeremy Clements and Patrick Emerling rounded out the top-10.

TRUCKS RECAP

• **Friday's** FRESH FROM FLORIDA 250, Daytona International Speedway



WINNER: COREY HEIM

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — When the caution flag flew on the final lap of Friday night's Fresh from Florida 250 at Daytona, Corey Heim thought he had finished second in the season opener.

Roughly an hour later, Heim was declared the winner of the superspeedway race after the No. 75 Chevrolet of apparent winner Parker Kligerman was disqualified when its ride height was measured as too low.

"Nothing short of crazy there the last 20 laps," Heim said. "Honestly, pretty impressed with everyone that we kept it straight for as long as we did. They piled it up a little bit on the last lap. Definitely was out of control there at the end, being three-wide middle on old tires, being free."

Reigning champion Ty Majeski was third, followed by Grant Enfinger. Chandler Smith led a race-high 38 laps but was shuffled back in the late going and finished sixth behind Justin Haley.

Actor-turned-full-time driver Frankie Muniz posted a career-best 10th-place finish in his fifth Truck Series start.

Behind Smith, Daniel Hemric, Jason White, William Sawalich and Muniz completed the top 10. Cup Series driver Michael McDowell finished 26th in his first Truck Series start since 2009.

DAYTONA 500

William Byron crossed the finish line 0.113 seconds ahead of runner-up Tyler Reddick in overtime, becoming the first driver since Denny Hamlin in 2019-20 to win the Great American Race in consecutive years.



William Byron, driver of the #24 Axalta Chevrolet takes the checkered flag to win the Cup Series Daytona 500 at Daytona International Speedway on Sunday. (Sean Gardner/Getty Images)

Daytona chaos no problem for back-to-back Byron

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. – Like Houdini making an unlikely escape from a straitjacket, William Byrom trusted his instincts and emerged from a smoky, last-lap wreck on the backstretch at Daytona International Speedway to win the Daytona 500 for the second straight time.

On Sunday night, after a long rain delay and a Presidential visit, Byron took full advantage when contact from Cole Custer turned three-time Daytona 500 winner Denny Hamlin at the front the field and started a wreck that gave Byron the opportunity he needed.

When Byron crossed the finish line 0.113 seconds ahead of runner-up Tyler Reddick in overtime, he became the first driver since Hamlin in 2019 and 2020 to win the Great American Race in consecutive years.

"Yeah, obviously some good fortune, but just trusted my instincts on the last lap there," Byron said after climbing from his car. "I felt like they were getting squirrely on the bottom, and I was honestly going to go third (top) lane regardless, because I was probably sixth coming down the back. Just obviously fortunate that it worked out in our favor. But just really proud of this team. Worked super hard all week and had an amazing car. Just had a really hard time with the fuel saving and kind of staying towards the front."

Last season, Byron claimed all three of his Cup Series victories in the first 11 races. This year, after another Daytona win, he plans to sustain the momentum.

"It's an amazing race, and obviously a lot of crazy racing out there tonight and just a lot of pushing and shoving," said Byron, who picked up his third victory at the 2.5-mile superspeedway and the 14th of his career.

The wreck on the second lap of overtime frustrated both Hamlin, who was late to the lead and 2022 Daytona 500 winner Austin Cindric, who led a race-high 59 laps and combined with Team Penske teammates Joey Logano and Ryan Blaney to lead 125 of 202.

"Frustration—you're taking the white as the leader," said Cindric, who qualified on the front row and won Thursday's second Duel at Daytona race. "I felt like I executed all the restarts the right way and really that whole third stage. I didn't get wrecked out of the lead this time, so that was cool, but it still doesn't make it feel any better."

"Obviously, I don't even know where we finished, but it was still a decent points weekend and an incredible showing by our team for the entirety of Speedweeks. It's just a shame we couldn't get this Discount Tire Ford Mustang in Victory Lane."

Hamlin had just pulled ahead of Cindric



on the backstretch when Custer made a move to the outside and then steered down the track toward Hamlin's No. 11 Toyota, triggering the crash.

Legacy Motor Club owner and part-time driver Jimmie Johnson finished third in his best result since 2020 at Dover. Pole winner Chase Briscoe was fourth and John Hunter Nemechek fifth, giving Legacy two drivers in the top five.

Alex Bowman, Blaney, Cindric, Justin Allgaier (in JR Motorsports first Cup race) and Chris Buescher completed the top 10.

The race was just over four laps from completion in regulation when a bump from Custer turned Christopher Bell hard into the outside wall on Lap 196. Bell's Toyota bounced off the SAFER barrier and collected the Ford of Ryan Preece, whose car got airborne and landed on its roof before finishing upright.

That wreck, which involved 10 cars, forced the race to overtime. An earlier melee on Lap 186, triggered by contact between Logano and Ricky Stenhouse Jr., changed the complexion of the race—eliminating Logano, Blaney, Kyle Busch, Chase Elliott, Brad Keselowski and Noah Gragson from contention for the win.

The 67th running of the Great America Race started in short bursts. With President Donald Trump in attendance and the grandstands packed with fans—reflective of a 10th straight sellout—drivers ran just nine green-flag laps from the start before rain interrupted the proceedings.

After a red-flag period that lasted 3 hours, 9 minutes, 59 seconds, drivers took to the track for a second time and ran another 12 laps under caution before a rainstorm halted the race for another 20 minutes, 29 seconds.

With Logano in the lead, the Daytona 500 resumed on Lap 24 and ran without incident until Lap 63 when the bottom lane checked up, and Zane Smith turned Hamlin's Toyota on the backstretch.

Smith's Ford slid up the track into the Ford of Josh Berry, seriously damaging that car. Smith took his car to the garage for attempted repairs, while Hamlin was able to continue without losing a lap.

Logano won the first stage under caution, but because of a problem with debris in the throttle body of his No. 22 Ford on the subsequent restart on Lap 71, Logano stacked up the top lane and ignited a seven-car melee in Turn 1. The accident eliminated the cars of Martin Truex Jr., Helio Castroneves and Ross Chastain.

Intense three-wide action throughout the race produced 56 lead changes among 15 drivers. Byron led five times for a total of 10 laps. There were eight cautions for 47 laps.

TRUCKS BONUS PIC: Frankie Muniz, driver of the #33 The Electric State Ford, looks on during qualifying for Friday's Fresh from Florida 250 at Daytona. He finished 10th. Mike Ehrmann/Getty



NEXT RACE: AMBETTER HEALTH 400



Atlanta Motor Speedway
3 p.m. ET Sunday, FOX

- 1.54-mile race track in Hampton, Georgia, 20 miles south of Atlanta.
- Length: 1.54 mi (2.48 km)
- Banking: Turns: 28°; Straights: 5°
- Capacity: 71,000-125,000 (depending on configuration)
- Owner: Speedway Motorsports
- Opened: July 31, 1960

THE AMS STORY

Competitors started fielding superspeedway cars for NASCAR races in Atlanta with 2022's Folds of Honor QuikTrip 500, won by William Byron. The combination of superspeedway-spec cars and Atlanta's revamped, steeper-banked track yielded tighter, more intense racing.

Few who saw Atlanta Motor Speedway in its infancy would recognize the track today, as it's a far cry from the structure planned in 1958. When the 1.5-mile track, then called Atlanta International Raceway, made its debut on July 31, 1960, it became the seventh superspeedway, a paved facility of one mile or more, to play host to a Cup race. Only three of the original seven; Darlington, Daytona and Charlotte, are still in operation.

With just the Weaver Grandstand and wooden bleachers on the backstretch, fans would bring blankets and sit on the dirt bank.

Bruce Smith changed all that when he purchased Atlanta International Raceway in 1990 and renamed the facility Atlanta Motor Speedway. A year later, the addition of the East Turn Grandstand expanded the seating capacity by 25,000, and the 30 suites that rimmed the top gave new meaning to "luxurious."

Atlanta Motor Speedway has undergone massive expansion and dramatically increased its menu, hosting everything from the Xfinity and Truck Series, drag racing, legends and Bandolero Racing as well as car shows, concerts and business conventions.



Daniel Suarez partied topside after winning last year at Atlanta. (Getty)

2025 CUP SERIES STANDINGS

Top 30 as of Feb. 16

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 R. Blaney Ford	51	16 T. Gibbs Toyota	21
2 W. Byron Chevrolet	50	17 J. Logano Ford	21
3 A. Cindric Ford	48	18 R. Herbst Toyota	20
4 A. Bowman Chevrolet	42	19 C. LaJoie Ford	20
5 C. Buescher Ford	40	20 D. Hamlin Toyota	20
6 E. Jones Toyota	40	21 B. Keselowski Ford	20
7 J. Johnson Toyota	34	22 T. Gilliland Ford	20
8 J. Nemechek Toyota	34	23 D. Wallace Jr. Toyota	20
9 C. Briscoe Toyota	33	24 J. Haley Chevrolet	18
10 C. Elliott Chevrolet	33	25 A. Dillon Chevrolet	18
11 T. Dillon Chevrolet	31	26 K. Larson Chevrolet	17
12 D. Suárez Chevrolet	29	27 C. Custer Ford	16
13 J. Allgaier Chevrolet	28	28 C. Bell Toyota	13
14 M. McDowell Chevrolet	27	29 C. Ware Ford	12
15 R. Stenhouse Chevrolet	26	30 N. Gragson Ford	9

2025 XFINITY SERIES STANDINGS

Top 20 as of Feb. 15

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Sheldon Creed #00	51	11 Jeremy Clements #51	29
2 Jesse Love #2	42	12 Patrick Emerling	27
3 Dean Thompson #26	38	13 Ryan Sieg #39	27
4 Taylor Gray #54	37	14 Matt DiBenedetto #99	26
5 Sam Mayer #41	35	15 Christian Eckes #16	25
6 Carson Kvapil #1	33	16 Caesar Bacarella #45	24
7 Jeb Burton #27	33	17 Austin Hill #21	24
8 Harrison Burton #25	32	18 Josh Billicki #91	23
9 Jordan Anderson #32	30	19 Anthony Alfredo #42	23
10 Justin Allgaier #7	30	20 Joey Gase #53	22

NEXT RACE: BENNETT TRANSPORTATION & LOGISTICS 250, Atlanta, 5 p.m. ET Saturday, CW

2025 TRUCK SERIES STANDINGS

Top 20 as of Feb. 14

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Corey Heim #11	49	11 Timmy Hill #56	26
2 Ty Majeski #98	46	12 Jake Garcia #13	25
3 Chandler Smith #38	45	13 Layne Riggs #38	25
4 Grant Enfinger #9	41	14 Andres Perez De Lara #77	25
5 Daniel Hemric #19	37	15 Norm Benning #6	21
6 Giovanni Ruggiero #17	36	16 Tanner Gray #15	20
7 Ben Rhodes #99	36	17 Matt Crafton #88	20
8 Jason M. White #22	29	18 Josh Reaume #2	19
9 Johnny Sauter #66	29	19 Stewart Friesen #52	19
10 Frankie Muniz #33	27	20 Jack Wood #91	19

NEXT RACE: FR8 208, Atlanta Motor Speedway, 2 p.m. ET Saturday, FS1

DAYTONA WINNER QUOTE

"Just obviously fortunate that it worked out in our favor. But just really proud of this team. Worked super hard all week and had an amazing car. Just had a really hard time with the fuel saving and kind of staying towards the front. Crazy. I can't honestly believe that. But we're here. So proud of it."
- William Byron, who emerged from late chaos to take Sunday's rain-delayed Daytona 500



William Byron in Victory Lane Sunday at Daytona.

CHRIS GRAYTHEN/GETTY IMAGES

Soup & Sandwich

COMBO

IT'S SOUP SEASON Y'ALL!

Warm up with a 12 oz. cup of Creamy Broccoli Cheddar Soup for \$5.29. Make it a combo and add your choice of a Grilled Cheese or Grilled Ham and Cheese today. Get both for only \$7.99!



Country Fair