

RACING THIS WEEK

BONUS CLASH
PIC: A view of pre-race fireworks for Wednesday's Cook Out Clash at Bowman Gray Stadium.
 J. Bachman/Getty



TRUCKS NOTES Things buzzing for Daytona

The NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series 2026 season opener at Daytona has a different buzz to it.

A new manufacturer will debut. Grassroots superstars are earning their first major national series opportunities. NASCAR Cup Series aces line the field. A Hall of Famer makes his highly anticipated return.

Is it possible that Friday's Fresh From Florida 250 (7:30 p.m. ET, FS1) features the most stacked field ever in over 30 years of Trucks competition?

Familiar faces in different places: Many drivers return to their seats occupied during 2025, but a few from a year ago shift into new rides.

Kaden Honeycutt takes over the No. 11 Tricon Garage Toyota, which was piloted by Corey Heim the last three years. Heim shifts into a part-time ride at the Cup Series level with 23XI Racing, but his departure leaves a void in the Trucks as he drove to a record 12 victories and the championship. Honeycutt ran the full 2025 schedule with three different teams and took over Halmar Friesen Racing's No. 52 entry in August after a dirt modified injury to Stewart Friesen. The 22-year-old from Texas led the team to the Championship 4 and ultimately finished third in driver's points. Friesen expects to return to race action for the first time at Daytona.

Ty Majeski pivots to ThorSport Racing's No. 88 Ford after three-time champ Matt Crafton stepped away from full-time racing. Majeski spent three seasons in the No. 98 truck and earned the 2024 championship by winning three races. Jake Garcia moves over to the No. 98 machine, and rookie Cole Butcher will wheel the No. 13 Ford for all 25 races.

Welcome back, Ram: For the first time since 2013, Ram is competing in NASCAR, partnering with Kaulig Racing for five entries in 2026. Of those five, four are occupied by full-time drivers: Daniel Dye in the No. 10; Brenden "Butterbean" Queen in the No. 12; Mini Tyrrell in the No. 14; and Justin Haley in the No. 16.

Kaulig's fifth entry, the No. 25 Ram, is under the Free Agent Driver Program, where the team and manufacturer land a rotating cast of drivers from all forms of motorsports. Hall of Famer and three-time Cup Series champion Tony Stewart will drive at Daytona, making his first NASCAR start in nearly 10 years since his retirement at the end of the 2016 season.

Other big-name drivers in the field. Legacy Motor Club's John Hunter Nemechek, a 13-time Truck Series winner, will drive the No. 62 Toyota for Halmar. Spire Motorsports drivers Michael McDowell and Carson Hocevar will pilot a pair of Silverados for the team at Daytona. McDowell is the 2021 Daytona 500 champion, and Hocevar, fresh off a contract extension into the next decade, commences a 13-race slate in 2026. Ricky Stenhouse Jr., another former Daytona 500 winner, will make his series debut in Niece Motorsports' No. 45 Chevrolet.

Corey LaJoie will enter the event with Henderson Motorsports. X Games legend Travis Pastrana will drive Niece Motorsports' No. 42 Chevrolet, and internet personality Cleetus McFarland (aka Garrett Mitchell) will attempt the race in the No. 4 Chevrolet.

Toni Breidinger and Rackley WAR will team up for a partial schedule in 2026, and the 26-year-old California native will begin that slate in Daytona as pilot of the No. 27 Chevrolet.

Daytona will set the tone for a highly anticipated Truck Series season.

COOK OUT CLASH

On wet-weather tires, on a track peppered with a wintry mix, Preece navigated the glazed asphalt at the historic Bowman Gray quarter-mile track to win the delayed "preseason" opener in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.



Winner Ryan Preece, driver of the #60 Kroger/Coca-Cola Ford, and Joey Logano, driver of the #22 Shell Pennzoil Ford, race during the Cook Out Clash at Bowman Gray Stadium in Winston Salem, North Carolina on Wednesday. (Jonathan Bachman/Getty)

Clash run leads to sleet victory for Ryan Preece

Neither rain nor sleet nor snow nor gloom of night could keep Ryan Preece from his appointed rounds at Bowman Gray Stadium.

On wet-weather tires, on a track peppered with a wintry mix during the 100-lap break, Preece navigated the glazed asphalt at the historic quarter-mile track to win the second Cook Out Clash staged in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Historically heavy snow had already forced postponement of the season-opening NASCAR Cup Series exhibition race twice, but for the 35-year-old driver from Berlin, Connecticut, the victory on Wednesday night was well worth the wait.

"I don't even know what to say," said Preece, tears in his eyes as he climbed from his car to the cheers of hardy fans who had braved the rain and bone-chilling temperatures. "To be honest with you, it's been a [freaking] long road.

"It's The Clash, but, man, it's been years and years of grinding. ... Two years ago, I didn't think I was going to have a job. I thought I was going back to Connecticut."

Preece, however, secured a ride in the No. 60 RFK Racing Ford after Stewart-Haas Racing closed its doors at the end of the 2024 season.

On Wednesday night, he led the final 45 laps after taking the top spot on Lap 156, muscling his way past Shane van Gisbergen after a restart four laps earlier.

In a rock 'em, sock 'em free-for-all that featured a Clash-record 17 cautions, Preece pulled away after the final restart on Lap 182 of 200 to beat runner-up William Byron to the finish line by 1.752 seconds.

Preece is the third driver to win The Clash before winning a NASCAR Cup Series points race, joining NASCAR Hall of Famer Jeff Gordon and Denny Hamlin in that distinction.

The modified star, who started 18th and worked his way forward before and after the halfway break, extended one streak and broke another. He is the ninth straight different driver to win The Clash, but he's the first to win from outside the first two rows since The Clash went to a quarter-mile format at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum in 2022.

Ryan Blaney ran third, followed by

Daniel Suárez and Denny Hamlin. Chase Briscoe, Austin Dillon, Chris Buescher, Ross Chastain and Alex Bowman completed the top 10.

Pole winner and reigning Cup champion Kyle Larson led a race-high 67 laps to Preece's 46, but Larson's race fell apart after rain and sleet covered the track, leading to a 16th-place result after the change from slick tires to wet-weather rubber.

For the second straight year, Josh Berry raced into the main event from the Last Chance Qualifier. After passing AJ Allmendinger for the top spot on Lap 18 of 75, Berry led the rest of the way in the No. 21 Wood Brothers Ford and finished 7.419 seconds clear of runner-up Austin Cindric.

The field for The Clash wasn't set, however, until AJ Allmendinger shoved Cindric past Corey LaJoie in the final corner, allowing Cindric to secure the second of two spots available through the LCQ.

From Lap 62 on, Cindric and LaJoie had battled for the runner-up position, with Cindric securing the inside position for the final four circuits.

"You wanted to be on the inside, obviously, but you don't want to pass the guy, 'cause then he has the opportunity to get back to you," said LaJoie, who was subbing for injured driver and team co-owner Brad Keselowski in the No. 6 Roush Fenway Keselowski Ford.

"It was exciting. It was fun to be in the fight. I hadn't been in a fight like that in a long time."

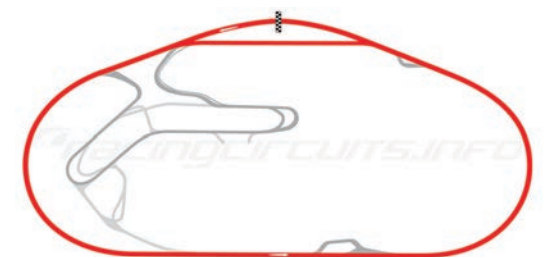
Allmendinger, who finished fourth behind LaJoie, was in the mix until the finish.

"I had the plan set up perfect," said Allmendinger, who intended to move both Cindric and LaJoie up the track on the final lap. "I just didn't execute. I went down in there to kind of shove 'em both out of the way, and we didn't have enough grip to throttle back up and beat 'em to the line."

Berry started 21st in the Clash and finished 12th. Cindric started 22nd and ran 21st after a litany of issues.

Bowman started last (23rd) in The Clash field on a provisional as the highest finisher in the 2025 standings not already in the field through qualifying or the LCQ.

NEXT RACE: 2026 POINTS OPENER DAYTONA 500



Daytona International Speedway
 2:30 p.m. ET Sunday, FOX

DETAILS

• Daytona International Speedway is 2.5 miles (4 km) long and a 500-mile race that requires 200 laps to complete.

• The Daytona 500 is the iconic 500-mile Cup Series season-opener held annually at Daytona International Speedway in Daytona Beach, Fla.

• Considered the most prestigious and important race in NASCAR, the Daytona has opened the NASCAR season every February since 1982. It is one of two Cup Series races held yearly at Daytona, with the second – a 400-mile event – as the last race of the 2025 regular-season.

• Richard Petty owns a series-best seven Daytona 500 wins, followed by Cale Yarborough with four.

• Petty Enterprises is the team with most Daytona 500 wins with 9 wins total.

• Denny Hamlin is the only active driver with multiple wins (3) in the "Great American Race."

• William Byron won the 67th running of the Daytona 500 in 2025.

• **Lee Petty**, driver of the No. 42 Oldsmobile, won the first Daytona 500 in 1959. Petty was not awarded the trophy until three days later after officials thought Johnny Beauchamp was the winner.



2025 CUP SERIES FINALS STANDINGS

Champion 1 + 29 as of November 2

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Kyle Larson #5	5034	16 Josh Berry #21	2150
2 Denny Hamlin #11	5031	17 Chris Buescher #17	889
3 Chase Briscoe #19	5019	18 Ryan Preece #60	861
4 William Byron #24	5004	19 Ty Gibbs #54	783
5 Christopher Bell #20	2403	20 Brad Keselowski #6	762
6 Ryan Blaney #12	2373	21 Kyle Busch #8	737
7 Joey Logano #22	2330	22 Michael McDowell #71	734
8 Chase Elliott #9	2310	23 Carson Hocevar #77	702
9 Tyler Reddick #45	2309	24 Erik Jones #43	665
10 Ross Chastain #1	2272	25 J. H. Nemechek #42	664
11 Bubba Wallace #23	2256	26 AJ Allmendinger #16	649
12 S. v. Gisbergen #88	2192	27 Todd Gilliland #34	616
13 Alex Bowman #48	2192	28 Zane Smith #38	615
14 Austin Cindric #2	2156	29 Daniel Suárez #99	611
15 Austin Dillon #3	2152	30 Ricky Stenhouse #47	562

2025 XFINITY FINAL STANDINGS

Champion 1 + 19 as of November 1

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Jesse Love #2	4040	11 Nicholas Sanchez #48	2198
2 Connor Zilisch #88	4034	12 Harrison Burton #25	2163
3 Justin Allgaier #7	4032	13 Christian Eckes #16	784
4 Carson Kvapil #1	4024	14 Jeb Burton #27	719
5 Brandon Jones #20	2240	15 Ryan Sieg #41	691
6 Austin Hill #21	2230	16 Dean Thompson #26	690
7 Taylor Gray #54	2228	17 Aric Almirola #19	652
8 Sammy Smith #8	2222	18 William Sawalich #18	636
9 Sheldon Creed #00	2218	19 Brennan Poole #44	608
10 Sam Mayer #41	2204	20 Daniel Dye #10	604

NEXT RACE: UNITED RENTALS 300, Daytona International, Saturday, CW

2025 TRUCKS FINAL STANDINGS

Champion 1 + 19 as of October 1

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Corey Heim #11	4040	11 Gio Ruggiero #17	703
2 Ty Majeski #98	4035	12 Ben Rhodes #99	632
3 Kaden Honeycutt #52	4034	13 Tanner Gray #15	599
4 Tyler Ankrum #18	4023	14 Connor Mosack #81	515
5 Layne Riggs #34	2297	15 Matt Crafton #88	494
6 Rajah Caruth #71	2297	16 A. Perez De Lara #44	472
7 Grant Enfinger #9	2198	17 Matt Mills #42	456
8 Chandler Smith #38	2179	18 Dawson Sutton #26	447
9 Daniel Hemric #19	2177	19 Jack Wood #91	443
10 Jake Garcia #13	2148	20 Stewart Friesen #52	397

NEXT RACE: SEASON OPENER, Daytona International Speedway, Friday, FS1

CLASH WINNER QUOTE

"I don't even know what to say. To be honest with you, it's been a [freaking] long road. It's The Clash, but, man, it's been years and years of grinding. ... Two years ago, I didn't think I was going to have a job. I thought I was going back to Connecticut."

— Ryan Preece, who battled past Shane van Gisbergen to grab the Clash win mid-week



Ryan Preece and crew chief Derrick Finley in Victory Lane Wednesday at Bowman Gray.

JONATHAN BACHMAN/GETTY IMAGES

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