

RACING THIS WEEK

KYLE BUSCH 1985-2026: A 2025 portrait of Kyle Busch, who died Thursday, May 21, after a sudden illness. **Jared C. Tilton/Getty**



O'REILLY RECAP

• **Saturday's** CHARBROIL 300, Charlotte Motor Speedway



WINNER: ROSS CHASTAIN

Ross Chastain drove through a succession of challenges — including a patch of oil and a brush with the outside wall — to win Saturday night's rain-shortened Charbroil 300 at Charlotte.

The victory was Chastain's first in the O'Reilly Auto Parts Series since 2019, his first at Charlotte and the third of his career. The race was stopped for rain for the second time after Chastain crossed the finish line to win the second stage on Lap 90.

Chastain's thoughts quickly turned to the absence of champion driver Kyle Busch, who on Thursday lost his life to a sudden illness at age 41.

"This weekend, it's just incredible trying to grasp losing Kyle," Chastain, who bowed in Victory Lane in honor of Busch (above), said. "I don't understand how he's not here racing. I don't grasp it mentally or spiritually."

Defending O'Reilly Series champion Jesse Love, who drives for Richard Childress Racing — as did Busch in the Cup Series — was second when the race was called.

"If this week taught us anything, it's that all this doesn't matter as much as we think it does," Love said. "As much as I'm angry and confused and upset, I also realized there's a lot of hurt people right now."

Austin Hill, Love's RCR teammate, finished third, followed by William Sawalich and Corey Day.

TRUCKS RECAP

• **Sunday's** NORTH CAROLINA EDUCATION LOTTERY 200, Charlotte



WINNER: LAYNE RIGGS

Layne Riggs made clear what was on his mind as he took the checkered flag under caution to win Sunday's North Carolina Education Lottery 200 at Charlotte Motor Speedway.

"Did it for Kyle, man, did it for Kyle," Riggs said in a dedication to two-time NASCAR Cup Series champion Kyle Busch, who lost his life to a sudden illness Thursday, May 21, at age 41.

In a race thrice delayed by rain from its scheduled Friday night start and run under NASCAR's adverse conditions provision with a noon time limit, Riggs completed 110 of a scheduled 134 laps before the clock ran out.

He earned his second victory of the season, his first at Charlotte and the seventh of his career.

After a celebratory burnout in the tri-oval, Riggs, who led a race-high 52 laps and won the second stage, collected the checkered flag, exited his No. 34 Front Row Motorsports Ford and performed a deep bow to the crowd in the grandstand—emulating Busch's signature victory move.

"Our hearts are really heavy this weekend," he said after giving Ford its first Trucks win on a 1.5-mile since Ben Rhodes won at Charlotte in 2023.

COCA-COLA 600

Daniel Suárez scored an emotional, weather-shortened victory Sunday night as the NASCAR Cup Series raced and honored the memory of Kyle Busch at Charlotte Motor Speedway.



Above: NASCAR Hall of Famer and RCR team owner, Richard Childress, Samantha Busch (wife) Brexton Busch (son) and NASCAR Chief Executive Officer Steve O'Donnell stand on the grid during the remembrance ceremony for Kyle Busch, who passed away suddenly at the age of 41, prior to the Cup Series Coca-Cola 600 at Charlotte Motor Speedway on Sunday. Top: Race winner Daniel Suárez wears Kyle Busch gear as he talks with reporters before the race. (Jonathan Bachman/Getty)

Emotional victory for Suarez at Charlotte

At the drivers' meeting before Sunday's Coca-Cola 600 at Charlotte Motor Speedway, NASCAR Senior Vice President of Competition Elton Sawyer had some parting words for the NASCAR Cup Series drivers.

"Let's put on a race Kyle would be proud of," Sawyer said, referring to two-time series champion and certain NASCAR Hall of Famer Kyle Busch, who passed away Thursday after a sudden, brief illness.

The drivers took those words seriously and put on a quality show that ended improbably, with Daniel Suarez claiming the third victory of his career when NASCAR called the event 27 laps short of its scheduled finish after a rainstorm drenched the track.

The win was especially poignant for Suarez, who received repeated encouragement and advice from Busch after arriving from his native Mexico and launching his NASCAR career.

"It really means a lot," Suarez said of the victory. "It really means a lot. I've been saying for years this is my favorite race of the year. This is most of the time the only race (they) get to come."

"It's been a very tough week. Kyle, he was special, man. This one is for Kyle. For Kyle, for (wife) Samantha, for (son) Brexton, for (daughter) Lennix, all his family ... Definitely, this one has a special flavor because of Kyle. This win is for him. If it wasn't for Kyle, I wasn't going to be an Xfinity champion. I wasn't going to have my shot in the Cup series. To win this race for him is unbelievable."

Suarez's crew chief Ryan Sparks made the call that won the race during pit stops under caution for lightning in the area on Lap 356. Taking two right-side tires only, Suarez gained 13 positions on pit road and led the field to green on lap 360.

Rain slowed the race on Lap 361, with Suarez barely in the lead over Christopher Bell and Denny Hamlin. With a strong push from fellow Chevrolet driver Kyle Larson, Suarez pulled ahead after the Lap 370 resumption and held the lead until the rains started in earnest three laps later.

For the final restart, Suarez lined up on the inside lane with Bell top his outside. The

push from Larson helped Suarez clear Bell's Toyota almost immediately.

"I knew after the first restart, I knew he couldn't get clear," said Bell, who won a rain-shortened Coke 600 two years ago. "I was going to have to stay beside him. I couldn't stay beside him. He cleared me. Once he cleared me, I knew it was going to be a really tough pass with it being a short run."

"If we would have had all the laps, he was going to block like hell and probably ... yeah, he did a good job blocking—but he won the race."

Suarez, who recovered from two unscheduled green-flag pit stops for tire vibrations, led once for the final 17 laps in scoring his first victory of the season and his first in the No. 7 Spire Motorsports Chevrolet.

Bell finished second and Hamlin third, with polesitter and series leader Tyler Reddick and Larson completing the top five.

Reddick led a race-high 119 laps, followed by Hamlin with 75 and Bell with 44. All told, there were 32 lead changes among 13 drivers on the racy 1.5-mile intermediate speedway and 12 cautions for 75 laps.

Reddick leaves Charlotte with a 122-point series lead over Hamlin in second.

The event got emotional before it started. Busch's widow, Samantha, and son Brexton and daughter Lennix made their first public appearance since Busch's death on Thursday.

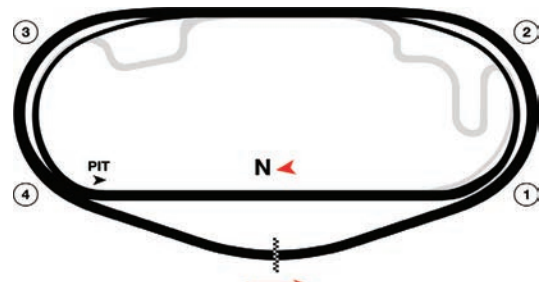
Before the cars fired their engines, NASCAR CEO Steve O'Donnell gave Samantha heartfelt assurances that she and her children would always be part of the NASCAR family.

On a day and in a race that traditionally has made a point of recognizing fallen soldiers on Memorial Day Weekend, the special remembrance was for Busch, who was so suddenly and unexpectedly taken from the NASCAR community.

Ty Gibbs ran a solid race and finished sixth, followed by Ryan Blaney, Joey Logano, William Byron and Zane Smith.

Katherine Legge was running at the finish of the Coca-Cola 600 in the second leg of her Indianapolis 500/Charlotte double. An early crash took Legge out of the race at Indy. After the commute to Charlotte, she finished 31st, 12 laps down in the 600.

NEXT: CRACKER BARREL 400



Nashville Superspeedway

7 p.m. ET Sunday, Prime

- **Location:** 4847-F McCreary Road, Lebanon, Tennessee
- **Owner:** Speedway Motorsports (since 2021)
- **Opened:** April 2001
- **Capacity:** 25,000
- **Course:** Tri-oval
- **Surface:** Concrete
- **Length:** 1.33 miles (2.140 km)
- **Turns:** 4
- **Banking:** Turns, 14°; Frontstretch, 9°; Backstretch, 6°

• **Of note:** It is one of three NASCAR tracks that features a concrete racing surface instead of the traditional asphalt; its sibling tracks in Dover, Delaware and Bristol, Tennessee, are the other two. Along with the main track, the track complex also features a 1.8 mile road course layout that uses parts of the main track along with an infield road course that is used to make a "roval."



Cars racing at an O'Reilly Auto Parts Series event at Nashville in 2008.



Ryan Blaney rocked out in Victory Lane after winning last year's Cracker Barrel 400. GETTY

2026 CUP SERIES STANDINGS

Top 30 as of May 24

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Tyler Reddick #45	620	16 Ryan Preece #60	303
2 Denny Hamlin #11	498	17 Austin Cindric #2	288
3 Ryan Blaney #12	446	18 Joey Logano #22	274
4 Ty Gibbs #54	425	19 AJ Allmendinger #16	254
5 Chase Elliott #9	423	20 Michael McDowell #71	248
6 Kyle Larson #5	386	21 Zane Smith #38	244
7 Chris Buescher #17	385	22 Erik Jones #43	244
8 Christopher Bell #20	361	23 Ross Chastain #1	238
9 Carson Hocevar #77	356	24 Austin Dillon #3	225
10 Daniel Suárez #7	350	25 Todd Gilliland #34	223
11 Brad Keselowski #6	343	26 Ricky Stenhouse Jr #47	222
12 William Byron #24	337	27 Kyle Busch #8	217
13 Bubba Wallace #23	328	28 Riley Herbst #35	202
14 S v Gisbergen #97	316	29 John H. Nemechek #42	200
15 Chase Briscoe #19	304	30 Noah Gragson #4	181

2026 O'REILLY AUTO PARTS STANDINGS

Top 20 as of May 23

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Justin Allgaier #7	696	11 Sam Mayer #41	376
2 Jesse Love #2	551	12 Taylor Gray #54	371
3 Corey Day #17	529	13 Rajah Caruth #88	369
4 Sheldon Creed #00	510	14 Ryan Sieg #39	356
5 Brandon Jones #20	480	15 Brent Crews #19	342
6 Austin Hill #21	466	16 Brennan Poole #44	293
7 Sammy Smith #8	453	17 Anthony Alfredo #96	266
8 Carson Kvatil #91	450	18 Dean Thompson #26	259
9 Parker Retzlaff #99	388	19 Jeremy Clements #51	241
10 William Sawalich #18	384	20 Jeb Burton #27	239

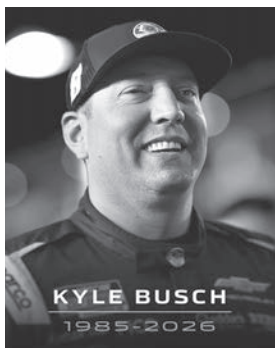
NEXT RACE: SPORTS ILLUSTRATED RESORTS 250, Nashville Superspeedway, 7:30 p.m. ET Saturday, CW

2026 CRAFTSMAN TRUCK STANDINGS

Top 20 as of May 24

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Kaden Honeycutt #11	393	11 Stewart Friesen #52	223
2 Layne Riggs #34	382	12 Justin Haley #16	215
3 Christian Eckes #91	321	13 Corey Heim #1	204
4 Gio Ruggiero #17	318	14 Brenden Queen #12	201
5 Chandler Smith #38	316	15 Tanner Gray #15	195
6 Ben Rhodes #99	282	16 Grant Engfinger #9	192
7 Ty Majeski #88	281	17 A. Perez De Lara #44	184
8 Jake Garcia #98	241	18 Dawson Sutton #26	165
9 Daniel Hemric #19	229	19 Mini Tyrell #14	141
10 Tyler Ankrum #18	224	20 Corey LaJoie #75	135

NEXT RACE: ALLEGIANCE 200, Nashville Superspeedway, 8 p.m. ET Friday, FS1



It's hard to fathom. On Friday, May 15, Kyle Busch did what Kyle Busch does best in a truck at Dover. Win. Less than a week later, on Thursday, May 21, Busch died after a sudden illness. Statement from the Busch Family, Richard Childress Racing and NASCAR: Our entire NASCAR family is heartbroken by the loss. A future Hall of Famer, Kyle was a rare talent, one who comes along once in a generation. He was fierce, he was passionate, he was immensely skilled and he cared deeply about the sport and fans. Throughout a career that spanned more than two decades, Kyle set records in national series wins, won championships at NASCAR's highest level and fostered the next generation of drivers as an owner in the Truck Series. His sharp wit and competitive spirit sparked a deep emotional connection with race fans of every age, creating the proud and loyal 'Rowdy Nation.' Our thoughts are with Samantha, Brexton and Lennix, Kyle and Samantha's parents, Kurt and all of Kyle's family, Richard and Judy Childress, everyone at Richard Childress Racing, his teammates, friends and fans. NASCAR lost a giant of the sport today, far too soon.

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