

# RACING THIS WEEK

## XFINITY RECAP

- Saturday's MARINE CORPS 250, Martinsville Speedway



### WINNER: AUSTIN HILL

The site that robbed Austin Hill of a spot in the Xfinity Championship 4 two years ago gave him a gift on Saturday.

Diving underneath a trio of wrecking cars in the final corner of overtime at Martinsville, Hill beat perennial bridesmaid Sheldon Creed to the finish line by 0.190 seconds to win Saturday's US Marine Corps 250, giving Richard Childress his 100th win in the series and earning a \$100,000 Dash 4 Cash bonus for the unlikely winner.

A rash of cautions peppered green-flag action in the final stage. The ending left 29th-place finisher Taylor Gray with thoughts of vengeance and 10th-place finisher Sammy Smith with an ostensible target on his back.

After the 14th caution for Matt DiBenedetto's spin in Turn 2 sent the race to overtime, Gray lined up behind Smith, the leader, and used his bumper to wrest the top spot from Smith—returning the favor from the previous restart on Lap 249 of 256.

Gray, seeking his first Xfinity win, held the lead until Turn 3 of the final lap, when Smith charged into the corner, spun Gray and knocked him into the outside wall.

Hill hit Justin Allgaier from behind, sent him crashing into Smith. Hill sneaked through on the bottom, bringing Creed with him, as Allgaier held on for third. Brennan Poole finished fourth after the melee, joining Hill, Creed and Allgaier as eligible contenders for the next Dash 4 Cash.

## TRUCKS RECAP

- Friday's BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB OF THE BLUE RIDGE 200, Martinsville



### WINNER: DANIEL HEMRIC

During the week before Friday night's Boys and Girls Club of the Blue Ridge 200 at Martinsville, Daniel Hemric practiced his back flip, the signature move he had been able to use just once in NASCAR national series competition—when he won the 2021 season finale at Phoenix to clinch the Xfinity championship.

Friday, he had a chance to perform the celebratory move once again, after capitalizing on the misfortunes of others—notably series leader Corey Heim—to win the first Truck Series race of his career.

Heim won the first two stages and led a race-high 149 of 200 laps, but contact with Kaden Honeycutt after a Lap 166 restart cut Heim's left-rear tire and sent him to pit road for tires.

Honeycutt inherited the lead, but on Lap 187, Ty Majeski broke loose under Honeycutt as the two drivers were battling, and both trucks hit the wall.

That put Tyler Ankrum, Hemric's McAnalley-Hilgemann teammate, at the front, but with four laps left, Hemric used his bumper to dive underneath Ankrum's truck, made the pass for the lead and pulled away to win by 0.544 seconds. Jake Garcia finished third, followed by Chandler Smith and Ben Rhodes. Heim rallied to finish sixth.

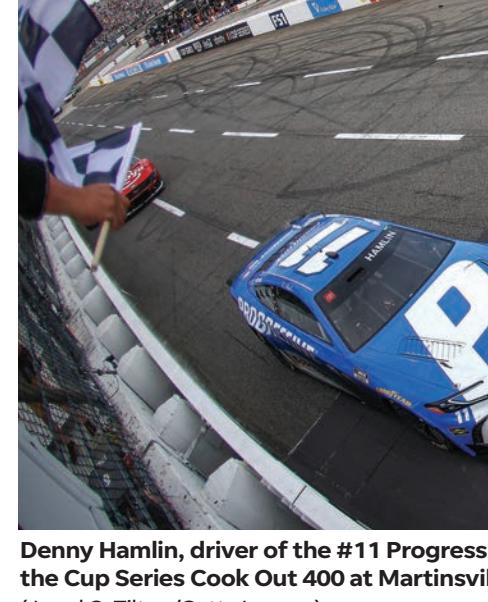
## MARTINSVILLE WINNER QUOTE

"It was just amazing. The car was great. It did everything I needed it to do. Just so happy to win with Chris Gayle, get 55... Obviously, back here in Martinsville where I spent so many years racing late models and whatnot—gosh, I love winning here."

- Denny Hamlin, who grabbed his first Cup win of the season in Sunday's Cook Out 400

## COOK OUT 400

Denny Hamlin pulled away toward the end of the final 75-lap green-flag run and beat Christopher Bell, his Joe Gibbs Racing teammate, to the finish line by 4.617 seconds. Sunday at Martinsville.



Denny Hamlin, driver of the #11 Progressive Toyota, takes the checkered flag to win the Cup Series Cook Out 400 at Martinsville Speedway on Sunday.

(Jared C. Tilton/Getty Images)

## Denny Hamlin's new approach? Dominate.

MARTINSVILLE, Va. — It didn't take Denny Hamlin long to find the recipe for success in Sunday's Cook Out 400 at Martinsville Speedway.

Hamlin grabbed the lead on Lap 126 of 400 in the seventh NASCAR Cup Series race of the season and never looked back.

With flawless work from his pit crew, the driver of the No. 11 Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota led 274 of the last 275 laps—with the only exception a lap credited to pole winner Christopher Bell, who raced side-by-side with Hamlin after the final restart on Lap 326.

Hamlin pulled away toward the end of the final 75-lap green-flag run and beat Bell, his Joe Gibbs Racing teammate, to the finish line by 4.617 seconds.

The victory was Hamlin's sixth at the 0.526-mile short track, most among full-time active drivers, but his first at Martinsville since 2015. It was his first win of the season and the 55th of his career, tying him with Rusty Wallace for 11th on the career victory list.

The win was also Hamlin's first with crew chief Chris Gayle, who took over the pit box on the No. 11 Toyota this season. Hamlin has now won Cup races with seven crew chiefs.

"You know, Chris Gayle, all the engineers, the pit crew, everybody really on that wall right there, just deciding they were going to come here with a different approach than what we've been over the last few years," said Hamlin, who won at Martinsville for the first time with the Gen 7 race car.

"It was just amazing. The car was great. It did everything I needed it to do. Just so happy to win with Chris, get 55... Obviously, back here in Martinsville where I spent so many years racing late models and whatnot—gosh, I love winning here."

Bell's No. 20 Toyota was too loose over the final run to keep up with Hamlin's Camry.

"We were back and forth on balance a little bit," Bell said. "I asked to be freer throughout the whole race. That last run, I just went a little bit too loose and lost my drive off (the corners)."

"It was a great weekend for Joe Gibbs Racing. Showed a lot of pace. All four of the

## XFINITY BURNOUT

**ALERT!** Austin Hill celebrates after winning Saturday's US Marine Corps 250 at Martinsville. L. Riely/Getty



## NEXT: GOODYEAR 400



### Darlington Raceway

3 p.m. ET Sunday, FS1

- Location: 1301 Harry Byrd Hwy., Darlington, SC
- Nicknamed "The Lady in Black" and "The Track Too Tough to Tame." These two titles provide some indication of the respect and awe NASCAR drivers and fans have for Darlington, the oldest superspeedway hosting Cup events.

- Length: 1.366 mi (2.198 km)
- Capacity: 47,000
- Surface: Asphalt

- Opened: 1950. Having broken ground in 1949 and hosted its first race in 1950, Darlington Raceway is the second oldest track in all of NASCAR and the oldest of all superspeedways. Only Martinsville Speedway in Virginia is older and has it beat by just one year.

- The idea and funding to build a venue in Darlington came from two retired drivers: Harold Brasington and Bill France, Sr. It was Brasington who approached France to partner up after seeing the success of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

- The land they purchased was previously used to cultivate cotton and peanuts and the previous owner only had one stipulation in the negotiation which was to not destroy his minnow pond; hence why the track has an oblong shape.

- They opened the track with a bang and posted a record prize purse of \$25,000 for the winner of the inaugural Southern 500. The race had a massive 80 entrants who attempted to qualify for the 75 available spots. The eventual winner, Johnny Mantz, raced in a now infamous Plymouth car owned by track co-founder Bill France Jr.



Brad Keselowski picked up a nice win last year at Darlington. (Getty)

## 2025 CUP SERIES STANDINGS

Top 30 as of March 30

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 William Byron #24	259	16 Kyle Busch #8	150
2 Kyle Larson #5	243	17 J. H. Nemechek #42	148
3 Chase Elliott #9	227	18 AJ Allmendinger #16	148
4 Christopher Bell #20	224	19 Josh Berry #21	147
5 Alex Bowman #48	224	20 Ricky Stenhouse #47	146
6 Denny Hamlin #11	218	21 Daniel Suárez #99	125
7 Tyler Reddick #45	213	22 Todd Gilliland #34	125
8 Bubba Wallace #23	208	23 Zane Smith #38	124
9 Joey Logano #22	199	24 Austin Cindric #2	122
10 Ryan Blaney #12	193	25 Ty Dillon #10	117
11 Chris Buescher #17	177	26 Justin Haley #7	114
12 Chase Briscoe #19	169	27 Austin Dillon #3	114
13 Ross Chastain #1	169	28 Carson Hocevar #77	113
14 Ryan Preece #60	165	29 Erik Jones #43	108
15 Michael McDowell #71	159	30 Brad Keselowski #6	102

## 2025 XFINITY SERIES STANDINGS

Top 20 as of March 29

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Justin Allgaier #7	293	11 Jeb Burton #27	169
2 Sam Mayer #41	252	12 Daniel Dye #10	168
3 Austin Hill #21	246	13 Taylor Gray #54	166
4 Sheldon Creed #00	222	14 Brandon Jones #20	164
5 Jesse Love #2	219	15 Harrison Burton #25	158
6 Sammy Smith #8	215	16 Nicholas Sanchez #48	148
7 Connor Zilisch #88	193	17 Brennan Poole #44	140
8 Aric Almirola #19	186	18 Josh Williams #11	139
9 Ryan Sieg #39	185	19 Dean Thompson #26	138
10 Carson Kispal #1	176	20 Christian Eckes #16	133

**NEXT RACE:** SPORT CLIPS VFW HELP A HERO 200, Darlington, 3:30 p.m. ET Saturday, CW

## 2025 TRUCK SERIES STANDINGS

Top 20 as of March 28

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Corey Heim #11	228	11 Kaden Honeycutt #45	130
2 Ty Majeski #98	209	12 Tanner Gray #15	123
3 Chandler Smith #38	193	13 Giovanni Ruggiero #17	119
4 Daniel Hemric #19	175	14 Matt Mills #42	98
5 Stewart Friesen #52	167	15 Rahal Caruth #71	97
6 Tyler Ankrum #18	164	16 A. Perez De Lara #77	97
7 Grant Enfinger #9	157	17 Matt Crafton #88	97
8 Layne Riggs #34	148	18 Jack Wood #91	91
9 Jake Garcia #13	137	19 Connor Mosack #81	90
10 Ben Rhodes #99	131	20 Dawson Sutton #26	85

**NEXT RACE:** WEATHER GUARD TRUCK RACE, Bristol, 8:30 p.m. ET Friday, April 11, FS1

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Denny Hamlin and crew celebrate Sunday at Martinsville.

JARED C. TILTON/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**