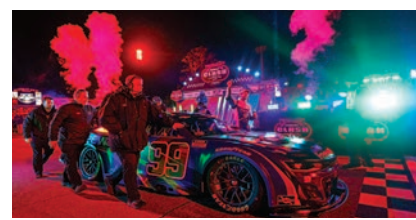


# RACING THIS WEEK

**BONUS CLASH PIC:** Crew members push the #99 Freeway Insurance Chevrolet driven by Daniel Suarez on track during intros for the Cook Out Clash Sunday.



After nearly wrecking off Turn 2, Kyle Busch (bottom) pulled off an epic save to win the Feb. 18, 2012, race in a photo finish with Tony Stewart. (Getty archive)

**CLASH AT BOWMAN GRAY**  
Adroitly working lapped traffic in the closing stages of the 200-lap season-opening exhibition race at a boisterous sold out Bowman Gray Stadium, Chase Elliott crossed the finish line 1.333 seconds ahead of Ryan Blaney.



Eventual winner Chase Elliott, driver of the #9 NAPA Auto Parts Chevrolet, and Denny Hamlin, driver of the #11 Sport Clips Haircuts Toyota lead the field during the Cook Out Clash at Bowman Gray Stadium on Sunday. (Sean Gardner/Getty Images)

## Memorable moments from The Clash

From Daytona International Speedway to the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum and now Bowman Gray Stadium won by Chase Elliott, The Clash has been through many changes over the years. Here's a look at some memorable moments from the exhibition race, since the inaugural event in 1979.

- Feb. 11, 1979:** Buddy Baker won the inaugural Busch Light Clash at Daytona, in a 20-lap sprint to the checkered flag.
- Feb. 12, 1984:** Ricky Rudd survived a wild ride that included multiple flips, which forced him to tape his eyes open during Daytona Speedweeks.
- Feb. 12, 1995:** Dale Earnhardt won the Busch Light Clash for the sixth and final time. Earnhardt remains the all-time winningest driver in the exhibition race.
- Feb. 8, 2003:** After being a day race for many years, the Busch Light Clash was held under the lights at Daytona.
- Feb. 12, 2006:** Joe Gibbs Racing's Denny Hamlin became the first rookie in the history of the exhibition race to win.
- Feb. 9, 2008:** Leading 47 of 70 laps in his first race with Hendrick Motorsports, Dale Earnhardt Jr. found himself in a familiar spot in Victory Lane again at Daytona.
- Feb. 16, 2013:** Kevin Harvick led 40 of 75 laps to win the Busch Light Clash for the third time in his Cup Series career. This was also the debut of the Gen 6 car.
- Feb. 14, 2015:** Matt Kenseth ended up in Victory Lane, but drama occurred on the final lap between Kevin Harvick and Joey Logano. Coming to the checkered flag on the last lap, Logano pushed Harvick and ended up putting him into the wall. Harvick exited his car and engaged in a heated post-race discussion with Logano.
- Feb. 10, 2019:** With 20 laps to go, Jimmie Johnson made contact with Paul Menard, causing a big multi-car pileup. Shortly afterward, rain arrived with Johnson leading. The race did not resume, resulting in the seven-time Cup Series champion's final win in a NASCAR-sanctioned event.
- Feb. 9, 2021:** Instead of running on the 2.5-mile oval at Daytona, the Busch Light Clash moved to the road course under the lights. In a dramatic finish, Chase Elliott and Ryan Blaney collided. This allowed Kyle Busch to steal the win.
- Feb. 6, 2022:** For the first time in the exhibition race's history, the Busch Light Clash was held at a different venue. After hosting this event at Daytona every year since 1979, the Cup Series debuted at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. Team Penske's Joey Logano held off Kyle Busch to win on the quarter-mile LA bullring in the Next Gen car's debut.
- Feb. 5, 2023:** After a winless 2022, Martin Truex Jr. kicked off the new season with a win in Los Angeles. This was an early sign of things to come as the Joe Gibbs Racing driver ended up clinching the Cup Series Regular Season Championship.
- Feb. 3, 2024:** The Busch Light Clash at The Coliseum was moved to Saturday night due to the threat of torrential rain forecasted over the next few days.
- Feb. 3, 2024:** Denny Hamlin started from the pole and showed up when it mattered most to capture his fourth clash victory of his career.
- Feb. 2, 2025:** It was a tough, bumper-driven battle between Chase Elliott, Denny Hamlin and Ryan Blaney at the iconic Bowman Gray Stadium during the 2025 main event. The end result, however, was the 2020 Cup Series champ in Elliott prevailing at the Winston-Salem facility to capture his first career Clash victory.

## Elliott grabs 'special' Clash win at Bowman

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — Pole winner Chase Elliott held off a dramatic charge from Ryan Blaney to win Sunday night's Cook Out Clash at Bowman Gray Stadium in front of a teeming, vociferous sellout crowd at the historic quarter-mile.

Adroitly working lapped traffic in the closing stages of the 200-lap season-opening exhibition race, Elliott crossed the finish line 1.333 seconds ahead of Blaney, who started last among the 23 competitors on a driver points provisional.

Elliott claimed his first victory in the Clash, which came to Bowman Gray after a three-year stint in the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. The driver of the No. 9 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet reveled in the Cup Series' return to the iconic short track after an absence of 54 years.

"This environment is special," said Elliott, who led 171 laps, including the first 96 before surrendering the lead to eventual third-place finisher Denny Hamlin. "This is a place that has a deep history in NASCAR. I think they deserve this event, truthfully.

"I hope we didn't disappoint. It was fun for me at least, and we'll hopefully come back here one day."

Hamlin led twice for 28 laps, but faded after Elliott retook the top spot from him on Lap 126. And when Blaney slipped past Hamlin's Toyota on Lap 147, it became a two-driver race.

But Blaney's car tightened up in the late going, preventing the driver of the No. 12 Team Penske Ford from challenging for the win. Blaney thought better of making an overly aggressive move on the series' seventh-most popular driver.

"I'm not going to bulldog into him and get chased out of here with pitchforks," Blaney quipped... "I just didn't quite have enough right rear at the end to make a move on him."

Joey Logano finished fourth, followed by Bubba Wallace, who advanced from his 14th-place starting position. Ross Chastain, Austin Cindric, Tyler Reddick, Shane van Gisbergen and Chris Buescher completed the top 10.

Hamlin rued the final restart on Lap 121, after the seventh caution for Brad Keselowski's spin off Wallace's bumper.

"I just didn't do very well on that restart

there, and kind of lost the bottom, and Chase took advantage of it," Hamlin said. "Once you get the lead, it's a lot easier to hang on to it."

"I thought that they were just a little better that second half than we were, along with the 12 (Blaney) was as well. We just have to get a little bit better, but overall, a good day for our Sport Clips Toyota."

In the last chance qualifier that determined positions 21 and 22 in the main event, Kyle Larson charged from the 10th starting position and survived nine cautions to win the 75-lap event and advance to the Clash.

On Lap 72, Larson grabbed the lead from Josh Berry, who was making his first competitive start for Wood Brothers Racing at the track where team patriarch and NASCAR Hall of Famer Glen Wood secured all four of his Cup Series victories.

Larson took the top spot for the first time on Lap 30 and led a race-high 36 circuits en route to the win. However, Larson's No. 5 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet sustained damage after he surrendered the lead to Erik Jones for a restart on Lap 65.

In a melee moments after racing resumed, Jones spun in a three-wide mishap with Berry and Larson and dropped out of contention.

"My car was way better than it was yesterday," said Larson, whose eighth-place finish in his Saturday heat relegated him to the last chance qualifier. "That was fun. I was able to get to the front without really getting into too many people."

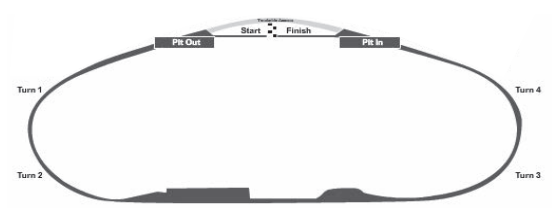
"But then after that long break (for local champion Burt Myers hard wreck on Lap 61), I cycled really tight for that restart and allowed Erik to get in front of me and just kind of lost control of the race at that point. Then, the next restart, it got crazy, and I got a bunch of damage."

Berry, who started 13th, held second to secure the 22nd spot in the Clash. Berry and Larson finished 13th and 17th, respectively, in the main event.

"It got pretty rough," Berry said. "You hate that it comes to that, but it is what it is—it's the Madhouse, it's Bowman Gray Stadium, it's a tight race track, and you're going to run into each other."

Note: This was the sixth time the Clash has been won from the pole position.

### NEXT: DAYTONA 500



**Daytona International Speedway**  
2:30 p.m. ET Sunday, Feb. 16, FOX

- Location:** 1801 West International Speedway Blvd, Daytona Beach, Florida
- Capacity:** 101,500-167,785 (w/infield, depending on configuration); 123,500 (grandstand capacity)
- The history of Daytona International Speedway began in 1953** when Bill France Sr. realized the days of racing on the beach were numbered due to spreading land usage of a rapidly growing population and huge race crowds. France put his plans for the future of racing in Daytona Beach in motion on April 4, 1953 with a proposal to construct a permanent speedway facility. On Aug. 16, 1954, France signed a contract with City of Daytona Beach and Volusia County officials to build what would become Daytona International Speedway, the "World Center of Racing." In 1957, land clearing began for the Speedway. The famous 31-degree highbanks were included in the design of the track so higher speeds could be achieved and to make it easier for fans to see the cars race around the 2.5-mile tri-oval. The dirt for the banking was taken from the infield and resulted in a 29-acre space that is known as Lake Lloyd.
- Racing moved from the beach-road course to Daytona International Speedway in 1959** and the first Daytona 500 took place on Feb. 22 in front of a crowd of over 41,000. Car entries included both hard tops and convertibles (it was the only Daytona 500 that included convertibles). The finish of the inaugural Daytona 500 was too close to call. Johnny Beauchamp went to Victory Lane, but 61 hours later Lee Petty was declared the official winner after a clip of newsreel footage showed that Petty nipped Beauchamp at the line by approximately two feet.
- On July 5, 2013, ground broke on the \$400 million DAYTONA Rising** frontstretch renovation that would transform the speedway into a state-of-the-art facility. It now has approximately 101,500 permanent, wider and more comfortable seats, 40 escalators, 17 elevators, twice as many restrooms, three times as many concession stands and three concourse levels.



William Byron celebrated after winning last year's Daytona 500. (Getty)

### 2024 CUP SERIES FINAL STANDINGS

Top 30 (w/ Champion in bold) as of Nov. 10, 2024

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 J. Logano Ford	5040	16 H. Burton Ford	2122
2 R. Blaney Ford	5035	17 C. Buescher Ford	930
3 W. Byron Chevrolet	5034	18 D. Wallace Jr. Toyota	878
4 T. Reddick Toyota	5031	19 R. Chastain Chevrolet	852
5 C. Bell Toyota	2413	20 Ky. Busch Chevrolet	766
6 K. Larson Chevrolet	2378	21 C. Hocevar Chevrolet	686
7 C. Elliott Chevrolet	2343	22 T. Gilliland Ford	630
8 D. Hamlin Toyota	2329	23 M. McDowell Ford	624
9 A. Bowman Chevrolet	2319	24 N. Gragson Ford	612
10 M. Truex Jr. Toyota	2258	25 R. Stenhouse Chevy	590
11 A. Cindric Ford	2248	26 R. Preece Ford	584
12 D. Suarez Chevrolet	2226	27 J. Berry Ford	579
13 B. Keselowski Ford	2209	28 E. Jones Toyota	516
14 C. Briscoe Ford	2184	29 D. Hemric Chevrolet	515
15 T. Gibbs Toyota	2169	30 Z. Smith Chevrolet	505

### 2024 XFINITY SERIES FINAL STANDINGS

Top 20 (w/ Champion in bold) as of Nov. 9, 2024

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Justin Allgaier #7	4035	11 Sammy Smith #8	2185
2 Cole Custer #00	4029	12 Shane v Gisbergen #97	2157
3 AJ Allmendinger #16	4028	13 Ryan Sieg #28	856
4 Austin Hill #21	4027	14 Brandon Jones #9	696
5 Chandler Smith #81	2314	15 Anthony Alfredo #5	641
6 Sheldon Creed #18	2264	16 Brennan Poole #44	572
7 Riley Herbst #98	2254	17 Aric Almirola #20	560
8 Jesse Love #2	2247	18 Josh Williams #11	515
9 Sam Mayer #1	2205	19 Jeb Burton #22	512
10 Parker Kligerman #48	2190	20 Jeremy Clements #51	477

**NEXT RACE:** UNITED RENTALS 300, Daytona International, Saturday, Feb. 15, CW

### 2024 TRUCK SERIES FINAL STANDINGS

Top 20 (w/ Champion in bold) as of Nov. 8, 2024

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Ty Majeski #98	4065	11 Layne Riggs #38	605
2 Corey Heim #11	4055	12 Stewart Friesen #52	557
3 Christian Eckes #19	4048	13 Tanner Gray #15	550
4 Grant Enfinger #9	4042	14 Matt Crafton #88	524
5 Nicholas Sanchez #2	2280	15 Chase Purdy #77	513
6 Taylor Gray #17	2247	16 Dean Thompson #5	469
7 Rajah Caruth #71	2213	17 Jake Garcia #13	459
8 Tyler Ankrum #18	2183	18 Bayley Currey #41	392
9 Ben Rhodes #99	2150	19 Kaden Honeycutt #45	384
10 Daniel Dye #43	2141	20 Bret Holmes #32	360

**NEXT RACE:** FRESH FROM FLORIDA 250, Daytona International, Friday, Feb. 14, FS1

### CLASH WINNER QUOTE

"This environment is special. This is a place that has a deep history in NASCAR. I think they deserve this event, truthfully. I hope we didn't disappoint. It was fun for me at least, and we'll hopefully come back here one day."

- Chase Elliott, who held off a dramatic charge from Ryan Blaney to win Sunday night's Cook Out Clash at Bowman Gray Stadium



Chase Elliott in Victory Lane Sunday at Bowman Gray.

SEAN GARDNER/GETTY IMAGES

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