

RACING THIS WEEK

XFINITY RECAP

• **Saturday's** KANSAS LOTTERY 300, Kansas Speedway



WINNER: BRANDON JONES

KANSAS CITY, Kan. — With a flawlessly executed race from start to finish, Brandon Jones preserved his bragging rights at Kansas Speedway, winning Saturday’s Kansas Lottery 300 Xfinity Series Playoff event.

The only driver in the field to have won a previous Xfinity race at the 1.5-mile intermediate track, Jones pulled away during the final 38-lap green-flag and beat runner-up rookie sensation Connor Zilisch to the finish line by 2.787 seconds.

With the victory, his second of the season, his third at Kansas and the seventh of his career, Jones claimed a berth in the Playoff’s Round of 8. Zilisch and defending series champion Justin Allgaier also advanced to the next round on points.

“That was exactly like how we needed that to go down,” said Jones, who started from the pole, led 54 of 200 laps and finished second in each of the first two stages. “Two really solid stages—no mistakes. The entire day was so well executed. That’s probably by far in my career my most well-executed race.

“I’m so proud of these guys (his No.20 Joe Gibbs Racing team). We worked so hard all week to get here and put a race like this together.”

Allgaier and Sam Mayer stayed out on 15-lap older tires during the fourth and final caution of the afternoon, hoping for a subsequent caution that would allow them to use their final set of Goodyears. But the caution never came, and Allgaier and Mayer finished 13th and 16th, respectively.

Allgaier, who won the first two stages and led a race-high 79 laps, didn’t have a problem with crew chief Jim Pohlman’s strategic call.

“They work for you sometimes, they don’t some other times,” Allgaier said. “Disappointed... our (No. 7 JR Motorsports) Chevrolet was really good.”

Though the handling of his No. 88 Chevrolet wasn’t precisely to his liking, Zilisch scored his 16th straight top-five result, breaking a tie with Sam Ard (1983) for the series record.

“I didn’t feel like our car was winning-capable, except at a point there in stage three, I thought we had a chance at it,” said Zilisch, who led 42 laps. “We’ll look at it and see what we could have done better. We were just kind of throwing Hail Marys at it all day and trying to make one stick—but it didn’t stick.”

Austin Hill finished third, followed by fellow Playoff drivers Sammy Smith, Sheldon Creed, Taylor Gray, Jesse Love and Nick Sanchez.

Next Saturday’s final Round of 12 race at the Charlotte Motor Speedway Road Course has the makings of an intense battle for the final positions in the Round of 8. Love, the last driver above the current elimination line, leads Sanchez by five points, Hill by seven, Harrison Burton (20th Saturday after starting from the rear) by eight and Smith by 14.

Mayer, highest in the standings of the drivers not yet locked into the Round of 8, has a 38-point cushion entering the final event in the round, the Blue Cross NC 250 (5 p.m. ET, Saturday on CW).

PLAYOFFS 5: HOLLYWOOD CASINO 400

Chase Elliott, who restarted eighth for the final two-lap shootout, got to the stripe 0.069 seconds ahead of Denny Hamlin, who led 159 laps Sunday at Kansas Speedway.



Chase Elliott, driver of the #9 Kelley Blue Book Chevrolet, takes the checkered flag to win the Cup Series Hollywood Casino 400 Presented by ESPN BET at Kansas Speedway on Sunday. (Chris Graythen/Getty Images)

Title dream intact for Elliott after Kansas

KANSAS CITY, Kan. — In the last few feet of race track in the second overtime Sunday afternoon, Chase Elliott came from oblivion to steal the Hollywood Casino 400 Presented by ESPN BET and earn a berth in the Round of 8 of the Cup Series Playoffs.

As his No. 9 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet sped wide open through the final corner on Lap 273 at Kansas Speedway, Elliott’s car bounced off the side of Denny Hamlin’s Toyota on the way to the finish line.

Elliott, who restarted eighth for the final two-lap shootout, got to the stripe 0.069 seconds ahead of Hamlin, who led 159 laps and drove the final stretch of the second Round of 12 Playoff race without benefit of power steering.

“Everything worked out perfect for me,” said Elliott, who picked up his second win of the season, his second at Kansas and the 21st of his career. “Had a great push through (Turns) 1 and 2. That kind of all started with the 6 (Brad Keselowski). Big run off of 2. Seas kind of parted and just was able to keep my momentum up. That was really it...

“I wasn’t going to lift, so I didn’t know what was going to happen. I figured at the end of the day, it was what it was at that point. We were both wide open corner exit. Wherever I ended up, I ended up. At that point, we were all committed.”

Hamlin was spent after man-handling his car around the 1.5-mile track in the closing laps of the race.

“Just super disappointing,” said Hamlin, who swept the first and second stages. “I wanted it bad. It would have been 60 (career victories) for me. The team just did an amazing job with the car, just really, really fast.”

The good news for Hamlin is that he increased his margin over the current Playoff cut line to 48 points entering next Sunday’s Round of 12 elimination race at the Charlotte Motor Speedway Road Course. Barring disaster, Hamlin is all but assured of advancing to the Round of 8.

Christopher Bell finished third, followed by pole winner Chase Briscoe and Bubba Wallace, who led the field to green for the final overtime restart but faded to fifth after battling side-by-side with Hamlin on the final lap.

Wallace was leading as he approached the white flag in the first overtime, but a violent four-car collision in Turn 3 on Lap 267 necessitated a caution that slowed the



Chase Elliott, driver of the #9 Kelley Blue Book Chevrolet, takes the checkered flag to win the Cup Series Hollywood Casino 400 Presented by ESPN BET at Kansas Speedway on Sunday. (Chris Graythen/Getty Images)

field before Wallace could reach the flag stand.

“Two years ago, I’d probably say something dumb,” said Wallace, who drives for the 23XI Racing team Hamlin co-owns with NBA legend Michael Jordan. “He’s a dumbass for that move (on the final lap). I don’t care if he’s my boss or not. But we’re going for the win. I hate that we gave it to Chevrolet there. Toyotas were super-fast, and proud to be driving one. I thought it was meant to be, and then it wasn’t.”

Despite the fifth-place finish, Wallace leaves Kansas 10th in the standings, 26 points below the elimination line for the next round.

He was tantalizingly close to his second win of the season before John Hunter Nemechek knocked the Ford of Zane Smith into the outside wall in Turn 3 in the first overtime.

The impact from Nemechek’s Toyota turned Smith’s Ford sideways against the outside wall, with Smith’s car sliding on the driver’s side through the corner before barrel-rolling down the banking and coming to rest upright on four wheels.

“It was a wild ride, no doubt,” Smith said. “Before I knew it, I had a decent restart going and I just got wrecked by the 42 (Nemechek). He just drives through me and then I was sliding on the wall.

“I was just mad at that point from how our day was going, and this just pissed me off even more, because that’s what really hurt was just flipping down the track. It was violent, no doubt, but we had such a fast Speedy Cash Ford today. It’s just a bummer.”

Playoff driver Austin Cindric was collected in an 11-car wreck in Turn 1 on Lap 217 and heads to the Charlotte Roval 48 points below the elimination line and almost certainly needing a victory to advance.

Playoff drivers Kyle Larson and Tyler Reddick ran sixth and seventh on Sunday but head to Charlotte in very different positions. Larson is 54 points ahead of ninth-place Ross Chastain, while Reddick is 11th in the standings, 29 points below the cut line.

Keselowski finished eighth at Kansas, followed by Playoff driver William Byron, who fought and ill-handling car until his No. 24 Chevrolet came to life in the final run.

Despite a pass-through penalty on the first lap for an inspection failure, New Zealander Shane van Gisbergen followed Byron, posting his first career top-10 finish on a NASCAR oval.

XFINITY BURNOUT ALERT! Brandon Jones celebrates after winning Saturday’s Kansas Lottery 300 at Kansas Speedway. **S. Gardner/Getty**



CUP PLAYOFFS: 6TH RACE BANK OF AMERICA ROVAL 400



Charlotte Motor Speedway

- 3 p.m. ET Sunday, USA
- The Charlotte Roval is a 17-turn, 2.28-mile road course at Charlotte Motor Speedway, known for being a hybrid of a road and oval track.
 - The course includes two chicanes and was designed in 2018 for NASCAR competition, integrating a portion of the existing oval with a newly built infield road course to create a challenging and exciting venue.
 - The track features significant elevation changes, with a 35-foot difference between its highest and lowest points, and has undergone several reconfigurations to improve racing dynamics and passing opportunities.



Kyle Larson in Victory Lane last year at Charlotte Roval. **GETTY**

CUP PLAYOFFS NOTES

- Two drivers have automatically advanced to the Round of 8 by winning a race in the Round of 12:
 1. Chase Elliott: Won at Kansas Speedway.
 2. Ryan Blaney: Won at New Hampshire Motor Speedway.
- The drivers in a strong position to join them on points are:
 1. Kyle Larson (+54 points above the cutline)
 2. Denny Hamlin (+48)
 3. Christopher Bell (+44)
 4. William Byron (+40)
- NASCAR playoff picture after Kansas race
 1. Ryan Blaney (locked into the Round of 8 after New Hampshire win)
 2. Chase Elliott (locked into the Round of 8 after Kansas win)
 3. Kyle Larson +54 ahead of 8th
 4. Denny Hamlin +48

2025 CUP SERIES STANDINGS			
Playoff 12 + 18 as of September 28			
Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Kyle Larson #5	3124	16 Josh Berry #21	2057
2 Denny Hamlin #11	3118	17 Chris Buescher #17	789
3 Christopher Bell #20	3114	18 Ryan Preece #60	717
4 William Byron #24	3110	19 Brad Keselowski #6	654
5 Chase Elliott #9	3104	20 Ty Gibbs #54	645
6 Ryan Blaney #12	3099	21 Kyle Busch #8	631
7 Chase Briscoe #19	3091	22 Carson Hocevar #77	625
8 Joey Logano #22	3083	23 Michael McDowell #71	610
9 Ross Chastain #1	3077	24 Erik Jones #43	609
10 Bubba Wallace #23	3057	25 AJ Allmendinger #16	592
11 Tyler Reddick #45	3054	26 J. H. Nemechek #42	590
12 Austin Cindric #2	3035	27 Zane Smith #38	537
13 Alex Bowman #48	2091	28 Daniel Suárez #99	504
14 S. v. Gisbergen #88	2086	29 Justin Haley #7	495
15 Austin Dillon #3	2086	30 Ricky Stenhouse #47	490

2025 XFINITY SERIES STANDINGS			
Playoff 12 + 8 as of September 27			
Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Connor Zilisch #88	2165	11 Harrison Burton #25	2057
2 Justin Allgaier #7	2128	12 Sammy Smith #8	2051
3 Sam Mayer #41	2103	13 Christian Eckes #16	648
4 Brandon Jones #20	2098	14 Jeb Burton #27	624
5 Taylor Gray #54	2076	15 Dean Thompson #26	619
6 Sheldon Creed #00	2072	16 Ryan Sieg #39	606
7 Carson Kvapil #1	2069	17 William Sawalich #18	573
8 Jesse Love #2	2065	18 Daniel Dye #10	556
9 Nick Sanchez #48	2060	19 Brennan Poole #44	552
10 Austin Hill #21	2058	20 Jeremy Clements #51	482

NEXT RACE: BLUE CROSS NC 250, Charlotte Road Course, 5 p.m. ET Saturday, CW

2025 TRUCK SERIES STANDINGS			
Playoff 8 + 12 as of September 20			
Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Corey Heim #11	3079	11 Gio Ruggiero #17	577
2 Layne Riggs #34	3032	12 Ben Rhodes #99	571
3 Daniel Hemric #19	3011	13 Tanner Gray #15	500
4 Tyler Ankrum #18	3010	14 Connor Mosack #81	444
5 Ty Majeski #98	3010	15 A. Perez De Lara #44	431
6 Grant Enfinger #9	3007	16 Matt Crafton #88	418
7 Rajah Caruth #71	3005	17 Stewart Friesen #52	397
8 K. Honeycutt #52	3003	18 Matt Mills #42	380
9 Chandler Smith #38	2086	19 Dawson Sutton #26	366
10 Jake Garcia #13	2071	20 Jack Wood #91	361

NEXT RACE: PLAYOFF RACE, Charlotte Roval, 3:30 p.m. ET Friday, FS1

KANSAS WINNER QUOTE

“Everything worked out perfect for me. Had a great push through (Turns) 1 and 2. That kind of all started with the 6 (Brad Keselowski). Big run off of 2. Seas kind of parted and just was able to keep my momentum up. That was really it...”
— Chase Elliott, who picked up his second win of the season, his second at Kansas and the 21st of his career Sunday



Chase Elliott in Victory Lane Sunday at Kansas Speedway. **SEAN GARDNER/GETTY IMAGES**

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