

RACING THIS WEEK

CLASH PREP: Ahead of the Cook Out Clash to kick off the new season on Sunday, Feb. 2 (8 p.m. ET, FOX), Bowman Gray Stadium has started making improvements to the 0.25-mile facility in Winston-Salem, NC.



Short-track star Burt Myers set for Cook Out Clash at Bowman Gray

MOORESVILLE, N.C. — Team AmeriVet announced its participation in the Cup Series' historic return to Bowman Gray Stadium for the Cook Out Clash Feb. 2. Driving the No. 50 Citrusafe Chevrolet and making his Cup Series debut will be short-track ace Burt Myers.

Myers is no stranger to the hallowed grounds of Bowman Gray. His exceptional record includes track championships in the 1999, 2001, 2007, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2023 and 2024 seasons as the track Modified Tour Champion. Beyond his dominance at Bowman Gray, Myers boasts titles as the 2010 and 2016 NASCAR Whelen Southern Modified Tour Champion and the 2002, 2021, and 2023 SMART Modified Tour Champion.

"I'm very excited to be a part of such a monumental event," said Myers. "Every short-track driver dreams of an opportunity like this. For mine to happen at my home track and to be able to continue my NASCAR family legacy means the world to me."

Continuing to call the shots as crew chief for the No. 50 in this event is another name enriched in NASCAR history, Tony Eury Jr.

"I'm looking forward to going to the stadium with Burt," said Eury. "We have won a lot of races together in our FURY modified over the years, and to be a part of this historic event with a driver like Burt, it's hard not to be excited."

Team owner Rebecca Auchmoody shared her enthusiasm for the event.

"I couldn't be more excited to kick off the racing season at The Clash with Burt Myers," she said. "This event will help us grow as a team with Burt's experience and Tony Jr. as crew chief; it will contribute towards improving team performance. It's also an incredible opportunity for us to continue our mission of supporting veterans through our 50 Vets a Week program. Last season, we were proud to relieve \$125,000 in veteran debt after the race in Phoenix, and our goal this time is to exceed that amount. Each race gives us a platform to make a meaningful impact in the lives of those who have served, and we can't wait to see what we can achieve together at The Clash."

ECR Engines continues its longtime relationship with Team AmeriVet to provide its engines.

The Cook Out Clash marks the NASCAR Cup Series' return to Bowman Gray, a venue steeped in history and tradition, and it promises to be an unforgettable experience for fans and participants alike. Bowman Gray is NASCAR's oldest weekly short track in the heart of Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The NASCAR Cup Series has not raced on the hallowed grounds of Bowman Gray since 1971.



Kyle Larson in action during the 2025 Chili Bowl (Shane Bevel/NASCAR)

Make that 3 bowls of Chili for Kyle Larson

TULSA, Okla. — The adage that it's better to be lucky than good is an appropriate way to describe Kyle Larson's Saturday night inside the SageNet Center.

Larson was involved in not one, but two incidents during the 40-lap Chili Bowl Nationals finale and somehow still managed to lay claim to his third Golden Driller trophy in midget car racing's grandest event.

"All three (Chili Bowl wins) are different," Larson said. "The first one was just a big hurdle to get over mentally I feel like to get a win in here finally. Then the next year meant a lot because we didn't have the best car that race but we played defense really well."

"Tonight, the track was challenging to make a lap by yourself, so when you can win a 40-lap race on a track that challenging, it's pretty cool."

In reality, Larson's good luck began Friday night during the draw for the pole shuffle, when he drew the No. 1 pill.

That meant that he would be the last driver to hit the track during the time trial program that set the lineup for the 10 drivers who locked into Saturday's finale via their respective preliminary night performances.

Larson bested Landon Brooks in the final pole shuffle pairing, earning the pole for the Chili Bowl main event that featured some of dirt racing's biggest and most talented stars.

"As bad as I qualified in the Race of Champions (on Monday), I knew my best shot to win was to draw the one or two (pill), because it would guarantee me the front two rows," said Larson, who won his preliminary feature Monday to punch his ticket directly to Saturday's main event. "Obviously drawing the one I was very happy because I knew I wouldn't start any worse than second."

Wheeling a car owned and prepared by his longtime sprint car crew chief Paul Silva, Larson quickly took command when the green flag waved Saturday night.

Holding a smooth wheel through the opening laps, Larson looked in complete control as he ripped around the top of the temporary Tulsa Expo Raceway like he did when he won the Chili Bowl in 2020 and 2021.

But just like in the NASCAR Cup Series, in dirt racing, things can change in an instant.

Larson was working his way through slower traffic with 17 laps to go when Jacob Denney and Brenham Crouch made contact directly in front of him.

With nowhere to go, Larson drove over the front two wheels of Crouch's car. His car briefly stalled, but it miraculously re-fired upon hitting the ground, and Larson was able to continue without losing the lead to his closest pursuer, Daison Pursley.

"He was just stopped sideways in front of me," Larson said. "I just kind of ramped over the left-front of his race car. I just kind



of jumped him really. It stalled in mid-air. When it was getting ready to land, I was like, 'Please, please, please re-fire.' It re-fired, so I thought I would only get one break, not two."

With no obvious damage done to his car, Larson held the lead when the race resumed. Again, he looked like he was well on his way to a comfortable victory. But yet again, Larson found a way to nearly throw it away.

Coming out of Turn 4 with four laps left, Larson's No. 1K caught the edge of the track. His car climbed up the outside wall before coming back down onto the track with the nose pointed toward the infield.

Somehow Larson got the car pointed back in the right direction just as Pursley roared around the top in an attempt to take the race lead.

Luckily for Larson, a banner on the frontstretch wall had become dislodged and was sitting on the racing surface following his failed wall climb, resulting in a well-timed caution flag that saved him from Pursley's assault.

"I made a mistake on the frontstretch and was kind of up on top of the wall and it shot me off of it," Larson said. "I thought I was going to flip similar to how I did last year. I didn't know it at the time, but it had ripped the banner down. I thought they threw the caution for me."

"Before I got back around to the other side I was like, 'Man, I don't know how they're going to score this.' If they were going to have me as the cause of the caution, if I would get penalized or anything. But I saw the banner laying there and I was like, 'OK, well that's good. Maybe I'll keep my spot.'"

Pursley tried his best to upset the apple cart during a pair of subsequent restarts, but Larson leaned on the experience he gained in his 16 previous Chili Bowl starts to win the event for the third time.

Larson understands just how lucky he was Saturday night. Either incident could have taken him out of contention to win the Chili Bowl Nationals.

But they didn't. And Larson did exactly what he's so good at doing regardless of the type of race car he's driving. Win.



Jimmie Johnson confirms '25 Cup Series schedule

Seven-time NASCAR Cup Series Champion and Legacy Motor Club co-owner Jimmie Johnson announced his racing plans for 2025.

Johnson, who ran nine Cup Series races in 2024, will once again attempt the Daytona 500 on Feb. 16, marking his 22nd appearance in "The Great American Race."

Additionally, Johnson will race in NASCAR's 'longest' event, the Coca-Cola 600 at Charlotte Motor Speedway, on May 25. Both races will have the branding and colors of Phoenix, Arizona-based Carvana on the No. 84 Toyota Camry XSE, as the special partnership between Johnson and Carvana enters its fifth season together.

"I'm so proud of the relationship we have built with Carvana," said Johnson. "They have always been supportive of my dreams and always find innovative ways to connect with fans. As my days behind the wheel of a racecar continue to wind down, the partnership with Carvana continues to celebrate my career and it's such an honor."

Not only will Johnson feel the homecoming vibes, but he will surpass a significant milestone. As he takes the green flag at Charlotte for 600 miles of racing action, it will mark his 700th Cup Series start. It is such a fitting place to make a significant start at, noting that he has visited victory lane at Charlotte eight times throughout his career, four of which coming from the Coca-Cola 600.

Carvana, known for its innovative paint schemes, will announce Johnson's ride later this month, ahead of the two-time Daytona 500 winner's return to the iconic Florida track.

"I'm thrilled to be returning to competition in 2025," said Johnson. "These two races hold a special place in my heart, and I've always loved the energy and excitement that surrounds them. The Daytona 500 is a crown jewel of NASCAR — there's nothing like it. Charlotte Motor Speedway is where I made my first start in the NASCAR Cup Series, and it's always felt like 'home' to me."

The Daytona 500 will take place on Sunday, Feb. 16, at 2:30 p.m. ET (FOX), kicking off the official start of the Cup Series season.

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. Suárez 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

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

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

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