

RACING THIS WEEK

TRUCKS RECAP

• **Saturday's** TEAM EJP 175, New Hampshire Motor Speedway



WINNER: COREY HEIM

LOUDON, N.H. – Corey Heim turned in yet another successful chapter to one of the most dominant seasons in Truck Series history – claiming his record-tying ninth season win in Saturday's Team EJP 175 at New Hampshire Motor Speedway.

The 23-year-old Georgia native's race effort was nearly as perfect as the NASCAR weekend setting – sunshine, cool Fall temperatures set among the beautiful season-changing foliage for which New England is renowned.

Heim claimed pole position in the No. 11 TRICON Garage Toyota, swept both stages, led a race best 124 of the 175 laps, set the fastest lap of the day and then motored off to a .823-second victory over Chandler Smith to end the first round of the series Playoffs as dominantly as the Regular Season Champion started them.

The nine-victory effort this year ties the single-season win mark set by former series champion Greg Biffle in 1999. And immediately after Saturday's checkered flag, Biffle posted a photo on social media of him holding a lobster (New Hampshire's traditional trophy award) on a beach with the caption, "Welcome to the 9-win club."

"It's a dream come true to be able to race with these guys ... got to keep it going," said Heim, who now has 20 wins in 85 career starts. "Still have four more races left [this year] and want to break that [single season wins] record. Shout out to Greg Biffle. He's a great dude.

"Dream year for me personally and just have to keep it going. It's awesome. Gotta keep the ball rolling."

Smith's runner-up showing was an inspired rally to try to advance to the next round of the Playoffs, but ultimately the Front Row Motorsports driver came up 10-points shy of moving on in the championship battle. ThorSport Racing's Jake Garcia, who finished 16th Saturday also failed to move on in the title fight.

Smith's Front Row teammate Layne Riggs finished third at New Hampshire and the season's three-time winner will begin this next three-race round of Playoff competition ranked second to Heim – 47 points behind the championship favorite.

Heim's rookie teammate Gio Ruggiero crossed the line fourth in one of his best showings of the season. And reigning series champion, ThorSport Racing's Ty Majeski was fifth.

The championship lineup going forward with points re-set includes – in order – McAnally-Hilgemann's Daniel Hemric, Majeski, McAnally-Hilgemann's Tyler Ankrum, CR7 Motorsports Grant Enfinger, Spire Motorsports' Rajah Caruth and Halmar-Friesen Racing's Kaden Honeycutt.

Caruth's gamble to stay out on old tires to gain extra points in Stage 2 proved critical in his advancing. He finished 10th.

Enfinger, Honeycutt, Corey LaJoie, Christian Eckes and Caruth rounded out the top-10.

The Truck Series returns to competition with an Oct. 3 series debut at the Charlotte ROVAL – race one in the final three-race run to decide which four drivers will be eligible for the championship at Phoenix on Oct. 31.

PLAYOFFS 4: MOBIL 1 301

Ryan Blaney's victory Sunday at New Hampshire Moto Speedway cashes the popular 2023 series champion's ticket into the Round of 8 in pursuit of his second Cup title.



Ryan Blaney, driver of the #12 Menards/Libman Ford, takes the checkered flag to win the Cup Series Mobil 1 301 at New Hampshire Motor Speedway on Saturday. (Meg Oliphant/Getty Images)

Blaney leads the way for Fords at NHMS

LOUDON, N.H. — Team Penske Fords were fast in practice, fast in qualifying and fastest in the Mobil 1 301 at New Hampshire Motor Speedway when it counted Sunday afternoon with Ryan Blaney taking a 0.937-second victory over fellow Ford driver Josh Berry in the opening race of the Cup Series Playoffs' Round of 12.

It marked a distinct competitive turn in this year's championship with three Fords finishing among the top five and three Chevrolets among the top seven at the 1-mile New Hampshire track after a Toyota sweep of the playoffs' opening three-race round.

Blaney's No. 12 Team Penske Ford — which started on the outside of the front row — led 116 of the race's 301 laps including the final 39 laps, holding off the Wood Brothers Racing driver Berry, who had rallied back in his No. 21 Ford after a spin on Lap 82.

"Probably the hardest 20 laps I drove," Blaney, 31, said of the race's closing laps. "Was trying to bide my stuff and he [Berry] really started coming. He started to get super free, and it was all I could do to hold him off. It was good racing. Clean racing and I appreciate Josh not throwing me the bumper when he could have."

Blaney's victory cashes the popular 2023 series champion's ticket into the Round of 8 in pursuit of his second NASCAR Cup Series title. Important both Sunday and likely further in the playoffs as the season's three-race winner can expect fierce competition from his Penske teammate, three-time and reigning series champ Joey Logano as the playoffs intensify.

The two were quickest throughout preparation for Sunday's race and maintained that edge throughout the day — combining to lead 263 of the 301 laps.

The pole-winner Logano led the most laps (147) and finished fourth. He crossed the line just behind another playoff-eligible driver, Hendrick Motorsports William Byron, whose teammate Chase Elliott turned in an inspiring comeback performance with a fifth-place showing after a 27th-place starting position.

"We ran well, we just weren't the fastest car," Logano said. "The 12 [Blaney] was fastest in practice and he showed that again in the race. Our only chance to beat him was on pit road and beat him on

details. But they were able to make up their track position when they put four [tires] on. That last restart I could have started behind him and finished third in the race, but if I was behind the 12 [Blaney] I wasn't going to win."

It perhaps marked a significant turn in competition — early in this round, at least — with the top Toyota driver, the race's defending winner Christopher Bell leading that manufacturer with a sixth-place finish Sunday. He won just a week ago capping a three-race Toyota winning sweep in the opening playoff series.

Playoff driver, Hendrick's Kyle Larson was seventh, followed by Spire Motorsports' Michael McDowell and playoff drivers Ross Chastain (Trackhouse Racing) and Chase Briscoe (Joe Gibbs Racing).

JGR's veteran driver Denny Hamlin, who ran top-10 most of the day, and was involved in an incident with his teammate Ty Gibbs mid-race, dropped from the championship lead coming into New Hampshire to now fifth place in the points with a 12th-place run. The season's five-race winner had no comment, however, about the contact with Gibbs that put the young third-year driver into the wall and out of the race while they both raced among the top-10.

Blaney's victory — the 16th of his career — automatically moves him into the next round of the playoffs. Byron is now second in the standings, 47 points above the cutoff line. Larson is 41 points up and Bell is 29 points to the good.

"The Penske cars were super-fast, kind of in another zip code," said Byron, who's third-place finish marks his first career top-10 showing in eight New Hampshire races.

"If we can just build on this, all our short tracks are coming together," said Byron. "It's no breathing room because you have to go out there and execute every week and keep your foot on the gas in this deal. But hopefully we can go to Kansas and be up front contending for a win.

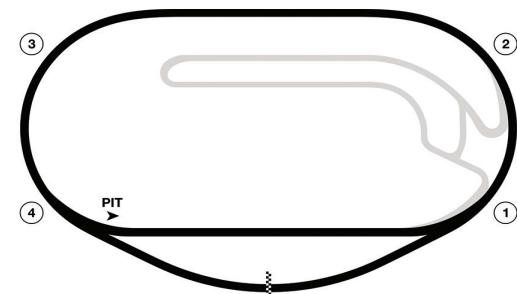
"... Definitely wasn't expecting to be this strong here, so hopefully we can go to Kansas and be really good."

The Cup Series moves to the 1.5-mile Kansas Speedway for Sunday's Hollywood Casino 400 (3 p.m. ET on USA Network, HBO Max, MRN Radio, SiriusXM NASCAR Radio, NBC Sports App). Chastain is the defending race winner.

TRUCKS FINISH:
Corey Heim takes the checkered flag to win Saturday's Team EJP 175 at New Hampshire Motor Speedway.
S. Gardner/Getty



CUP PLAYOFFS: 5TH RACE HOLLYWOOD CASINO 400



Kansas Speedway
3 p.m. ET Sunday, USA

- Kansas Speedway is a 1.5-mile (2.4 km) tri-oval track in the Village West area near Kansas City, KS.
- Inaugural Cup race: Sept. 30, 2001; winner, Jeff Gordon
- Surface: Asphalt
- Length: 1.5 miles (2.414 km)
- Turns: 4
- Banking in turns: 17-20 degrees variable banking
- Banking on frontstretch: 9-11 degrees variable
- Banking on backstretch: 5 degrees
- Property size: 1,200+ acres



Jeff Gordon with the trophy after winning inaugural Kansas race. HENDRICK MOTORSPORTS

CUP PLAYOFFS NOTES

• Denny Hamlin is now fifth in the standings with a 27-point cushion on the elimination line, followed by Joey Logano (plus-24), Chase Elliott (plus-14), and Chase Briscoe, who holds a 12-point advantage over Ross Chastain for the eighth and final playoff position to advance following the Kansas race Sunday and the Charlotte Motor Speedway Roval race on Oct. 5.

• Team Penske's Austin Cindric (minus-19) and 23XI Racing teammates Tyler Reddick (minus-23) and Bubba Wallace (minus-27) are also below the Playoff line heading to Kansas. Cindric finished 17th Sunday, Reddick was 21st and Wallace was 26th.

• Ryan Blaney's victory — the 16th of his career — automatically moves him into the next round of the playoffs. William Byron is now second in the standings, 47 points above the cutoff line. Larson is 41 points up and Bell is 29 points to the good.

2025 CUP SERIES STANDINGS			
Playoff 12 + 18 as of September 21			
Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Ryan Blaney #12	3084	16 Josh Berry #21	2053
2 William Byron #24	3082	17 Chris Buescher #17	764
3 Kyle Larson #5	3076	18 Ryan Preece #60	706
4 Christopher Bell #20	3064	19 Ty Gibbs #54	633
5 Denny Hamlin #11	3062	20 Brad Keselowski #6	625
6 Joey Logano #22	3059	21 Carson Hocevar #77	615
7 Chase Elliott #9	3049	22 Kyle Busch #8	613
8 Chase Briscoe #19	3047	23 AJ Allmendinger #16	591
9 Ross Chastain #1	3035	24 Erik Jones #43	588
10 Austin Cindric #2	3028	25 Mike McDowell #71	587
11 Tyler Reddick #45	3024	26 J.H. Nemechek #42	585
12 Bubba Wallace #23	3020	27 Zane Smith #38	529
13 Alex Bowman #48	2081	28 Ricky Stenhouse #47	488
14 Austin Dillon #3	2076	29 Daniel Suárez #99	484
15 S. van Gisbergen #88	2059	30 Justin Haley #7	476

2025 XFINITY SERIES STANDINGS			
Playoff 12 + 8 as of September 12			
Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Connor Zilisch #88	2116	11 Austin Hill #21	2018
2 Justin Allgaier #7	2084	12 Sammy Smith #8	2010
3 Sam Mayer #41	2066	13 Christian Eckes #16	625
4 Carson Kvapil #1	2047	14 Jeb Burton #27	617
5 Harrison Burton #25	2040	15 Ryan Sieg #39	588
6 Brandon Jones #20	2039	16 Dean Thompson #26	587
7 Sheldon Creed #00	2038	17 William Sawalich #18	547
8 Taylor Gray #54	2034	18 Brennan Poole #44	543
9 Jesse Love #2	2031	19 Daniel Dye #10	531
10 Nicholas Sanchez #48	2031	20 Jeremy Clements #51	477

NEXT RACE: KANSAS LOTTERY 300, Kansas Speedway, 4 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, Oct. 3, FS1

MOBIL 1 301 WINNER QUOTE

"Probably the hardest 20 laps I drove (in the closing laps). ... Was trying to bide my stuff and he (Josh Berry) really started coming. He started to get super free, and it was all I could do to hold him off. It was good racing. Clean racing and I appreciate Josh not throwing me the bumper when he could have."

— Ryan Blaney, who held off fellow Ford driver Berry to win Sunday's race at New Hampshire



Ryan Blaney nabbed the big lobster Sunday at New Hampshire Motor Speedway.
SEAN GARDNER/GETTY IMAGES

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