

# RACING THIS WEEK

## XFINITY RECAP

• **Saturday's** UNITED RENTALS 250, Talladega Superspeedway



### WINNER: AUSTIN HILL

Once again, Richard Childress Racing's Austin Hill proved himself the driver to beat on NASCAR's big drafting-style tracks, the veteran holding off the field on a dramatic overtime restart with two laps remaining at Talladega Superspeedway to earn the victory in Saturday's United Rentals 250.

Hill's No. 21 RCR Chevrolet led a race-best 48 of the 100 laps to earn a season sweep at the 2.66-mile speedway, NASCAR's biggest track. The victory now gives him 10 wins at drafting style tracks – having already eclipsed the previous record set by Dale Earnhardt and Tony Stewart, who each had eight wins on that style of track.

Although Hill has been eliminated from contention for the driver's title, his win Saturday guarantee his RCR team a car in the 2025 owner's championship.

Playoff driver Justin Allgaier finished third, significant in that it boosted the reigning champion's points total enough to clinch one of the four Championship-eligible entries for the Nov. 1 season finale at Phoenix.

Rookie Connor Zilisch had a rough outing Saturday. He finished 23rd, three laps down after being collected in a late-race accident. But the good news for the 10-race winner and regular season champ was that his outing earned enough points to claim a Championship 4 bid. The final two championship positions will be decided Saturday at Martinsville Speedway.

## TRUCKS RECAP

• **Friday's** LOVE'S RV STOP 225, Talladega Superspeedway



### WINNER: GIO RUGGIERO

Rookie Gio Ruggiero capped a dramatic afternoon of racing on the Talladega Superspeedway high banks with the 19-year-old's first career trip to Truck Series Victory Lane in Friday's Love's RV Stop 225.

Though not in the playoffs, Ruggiero held off his Tricon Garage teammate and current championship leader Corey Heim in a two-lap overtime duel to the checkered flag, his No. 17 Toyota leading the way by a mere .059 seconds. The effort rewarded an absolutely strong day for the young driver, who won pole position and led a race-best 37 of the 90 laps.

Heim's runner-up effort was the best showing by one of the eight playoff drivers with only a single race remaining in this three-race round to finalize which four will race for the championship on Oct. 31 at Phoenix.

Heim is the only driver with a secure entry to the Phoenix finale thanks to a victory in this round's opening race at the Charlotte Roval two weeks ago.

Ty Majeski — the reigning series champion — finished third. Rookie Dawson Sutton was fourth, followed by playoff driver Layne Riggs. Six of the eight playoff drivers finished among the top 10.

## PLAYOFFS 8: YELLAWOOD 500

With the win Sunday, Chase Briscoe will join JGR teammate Denny Hamlin (who won at Las Vegas) in the Finals at Phoenix, leaving the final two positions in the Championship 4 to be decided Sunday at Martinsville.



Chase Briscoe, driver of the #19 Bass Pro Shops Toyota, takes the checkered flag to win the Cup Series YellaWood 500 at Talladega Superspeedway on Sunday. (Chris Graythen/Getty Images)

# Briscoe chases down Championship 4 spot

TALLADEGA, Ala. — In a dramatic push to the Talladega Superspeedway checkered flag, Joe Gibbs Racing's Chase Briscoe made a last lap pass on the frantic-field to claim victory in Sunday's YellaWood 500 Cup Series Playoff race and earn his first-ever career shot at the season title.

The 29-year old Indiana-native Briscoe will join his JGR teammate Denny Hamlin, who won last week at Las Vegas, leaving the final two positions in the Championship 4 to be decided in next week's regular season finale at Martinsville (Va.) Speedway.

Briscoe thanked another JGR teammate, 23-year old Ty Gibbs, for the push forward on the final lap Sunday that resulted in his first ever superspeedway win — .145-second over Front Row Motorsports' driver Todd Gilliland and Gibbs, neither who are among the current eight-driver Playoff field.

The runner-up showing was a career best for Gilliland. 23XI Racing's Bubba Wallace and Haas Factory Team's Cole Custer rounded out the top-five.

"Ty Gibbs, just an incredible teammate there," said an emotional Briscoe, who stood on his No. 19 JGR Toyota waving his arms to the cheering crowd "I honestly would not have won that race without Ty. It was an amazing team effort. I can't believe I won a superspeedway race. I've never done it at any level."

"It's not hit me, we're going to Phoenix," Briscoe said of the championship opportunity he now has after leading only 16 laps Sunday.

"Absolutely [a dream come true]. So thankful that the Lord's blessed me, opening doors and closing door at times, but certainly opening an incredible door for me here at Joe Gibbs Racing. ... Even today I just had such a "peace" and normally I'm scared to death, nervous around this place but today just had such a peace."

Another JGR driver, Christopher Bell, joined Briscoe as the only other Playoff competitor to finish among the top 10 Sunday, crossing the line eighth in the frantic three-wide four rows deep finish that has long characterized the 2.66-mile Talladega high-banks — NASCAR's largest track. With Hamlin and Briscoe in the title race thanks to victories, Bell now holds the top points position, 37 points above the cutoff line.

As good of a day as it was for the Gibbs team to be able to claim half the

championship race eligibility and position Bell atop the points standings, it was a disappointing afternoon for the other two organizations also racing for a shot at the title — Hendrick Motorsports and Team Penske.

Hendrick had two cars running among the top five for the overtime restart only to have Kyle Larson drop back from the lead after running out of fuel. William Byron get spun out from behind only yards in front of the finish line while running top-10. They finished 25th (Byron) and 26th (Larson).

Larson is ranked fourth, a point below Bell in the standings — 36 points above the cutoff line. Byron — the regular season champion — is now fifth, 36 points below the line.

Penske's two Playoff drivers, reigning series champion Joey Logano and 2023 series champ Ryan Blaney also experienced similar late-race frustration after positioning themselves up front in the waning laps. Logano's No. 22 Ford actually led the most laps (35) on the day and turned in the longest single stint out front (16 laps) in a race that featured an incredible 77 lead changes among 27 drivers.

Ultimately neither could move forward in the closing pair of laps, however. Logano finished 16th and Blaney was 23rd — after both had to pit during the overtime caution period to top off on fuel.

Sunday's results leave Logano ranked sixth among the eight Playoff drivers, 38 points below the cutoff line. Blaney is seventh, 47 points back. Both now need a victory at Martinsville to return to the championship race. Blaney has won the last two Playoff races at the half-mile Martinsville track and Logano won in 2018.

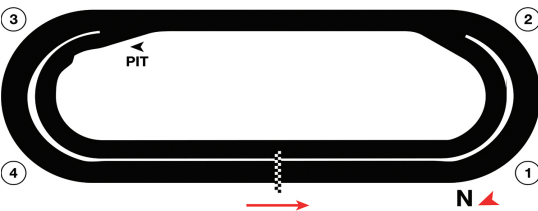
Chase Elliott was the first Playoff driver to have trouble, collected in an eight-car accident near the front of the field only 51 laps into the 193-lap race, resulting in a last place finish in the 40-car field. Elliott had started the race ranked sixth in Playoff standings, 23 points below cutoff line and has now fallen to eighth among the eight drivers, 62 points out of Playoff contention and also needing to win Sunday at Martinsville — something he's done before, claiming the 2021 Playoff finale there.

Spire Motorsports' Carson Hocevar, 23XI Racing's Tyler Reddick, Bell, Front Row Motorsports' Zane Smith and Roush-Fenway-Keselowski owner-driver Brad Keselowski rounded out Sunday's top-10.

**XFINITY VICTORY LANE:** Austin Hill and crew celebrate after winning Saturday's United Rentals 250 at Talladega Superspeedway. C. Graythen/Getty



## CUP PLAYOFFS: 9TH RACE XFINITY 500



### Martinsville Speedway 2 p.m. ET Sunday, NBC

• Martinsville Speedway is an oval short track in Ridgeway, Va., a community of Martinsville, Va.

• Originally a dirt oval, Martinsville opened in September 1947. The facility hosted its first Cup Series races in 1949 and half interest of the track was purchased by the France family the year after. In 1955, the track was paved with asphalt. After 21 years of repaving, the lower lanes of the track's corners were paved with concrete.

**Length:** 0.526 mi (0.847 km)

**Turns:** 4

**Surface:** Asphalt (straights and higher lanes of turns); concrete (lower lanes of turns)

**Banking:** Turns, 12°; straights, 0°



1947: Martinsville Speedway is founded by the late H. Gray Earles. It's the only Cup Series track to host a race every year since the Series inception in 1949. **ISC VIA GETTY**

## Notes from Talladega

Hendrick Motorsports teammates William Byron and Kyle Larson ran 1-2 in that order as Sunday's race lurched into overtime, and the two controlled the front row for the fateful final restart — Larson lined up high after lane choice, with Byron low.

Both faltered in the final circuit, watching their opportunity for a victory and an automatic championship-race berth evaporate. Larson bailed out of the pack with half a lap to go, stumbling with a dry fuel tank and leaving him with a 26th-place finish. That result was one spot below 25th-finishing Byron, who was overcome by a Toyota-led charge in the outside lane and later spun through the trioval.

The two now find themselves on opposite sides of the playoff bubble with one chance Sunday at Martinsville. Larson sits 36 points above the elimination line as the provisional final driver in; Byron is the first driver out as it stands, down by the same 36-point margin.

| 2025 CUP SERIES STANDINGS       |        |                        |        |
|---------------------------------|--------|------------------------|--------|
| Playoff 8 + 22 as of October 19 |        |                        |        |
| Rank/Driver                     | Points | Rank/Driver            | Points |
| 1 Chase Briscoe #19             | 4116   | 16 Josh Berry #21      | 2093   |
| 2 Christopher Bell #20          | 4107   | 17 Chris Buescher #17  | 854    |
| 3 Kyle Larson #5                | 4106   | 18 Ryan Preece #60     | 798    |
| 4 Denny Hamlin #11              | 4103   | 19 Ty Gibbs #54        | 736    |
| 5 William Byron #24             | 4070   | 20 Brad Keselowski #6  | 710    |
| 6 Joey Logano #22               | 4068   | 21 Mike McDowell #71   | 692    |
| 7 Ryan Blaney #12               | 4059   | 22 Kyle Busch #8       | 681    |
| 8 Chase Elliott #9              | 4044   | 23 Carson Hocevar #77  | 680    |
| 9 Tyler Reddick #45             | 2270   | 24 J. H. Nemechek #42  | 642    |
| 10 Bubba Wallace #23            | 2236   | 25 Erik Jones #43      | 640    |
| 11 Ross Chastain #1             | 2210   | 26 AJ Allmendinger #16 | 639    |
| 12 S. V. Gisbergen #88          | 2172   | 27 Zane Smith #38      | 595    |
| 13 Alex Bowman #48              | 2152   | 28 Daniel Suárez #99   | 578    |
| 14 Austin Cindric #2            | 2123   | 29 Todd Gilliland #34  | 565    |
| 15 Austin Dillon #3             | 2114   | 30 Ricky Stenhouse #47 | 532    |

| 2025 XFINITY SERIES STANDINGS   |        |                           |        |
|---------------------------------|--------|---------------------------|--------|
| Playoff 8 + 12 as of October 18 |        |                           |        |
| Rank/Driver                     | Points | Rank/Driver               | Points |
| 1 Connor Zilisch #88            | 3145   | 11 Taylor Gray #54        | 2137   |
| 2 Justin Allgaier #7            | 3138   | 12 Christopher Burton #25 | 2107   |
| 3 Jesse Love #2                 | 3102   | 13 Christian Eckes #16    | 742    |
| 4 Carson Kvapil #1              | 3073   | 14 Jeb Burton #27         | 687    |
| 5 Sammy Smith #8                | 3062   | 15 Ryan Sieg #39          | 667    |
| 6 Brandon Jones #20             | 3053   | 16 Dean Thompson #26      | 641    |
| 7 Sam Mayer #41                 | 3051   | 17 William Savalich #18   | 636    |
| 8 Sheldon Creed #00             | 3032   | 18 Daniel Dye #10         | 591    |
| 9 Austin Hill #21               | 2177   | 19 Brennan Poole #44      | 588    |
| 10 Nicholas Sanchez #48         | 2148   | 20 Aric Almirola #19      | 562    |

| 2025 TRUCK SERIES STANDINGS     |        |                         |        |
|---------------------------------|--------|-------------------------|--------|
| Playoff 8 + 12 as of October 17 |        |                         |        |
| Rank/Driver                     | Points | Rank/Driver             | Points |
| 1 Corey Heim #11                | 3167   | 11 Gio Ruggiero #17     | 666    |
| 2 Rajah Caruth #71              | 3096   | 12 Ben Rhodes #99       | 600    |
| 3 Tyler Ankrum #18              | 3090   | 13 Tanner Gray #15      | 531    |
| 4 Kad. Honeycutt #52            | 3087   | 14 Connor Mosack #81    | 497    |
| 5 Ty Majeski #98                | 3082   | 15 Matt Crafton #88     | 462    |
| 6 Layne Riggs #34               | 3081   | 16 A. Perez De Lara #44 | 456    |
| 7 Daniel Hemric #19             | 3055   | 17 Dawson Sutton #26    | 426    |
| 8 Grant Enfinger #9             | 3047   | 18 Matt Mills #42       | 420    |
| 9 Chandler Smith #38            | 2119   | 19 Stewart Friesen #52  | 397    |
| 10 Jake Garcia #13              | 2093   | 20 Jack Wood #91        | 392    |

**NEXT RACE:** SLIM JIM 200, Martinsville Speedway, 6 p.m. ET Friday, FS1

## TALLADEGA WINNER QUOTE

"Ty Gibbs, just an incredible teammate there. I honestly would not have won that race without Ty. It was an amazing team effort. I can't believe I won a superspeedway race. I've never done it at any level. It's not hit me, we're going to Phoenix."  
— Chase Briscoe, who Sunday at Talladega punched his ticket to the Championship 4



Chase Briscoe in Victory Lane Sunday at Talladega.

SEAN GARDNER/GETTY IMAGES

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