

RACING THIS WEEK

O'REILLY BURNOUT ALERT! Kyle Larson celebrates after winning Saturday's The LiUNA! at Las Vegas. C. Graythen/Getty



O'REILLY RECAP

• Saturday's THE LIUNA!, Las Vegas Motor Speedway



WINNER: KYLE LARSON

No matter the series, Las Vegas Motor Speedway agrees with Kyle Larson.

Surging into the lead from the seventh position moments after the final restart on Lap 154 of 200, Larson pulled away to win The LiUNA!, becoming the fifth different winner in five O'Reilly Auto Parts Series races this season.

Larson crossed the finish line in Saturday's race 2.557 seconds ahead of Chase Briscoe, who recovered from a brush with the outside wall and resulting flat tire to finish second.

The victory was Larson's second at Las Vegas to go with three in the Cup Series. In his first O'Reilly Series start of the 2026 season, the No. 88 JR Motorsports Chevrolet driver registered the 18th win of his career.

Sheldon Creed ran third, followed by series leader Justin Allgaier and Sammy Smith.

"I was a bit nervous," Larson said of the final run. "I knew the 00 (Creed) and Briscoe were ripping the top. I tried it once, and I didn't feel good up there at all.

"I don't know — clean air just must have meant a lot today. So, glad I was able to get the lead when it mattered."

Briscoe took responsibility for the mistake that cost him a chance to win.

"Even with the adversity we were dealing with, I knew if we got a lucky break, we were going to hopefully get back up there," Briscoe said. "Honestly, it wasn't an unfortunate break with the tire — I think it was my own fault.

"I just drove it into the fence and cost myself. I had a lot of fun. It was certainly fun slipping and sliding around the race track. You could kind of run all over. I had a blast."

Jesse Love ran sixth in one of the fastest cars in the race. Love led 36 laps and was first off pit road after stops on Lap 120. But his team incurred a safety violation when a crew member fell over the wall on that stop, and Love restarted 32nd under penalty. A determined charge through the field earned the sixth-place finish.

Creed's third-place run was not without incident. On Lap 148, a tap from Creed's front bumper sent Taylor Gray's Toyota rocketing into the Turn 3 wall and out of the race as the drivers were battling for second.

"I just got into him," Creed said. "I was trying to pack some air. I didn't know he was that close to the 17 (eighth-place finisher Corey Day). I could have cut him more of a break there, and I didn't. That's not the way I wanted to race him."

Connor Zilisch ran seventh as the fourth JRM driver in the top seven. Day in eighth scored his fourth consecutive top 10 after leading nine laps before the Creed/Gray accident caused the eighth and final caution.

William Sawalich finished ninth, and Daytona winner Austin Hill ran 10th.

Allgaier led a race-high 48 laps to Larson's 47, with the No. 7 JRM driver sweeping the first two stages to expand his series lead over Love to 13 points.

The O'Reilly Series returns to action Saturday at Darlington Raceway.

PENNZOIL 400

Denny Hamlin drove the dominant car to victory Sunday at Las Vegas Motor Speedway for his first of the season; it was his third overall and second straight at the 1.5-mile track.



Denny Hamlin, driver of the #11 Yahoo! Toyota, crosses the finish line to win the Cup Series Pennzoil 400 presented by Jiffy Lube at Las Vegas Motor Speedway on Sunday. (Sean Gardner/Getty)

All-heart Hamlin returns to Victory Lane at Vegas

LAS VEGAS, Nev.—A refocused and rejuvenated Denny Hamlin drove the dominant car to victory in Sunday's Pennzoil 400 Presented by Jiffy Lube at Las Vegas Motor Speedway.

The Cup Series victory was Hamlin's first of the season, his third overall and second straight at the 1.5-mile track and the 61st of his career—good for 10th on the all-time list.

The win came five races after Hamlin suffered a crushing 11th-hour defeat in the race for the 2025 Cup championship at Phoenix Raceway last November. Three laps from his first title and foiled by an ill-timed caution, the driver of the No. 11 Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota took months to reconcile the disappointment.

"I knew it took a few weeks to feel like driving," Hamlin said. "Over the last couple weeks, I definitely regained my love of it, got refocused. These are great opportunities for us."

His 61st victory broke a tie on the career list with Kevin Harvick.

"My name stands out amongst... there's the legends of the sport," said the 45-year-old driver. "I feel very fortunate to be on the list. Those guys were far more talented than I have ever thought about being.

"I just work really hard. I still to this day work really hard at my craft to try to continue to get better. Days like today certainly make me feel happy about where I'm at in the sport still and what I can still do."

Brushing off a pit road speeding penalty at the first stage break, Hamlin rallied to lead a race-high 134 laps and held off the Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolets of Chase Elliott and William Byron, who ran second and third, respectively.

Pole winner Christopher Bell was fourth, followed by Ty Gibbs, Chris Buescher and Kyle Larson, who led 62 laps and finished second in both Stage 1 and Stage 2.

Chase Briscoe ran eighth, overcoming a pit road speeding penalty, as did Gibbs, his Joe Gibbs Racing teammate. Bubba Wallace came home ninth and Brad Keselowski 10th.

Tyler Reddick, winner of the first three races this season, faded to 13th in the final run but maintained his series lead by 61 points over Wallace, his 23XI Racing teammate, and 67 over third-place Ryan Blaney.

With Hamlin relegated to the rear after his speeding penalty, the start of the second

stage was a thrill show, with the cars of Larson, Bell, Byron and Elliott packed together like the Air Force Thunderbirds flying in formation.

The four drivers, soon joined by Reddick, jockeyed for position for three laps before Byron pushed Larson into the lead on Lap 93, with Bell soon following into second.

Larson led 28 laps before steering his car to pit road on Lap 121. When the pit cycle ended, Larson led Bell by nearly three seconds but began to fade toward the end of the stage. Both Bell and Byron tracked Larson down, with Byron seizing a chance to take the lead three-wide in the tri-oval on Lap 159.

Byron pulled away to win the stage, with Larson and Bell finishing second and third under the green/checkered flag on Lap 165.

Meanwhile, Hamlin spent the entirety of Stage 2 recovering from the pit road speeding penalty he incurred under caution during the Stage 1 break on Lap 84. Restarting 21st on Lap 89, Hamlin methodically worked his way forward and was fifth when the second stage ended.

Hamlin moved to second behind Byron after the final-stage restart on Lap 174, grabbed the lead to the inside of the Hendrick driver on Lap 185 and began to pull away.

But Hamlin's lead was short-lived. On Lap 211, Byron pulled ahead in Turn 3 moments before Connor Zilisch spun off Turn 4 to cause the first caution of the race for an on-track incident.

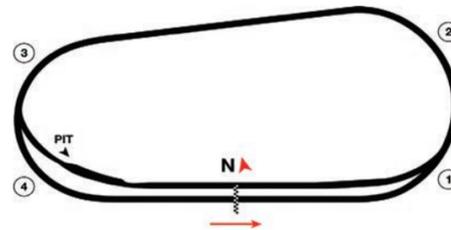
Under the yellow, Bell regained two positions and the lead with a quick stop, with Hamlin exiting pit road in second and Byron and Elliott following in third and fourth. A slow pit stop relegated Larson to eighth for the Lap 218 restart.

One lap later, Hamlin passed his JGR teammate for the lead and held it the rest of the way, holding off a fast-closing Elliott by 0.502 seconds at the finish.

"It (the No. 9 Chevrolet) was definitely better there towards the end than we had started the run," said Elliott, who hasn't led a lap at Las Vegas since NASCAR introduced the Gen 7 race car in 2022. "I thought there might be an opportunity. I knew that he was starting to get tight there at the end of runs.

"Yeah, man, as bummed as I am to come up that close to a win, I have to kind of bring myself back to a reality check, how much better we ran today."

NEXT: GOODYEAR 400



Darlington Raceway
3 p.m. ET Sunday, FS1

- **Location:** 1301 Harry Byrd Hwy, Darlington, South Carolina
- **Nicknames:** The Lady in Black; The Track Too Tough To Tame
- **Capacity:** 47,000
- **Owner:** NASCAR (2019-present)
- **Opened:** August 19, 1950
- **Course:** 4 turn egg-shaped oval
- **Surface:** Asphalt
- **Length:** 1.366 mi (2.198 km)
- **Banking:** Turns 1, 2: 25°; Turns 3, 4: 23°; Frontstretch, Backstretch: 6°
- **Fastest lap:** 0:28.332, Denny Hamlin, Toyota Camry, 2018 Cup race
- **In 2004,** the venue added permanent lighting to host night racing at the track.



Denny Hamlin won last year's Goodyear 400 at Darlington. GETTY

2026 CUP SERIES STANDINGS

Top 30 as of March 15

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Tyler Reddick #45	255	16 Shane v Gisbergen #97	117
2 Bubba Wallace #23	194	17 Daniel Suárez #7	117
3 Ryan Blaney #12	188	18 AJ Allmendinger #16	117
4 Denny Hamlin #11	177	19 Zane Smith #38	108
5 Chase Elliott #9	168	20 Ross Chastain #1	94
6 Christopher Bell #20	164	21 J. H. Nemechek #42	91
7 Kyle Larson #5	157	22 Kyle Busch #8	90
8 William Byron #24	157	23 Riley Herbst #35	86
9 Chris Buescher #17	146	24 Austin Dillon #3	81
10 Ty Gibbs #54	140	25 Ty Dillon #10	80
11 Joey Logano #22	135	26 Chase Briscoe #19	76
12 Brad Keselowski #6	127	27 Erik Jones #43	76
13 Ryan Preece #60	125	28 Noah Gragson #4	73
14 Michael McDowell #71	122	29 Ricky Stenhouse Jr #47	72
15 Carson Hocevar #77	118	30 Austin Cindric #2	71

2026 O'REILLY AUTO PARTS STANDINGS

Top 20 as of March 14

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Justin Allgaier #7	237	11 Brandon Jones #20	120
2 Jesse Love #2	224	12 Taylor Gray #54	110
3 Austin Hill #21	208	13 Jeb Burton #27	104
4 Sheldon Creed #00	188	14 Brennan Poole #44	97
5 Carson Kvapil #9	173	15 William Sawalich #18	95
6 Sammy Smith #8	164	16 Patrick Staropoli #48	87
7 Corey Day #17	154	17 Anthony Alfredo #96	82
8 Rajah Caruth #32	137	18 Ryan Sieg #39	81
9 Parker Retzlaff #99	129	19 Blaine Perkins #31	81
10 Sam Mayer #41	122	20 Kyle Sieg #28	72

NEXT RACE: SPORT CLIPS HAIRCUTS VFW HELP A HERO 200, Darlington, 5:30 p.m. ET Saturday, CW

2026 CRAFTSMAN TRUCK STANDINGS

Top 20 as of February 28

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Chandler Smith #38	152	11 Brenden Queen #12	66
2 Ben Rhodes #99	118	12 Tyler Ankrum #18	64
3 Ty Majeski #88	102	13 Daniel Dye #10	64
4 Giovanni Ruggiero #17	98	14 Jake Garcia #98	58
5 Layne Riggs #34	96	15 Cole Butcher #13	52
6 Kaden Honeycutt #11	87	16 Kris Wright #81	49
7 A. Perez De Lara #44	85	17 Tanner Gray #15	48
8 Stewart Friesen #52	70	18 Landen Lewis #45	47
9 Christian Eckes #91	69	19 Daniel Hemric #19	46
10 Justin Haley #16	67	20 Mini Tyrrell #14	45

NEXT RACE: BUCKLE UP SOUTH CAROLINA 200, Darlington, 7:30 p.m. ET Friday, FS1

VEGAS WINNER QUOTE

"I just work really hard. I still to this day work really hard at my craft to try to continue to get better. Days like today certainly make me feel happy about where I'm at in the sport still and what I can still do."

—Denny Hamlin, who rallied to lead a race-high 134 laps to take Sunday's Pennzoil 400



Denny Hamlin and crew celebrate in Victory Lane Sunday in Las Vegas.

CHRIS GRAYTHEN/GETTY

SEAS THE DAY

Reel in your hunger with this fresh catch!
Creamy tuna salad with chopped celery piled high on a fresh-baked roll.



TUNA SALAD sub

Country Fair