

# RACING THIS WEEK

**TRUCKS BIG CHECK ALERT!**  
Tyler Ankrum with the \$50,000 Triple Truck Challenge check after winning Friday at Rockingham.  
**J. Gilbert/Getty**



## TRUCKS RECAP

• **Friday's** BLACK'S TIRE 200, Rockingham Speedway



**WINNER: TYLER ANKRUM**

ROCKINGHAM, N.C. — It had been so long since Tyler Ankrum won his first Truck Series race that the driver of the No. 18 McAnally-Hilgemann Chevrolet couldn't find Victory Lane after winning Friday's Black's Tire 200 at Rockingham Speedway.

After an effort at saving fuel, Ankrum coasted across the finish line 6.657 seconds ahead of pole winner and runner-up Jake Garcia to break a 130-race drought dating to July 11, 2019.

Ankrum's last win was so long ago that the track that gave him his maiden victory — Kentucky Speedway — has long since fallen off the NASCAR national series schedule.

In the return to "The Rock" after an 11-year absence, Ankrum had to battle back from damage sustained during an accident on Lap 2, an incident that put him a lap down. Ankrum got his lap back as the beneficiary under caution for Stage 2 break after Lap 90 and embarked on a heroic drive to the front.

The trophy wasn't the only reward Ankrum got for the victory. He also earned a \$50,000 check for winning the final Triple Truck Challenge race.

"It's strange — I didn't know where Victory Lane was at," Ankrum said after climbing from his truck. "The way this day started, going a lap down and (crew chief) Mark (Hillman) making a pit call to get the track position back...

"Just saving fuel, man. I knew we were five (laps) short. I was hoping I had saved enough, and we did... I just found something there where I was pretty much lifting 60 percent down the straightaway, and I was able to draft off of (Matt) Crafton and a couple of other guys, and I was able to save that way.

"It's just surreal. I feel like this is pretty much the way it went down at Kentucky in 2019."

Ankrum took the lead for good on Lap 172 after Corey Heim and Gio Ruggiero came to pit road. The two TRICON drivers stayed on track during consecutive cautions early in the final stage and were running 1-2 before having to come to pit road for fuel.

Heim seemed confused by the strategy that kept him on the track while other top contenders pitted for the fuel they hoped would carry them to the end of the race.

Even though the Front Row Motorsports Fords of Layne Riggs and Chandler Smith pitted after Heim's final stop, both ran short of fuel and had to bring their trucks to pit road in the closing laps.

Daniel Hemric, Rajah Caruth and Grant Enfinger benefited from the Fords' gas shortage, finishing third, fourth and fifth, respectively.

Trouble continued to follow reigning champion Ty Majeski, whose truck broke loose from the inside lane in Turn 1 while he was racing Enfinger on Lap 109. Majeski's No. 98 ThorSport Ford backed into the outside wall and was eliminated from the race.

Heim, who led a race-high 52 laps compared to 43 for Garcia and 29 for Ankrum, held the top spot in the series standings by 22 points over Chandler Smith and 62 points over Ankrum. Kaden Honeycutt, Jack Wood, Corey Heim, Connor Mosack and Gio Ruggiero finished sixth through 10th.

## XFINITY RECAP

NORTH CAROLINA EDUCATION LOTTERY 250 PRES. BY BLACK'S TIRE, Rockingham Speedway  
Sammy Smith was awarded the victory Saturday when Jesse Love violated Rule 14.14.2.1-5.h which covers trailing arm spacers and pinion angle shims. The disqualification gave Smith his first victory of the season and the third of his career, as well as the last \$100,000 bonus Xfinity Dash 4 Cash check.



**Sammy Smith of JR Motorsports leads a group of cars down the frontstretch Saturday in the Xfinity Series North Carolina Education Lottery 250 presented by Black's Tire at Rockingham Speedway. Post-race he would grab the win on disqualification.**

(James Gilbert/Getty Images)

## Smith didn't love the way he won, but he'll take it

ROCKINGHAM, N.C.—Long after the checkered flag waved in the Xfinity Series' long-awaited return to Rockingham Speedway, Sammy Smith's fortunes improved dramatically.

Smith was awarded the victory in the North Carolina Education Lottery 250 after the No. 2 Chevrolet of ostensible race winner Jesse Love was deemed to have violated Rule 14.14.2.1-5.h which covers trailing arm spacers and pinion angle shims.

"All mating surfaces of those parts need to be in complete contact with each other, and unfortunately they violated that rule and were disqualified," said series director Eric Peterson.

The disqualification of Love's car gave Smith his first victory of the season and the third of his career, as well as a \$100,000 bonus as the winner of the final Xfinity Dash 4 Cash race of the season.

"It's a tough way to win that, but I feel like we'll take 'em any way we can get 'em," Smith said after learning of Love's disqualification. "We waited here to see what happens, but overall, it was a good day, and I'm very happy with the progress we've made recently.

"I'm kind of speechless, to be honest with you."

After Love climbed from his car at the finish line, the No. 2 Camaro rolled away from him down the banking and into the infield grass. Perhaps that was an omen of problems to come.

Love had just done a celebratory burnout after a magnificent restart in overtime propelled him to the apparent victory. He finished 0.691m seconds ahead of Smith, but the margin was negated by the infraction, and the win went to the driver of the No. 8 JR Motorsports Chevrolet.

Before the infraction was discovered, Love was ecstatic to win at "The Rock."

"Oh, my gosh, these fans are amazing," said Love, who was all but drowned out by the cheers from the onlookers, who celebrated the return of the Xfinity Series to Rockingham for the first time since 2004. "What an amazing race track. Man, this race track's right in my alley. It's hammer down—you've got to be in the gas good today.

"I had such an incredible car... (On the final restart) I don't know if I hit him (Smith) or if he stumbled... I had to get it done—we had too good of a piece."

Unfortunately, the fastest car on Saturday couldn't pass post-race inspection.

In a race that featured 14 cautions for 83 laps—with nine yellows occurring in the final stage—Parker Retzlaff ran second, a career

best; Harrison Burton was third, giving AM Racing its best-ever Xfinity Series finish; and Brennan Poole came home fourth, scoring his second top five in the last four races.

Sunoco rookie Taylor Gray completed the top five. Austin Hill, Josh Williams, Jeb Burton, Daniel Dye and Jeremy Clements finished sixth through 10th respectively.

Ryan Sieg led a race-high 77 laps, battling Love for the lead in the final stage, but was collected in a massive Lap 241 crash when Christian Eckes ran short of fuel on a restart and backed up the field behind him.

That wreck ruined the Dash 4 Cash hopes of the three other contenders for the bonus, Justin Allgaier, Carson Kvapil and Brandon Jones.

Nick Sanchez was out front for 52 circuits, including the first 44 of the race, but he, too, fell victim to the Lap 241 crash, which forced the first of two red-flag periods.

Carson Kvapil led 47 laps in the second stage as he and Love fought for the lead. Sanchez won Stage 1, and Dean Thompson scored the first-ever stage win for Sam Hunt Racing in Stage 2.

Fans who came to Rockingham anticipating a show weren't disappointed. A workable second groove opened above the bottom lane, and drivers were even able to roll three-wide through the corners on occasion, though some of the attempts to do so produced regrettable outcomes.

Katherine Legge's sixth Xfinity Series start—and her first since 2023 at Road America—came to an early end on Lap 52, when hard contact from William Sawalich turned her No. 53 Chevrolet sideways in Turn 1.

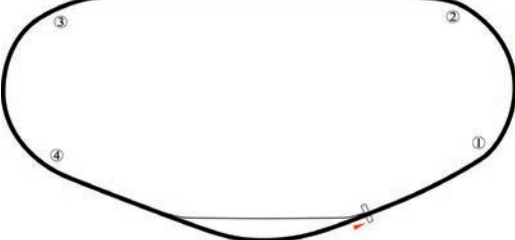
Unable to avoid Legge's spinning car, Kasey Kahne, making his first start in the series since 2017, sustained damage to the right front of his No. 33 Chevrolet, with the blow sending Legge's Camaro up the track into the outside wall, eliminating her from the race.

Legge had failed to qualify during time trials earlier in the day, but she arranged to take over JJ Yeley's ride and started from the rear because of the driver change. She had already been lapped by then-leader Jesse Love when the accident occurred.

Kahne had to pit for repairs to the nose of his car and lost a lap in the process, but he recovered to finish 14th.

The No. 19 Toyota of Justin Bonsignore also was disqualified for lug nuts not installed in a safe and secure manner. Bonsignore had finished 36th of 38 drivers before the disqualification.

## NEXT: JACK LINK'S 500



### Talladega Superspeedway 3 p.m. ET Sunday, FOX

Talladega Superspeedway, nicknamed "Dega," and formerly named Alabama International Motor Speedway, is a motorsports complex located north of Talladega, Alabama. It is located on the former Anniston Air Force Base in the small city of Lincoln.

**Capacity:** 80,000–175,000

**Length:** 2.66 mi (4.281 km)

**Surface:** Asphalt

**Banking:** Turns 1 & 2: 33°; Turn 3: 32.4°; Turn 4: 32.5°; Tri-oval: 16.5°; Back straight: 3°

#### DYK ...

• Alabama International Motor Speedway (AIMS) opened Sept. 14, 1969 with its first race, the Talladega 500, named in honor of the local people who helped bring the track from vision to reality. Richard Brickhouse wins the inaugural event.

• Talladega is the longest NASCAR oval, with a length of 2.66 miles (4.281 km), compared to the Daytona International Speedway, which is 2.5 miles (4.0 km) long. The total peak capacity of Talladega is around 175,000 spectators, with the main grandstand capacity 80,000.

• How fast do NASCAR's go at Talladega?

The Talladega record is 212 mph and has stood for over 30 years.

• Talladega has seen a wide amount of winners, but Brad Keselowski has the most wins there among active drivers with five.

• Talladega is known for first-time winners, including Bubba Wallace mor recently.

• Talladega Superspeedway is the most competitive racetrack on the NASCAR schedule (record 88 lead changes in 188 laps).

• Three- and four-wide racing at 200 mph are a norm at Talladega, along with nail-biting photo finishes.



Tyler Reddick celebrated the win with wife Alexa and son Beau last April at Talladega. (Getty)

### 2025 CUP SERIES STANDINGS

*Top 30 as of April 13*

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 William Byron #24	346	16 AJ Allmendinger #16	198
2 Denny Hamlin #11	316	17 Josh Berry #21	179
3 Christopher Bell #20	305	18 Ricky Stenhouse #47	176
4 Kyle Larson #5	304	19 Michael McDowell #71	174
5 Chase Elliott #9	278	20 Ty Gibbs #54	171
6 Ryan Blaney #12	275	21 J.H. Nemechek #42	171
7 Tyler Reddick #45	274	22 Austin Cindric #2	171
8 Bubba Wallace #23	251	23 Justin Haley #7	164
9 Joey Logano #22	245	24 Zane Smith #38	161
10 Alex Bowman #48	244	25 Carson Hocevar #77	157
11 Ross Chastain #1	229	26 Austin Dillon #3	155
12 Chris Buescher #17	227	27 Daniel Suárez #99	151
13 Chase Briscoe #19	213	28 Todd Gilliland #34	150
14 Ryan Preece #60	201	29 Ty Dillon #10	146
15 Kyle Busch #8	200	30 Erik Jones #43	139

### 2025 XFINITY SERIES STANDINGS

*Top 20 as of April 19*

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Justin Allgaier #7	411	11 Jeb Burton #27	251
2 Sammy Smith #8	331	12 Harrison Burton #25	243
3 Sam Mayer #41	324	13 Daniel Dye #10	240
4 Austin Hill #21	311	14 Taylor Gray #54	223
5 Jesse Love #2	287	15 Dean Thompson #26	220
6 Carson Kvapil #1	286	16 Christian Eckes #16	218
7 Brandon Jones #20	284	17 Nicholas Sanchez #48	218
8 Connor Zilisch #88	284	18 Brennan Poole #44	200
9 Ryan Sieg #39	277	19 Jeremy Clements #51	197
10 Sheldon Creed #00	254	20 Josh Williams #11	193

**NEXT RACE:** AG-PRO 300, Talladega

Superspeedway, 4 p.m. ET Saturday, CW

### 2025 TRUCK SERIES STANDINGS

*Top 20 as of April 18*

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Corey Heim #11	312	11 Gio Ruggiero #17	181
2 Chandler Smith #38	290	12 Ben Rhodes #99	179
3 Tyler Ankrum #18	250	13 Tanner Gray #15	161
4 Daniel Hemric #19	239	14 Rajah Caruth #71	159
5 Layne Riggs #34	232	15 Jack Wood #91	147
6 Ty Majeski #98	228	16 A. Perez De Lara #77	140
7 Jake Garcia #13	224	17 Matt Crafton #88	139
8 Grant Enfinger #9	218	18 Connor Mosack #81	131
9 Kaden Honeycutt #45	215	19 Dawson Sutton #26	123
10 Stewart Friesen #52	185	20 Matt Mills #42	122

**NEXT RACE:** SPEEDYCASH.COM 250, Texas Motor Speedway, 8 p.m. ET Friday, May 2, FS1

## XFINITY WINNER QUOTE

"It's a tough way to win that, but I feel like we'll take 'em any way we can get 'em. We waited here to see what happens, but overall, it was a good day, and I'm very happy with the progress we've made recently."

- Sammy Smith, who grabbed his first Xfinity win of the season in Saturday's North Carolina Education Lottery 250 when Jesse Love was disqualified



**Sammy Smith at Rockingham.**

JAMES GILBERT/GETTY IMAGES

# 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**