

O'REILLY SUMMER BREAK



Here's a look at a few O'Reilly Auto Parts Series drivers who have helped define 2026 so far.

Top of the charts

Justin Allgaier leads all drivers with six race victories, seven stage wins, 10 top-two finishes, 14 top-five finishes and 17 top-10 finishes for an 8.7 average finish.

Are we looking at the 2026 O'Reilly champion already? We very well might be, with the 2024 O'Reilly titleholder already eclipsing his previous career high for victories in a single season. Keep in mind, it's July. Whether Allgaier can keep this pace going remains to be seen, but there's no denying that the O'Reilly veteran is already well on his way to title No. 2.

About time ...

Sheldon Creed earned his first victory at EchoPark Speedway after a record 15 runner-up finishes before his breakthrough win.

For the better part of two years, the question was always when Creed would finally find Victory Lane. Runner-up after runner-up, though, could have easily changed the question to if. Not for Creed, however. The No. 00 Haas Factory Team pilot stuck to his guns, continued to exhibit speed and put himself in position to win until fate finally lent a helping hand. And on the final lap at EchoPark Speedway in February, all of the pieces finally came together in thrilling fashion.

Coming around

Carson Kvapil is the only full-time driver to race under three different car numbers this year. Kvapil leads all drivers in points earned since the first day of summer (June 21).

Navigating day-to-day operations with one team can be a busy assignment. How about three? Such has been the case for 23-year-old Kvapil, who has wheeled the No. 1 and No. 9 JR Motorsports machines this season, in addition to the No. 91 DGM Motorsports entry. No matter. If anything, challenge accepted. As the season has progressed, Kvapil has only gotten stronger, especially of late. Dating back to Naval Base Coronado (June 20), Kvapil has finished 11th or better in all five races, with his first series victory coming at Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Emotions aplenty

Austin Hill wins at Naval Base Coronado for Richard Childress Racing's first victory since the death of Kyle Busch.

A clutch last-lap pass at San Diego's Qualcomm Circuit netted Austin Hill his first career O'Reilly victory on a road course. The victory, however, held even more meaning for driver and team alike. The win was Richard Childress Racing's first as an organization since the death of longtime driver and sport icon Kyle Busch on May 21. "I'm not gonna lie, I started talking to this guy a little bit down the straightaways," Hill said while pointing to his No. 8 Busch hat. Hill found winning speed, prevailing in what has been the most memorable moment of the 2026 O'Reilly campaign.

CUP SUMMER BREAK



Tyler Reddick and Michael Jordan, NBA Hall of Famer and co-owner of 23XI Racing, celebrated a big season opening win at Daytona. JAMES GILBERT/GETTY

Reddick got things rolling in a season of surprises

Twenty-two Cup Series races down, four remaining in the regular season before we get Playoffs. With the Cup Series on summer break, here's a look at a few drivers who have helped define 2026 so far.

The opener

Tyler Reddick began 2026 by doing something no Cup driver had ever done: winning each of the season's first three races. The achievement was impressive enough on volume alone, but the manner of the victories made it more impressive, particularly since he kicked it off by winning a Daytona 500 for Michael Jordan. Different tracks, different race shapes and different late-race demands produced the same result, immediately and bafflingly positioning the No. 45 as the season's central force for the first few months; if you'll recall, Reddick won zero races all of last season. The perfect streak eventually ended, but Reddick's historic opening months created the foundation for five wins in nine races.

Sunday driver

A speeding penalty is the sort of mistake that rarely squanders a season in a season-long points system, but it can quietly dismantle an otherwise excellent race. **William Byron** has gone 29 consecutive events without one, the longest active streak in the Cup Series, and that discipline has prevented the No. 24 from donating track position on afternoons when margins are already thin. Hendrick Motorsports' fifth-ranked pit crew has generally performed at a high level around him, making Byron's clean record another component of an efficient operation. While the No. 24 is meandering through an otherwise frustrating season, underlying statistics like this prove they may not be as far off as they appear.

Bracket buster

A bracket seeded by regular-season performance gave **Todd Gilliland** the No. 25 position and every reason to be viewed as an early exit. Five rounds later, he owned the In-Season Challenge and its \$1 million prize. Gilliland never needed to become the fastest driver in the tournament; he needed to survive each matchup, avoid catastrophic mistakes and capitalize whenever the door cracked open. That formula carried him through a field loaded with championship contenders.

Most-improved

Carson Hocevar's talent was never particularly in question. But the major development in 2026 has been his ability to convert it into complete race weekends. His 14.01 average finish is 8.86 positions better than his 22.95 mark through 22 races last season, moving him all the way to fifth in points and 158 above The Chase cutline. Hocevar also ranks sixth in passing efficiency and has established himself as

a regular presence near the front rather than an occasional disruptor. The flashes have become a body of work and his ceiling continues to be heightened.

Mr. Short Track

This season as a whole has required course correction to some previously held assumptions, but NASCAR's tighter confines have continued speaking **Joey Logano**'s love language. The three-time champion has finished inside the top 10 in seven consecutive short-track races, the longest active streak in the Cup Series. That consistency tracks with the fundamentals that have defined his career: protecting the bottom, controlling traffic and knowing exactly how much space is actually available when the answer appears to be none. Whatever else has fluctuated in 2026, the short-track baseline has held and Logano remains the standard.

Leading man

Denny Hamlin has controlled more of the season than anyone else — both literally and figuratively. His 877 laps led are the most in the Cup Series and represent his highest total through 22 races in any year of his career. That last distinction carries real weight for a driver whose resume already spans two decades of winning and front-running seasons. Hamlin's current points lead has not been assembled through quiet consistency alone; the No. 11 has repeatedly dictated races, has possessed the series' best overall speed thus far and made the front of the field its natural habitat.

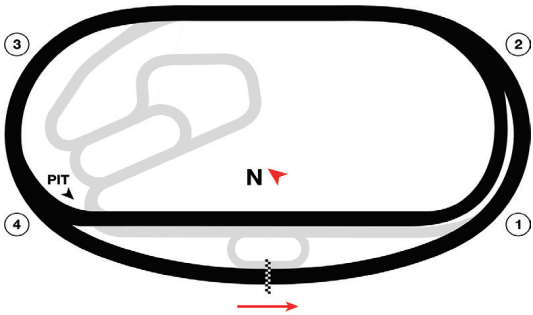
King of the road

Road-course races the past few years have stopped feeling like wild-card races and taken on a **Shane van Gisbergen** vs. the field sort of dynamic, which honestly has been equally electric. SvG has won seven of the last nine Cup events contested on road circuits, including two of the four this season. The statistic is staggering not simply because of the victory total, but because the venues and circumstances change, while the central premise does not. SvG continues leaving with the trophy often enough that anything else now qualifies as a major upset now. Best race

Best race

Here's looking at you, **EchoPark Speedway** — we're counting both races as a tie for the top here. The spring race produced double overtime, a track-record 57 lead changes and 29 of 38 cars involved in accidents before Tyler Reddick emerged from a damaged field with his second consecutive victory to open the season. The summer return then delivered a completely different endurance test following a three-hour weather delay, with Blaney leading 171 laps and another overtime finish decided by a last-lap pass and a three-wide charge to the stripe.

NEXT: IOWA CORN 350



Iowa Speedway

3:30 p.m. ET Sunday, TNT

- The Iowa Corn 350 (officially known as the Iowa Corn 350 powered by Ethanol) is held at Iowa Speedway in Newton, Iowa. William Byron is the defending race winner, having won in 2025.
- **First race:** 2024, won by Ryan Blaney
- **Distance:** 306.25 miles
- **Laps:** 350
- **Surface:** Asphalt
- **Length:** 0.875 miles
- **Turns:** 4



Squeezing 144 laps out of his fuel cell last season at Iowa Speedway, William Byron crossed the finish line ahead of pole winner Chase Briscoe, Brad Keselowski and defending race winner Ryan Blaney. Byron's No. 24 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet ran out of fuel during burnout. GETTY

2026 CUP SERIES STANDINGS			
Top 30 as of July 26			
Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 D. Hamlin Toyota	886	16 A. Cindric Ford	518
2 T. Reddick Toyota	802	17 R. Preece Ford	480
3 R. Blaney Ford	766	18 E. Jones Toyota	474
4 T. Gibbs Toyota	751	19 B. Keselowski Ford	468
5 C. Hocevar Chevrolet	638	20 M. McDowell Chevrolet	442
6 C. Elliott Chevrolet	635	21 R. Chastain Chevrolet	436
7 C. Briscoe Toyota	623	22 AJ Allmendinger Chevy	409
8 K. Larson Chevrolet	617	23 T. Gilliland Ford	406
9 C. Buescher Ford	613	24 Z. Smith Ford	393
10 C. Bell Toyota	609	25 R. Herbst Toyota	370
11 D. Suárez Chevrolet	583	26 R. Stenhouse Chevrolet	364
12 W. Byron Chevrolet	568	27 J. Nemechek Toyota	355
13 J. Logano Ford	545	28 A. Dillon Chevrolet	349
14 D. Wallace Jr. Toyota	540	29 A. Bowman Chevrolet	310
15 S. v Gisbergen Chevy	537	30 C. Custer Chevrolet	270

2026 O'REILLY AUTO PARTS STANDINGS			
Top 20 as of July 25			
Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Justin Allgaier #7	1016	11 Brent Crews #19	573
2 Carson Kvapil #1	751	12 Taylor Gray #54	567
3 Jesse Love #2	747	13 William Sawalich #18	560
4 Sheldon Creed #00	733	14 Rajah Caruth #32	547
5 Corey Day #17	719	15 Ryan Sieg #39	493
6 Brandon Jones #20	692	16 Anthony Alfredo #96	446
7 Austin Hill #21	688	17 Brennan Poole #44	394
8 Sammy Smith #8	658	18 Dean Thompson #26	389
9 Parker Retzlaff #99	619	19 Jeremy Clements #51	373
10 Sam Mayer #41	589	20 Jeb Burton #27	338

NEXT RACE: HYVEE PERKS 250, Iowa Speedway, 5 p.m. ET Saturday, CW

2026 CRAFTSMAN TIRE STANDINGS			
Top 20 as of July 24			
Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Layne Riggs #34	715	11 Tyler Ankrum #18	365
2 Kaden Honeycutt #11	616	12 Jake Garcia #98	341
3 Chandler Smith #38	563	13 A. Perez De Lara #44	331
4 Christian Eckes #91	496	14 Brenden Queen #12	330
5 Gio Ruggiero #17	491	15 Justin Haley #16	314
6 Ty Majeski #88	446	16 Tanner Gray #15	311
7 Ben Rhodes #99	408	17 Corey Heim #5	309
8 Grant Enfinger #9	391	18 Dawson Sutton #26	260
9 Daniel Hemric #19	379	19 Mini Tyrrell #14	233
10 Stewart Friesen #52	373	20 Cole Butcher #13	233

NEXT RACE: BLACK'S TIRE 250 PRES. BY BTS, Richmond, 7:30 p.m. ET Friday, Aug. 14, FS1

NASCAR DOCUSERIES DEBUT

NASCAR and USA Sports announced the debut of "NASCAR Americana," a three-part documentary series inspired by America's 250th birthday that explores the sport's unique place in the American story. Executive produced by Peyton Manning, the docuseries will debut at 7 p.m. ET Sunday on USA Network, following the Iowa Corn 350 at Iowa Speedway. From its roots on Southern back roads to its rise as a

national institution, the three-parter traces the people and traditions that have shaped stock car racing. Each episode reveals how a regional pastime evolved into an American cultural phenomenon: Part 1 (Sunday) — "Rebel Roots" traces NASCAR's origins from rebellious moonshiners. Part 2 (August 15) — "Family Bonds" explores the love of racing that has united families across generations. Part 3 (August 23) — "Enduring Spirit" follows NASCAR's transformation to national institution.

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