

# RACING THIS WEEK

At the NASCAR 2025 Season Awards Tuesday in Phoenix, longtime race announcer **Mike Joy** was awarded the prestigious Myers Brothers Award, voted on by the National Motorsports Press Association members for contributions to the sport.



## XFINITY AWARDS



**2025 NASCAR Xfinity Series Champion Jesse Love speaks onstage during the 2025 NASCAR Awards Show at JW Marriott Desert Ridge Resort & Spa on in Phoenix on Tuesday.** (Chris Graythen/Getty)

### Love: Tells family ‘this championship is for you, too’

On Tuesday evening in the JW Marriott Resort in Scottsdale, the 2025 NASCAR Xfinity Series champion, Richard Childress Racing’s Jesse Love, 20, delivered an emotional, heart-felt speech including a touching thank you to his family at the annual NASCAR Awards.

“To my mom and my sister. I know what you have sacrificed for me to chase this dream,” Love said. “The trips you didn’t take, the things you gave up, the years of stress and uncertainty. And I want you to know, tonight, that this championship is yours too. You both have carried me more times than you’ll ever realize.”

Love became emotional speaking about and thanking his father Duke, “My dad has been my coach, my best friend, my teammate, and my biggest believer.”

Love’s good friend and the Xfinity Series 10-race winner, 19-year-old JR Motorsports driver **Connor Zilisch**, accepted the Sunoco Rookie of the Year award, reiterating despite the tough championship race outcome he is proud of his team’s record-breaking effort this year. Asked which of his many wins he considered his “favorite,” Zilisch smiled and declared his victory at Pocono (Pa.) Raceway this summer as his best.

“Because [team owner] Dale [Earnhardt] Jr. was on the pit box,” Zilisch said, grinning. “Pretty cool, his first win as a crew chief.”

Joe Gibbs Racing’s No. 19 Toyota co-driven by six drivers this season claimed the owner’s title in the Xfinity Series.

JR Motorsports **Justin Allgaier**, the 2024 series champion, was the Xfinity Series Most Popular Driver for the sixth time and third consecutively.

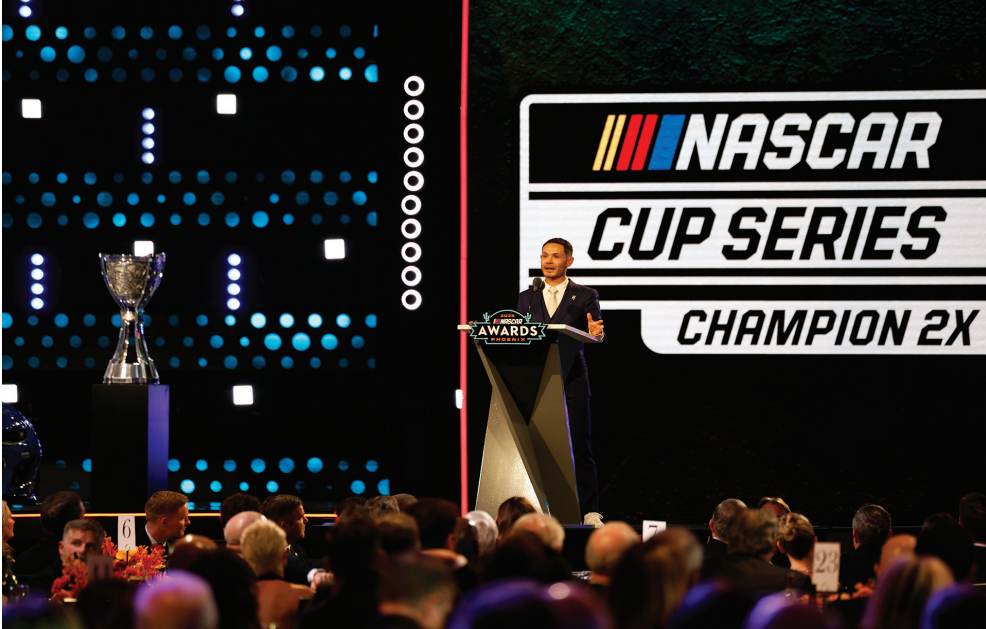
The Comcast Community Champion of the Year award announced Monday with the prestigious honor going to NASCAR Xfinity Series driver, Kaulig Racing’s **Daniel Dye** for his longstanding work in a suicide prevention. Dye founded non-profit “Race to Stop Suicide” in 2018 as a 14-year-old eighth-grader and has used his platform in NASCAR to spread the word and offer help to others.

“If you have a platform to do something good and you don’t use it, that’s a wasted opportunity,” Dye said.



**NASCAR Xfinity Series Daniel Dye, the 2025 Comcast Community Champion of the Year, on the red carpet during the 2025 NASCAR Awards Show.** (Chris Graythen/Getty)

## CUP AWARDS



**2025 NASCAR Cup Series Champion Kyle Larson speaks onstage during the 2025 NASCAR Awards Show at JW Marriott Desert Ridge Resort & Spa in Phoenix on Tuesday.** (Chris Graythen/Getty Images)

### Larson: Cup title win ‘embodied everything about our season’

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. – In the moments after Kyle Larson and his No. 5 Hendrick Motorsports team celebrated his milestone second-career Cup Series championship at Phoenix Raceway, Hendrick executive, NASCAR Hall of Famer and four-time series champion Jeff Gordon grinned when asked if he worried Larson may one day surpass his own championship trophy total.

“I believe that records and championships, they’re made to be broken,” a smiling Gordon said of Larson. “As long as he’s on our team, I want him to win 10 [championships].”

On Tuesday evening in the JW Marriott Resort in Scottsdale, Larson was celebrated, toasted and even playfully roasted at the annual NASCAR Awards, where the 2021 champ officially became only the sport’s third active full-time driver to earn multiple championships, adding the 2025 title to his resume of 32 series wins.

It marks the 15th Cup Series championship for Hall of Fame team owner Rick Hendrick and comes on the 30th anniversary year from Gordon’s first title.

NASCAR Commissioner Steve Phelps introduced Larson to the stage as a “Future first-ballot, NASCAR Hall of Famer” noting the only question that remains about the driver of the No. 5 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet is by how far he will exceed so many expectations.

After thanking his wife, three young children, parents, sister, team, his public relations manager Jon Edwards, who passed away unexpectedly early in the season, and so many friends, Larson delivered a heartfelt, inspiring champion’s speech, noting the perseverance displayed for a comeback title-run in Sunday’s championship race.

“Winning the championship really embodied everything about our season,” Larson said. “All the challenges, all the hard work, the setbacks we faced, and the fight we put in ... it all came together in that moment.”

“That win wasn’t just a finish line on a Sunday — it was a reflection of everything this team went through to get here,” said Larson, who closed his speech, dedicating the championship to Edwards.

Larson, now joins a short list of esteemed Californian multi-time champions, NASCAR Hall of Famers Gordon and seven-time series champion Jimmie Johnson.

The 33-year-old Elk Grove native has long been considered a generational crossover – a natural talent in any kind of car he steers, but especially so in NASCAR’s premier Cup

Series, where he posted three wins, earned a series best mark in laps led (1,106) and tied Joe Gibbs Racing’s Christopher Bell with the most top-10s (22) on the year.

He rallied to the championship win over good friend, JGR’s Denny Hamlin, JGR’s Chase Briscoe – a first time Championship Four competitor – as well as Larson’s Hendrick teammate, the regular season champion William Byron.

All four spoke Tuesday night – and for Hamlin it was an especially emotional turn considering the veteran led four times more laps than any other driver in Sunday’s race but was unable to catch Larson after a late race restart and pit stop cycle reshuffled him farther back in the field.

Hamlin was heartbroken in the moment and the 44-year-old conceded later during interviews that this will take some time to “get over.” But he was steadfast in his praise of his No. 11 JGR Toyota team and the six-win season they earned together. His win at Las Vegas in the Playoffs marked the three-time DAYTONA 500 winner’s 60th career victory.

“Really a proud moment for myself, my team, and my family, just a great day,” Hamlin said of that milestone win, adding of his 2025 season, “It was a good season, a great season, almost perfect.”

In his speech, Larson noted the emotional ending to Sunday’s race, with words for his friend Hamlin.

“I’ve got to give a special shout-out to Denny Hamlin,” Larson said. “Nobody in this sport works harder or expects more out of himself. Year after year, he raises the bar and pushes his competitors to be better. He holds himself to a true championship standard, and I think everyone in this room has a ton of respect for that.”

Also honored Tuesday was NASCAR Cup Series Sunoco Rookie of the Year, New Zealander **Shane van Gisbergen**. The former Australian SuperCars multi-time champion won a rookie record five races in the No. 88 Trackhouse Racing Chevrolet – all of them on road courses – and finished 12th in the championship in his series debut.

Perhaps the least “surprising” moment of the night came when Hendrick Motorsports’ **Chase Elliott** was announced as the NASCAR Cup Series’ Most Popular Driver. This is the eighth-consecutive time the 2020 series champion has claimed the honor as voted on by fans.

**Chevrolet** won the manufacturer’s championship in both the NASCAR Cup and Xfinity Series and **Toyota** claimed the title in the NASCAR CRAFTSMAN Truck Series.

## TRUCKS AWARDS



**2025 NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series Champion Corey Heim speaks onstage during the 2025 NASCAR Awards Show at JW Marriott Desert Ridge Resort & Spa in Phoenix on Tuesday.** (Chris Graythen/Getty)

### Heim: Thanks his dad for ‘belief in me from day one’

On Tuesday evening in the JW Marriott Resort in Scottsdale at the annual NASCAR Awards, another of the season’s most dominant 2025 competitors, 12-race winner TRICON Garage’s Corey Heim, 23, was celebrated for his NASCAR CRAFTSMAN Truck Series title.

The Georgia-native Heim set records in several competitive categories from his 12-trophy single season haul to the impressive record mark of leading at least one lap in every single race on the season (25).

“Before I was with Toyota — before any of this — it was just me and my dad,” Heim said. “My dad was my agent, my sponsor, and my number one fan. I’ve raced hundreds of times in my life, and I can count on one hand how many races he’s missed. He’s been there for every high and low. Thank you, Dad, for your unconditional support and belief in me from day one.”

When Heim took the lead from Chandler Smith on Lap 22 of the finals race, he completed a perfect record of leading laps in all 25 Truck Series races, a unique accomplishment. Heim finished the season with a record 1,625 laps led, eclipsing the mark of 1,533 set by Mike Skinner in 1996.

“I don’t care if I was on hundred-lap tires, nobody was going to beat me tonight,” asserted Heim, who won for the first time at Phoenix and the 23rd time in his career. “Drove it in deep until I couldn’t anymore. Drove away with it.”

Also honored Tuesday was the series’ Sunoco Rookie of the Year **Gio Ruggiero**, who claimed his first victory at Talladega Superspeedway only a few weeks ago.

Spire Motorsports driver **Rajah Caruth** won Series Most Popular Driver honor for the second straight year.

## 2025 CUP SERIES FINALS STANDINGS

*Champion 1 + 29 as of November 2*

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 <b>Kyle Larson #5</b>	<b>5034</b>	16 Josh Berry #21	2150
2 Denny Hamlin #11	5031	17 Chris Buescher #17	889
3 Chase Briscoe #19	5019	18 Ryan Preece #60	861
4 William Byron #24	5004	19 Ty Gibbs #54	783
5 Christopher Bell #20	2403	20 Brad Keselowski #6	762
6 Ryan Blaney #12	2373	21 Kyle Busch #8	737
7 Joey Logano #22	2330	22 Michael McDowell #71	734
8 Chase Elliott #9	2310	23 Carson Hocevar #77	702
9 Tyler Reddick #45	2309	24 Erik Jones #43	665
10 Ross Chastain #1	2272	25 J. H. Nemechek #42	664
11 Bubba Wallace #23	2256	26 AJ Allmendinger #16	649
12 S. v. Gisbergen #88	2192	27 Todd Gilliland #34	616
13 Alex Bowman #48	2192	28 Zane Smith #38	615
14 Austin Cindric #2	2156	29 Daniel Suárez #99	611
15 Austin Dillon #3	2152	30 Ricky Stenhouse #47	562

## 2025 XFINITY FINAL STANDINGS

*Champion 1 + 19 as of November 1*

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 <b>Jesse Love #2</b>	<b>4040</b>	11 Nicholas Sanchez #48	2198
2 Connor Zilisch #88	4034	12 Harrison Burton #25	2163
3 Justin Allgaier #7	4032	13 Christian Eckes #16	784
4 Carson Kvapil #1	4024	14 Jeb Burton #27	719
5 Brandon Jones #20	2240	15 Ryan Sieg #41	691
6 Austin Hill #21	2230	16 Dean Thompson #26	690
7 Taylor Gray #54	2228	17 Aric Almirola #19	652
8 Sammy Smith #8	2222	18 William Sawalich #18	636
9 Sheldon Creed #00	2218	19 Brennan Poole #44	608
10 Sam Mayer #41	2204	20 Daniel Dye #10	604

**NEXT RACE:** UNITED RENTALS 300, Daytona International, Saturday, Feb. 14, 2026, CW

## 2025 TRUCKS FINAL STANDINGS

*Champion 1 + 19 as of October 1*

Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 <b>Corey Heim #11</b>	<b>4040</b>	11 Gio Ruggiero #17	703
2 Ty Majeski #98	4035	12 Ben Rhodes #99	632
3 Kaden Honeycutt #52	4034	13 Tanner Gray #15	599
4 Tyler Ankrum #18	4023	14 Connor Mosack #81	515
5 Layne Riggs #34	2297	15 Matt Crafton #88	494
6 Rajah Caruth #71	2237	16 A. Perez De Lara #44	472
7 Grant Enfinger #9	2198	17 Matt Mills #42	456
8 Chandler Smith #38	2179	18 Dawson Sutton #26	447
9 Daniel Hemric #19	2177	19 Jack Wood #91	443
10 Jake Garcia #13	2148	20 Stewart Friesen #52	397

**NEXT RACE:** SEASON OPENER, Daytona International Speedway, Friday, Feb. 13, 2026, FS1

## BONUS LARSON QUOTE

“Winning the championship really embodied everything about our season. All the challenges, all the hard work, the setbacks we faced, and the fight we put in ... it all came together in that moment. That win wasn’t just a finish line on a Sunday — it was a reflection of everything this team went through to get here.”

— 2025 Cup Champion Kyle Larson



Kyle Larson poses with the Bill France 2025 and 2021 Cup Series Championship trophies after winning the Championship at Phoenix Raceway

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