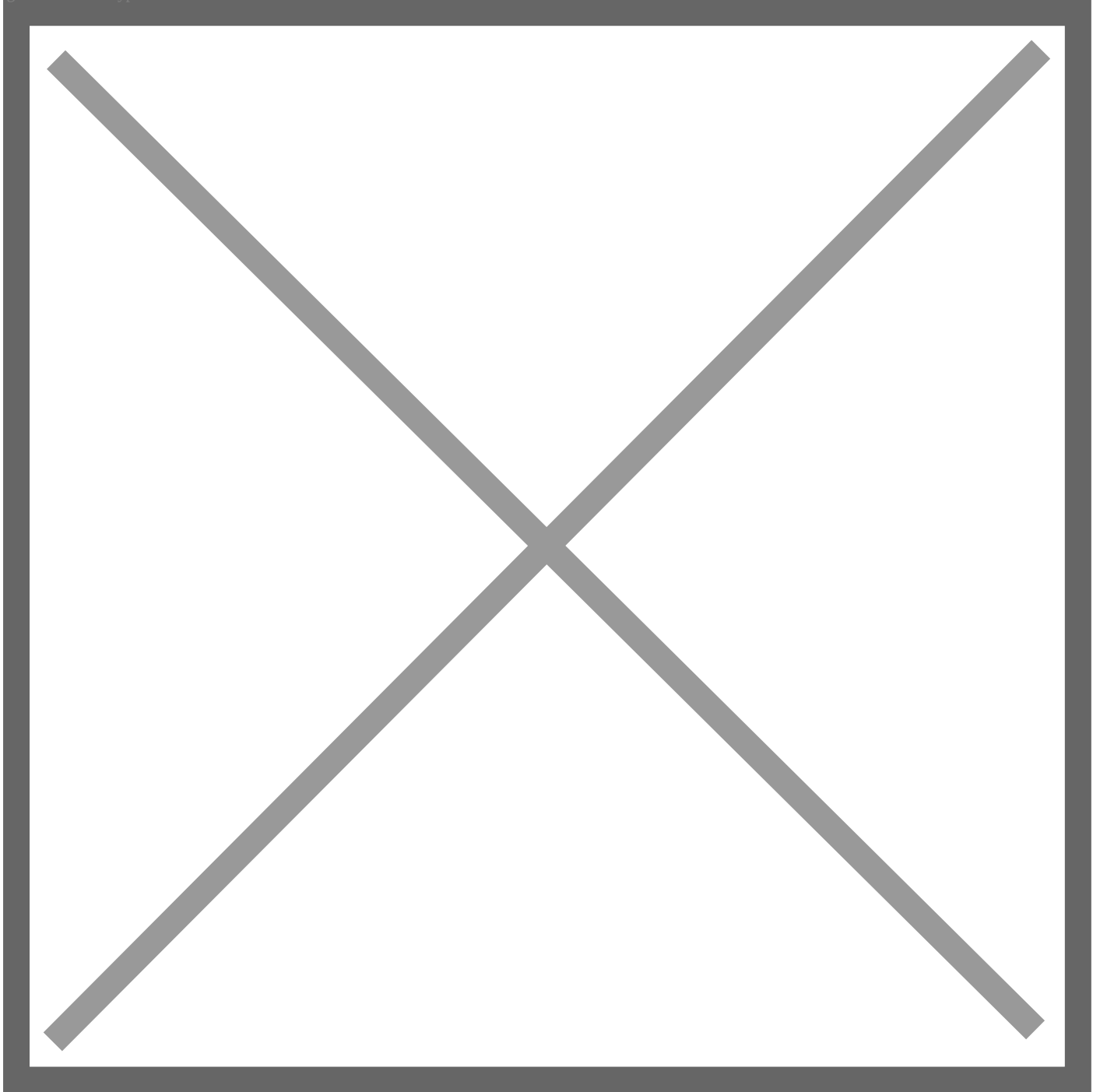


Toyota Victories from Coast to Coast

March 19, 2018

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MENCS

Martin Truex Jr. appeared to be in a class of his own at Southern California's Auto Club Speedway after earning the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series (MENCS) pole position. He then led a race-high 125 laps (of 200),

claimed both of the event's stages wins and drove his Camry to his first victory of the year with a margin of victory exceeding 11 seconds Sunday.

The victory was Truex' first-career Cup Series win at Auto Club Speedway and Toyota's first MENCS win at the California track since 2014. On the strength of four-consecutive top-five finishes through five races this season where he's led at least one lap in all races this year, the defending MENCS champion takes control of the point standings.

"We were just fighting hard and never gave up on it," Truex said, from victory lane. "I knew we really had a good race car – after the first adjustment of the race, the thing just came alive. From there it was just about managing my tires and being smart. I was out at TRD (Toyota Racing Development) this week and they gave me this hat. It must be good luck. Thank you guys for great engines. This is a dream come true."

Four MENCS Toyota drivers finished together in the top-10 with Kyle Busch (third), Denny Hamlin (sixth) and Erik Jones (seventh) following Truex to the checkered flag. The strong performances came in the backyard of TRD, USA (Toyota Racing Development), which is based in nearby Costa Mesa, California, where the Cup Series Camry engines are built.

NXS

Camry driver Ryan Preece finished ninth in Saturday's NASCAR Xfinity Series race at Auto Club Speedway. His Joe Gibbs Racing teammate Christopher Bell won his third NXS pole position of the year, but was relegated to a 21st-place result after being involved in an on-track incident at the two-mile track.

Camry driver Brandon Jones finished 13th in his fifth NXS race with JGR and has finished inside the top-20 in each contest this season.

NASCAR K&N West

Derek Kraus was victorious Thursday night in the NASCAR K&N Pro Series West season-opener in Bakersfield, California. His Bill McAnally Racing Toyota teammates Cole Rouse (third) and Hailie Deegan (seventh) also recorded top-10s.

NHRA

Toyota driver Richie Crampton captured his eighth-career NHRA Top Fuel win Sunday and first since with Kalitta Motorsports at the NHRA Gatornationals at Florida's Gainesville Raceway.

On the way to the finals, Crampton knocked out his teammate Doug Kalitta with a hole-shot in round one and then eliminated Mike Salinas in round two to set up a semi-final match-up with fellow Toyota driver Antron Brown. Both cars smoked the tires as changing conditions saw track temperatures rise by almost 40 degrees during the day, but it was Crampton that would come away with the victory.

"It was pretty interesting," Crampton said of his Gainesville victory. "As always, we were able to make great power at Gainesville. The track temps were just up a bit and it made the crew chiefs just pull their hair out. It made it a little bit more of a driver's race and it evened the playing field a little bit. I thrived on it. I loved it. It was one of my most rewarding wins ever."

Shawn Langdon registered his second semi-final Funny Car appearance in three races since moving over from Top Fuel after last season.

What's Next:

The Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series heads to Virginia after three weeks out West to compete at Martinsville Speedway this Sunday, March 25 at 2:00 p.m. ET on FS1.

The NASCAR Xfinity Series takes two weeks off before returning to action at Texas Motor Speedway on Saturday, April 7.

Tundra drivers are back in action this week when the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series (NCWTS) races at Martinsville Saturday, March 24 at 2:00 p.m. ET on FS1.

NHRA also takes two weeks off to gear up for Las Vegas' first four-wide April 6-8.