

CJ Greaves Captures TORC Title, NASCAR Drivers Advance in Playoffs

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NASCAR

Two Toyota Camry drivers are now locked into the second round of the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series (MENCS) Playoffs as Kyle Busch captured the victory on Sunday afternoon at New Hampshire Motor Speedway. He joins Chicago-winner Martin Truex Jr. as two-of-12 drivers who will advance to the second round following next week's event at Dover International Speedway.

"It's fun to drive these Toyota Camrys with how fast they are," Busch said, following the race. "You know, it's a great opportunity for us to put them in victory lane. It was just a great day for our team and for the 18 team we were able to execute all day long and we did everything right. We did everything we were supposed to do and that's where you end up when we're able to do those things and it was a great race up front too with the 78 (Martin Truex Jr.) there."

After starting from the pole position, Busch relinquished the lead to fellow Camry driver Truex who won the race's first stage. Truex was well on his way to capturing the race's second stage, but an accident on the final lap of the segment collected the race leader along with several other Playoff contenders. Truex was able to continue on and finish the race in the fifth position. Camry drivers Matt Kenseth (third), Erik Jones (sixth) and Daniel Suárez (eighth) also joined Busch and Kenseth in the top 10.

Toyota continued its dominance at the New Hampshire oval leading 299 laps (of 300) with Busch out front for 187 laps and Truex taking time at the point for 112 laps. Camry drivers have now won a total of nine MENCS races at New Hampshire, including five of the last six events.

The MENCS Playoffs continue next week as the 'round of 16' is cut down to the 'round of 12' at Dover International Speedway in Delaware.

Toyota driver Christopher Bell was victorious in the opening Playoffs race for the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series (NCWTS) at New Hampshire Motor Speedway on Saturday afternoon.

Bell led a race-high 73 laps (of 150) to claim his fifth triumph of the year – and an automatic berth into the next three-race round of the postseason – and hold his lead in the Truck Series point standings.

"It's huge to know that we can go and be aggressive at Vegas and Talladega and try and race for more wins," Bell said from victory lane of the next races in the first round. "It's huge for us. To be able to win five races in a year is incredible."

Bell led four Toyota drivers in claiming the top-four finishing positions, as Ryan Truex finished second, Todd Gilliland took third and Grant Enfinger claimed fourth. The third-place result marked the career-best finish for 17-year-old Gilliland in just his fourth NCWTS start.

"For one thing or another, we just haven't really got the finished that we wanted, so it definitely feels good to finish this one off," Gilliland said. "I had Kyle Busch (team owner) on the radio telling me what he felt through his Cup car and everything and I feel like that really helped a lot. With all those little things that Kyle Busch Motorsports provides, you should be able to get the finishes that we got today and it's definitely just a big confidence booster going into the next one."

In addition to Bell being one-of-eight drivers competing for the title in the NCWTS Playoffs, Tundra championship contenders and ThorSport Racing teammates Matt Crafton and Ben Rhodes finished sixth and seventh, respectively.

Later Saturday evening in Kentucky, Camry driver Ryan Preece had the highest-finishing Toyota in the night's NASCAR XFINITY Series (NXS) race at Kentucky Speedway.

Preece led the field for 22 laps (of 200) en route to his third top-five result in three starts for Joe Gibbs Racing (JGR) in a Camry this season.

"Fourth – it's a top five, it's a good day, but I wanted to win," Preece said. "I fought loose on that last run. We were pretty good that second to last run, but that last run we were just a little too loose. Quite a bit loose. Overall, the track is just a real fast track and if you got to get out of the gas, it really hurts your center speed. Overall, it's a good day to finish fourth and move on."

Preece's JGR teammate Kyle Benjamin started from the pole and led 52 laps, but finished 12th, while Camry full-timer and NXS title contender Matt Tifft finished ninth in the first race of the NXS Playoffs. Tifft is one of 12 drivers vying for the NXS driver's championship.

NASCAR next races at Dover International Raceway as all three national series competing at the Delaware track from Friday to Sunday, Sept. 29 – Oct. 1.

NHRA

Antron Brown advanced to the Top Fuel semi-finals to lead Toyota at the NHRA Nationals at Maple Grove Raceway in Mohnton, Pennsylvania on Sunday.

Brown defeated fellow Toyota driver Richie Crampton in the first round and polesitter Clay Millican in round two to advance before falling to Brittany Force.

"It's a little frustrating, but we have to look at where we started from," Brown said. "We dug ourselves out of a hole this weekend in qualifying eighth. We ran good today, but had some blower belt issues where the belts were breaking on us. We should have run a .71 in the first round and then we ran a .77 in the second round and should have run a 3.75. Our car was right there and we kept the car where it needed to be, but it got a little aggressive on us in the semi-final. We could have run anything and won that. That's the disappointing part."

After qualifying second, Doug Kalitta won his opening round Top Fuel match-up, but was eventually eliminated in round two by Dom Lagana, who eliminated fellow Toyota driver Shawn Langdon in round one. Kalitta currently sits second in the point standings, while Brown is fourth with four races remaining in the Playoffs.

In Funny Car, Camry drivers J.R. Todd, Alexis DeJoria and Cruz Pedregon all fell in the opening round.

NHRA next competes at Gateway Motorsports Park, outside of St. Louis, Missouri, for the AAA NHRA Midwest Nationals, Sept. 29 – Oct. 1.

TORC

CJ Greaves clinched his third consecutive TORC: The Off-Road Championship PRO 4 title with a dominating victory on Sunday at ERX Motor Park in Round 13 of the Final Rounds. The 22-year-old also won on Friday and placed second on Saturday in the weekend's triple-header.

In the final race, Greaves started on the third row following a top-six inverted start, but quickly made his way to the front and never looked back after passing leader Scott Douglas, who experienced a mechanical issue.

"This is one of the toughest seasons we've had so far in PRO 4," Greaves said. "We're usually known as the guy

that's Mr. Consistency. This year we either won or were off the podium."

For the season, Greaves drove his Toyota Tundra to eight victories in 13 TORC events. CJ's father, Johnny, finished second in the championship and second in the final race of the season.

USAC

Spencer Bayston went wire-to-wire at the USAC 4-Crown Nationals at Eldora Speedway on Saturday night to give Toyota its 30th national midget car feature win of the season. With the win, Bayston now holds a 66-point lead in the championship standings.

"It makes it easy when you have a good group of guys working behind you," Bayston said of his Keith Kunz Motorsports team. "They know what they're doing and it definitely shows. I felt so comfortable. We raced here last night in the wing car and didn't do that great, but I really think it helped me. Coming here tonight in the midget, it felt like everything was in slow motion for me."

The win marked the fifth national feature win for Bayston this season as the 19-year-old has now won two-of-the-three crown jewel races on the USAC schedule after previously winning the Belleville Midget Nationals. He will go for the sweep at the Turkey Night Grand Prix on Thanksgiving, Nov. 23.

Fellow Toyota drivers Brady Bacon finished third while Tanner Thorson was fifth, one spot ahead of Holly Shelton who won the race's Hard Charger Award after racing from 13th to an eventual sixth-place finish. Chad Boat (seventh) and Tanner Carrick (eighth) also placed their Toyotas in the top eight.

The USAC National Midget Series returns to action Oct. 22 at the Wayne County Speedway in Wayne, Illinois.

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