

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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## NASCAR 2018

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

### “Rowdy” Kyle Wins; Final-4 Set

Phoenix, AZ - “Rowdy” Kyle Busch proved to be the class of the field in Sunday’s next to last NASCAR Cup Series race of the 2018 season.

Busch is one of four drivers that will battle it out for the championship next week at Homestead, FL. The other three are: Joey Logano, Martin Truex Jr., and Kevin Harvick.

Busch didn’t seem to have the fastest car at the beginning of the 312-lap race, but he was able to win Stage 2, and remained near the front for the balance of the race. He lost the lead twice in the closing laps, first to Erik Jones, and then to Aric Almirola. But each time he battled back, and finished .50-seconds ahead of runner-up Brad Keselowski.

“It was definitely a good day for us,” said Busch. “We didn’t have a winning car at the beginning of the race, but it kept getting better and faster.”

Kyle Larson was third, followed by Aric Almirola.

Polesitter Kevin Harvick had a flat tire on lap 78 while leading the race. A pit stop under green cost him a lap. He got back on the lead lap, but was not a threat to Busch at the end. He finished fifth.

“We were in big trouble with that flat,” said Harvick. “We caught a caution at the right time and that helped us get back where we needed to be.”

Jamie McMurray, Matt Kenseth, Austin Dillon, William Byron and Bubba Wallace rounded out the top 10 finishers.

There were 10 cautions, involving 16 different drivers. Four of the drivers that were still in the Chase were caught up in at least one of them.

Joey Logano wrecked on lap 95, and wound up finishing 37th.

Clint Bowyer had a tire go down on his No. 14 during lap 133. He hit the outside wall, demolishing his car.

“Never knew it was coming,” said Bowyer. “There was nothing I could do. The back end came around, and that was it.”

Perhaps the most costly wreck came during a restart on lap 269. Denny Hamlin went up the track and into Kurt Busch, putting Busch into the wall. The cars spun around, and when Busch began to slide down the track, he broadsided Chase Elliott, who was trying to dodge the two spinning cars.

“Denny came out of nowhere,” said Busch. “I had the spot and he just pushed me over. It was the best car I’ve had, but we didn’t get the job done.”

Elliott, who was also hoping to gain one of the final-4 spots after winning the race’s first stage, saw his championship hopes dashed. His team made repairs to his car, but he was unable to run with the leaders when racing went back green.

Note: The number of drivers in each series has been narrowed to four. Each series title will be determined by the highest finishing driver next weekend at Homestead, Fla.

#### BELL TAKES XFINITY RACE

Christopher Bell led 94 laps on the way to victory in Saturday’s Xfinity Series race. Daniel Hemric was second, followed by Matt Tifft, Austin Cindric, Ryan Preece, Tyler Reddick, Brandon Jones, Cole Custer, John Nemechek, and Spencer



“Rowdy” Kyle and wife Samantha at Phoenix Gallagher.

The Final-4 drivers that are still in the Chase are: Cole Custer, Christopher Bell, Tyler Reddick, and Daniel Hemric.

Here are the results of Friday’s NASCAR’s Phoenix Truck Series race: 1. Brett Moffitt, 2. Noah Gragson, 3. Harrison Burton, 4. Grant Enfinger, 5. Stewart Friesen, 6. Tyler Ankrum, 7. Johnny Sauter, 8. Derek Kraus, 9. Christian Eckes, 10. Sheldon Creed.

The top-4 drivers that will vie for this year’s championship are: Brett Moffitt, Justin Haley, Johnny Sauter, and Noah Gragson.

#### TRUEX AND CREW CHIEF TO JOIN JGR

Martin Truex Jr., his crew chief, Cole Pearn and other members of the No. 78 team have signed up with Joe Gibbs Racing, beginning with the 2019 racing season.

JGR announced last week that Truex will replace Daniel Suarez in the No. 19 Toyota.

“Anytime you have an opportunity to bring people of this caliber into your organization, it’s certainly an exciting time,” said Gibbs. “They obviously have developed a chemistry that has led to tremendous success, including a championship. We’ve gotten to know them well over the past few years through the alliance and having been part of the Toyota family. They will make us stronger as an organization.”

Truex and Pearn have been together on the No. 78 team since 2014. They captured the 2017 NASCAR Championship. Truex has 19 career Cup Series wins, including a career-high eight victories in his championship season. He currently has four wins this season and remains in contention for the 2018 Championship.

Pearn was elevated to his current role as crew chief for the No. 78 following the 2014 season after serving as the lead race engineer. The team has captured 17 wins in the four seasons since that time.

“I’m really excited to have the opportunity to join Joe Gibbs Racing,” said Truex. “Obviously to be able to make this transition and still be able to work alongside Cole is something that was very important to me. There is also a real comfort level working with the JGR team and I wanted to stay in the Toyota family. We still have big goals for the remainder of this season, but it’s nice to know what we will be doing in 2019.”

Sponsorship for the No.

19 Toyota Camry in 2019 is still being finalized and will be announced at a later date.

#### NASCAR OFFERS TO BUY ISC

NASCAR has made an offer to buy International Speedway Corporation, owner and operator of 13 motorsports facilities.

NASCAR’s proposal letter indicates there would be no impact on the France family’s “long-term commitment to the sport, nor its interest in maintaining its current ownership in ISC, as the family is not interested in selling its shares of ISC at this time.”

The disclosure document said the intention is to combine the two into one privately held group of companies with the France family as primary owners.

“In a highly competitive sports and entertainment landscape, a more unified strategic approach is important to our future growth,” said Jim France, NASCAR chairman and CEO. “We believe the industry requires structural changes to best position the sport for long term success and this offer represents a positive step forward in that direction.”

**Racing Joke:** Little Susie, a six-year-old, complained, “Mother, I’ve got a stomach ache.”

“That’s because your stomach is empty,” the mother replied. “You would feel better if you had something in it.”

That afternoon, Ryan, her father, came in complaining that he had a severe headache all day.

Susie perked up, “That’s because it’s empty,” she said. “You’d feel better if you had something in it.”

**Weekend Racing:** The last NASCAR racing of the season will be Nov. 16-18 at Homestead, Fla.

Fri., Nov. 16; Truck Series race 23 of 23; Starting time: 8 p.m. ET; TV: FoxSports1.

Sat., Nov. 17; Xfinity Series race 33 of 33; Starting time: 3:30 p.m. ET; TV: NBCSN.

Sun., Nov. 18; Cup Series race 36 of 36; Starting time: 2:30 p.m. ET; TV: NBC.

**Racing Trivia Question:** Where will this year’s NASCAR Cup Series banquet be held?

**Last Week’s Question:** Who was the first Cup Series champion under the Chase format? Answer: It was Kurt Busch, in a Roush Ford.

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## Pickleball Beginners’ Class Holds Tournament



(L-R): Tony Newbern; Susan Phillips; Ron Eno, first place winner; Carol Flynn; Sandi Camp, second place winner; Deborah Honnen; Hollis Hemrick

Pickleball classes are always a popular choice in the OASIS (Outstanding Adults Sharing in Service) program of the First United Methodist Church of Union County. There is usually a waiting list for both the beginner and intermediate classes.

On November 1, the last day of the Fall Quarter, several members of the Beginner Class competed with each other in a “round robin” style tournament to test the skills learned over the last eight weeks. The competition was tough, with everyone using the methods that they

had learned from the skills and drills sessions. First place was won by Ron Eno, with Sandi Camp being runner-up with just a one point difference.

Winter Quarter, beginning in January, will offer an intermediate class which will be an opportunity for the graduates of the beginners’ class to advance in the sport. Volunteer instructors are Pam Collins and Bob Haist, both certified pickleball instructors, Charles Smith, Nancy Smith, Karen Richards, Lois Swan, and Carleen Hughes.

Thanks go to Pastor Stan

Wallace and OASIS Registrar Alan Zimmerman for organizing and facilitating the classes and the use of the MAC (Methodist Activity Center) for playing time. The sport is a great way to get exercise, learn a new sport, make good friends, and develop a life long hobby.

Sole County Commissioner Lamar Paris is currently making plans for permanent courts to meet the needs of the fast growing population of pickleball players. To learn about pickleball, go on YouTube, or the www.Pickleball-Channel.com. NT(Nov14,Z9)CA

## Towns Co. Middle School sweeps Copper Basin, TN



The Towns County Middle School Indians played a terrific game against Copper Basin, Tennessee, on Monday, Nov. 5. The boys ended up walking away with a one-sided 48-8 victory over the visiting Cougars. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



The Towns County Middle School Lady Indians outscored their Lady Cougar counterparts 23-11 in a fierce game of basketball at home on Monday, Nov. 5. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

## Upward Indoor Soccer Registration

**BLAIRSVILLE** - House of Prayer Church is pleased to announce its Upward 2019 Indoor Soccer season for boys and girls in grades Kindergarten through 8th Grade, with on-line registration now available at www.hopb.org.

Registration will remain open through January 19, 2019 at the cost of \$60 per child, and payment plans are available, if needed. Convenient weekly practices commence the week of January 14, 2019, while 6 games will be played on Saturdays between February 2nd and March

9th. Registrants should attend the evaluation that will be held on Tuesday, December 4th on a drop-in basis between the hours of 5:30 and 7:00 p.m. at the House of Prayer Family Life Center gym. For more information regarding registration, call the HOP church office at (706) 745-5925.

Established in 1995, Upward Sports is the world’s largest Christian youth sports provider. It remains unique by providing a substitution system that ensures every young

athlete plays, and conveniently requires only one 1-hour practice a week followed by one game per week. Upward Sports develops total athletes mentally, athletically, spiritually, and socially – producing players who excel both on and off the field. Today, approximately 6.2 million players have participated at more than 2,000 churches in 47 states, in camps, clinics, and leagues through Upward Sports’ Recreation Division. Information regarding Upward Sports can be found online at www.upward.org.