



KYLE BUSCH

Eyes on the Prize

HUNTERSVILLE, North Carolina (Oct. 1, 2019) – As the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series heads to Dover (Del.) International Speedway for Sunday’s fourth playoff race of the season and first in the Round of 12, Kyle Busch and his No. 18 Interstate Batteries Toyota team for Joe Gibbs Racing (JGR) have their eyes firmly on the prize.

Busch is looking to put his start to the playoffs in the rearview mirror and is focused on starting the second round with a win in Sunday’s Drydene 400 at Dover. While Busch led 203 laps and finished in the runner-up spot two weeks ago at Richmond (Va.) Raceway, finishes in the playoff opener at Las Vegas Motor Speedway and the first-round finale on the Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway roval road course were not what the team was looking for. However, with a new round of the playoffs comes a reset of the point standings. The slate is wiped clean and Busch leads the standings with a fresh set of races ahead of him and the Interstate Batteries team as they continue their focus on the prize at the end of the year – the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series championship trophy.

Busch will look to add to his three career wins at the “Monster Mile,” where many remember his most recent win in the October 2017 race, which he brought home in dramatic fashion. The Interstate Batteries driver caught and passed leader Chase Elliott in the final laps and held on for another “Miles the Monster” trophy, which is awarded to each winner at the challenging concrete mile oval. It was Busch’s first fall win at Dover, and his second win in as many weeks as he was victorious the previous weekend at New Hampshire Motor Speedway in Loudon. The 2015 Cup Series champion and his Interstate Batteries team have been looking forward to the Round of 12 of this year’s playoffs for a couple of weeks after the aforementioned runner-up finish at Richmond Sept. 21 was enough to advance. His lead in the newly reset playoff standings is five points over second-place Martin Truex Jr., his JGR teammate.

The familiar green-and-white-striped Interstate Batteries colors will return this weekend for the sixth and final time in 2019. The iconic partnership continues the impressive run by JGR’s founding sponsor in the 28th consecutive year Interstate has been a primary sponsor on the No. 18 car owned by three-time Super Bowl-winning coach Joe Gibbs.

In addition to his three career wins at Dover, Busch and his Interstate Batteries team have some impressive overall stats there to bolster their confidence this weekend. Along with the wins in NASCAR’s top series, Busch has scored five NASCAR Xfinity Series wins and four NASCAR Gander Outdoors Truck Series wins at Dover. Busch has led 1,188 laps in his previous 27 Cup Series starts at Dover, an average of 44 per race. He’s also scored 12 top-five finishes and 18 top-10s at the track.

So, as the Interstate Batteries team heads to Dover, Busch will have no problem keeping his eyes on the ultimate prize during Sunday afternoon’s 400-miler on the Delmarva Peninsula in Delaware’s capital city. A win would make for an automatic bid into the playoffs’ Round of 8, and get him and his team a step closer to his shot at a second career Cup Series championship.

KYLE BUSCH, Driver of the No. 18 Interstate Batteries Toyota Camry for Joe Gibbs Racing:

Is it all about winning the opening race in the playoff rounds?

“You strive to go out there and win every single time you’re on the racetrack but, if you put yourself in a bad spot or try or push too hard and you get yourself out of whack and crashed or something like that, obviously that’s going to be way worse for yourself. So you have to be mindful of those situations and you have to pick and choose your battles. If we are in a position to try and win one on Sunday with our Interstate Batteries Toyota, we’ll try and take advantage of it, for sure.”

What does it take to be successful at Dover?

“Obviously, the race in the spring there was really frustrating for us, so I’m hoping that we find more than we did there the last time with these cars the way they are now. Dover, being a concrete track, is challenging. They’re all a challenge, but Dover is especially so, just because of the way you have to run around that place. The way tires sometimes wear out. The way the rubber gets put down there. You’ve got to be fast through the corner. Two-thirds of your lap time is through the turns rather than down the straightaway, so you definitely have to make sure you have a good-handling racecar – one that’s good in the beginning of the run on low air pressures and one that’s good at the end of the run on high air pressures, and even through traffic, too. Some of the most challenging times are when you’re trying to get through traffic with guys.”

Do you enjoy racing at Dover?

“It’s definitely a fast racetrack. It’s a fun racetrack, too. It makes it interesting when you get to traffic, when you have to pass guys, when you’re kind of falling down into the hole and jumping back up out of the hole to the straightaways. It’s a good place to race. It’s a competitive racetrack and, when the rubber gets laid down, it definitely changes the whole atmosphere and the whole way you run around that place.”

Does going from concrete to asphalt change the way the car handles?

“We don’t run on an asphalt racetrack that’s banked like that or shaped like that. The mile tracks we go to that are asphalt are Phoenix and Loudon, and they are relatively flat. The concrete just changes the feel a little bit, of course, and changes the way you approach the racetrack, too.”

You have three Cup Series wins and a competitive history at Dover. What is your outlook with your history there?

“I went there when I was 18 to race in the Xfinity Series for my first time. It will scare you the first time you race there. You carry so much speed at that racetrack and, for it to be a mile in length and for it to be concrete – concrete surfaces that we race on, anyway, are a little bit slick. It’s definitely a roller-coaster ride and you need to treat it like it’s fun and not to be scared of the place, I think, because you can get so much out of that place. There are two ways about it – you can probably be really, really good there, or really, really bad there. Some days you’re going to be better than others, obviously, with how you can get your car set up compared to the competition.”

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