

NASCAR SPRING RACE WEEKEND

FRIDAY-SATURDAY-SUNDAY MARCH 9-10-11

LAST NASCAR EVENT WITH OLD STANDS, INFIELD, START-FINISH LINE

PHOTOS: RANDALL BOHL

NASCAR Spring Race Weekend kicked off with practice sessions for both the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series and NASCAR XFINITY Series on Friday; up and coming NASCAR drivers in the DC Solar 200 NASCAR XFINITY Series Race on Saturday; and NASCAR Goes West with Champions Kevin Harvick and Kyle Busch taking on young guns like Kyle Larson and Chase Elliott on the track on Sunday.

FRIDAY: GATORADE POLE DAY: Reigning Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series champion Martin Truex Jr. started his quest for a first career win at ISM Raceway by claiming the pole on Friday for the TicketGuardian 500—his second career pole here, with a lap of 136.945 mph, giving him two top fives and eight top 10s in 24 races here. His best finish was a third in last November's Can-Am 500, during an incredible run to his first Series championship.

Truex was trailed by three young guns also searching for their first win at ISM Raceway—Kyle Larson, missed the pole by six one-hundredths of a second, and started alongside Truex on the front row, then Chase Elliott and Tucson native Alex Bowman, Hendrick Motorsports teammates. Rounding out the top five was Joey Logano, winner of the 2016 fall race.

SATURDAY: DC SOLAR 200: Brad Keselowski, driver of the No. 22 car for Team Penske, overcame a stage two pit road speeding penalty and multiple weather delays to outlast the field in the DC Solar 200 NASCAR XFINITY Series (NXS) race at ISM Raceway. With Keselowski's victory, Roger Penske became the winningest team owner in ISM Raceway history with

15 including six in NASCAR. Keselowski had to endure two red flags for rain during the race. The first came on lap 47 at the end of Stage 1 and lasted for an hour and 34 minutes; the second was at the end of Stage 2 for 25 minutes. In his second career NXS win here, he led 66 of 200 laps, including the final 22.

Pit road strategy, with four cautions and two red flags, led to 10 lead changes throughout the race. Justin Allgaier, 2017 DC Solar 200 winner, earned the pole Saturday afternoon, led a race-high 76 laps and finished second, Kyle Busch third, rookie Christopher Bell fourth and Jamie McMurray fifth.

SUNDAY: TICKETGUARDIAN 500: Kevin Harvick, driver of the No. 4 for Stewart-Haas Racing, became the first driver since 2015 to win three consecutive races in the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series by claiming the victory in Sunday's TicketGuardian 500—his ninth career victory in Phoenix, extending his all-time wins record here. It was also Harvick's 40th career win, tying him with NASCAR Hall of Famer Mark Martin for 18th on the career wins list in the Monster Energy Series, and positioning him as Series points leader after four races.

Kyle Busch, who led a race-high 128 of 312 laps, finished second, Chase Elliott third, Denny Hamlin fourth and 2017 Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series champion Martin Truex Jr fifth.

NOVEMBER NASCAR AND REDEVELOPMENT GRAND OPENING: Dates are set for the Can-Am 500 Monster Energy Series Playoff race weekend: November 9-10-11, 2018. Tickets are already on sale,



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PHOENIX, ARIZONA

available online at ISMRaceway.com, by phone at 1-866-408-RACE (7223) or in person at the ISM Raceway ticket office in Avondale.

November NASCAR Race Weekend will mark the grand opening of the new ISM Raceway, after the completion of the \$178 million ISM Raceway Project Powered by DC Solar redevelopment. Fans will be able to experience all aspects of the track's modernization, from the infield Fan Zone, to free in-seat wifi, to a Cup Garage that's more accessible than ever.

The weekend will also feature the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series Lucas Oil 150 on Friday and the NASCAR XFINITY Series 200 on Saturday.

All three national series will be hosting their final Playoff elimination races, determining the final four who will compete at Homestead for the series title.

NASCAR 2019: The Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series returns here with TicketGuardian 500 race weekend on Sunday, March 10, 2019, again part of NASCAR's West Coast Swing at the start of the season, along with Las Vegas Motor Speedway and Auto Club Speedway. Details for the NASCAR XFINITY Series and NASCAR Camping World Truck Series will be announced at a later date. ■



Kevin Harvick

