



KURT BUSCH

Here We Go

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina (Sept. 12, 2017) – With his victory in the season-opening Daytona 500, Kurt Busch pretty much solidified his spot in the NASCAR Playoffs for 2017.

And much like a baseball team that gets a huge lead in the division in May and doesn't lose it, there is a feeling of, "Are the playoffs finally here? We're, um, ready to play."

For Busch, driver of the No. 41 Monster Energy/Haas Automation Ford Fusion for Stewart-Haas Racing (SHR), the time is now as the playoffs start with Sunday's Tales of the Turtles 400 at Chicagoland Speedway in Joliet, Illinois.

Busch won the Cup Series title in 2004 during the first season of what was then known as the NASCAR Chase for the Championship. The original 10-driver, 10-race Chase format has evolved into what is now a 16-driver playoff format involving three, three-race rounds and a winner-take-all championship among the final four drivers to advance. So, consistency and success are keys.

Busch will start this year's playoffs 12th in points. This is his fifth consecutive playoff appearance and his 11th overall. After winning the championship in 2004, he finished 10th in 2005, seventh in 2007, fourth in 2009, 11th in 2010 and 2011, 10th in 2013, 12th in 2014, eighth in 2015 and seventh in 2016.

In 16 Sprint Cup Series starts at Chicagoland, Busch has two top-five finishes and nine top-10s. His best finish at the 1.5-mile track came in 2015, when he brought home a third-place finish. He overcame a flat tire on lap 86 and a green-flag pit stop that put him a lap down to still contend for the win. However, a late-race caution took away what appeared to be a sure win and an automatic advance into the next round of the playoffs for Busch and the No. 41 team.

And Busch heads into this year's playoffs with a solid record in the last few weeks of the regular season. He has scored three consecutive top-five finishes and hasn't placed lower than 13th in the last six races.

Busch, his crew chief Tony Gibson and the entire No. 41 Monster Energy/Haas Automation team would love to bring SHR its third championship.

And it starts at Chicagoland this weekend. Here we go.

KURT BUSCH, Driver of the No. 41 Monster Energy/Haas Automation Ford Fusion for Stewart-Haas Racing:

You have a lot of connections to Chicago. Talk about that.

"Both my mom and dad were born in the Chicagoland area. My grandfather lived downtown and was a big Chicago Cubs fan. I remember growing up and going to his house and seeing all of his Cubs stuff. And then in (Las) Vegas, where I grew up, we had WGN-TV and it was cool to be connected to the Cubs at an early age. I still have aunts and uncles in the Chicago area. The Busches moved out to Vegas in the early 70's. And that's where Kyle (brother) and I were born and raised."

Do you look at Chicago as another hometown race?

"It's fun just with my affinity for Chicago. I love the town, the Chicago Cubs, the Bears. Over the years, I've met a lot of good people throughout the Illinois area. It does feel like a second home."

What is the key to a good start in the playoffs?

"I think the key is having a strategy, sticking with it and staying calm. You might be a point or two ahead or a point or two behind, but you have to have a strategy. That's what I remember about the year that I won and the years I was up in the top-five of the championship standings."

KURT BUSCH, Driver of the No. 41 Monster Energy/Haas Automation Ford Fusion for Stewart-Haas Racing (continued):

How important is luck in the playoffs?

“Luck is definitely a key ingredient. You can’t do it without it. And being prepared for it is having the downforce at the levels that you need and the setup balanced properly with the simulation models. And making sure the driver feedback is there. Luck can be just as simple as, two weeks ago at Darlington, my teammate was faster than me on lap four of a run and I let him pass me, and then a yellow came out a lap later and I was like, ‘Oh man.’ And then we were on the wrong side for the restart. So that was like a double-whammy. Lose a position and then you’re in the worst lane for the restart. If you’re making a championship run, things come at you when you don’t even know it. And that’s when you end up in the right lane on a restart or somebody gives you a spot. First thing you think about is having a smooth race. If you’re running eighth, next thing you know you’re running fourth. And you think, ‘How’d that happen?’ Those are the days championships happen.”

The 1.5-mile ovals all look the same but are completely different. How is Chicagoland?

“They’re all very different. It’s all about the asphalt and grip level. And the tire that Goodyear is bringing for us to all race on. It’d be very interesting to all get to choose what sets of tires we all wanted to race on for grip levels. Chicago is very similar to Homestead and it’s similar to Atlanta that we run earlier in the year. Very worn-out mile-and-a-half that chews up tires and you have to be nice to your tires.”

Kurt Busch’s Chicagoland Speedway Performance Profile:

Year	Event	Start	Finish	Status/Laps	Laps Led	Earnings
2016	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 400	12	13	Running, 270/270	0	N/A
2015	MyAFibRisk.com 400	9	3	Running, 267/267	37	\$195,005
2014	MyAFibStory.com 400	14	8	Running, 267/267	0	\$114,070
2013	Geico 400	16	4	Running, 267/267	0	\$169,960
2012	Geico 400	30	32	Running, 245/267	0	\$101,677
2011	Geico 400	3	6	Running, 267/267	64	\$161,750
2010	LifeLock.com 400	22	26	Running, 265/267	0	\$129,198
2009	LifeLock.com 400	22	17	Running, 267/267	0	\$110,100
2008	†LifeLock.com 400	18	28	Running, 267/267	1	\$85,125
2007	USG Sheetrock 400	35	6	Running, 267/267	2	\$150,133
2006	×USG Sheetrock 400	19	8	Running, 270/270	0	\$138,958
2005	USG Sheetrock 400	19	8	Running, 267/267	0	\$148,775
2004	Tropicana 400	21	35	Running, 151/267	0	\$84,600
2003	Tropicana 400	32	39	Engine, 124/267	0	\$79,985
2002	Tropicana 400	2	6	Running, 267/267	0	\$85,000
2001	Tropicana 400	31	8	Running, 267/267	0	\$68,100

† Qualifying canceled due to weather, starting position set via car owner points. × Race length extended due to green-white-checked finish.

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Contact Joe Crowley with True Speed Communication
 (704) 875-3388, ext. 813 or Joe.Crowley@TrueSpeedCommunication.com
www.TrueSpeedCommunication.com Online Media Kit Available at: www.TrueSpeedMedia.com