



KYLE BUSCH

Late Summer Road Trip

HUNTERSVILLE, North Carolina (Aug. 7, 2018) – After a hot start to the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series season, Kyle Busch never slowed down as the season entered the summer months.

The driver of the No. 18 Interstate Batteries Toyota Camry for Joe Gibbs Racing (JGR) turned up the heat as NASCAR's top series headed into late summer with the playoffs within sight. And as the NASCAR Cup Series makes its way to Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn for Sunday's Consumers Energy 400, the summer road trip is nearing its end with one final summer visit to Michigan and fall on the horizon.

With Interstate Batteries returning to the No. 18 car this weekend, Busch is encouraging fans to stop by a local Interstate dealer to get their vehicle batteries checked before taking off on their late-summer vacation. Hot weather has a far greater effect on batteries than the cold, so this weekend's race at a popular summer tourist destination like the Great Lakes state of Michigan is the perfect setting to remind fans to have their batteries checked.

As far as this year's NASCAR summer stretch, in the last nine races on the schedule starting with the June event at Pocono (Pa.) Raceway and through last weekend's race at Watkins Glen (N.Y.) International, Busch scored two wins, along with an impressive eight top-five finishes in those nine races.

In the Irish Hills of Michigan this weekend, Busch will look to keep running up front, starting with an improvement over the solid fourth-place finish he earned at Michigan in June. Busch looks to use that strong run as momentum this weekend at a facility he had struggled with since the track was repaved heading prior to the 2012 season. The Las Vegas native's top-five finish at Michigan in June was his second on the new surface, but he's also suffered five finishes of 30th or worse since the repave.

Busch had some success in the last race on the old surface at Michigan on Aug. 21, 2011, and with just four top-10 finishes in 13 previous starts at Michigan, he found himself outdueling now seven-time Cup Series champion Jimmie Johnson for the win in a late-race shootout at the 2-mile oval for his first and only Cup Series win in the Automobile State.

So, as Busch and the Interstate Batteries team head back to the Midwest this weekend with an "Outrageously Dependable" Interstate Battery under the hood, the confidence built from a strong June weekend there and a summer spent running up front will do them well this weekend. But he knows chances are he'll need to outduel several others in order to capture his second career Cup Series victory in the Irish Hills of Michigan.

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

How do you feel going into Michigan and what does that track mean for you guys on the schedule?

"Ever since the repave, we just haven't found what we were looking for there. We just try to figure out what we can continue to do to evolve and get better there. The setup there equates nothing to anything that we race throughout the playoffs, so really it's just a track that we have to go to and do the best we can. But, beyond that, you never want to give away any opportunities to go out there and win a race or to excel or to take momentum away from what you're doing with our Interstate Batteries Camry. We've put a focus on that track for the last two years and we've gained. We've certainly made improvements. I think we've run well there but our finishes may not have shown for it. We just need to be able to not have to race at a hundred percent at Michigan all the time to finish third. We need to be able to run 90 percent to win and that would allow us to then make up time if certain situations happen to us if we have a loose wheel, a bad pit stop, whatever. You can make time and pass people, things like that."

How is the track evolving since the repave?

"I expect it to be fast, still. There's still a lot of grip, but it's starting to get worn in, but not quite to that level Kansas did just yet. I would still expect it to be very fast this weekend. But if you're just a little bit loose there, now you're nervous that just any little bit of getting outside the groove or having a little bit too much yaw will lead to a wreck. It was really intense last year in our tests and in the races there. You are hauling there now, for sure, and we know that corner speeds are up overall this year at other places."

-more-

Does taking the same approach you have following the Kansas repave also benefit you at a place like Michigan?

“Our team has come a long way at Kansas, that’s for sure. To get a win there was a really big deal for our team. I give my guys a lot of credit for working hard to find something I was more comfortable with there. Our whole team has shown how well we’ve worked together, and that he (crew chief Adam Stevens) has been a really quick study, so I think the same direction can work at Michigan. We’ve put a lot of emphasis on getting better there the last two years. We are working on improving as an organization not only on the resurfaced tracks, but overall in general, and it showed there in June. We ran as well as we have since the repave there. Everyone is working their guts out to get our stuff better there and we made a lot of progress in June. I’m looking forward to getting out there in practice and seeing what we can learn with our Interstate Batteries Camry.”

Most drivers really seem to enjoy racing at Michigan International Speedway. Why is that?

“Regardless of new pavement or not, it’s wide-open racing and you can run from top to bottom more and more every race there as the groove widens out. The biggest thing used to be to find grip there. But, with the new surface, there is a ton of grip now. Before, you had grip for maybe five laps, and then you’d just be out to lunch. But now, the tire wear is all out the window and the racetrack is very fast. And the wide racetrack is good. That’s what makes Michigan so exciting and so fun. That’s the biggest deal about it. The surface is finally starting to wear in a bit and we have learned a lot there. I would certainly like to get back to victory lane there for Norm (Miller, Interstate Chairman) and everyone at Interstate Batteries.”

-TSC-

Contact Bill Janitz with True Speed Communication
(704) 875-3388 ext. 803 or Bill.Janitz@TrueSpeedCommunication.com
www.TrueSpeedCommunication.com • Online Media Kit Available at: www.TrueSpeedMedia.com