

## KYLE BUSCH: Filling the Empty Spot in the Trophy Case

HUNTERSVILLE, North Carolina (Feb. 6, 2019) – As the 2019 Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series season is set to begin with Speedweeks activities this weekend at Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway, Kyle Busch has turned his attention to filling the final empty spot in his trophy case.

The trophy that Busch, driver of the No. 18 M&M'S Chocolate Bar Toyota for Joe Gibbs Racing (JGR), is hoping to finally secure is the Harley J. Earl Trophy that goes annually to the Daytona 500 winner as he makes his 14th career start in the "Great American Race" slated to run Sunday, Feb. 17.

Busch is still searching for his first victory in NASCAR's season-opening event, which would be one of the biggest accomplishments on his already impressive resume. The important race wins already checked off the list is housed in a large trophy case built at his Kyle Busch Motorsports race shop. The list starts with his 2015 NASCAR Cup Series championship trophy, along with wins in crown jewel races starting with the Southern 500 at Darlington (S.C.) Raceway in 2008, back-to-back Brickyard 400s at Indianapolis Motor Speedway in 2015 and 2016, and last year's first Cup points-paying win at Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway in the Coca-Cola 600 on Memorial Day weekend.

Along with his Coca-Cola 600 win at Charlotte that made him the first driver to win a Cup race at every track on the schedule, Busch added a few milestones to an already Hall of Fame-worthy career in 2018, including notching his 50th Cup Series win at Richmond (Va.) Raceway in September and bringing home career-high totals of 22 top-five finishes and 28-top-10s, along with tying his 2008 career high of eight victories in a season. Busch's strong 2018 season netted a fourth-place finish in the final Cup Series standings after his 11th career appearance in NASCAR's playoffs and fourth consecutive appearance in the Championship 4. Busch's eight wins also continued his streak of at least one win in each of his first 14 seasons.

The 2015 NASCAR Cup Series champion will be sporting an M&M'S Chocolate Bar scheme on his No. 18 Toyota for NASCAR's season-opening race, as the new permanent addition to the brand's iconic candy lineup will be highlighted throughout Daytona Speedweeks. The M&M'S Chocolate Bar consists of smooth milk chocolate with whole M&M'S Minis visible in a large bar format and available nationwide in five flavors: Peanut, Milk Chocolate, Crispy, Almond and Crispy Mint. In addition to the M&M'S Chocolate Bar, the M&M'S brand

returns for its 12th season in 2019 with Busch and other Mars Wrigley Confectionery U.S. products, which include SNICKERS, Skittles and PEDIGREE.

The M&M'S Chocolate Bar Toyota will be on track throughout 2019 Speedweeks in lead-up to next week's edition of the "Great American Race." It starts with Sunday's Clash at Daytona, an exhibition race Busch won in 2012. It continues through next week's Can-Am Duel qualifying races. Busch won his Duel qualifying race in 2009, 2013 and 2016. Then, the official NASCAR Cup Series season begins in earnest Feb. 17 with the Daytona 500. In addition to his three non-points race wins at Daytona, Busch captured his first and only Daytona points-paying Cup Series win in July 2008.

The winner of 51 career races in NASCAR's Cup Series will look to continue to win races and vie for another champi-

of frustration. The Daytona 500 has been challenging, to say the least. Certainly would love to get the opportunity to win the Daytona 500. It's the last big trophy that I'm looking to put in my trophy case. To be able to have every trophy I wanted to get would mean the world to me. I'm excited to head back to Daytona and get a new year started. Hard to believe it's my 12th season with M&M'S on board. They have their new M&M'S Chocolate Bar on the car, which is an exciting new product you can get now all over the country. I know we'll be spreading the word about the M&M'S Chocolate Bar – milk chocolate in a bar with M&M'S minis. It's a winner, for sure."

**Why is the Daytona 500 so difficult to win?**

"Because everybody else wants to win it and it's on all their bucket lists and, of course, it's a race that 40 people have a chance to go out there and win. I wouldn't say the same for a race like Atlanta. You go to Atlanta and obviously that's a race where probably 10, 12

That's sort of the feeling of getting ready to start the Daytona 500. To me, I get nervous or pumped up or excited for the start of the Super Bowl just watching it. I'm excited and I'm jacked up for it, so I can only imagine what the players feel, and that's sort of the feeling you get."

**How important is the Clash exhibition race to learn the draft and get ready for the rest of Speedweeks?**

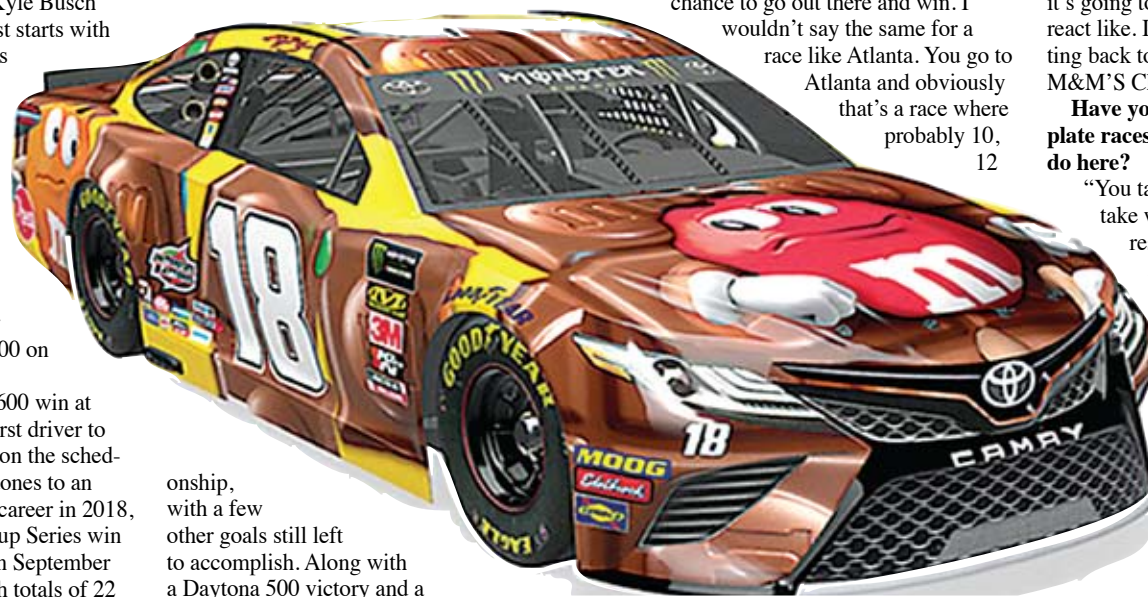
"I think, anytime we ever go down to Daytona, whether it's with a new car or whether it's with a different rules package or what have you, we always look at the Clash as a race to watch to see exactly what's going to happen and what characteristics you have in your racecar and things. It's a learning experience for everybody, whether you're in the race or whether you're out of the race and not in it. For us, we're curious to see how the car is going to race and how it's going to handle and what it's going to react like. I'm just looking forward to getting back to Daytona to my day job with our M&M'S Chocolate Bar Camry."

**Have you taken notes on restrictor-plate races, saying this is what I need to do here?**

"You take mental notes more than you take written-down notes because the restrictor-plate races change so much, the rules change, the cars change, things change with those. But since the Gen 6, is that what we're on, since we got to this car, especially the last two, three years, it's been the Penske guys, especially Brad (Keselowski), that has been really, really good at this game. Denny (Hamlin) has been really, really good at this game. Those guys are who I watch."

**How are you preparing for your Can-Am Duel qualifying race?**

"I think the biggest thing about that race is that you've got to go for points, be smart, get some points out of that race if you can. Obviously it's a big deal to have stage points. We kind of saw that the last couple of years with everything going on. Even if you can win the thing, obviously that would be even better to get that stage bonus point. But to have the points collection just kind of starting with that race is going to be important. So you've got to be cautious and mindful of what you've got going on, what you're doing, because that's the car you want to start the Daytona 500 with. It's also the car that you've qualified with. You're not allowed to touch it after qualifying. Everybody has speed dialed in. I wouldn't say a lot of guys have a whole lot of comfort dialed into their cars. You might see some exciting moments. Hopefully, we won't get caught up in any of that."



onship, with a few other goals still left to accomplish. Along with a Daytona 500 victory and a return to the Championship 4, Busch's goals for 2019 include securing his second Cup Series championship and earning his 200th overall win in NASCAR's top three series – he starts the season with 194.

So, as Busch and his No. 18 M&M'S Chocolate Bar Camry head back to Daytona for another edition of Daytona Speedweeks, his sights will be set on adding the last important trophy to his collection by becoming the 40th driver to grace the Harley J. Earl Trophy as Daytona 500 champion.

KYLE BUSCH, Driver of the No. 18 M&M'S Chocolate Bar Toyota Camry for Joe Gibbs Racing:

**With some of the things you accomplished last season, is the Harley J. Earl Trophy that goes to the Daytona 500 champion the one big piece you are missing in your trophy case?**

"No doubt. I've been close a couple of times and have had some solid finishes, but all the rest of the years have been mounds

guys are going to have a chance to win but, when you show up to Daytona, all 40 people will believe that they have a chance to win."

**How would you explain the feeling of starting the Daytona 500?**

"It's crazy because I felt that as a rookie, maybe my second year, but I don't necessarily feel it that much, now. I feel it's like another race, but it is the first race of the year and you want to start it off well. Are you always really ready for the start of the season? Who knows? If the Daytona 500 was the fifth or sixth race of the year, would it be better for me or better for somebody else? Maybe, or maybe not. The only way I can explain it to people is if you ever get excited or the adrenaline starts pumping and you don't necessarily have any feelings and it's just excitement. It could be for people experiencing the birth of a kid or something like that, or seeing their kid go through graduation or something like that.