

Running It Back: NASCAR Drivers Double Down on Last Year's Race Wins

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For Immediate Release:

Racing returned to America's Most Famous Short Track this past Saturday night as Hickory Motor Speedway opened its gates for the first time in 2026. Fans were welcomed by a fresh coat of paint and brand new handrails across the grandstands as the track continues to improve the fan experience. The anticipation of a brand new season would bring out a near capacity crowd to witness history at the 75 year old track.

The action packed evening began with the return of the Crown Vic series. Twelve cars would take part in the 20 lap feature, all qualifying within a one second margin. Todd Bradburry from Concord, NC would lead the field to green from the pole and hold onto an early lead until the first caution flag of the night would fly. After the restart, close side by side racing would hand over the lead to Jimmy Crigger in the 98 car. A tight battle would eventually allow Bradburry the chance to strike and take back the lead. With only two laps remaining, Jimmy Crigger would retire early from the race after running second adding an unfortunate end to what had been a solid race for the 98 crew. As the checkered flag waved, Todd Bradburry would cross the line first, followed by Dean Levi in the 19, and TJ Gibson in the 6 car.



After an exciting Crown Vic race, the Rowdy Renegades took center stage. Former track champion Steve Smart would win the pole allowing him to lead the field for the first time in 2026. Matthew Chambers in the 81 car saw tremendous growth last season, and he picked up right where he left



off. Chambers would take over the lead early and lead the field starting on lap number one. After jumping out to a lead of around two car lengths, Steve Smart would find his line allowing him to gain momentum on the exit of each corner. After hunting down the 81 for multiple laps Smart would make a strong move to

the bottom forcing Chambers to the outside and taking over the lead. Lap traffic would become a factor late in the race but would not ultimately change the outcome as Steve Smart would go on to win the first Renegade feature of the year.

The new Division 1 series would take part in the action as the Paramount Auto Group Limited Late Models rolled onto the track for 60 laps. This event was filled with interesting stories to follow as 12 cars fought for the trophy. Chase Robertson, who did not have a large amount of experience at Hickory would win the



pole showcasing his talent and highlighting himself as an early favorite. Perhaps the biggest storyline of the night belonged to Graham Hollar. Graham showed up to the track with a brand new car like some other drivers Saturday. But the catch was, he had just purchased this car hours before raceday. This car possessed a successful history and after working through the night, the team believed they had something

to work with. This would be proven in the race as Hollar would qualify in third and quickly take over the second position in the first 3 laps of the race. A caution early in the race would force Robertson in the 37



to give up his lead to Hollar who pulled away after a strong restart on lap 6. Later on in the race, Robertson regained the lead and defended it well over a hard charging Graham Hollar. The two drivers began trading paint as Graham Hollar fought his way back to the lead with just five laps to go. Hollar would go on to win the race

followed by Chase Robertson, Jackson Tovo, Ethan Tovo, and Billy Jack Lester.

Next up under the lights would be the Leapfrog Lawncare Super Trucks. Charlie Neil in the 2 Truck was back on the pole with a Super Truck newcomer Michael Bumgarner to his outside. Michael ran and won a handful of truck events towards the end of last season. The biggest highlight of the



race would come on the first lap as Charlie Neil and Michael Bumgarner raced side by side. As the exited turn two, Bumgarner would go sideways towards the inside wall. What looked like the start of a horrific crash quickly turned into the greatest save of the night as Bumgarner corrected his truck, held the bottom line, and took the lead from Charlie Neil as the field powered into turns 3 and 4. With only a handful of laps to go a new driver entered the frame. Jacob “The Rocket” Hayes showed up in familiar fashion to

battle Charlie Neil for the second position late in the race as Bumgarner continued to extend his lead. As Scott Herman dropped the checkered flag, Michael Bumgarner would win followed by Charlie Neil, and Jacob Hayes.



The Carolina Pro Late Model Series returned to Hickory Motor Speedway for the 5th race of the night. 75 laps would be the length of their feature as Carson Ware in the 51 would lead the field to the green from the pole. A clean race throughout, the field would stretch out allowing the 51 car to

extend a significant lead. Carson Ware would lead the way for the remainder of the race taking the checkered flag with TJ Moon in tow. After the conclusion of the race, the 51 car was disqualified, handing over the win to TJ Moon in the 9 car. Former CPLMS champion Dexter Canipe III would finish in second, with Tyler Church in the 7 finishing third.

The Late Models of Hickory Motor Speedway would take to the track next. A field full of stars would compete in this event including former track champions Thomas Beane in the 01, Michael Bumgarner in the 97, and Landon Huffman in the 75. With the front two rows filled with veterans, they would remain in control for a majority of this race. Defending track champion Michael Bumgarner started from the pole position and would remain there throughout the majority of the race. Thomas Beane spent

many laps working the outside line but would eventually fall behind Landon Huffman in the 75. Huffman would remain in the second position throughout the first half of the race to eventually fall back to a fourth place result at the end. Michael Bumgarner continued his streak by winning his



second race of the night and connecting his 2025 success to the present. Thomas Beane would start the year strongly with a solid second place finish followed by a racing veteran in a new number, Charlie Watson in the 51.

Finally, the Heritage Finance Street Stocks would make their way onto the track for 30 laps. After having one of the best qualifying runs in his career, Trey Buff would join Cody Demarmels on the front row. From the drop of the green flag, Demarmels was in control of the race. He would extend his lead to over a second within the first 10 laps. Marshal Sutton in the 64 would follow Demarmels and Buff in third as the top 3 cars pulled away. Meanwhile Steve Smart in the 16 began to battle a loose racecar. Initially Smart had issues at the start of the race bringing out an early caution and causing Kyle Divanna to spin. As the 16 continued to get loose, the car eventually turned in front of the 71 of Divanna bringing out another caution. The two cars would then trade paint throughout the remainder of the race before both cars crashed hard into the turn 1 wall. The top three would remain the same and Cody Demarmels would go on to win the race followed by Trey Buff and Marshal Sutton.

Racing will return to the Birthplace of the NASCAR Stars this coming weekend when the PASS Pro All Star Series comes to town with the running of the Easter Bunny 200. Visit hickorymotorspeedway.com for more information or call (828) 464-3655.

Official Hickory Motor Speedway Results 3/7/2026:

Late Models:

- 1 #97 - Michael Bumgarner
- 2 #01 - Thomas Beane
- 3 #51 - Charlie Watson
- 4 #75 - Landon Huffman
- 5 #51 - Anthony Bello
- 6 #99 - Billy Snodgrass
- 7 #17 - Skyler Chaney
- 8 #18 - Alex Meggs
- 9 #70 - Nick Tucker
- 10 #19 - Kaeden Ballos
- 11 #14 - Christopher Martin Jr.
- 12 #24 - Lucas Ransone
- 13 #99 - Brandon Dean
- 14 #32 - Jacob Kolber
- 15 #28 - Landon Rapp

Paramount Auto Group Limited Late Models:

- 1 #1 - Graham Hollar
- 2 #37 - Chase Robertson
- 3 #31 - Jackson Tovo
- 4 #13 - Ethan Tovo
- 5 #97 - Billy Jack Lester
- 6 #88 - Paityn Feyen
- 7 #97 - Jonah Cullen
- 8 #6 - Toro Rodriguez
- 9 #8 - Jaxon Lash
- 10 #32 - Justin Parry
- 11 #66 - Dystany Spurlock
- 12 #98 - Josh Phillips
- 13 #14 - Don Carlton

Leapfrog Lawncare Super Trucks:

- 1 #97 - Michael Bumgarner
- 2 #2 - Charlie Neil
- 3 #0 - Jacob Hayes
- 4 #8 - Mitchell Mote
- 5 #88 - Hudson Canipe
- 6 #65 - Josh Goble
- 7 #11 - Dustin Little Jr.
- 8 #4 - Hunter Hatton
- 9 #5 - Tony Edward

Renegades:

- 1 #16 - Steve Smart
- 2 #81 - Matthew Chambers
- 3 #55 - Jordan Cook
- 4 #1 - Justin Austin
- 5 #99 - John Vassh
- 6 #71 - Ethan Perdue

Carolina Pro Late Models:

- 1 #9M - TJ Moon
- 2 #5 - Dexter Canipe III
- 3 #7 - Tyler Church
- 4 #74 - Talon Pelfrey
- 5 #1X - Andrew Patterson
- 6 #43 - Joshua Horniman
- 7 #32Q - Alex Quarterly
- 8 #43M - Ray Minieri
- 9 #8 - Terri Crider
- DQ #51 - Carson Ware

Crown Vic:

- 1 #00B - Todd Bradburry
- 2 #19 - Dean Levi
- 3 #06 - TJ Gibson
- 4 #70 - Christian Morris
- 5 #279 - Vincent Morlando
- 6 #013 - Dominnic Morlando
- 7 #69 - Mark Stewart
- 8 #22 - Brad Martin
- 9 #01 - Kirk Hanson
- 10 #26 - Michael Lipe
- 11 #00 - Matthew Shelton
- 12 #98 - Jimmy Crigger
- 13 #05 - Bentley Black
- DNS #1 - Rileigh Hathcock