

Ben Rhodes Wins NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series Championship

BEN RHODES DRIVES F-150 TO SECOND STRAIGHT TRUCK SERIES CHAMPIONSHIP

Ben Rhodes won his second career NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series championship and first with Ford after winning tonight's Craftsman 150.

It also marks the second consecutive series championship for F-150 after Zane Smith won the title a year ago with Front Row Motorsports.

Rhodes is the fifth driver in NCTS history to win multiple titles, joining Ron Hornaday Jr., Matt Crafton, Jack Sprague and Todd Bodine.

This also marks Ford's third series championship in the last five years after Matt Crafton won in 2019 and Smith in 2022.

Ford has now won the title four times overall with Greg Biffle being the first to do it in 2002.

BEN RHODES, No. 99 Kubota Ford F-150 – POST-RACE INTERVIEW – WHAT WERE YOUR EMOTIONS ON THOSE LAST FOUR RESTARTS? "I was so angry. I didn't even know I'd be happy if I won at that point because

I was so mad about it. I just couldn't believe that every single time there was a caution. What the heck? The restart that I wadded the front end up from the missed shift in front of me, who could have planned that out. I'm just grateful to be here and grateful for Ford Performance, Kubota, Campers Inn, all of our partners. They make this possible."

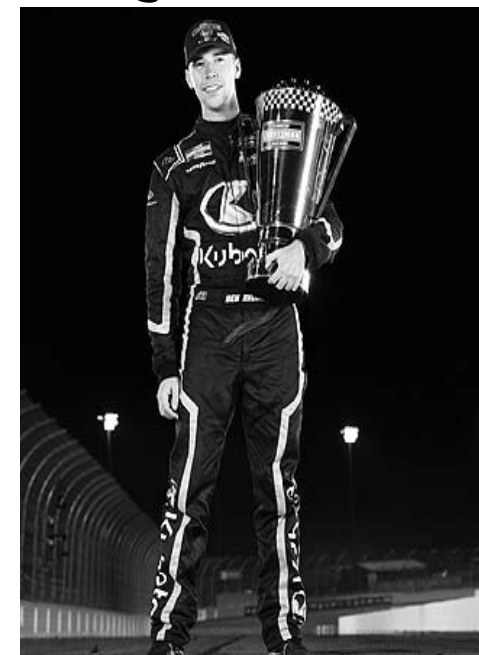
YOU GOT REUNITED WITH RICH LUSHES. HOW CRITICAL HAS HE BEEN IN THIS RUN? "It's been super critical. The guy makes the calls when they matter and that's what we need in playoffs. It's crunch time. The pressure is on and he does it. He delivers."

HOW WILL THE CELEBRATION BE TONIGHT? "You just wait and see."

HOW DOES THIS FEEL? "I can't even believe it. Let's go! I hate when people do that on TV, so I'm sorry. But hey, this is so awesome, man. To go 25 laps into overtime, you know what that feels like? Almost lose it three times? Look at the front of the truck. It's crazy. I didn't

think we were going to make it. I thought we were going to pop a tire. I thought anything that could have gone wrong was going to go wrong. Grant almost got me. Hats off to him. He ran a great race. I wouldn't want to race against anybody else for the championship. He raced me clean, and I respect the hell out of him for it."

WERE YOU AWARE GRANT WAS COMING OFF TURN FOUR? "I saw him. I'm watching the replay right here. I saw him. He went for everything, but he ran me clean, and I thank him for that. That's what these championships are all about. It's unfortunate we had so many cautions, but we ran each other clean, all of us did tonight, and ugh, great show. I love you guys. Thanks for all the fans coming out. I love it. Thanks Kubota, Campers Inn, my team, ThorSport Racing, Ford Performance. What a team. I don't know how we pulled it off, but we got here and we did it."





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COLE CUSTER WINS FIRST NASCAR XFINITY SERIES CHAMPIONSHIP

The third time was the charm for Cole Custer, who won his first series championship after finished second in his previous two attempts.

This marks the seventh NXS championship for Ford and second in the last four years after Austin Cindric won in 2020.



Both Images: NASCAR/GETTY

Ford's other champions include: Greg Biffle (2002), Carl Edwards (2007), Ricky Stenhouse Jr. (2011-12), and Chris Buescher (2015).

This marks the second time Stewart-Haas has won an NXS championship with Ford after Custer delivered the owner's title in 2018.

This continues a streak that has seen Mustang win a driver's or owner's championship in all but three seasons since coming to the series full-time in 2011.

COLE CUSTER, No. 00 Haas Automation Ford Mustang – CHAMPIONSHIP VICTORY LANE INTERVIEWS:

THREE-WIDE OFF OF TURN ONE ON THE WHITE FLAG LAP AND YOU WON IT. WHAT WERE YOU THINKING WHEN IT LOOKED LIKE THE RESTART WASN'T GOING TO GO YOUR WAY? "I thought it was over. I mean, I went from first to third and I was able to shift the car all night and the Doug Yates horsepower worked out and pulled me off the corner. I can't believe we won that thing after going back to third on that restart, but I can't say enough about these guys. I mean, we started the year off and it was a struggle and we kind of had to dig deep with each other and really talk about

how to get better. To see how much this group has grown through the year and to be a part of something, I knew I wanted to work with JT. I knew that he was the guy that could make it happen and I wouldn't want to do it with anybody else. I just can't thank Gene Haas enough. He's given me opportunities and I wouldn't be here without him. I can't thank him enough, and Ford Performance, Haas Automation, everybody at Stewart-Haas Racing. It's awesome to bring one back to Stewart-Haas right now. Man, I'm gonna enjoy this. I've been waiting to hear Wayne on the radio for a few times now, so I'm pumped."

WHAT DID YOU HAVE TO PROVE PERSONALLY WITH COMING BACK TO XFINITY IN THIS CHAMPIONSHIP RUN? "You get knocked down a little bit and you just want to prove that you can go out there and do it. I think these guys have just really always believed in me all year and I just can't thank them enough for giving me really fast race cars and still believing in me when things weren't going great."

HOW ABOUT THAT FINISH? "That was crazy. Having it three-wide there at the end. I can't believe we went from third to first there when we dropped back. Man, it was such a fast

car. JT and all the guys did such a great job. I can't thank everybody at the team. When things weren't going good the last few years and them still believing in me coming back, I just can't thank everybody enough. It's a very proud moment winning this championship with these guys. I wouldn't want to do it with anybody else."

WHAT ABOUT THAT FINAL RESTART WITH ALL FOUR CONTENDERS BATTLING? "I thought I lost it on the frontstretch. I thought it was over, but just how it worked out I was able to downshift it pulling up off the corner and get a good angle going into three and I can't believe it all worked out. I wouldn't have it any other way. We've been so close here a few times and to have it all work out is just amazing."

YOU CAME BACK TO THE XFINITY SERIES TO RUN FOR A CHAMPIONSHIP AND YOU'VE DONE IT. "It means the world. Being so close a couple times at this and how the last few years have gone, I mean, these guys still believe in me and have given me really fast race cars and just digging all year. We did such a great job just getting better and better every week. These guys just brought a rocket ship tonight and I'm so proud of everybody."