

# Daytona winning Stenhouse team thankful



**Ken Willis**  
The Daytona Beach  
News-Journal

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. – Though auto racing is overflowing with the unpredictable, there are also many clockwork routines.

One of those is the post-race choreograph for a team: break down the pit box, put everything away in its assigned place, hustle to the airport and fly home.

This time, not a chance. If you're gonna kick routine to the curb, you do your kicking after winning the Daytona 500.

"When you win a race like this, you take your time and celebrate it," Zach Yager said Monday morning. "You can rush to the plane when you lose. No need to be rushing to the plane when you win."

Instead, the No. 47 team remained in Daytona's Victory Lane, where champagne kept magically appearing as the hour grew later and later.

"We decided to enjoy it and stay inside the track where it happened," Yager said. "A lot of champagne bottles. We were also so caught up in the moment, we didn't want to leave here. We felt if we left, it would make it not real."

Yager is a tire carrier on Ricky Stenhouse Jr.'s pit crew. Normally on a Monday morning, he'd be back in the Charlotte, North Carolina, area, getting back to the modern routine for the modern crewman, which at the NASCAR level is now a full-time gig – cardio, pit practice, weights.

But this was no normal Monday. Over the years, it has informally been known as the Hangover Invitational. The winning driver and team returns to Daytona International Speedway, mere hours after leaving the previous night/early morning, for more platitudes and spoils.

Leather Daytona jackets for driver, crew chief and owner(s), as well as a Rolex for the driver, who removes it before pressing his hands (and right racing boot) into wet cement to solidify the history of it all.

Then it's more group pictures, and Stenhouse, like all the winners before him, is again reminded he didn't do it alone.

"For us as a race team, it's all about these guys, all the guys and gals back at the shop," Stenhouse said. "Friends and family – to celebrate this with them, it was the perfect ending. It didn't get too crazy last night, but we did stay out a little late."

This is obviously the career highlight, so far, for the 35-year-old Mississippi native. Stenhouse cut his racing teeth on dirt, making a name for himself in USAC's sprint-car divisions, before putting more sheet metal around him and asphalt down below – in 2008 he made the move to full-bodied stock cars and found quick success in the ARCA Series.

That's when he lined up a new Holy Grail.

"Once I transitioned to stock car racing in 2008, in the ARCA Series, that's when the dream of winning the Daytona 500 came about for me," he said Monday morning.

He came close before. First, he showed he could win here when he won Daytona's summer race in 2017. And a year ago in the 500, he led from lap 180 through 193 and was still jockeying for the lead – and potentially the eventual win – when he was caught up in a crash on lap 195.

Knowing you can win it is only half the battle.

"Once you get a win at Daytona, I felt like that dream was possible," Stenhouse said. "I knew where Victory Lane was. Last year, I felt like we had it in our grasp, but it slipped away. We seized it this year and it's really special."

It wasn't exactly a David-over-Goliath story, but about as close as you can get in NASCAR. Stenhouse's team – JTG Daugherty Racing – employs 40, owns a Cup Series charter, and partners with a slew of sponsors, big and small. A first-class operation, no doubt, but within today's Cup Series, it's practically a shoe-string operation.

"You have to have the right people," said Jodi Geshickter, part of an ownership group that includes her husband Tad, former NBA All-Star Brad Daugherty,



**Ricky Stenhouse does the Daytona 500 winner's traditions Monday in Victory Lane.** NADIA ZOMORODIAN/THE NEWS-JOURNAL

ty, and Gordon Smith.

"It's a beautiful moment," Jodi said on a crisp and clear morning. "The sun is shining, we're here together celebrating. We have so much to be thankful for, from a spiritual standpoint, we just thank God for this moment."

The night before, it was other men upstairs who held the No. 47 team's fate in their hands. After an overtime extended by a lengthy caution, and another restart, Stenhouse got back to the white flag in a side-by-side battle with Joey Logano – Shoestring versus Team Penske.

Yet another free-for-all erupted behind them through Turn 1, and since they had completed one lap of the two-lap overtime, the ensuing yellow flag ended the racing – the finishing order would be frozen in whatever position everyone was in when the caution was triggered.

Logano and Stenhouse, or Stenhouse and Logano? Officials upstairs viewed replays and scoring equipment and made the call: Goliath gets second place.

Behind pit wall, the tire carrier felt the call coming but wouldn't let himself believe it until he heard it.

"I knew they were going to review it," Yager said Monday. "I thought, if they're going to look at this, for once I hope the chips fall on our side. We were five laps away from winning this last year. Don't rip the rug out from under us again."

"Let it be us."

## NASCAR Cup Series Daytona 500 Sunday Daytona International Speedway Daytona Beach, Fla.

(Start position in parentheses)

- (31) Ricky Stenhouse Jr., Chevrolet, 212 laps, 48 points.
- (3) Joey Logano, Ford, 212, 42.
- (5) Christopher Bell, Toyota, 212, 35.
- (9) Chris Buescher, Ford, 212, 43.
- (1) Alex Bowman, Chevrolet, 212, 41.
- (29) AJ Allmendinger, Chevrolet, 212, 34.
- (24) Daniel Suárez, Chevrolet, 212, 30.
- (7) Ryan Blaney, Ford, 212, 29.
- (23) Ross Chastain, Chevrolet, 212, 38.
- (38) Riley Herbst, Ford, 212, 0.
- (40) Travis Pastrana, Toyota, 212, 26.
- (13) Kevin Harvick, Ford, 212, 32.
- (17) Zane Smith, Ford, 212, 0.
- (35) Cody Ware, Ford, 212, 23.
- (16) Martin Truex Jr., Toyota, 212, 29.
- (12) Corey Lajoie, Chevrolet, 212, 21.
- (18) Denny Hamlin, Toyota, 212, 20.
- (2) Kyle Larson, Chevrolet, accident, 211, 19.
- (36) Kyle Busch, Chevrolet, accident, 211, 18.
- (15) Bubba Wallace, Toyota, accident, 211, 17.
- (4) Aric Almirola, Ford, accident, 211, 19.
- (10) Brad Keselowski, Ford, accident, 211, 25.
- (6) Austin Cindric, Ford, accident, 210, 20.
- (22) Noah Gragson, Chevrolet, 210, 13.
- (23) Ty Gibbs, Toyota, 210, 17.
- (19) Harrison Burton, Ford, 210, 11.
- (14) Todd Gilliland, Ford, accident, 208, 11.
- (11) Michael McDowell, Ford, 208, 15.
- (34) Conor Daly, Chevrolet, 206, 0.
- (32) BJ McLeod, Chevrolet, 204, 7.
- (39) Jimmie Johnson, Chevrolet, accident, 203, 10.
- (28) Justin Haley, Chevrolet, accident, 203, 5.
- (27) Austin Dillon, Chevrolet, accident, 202, 4.
- (21) William Byron, Chevrolet, accident, 202, 7.
- (30) Chase Briscoe, Ford, accident, 182, 2.
- (20) Ryan Preece, Ford, accident, 181, 10.
- (25) Erik Jones, Chevrolet, accident, 118, 1.
- (8) Chase Elliott, Chevrolet, accident, 118, 1.
- (26) Tyler Reddick, Toyota, accident, 117, 1.
- (37) Ty Dillon, Chevrolet, engine, 26, 1.

### Race Statistics

Average Speed of Race Winner: 145.284 mph.  
Time of Race: 3 hours, 38 minutes, 53 seconds.  
Margin of Victory: Under Caution.  
Caution Flags: 8 for 38 laps.

Lead Changes: 52 among 21 drivers.

Lap Leaders: A.Bowman 0; K.Larson 1; A.Bowman 2-10; K.Larson 11-12; C.Bell 13-20; K.Larson 21-23; C.Bell 24-34; A.Almirola 35; A.Bowman 36-37; C.Bell 38; T.Pastrana 39-40; D.Hamlin 41; C.Briscoe 42; D.Hamlin 43-47; C.Briscoe 48-51; M.Truxex 52-64; B.Keselowski 65-67; R.Preece 68-71; B.Keselowski 72; A.Almirola 73; B.Keselowski 74-76; A.Almirola 77-79; B.Keselowski 80; A.Almirola 81; B.Keselowski 82-108; K.Harvick 109; J.Logano 110; R.Blaney 111; J.Logano 112-115; C.Buescher 116; J.Logano 117; C.Buescher 118-121; J.Logano 122-125; R.Chastain 126; J.Logano 127; R.Chastain 128-132; A.Bowman 133; B.Wallace 134-137; A.Almirola 138-142; B.Wallace 143; A.Almirola 144-145; C.Buescher 146; A.Almirola 147-148; C.Buescher 149-153; A.Almirola 154; C.Buescher 155-175; D.Suárez 176-178; H.Burton 179-187; J.Logano 188; A.Allmendinger 189; B.Keselowski 190-196; K.Busch 197-202; R.Stenhouse 203-212

Leaders Summary (Driver, Times Led, Laps Led): B.Keselowski, 6 times for 42 laps; C.Buescher, 5 times for 32 laps; C.Bell, 3 times for 20 laps; A.Almirola, 8 times for 16 laps; M.Truxex, 1 time for 13 laps; J.Logano, 6 times for 12 laps; A.Bowman, 3 times for 12 laps; R.Stenhouse, 1 time for 10 laps; H.Burton, 1 time for 9 laps; R.Chastain, 2 times for 6 laps; D.Hamlin, 2 times for 6 laps; K.Larson, 3 times for 6 laps; K.Busch, 1 time for 6 laps; B.Wallace, 2 times for 5 laps; C.Briscoe, 2 times for 5 laps; R.Preece, 1 time for 4 laps; D.Suárez, 1 time for 3 laps; T.Pastrana, 1 time for 2 laps; A.Allmendinger, 1 time for 1 lap; R.Blaney, 1 time for 1 lap; K.Harvick, 1 time for 1 lap.

Wins: R.Stenhouse, 1.  
Top 15 in Points: 1. J.Logano, 52; 2. C.Buescher, 50; 3. R.Stenhouse, 49; 4. C.Bell, 44; 5. A.Bowman, 41; 6. R.Chastain, 38; 7. R.Blaney, 37; 8. K.Harvick, 37; 9. A.Allmendinger, 34; 10. B.Keselowski, 32; 11. M.Truxex, 32; 12. D.Suárez, 30; 13. A.Cindric, 29; 14. A.Almirola, 29; 15. C.Lajoie, 27; 16. T.Pastrana, 26.

### NASCAR Driver Rating Formula

A maximum of 150 points can be attained in a race.

The formula combines the following categories: Wins, Finishes, Top-15 Finishes, Average Running Position While on Lead Lap, Average Speed Under Green, Fastest Lap, Led Most Laps, Lead-Lap Finish.

# Mallory Swanson scores again to lead USWNT win

## Jason Anderson

Pro Soccer Wire | USA TODAY Network

It was far from easy, but as long as the U.S. women's national team has Mallory Swanson in this kind of form, the squad is a problem for anyone.

The USWNT were made to sweat early and late by Japan but emerged 1-0 winners Sunday in Nashville, Tennessee, as Swanson scored her seventh goal in her last five national team appearances just before halftime. Goalkeeper Casey Murphy provided two top-tier late saves to preserve the win, which means that a win over Brazil on Wednesday would guarantee a USWNT tournament victory at the SheBelieves Cup.

Sunday's match, with five changes to the USWNT lineup, had a different feel from the 2-0 win over Canada. Japan offered a withering early high press, and though the USWNT got through the early stages unscathed, the new faces at the back and in midfield had a more difficult go of things than the more familiar lineup that faced the Canadians.

A first half featuring few chances still saw Japan causing a very imprecise U.S. fits, but Murphy was only truly tested by one long-range effort.

The USWNT wobbled on a handful of occasions but always had a timely block or interception before things could truly go awry.



**USWNT forward Mallory Swanson scores the only goal in the SheBelieves Cup match Sunday against Japan in Nashville.** STEVE ROBERTS/USA TODAY SPORTS

At the other end, their threats – other than a sliced Lynn Williams cross that Ayaka Yamashita had to tip off the crossbar – chiefly came through Swanson, who continued her scintillating form by scoring in the final seconds of the half.

Sofia Huerta could have just hoofed the ball clear from deep inside the USWNT half but took aim at Alex Morgan, who had checked back from the Japan back line. Morgan took the ball

down, turned under no pressure, and fed Swanson – who by this point had turned on the afterburners – in behind the defense.

Swanson produced a masterful first touch to prevent Shiori Miyake from intervening, then raced away to slide a clinical finish past Yamashita.

Japan came out with a bit more creativity in the attack to start the second half, with Hina Sugita slashing in from left wingback to glance a point-blank

header just wide after good work from Risa Shimizu and Aoba Fujino on the opposite flank.

Much has been made of the USWNT's work on the game management front, with head coach Vlatko Andonovski citing it multiple times after the win over Canada. With a 1-0 lead, he might not have enjoyed seeing that Sugita chance, but from there Japan assembled long spells of possession without ever breaking the USWNT defensive block.

Still, Japan was patiently starting to find better openings, moving the U.S. shape around and at long last finding seams. Fuka Nagano whistled a 20-yard bid just over the crossbar in the 79th minute.

Murphy had to make an excellent save in the 81st minute to deny Yui Hasegawa, who knifed in to fire a half-volley on frame from 7 yards, and then did well to stop Jun Endo's stoppage-time effort from the left.

Still, despite the late push for an equalizer, the USWNT managed to hold off Japan, which by the end of the match was pushing eight players into the attack in pursuit of an equalizer.

If Andonovski's stated position is that pre-tournament friendlies must teach the team about where its weak points are and how to shore them up, this will go down as a very useful win indeed.

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