



## **KYLE BUSCH: Driver, No. 18 M&M'S/Interstate Batteries Toyota**

After bringing home his first Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series championship in 2015, Kyle Busch again found himself vying for another NASCAR Cup Series title when the series headed to the 2016 finale at Homestead-Miami Speedway.

While he came up just short of another title in 2016, Busch, the winner of 38 races in NASCAR's top series (as of January 2017), has shown that he's now consistently a threat to win the championship as he enters his 12<sup>th</sup> full-time Cup Series season in 2017.

It's likely a question of when and how many when it comes to Busch's next Cup Series titles but, no matter what happens, how Busch won his first title in 2015 will be difficult to top. In February 2015, the Las Vegas native suffered a broken right leg and a broken left foot in an accident during the NASCAR Xfinity Series race at Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway and Busch initially figured he would work on his rehab and get himself ready for the 2016 season.

But as the weeks went by and he went from laying in a makeshift hospital bed set up in his living room, to standing, and then to walking, Busch knew that he may have a shot at racing in 2015 as the timeline for his recovery kept getting shorter and shorter.

The initial goal was simply to be standing by his wife Samantha's side for the birth of their son, who was due in mid-May. As it turned out, Busch's miraculous recovery saw both his return to racing and the birth of his son happening just two days apart. Busch returned for the May 16 NASCAR All-Star Race, a non-points event where he finished a solid sixth in his 2015 Cup Series debut. Just two days later, on May 18, Busch and wife Samantha welcomed their son Brexton into the world.

On the track, Busch was granted a waiver by NASCAR that allowed him to be eligible for the playoffs despite missing the first 11 regular-season races. The conditions of the waiver were that Busch had to win a regular-season race, and also had to finish the regular season in the top-30 in driver points. Having missed those 11 events left Busch with a tall mountain to climb to meet both criteria required to make the playoffs by its September cutoff. It meant Busch and the No. 18 team had just 15 races to get the job done. To make it even more difficult, an accident at Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn in mid-June created an even deeper hole in the driver standings for Busch in his quest to crack the top-30 as he sat 173 points behind the 30<sup>th</sup>-place driver.

Not about to give up, Busch and then rookie crew chief Adam Stevens and the entire team rolled up their sleeves and went to work. Using the off weekend following Michigan as a point to refocus, the team turned around its season in late June by winning at Sonoma (Calif.) Raceway. The win started a remarkable streak of four wins in five weeks, including three in a row at Kentucky Speedway in Sparta, New Hampshire Motor Speedway in Loudon and the prestigious Brickyard 400 at Indianapolis Motor Speedway. With the hot streak, Busch and company jettisoned their way into the top-30, clinching a playoff berth at the Labor Day weekend race at Darlington (S.C.) Raceway.

Once in the playoffs, Busch and Stevens navigated the difficult 10-race, 16-driver playoffs with hard work and smart racing. They advanced through the first three rounds and into the four-driver, winner-take-all season finale at Homestead. Not only did the No. 18 team make it to the Championship Four, its fast pit work on the final stop of the race vaulted Busch into the lead with less than 10 laps to go. And in another case of truth being stranger than fiction and something more likely belonging in a Hollywood script, Busch brought home his first Cup Series title by winning the series finale, and the championship capped off a season to remember for Busch, his entire JGR team, and his family.

Busch's rise to Cup Series champion and dominant racer took shape very early in his life as he unofficially began racing at age 6, when he cruised around the cul-de-sac of his family's Las Vegas neighborhood in a makeshift go-kart. Busch was too small to reach the throttle, but that didn't stop him from picking up the basics. His father, Tom, held down the gas pedal while Busch steered the kart on the street. Once Busch was tall enough to reach the gas pedal, an accelerated pace was set for his future career in motorsports.

Throughout his childhood, Busch spent countless hours as an apprentice in the family garage to his father and his older brother Kurt, learning to build and repair racecars. By age 10, Busch was a full-fledged mechanic and served as crew chief on fellow future Cup Series champion Kurt's Dwarf car team. In 1998, shortly after his 13<sup>th</sup> birthday, Kyle Busch's driving career officially began.

Given his young age, schoolwork was always a priority. Busch was an honor student, but his extracurricular activities always included a racecar. Busch's parents taught him accountability: If he wanted to race, he was responsible to work on, repair and pay for his cars. Busch learned early on that carelessness on the track proved costly, resulting in wrecked equipment and being unprepared for the next event. He took pride in his racecars and raced competitors with respect.

From 1999 to 2001, Busch earned more than 65 wins in Legends cars as he earned two track championships at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway "Bullring" before moving up to Late Model stock cars. Winning seemed to come naturally no matter what Busch drove, as he captured 10 victories in Late Model competition at the Bullring in 2001.

His winning reputation and potential for success began to pique the interest of car owners in NASCAR, and Busch made his NASCAR Camping World Truck Series debut – at age 16 – Aug. 3, 2001 at Lucas Oil Raceway near Indianapolis, where he started 23<sup>rd</sup> and finished ninth for Roush Fenway Racing. Shortly thereafter, an unexpected ruling by NASCAR that enacted a minimum age requirement for competitors in NASCAR's top three series sidelined Busch until his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Instead of sitting idle until that magic date, Busch turned his attention to the American Speed Association and ran the entire 2002 schedule. In a division that prepared the likes of Mark Martin, Alan Kulwicki and Rusty Wallace for NASCAR, Busch once again was successful by posting five top-fives and 10 top-10s in 20 starts, ending the season eighth in points. That same year, he graduated with honors – one year early – from Durango High School in Las Vegas.

Prior to his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2003, Busch signed with Hendrick Motorsports and quickly got down to business, winning his very first ARCA Series race at Nashville (Tenn.) Superspeedway from the pole position. He followed with a second win in his very next outing at Kentucky.

Upon turning 18, he entered seven races in the NASCAR Xfinity Series – the stepping-stone to the elite Cup Series – and finished second at Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway in his very first start. Busch ended the year with two second-place finishes, three top-10s and five top-10 qualifying efforts.

The 2004 season started off on a high note as Busch scored an ARCA victory Feb. 7 in his first career start on the high banks of Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway. And after his first full season in the Xfinity Series, Busch was the youngest top rookie in series history, at age 19.

Busch grabbed his first Xfinity Series victory May 14, 2004 at Richmond (Va.) International Raceway. The win sparked four more victories – at Charlotte, Kentucky, O'Reilly Raceway Park and Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn. Busch ended the year with five poles, five wins, 16 top-fives, 22 top-10s and a runner-up finish in the point standings.

Looking to gain experience and seat time in NASCAR's premier series, Busch also qualified for six Cup Series races. In late 2004, Busch's career dreams came true as he was selected to replace the retiring Terry Labonte in Hendrick Motorsports' No. 5 car beginning in 2005.

At age 19, Busch started the 2005 season with a record-setting pole at Auto Club Speedway in Fontana, Calif., in just his eighth career Cup Series start. Busch, who was 19 years, 317 days old, broke the record previously held by Donald Thomas, who was 20 years, 129 days old when he won the pole Nov. 16, 1952 at Lakewood (Ga.) Speedway. Thomas went on to win that race and remained the youngest race winner in Cup Series history until Busch won Sept. 4, 2005 at Auto Club Speedway at Fontana, Calif. Busch bested Thomas' record by a mere four days and held the title as youngest Cup Series winner until his JGR teammate Joey Logano won in June 2009 at New Hampshire Motor Speedway in Loudon at 19 years, 35 days.

Finishing his rookie season with another victory in November at Phoenix International Raceway, Busch's first year consisted of one pole, nine top-fives, 13 top-10s, two wins and a 20<sup>th</sup>-place finish in the standings. Busch bookended his Xfinity Series Rookie of the Year trophy from 2004 by winning the Cup Series Rookie of the Year title in 2005.

The 2006 season brought more success for Busch as he won another pole in April at Phoenix and took his third race win in July at New Hampshire. In addition to the pole and race win, Busch managed to bring home 10 top-five and 18 top-10 finishes while ending up 10<sup>th</sup> in the point standings after qualifying for the playoffs for the first time, becoming the youngest driver ever to become eligible for the playoffs.

Busch continued his success in his third full season in 2007 by winning in March at Bristol (Tenn.) Motor Speedway and again qualifying for the playoffs. He finished the season with a remarkable 20 top-10s and 11 top-fives and went on to complete the season fifth in the final point standings – his career best.

In the offseason, Busch moved to Joe Gibbs Racing (JGR) to pilot the team's legendary No. 18 machine after his four seasons at rival Hendrick Motorsports. In the meantime, JGR was in the middle of a major change, having switched from Chevrolet to new manufacturer Toyota and M&M'S Chocolate Candies becoming the primary sponsor of the No. 18 car.

The Busch-JGR-M&M'S Toyota combination quickly became successful and yielded eight Cup Series wins, 17 top-fives and 21 top-10s en route to a 10<sup>th</sup>-place finish in the points in 2008.

Adding to his Cup Series success, Busch began to win in seemingly everything he drove. By season's end, Busch recorded 21 victories across NASCAR's top three series – eight in Cup, 10 in Xfinity and three in Truck. Busch bested the previous record by seven wins for most victories overall in a season since the addition of the Truck Series in 1995.

The 2009 season saw more of the same as Busch drove the No. 18 M&M'S Toyota to victory in four races, including an emotional win at his home track of Las Vegas Motor Speedway, which was being constructed when his career was just beginning. He also scored 13 top-10 finishes en route to a 13<sup>th</sup>-place finish in the points.

Busch also won his first NASCAR title of any kind by defeating runner-up Carl Edwards by 210 points to win the 2009 Xfinity Series title driving for JGR. The championship likely will go down as one of the most impressive in NASCAR's 62-year history.

His 5,682 points scored in 2009 were the most ever by an Xfinity Series competitor, as were the 2,698 laps he led throughout the season. Busch totaled nine wins – four more than any other driver in 2009 – while he finished second 11 times for a single-season Xfinity Series record. Busch's 25 top-five finishes were the most since Jeff Green scored 25 top-fives in a 32-race season in 2000.

Busch failed to lead a lap in only three races and led more than 50 percent of the laps in a race an incredible 12 times. The points race was never in doubt as he topped the standings after 30 of the 35 events, including the last 29 of the season.

In addition to his Xfinity Series championship in 2009, Busch continued to participate in a limited Truck Series schedule and drove to victory lane seven times in just 15 starts.

While it seemed as if his 2008 and 2009 season would be difficult to top, Busch stepped up his performance yet again in 2010. Across all three of NASCAR's national series that season, Busch made 81 total starts – 36 Cup, 29 Xfinity and 16 Truck, the latter of which he served as driver-owner of Kyle Busch Motorsports (KBM) during its inaugural season.

He won 24 races across the three divisions – three in Cup, a record-smashing 13 in Xfinity and eight in the Truck Series for an incredible winning percentage of nearly 30 percent. Coupled with his 21 overall wins in 2008 and 20 overall wins in 2009, Busch recorded an astounding 65 overall victories over those three seasons. In addition to his remarkable win totals, Busch had 45 top-five and 57 top-10 finishes, as well as 11 poles among NASCAR's top three series in 2010.

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And Busch also found several new ways to add his name to the record books in 2010, something he has done routinely since joining the powerhouse JGR organization at the beginning of the 2008 season.

Including the 13 Xfinity Series wins, which shattered the mark of 10 wins set by Sam Ard in 1983 and was tied by Busch in 2008, Busch broke Mark Martin's Xfinity Series career record of 8,082 laps led. Busch's 9,466 career laps led total is an all-time high. In addition to being the all-time Xfinity Series lap leader, Busch found himself just five wins behind Martin's series record of 48 wins.

Another impressive accomplishment for Busch in 2010 came in August at Bristol, where he swept the schedule of NASCAR races at the .533-mile oval to become the first driver in history to win all three of NASCAR's national touring series events in the same weekend.

While he fell short of a Cup Series title with the No. 18 Cup Series team, Busch qualified for the playoffs and finished eighth in points. But Busch's talents helped earn two other teams a championship in 2010. In addition to his part in vaulting JGR's No. 18 Xfinity Series to the owner title – JGR's third championship in a row – Busch guided his KBM Toyota team to the 2010 Truck Series owner title, even more impressive because the team was in its first year.

After winning 18 overall races among NASCAR's top three divisions in 2011, including his 100<sup>th</sup> overall win in the Xfinity Series race in July at New Hampshire, Busch embarked on a scaled-back schedule of Xfinity and Truck Series events in 2012. His victory total suffered, with just one overall win. Busch finished 13<sup>th</sup> in points in a disappointing Cup Series season in 2012, as mechanical setbacks hindered the team's championship drive.

Busch and his No. 18 M&M'S team bounced back with vengeance in 2013 as NASCAR introduced the new Generation-6 car to the Cup Series. He finished fourth in Cup Series points and recorded 16 top-five and 22 top-10 finishes, with the 22 top-10's a career-best, as he showed the consistency it takes to be a Cup Series champion.

Busch's 2013 season included four Cup Series victories, which came at Auto Club Speedway, Texas Motor Speedway in Fort Worth, Watkins Glen (N.Y.) International and Atlanta Motor Speedway. The Atlanta victory marked his 28<sup>th</sup> career NASCAR Cup Series win, as he sits in a tie for 23<sup>rd</sup> place on the all-time Cup Series win list with Rex White.

In 2014, Busch scored just one Cup Series win, which came at Auto Club Speedway in March. By virtue of the victory, Busch made NASCAR's revamped 16-driver, 10-race playoffs for the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series. However, Busch was caught up in a wreck not of his making in the sixth race of the playoffs at Talladega (Ala.) Superspeedway, which was an elimination race in the new playoff format. Despite scoring three top-five and five top-10 finishes in the first five races of the playoffs, the wreck was too much for Busch to overcome and he was eliminated from championship contention and finishing 10<sup>th</sup> in points.

After bringing home his aforementioned first NASCAR Cup Series title in 2015, Busch backed it up again last season with four wins, to go along with 17 top-five and a career-high 25 top-10 finishes. While he came up just short of the title, Busch finished third in the standings and posted his third top-five finish in the Cup Series standings over the course of the past four seasons.

Along with his Xfinity and Cup Series titles, Busch now has 170 overall wins among NASCAR's top three divisions to start the 2017 season – 38 in Cup, 86 in the Xfinity Series and 46 in the Truck Series. On the Cup Series side, Busch sits tied for 19<sup>th</sup> on the all-time win list in NASCAR's top series entering the 2017 season.

In addition to the full Cup Series schedule in 2017, Busch plans to run 10 Xfinity Series races for JGR and continue his ownership of Kyle Busch Motorsports (KBM) with three fulltime teams in 2016, along with driving the No. 51 Tundra in six races this season.

In addition to his aggressive nature behind the wheel of a racecar, Busch has a strong charitable drive. He formed the Kyle Busch Foundation (KBF). His foundation is committed to empowering children, families and communities to overcome hardship by providing essential tools – financial, material and experiential – to allow them to live their best lives possible.

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In addition to children's homes his foundation supports, Busch and his wife, Samantha, have a few initiatives they continue to support that are important to them. The first is North Carolina-based Pretty in Pink Foundation, as money raised at a charity dinner held each October in Charlotte, N.C. Along with support for the Pretty in Pink Foundation, the couple started the "Kyle and Samantha Busch Bundle of Joy Fund" benefiting in-need families struggling with infertility. KBF donates to costs associated with infertility treatment through the REACH Clinic of Charlotte.

Busch, wife Samantha, and son Brexton reside in Denver, North Carolina.

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