

KYLE BUSCH'S CLOSING QUALIFYING FLURRY LANDS INDY POLE

INDIANAPOLIS: Less than an hour after watching one winning streak end Saturday, Kyle Busch started working on another.

Now the two-time defending Brickyard 400 champion is in the best possible position for an unprecedented three-peat at Indianapolis.

Busch became the first Cup driver in nearly two decades to win back-to-back Indy poles by saving his fastest lap for the final one of the day. His speed of 187.301 mph was almost a mph faster than second-place Kevin Harvick and was the second-fastest pole-winning speed in the race's 24-year history.

"Obviously, we've had a really fast car," Busch said after winning his fourth pole of the season. "We've been focused on race trim and I felt like we did a pretty good job with that. But I wasn't sure about qualifying. So, obviously, they were listened to what our teammates

had to say."

He couldn't quibble with the results. Harvick's No. 4 Ford was second at 186.332 and Jamie McMurray, in the No. 1 Chevrolet, wound up third at 186.274. Nobody else topped 185. If the 2015 Cup champion wins Sunday, he will join former Formula One star Michael Schumacher as the only drivers with three straight Indy wins in the premier series of their respective leagues. Schumacher won the U.S. Grand Prix four consecutive times on the road course. Nobody has ever won three straight races on Indy's oval.

"We've just got to keep it there, stay up front and, of course, lead the last lap," Busch said as his 2-year-old son, Brexton, giggled into a microphone. For Busch, it was another marathon session on another hot, humid midsummer afternoon in the No. 18 Toyota.

He drove in both of the morning's

Cup practices, qualified for the NASCAR Xfinity Series race in the early afternoon and watched his four-race Indy winning streak snapped after a late pit stop dropped him from first to 21st. Busch finished 12th.

After about a 30-minute break, he was back in the car for three more qualifying rounds. His last lap allowed him to join Jeff Gordon (1995-96) and Ernie Irvan (1997-98) as the race's only back-to-back pole winners.

It certainly wasn't strategy. "When you're in such a short window, five minutes, you couldn't come back and get the tires cooled in time to make another lap," he said. But it was good enough. Harvick, meanwhile, found the consistency he was seeking but avoided going too hard to get into trouble.

"I think that was the right approach," Harvick said. "I've tried to get too much in the last round and this is just not the

place where you can overdrive the entry and make up for something. The problems compound fast here, but it's good to have that speed."

GOING TO THE BACK

For the second consecutive week, series officials threw out a qualifying speed. This time, it was BJ McLeod who drew the penalty after a post-qualifying inspection showed the No. 51 car had taped shut a cooling aqueduct. It was supposed to remain open and the penalty cost McLeod five spots on the starting grid.

He will start from the back of the 40-car starting grid after initially qualifying 35th with a speed of 176.294. Kyle Larson's pole-winning run was disallowed last week at New Hampshire.

JUNIOR'S FINALE

Dale Earnhardt Jr., the most popular

driver in the series, qualified 13th for his final Indianapolis start. The 42-year-old driver announced in April that he will retire at the end of the season. But before he goes, Earnhardt hopes to join Al Unser and Al Unser Jr. as the only two father-son winning tandems in Indy history.

"Considering how our season has gone, winning here would right all the wrongs," Earnhardt said. Chase Elliott, who qualified 16th, also has a chance to join the father-son winner's list Sunday.

HARD LESSON

One of Harvick's spotters, Tim Fedewa, had his credential taken away briefly Saturday after dropping a sandwich from the spotter's stand. NASCAR spokesman Matt Humphrey said the hard card was returned following a short investigation. Fedewa is a former driver in the series. — AP



ANAHEIM: Kole Calhoun #56 of the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim is safe at second as second baseman Dustin Pedroia #13 of the Boston Red Sox can't reach the ball on a throwing error by shortstop Xander Bogaerts #2 on an attempted force play in the fifth inning at Angel Stadium of Anaheim on Saturday in Anaheim, California. — AFP

BASEBALL

SIMMONS SLUGS ANGELS TO WIN OVER RED SOX

ANAHEIM: Andrelton Simmons drove in three runs, including a go-ahead two-run homer and Albert Pujols went 3 for 4 with two RBIs as the Los Angeles Angels rallied for a 7-3 victory over the Boston Red Sox in Major League Baseball on Saturday. Simmons hit his 10th homer of the season to left and put the Angels ahead 4-3 in the third inning after falling behind early. Pujols doubled to score Yunel Escobar and Mike Trout to start the four-run burst. Pujols became the 26th player to score 1,700 runs when he touched home plate after Simmons went deep. Pujols joins Barry Bonds, Hank Aaron, Babe Ruth, Alex Rodriguez and Willie Mays in amassing at least 600 home runs and 1,700 runs. JC Ramirez (9-8) recorded his second win at home in 11 starts, striking out six while allowing one earned run and five hits in six innings. David Price (5-3) gave up five earned runs and seven hits in five innings, allowing more than three earned runs for only the second time this year.

CUBS 3, CARDINALS 2

Kris Bryant raced home from first base on Anthony Rizzo's bloop double, capping the Cubs' three-run rally in the eighth inning. Bryant also had a tying, broken-bat single during the comeback. A classic pitchers' duel between Jon Lester and Adam Wainwright kept it scoreless into the eighth. Lester (7-6) had a perfect game until Wainwright singled with two outs in the sixth. Lester gave up three hits and struck out 10 in eight innings.

Wainwright allowed two runs on four hits in 7 2/3 innings, retiring 14 straight at one point.

GIANTS 5, PADRES 4, 12 INNING

Backup catcher Nick Hundley singled in Kelby Tomlinson with two outs in the 12th for San Francisco. It was Hundley's fifth game-ending hit of his career and his first since July 11, 2014, with Baltimore. One day after the teams played 11 innings in a game that lasted nearly 5 hours, the Giants and Padres had another extended battle. Eduardo Nunez had three hits and two RBIs, Hundley singled twice and San Francisco took advantage of an error by San Diego shortstop Allen Cordoba that led to three unearned runs. Will Myers hit his second homer in two days as part of San Diego's four-run fourth. Josh Osich (3-1) retired five batters and struck out three in getting the win.

MARINERS 6, YANKEES 5, 10 INNINGS

Nelson Cruz hit a winning single off Adam Warren in the 10th inning, and Seattle beat New York after Edwin Diaz allowed a tying hit to Ronald Torreyes in the ninth. Masahiro Tanaka had another shaky outing and New York trailed 4-2 before Aaron Judge hit his MLB-leading 32nd home run, a sixth inning drive against Steve Cishek. Diaz blew a save for the fourth time in 22 chances when Didi Gregorius walked leading off the ninth, pinch-runner Jacoby Ellsbury stole second and Torreyes followed with a single. Ben Gamel opened the 10th with a double against Warren

(2-2), Robinson Cano was intentionally walked and Cruz lined a pitch to left for his AL-leading 75th RBI. Tony Zych (4-2) pitched a perfect 10th, throwing called third strikes past Clint Frazier and Judge.

BREWERS 9, PHILLIES 8

Domingo Santana singled home the go-ahead run in the ninth inning after the Brewers blew a big lead, and Milwaukee ended a season-worst six-game losing streak. Ryan Braun homered and drove in four runs, and Travis Shaw also homered for the Brewers, who maintained a one-game lead over the Cubs in the NL Central division. Milwaukee led 8-1 after batting in the seventh and manager Craig Counsell removed Braun, who had missed the past three games with a wrist injury. The Phillies rallied to tie it with four runs in the seventh and three in the eighth. Santana came through with a one-out single to left off Hector Neris (2-4) to score Hernan Perez and put Milwaukee back in front. Jacob Barnes (3-1) gave up three runs and four hits in the eighth but ended up getting the win. Herrera had four hits with a homer and a pair of doubles for Philadelphia, which had won three straight.

MARLINS 5, REDS 4

J.T. Realmuto hit a pair of two-run homers and a double, powering Miami to its second straight victory. Miami won for only the third time in eight games, getting its first back-to-back wins since the All-Star break. Realmuto connected in the second and sixth innings off Robert Stephenson (0-3), who made his first start of the season after 13 relief appearances. It was the catcher's second career multi-homer game - he also had one in 2015. Nick Wittgren (3-1) relieved starter Chris O'Grady in the fifth and got the win. Scooter Gennett singled home a run in the eighth off Junichi Tazawa, cutting it to 5-4. A.J. Ramos pitched the ninth for his 19th save in 21 chances.

NATIONALS 4, DIAMONDBACKS 3

Bryce Harper homered and drove in two runs, Tanner Roark struck out a season-high 11 and Sean Doolittle stranded the potential tying run to preserve the Nationals' win. Roark (8-6) gave up two runs and three hits in seven innings for the NL East-leading Nationals. Harper hit his 25th home run of the season on a full-count changeup from Anthony Banda (0-1), who lost in his major league debut. Chris Iannetta hit a two-out RBI double in the bottom half, but the Nationals opened a 4-1 lead with a three-run sixth. Harper hit a run-scoring double and scored on Ryan Zimmerman's double, and Anthony Rendon beat out an RBI sin-

gle that sent Zimmerman home.

ROCKIES 7, PIRATES 3

Colorado's German Marquez matched a career best with nine strikeouts in seven solid innings and also had a wayward pitch that fueled a near brawl. Mark Reynolds added a pair of run-scoring singles and Charlie Blackmon scored after doubling in the third and tripling in the eighth. Marquez (8-4) hit Andrew McCutchen with a pitch in the sixth inning, and the Pirates outfielder strode toward the mound before being headed off by the home plate umpire and taking his base. Pittsburgh's Chad Kuhl then threw an inside pitch in the sixth that narrowly missed Carlos Gonzalez. Players and coaches from both teams streamed onto the field and though there were some heated exchanges, no punches were thrown. Greg Holland got four outs for his major league-leading 31st save in 32 chances. Kuhl (3-7) allowed four runs and nine hits in six innings.

DODGERS 6, BRAVES 2

Chris Taylor drove in three runs with a home run and a triple, and Corey Seager and Chase Utley hit solo home runs to lead the Dodgers past Atlanta. Ending the two-game hiccup which saw the Dodgers outscored 18-6, Los Angeles has won 32 of 38, and 19 of 22 at Dodger Stadium, for the best record in Major League Baseball. The Dodgers' 67-31 mark is their best through 98 games since the Brooklyn Dodgers were 69-29 in 1942. Taylor led off the bottom of the inning by driving an 0-1 pitch from Julio Teheran (7-8) into the left field bleachers, giving the Dodgers a 4-2 lead. Taylor added a two-run triple off reliever Luke Jackson with two outs in the eighth for the final margin. Dodgers starter Rich Hill (7-4) struck out eight as he held the Braves to two runs and six hits over 6 1/3 innings.

METS 6, ATHLETICS 5

Wilmer Flores hit a solo home run with two outs in the bottom of the ninth inning as New York rallied from an early five-run deficit to beat Oakland for its fourth consecutive victory. Pinch-hitter Lucas Duda delivered a tying single with two outs in the eighth off left-hander Daniel Coulombe. Jay Bruce hit a two-run homer in the sixth to begin New York's comeback, and Jose Reyes tripled twice. Hansel Robles (6-1) tossed a hitless inning to win for the second straight day.

ROYALS 7, WHITE SOX 2

Mike Moustakas homered twice, and Salvador Perez, Brandon Moss and Jorge Bonifacio also went deep to lead Kansas City over the White Sox, extending Chicago's

longest losing streak in two years to eight games. Mike Pelfrey took a two-hitter into the sixth, but put leadoff man Lorenzo Cain on with his sixth walk. David Holmberg (1-3) relieved and gave up three homers in an eight-pitch span. Perez's two-run homer tied the score, Moustakas homered two pitches later, and Moss then homered for a 4-2 lead.

ASTROS 8, ORIOLES 4

Marwin Gonzalez stepped in for injured Colin Moran and delivered a pinch-hit, three-run homer in the sixth inning to propel Houston past Baltimore. Moran fouled a ball off his left eye and had difficulty standing before being carted from the field. An update on his condition was not immediately available. Gonzalez subsequently ended a nine-pitch at-bat by driving a 2-2 offering from Darren O'Day (1-3) over the right-field wall. It was Houston's first pinch-hit homer of the season, and it capped a five-run uprising that wiped out Baltimore's 4-1 lead. Alex Bregman and Yuli Gurriel also homered for the Astros. Astros right-hander Collin McHugh allowed four runs in 4 2/3 innings in his season debut and Francis Martes (3-0) pitched 2 1/3 innings of hitless relief.

INDIANS 2, BLUE JAYS 1

Francisco Lindor hit a leadoff home run in the bottom of the 10th inning as Cleveland defeated Toronto. Lindor hit a 2-2 pitch from Danny Barnes (2-3) to right field for his 15th homer of the season. Bryan Shaw (3-4) retired Kevin Pillar on a groundout with two on to end the 10th.

TWINS 6, TIGERS 5

Kyle Gibson took a shutout into the eighth inning in his longest start of the season, Zack Granite had three of the Twins' 14 hits, and Minnesota held off a late rally to beat Detroit. The Twins have been rumored to be searching for starting pitching as the trade deadline approaches and Gibson (6-8), who entered the game with a 6.29 ERA, was a likely candidate to be replaced in the rotation. Brandon Kintzler retired Andrew Romine on a grounder to get out of the eighth inning and then pitched a scoreless ninth for his 27th save.

RANGERS 4, RAYS 3

Texas turned three Tampa Bay miscues into a three-run sixth inning and beat the Rays. Elvis Andrus, who entered the series hitless in 16 at-bats, homered in his second consecutive three-hit game for the Rangers. Andrew Cashner (5-8) gave up three runs and four hits over six innings. Chris Archer (7-6) allowed four runs, four hits and struck out 11 to set a team record with his 24th career game with double-digit strikeouts. — AP

MLB Results/Standings

LA Dodgers 6, Atlanta 2; Seattle 6, NY Yankees 5 (10 innings); LA Angels 7, Boston 3; Colorado 7, Pittsburgh 3; Washington 4, Arizona 3; Kansas City 7, Chicago White Sox 2; Texas 4, Tampa Bay 3; Minnesota 6, Detroit 5; Miami 5, Cincinnati 4; NY Mets 6, Oakland 5; Cleveland 2, Toronto 1 (10 innings); Houston 8, Baltimore 4; Milwaukee 9, Philadelphia 8; San Francisco 5, San Diego 4 (12 innings); Chicago Cubs 3, St. Louis 2.

American League					National League				
Eastern Division					Eastern Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB		W	L	PCT	GB
Boston	55	44	.556	-	Washington	58	38	.604	-
NY Yankees	50	46	.521	3.5	Atlanta	47	49	.490	11
Tampa Bay	51	47	.520	3.5	NY Mets	45	50	.474	12.5
Baltimore	46	51	.474	8	Miami	44	51	.463	13.5
Toronto	44	53	.454	10	Philadelphia	33	62	.347	24.5
Central Division					Central Division				
Cleveland	50	45	.526	-	Milwaukee	53	47	.530	-
Minnesota	49	47	.510	1.5	Chicago Cubs	50	46	.521	1
Kansas City	49	47	.510	1.5	Pittsburgh	49	49	.500	3
Detroit	44	52	.458	6.5	St. Louis	47	50	.485	4.5
Chicago White Sox	38	56	.404	11.5	Cincinnati	40	57	.412	11.5
Western Division					Western Division				
Houston	65	32	.670	-	LA Dodgers	67	31	.684	-
Seattle	49	50	.495	17	Arizona	56	41	.577	10.5
LA Angels	48	51	.485	18	Colorado	57	42	.576	10.5
Texas	47	50	.485	18	San Diego	42	55	.433	24.5
Oakland	43	54	.443	22	San Francisco	38	61	.384	29.5