

Logano clinches final playoff spot in dramatic Charlotte finish

BY JENNA FRYER
AP AUTO RACING WRITER

CONCORD, N.C. — Joey Logano, winner of two of the last three Cup Series championships, was never part of the conversation of potential elimination from NASCAR playoffs.

At least not until Sunday's race at Charlotte Motor Speedway, where the Team Penske driver found himself struggling most of the race and in a tense battle with Ross Chastain for the final spot in the round of eight.

The two swapped the final transfer spot multiple times as NASCAR prepared to cut the field from 12 drivers to eight ahead of the third round of the playoffs. Chastain was in, then it was Logano, then the two were tied with Logano holding the tie-breaker.

Logano, on fresher tires, worked his way through the field for every point possible. Chastain was nursing old Goodyears and holding off every challenging driver closing quickly in his rearview mirror.

But then came Denny Hamlin, who for the second week in a row played a pivotal role in the finish and the playoff field. A week ago, his hard racing of Bubba Wallace kept Wallace from winning at Kansas Speedway and ultimately led to Wallace being eliminated from the playoffs.

This time it was chasing down Chastain. The two cars had contact, Chastain spun, and crossed the finish line backward in 21st, one spot behind Logano. It was enough to give Logano the final spot in the third round of the playoffs and eliminate Chastain.

An animated Hamlin on pit road complained to his No. 11 crew that he was not made

aware of the situation and would not have passed Chastain had he known it would benefit three-time Cup Series champion Logano.

"I didn't know anything about anything on that last run, I wasn't very good," Hamlin said. "I saw (Chastain) and I didn't know anything about anything going on. I didn't know. I thought I was racing for about 18th. I just wish I knew so I could have been either prepared or made a different decision."

Shane van Gisbergen, meanwhile, won his fifth consecutive race on a road or street course. Charlotte, called The Roval in this configuration, is a hybrid road course/oval.

The theory headed into Charlotte was that van Gisbergen had the race locked up and the only way a driver below the cutline could save his championship chances was if the New Zealander was beat.

Kyle Larson and Christopher Bell both put tough challenges on van Gisbergen, but van Gisbergen emerged from a car-slamming battle with Larson through the turns with 14 laps remaining and took the lead for good with 11 laps remaining.

That eliminated any shot for Tyler Reddick and Wallace of 23XI Racing, or Austin Cindric of Team Penske, claiming the final playoff position. Chastain of Trackhouse Racing remained in the hunt, though, as Logano couldn't get his Penske Ford running well enough to secure his spot in the playoffs.

"Everybody was telling me how close it was going to be there. We're still in. We're still alive, baby," Logano said as he reveled in a loud chorus of fan booing. "I knew it was within a point there, and I knew



we were going to be tied there at the end and Ross was going to do whatever he had to do to make it happen.

"If you want drama, the playoffs bring it every time. What an entertaining finish there. We've still got a shot."

It was similar to a year ago when Logano left Charlotte eliminated from the playoffs, only to learn hours later while having dinner with his family that Alex Bowman had been disqualified and Logano was back in the field. He went on to win the Cup Series championship.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Please take notice that the City of Taylorsville on the 14th day of October 2025 will consider the following ORDINANCE(S) for second reading and adoption:

1. Proposed Ordinance No. 474 Amending Article 2, Definitions of the Taylorsville Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance, Ordinance No. 472.

Karen Spencer, Mayor, City of Taylorsville

Attest:
Marcia Finley, City Clerk

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Scott Travis
Spencer County Judge/Executive

Attest: Lynn Hesselbrock
Clerk Spencer County Fiscal Court

Shane van Gisbergen celebrates in Victory Lane after winning a NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Charlotte Motor Speedway on Sunday in Concord, N.C.

Matt Kelley/AP photo

PUBLIC NOTICE

Please take notice that the Fiscal Court of Spencer County on the 20th day of October 2025 will consider the following ORDINANCE(S) for second reading and adoption: Robert Scott & Karen L. Webb and Robert Lee & Judy McClain requesting zone change from AG-1, agricultural to AG-2, agricultural on 5.835 total acres located at 885 Rice Lane.

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Spencer County Judge/Executive

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