



**Communiqué de presse**  
(Pour diffusion immédiate)

**RAPHAEL LESSARD: FIRST RACE IN NASCAR GANDER OUTDOORS TRUCK SERIES  
WITH KYLE BUSCH MOTORSPORTS**

Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>: Martinsville Speedway

**Saint-Joseph-de-Beauce** (Quebec, Canada) - **March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019** - Raphael Lessard will run his first NASCAR Gander Outdoors Series Truck race aboard his No. 46 FRL Express | Spectra Premium Toyota, on his first visit to the 0.5-mile oval this Saturday March 23<sup>rd</sup> on the Martinsville Speedway oval.

The geometry of Martinsville makes for spectacular racing. With relatively long, narrow straights, the inside line is preferred for normal racing as well as passing, when a little bumping always helps. The slow, sharp corners require a lot of braking, and the inside line is again the place to be. Corner exits see a lot of wheelspin with torque causing the tires to lose traction more easily than at any other track.

Tire and brake management are key to success at this track, where smartness can pay off as much as experience. Raphael Lessard will certainly put a great show of car control over a couple of hours of hand-to-hand combat.

"This is my first visit to Martinsville; however I am confident that I can adapt to the circumstances quickly. According to Kyle Busch Motorsports team, getting out of the corners without sliding is essential with the new engine package - wasting power on big slides is out of the question – and I am good at smooth driving", explained Raphael Lessard.

A perfect exit requires a perfect entry into corners, imposing precision and concentration at all times. The drivers must also manage brakes and tires on the tight track. And add to this Martinsville's usual bump and shove as there is only one efficient line on the tight track, especially late in the race as tempers grow short.

Raphael Lessard has been using his experience on short tracks and his innate talent this season to make the most of the three different car-track combinations to which he must adapt as efficiently as possible.

"I will do well, especially with a Tundra set up by my Crew Chief, Mike Shelton, who has won a Truck Series championship before" added Raphaël Lessard, who is ready to take up the challenge.

**You can follow the race** on March 23, 2019 at 2 p.m. ET on FOX, MRN and SiriusXM NASCAR 90.

**Martinsville Speedway**

Opened in 1947, this paved-and-concrete 0.526-mile track features tight corners with 12-degree of banking and longish flat straights – it is called the "Paper Clip" with reason! The quick way around is the hotly contested inside lane, resulting in multiple bumps and scrapes on every car after a race, and a good show.

**2019 SEASON**

DATE	RACE	SERIES	TEAM	START	RESULTS	Notes
March 9, 2019	Five Flags Speedway, Florida, USA	ARCA	KBR Development	6 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	Led 83 laps on 250
March 23, 2019	Martinsville Speedway, Virginia, USA	Gander Outdoors Truck	Kyle Busch Motorsports			
April 6, 2019	Bristol Motor Speedway, Tennessee, USA	K&N Pro East	Bill McAnally Racing			
May 3, 2019	Dover International Speedway, Delaware, USA	Gander Outdoors Truck	Kyle Busch Motorsports			

August 15, 2019	Bristol Motor Speedway, Tennessee, USA	Gander Outdoors Truck	Kyle Busch Motorsports			
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**Photo credit:** KBMTeams

**High resolution pictures:** <https://bit.ly/2TxNOW0>

#### ABOUT RAPHAEL LESSARD

Born on July 5th, 2001, in St-Joseph-de-Beauce, Quebec, Canada, Raphaël Lessard is one of the hottest prospects in North-American racing today. Raphaël made his debut as a race car driver in 2013, around local tracks in the Quebec City area. A quick learner, Lessard moved up the ranks through 2014, and in 2015 caught the eye of ex-NASCAR Cup Series driver David Gilliland. This led to Lessard running in last four races of the season on the PASS North Tour; an asphalt late model division, driving for David Gilliland Racing. In 2016, his first full-time season with Gilliland, Lessard won the CARS Super Late Model Tour Championship with four wins, eight top-five and nine top-ten finishes in his No. 99 Toyota Camry. He also became the youngest Canadian race car driver to win in a USA-based major stock car series. Since 2016, Lessard is part of Toyota's prestigious driver development program (TRD). To this day, he is the only Canadian to be recruited into this program. [Raphael Lessard Racing](#)

#### HIGHLIGHTS

**2018** - Competed in 16 Super Late Model events for Kyle Busch Motorsports

- Earned **two wins**, **seven top-five** and **13 top-10** finishes
- **Won the U.S. Short Track Nationals** at Bristol Motor Speedway
- **Won the Red Bull 400** at Anderson Speedway
- **Led 60 laps at the prestigious Snowball Derby** in December, when a leak put him out of the race with 6 laps to go.

**2017** - Competed in **20 Super Late Model and two ARCA Series events**

- Earned **two wins and eight top-five finishes in Super Late Model competition**
- Captured **one top-10 in two starts in ARCA competition**

**2016** – Competed in 10 races

- CARS Super Late Model Series **Champion**
- **Youngest Canadian driver to win** in a USA-based major stock series
- **Four wins, eight top-five and nine top-10** finishes in the 10-race schedule
- **Voted most popular driver in North America for 2016 by Speed51.com**
- Named **Top-10 Pavement Short Track Driver to watch in 2017** by Speed51.com
- Voted as the **seventh-ranked driver in the United States by Speed51.com's Short Track Power Ranking**

#### ABOUT KYLE BUSCH MOTORSPORTS

Since debuting in 2010, Kyle Busch Motorsports (KBM) has quickly established itself as one of the most successful teams in all of NASCAR. Owned by 2015 Cup Series champion Kyle Busch and fueled by his passion for winning, his organisation holds the Gander Outdoors Truck Series records for most team wins (68) and most team wins in a single season (14 in 2014). In addition to collecting a series-record six Owner's Championships, the organisation has produced two championship-winning drivers; Erik Jones (2015) and Christopher Bell (2017).

KBM prepares a fleet of race-winning Tundras out of a state-of-the-art 77,000-square-foot facility in Mooresville (N.C.)

Fans can keep up-to-date with all the latest KBM news online at [KyleBuschMotorsports.com](http://KyleBuschMotorsports.com), by liking the team on Facebook ([KBMteam](#)) and by following the team on Instagram ([KBMteam](#)) and Twitter ([@KBMteam](#)).

#### ABOUT TOYOTA

Toyota (NYSE:TM), creator of the Prius hybrid and the Mirai fuel cell vehicle, is committed to building vehicles for the way people live through our Toyota and Lexus brands. Over the past 60 years, we've built more than 30 million cars and trucks

in North America, where we operate 14 manufacturing plants (10 in the U.S.) and directly employ more than 44,000 people (more than 34,000 in the U.S.). Our 1,800 North American dealerships (nearly 1,500 in the U.S.) sold nearly 2.6 million cars and trucks (2.45 million in the U.S.) in 2016 - and about 85 percent of all Toyota vehicles sold over the past 15 years are still on the road today.

#### **ABOUT FRL EXPRESS Inc.**

F.R.L. Express Inc. is a general trucking company founded in December 2004 by François Lessard, specializing in general transportation in closed trailers, on short or long distances, in Canada and in the United States. Our team now employs about fifty logistics specialists as well as ten contracted truck drivers. We are proud of our business growth and evolution since our inception and recognize the hard work of every member of our team who contributed to our success. Our business priorities are taking care of our team members, providing flawless customer service, and ensuring complete customer satisfaction. We contribute to the success of our son Raphaël Lessard and are very proud of his accomplishments.

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#### **CONTACT MÉDIA :**

**Mario Lachance, coordinateur Raphael Lessard Racing**

Cell phone : 418.369.9209 – Courriel : [mlachance@frlexpress.ca](mailto:mlachance@frlexpress.ca)



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