

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (August 28, 2024):

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Photo credit: & suggested caption Brayden Monteith Racing // Brayden Monteith sits patiently in his racecar during a private test at Hickory Motor Speedway. Monteith will make his debut in the Carolina Pro Late Model Series on August 31 at Hickory.

Two Tri-Cities & Northeast Tennessee Racing Families' Lineage Takes Another Crucial Step This Weekend

BLUFF CITY, TN (Aug. 28, 2024) - When Tri-Cities native Nate Monteith made a series of starts in the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series, it was the culmination of a dream, and a proud moment for the Mountain Empire. Furthermore, when Sevierville native Blake Jones raced in the NASCAR Cup and Xfinity Series, it was yet another statement about the racing talent grown in northeast Tennessee.

This weekend, both families will converge to further the career of another racing generation. Under the guidance of Blake Jones and Nate Monteith, Brayden Monteith will make his first full-size stock car start at the Birthplace of the Stars, Hickory Motor Speedway in North Carolina, driving a pro late model against some of the discipline's toughest teams. Hickory has been the launchpad for many famous racing families careers including the Earnhardts, Jarretts, Pettys, Houstons and dozens more.

"I won't lie, I'm a little nervous simply because he's my son and I have all the feelings any dad would in this situation," said Nate Monteith, who most recently raced in the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series across the years of 2007-2013. "But this is what he wants to do, and he has put in the work and done the things he needs to be successful, and that says a lot to me, especially for him being only 12 years old."

Monteith will be racing in the Carolina Pro Late Model Series on Saturday night at Hickory, against teams with backing from national driver development programs and NASCAR Cup Series teams. The series is one of the more popular feeder series in the region, leading many of its competitors directly into the ARCA Menards Series and ultimately the NASCAR National Series. One of the drivers Monteith will be competing against on Saturday has already signed a development contract with Joe Gibbs Racing, a NASCAR Cup Series team which fields four cars for drivers such as Denny Hamlin and Christopher Bell.

"I've worked with a lot of kids since I got away from racing full-time years ago, but his ability to adapt to a pro late model after never being in a full size stock car was what caught my attention," said Blake Jones, who has two years of NASCAR Cup Series starts from 2018-19 and is serving as Monteith's spotter and driver coach. "With how quick he found speed and ran consistent laps, his raw speed was very impressive.

"You wouldn't think a kid as young as he is would be able to test only three or four times and be ready to race," he continued. "It's usually a long transition from Legends or Bandoleros or karts, or whatever you're racing, to a full size car. It's usually a lot because of the physical demands, mental toughness, the speed, and the fact it's a lot heavier car, but I believe he's ready for this next step."

In private testing, Monteith's lap times were on pace or faster than pole speeds from previous Carolina Pro Late Model Series events at Hickory over the past season. Before jumping into the pro late model, Monteith raced traditional-style karts across the country and outlaw wing karts on dirt. Other drivers who began their careers on a similar path include Kyle Larson, Christopher Bell, Ty Gibbs and more. He also has spent time in INEX Bandoleros, a stepping stone used by drivers such as Joey Logano, Kyle Busch and dozens more before they ascended to the NASCAR Cup Series. Brayden became the youngest winner in Kingsport (TN) Speedway history with a win in Bandolero competition early in his career.

"We've raced for 20 years after starting the moonshine business, keeping Blake too busy to race, so we have missed going to the track," said Teddy Jones, Blake's father and car owner for Monteith's first career stock car start. "When Brayden started racing in the lower classes, we kind of caught the bug again after seeing him race; we have raced long enough to know talent when we see it. Like the great Dale Earnhardt once said, 'They either have it or they don't; you can't put it in them and you can't take it out,' and this kid has definitely got it. Who knows where this ends, the last time we made it to the Cup level with Blake. Only time will tell if Brayden is the next superstar."

Adding more resources to the team, the Jones family has secured the expertise of former and multi-time Kingsport Speedway track champion Wade Day, who has his own record of success with two NASCAR Xfinity Series Starts in 2005. Day is considered by many within the industry to be a late model expert and will serve as crew chief and another mentor for the young racer during this stage of his career.

"The sky's the limit," the younger Jones commented. "Nate and I have always been close, he helped guide me a bit as I was working up through my starts in the Xfinity Series and the Cup Series, and from that there is so much knowledge we can point toward kids like Brayden. Ultimately, it's all about securing sponsorship. Brayden could be in the Cup Series in ten years. We've been there and know what it takes, we just have to get all the pieces of the puzzle together at the right time. If he continues to put the work in and stays hungry, anything is possible."

The upcoming Carolina Pro Late Model Series race with Brayden can be seen LIVE with a subscription to Pit Row TV (pitrow.tv) and viewed through the channel's various apps and OTT platforms.

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