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CRAFTON RELISHES RETURN TO MARTINSVILLE

Matt Crafton heads down the homestretch of the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series season seeking an additional bit of good fortune in his bid for a first NCWTS championship.

Crafton enters the Kroger 200 at Martinsville Speedway on Saturday in 2nd place in the NCWTS standings, where he has been for much of the season, save for a couple of weeks spent as the points-leader. With five races remaining this season, Crafton remains in striking position for a championship, but knows part of the title equation is beyond his control.

“We’re focused on what we have to do each week to win races, and everything else will shake out the way it shakes out,” Crafton said. “We know that, to have a shot to win the championship, some things would have to happen that are out of our control, and we can’t spend our energy worrying about that. But there’s no doubt that the next two races, here at Martinsville this week and next week at Talladega, will play a huge part in the equation. They are two wildcard tracks, for sure, and you just never know what’s gonna happen. It’s kind of like rolling the dice at both places. The picture will be a lot clearer after the next two races. So we know we need to be at our best in Martinsville, and we’ll see how it plays out from there.”

In fifteen career NCWTS starts at Martinsville, Crafton has claimed a pair of top-5 finishes, including a 2nd place finish last season. He has finished in the top-10 seven times.

“Martinsville is a great symbol of the old days of racing, a reminder of the Saturday night, short-track races that most of us were raised on,” said Crafton. “I love the place. There’s such great history here, which makes it one of the really special tracks we visit. The track can take a tremendous toll on your truck. Handling and track position are obviously keys at Martinsville, and strong pit stops are crucial. If you aren’t careful, you can get shuffled to the back of the pack pretty quickly, and it’s difficult to work your way back to the front. Martinsville is always a heated battle, and there’s no margin for error. We’ll just try to stay patient and avoid the messes that can happen in a hurry, and, hopefully, we can take our No. 88 Menards Chevy to Victory Lane on Saturday.”