

Matt Crafton is ready. His fleet of No. 88 Menards/SealBest Chevrolets is ready. His crew is ready.

All they need is to see the first green flag of the 2011 NASCAR Camping World Truck Series season.

After finishing second in the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series standings in 2009, Crafton was pegged as a favorite for the 2010 series championship. Looking at his performance in the No. 88 Menards/SealBest Chevrolet Silverado over the final 16 races of the season, it's hard to believe he wasn't fighting for the title. Crafton closed the season with 16 consecutive top-ten finishes and moved from eighth in the series standings back up to fourth. But uncharacteristic troubles over the first nine races of the season - in which Crafton was involved in a couple of fender-benders and had his first engine failure in more than two years - left him in a deep points deficit that he wasn't able to overcome.

So what are Crafton's goals heading into 2011?

"Our main goal is really simple, we want to win," Crafton said. "That's the only thing we've been missing over the past two years. We've had poles. We've had a ton of top-fives and top-tens. We've been right up there in the points for the last three years. But we've only had that one win (Charlotte, 2008). We've been so close so many times it hurts to think about it. Our goal is to get back to victory lane. We have a lot of momentum on our side after finishing the season as strong as we did last year. We're ready to head down to Daytona and pick up right where we left off."

Crafton, crew chief Bud Haefele and the rest of the ThorSport Racing crew aren't going to change much in their approach to the new season, but they're hoping to catch a couple more good breaks and fewer bad breaks in 2011.

"We hadn't had a DNF (did not finish) in more than two years," Crafton said. "But we got caught up in a wreck at Atlanta and another one in Kansas. We had some motor trouble in Michigan. Those things hadn't happened to us in a long, long time. It's just bad luck, and you can't really do anything about it other than to wait it out and hope eventually it changes. If we can keep those things from happening this season, and get the Menards Chevy into the winners circle a couple of times, I think we'll be a lot closer to the championship than we were last year and even in 2009."

Crafton and his ThorSport Racing team will celebrate a unique milestone in 2011: their sponsorship with Menards will enter its tenth full season, making it the longest team and primary sponsor relationship in NASCAR Camping World Truck Series history.

"Breaking that record is something we're all proud of," Crafton said. "It says a lot about our team owners Duke and Rhonda Thorson, who have been committed to this series for 16 years and it says a lot about Menards. I'm proud to have been a part of it for nine of the ten years. One of the really cool parts about working with Menards is going to the stores and seeing the race fans. We'll go out to somewhere in Minnesota or North Dakota in the middle of winter, and it feels like it's 50 below zero, and there are people

there lined up to see the Team Menards racecars. It's been great to be a part of it and hopefully we can end our record-breaking season with a championship celebration in Miami."