

NASCAR Champion Kyle Busch Dead at Age 41

Only hours after his family alerted the NASCAR world that star driver Kyle Busch faced a severe illness and would not race in Sunday's Coca-Cola 600, NASCAR announced the 41-year-old had died.

"We are saddened and heartbroken to share the news of the passing of Kyle Busch, a two-time Cup champion and one of our sport's greatest and fiercest drivers. He was 41 years old," NASCAR announced, according to the Associated Press.

No cause of death was given.

"Our entire NASCAR family is heartbroken by the loss of Kyle Busch," the statement said. "A future Hall of Famer, Kyle was a rare talent, one who comes along once in a generation. He was fierce, he was passionate, he was immensely skilled and he cared deeply about the sport and fans."

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We extend our deepest condolences to the Busch family, Richard Childress Racing and the entire...

— NASCAR (@NASCAR) May 21, 2026

The statement further said that "throughout a career that spanned more than two decades, Kyle set records in national series wins, won championships at NASCAR's highest level and fostered the next generation of drivers as an owner in the Truck Series. His sharp wit and competitive spirit sparked a

deep emotional connection with race fans of every age, creating the proud and loyal 'Rowdy Nation.'"

On Thursday morning, a statement from Busch's family on his X account read, "Kyle has experienced a severe illness resulting in hospitalization."

"He is currently undergoing treatment and will not compete in any of his scheduled activities this weekend at Charlotte Motor Speedway," the family said.

Busch, 41, had also been scheduled to race in the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series race in Concord, North Carolina, according to ESPN.



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Austin Hill, who drives for Richard Childress Racing in the O'Reilly Auto Parts Series, will take Busch's place at the Coca-Cola 600, the team announced.

Last year, Busch said faith was an essential part of his life with his wife, Samantha, and his family, according to Forbes.

"I mean, yeah," he said. "You put your faith in God in a lot of things—racing, life, decisions you have to make as a family. You think you can make the best choices yourself, but honestly, a lot of it's in God's control."

Samantha said faith is the family's foundation.

"I think when you get deeper in your faith and when you're strong as a family and you kind of put life in perspective, you're like, OK, there's nothing I can do," she said. "That race was done. I gave it my all. but I'm still going to show up for my family."

Busch said he understands from a winless 2025 that there is

more to life than winning.

“Enjoy the wins but also know that there’s a lot of hard work in order to achieve those and there’s a lot of things that you do to prepare yourself as you get older,” he said.

“I’m just dad,” he said. “It’s helped me put the tougher races aside easier. You load up, you go home, and you figure out what you can do better.”

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