



# ThorSport brings mix of newness, experience to Championship 4



By **Michael Manny**

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PHOENIX — Coming into the 2022 NASCAR Camping World Truck Series season, Ty Majeski was not high atop many people’s championship favorite list.

The 28-year-old was coming into his first full-time season in the No. 66 Toyota Tundra with ThorSport Racing this year, having made just 20 previous truck starts.

How things can change in a year.

In his first full-time season, all Majeski has done is earn his first two career victories, plus 10 top-fives, 15 top 10s, three poles, and a chance to earn his first championship.

It’s all an opportunity Majeski said he did not think was possible at times.

“There’s a lot of times in my career where this looked incredibly improbable and having the success I’ve had on the short tracks, and making the transition to NASCAR wasn’t smooth,” Majeski said.

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Majeski has had a long road to get to this point. The Seymour, Wisconsin native grew up racing go-karts in his home state, getting his first NASCAR opportunity in the Xfinity Series with then-Roush Fenway Racing in 2017.

A few stops later, Majeski arrived at ThorSport in 2021, but racing took a backseat. His primary job was working as an engineer in the shop.

"My day-to-day job is ROMER arm," Majeski said. "Each part, chassis, everything that has to do with the suspension of the truck gets scanned and gets a part number. We are able to take each component and choose it and basically build a model of the truck with each scanned number for each part, so it makes sim for us extremely accurate."

Majeski continues to work in the shop during the week, which has benefited him in more ways than one.

"It's been great to actually touch each component," Majeski said. "It's forced me to learn a lot at a fast rate, and it has been able to bridge that gap between driving and the engineering standpoint."

He now has a chance to add a fifth championship to ThorSport's winning pedigree, after his teammate Ben Rhodes' win last season, and Matt Crafton's three in 2013, 2014 and 2019.

The No. 66 team has gotten hot at the perfect time. Majeski won two out of the three races in the Round of 8, at Bristol and Homestead-Miami. He led 67 of the 134 laps at Homestead.

Now coming into Phoenix off of those two victories, Majeski said his confidence could not be higher.

"We have a lot of swag as a race team coming into this race," Majeski said. "We feel really, really good about where we're at from a race team standpoint. I feel really good about where I'm at, just having confidence in our package and our truck and what we're coming with."

### **Rhodes has the chance to repeat**

Majeski isn't the only ThorSport driver in the Championship 4. He is joined by Rhodes, who snuck into the final round by finishing sixth at Homestead last week.

Despite being the defending Truck Series champion, the 25-year-old has flown a bit under the radar since his win at the Bristol Dirt April 16.

"Honestly, I think we were the longshot last year too," Rhodes said. "I guess that's just what we do. Everybody has me being the longshot. I don't know, I guess some of that might come from stats and I'm sure it does. I don't care."

Rhodes has had an up-and-down stretch in these playoffs. The No. 99 Toyota Tundra driver finished second in the playoff opener at Lucas Oil Indianapolis Raceway Park and Oct. 1 at Talladega. These results were sandwiched between 18th, 13th and 18th-place finishes at Richmond, Kansas and Bristol respectively.

To repeat as champion, Rhodes will have to hold off his teammate Majeski, plus Front Row Motorsports' Zane Smith and Kyle Busch Motorsports' Chandler Smith.

Looking back on last year's championship just makes Rhodes hungrier to celebrate all over again.

“We won it, I’ve never experienced such emotion and raw happiness in racing before,” Rhodes said. “It felt like it was so long to get to this point and now I feel like I can’t live without it. And now my cup is empty again. I’ve got to fill it and it’s kind of like an addiction and I’ve got to make it happen. Once you get it, again you can’t live without it.”

The Lucas Oil 150 is set to begin at 10 p.m. ET, with coverage on Fox Sports 1, MRN and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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