

Technician Insider

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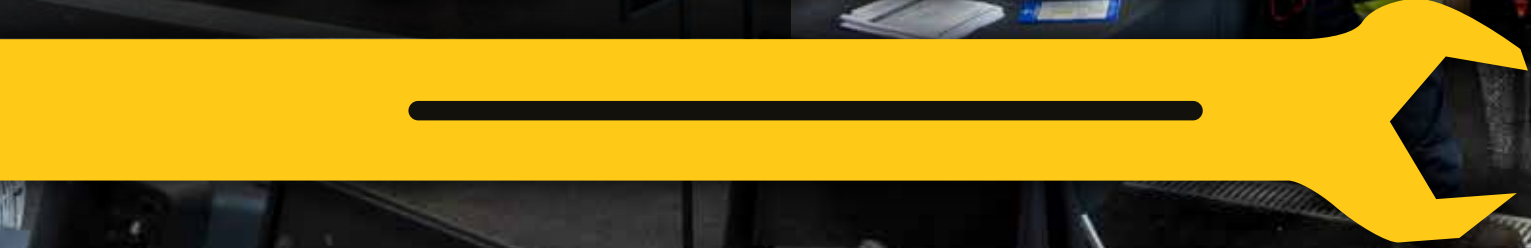
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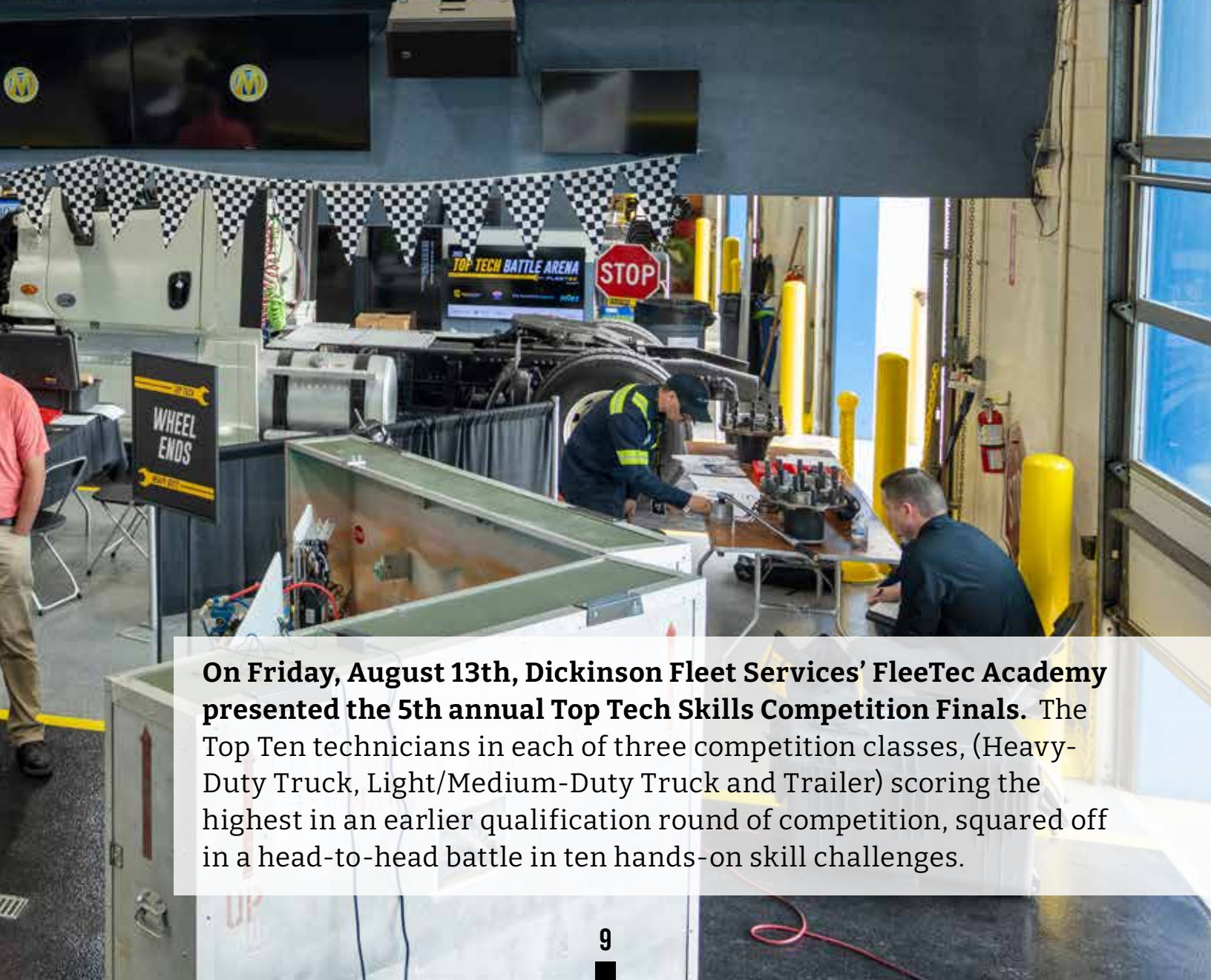


COX AUTOMOTIVE
MOBILITY



THE
RETURN
OF
TOP TECH





On Friday, August 13th, Dickinson Fleet Services' FleeTec Academy presented the 5th annual Top Tech Skills Competition Finals. The Top Ten technicians in each of three competition classes, (Heavy-Duty Truck, Light/Medium-Duty Truck and Trailer) scoring the highest in an earlier qualification round of competition, squared off in a head-to-head battle in ten hands-on skill challenges.

Held at Cox Automotive's Manheim Indianapolis auction facility, temporarily converted to the Top Tech Battle Arena(!), thirty finalists representing the highest caliber technicians across Cox Automotive Mobility brands including Dickinson Fleet Services, Interstate Truck Center, and Pivot Fleet Services competed for the title of Top Tech Grand Champions. Thirty arrived as *challengers*, but just three left as *champions*.

Congratulations to each and every Top Tech Finalists and all of the guests who came to support them. Of course, we celebrate the **Top Tech Grand Champions** **Brandon Monroe**, **Zach Nikorak** and **Jeremy Piepmeier**, who will go on to

compete nationally at the Technology & Maintenance Council's SuperTech event in September! Congratulations also to the 2021 Top Tech runners-up **Cedrick Desmarchais**, **Jose Feliciano** and **Joshua Lawhorn**. And congratulations to the remaining 2021 Top Tech Finalists:

Heavy-duty Truck Finalists

- Jeff Brinkman** – DFS IL Mobile
- Mike Colt** – DFS Tampa Service Center
- Michael Johnson** – DFS S. Fla. Mobile
- Josh Kahler** – DFS TN Mobile
- Dylan Parrish** – DFS MI Mobile
- Barry Morrison** – Interstate Truck Centers SE Division
- Brad Sherman** – DFS AZ Mobile
- Donny Tackett** – DFS Indianapolis Service Center

The 2021 Top Tech Grand Champions pictured left to right: Brandon Monroe (DFS MI Mobile and 1st year Finalist) – Trailer. Zach Nikorak (DFS PA Mobile and 2019 LMD Champion) – Light/Medium-Duty Truck. Jeremy Piepmeier (DFS GA Mobile, 2018 HD Champion and 2019 HD Runner-up) – Heavy Duty Truck.





Jeremy Piepmeier (left) hands a set of Dickinson coveralls to Cox Automotive Mobility President Joe George (right) to suit for a busy day in the shop.

Tech & Exec:

Jeremy Piepmeier's Journey

From the “Greenest Green Bean” to 2018 Top Tech Grand Champion...
Dickinson-Cox Ambassador, and back to 2021 Top Tech Grand Champion

By David Evans & Alex Nauth / Photography by David Evans

Jeremy Piepmeier's talent as a diesel technician should not be underestimated. A humble and confident man, he speaks with honesty and authenticity; his unique, kind and even brotherly personality is disarming. But do not underestimate this Atlanta-based Lead Mobile Technician. He has been with Dickinson for 10+ years.

His service truck is plastered with awards for his multiple achievements in Dickinson's annual Top Tech skills competition.

We caught up with Jeremy over email to learn about more him as a person and how the “greenest green bean” became a decorated diesel tech veteran that would eventually meet Cox Automotive Mobility President, Joe George. He also had the chance to teach Joe a thing or two about what he does best- fixing trucks.

• **Tell us about your proudest moment at Dickinson Fleet Services.**

My proudest moment was winning Top Tech. My wife was sick, she had been diagnosed with a chronic illness a year

earlier and that year she wasn't doing well. We had a ton of doctor visits and a lot on our plate. I almost didn't do Top Tech but she told me not to worry about that and do the competition because the years prior I enjoyed it so much. So I did it and I won it that year. That was 2018.

• **What is a challenge you learned from?**

I think our competition is the challenge I learned most from. They have competition stations run by experts in those fields, electrical, diag, brakes and so on. After it's over they take time and explain the systems and how they work. They give tips and tricks to help diag faster and more efficiently... To repair it faster. And how to use diagnostic tools properly.

Jeremy Piepmeier (left) talks with Cox Automotive Mobility President Joe George (right). Joe met with Jeremy at Dickinson's Doraville, GA location on May 6, 2021 to learn more about the work that Jeremy and the technician community do to keep America trucking.



- **What do you think makes Dickinson a great place to work?**

Dickinson has the family-owned feel and atmosphere. They had been very flexible with me and my work schedule and my family schedule. Our Human Resources department has been awesome. Alyce Hammond there has been a huge help with me. They just don't act like, "well you've got problems, and that's your problem not ours." They've gone above any beyond in helping me take care of my family.

- **What is your advice for newer technicians?**

Don't give up. Figure out a groove. Being mobile is hard. There's a lot to juggle. Having multiple customers, a lot of travel, scheduling the work, pm, follow-

ups, getting the parts and keeping the customers informed about the trucks and repairs needed on the trucks. The hardest part about being mobile is you're working alone, but you aren't alone. We have a great team of techs and support staff, MSW, parts, training staff, that have vast knowledge and will help. If you run into problems reach out. You aren't alone.

- **Tell us about your background – how did you get started as a technician?**

First as a kid I was fascinated by trucks. The size, the look, the noise. I would always look at them. Wondering about them. My dad was a computer engineer. The most he ever did on a car was change the oil. So I didn't have the mechanical background that so many techs have.





Clockwise from top left: Jeremy competes at the 2021 Top Tech Skills competition on Aug. 13, 2021 at the Manheim facility in Indianapolis, IN; Jeremy speaks to a FleeTec Academy student and future technician at the 2021 Top Tech competition; Jeremy and Angie Tovey embrace as Jeremy is named the 2021 Top Tech Grand Champion in the heavy-duty category on Aug. 14, 2021 at the Marriott North in Indianapolis, IN. Executive Officers Ted Coltrain and Mike Dickinson present the 2021 Top Tech Trophy to Jeremy; Dickinson Executive and Top Tech Awards host Steve Ginn congratulates Jeremy at the Top Tech awards ceremony.



Most grew up around it. So my first car, the water pump went out. I had no clue what it was or what it did. I decided to try and fix it myself. We had basic tool and I bought a book and did it. It was hard not knowing anything. But after I fixed it, I realized I enjoyed it. That great feeling of satisfaction. "I did it". So after high school looking at career paths, I decided to learn how to work on them. Went to tech school. I remember the first day at school, I was the greenest green bean there. The instructor asked "what's the main difference between a diesel engine and a gas engine?". My answer was the best. "One runs in diesel and one runs on gas". Wow I didn't know anything back then. That was like 25 years ago.

- **Is there a mentor or someone you've looked up to – either at Dickinson or in your personal life?**

I don't remember anyone in particular. I worked at a trucking company in Columbus, GA, I was 21 years old. I worked in the trailer side of the shop. There were 3 guys there, 2 were retired military, they would tell me stories about equipment they've worked on and problems they had. Man the knowledge they had. It was incredible. I learned so much from them.

- **Tell us a bit more about life outside of work – hobbies you enjoy, family, etc.**

I have a basic life outside of work. I spend most of the time with the family. My

youngest kids are now 15, twins. The boy plays video games a lot. So sometimes we'll go kill some zombies in the call of duty game. My girl likes to play guitar and paint. So trips to the art store. She's really good at landscapes, trees, and people's eyes. I enjoy cooking and we stream movies a lot. So there's a lot of dinner and a movie after work.

- **We saw a video recently of you chatting with Joe George – cool! What was it like meeting him?**

It was awesome meeting him. Not knowing what to expect was nerve racking. I mean he's the president of Mobility. But I was totally surprised. He is a great guy. He's friendly, personable, down to earth. I never got the vibe from him like he's better than me. He was very interested in what we do on a daily basis, how we do our job, what issues we deal with. He made me feel like I could talk openly and freely. Not like it's his way or the highway.

**Watch the Video
of Jeremy and Joe here:**

