



FEBRUARY 27, 2017

FastTrack

RACING JOURNAL ONLINE

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Kurt Busch Pulls Off Last-Lap Victory



Rookie Kaz Grala Beats the Wrecks



Overtime Means Win for Reed

The Show Goes On...

D A Y T O N A BEACH, FL - Almost forgotten in the carnage of 35 damaged or destroyed race cars and Kurt Busch's dramatic victory in last Sunday's Daytona was the elephant that wasn't in the room - Carl Edwards.

Everyone at the Daytona International Speedway was still baffled by Edwards' sudden and shocking departure last month from Joe Gibbs Racing. Speculation surrounding the move, which included the immediate promotion for Mexican driver Daniel Suarez from the Xfinity Series, remains rampant.

And if there were any other reasons to leave the sport other than what Edwards said during his Jan. 11 announcement, nobody seems to know. Or they're very good at keeping secrets.

"Honestly, I hope that more comes of that story," driver Jamie McMurray said. "I didn't actually watch the press conference. I read some quotes from it just because I was curious, right? I don't really know Carl enough to call him and ask him outright. My gut tells me that maybe we'll hear more later on. But, yeah, I was pretty taken aback by that, especially since it happened so late in the winter."

There are hints - and certainly not facts - that create doubt. Edwards lost the 2011 Cup Series championship in a tiebreaker to Tony Stewart. Last year he was leading with four laps remaining the season-finale race at the Homestead-Miami Speedway when he was involved in a crash with Joey Logano. A victory would have won Edwards a championship.

Two months after Homestead, he stepped up to the microphone at Joe Gibbs Racing and said he was done. For now.

Edwards gave three reasons for quitting: No. 1, he's satisfied with what he's accomplished in NASCAR; No. 2, racing demanded too much of his time; and, No. 3, he's still healthy.

"I've been racing for over 20 years," Edwards said. "It's been something that I wouldn't trade for anything. I have no regrets. It's been a blast, and I owe thanks to a

lot of people."

Even before he gave his reasons, the rumor mill kicked into high gear. The fact he refused to call it a retirement only adds to the mystery.

There were suggestions Suarez was being fast-tracked to the Cup Series level, especially since minutes after Edwards quit, Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim was at the press conference supporting Suarez's new job.



DON COBLE

NASCAR also was quick to notice the potential of gaining legions of new fans when Suarez returned home to Mexico after winning the Xfinity championship. He was greeted by nearly 25,000 fans who hailed him as a conquering hero.

Edwards also had one year remaining on his contract and there have been suggestions he may go to a new third team at Penske Racing next year.

And some firmly believe he really wanted to spend time with his family away from the sport.

"We live in a society that always has conspiracy thoughts, so I think we all are thinking that right now," McMurray said.

"Maybe he woke up one day and said, 'What the hell am I doing?' It was one of those moments, I guess," driver Martin Truex Jr. said.

Nobody knows for sure. And for now, anything else is pure conjecture.

Trevor Bayne, who admitted being completely surprised by the announcement, is taking Edwards at this word.

"I called him instantly and he answered. I was surprised because he's probably had 100 million phone calls," Bayne said. "He answered: 'What's up buddy?' We talked a little bit. Basically, everything he told the media is what we talked about on the phone."

Bayne believes Edwards' desire to be home at Columbia, Mo., working on the farm and spending time with his family weighed heavily in the decision.

"This sport can suck you in," he said. "This is what you think you are, this is what you think your value is, and who you are, and sometimes you don't know how to separate the person from what our duties are and our opportunities."

"Carl's always had a pretty good perspective on that, living at home in Missouri. He's kept his core

group around him. He really didn't change much. He's a genuine guy who loves being around his family. He loves farming. Everything he says is true. I appreciate he was able to make that decision. A lot of guys look at the fame and the money and wouldn't be able to make that decision."

But why so close to the start of a new season?

"So, I had been thinking what I thought was a reasonable amount about how this would end," Edwards said during his announcement. "I always think about things going forward. And in my mind, I'd considered next year being my final

year, but I hadn't put really a lot of thought into it, and after Homestead, I had some time to sit, think and reflect about all of this, and for those three reasons that I gave you. I thought, man, it just -- I can't come up with a good reason why now isn't a good time."

Edwards became a curious footnote for Sunday's Daytona 500, because there isn't enough time or attention for distractions. If there really was an ulterior reason behind Edwards' sudden and shocking departure, we may never know.

But one thing is for certain: The show will go on -- with or without the elephant not in the room.

Ralph Capitani Passes

CONCORD, NC - The World of Outlaws extends its deepest condolences to the family and friends of Ralph Capitani.

Capitani was instrumental in growing the sport of Sprint Car racing, and more significantly, in the overall growth and development of the legendary Knoxville Nationals.

"Ralph was a visionary promoter in the Sprint Car racing world," said World of Outlaws CEO Brian Carter. "I enjoyed the opportunities I had to learn while working with him. We will miss him."

In 1978, while Ted Johnson was launching the World of Outlaws, Capitani commenced his dirt track racing career with Knoxville Raceway as director of racing. During his tenure there, Capitani focused on ramping up weekly racing and turning the Knoxville Nationals into the marquee event it is today. He also helped found the National Sprint Car Hall of Fame and Museum in 1985 and the National 360 Sprint Car Council in 1993.

"Cappy has been voted the National Sprint Car Poll's 'Promoter of the Year' on three occasions (1985, 1990, 1991), and has consistently been named one of the poll's top three most powerful leaders in the sport (with Ted Johnson and Earl Baltes) since its inception." reads his 2014 award profile on the National Sprint Car Hall of Fame website.

Services for Capitani will be announced at a later date.

Welcome 2017 Race Fans!

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ON THE COVER:

MONSTER CUP/XFINITY - JARED TILTON/GETTY IMAGES
NCWTS - RONDA GREER

You Always Remember Your First

Daytona Speedweeks 2017 is in the NASCAR record books, and there were lots of “firsts” to note. The three major divisions of NASCAR – Camping World Truck, XFINITY, and Monster Energy Cup Series – ran their first races of the

2017 under several new rules and format updates.

All three divisions will use a new race format this season with three stages, points awarded to stage winners and top ten finishers, and bonus points awarded for each stage winner. Also, a new crash policy will be used to determine if and when cars involved in an incident may return to the racing action. Basically, if you’re involved in an accident or go to the garage area, you are officially out of the race. If your car is damaged and worked on pit road, you will have five minutes to repair the damage and return to the track. If repairs take longer, you are out of the race. Also, body panels are not allowed to be replaced and the car return to the race. Gone are the days when a car is involved in an accident, goes to the garage or behind pit wall, replaces damaged panels or parts, and returns to the race laps down. Believe me, this rule will have a major effect on the overall point race during the “regular season” of all three divisions.

Now, let’s examine the “on-track” action. Two of the three winners last weekend won their first ever race at Daytona. The third won his second career race, both at Daytona.

The Camping World Truck Series got the action started with a wild, yet entertaining, race last Friday. Kaz Grala became the youngest-ever pole winner and race winner in Daytona history. The 18-year old native of Westborough, Massachusetts was competing in only his tenth career truck series race when he started from the pole. Gralaz ran nine truck races last year with a best finish of eighth at Gateway (ILL). Grala led fourteen laps in the CWTS season-opener, the first laps he has ever led in the series.

Grala also ran in the ARCA race at Daytona this year, starting sixth and finishing tenth. Those laps proved to be very valuable from an experience standpoint for the talented, young driver. He also competed in the Rolex 24 at Daytona earlier this year, starting fourteenth and finishing twenty-fifth in the GTD Class. Grala will race the entire CWTS schedule in 2017 and look to ride the momentum he takes from Daytona through the season.



DENNIS PUNCH

The XFINITY Series opener always provides an entertaining afternoon of racing with a mix of Cup drivers, XFINITY veterans, and a talented group of rookies. Last Saturday was no exception. Ten cautions for 42 laps made the race feel as though it would never end. However, when the dust settled, Ryan Reed earned his second career victory in the NASCAR XFINITY Series. Ironically, Reed’s other win came at Daytona in 2015.

The 23-year old from Bakersfield, California has competed in 106 career XFINITY races. As noted, he scored his first win at Daytona in 2015 leading fourteen laps. It was his only top five finish of the 2015 season. The Roush Racing driver started second last Saturday, led nine laps, and survived the wreckfest to earn his second victory. It was only his fourth career top five finish in his XFINITY career.

The Daytona 500 is known as NASCAR’s Super Bowl and, many observers say, the most important and biggest race of each season. With the new race format and rule changes, the 2017 edition of “The Great American Race” was certainly not short on excitement. After watching the CWTS and XFINITY Series races the prior two days turn into a “last driver standing” type event, the “survivor” on Sunday would certainly earn the recognition that comes with winning the Daytona 500. All that being said, I’m not sure anyone could have forecast what would happen at the finish. It’s certainly not uncommon for a last-lap pass to produce the eventual victor. But, last Sunday, a different driver led each of the final four laps. Plus, the driver who led with three laps remaining (Chase Elliott), two laps remaining (Martin Truex Jr.), and one lap remaining (Kyle Lar-

son) finished outside the top ten. The Daytona 500 winner, Kurt Busch, led only the final lap (actually only half a lap).

The Las Vegas, Nevada driver was competing in his 577th career Cup Series race. He was the 2004 Series Champion and had 28 career wins prior to the ’17 Daytona 500. Busch had finished second in the 500 on three previous occasions (2003, 2005, and 2008). He also has three third-place finishes at Daytona (’06, ’07, and ’14), all in the July 400-mile race. But, with all his career accomplishments, Kurt Busch had never won the Daytona 500.

Driving a very competitive race, Busch kept himself out of the eight cautions and in position for a late-race charge. Timing his winning pass of Kyle Larson perfectly, Busch outran several hard-charging challengers to the checkered flag and his historic victory. The win was especially meaningful for the

Stewart-Haas Racing organization as this was their first race after making the manufacture change to Ford after the 2016 season. Another very significant “first” for the 2017 Daytona 500.

Now, it’s on to the Atlanta Motor Speedway for all three major divisions of NASCAR. The new race format with stages, points, and bonus points will certainly be a major topic of discussion this week. Did the stage format add to the competitive nature of all three races?

Did awarding regular-season points to the top ten finishers of the first two stages, plus bonus points for stage winners, add to the number of cautions and aggressive racing at Daytona? Is the type of racing we saw at Daytona going to be the exception or the rule moving forward? How well will the 5-minute rule for crash damage be received? The search for answers to these, and many other, questions continues next week.

And, how many “firsts” will be recorded at Atlanta?



Kaz Grala celebrates in Victory Lane by putting a winner's sticker on his truck, (GETTY IMAGES photo)

Kurt Busch Rides Last-Lap Pass to DAYTONA 500 Victory

DAYTONA BEACH, FL - Kurt Busch used a last-lap pass to win the 59th annual DAYTONA 500 Sunday in a raucous, rough-and-tumble season-opening race for the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series.

Busch (No. 41 Haas Automation/Monster Energy Ford), a three-time DAYTONA 500 runner-up and the 2004 series champion, made a high-line move coming off the Daytona International Speedway backstretch to pass Kyle Larson (No. 42 Target Chevrolet), as Larson was running out of fuel. Busch beat Ryan Blaney (No. 21 Motorcraft/Quick Lane Tire & Auto Center Ford) at the line by 0.228 seconds, with AJ Allmendinger (Kroger Click List Chevrolet) finishing third.

"My rear-view mirror fell off with 30 laps to go," Busch said. "I said to myself, 'that's an omen.'"

The story of this victory comes with a couple of significant subplots. Busch's crew chief Tony Gibson is a native of Daytona Beach, while Busch's car owner Tony Stewart got a victory in the first race since he retired from driving after the 2016 season.

"I ran this damn race for 17 years and couldn't win it," Stewart said. "Now, to win it as an owner ... this is awesome."

Polesitter Chase Elliott (No. 24 NAPA Auto Parts Chevrolet) led 39 laps and appeared headed toward Gatorade Victory Lane, but ran out of fuel himself with three laps remaining, giving the lead to Martin Truex Jr. (No. 78 BASS Pro Shops/TRACKER BOATS Toyota), who led for one lap before Blaney assumed the lead. Elliott finished 14th.

Elliott and two-time DAYTONA 500 champion Dale Earnhardt Jr. (No. 88 Nationwide Chevrolet) started on the front row and led the 40-car field to the green flag. It was a back-to-the-future feel: their famous fathers who were bitter rivals, NASCAR Hall of Fame inductees Bill Elliott and Dale Earnhardt, started 1-2 four times during their legendary careers.

This race will be remembered, in part, for a series of multi-car inci-

dents that involved many of NASCAR's biggest names and whittled the field in dramatic fashion.

- On Lap 105, Kyle Busch's car (No. 18 M&M's Toyota) had a tire go down in Turn 3, causing him to spin and collect five other cars, including Earnhardt's Chevrolet, which had been leading the race since Lap 97. The right front of Earnhardt's car rolled atop Busch's Toyota, causing considerable damage – to the radiator and suspension, primarily – which forced Earnhardt out of the race. Earnhardt, NASCAR's long-running most popular driver, was racing for the first since the middle of last season when he was sidelined due to concussion-like symptoms.

- On Lap 128 in Turn 4, 17 cars were involved in another incident that ended the day for two-time DAYTONA 500 champion Jimmie Johnson (No. 48 Lowe's Chevrolet), and a strong-running Danica



Kyle Busch (18) spins after cutting a tire and collects Erik Jones (77), Matt Kenseth (20) and Ty Dillon (13) early in the Daytona 500. (JERRY MARKLAND/GETTY IMAGES photo)

Patrick (No. 10 Aspen Dental Ford), among others. Two other former champions, Denny Hamlin (No. 11 FedEx Express Toyota) and Kevin Harvick (No. 4 Jimmy John's Ford) were able to return after some repairs, with their chances of winning as dented as their cars.

- On Lap 142, 12 cars tangled on the backstretch, knocking out two more big names – former DAY-



Kurt Busch, driver of the #41 Haas Automation/Monster Energy Ford, celebrates in Victory Lane with team co-owner Tony Stewart after winning the 59th Annual DAYTONA 500. (JARED TILTON/GETTY IMAGES photo)

TONA 500 champion Jamie McMurray (No. 1 Cessna McDonald's Chevrolet) and former series champion Brad Keselowski (No. 2 Miller Lite Ford).

"The more that becomes unpredictable about Daytona, the more it becomes predictable to predict unpredictability," Busch said. "The more I run this race the more I just

throw caution to the wind."

Speedweeks 2017 served as the debut for NASCAR's new national series format that divides races into three stages with extra points awarded to the top-10 finishers in each of the first two stages. The DAYTONA 500 had a 60-60-80 lap division. Kyle Busch led at the end of the first stage, with Harvick leading at the end of the second.

Hamlin, the defending race champion, finished 17th, thwarted in his attempt to become only the fourth driver to win consecutive DAYTONA 500s. (Richard Petty in 1973-74, Cale Yarborough in 1983-84 and Sterling Marlin in 1994-95 are the three to achieve the feat.)

Hamlin was one of 10 former DAYTONA 500 champions in the field, a group that included Michael Waltrip (No. 15 Aaron's Toyota), the champion in 2001 and '03 who finished eighth in his final NASCAR race.



Drivers including Jimmie Johnson (48), Kevin Harvick (4), Danica Patrick (10) and Clint Bowyer (14) are involved in early an on-track incident. (JERRY MARKLAND/GETTY IMAGES photo)

Chase Elliott, Denny Hamlin Win Can-Am Duel Races at DIS

DAYTONA BEACH, FL - Chase Elliott and Denny Hamlin won the Can-Am Duel races on Thursday night at Daytona International Speedway, as the starting grid for Sunday's 59th annual DAYTONA 500 was

established by the two 150-mile qualifying events. DAYTONA 500 Qualifying Presented By Kroger – which also locked him into the pole position for the DAYTONA 500. Elliott led a total of 25 laps including the last 24

in dominating style.

“It was a great way to start the season,” Elliott said. “I know this is just a Duel win and obviously I wish this was Sunday ... but it still means a lot to me and it means a lot to our team.”

“We had some big steam under the hood which was a huge factor in keeping us out front. I’m glad we were able to race and stay aggressive and battle those guys. Hopefully we can dial it in a little better

on Sunday and give it another shot.”

Dale Earnhardt Jr., in the No. 88 Nationwide Chevrolet, had the pole for the second Can-Am Duel race after qualifying second behind Elliott last Sunday – which locked him into the DAYTONA 500 outside pole. Earnhardt led 53 of 60 laps but was passed by Hamlin in Turn 3 on Lap 59 and came home sixth. Hamlin got invaluable drafting help from a trailing Austin Dillon, using



Above: Chase Elliott celebrates winning the first of the Can Am Duel races Thursday night. Below: Denny Hamlin resumed his winning 2016 ways with a win the second Can Am Duel race. Elliott started the Daytona 500 on the pole and Hamlin started behind him in third place. (SEAN GARDNER/GETTY IMAGES photo)

the momentum to zip by Earnhardt on the outside.

Hamlin – the defending DAYTONA 500 champion – will start the No. 11 FedEx Toyota behind Earnhardt on Sunday in the fourth position, thanks to his Can-Am Duel victory.

“We had a great car and we got a great push from Austin,” Hamlin said. “[Earnhardt] thought I was going one way and I went the other. I’m not sure what this means or what this says [about our DAYTONA 500 chances] but overall, pretty happy with the result.”

Two drivers from each Can-Am Duel race – part of a group of six “Open” entries who came to Speedweeks without guaranteed spots in the DAYTONA 500 field – “raced their way” into the big show via their Duel race result. (Thirty-six drivers were guaranteed spots via their status as NASCAR “Charter” entries.) From the first Can-Am Duel race, it was Corey LaJoie; from the second race, it was DJ Kennington.

Ryan Reed Wins PowerShares QQQ 300

DAYTONA BEACH, FL - In a race that evolved dramatically from early attrition into stunning door-to-door competition, Ryan Reed won the PowerShares QQQ 300, the high-intensity season-opener for the NASCAR XFINITY Series on Saturday night at Daytona International Speedway.

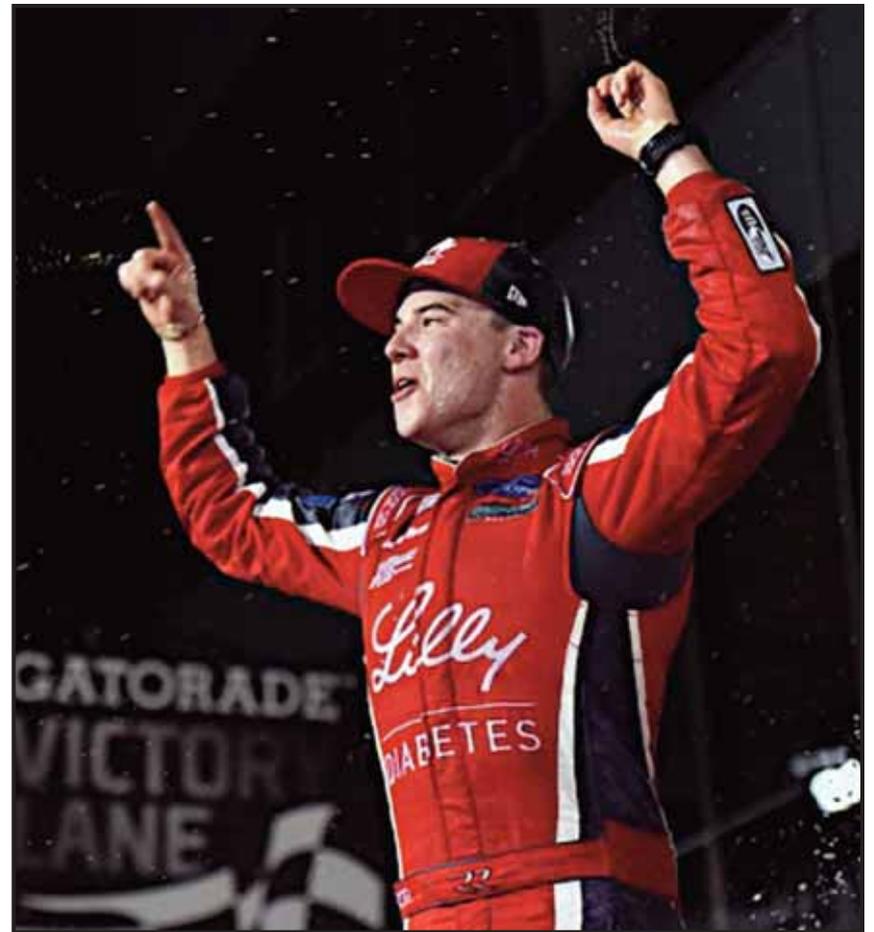
It required "NASCAR Overtime" which extended the race to 124 laps, four more than the scheduled distance. Reed, driver of the No. 16 Lilly Diabetes Ford, surprisingly out-dueled three of NASCAR's major stars – Kasey Kahne, Austin Dillon and Brad Keselowski – during the OT. Reed, the 300's champion in 2015, edged Kahne by 0.219 seconds at the stripe.

The PowerShares QQQ 300 had two significant multi-car inci-

dents early. The first involved 19 cars, the second one nine. Both resulted in red-flag periods. Meanwhile, Elliott Sadler was a constant, avoiding trouble and winning the first two stages – both 30 laps – to earn extra points in the NASCAR XFINITY Series championship standings. Speedweeks is serving as the debut for NASCAR's new national series format that divides races into three stages with extra points awarded to the top-10 finishers in each of the first two stages. Sadler led 40 laps overall but exited after being caught up in a Lap 104 mishap.

After that, the lead changed hands repeatedly over the last 20 laps. Reed took the lead for good on the overtime restart.

"I don't know how that looked from the grandstands or on television but from my view it was a lot of fun," Reed said. "Now, let's go get some more. Let's go win a championship."



Ryan Reed is all smiles in the Daytona International Speedway victory lane after winning Saturday's race. (NIGEL KINRADE PHOTOGRAPHY photo)

Rookie Kaz Grala Avoids Last-Lap Incident, Wins NextEra Energy Resources 250

DAYTONA BEACH, FL - Rookie driver Kaz Grala guided his truck through, then past a last-lap incident involving 13 trucks to win an action-filled NextEra Energy Resources 250 on Friday night at Daytona International Speedway, to open the season for the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series.

Grala, an 18-year-old who started on the pole in the No. 33 Kiklos Greek Extra Virgin Olive Oil Chevrolet, emerged from the backstretch incident that ruined a dominating effort by Grala's teammate, defending race champion – and reigning series champion – Johnny Sauter (No. 21 Allegiant Travel Chevrolet). Sauter led 52 laps of the 100-lap race, in the process also winning the race's first two "stages" – in the debut of NASCAR's new national-series format that divides races into three

stages and awards points for each stage. Friday's stages were 20, 20 and 60 laps.

Sauter was passed for the lead by former series champion Matt Crafton at the start of the final lap. Crafton was slightly ahead on the backstretch when multi-car contact sent his No. 88 Goof Off/Menards Toyota airborne, into a full flip – but then landing upright. Sauter, caught up in the incident, finished 15th.

Grala is the youngest Daytona International Speedway winner of a NASCAR national series race – 18 years, one month, 26 days. He was followed to the flag by Austin Wayne Self (No. 32 AM Technical Solutions Toyota) and another rookie, Chase Briscoe (No. 29 Cooper Standard Ford).

"I saw coming out of Turn 2 it was getting crazy," Grala said. "There wasn't going to be any way I was going to be lifting. I just went low, closed by eyes and crossed my fingers and luckily it worked out ... it was pretty hectic."



Kaz Grala is joined by his GMS race team to celebrate winning his first NCWTS race at Daytona and starting out the season on a positive note. (RONDA GREER photo)

PUBLIC AUCTION

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2 Day Sale -Starting at 9:30 AM Each Day – Doors open at 8:30 AM

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P.A.S.S.

Bradley McCaskill In Unexpected Position For PASS Return To Southern National

CHARLOTTE, NC - In the early 2000s, the ranks of Super Late Model racing in the southeast were shrinking. The few tracks that featured the division, which included Southern National Motorsports Park in Kenly, NC, were eliminating them and there was not a series for teams to follow. By the winter of 2005, Pro All Stars Series (PASS) President Tom Mayberry decided to take a big risk in expanding his sanctioning body that was already finding success in New England. When the inaugural PASS South Super Late Model season was announced in 2006, the second race that inaugural year was at Southern National and was won by the legendary Freddie Query. Now, 11 years later, PASS South continues as the oldest and most successful Super Late Model sanction in the region, and fittingly, returns to Southern National for the first time in two years, along with the NASCAR Late Model Stocks, for the Dogwood 300 on Saturday afternoon, March 4.

One of the drivers who came on board to support PASS virtually from the beginning was Bradley McCaskill. In 2008 and 2009, McCaskill competed for the champi-

onship, with a best point finish of 10th in 2009. As he settled down to start a family, he stepped back to compete closer to home in the Limited Late Model and Late Model Stock divisions. But, with his own graphics business that worked closely with many PASS teams, McCaskill was never too far from the series that he got his start.

Following a serious accident last summer that left him with major burns to his hands, McCaskill and his family made the decision to return to the Super Late Model ranks in 2017. In his first race back with the series in the PASS National Championship event at Dillon Motor Speedway earlier this month, McCaskill ran with the leaders all day and finished a career-best third following a thrilling battle with Ben Rowe. Now, he looks forward to returning with PASS to his home-track, Southern National, as he seeks his first win and with the unlikely honor of being the series point leader.

Joining McCaskill among the early entrants will be fellow championship contenders Matt Craig, Spencer Davis, Kodie Conner, and Kyle Desouza. Sarah Cornett-Ching and JP Josiasse will also be in action at Southern National.

All the action gets under way for

the Dogwood 300 on Friday, March 3 at Southern National Motorsports Park with rotating practice for all divisions from 3 – 6 PM. On Saturday, March 4, practice will begin at 10 AM with qualifying starting at 12:15 PM and Twin 150s going green at 2 PM for the PASS South Super Late Models and NASCAR Late Model Stocks.

Entry forms for the Dogwood 300, along with the 44th Annual Oxford 250 and upcoming events at Orange County Speedway, Thompson Speedway, Hickory Motor Speedway, and Beech Ridge Motor Speedway, can be found at

ProAllStarsSeries.com. The 2017 license forms for the PASS Super Late Models are also available at ProAllStarsSeries.com. Drivers purchasing licenses for the 2017 season will receive bonus points for each race they are pre-registered for and will also save money towards any events that they enter early.

Please visit ProAllStarsSeries.com for more information and don't forget to "Like" the Pro All Stars Series on Facebook or follow us on Twitter at @PASSSLM14 to keep up with breaking news as it happens.

Southern Super Series

Rattler 250 to Be Broadcast Live on Speed51.com

One of the nation's most unique Super Late Model races will be making its way to a worldwide audience for the second straight year. In a partnership between South Alabama Speedway and Speed51.com, the 41st annual Rattler 250 will be broadcast live on Speed51 TV on March 18 - 19, 2017.

For the third year, the race will serve as the season-opening event for the Southern Super Series presented by Sunoco.

The live broadcast on Speed51.com will feature two days of racing from the 4/10-mile oval in

Opp, Alabama. Super Late Model qualifying for the Rattler 250, as well as the 125-lap Baby Rattler for Pro Late Models will air live on Saturday, March 18. The big show, the Rattler 250 featuring the Southern Super Series Super Late Models, will take place on Sunday, March 19.

There will be a blackout of 150 miles surrounding the region.

All of the drivers will be battling for the chance to meet the infamous rattlesnake in victory lane.

Fans can also purchase a two-day video ticket for \$39.99 and enjoy a savings of \$5. Speed51 Network yearly members receive a 10% discount.

For more information on the Southern Super Series, visit www.southern superseries.com.

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Disney Pixar's "CARS 3" Gears Up for a Season Long Ride with NASCAR

DAYTONA BEACH, FL - Disney•Pixar's "Cars 3" is teaming up with NASCAR this year as crowd favorite Lightning McQueen prepares to return to the big screen June 16, 2017. Plans for the joint effort were shared by "Cars 3" director Brian Fee,

Cristela Alonzo—the voice of the film's elite trainer Cruz Ramirez—and NASCAR's vice president of entertainment marketing & content development Zane Stoddard at the Daytona International Speedway.

"Cars 3" very much pays homage to stock car racing and its rich history," said Fee. "Our story leans into the drama, emotion and excitement NASCAR fans find at every race."

FAST FORWARD: Kicking off at the DAYTONA 500 with the premiere of a new on-air promo, the NASCAR-"Cars 3" collaboration continues throughout the entire race season.

- The joint effort will include a variety of marketing initiatives, including digital and social cross promotional activities and sweepstakes.

- Throughout the 2017 Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series, races will feature a "Cars 3" at-track presence via a wide array of promotions.

- A co-branded merchandise program with Fanatics will also kick off at the DAYTONA 500 featuring the first film-related product available for fans to purchase. Product will be available at the Fanatics Trackside Superstore continuing at race tracks throughout the season, as well as online at the NASCAR.com Superstore..

- NASCAR Acceleration Nation, the sport's youth program, and the NASCAR Hall of Fame will be featured throughout the full duration of a "Cars 3" nationwide tour.

THE VOICES OF NASCAR: The announcement included the introduction of NASCAR greats—from rookie drivers and legends to the voices behind the sport—tapped by Pixar Animation Studios to voice characters in the film.

- CHASE ELLIOTT, 21, was named 2016's Sunoco Rookie of the Year after finishing last season

tenth in the driver standings. Elliott, who pilots the No. 24 car previously driven by four-time champion Jeff Gordon, lends his voice to second-generation Piston Cup racer CHASE RACELOTT in "Cars 3." Racelott's blend of skills, track smarts and top-of-the-line technology make this rookie a real contender.

- RYAN BLANEY, a 23-year-old, third-generation racer, pilots the No. 21 Ford in the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup series. He voices third-generation racer RYAN "INSIDE" LANEY in "Cars 3." Known for his racing passion and ability to have fun on the track, Laney races with talent, speed and precision.

- DANIEL SUÁREZ, who just turned 25, pilots the No. 19 ARRIS Toyota Camry in the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series. The 2016 NASCAR XFINITY Series champion can be heard in the film voicing DANNY SWERVEZ, a next-gen racer who's ascending the Piston-Cup ladder against all odds. A mid-season replacement, Swervez is a quick learner who pushes himself to the limit.

- BUBBA WALLACE, 23, won the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series race at Martinsville Speedway in 2013, becoming the first African American to win in one of the top three touring divisions since Wendell Scott in 1963. In "Cars 3," Wallace voices next-gen stock car racer BUBBA WHEELHOUSE, a fast and tenacious young racer who knows how to win.

- DARRELL WALTRIP, the NASCAR Hall of Fame racer-turned-NASCAR on FOX color analyst lends his voice to DARRELL CARTRIP. Cartrip, a veteran Piston-Cup announcer also heard in "Cars" and "Cars 2," may think he's seen it all—but this new season might still have a surprise or two in store.

- SHANNON SPAKE, NASCAR on FOX correspondent and college football and basketball reporter for FOX Sports, voices on-the-track reporter SHANNON SPOKES in the film. Spokes weaves her way into the middle of the action for in-the-moment interviews, and she's not afraid to ask racers the tough questions.

- HOWARD AUGUSTINE "HUMPY" WHEELER JR., the legendary NASCAR promoter and former president and GM of Charlotte



Grand Marshal Owen Wilson, voice of Lightning McQueen in "Cars 3" poses with NASCAR racers Daniel Suarez, Bubba Wallace, Ryan Blaney, and Chase Elliott for the 59th Annual DAYTONA 500 at Daytona International Speedway. (Gerardo Mora/Getty Images for Disney photo)

Motor Speedway, lends his voice to iconic Dinoco team owner TEX DINOCO in "Cars 3." Tex, who met Lightning McQueen in "Cars," would love nothing more than to see #95 decked out in Dinoco blue.

- JEFF GORDON, four-time NASCAR champion, current NASCAR on FOX analyst, and story consultant for "Cars 3," lends his voice to JEFF GORVETTE. Corvette, whose number of top-ten finishes remains unmatched, may have hung up his racing tires—but his heart remains on the track. His ability to succeed at all levels turned hoods wherever he raced.

- RICHARD "THE KING" PETTY, team owner and champion NASCAR driver with 200 wins, returns to the role of STRIP "THE KING" WEATHERS. From his humble beginnings on the Piston-Cup circuit to the glitzy sponsorship and media attention, the champion racer now serves as crew chief for his nephew, Cal Weathers.

- KYLE PETTY, retired NASCAR driver and current NASCAR commentator on NBC, helps bring CAL WEATHERS to life in "Cars 3." Weathers grew up around the track watching his uncle, Strip "The King" Weathers, tear it up. The veteran racer finds himself taking a step back to make room for the next generation on the track.

- MIKE JOY is FOX Sports' lead NASCAR announcer who will call his 38th DAYTONA 500 this Sunday. He lends his iconic voice to on-the-spot radio talk show host MIKE JOYRIDE in the movie. Joyride stays one step ahead in the racing news game by keeping a keen eye on where the racing season is headed.

- RAY EVERNHAM, winner of three NASCAR championships as

crew chief for Jeff Gordon and current consultant to Hendrick Motorsports, lends his voice to RAY REVERHAM, Jackson Storm's crew chief, and an expert at training in the cutting edge technology and tactics being used by the next-gen racers. Evernham also serves as a story consultant for filmmakers.

LIFE-SIZED CHARACTERS: NASCAR fans can picture themselves with Lightning McQueen and Cruz Ramirez—or at least life-sized cars designed to look like the big-screen characters. Comedian and actress Cristela Alonzo got to hang with her character look-alike at the event. "I am excited to be here as race fans get to see these two life-sized characters together for the first time," said Alonzo.

The Lightning McQueen and Cruz Ramirez look-alike cars are slated to make appearances at select races throughout the season as part of a "Cars 3" nationwide tour. Joining them on the tour will be a look-alike of Lightning McQueen's on-track rival, Jackson Storm.

ABOUT THE MOVIE: Blind-sided by a new generation of blazing-fast racers, the legendary Lightning McQueen (voice of Owen Wilson) is suddenly pushed out of the sport he loves. To get back in the game, he will need the help of an eager young race technician, Cruz Ramirez (voice of Cristela Alonzo), with her own plan to win, plus inspiration from the late Fabulous Hudson Hornet and a few unexpected turns. Proving that #95 isn't through yet will test the heart of a champion on Piston Cup Racing's biggest stage! "Cars 3" cruises into theaters on June 16, 2017.

Mark Smith is Once Again The King of the 360's

TAMPA, FL - For the second time, Pennsylvania's Mark Smith ended his weekend at Tampa's East Bay Raceway Park as the King of the 360's with the Lucas Oil ASCS Southern Outlaw Sprints.

While Smith gave chase early on, the race on the start saw outside pole starter, Shawn Donath, taking

the early advantage over Travis Rilat. Slowed on Lap 3, Rilat was not to be counted out as the No. 29 stole the advantage by just over two tenths before the caution flew again.

Slowed again with five laps compete, Rilat had company on the restart as fourth starting, Mark Smith, began his run on the point. Giving chase and challenging until Lap 13, the following revolution saw the No. M1 advance into the top spot.

Keeping pace with Smith, the race for the lead came quickly as the top two ran to slower traffic. Trading slide jobs at both ends of the East Bay Raceway Park, Smith was able to return the favor for every pass by the No. 29.

With varying slower traffic in play, that allowed Smith to gain a small advantage before the red lights blinked on for Caleb Helms on Lap 31. Helms was able to walk away unhurt. Two attempts at the restart, and both times Travis Rilat railed the cushion to a side-by-side race with Smith. Retaking the lead on the second attempt, Travis peddled hard on the high side with Smith patiently working the hub.

With the run on the thirty-fourth round, Smith rocketed back to the lead the following lap and would not be contested for his second King of the 360's title. Battling in the closing laps with a hard charging, Thomas Kennedy, the No. 21k advanced to the runner-up spot with Travis Rilat completing the night's podium.

Falling back in the early goings, Terry McCarl was able to rebound to finish fourth with Tampa's A.J. Maddox coming from 16th to complete the top-five. Chad Kemenah came home sixth with Danny Martin, Jr. seventh. Jason Sides was eighth with Tim Shaffer and Rico Abreu completing the top-ten.

The Lucas Oil ASCS Southern

Outlaw Sprints returns to action at Southern Raceway in Milton, Fla. on March 11, 2017. For continued updates on the American Sprint Car Series, log onto www.ascsracing.com.

Terry McCarl Stands Tall On Night 2 of the King of the 360's

TAMPA, FL - The second night of competition at East Bay Raceway Park's King of the 360's and Ronald Laney Memorial ended with the defending champion in Victory Lane as Iowa's Terry McCarl mastered the low line to claim the win with the Lucas Oil ASCS Southern Outlaw Sprints.

Robbie Stillwaggon from the pole out dueled the No. 24 of Terry McCarl on the start. With the track locked to the bottom groove, the field was quick to find the tail with traffic coming into play on Lap 8.

Having fallen to third in the early laps, the race into traffic proved just what McCarl needed as Terry raced around the No. 53 of Shawn Donath on Lap 9. With Stillwaggon directly to his front wing, the No. 24 made quick work of Robbie to grab the lead on the tenth round.

With the track clearing as the field ran to Lap 15, McCarl held a half straightaway advantage over Shawn Donath who followed McCarl to second as he passed for the lead; but the field would again find Terry.

Into the closing laps, the top-five all ran nearly nose to tail with each waiting for the other to bobble. Presenting the chance for the field to pounce, McCarl found an infield tire with six laps to run. Terry held pace as the laps counted down, and tires began to chatter.

Crossing under the checkered flag with a small amount of Hoosier to spare, Terry was chased to the line by Shawn Donath with Robbie Stillwaggon in tow. Derek Hagar crossed fourth with Wayne Johnson completing the top-five.

Tim Shaffer found himself in sixth with Chad Kemenah seventh. Harli White, Mark Smith, and Colman Gulick made up the top-ten.

Smith Takes King of the 360's Opener

TAMPA, FL - The 2017 edition of the King of the 360's and Ronald Laney Memorial saw a familiar face in Victory Lane as Mark Smith rocketed to victory aboard the No. M1



Mark Smith ended his weekend at East Bay Raceway Park as King of the 360's with the Lucas Oil American Sprint Car Series Southern Outlaw Sprints. (Mike Horne/ASCS photo)

with the Lucas Oil ASCS Southern Outlaw Sprints at Tampa's East Bay Raceway Park.

Giving chase from the sixth starting spot, Smith would have to ride as it was the No. 29 of Travis Rilat who led the opening rounds. Working to traffic with eight laps to run, Smith had found his way into the runner-up spot with Rilat in sight. Closing the gap within the lap, the following round ended with a new race leader.

Picking through slower traffic with ease, Smith was never far from Rilat as the pair weaved in and out of lapped traffic. Working back to the rear bumper of the No. M1 with 18 laps complete, Travis

set up for the strike only to have the caution take away the opportunity.

Taking off the for the final time, Rilat tired the top, but would see his run fall short as eighth starting, Terry McCarl, brought his No. 24 to the runner-up spot. On a break-away with Smith, the defending race winner would have to settle for silver as Smith claimed the gold. Rilat would end up third with Jason Sides fourth. Ohio's Phil Gressman crossed fifth.

Danny Smith came from 11th to sixth with Rico Abreu in tow. Danny Martin, Jr. grabbed eighth with Chad Kemenah ninth. From a B-Main, Greg Hodnett clawed from 20th to round out the top-ten.

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O'Neal Wins the Feature at the DIRTcar Nationals Finale

Clanton wins DIRTcar Nationals Championship

BARBERVILLE, FL - Don O'Neal, a veteran racer in action since 1988, has been one of the biggest names without a World of Outlaws Craftsman® Late Model Series victory. That changed in his 53rd career feature start when O'Neal finally took a coveted trip to Victory Lane during the bookend to the 46th Annual DIRTcar Nationals at Volusia Speedway Park on Saturday night.

Heading into the 40-lap Craftsman Club Feature, the buzz was about what tire compound the teams would choose. It was ultimately Don O'Neal who chose the right combination.

"We've had a good car," said O'Neal. "The Peak Anti-Freeze team with Crawford Outdoor, Cometic Gasket, and Penske Shocks car has been good all Speedweeks, there just wasn't anything going our way. Tonight, it did."

O'Neal was a man on a mission all night. Locking up the final transfer spot from his heat put him 13th on the feature starting grid. O'Neal made quick work of the cars in front of him and used a lap 15 restart to take the lead from polesitter Dennis Erb Jr. who had led every lap to that point.

"We had a harder tire on than most of those guys," said Erb Jr., who finished seventh. "A lot of those guys gambled with that soft tire. We took the green early and everyone stayed in that line around the bottom. My car was working really good there. Everything was going good until that yellow came out. Then everybody got chasing the brown, [tacky dirt] around the top and those soft tire were able to pull away from me. We definitely got beat on tires tonight."

Tim McCreddie jumped to the second position the same lap as O'Neal took over the point and steadily gained ground on the leader. On lap 38 in the midst of heavy lapped traffic, O'Neal nearly got into the turn two wall. The slip up by O'Neal allowed McCreddie an attempt for a last lap pass bringing the crowd surrounding the World's Fastest Half-Mile to their feet.

O'Neal claimed a desired Gator trophy and \$10,000 but it was Shane Clanton who took home the king of them all, the Big Gator as DIRTcar Nationals Late Model champion.

"We missed it a little bit tonight, but it's a testament to how hard we worked all week," said Clanton "To run top-five three nights and just miss it a little bit tonight and run where we did (13th), we had a shot."

Headed out of DIRTcar Nationals, Brandon Sheppard is the leader in the 2017 World of Outlaws Craftsman Late Model Series Points Standings followed by Rick Eckert who is only a mere four points behind. For the last two years the driver who headed out of DIRTcar Nationals highest in points ultimately won the Championship Title at the end of the year. That may not be the case this year as the points race is still very close; meaning it could be anyone's for the taking.

Fog a First Time Winner at Volusia

BARBERVILLE, FL. - The World of Outlaws Craftsman® Late Model Series took the track at Volusia Speedway Park for the first time on night 11 of DIRTcar Nationals. During the 40-lap Craftsman Club Feature fans and drivers in attendance



Don O'Neal (right) won the DIRTcar Nationals Finale at Volusia Speedway Park, but Shane Clanton (left) took home the Big Gator as the DIRTcar Nationals Late Model Champion. (GT Smith photo)

witnessed a thick fog roll in after 10 p.m. that was the concoction of two days of heavy rain followed by a third of sunny blue skies. For the drivers' safety, the feature was called complete with 23 laps in the books due to poor visibility.

Despite the bad luck Mother Nature brought, Shane Clanton was the class of the field all around. He had the fastest lap time during qualifying with 15.861-second lap, won his heat race and led all 23-laps of the feature.

Eric Wells also had a strong night as he claimed the second overall fastest time with a 15.862-second lap. Wells also won his heat race and found his way to second place on the podium.

Not everybody had as successful a night as the top three. Several drivers battled both the elements and mechanical problems throughout the night and were forced to retire early.

Chris Madden was the first driver forced to retire on lap seven when the third driveshaft of the night broke on the No.44.

Don O'Neal suffered a similar fate on lap 16. The Martinsville, Ind. native was running fifth after starting the feature 11th.

Darrell Lanigan finished eighth in heat two after he pulled pit side with a miss in the motor. Lanigan's team was scratched for the remainder of the night after pulling the motor.

As fog rolled over Volusia midway through the 40-lap feature, several drivers struggled with vision and ran out of tearoffs before the race was called at lap 23.

DIRTcar Nationals Wednesday and Thursday Program Cancelled Due to Persistent Rain

BARBERVILLE, FL - Nights 9 and 10 of DIRTcar Nationals at Volusia Speedway Park have been cancelled due to an extended heavy rain storm that hit the area on Wednesday with a forecast of continued rain through Thursday.

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Atlanta Motor Speedway

HAMPTON, GA - A star-studded lineup of celebrities with close Georgia ties will welcome fans visiting Atlanta Motor Speedway during next weekend's Folds of Honor QuikTrip 500 NASCAR weekend.

Television stars, athletes, musicians and even some of the most iconic names in NASCAR will be on hand, as the historic track, hosting its record 102nd 500-mile race, becomes NASCAR's hub of activity at its annual Atlanta stop.

Leading off is former Atlanta Falcons linebacker Keith Brooking and current Falcon, defensive tackle Grady Jarrett. Brooking, a five-time Pro Bowl selectee and Georgia Tech alumnus, will serve as Sunday's honorary pace car driver as the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series field takes the green flag in the Folds of Honor QuikTrip 500. Brooking attended East Coweta High School in Sharpsburg, Georgia before playing four seasons at Tech, where he became the leading tackler in school history with 467.

The Falcons picked Brooking 12th overall in the 1998 NFL draft, and he helped the team win the 1998 NFC championship before appearing in its first title game in Super Bowl 33 on Jan. 31, 1999. He would go on to lead the team in tackles each year from 2001 to 2006. He also played three seasons for the Dallas Cowboys and one for the Denver Broncos.

Current Falcon Jarrett attended Rockdale County High School in nearby Conyers, Georgia, where he was a two-time all-state selection. He attended Clemson University from 2011 to 2014, where he played four seasons for the Tigers before the Falcons selected him in the fifth round of the 2015 draft. He appeared in all 16 regular season games and all three playoff games for the Falcons last season and recorded four tackles in Super Bowl 51 earlier this month, including three sacks of Super Bowl MVP Tom Brady.

Bolstering the host committee's local pro sports presence, former Atlanta Braves pitcher John Rocker will also be on hand for the Folds of Honor QuikTrip 500. Rocker, a Macon native who now calls Atlanta home, played parts of four seasons

with the Braves from 1998 to 2001, compiling an 8-12 record and recording 83 saves. He helped the Braves win division titles in each of those seasons during its historic run of 14 in a row.

Performing the national anthem on the AMS frontstretch prior to Sunday's Folds of Honor QuikTrip 500, is Ed Roland and the Sweet Tea Project. Roland, an Atlanta resident, is the lead singer for rock band Collective Soul and started Sweet Tea Project with a group of friends in Atlanta in 2011. The band will release its second album, "Alder Lane Farm," later this year.

Taking on grand marshal duties for the weekend is acclaimed television personality and designer Ty Pennington. An Atlanta native and alumnus of The Art Institute of Atlanta, Pennington will return to his home state to visit with race fans, attend the pre-race drivers' meeting and give the command prior to Sunday's race.

Pennington first won national attention as the quirky carpenter on the groundbreaking home-improvement reality TV series "Trading Spaces." Later, as host of "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition," Pennington helped transform the lives of thousands while inspiring millions more around the world to volunteer their time to help others.

On the racing side of things, Dawsonville, Georgia native, NASCAR Hall of Famer, five-time Atlanta winner, 16-time Winston Cup Series most popular driver, two-time Daytona 500 winner and 1988 Winston Cup Series champion Bill Elliott will also welcome fans as an iconic member of the celebrity host committee.

Finally, completing host committee lineup, is 2016 Ms. Georgia American Beauties Plus, Quanisha Dawson. Originally from Hampton, Virginia, Dawson now lives in Atlanta, where she is closely involved as a full-time student, mom and community involvement leader.

For more information about the celebrity host committee and details about race-weekend appearances, visit the Atlanta Motor Speedway website at www.atlantamotorspeedway.com. NASCAR racing returns to Atlanta Motor Speedway March 3-5, 2017, kicking off with the Aspen Dental Get Started Qualifying Day on Friday, March 3, followed by the Rinnai 250 XFINITY Series and Active Pest Control 200 Camping World Truck Series doubleheader on Saturday, March 4. The Folds of Honor QuikTrip 500 Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series race rounds

out the weekend on Sunday, March 5.

For more information or to purchase tickets today, contact the Atlanta Motor Speedway ticket office at (770) 946-4211, (877) 9-AMSTIX or visit www.atlantamotorspeedway.com.

Phoenix Raceway

PHOENIX, AZ - Phoenix Raceway, a subsidiary of the International Speedway Corporation, announced today that FunWall has signed a letter of intent to bring FunWall's proprietary mobile social gaming platform to the world of motorsports. With this partnership, the track will be the first motorsports venue to offer social mobile gaming that is fully integrated into the race day experience.

"We are excited to offer even more to our fans as part of their race day experience through FunWall's revolutionary technology," said Bryan R. Sperber, President of Phoenix Raceway. "This partnership combines the attraction of mobile gaming with the excitement of live motorsports entertainment creating a unique and engaging platform for our fans."

FunWall's unique technology will give Phoenix Raceway the ability to revolutionize fan communication by transforming one-way communication channels into intelligent, two-way fan experiences. This partnership provides the opportunity to engage the race fan at each Phoenix Raceway event with fun incentivized tournament games.

"FunWall makes the vital audience connection by combining fun and incentives into the same experience," said Steve Ridley, CEO of FunWall. "Phoenix Raceway is the perfect partner to help us pioneer the power of mobile social gaming into the dynamic world of motorsports."

FunWall will deploy its new proprietary "GeoGame" platform, which allows Phoenix Raceway to offer fans specific games and competitions based on the user location within the facility. This unique tool unlocks the ability for fans to interact with each other and with Phoenix Raceway partners in designated locations as well as have the opportunity to be awarded unique experiences or prizes based on the specific location that they are visiting at that time.

Social mobile games provide the

perfect vehicle to engage, entertain, capture and incentivize an audience. FunWall's unique platform takes the buzz around eSports and places it at the fingertips of users whenever and wherever they are. FunWall is the first technology allowing users to take any mobile game from a "one-on-one" challenge to a "play-the-entire-world" tournament.

FunWall's mobile gaming app will be featured in key areas of the Raceway and will be fully available to race franchises, sponsors, race teams, and concessions, making social mobile gaming a key engagement tool for anyone looking to maximize their experience on race day and beyond the race track.

Since 1964, Phoenix Raceway has been the premier motorsports venue in the Southwest. Founded as an open-wheel racing mecca, Phoenix Raceway is proud to once again host the Phoenix Grand Prix Verizon IndyCar Series race under the lights on April 29. Phoenix is the only track in the West to feature two Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series weekends a year, beginning with the Camping World 500 race weekend in March 17-19. The schedule is anchored by the upcoming Can-Am 500 race weekend on Nov. 10-12, the semifinal race in NASCAR's Playoffs after which the field is reduced to the final four championship contenders. For more information, visit www.PhoenixRaceway.com.

Atlanta Motor Speedway

HAMPTON, GA - Ed Roland, front man for multi-platinum rock band Collective Soul, will perform the national anthem at the March 5 Folds of Honor QuikTrip 500 Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series race at Atlanta Motor Speedway with his band, Ed Roland & the Sweet Tea Project. Roland joins several other members of a star-studded lineup of celebrities with close Georgia ties making up the Celebrity Host Committee, which will help welcome fans to the weekend at AMS.

(Continued Next Page)



Continued...

Roland is best known as the lead singer and principal songwriter of Collective Soul. With seven No. 1 hits under his belt, Roland also stays busy with his Americana band, the Sweet Tea Project, and has other solo projects in the works as well. The producer and two-time Georgia Music Hall of Fame inductee is also a huge sports fan, a father, an avid golfer

and supports various charities in his community.

"I am honored the Sweet Tea Project was asked to perform the national anthem at Atlanta Motor Speedway, here in my home state," said Roland. "NASCAR fans are just like rock fans—all high energy. We are looking forward to an awesome day at the track!"

Collective Soul broke into mainstream popularity when they rose to international fame in 1993 with the rock anthem "Shine." The multi-platinum quintet has been making music for two decades since then and has a catalog of No. 1 hits, including "December," "The World I Know," "Heavy" and "Run." The band released its ninth album, "See What You Started by Continuing," in 2015. The album debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard Alternative Album chart, marking the band's highest-charting position on that chart in their illustrious career. Recently, Collective Soul has been back in the studio working on its 10th album.

In 2011, Roland began recording and touring with a group of Atlanta-area friends, eventually forming the Sweet Tea Project. The band is set to release its second album, "Alder Lane Farm" in 2017.

For more information about the celebrity host committee and details about race-weekend appearances, visit the Atlanta Motor Speedway website at www.atlantamotorspeedway.com.

Darlington Raceway

DARLINGTON, SC - Darlington Raceway is pleased to announce that it is once again giving fans the opportunity to participate in a special race-day celebration featuring several NASCAR Hall of Famers and other industry legends that helped build the foundation of the sport.

The Bojangles' Legends Break-



The 2016 Bojangles' Legends Breakfast at Darlington Raceway. (Harrelson Photography for Darlington Raceway photo)

fast, considered one of the most special moments during the track's Labor Day race weekend the past two years, will once again feature a panel of NASCAR icons, including Mark Martin and Leonard Wood, among others. The "fireside chat" will be moderated by NASCAR Hall of Fame executive director Winston Kelley.

"Darlington Raceway served as the backdrop for countless memorable moments that our NASCAR Hall of Famers experienced over the decades," Kelley said. "Having the true legends of our sport continue to come back to help honor a place that is rooted in some of their proudest achievements and our sport's most defining points in history is another reminder of the significance Darlington plays in both our past and future."

The once-in-a-lifetime event was a must-see for over 1,000 race fans that participated in the 2016 breakfast. The opportunity to hear the legends of the sport tell stories about their racing heritage and success is a can't-miss moment for fans.

"For the past two years, the Bojangles' Legends Breakfast has truly been a highlight event of the race weekend," Darlington Raceway President Kerry Sharp said. "It is indeed an honor to have so many NASCAR legends in one place, talking about the most historical moments of their careers. We greatly appreciate Bojangles' and the NASCAR Hall of Fame for their efforts to make this breakfast something truly special for our fans."

The promotion kicks off on Wednesday, Feb. 22. Fans that purchase their seats to the Sept. 3 Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series Bojangles' Southern 500 will receive free access to the Bojangles' Legends Breakfast while sup-

plies last.

This offer will be valid for ticket purchases made through the Feb. 26 Daytona 500 by calling 866-459-7223, visiting www.DarlingtonRaceway.com or through the track's mobile app.

The Bojangles' Legends Breakfast will take place on Sunday morning, Sept. 3 from 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. in the track's hospitality village just outside turn three.

Darlington Raceway's award-winning throwback campaign is now The Official Throwback Weekend of NASCAR featuring the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series Bojangles' Southern 500® on Sunday, Sept. 3, 2017. The NASCAR XFINITY Series Sport Clips Haircuts VFW 200 will race on Saturday, Sept. 2, 2017. Tickets are on sale now by calling 866-459-7223 or visiting DarlingtonRaceway.com.

You can keep up with all of the latest news from Darlington Raceway at DarlingtonRaceway.com, on Facebook at [Facebook.com/DarlingtonRaceway](https://www.facebook.com/DarlingtonRaceway) and on Twitter at [Twitter.com/TooToughToTame](https://twitter.com/TooToughToTame). Fans are encouraged to post their Bojangles' Southern 500 stories and memories at #TraditionContinues, #BojanglesSo500 and #SportClips200.

Phoenix Raceway

PHOENIX, AZ - Race fans attending the Camping World 500 on Sunday, March 19 at Phoenix Raceway will be treated to a performance by country music star Colt Ford before the green flag drops. The concert, which will take place on the Fan Midway area at 10:30 a.m. MST., is just one part of race-day excitement that is free to all fans with a grandstand ticket for the Camping World 500 Monster Energy

NASCAR Cup Series race on Sunday, March 19.

With his groundbreaking blend of country music with hip-hop grooves, country artist, Colt Ford, connects with fans everywhere through his live performances, music and social media. Ford scored a No. 1 album on Billboard, sold over 1 million albums and millions more tracks, and has over 100 million YouTube views. His loyal, ever-growing fan base includes 1.6 million Facebook friends, 330,000 Twitter followers and 80,000 Instagram followers. Ford will soon release his sixth studio album, "Love Hope Faith" on Average Joes Entertainment.

A former professional golfer, Ford will continue his affiliation with NASCAR following his 2013 music video for "Drivin' Around Song" with Jason Aldean which was filmed in Mooresville, N.C., and features Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series stars Danica Patrick and Ricky Stenhouse, Jr.

Ford has toured with the likes of Toby Keith, Eric Church and Florida Georgia Line. This summer, he will kick off his "Love Hope Faith" tour which will take him to 35-plus cities nationwide.

Tickets for the Camping World 500 on March 19 start at just \$25 and can be purchased online, by phone at 866-408-RACE (7223) or in person at the Phoenix Raceway ticket office.

Ford's pre-race concert is the result of a partnership between Phoenix Raceway and Niner Sports & Entertainment.

In 2012, Colt penned two #1 hits; Jason Aldean's "Dirt Road Anthem," and Brantley Gilbert's, "Country Must Be Country Wide." His album, Declaration of Independence, topped the Billboard Top Country Albums Chart at #1, and was followed by his new release, Thanks For Listening, in July 2014. Thanks For Listening charted at #1 on Billboard's Independent Albums, #1 on Billboard's Rap Albums chart, #2 on Billboard's Top Country Albums Chart and #10 on The Billboard 200 Albums chart. In addition to being a gifted songwriter and artist, resides with his family in Athens, GA.

Follow at www.coltford.com; twitter.com/coltford; facebook.com/coltford.



New Smyrna Speedway - Saturday, Feb. 25th

NEW SMYRNA, FL - Harrison Burton has won plenty of races at New Smyrna Speedway. Saturday night, the 16-year-old from Huntersville, North Carolina, captured the ultimate prize.

Burton finished sixth in the PPG/Tower Sealants 100, the finale the Super Late

Model Division on the high-banked half-mile. It was enough to out-distance fellow NASCAR Next drivers Spencer Davis by 10 points and Ty Majeski by 16. Majeski, the defending World Series champion, was not able to overcome a mid-week post-race disqualification. He was also not able to chase down race winner Jeff Choquette, finishing Saturday's feature on the winner's back bumper as they crossed the line.

Choquette, the grandson 1954 NASCAR Modified champion Jack Choquette, had won a Pro Late Model and Florida Modified feature earlier in the week. According to Speed51.com, he became the first driver to win a race in three different division's in the history of the World Series.

Choquette also won the 100-lap Pro Late Model finale Friday night.

Last year, Burton had a pair of wins but finished a distance second by 24 points to Majeski in New Smyrna's top NASCAR Whelen All-American Series division.

This year, Burton started the week strong with two wins and two runner-up finishes, and by Saturday had built a commanding lead. He started third in the extra-distance race to close out the weekend and was able to cruise.

Davis, who started the week off with a win last Friday, finished fourth behind Choquette, Burton and Steven Wallace. Gus Dean completed the top five.

After Burton, David Rogers, Brad May, Cole Anderson and Fredrick Moore rounded out the top 10.

New Smyrna Speedway - Friday, Feb. 24th

NEW SMYRNA BEACH, FL - Matt Hirschman used a late race move to score the win in Friday's Richie Evans Memorial 100 for the Tour-Type Modifieds at New



Harrison Burton finished the 51st World Series of Asphalt Racing at New Smyrna (Fla.) Speedway with the championship trophy for the Super Late Model division. (JIM DUPONT photo)

Smyrna Speedway.

Hirschman took the point from race leader Ron Silk on the final restart with just 12 laps to go, but it wasn't over from there. Silk charged back to the bumper and chased Hirschman's No. 60 all the way around to the checkered flag.

However, Hirschman wasn't going to be denied. The win completed the week for him in grand style – after he had finished second in two of the first three races.

"All week I've been trying to make the pass and not the one trying to protect and it's been so tough," Hirschman said. "That was the opportunity where I finally had position and I might have taken a little bit from him, but that's what everyone else has been doing all week."

Early in the event, Chuck Hossfeld showed the way, but was overtaken by Hirschman on lap 22. When Silk took the lead on lap 27, Hirschman settled in and stayed inside the top five until a caution on lap 43 brought the leaders to pit road.

At lap 45, Hirschman restarted back in 11th position – but quickly

worked his way towards the front. On a restart just after a caution for a single car incident, Hirschman went from fourth to second on the outside lane, then went after Silk. He chased the back bumper of Silk's No. 82 until the caution, then made his move on the bottom lane in turn one with 12 laps to go and eventually took down the win.

"This could have been multiple wins for us and I'm sure if I had to do some things over I would have done them differently," Hirschman said. "But I'm glad we at least closed with the big win here tonight."

Ultimately, Hirschman was able to seal the deal and capture his first win of the week, but it wasn't enough to take down the modified championship crown.

Instead, Berlin, Conn. driver Ryan Preece -- who has plans to return to the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour full-time in 2017 – was able to take the title with his fourth place finish. Preece edged Hirschman by just a mere one point in the final points tally to capture his third straight World Series of Asphalt Stock Car Racing champi-

onship.

"It's a good accomplishment," Preece said. "I knew Matt was going to be racing for the win here in the 100 lapper and I wish I could have been up there. We ended up coming up here and getting the championship."

Preece and his team made the decision to pit before the green even flew on Friday night because he wasn't confident in the adjustments they had made prior to qualifying. Teams weren't allowed to adjust on their cars in between time trials and the race, so Preece forfeited his starting spot to make a change and had to come from the back of the pack.

"I had a lot of preload in the left front shock and I wasn't confident with it. The car did what I wanted after that and it was going to be really good but when my bumper got killed it jammed into the swaybar arm and it wasn't allowing the swaybar to work," Preece said.

At the finish, Hirschman, Silk, Jon McKennedy, Preece and Justin Bonsignore finished out the top five spots. Timmy Solomito, Chuck Hossfeld, Spencer Davis, JR Bertuccio and Richie Pallai Jr. were the top-10.

In other action on Friday night at Smyrna, Jeff Choquette took down the win in the Pro Late Model 100 lap feature event. Travis Eddy also scored a win in the Florida Modified division.

New Smyrna Speedway - Thursday, Feb. 23rd

NEW SMYRNA, FL - Ryan Preece has won his share of tour-type Modified race at New Smyrna Speedway.

He added the John Blewett III Memorial 76 to trophy case Thursday night as racing resumed in the 51st World Series of Asphalt Racing. The Berlin, Connecticut, driver held off Matt Hirschman in the closing laps of the extra-distance event on the high-banked half-mile to continue his quest for a third straight World Series crown.

"The level of competition right now is really high and this is the strongest field New Smyrna has had in a really long time," Preece said. "It's a good accomplishment, and now we have to get back to work and get the car ready for Friday night."

Rain washed out racing Wednesday and pushed the annual tribute to the former Modified driver from New Jersey to Thursday.

Preece was chasing his first win of the week after he had finishes of



Jeff Choquette celebrates winning the PPG/Tower Sealants 100 Saturday night at New Smyrna (Fla.) Speedway. (JIM DUPONT photo)

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second and fourth in the first two 35-lap races of World Series.

"We've taken bits and pieces from every single night we've raced," Preece said. "It's been putting a notebook together; what we need in the race car to get these tires to last long enough to win a race."

The 2012 NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour champion and NASCAR

Next alum took the lead from Ron Silk with 13 laps to go and then held off a charge from Hirschman to score the win.

Silk settled for third, followed by Justin Bonsignore and Jimmy Blewett.

Timmy Solomito, Richie Pallai Jr., Chuck Hossfeld, JR Bertuccio and Calvin Carroll rounded out the top 10.

The week will conclude tonight for the tour-type Modifieds with the Richie Evans Memorial 100. The racing will stream live on FanChoice.TV.

Preece has won the race the last two years. He holds a five-point lead over Hirschman for the week's title and seven over Silk.

"When you come down here, it's a long haul, it's a long week, and you come down here to win races," said Preece. "We got one (tonight), but the one everybody comes out for is the Richie Evans. I'm definitely looking forward to it."

Like Preece, NASCAR Next driver Ty Majeski got his first win of the week. Only it came two days after he thought he had one. The Seymour, Wisconsin, driver had his Super Late Model victory stripped Tuesday in post-race technical inspection. Majeski, the defending World Series champion in the division, bounced back with a dominating performance in the 35-late event Thursday night.

Hickory Motor Speedway

NEWTON, NC - The outside temperature is warming up and this is the sign that spring is coming which will bring an annual tradition to the Greater Hickory Metro that fans are excited to get started once again – NASCAR racing at Hickory Motor Speedway.

The speedway will kick off its 66th season of NASCAR Whelen All-American Series competition this Saturday with the Cosmo Motors



Racing at Hickory Motor Speedway is always door to door and bumper to bumper excitement. (STEARNS PHOTOGRAPHY photo)

Spring Classic.

Classic is an appropriate name for the event for Americas Most Famous Short. From NASCAR Hall of Fame drivers Ned Jarrett, Dale Jarrett, Bobby Isaac, Jack Ingram and Junior Johnson to current NASCAR Monster Energy Cup Series regular Matt DiBenedetto – many legendary names in NASCAR either called Hickory Motor Speedway home or won races or championships at the .363-mile track.

The next future NASCAR Monster Energy Cup Series star could be competing at the track this weekend as Lee Faulk Racing brings their development program back to Hickory Motor Speedway this week. Also, NWAAS Late Model Stock Car driver Ty Gibbs, grandson of Monster Energy Cup Series owner Joe Gibbs will be driving for Greg Marlowe Motorsports.

Headlining Saturday's season-opening schedule will be the NASCAR Whelen All American Series Bojangles Late Model division in Twin-50 lap features. Other divisions in action include a 50-lap feature for the Paramount Auto Group Limited Late Models and a 35-lap feature for the Super Trucks. The Cosmo Motors Street Stocks will battle for 30 laps and the Renegade division will also have a 20-lap race.

The Cosmo Motors Spring Clas-

sic will also feature a new starting time of 7:30 p.m. with gates opening at 5 p.m.

For the fourth consecutive season the track will also feature the Paramount Kia "Big 10" Challenge, however 2017 will bring a change as the Challenge has been moved to the Paramount Auto Group Limited Late Models. This is a special 10-race series featuring special purse amounts and bonus awards for drivers who compete in the special series to highlight the Limited Late Model drivers.

"We're very fortunate to have a well-known and established company like Paramount Auto Group to step up and partner with the track to give our competitors a prestigious series and give the fans a great show during this 10-race challenge," said HMS track promoter Kevin Piercy. "Paramount's support allows us to give Limited Late Model drivers from across the state and region an opportunity to race for respectable purses and the prestige that comes with being a feature race winner at Hickory Motor Speedway."

Since Gwyn Staley won the first race held at the track in 1951, the legendary facility has not only served as a proving ground for up and coming drivers, it also helped some of today's sharpest minds in the sport hone their skills either behind the wheel and /or applying that

knowledge as a crew chief or pit crew member.

Several former track champions have made that a reality with 2004 Hickory Motor Speedway Track Champion Matt McCall now serving as crew chief for NASCAR Sprint Cup Series driver Jamie McMurray. Shane Huffman (1999) calls the shots for Timothy Peters in the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series with Mark Setzer serving as an integral part with Richard Gdovic's NASCAR Xfinity Series team and two-time champion (1987 & 1988) Robert Huffman serving as a truck chief in the NCWTS for former NSCS champion and team owner Brad Keselowski.

Brothers Andy and Marty Houston won track titles in 1994 & 1997, respectively and both currently work for Richard Childress Racing with Andy currently serving as spotter for NSCS driver Austin Dillon.

"Hickory has a proud tradition of producing talent throughout the world of NASCAR and fans can expect to see that on track at Hickory Motor Speedway this season," said Piercy. "Josh Berry has already made starts for Dale Earnhardt Jr. in the NASCAR Xfinity Series and Shane Lee is coming off a recent 3rd place finish at Daytona International Speedway in the ARCA race and I don't see this pipeline of talent from Hickory stopping anytime soon."

DiBenedetto, who competed in the NASCAR Whelen All American Series Bojangles Late Model division at Hickory when he was a student at Fred T. Foard High in Newton, has progressed to a full-time ride in NASCAR premiere division and has proven once again if you can compete and win at Hickory Motor Speedway you are likely talented enough to climb the NASCAR ladder and make it to one of NASCAR's national series.

"We work hard to produce a family oriented atmosphere for our fans when they choose to come watch a race at this legendary track and we're going to continue in our efforts to make sure their experience at Hickory Motor Speedway lives up to their expectations when they come to a race," Piercy said.

Ticket prices for the Cosmo Motors Spring Classic Season Opener are only \$12.50 for adults; teen and seniors are just \$10.50 with kids 10 and under free. The track is also offering for a limited time a NASCAR Whelen All-American Series 20 race ticket pack for just \$200. For more information call 828-464-3655 or visit www.hickorymotorspeedway.com.