



DECEMBER 4, 2017

# FastTrack

RACING JOURNAL ONLINE

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## Truex Leads the Vegas Show



## Kyle Busch Works Hard for 50th Annual Snowball Derby Win

# Memorable 2017 Moments

Martin Truex Jr. turned the spotlight on his longtime girlfriend, Sherry Pollex, as he accepted the accolades last Thursday of winning the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series championship.

It was another memorable moment from a racing season that won't be forgotten anytime

soon.

Forever humble, Truex said her battle with cancer became a driving force in his life that spread throughout the entire Furniture Row Racing team. His love and sincerity became the highlight of the entire season.

"The 78 team has a motto throughout the season: 'Never give up,'" No one has lived that more than my life partner, Sherry," he said. "As we all know Sherry was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2014. Today she is still fighting her disease with tenacity and a never-give-up attitude that inspires millions of people to do the same. She is the true champion."

Goosebumps. Tears.

There were other notable soundbites from the just-completed season, including when Truex, who grew up in Mayetta, N.J., was asked if it was as big as Bruce Springsteen back home.

"[He's] pretty big. I mean, [he's] worldwide, right? I don't know if I am or not."

Others included Dale Earnhardt Jr.'s final Cup Series post-race interview following the race at the Homestead-Miami Speedway. He reminded everyone he's not going to disappear.

"So, we'll be around. I still want to have a purpose in this sport," Earnhardt said. "After driving you've got to find something to be passionate about that matters to you and I think I might have found that with broadcasting and obviously still owning JR Motorsports.

"We're going to be competitive and the competitor inside will still be on fire and trying to keep that team going. I just texted Elliott Sadler all morning about man we're going to come back next year. You just get your head right and after the off-season, we're coming right back here to try to win that thing

again because we want to be a part of this sport as long as we can, we really do. It's time for somebody else to get in this car."

Brad Keselowski fired a warning shot toward Toyota during the playoffs, saying the car company had an unfair advantage. That didn't sit well with the Toyota camp, and their executives and race teams fired back on social media.

"At this moment, there's really no reason for Toyota not to have all four spots going to Home- stead," Keselowski said.



**DON COBLE**

There was some truth to Keselowski's claims. The top-two drivers – Truex and Kyle

Busch – drove Toyotas. After winning just one of the first 10 races, Team Toyota bounced back to win 15 of the final 26.

It's hard to imagine a more-compelling final 20 laps than Truex holding off Busch at Homestead. Busch's car clearly was faster and Truex's was fading, but true to his team's mantra, he never gave up.

The best race, however, probably was Ricky Stenhouse Jr.'s victory at the Talladega Superspeedway on May 7 or Kurt Busch's win at the season-opening Daytona 500. There were 37 lead changes at Daytona; 26 at Talladega.

The worst race had to be at the New Hampshire Motor Speedway during the playoffs when Busch and Truex combined to lead 299 of 300 laps, with Busch leading 148 of the final 151 laps and winning by 100 yards.

The most-sentimental moment came with Matt Kenseth's victory at Phoenix is what probably was his second-to-last race. There wasn't a dry eye in the place.

The oddest moment came after Busch and Truex combined to lead 296 of 400 laps at the Charlotte Motor Speedway on May 28, only to have their hopes dashed by running out of gas. That allowed Austin Dillon, who was in a full fuel-saving mode to post the upset victory.

When asked about not winning, Busch had the following reaction:

"I'm not surprised by anything, Congratulations." He then dropped the microphone and left the media center.

The other things were learned were: Kyle Larson is a future superstar; Denny Hamlin and Chase Elliott won't be exchanging Christ-



**Martin Truex Jr. gives an emotional acceptance speech at the 2017 Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series awards ceremony. (NIGEL KINRADE/NKP photo)**

mas cards; with Earnhardt, Kenseth and Danica Patrick all gone and Kurt Busch still without a deal to return to Stewart-Haas Racing next year, the sport's in one of its biggest youth movements of all time; and, segment-racing created a new level of competition that will

become a permanent part of the sport's future.

And with all that said, it's time to wave the checkered flag on another season. But don't worry, the Daytona 500 will be here sooner than you think.

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### In This Issue:

<b>Fast Forum</b>	<b>2-3</b>	<b>World of Outlaws</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Monster Energy Cup</b>	<b>4-6</b>	<b>Super DIRTcar</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Snowball Derby</b>	<b>7-9</b>	<b>OnTrack</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>NASCAR Touring</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Ultimate Super LM</b>	<b>13</b>
		<b>ShorTrack</b>	<b>14</b>

### ON THE COVER:

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# Turn the Page

At this time of year, I like to take a few moments and reflect on the past racing season and look to the future of our sport. So, in no particular order, here's my take on the biggest NASCAR motorsports stories of 2017.

Without question, one of the biggest stories of 2017 was the fantastic season of

Martin Truex Jr. and the #78 Furniture Row Racing Team. Truex was a story by himself, from the debacle at Michael Waltrip Racing to survival with the #78 team. His on-track struggles and triumphs are well documented, but his off-track story is even more emotional. The health issues of his girlfriend, Sherry Pollex, have been difficult and stressful. However, together they have been each others strength and inspiration. Their charity work and foundation development has been tremendous and helped raise thousands of dollars as well as awareness to several medical issues.

Truex left no doubt who was the "man to beat" almost every week this season. From his first victory early in the year at Las Vegas to his final triumph at Homestead-Miami Speedway, Martin Truex Jr. had a championship season. His eight victories led the Monster Energy Cup Series and his title-clinching victory at Homestead obviously the sweetest. The dominant fashion that Truex captured his first Monster Energy Cup Series Championship, coupled with the , coupled with the story of his long journey reaching the pinnacle of our sport, certainly makes Martin Truex Jr. one of the feature stories of 2017.

Along with Truex winning the championship, the reign of Toyota in the MECS this season was overpowering. Combined with Truex eight wins were six by Kyle Busch (including the All-Star race), two by Denny Hamlin, and one by Matt Kenseth. That's seventeen victories by one manufacturer. Plus, there were several other races that Toyota was in position to win and fell just short. By any group of numbers or merely the "eye test", Toyota dominated the MECS in 2017.

Another major story of 2017 was Hendrick Motorsports. Even though seven-time champion Jimmie

Johnson won three races, the presence of Hendrick Motorsports cars at the front of the pack battling for wins did not happen as often as in past seasons. Of course Kasey Kahne won at Indy, but, for the most part, the #5 car did not have the quality season they had hoped for. Dale Earnhardt Jr., in his final season as a full-time driver in the MECS, struggled most of the season and was a top-15 car at best most weeks. The emergence of Chase Elliott to make the playoffs and battle for several wins in those final races, gives hope to the future of Hendrick Motorsports. Elliott gained a tremendous number of fans at Martinsville and Phoenix late in the season, but still needs to get that first victory to keep that fan interest.

Of course, the news that Dale Earnhardt Jr. would not race full time after this season sent shock waves throughout the sport. Following the retirement of Jeff Gordon, Tony Stewart, and Carl Edwards in recent years, the sport is losing another of its biggest stars. In fact, some would argue the biggest star. To win the MECS Most Popular Driver Award for fifteen consecutive years tells you the relationship Jr. has with his fans. Even though he'll still remain involved in the sport, his non-presence on the track will be felt.

The sport is going to begin the 2018 season without several other notable drivers. Former MECS Champ Matt Kenseth has decided to "step away" from the sport for a period (who knows how long) and will not compete on a full time basis.

Danica Patrick has announced that she will race the Daytona 500 and the Indianapolis 500 next year and that's it. Losing her presence and her marketing and promotional value will be difficult for NASCAR to absorb. Plus, she was a role model for many young girls and women to strive to succeed in sports and motorsports. Kenseth and Patrick will be very hard to replace.

One of the bright stories that

bodes well for the future of our sport is the first-time champions in each of the three major divisions of NASCAR. Christopher Bell in the Camping World Truck Series, William Byron in XFINITY, and Martin Truex Jr. in MECS all won their first title this year. Along with the other young, talented drivers in each division, the sport does have several emerging stars.

But, even with a lot of good, young drivers, how solid is our sport? The attendance figures and television ratings for NASCAR events have continued to decline. The older race fans are not watching or attending as many NASCAR races as in past years, and the younger fans don't seem to possess the passion for the sport. Granted, there are multiple other entertainment options available today.

Regardless, the fast-paced action and excitement, plus the availability of the drivers to their fans have always been a positive that our sport has brought to the public. So, why the decline?

One bright light in 2017 was Kyle Larson. He began his rise to stardom late in 2016 and kept the momentum going this season.

Pollex won, laps led, and victories highlighted Larson's season. He was, often-times, the biggest threat to

Truex on race day. His Chip Ganassi Racing Team certainly had an outstanding year. Their setbacks in the playoffs did not begin to tell the positive story that Larson and teammate Jamie McMurray told in 2017. If they can continue their momentum, both Larson and McMurray can become huge stars in the MECS.

Looking forward, I'm concerned about the number of rule changes each year. NASCAR has a new jack rule and will monitor and number the amount of crew members on each team next year. While

I understand that some rules are made to cut costs and keep competition as equal as possible, I'm not sure that the average race fan liked all the changes made. Plus, you know as well as I do, it's only a matter of time until the brilliant engineers, crew chiefs, and team management figures a way to circumvent these and any other new

rules.

I see the lack of major sponsorship as an issue that teams, as well as the sanctioning body, are facing. When the Series sponsor is taking a long look at a renewal contract and several other major program and award sponsors are looking at leaving the sport, difficult questions arise and must be answered. Lack of sponsorship affects the entire sport. Teams without proper funding cannot continue to compete. Tracks can't promote and market events without corporate America on board. And, if the sanctioning body of our sport cannot provide the Series sponsors and contingency dollars for tracks and teams, what happens?

It will also be very interesting to see if there are any changes to the charter system used in NASCAR. With no new teams coming into the sport, it appears that the charter system has become seeing who can rent a charter for a year or two. Ownership of these charters is becoming a growing issue.

Each racing season brings a new reason to smile and a new reason to think. I smile when I think about the wonderful story of Martin Truex Jr. and his journey to the Monster Energy Cup Series title. I smile thinking about the "young stars" of our sport and their future. I smile when I see an XFINITY or Camping World Truck Series stand-alone event with just drivers from their respective series racing. I smile when I go to my local short track and see the number of competitive cars and talented drivers racing. I even smile when I have to search for a close parking spot at the local track.

However, I frown when I think about the money spent in our sport and the decline of sponsors spending their marketing dollars in racing. I'm concerned when I look at the grandstands at many of our major racing weekends and see the empty seats. I'm sad when I read the television numbers on viewership. I understand that sponsors rely on those, and many other numbers, to determine if and how much they will spend in motorsports. Without those dollars, there are major concerns.

Every sport has its positives and negatives. Our sport of auto racing certainly has its share of issues as well. But, NASCAR has survived issues before, and I believe they will again. So, let's "turn the page" on 2017 and look with anticipation to 2018. Here's hoping that our fans enjoy a Merry Christmas and joyous Holiday season!



**DENNIS PUNCH**



**KYLE LARSON**

# Champion Martin Truex Jr., Dale Jr. Honored at 2017 Monster Energy Series Awards

LAS VEGAS, NV - The 2017 version of the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series Awards included a night of tributes, honors and plenty of good cheer celebrating the 2017 champion Martin

Truex Jr. and his Furniture Row Racing team and giving a fond and heartfelt farewell to the now 15th consecutive NMPA Most Popular Driver in the sport, Dale Earnhardt Jr.

The ceremony — shortened to 90 minutes this year — at the gorgeous Wynn Las Vegas included time spent speaking with the 16 playoff drivers, handing out awards and recognizing Truex for his maiden and emotional Cup victory.

Drivers, their wives and the sport's VIPs walked the sport's version of the "red carpet" to come into the banquet looking fabulous in tuxes and formal gowns and giving off good vibes and fond farewells.

All 16 drivers who qualified for the playoffs took turns on stage with the final four making speeches culminating with Truex's earnest words of gratitude for his team, team owner Barney Visser — who is in Denver, recovering from a heart attack — and his longtime girlfriend

Sherry Pollex, who is battling a recurrence of ovarian cancer.

Earnhardt Jr. introduced Truex and offered sincere words of congratulations and praise for his longtime friend and onetime employee.

"His life partner battles the most evil of diseases and he stands with her," Earnhardt said, bringing Truex on stage to receive his Monster Energy NASCAR Cup.

"He is a champion friend. And there is no one more deserving.

"It's my privilege to introduce the 2017 Monster Energy Cup champion ... my good buddy, Martin Truex Jr."

The introduction culminated a night of handshakes and back pats. The ballroom gave a standing ovation to special guests — Las Vegas area emergency responders, who assisted during the recent mass shooting in the city.

And there were multiple good wishes made from drivers and NASCAR executives throughout the evening to 2003 champion Matt Kenseth, who is retiring at the end of the season.

One of the evening's most anticipated moments was time on stage with Earnhardt Jr., who retired from full-time competition following the season finale at Miami two weeks ago.



Dale Earnhardt Jr. takes the stage to introduce Martin Truex Jr. as the new champion and to accept the Bill France Award of Excellence. (DAVID BECKER/GETTY IMAGES photo)

In addition to accepting his NMPA Most Popular Driver award, Earnhardt was also presented the prestigious "Bill France Award of Excellence" by NASCAR Chairman Brian France. The award is not given on an annual basis but instead only for extreme merit and extraordinary work.

"I had no idea," Earnhardt said of receiving the recognition. "The Myers Brothers award and the Bill France Award, those are so personal and they really get your feelings. It's an incredible feeling for someone to feel like you're worth that acknowledgement. I'm grateful and it makes you inspired to continue to be an asset and help the sport grow."

While making his speech for finishing runner-up in the championship, Kyle Busch joked that he appreciated the retired Earnhardt giving all his "Junior Nation" fans to his "Rowdy Nation."

"It's all going to be very different getting all those cheers at driver intros," Busch said smiling.

In the end, Truex was feted by sponsors, Toyota, fellow drivers and cheers from the rear of the grand room — his Furniture Row Racing team.

"The 78 team has a motto: 'Never give up,' " a smiling Truex said. "It's just unbelievable to be here. It's a childhood dream for me."

He thanked his parents and Pollex's parents for being there and reminded that team owner "Barney Visser is the heart of this team, People thought he was crazy to start a NASCAR team in Denver."

"Well, who's crazy now?" Truex asked, breaking into a grin.

Truex thanked his crew chief Cole Pearn who led the team to a series-best eight wins this season.

"He never sleeps and is more competitive than anyone I've met in my life," Truex said. "Buddy, thank you for making me a champion."

And Truex finished the night in the ultimate feel good — a reminder that life and love go beyond the race trophies and championships.

"You are the love of my life," Truex said, turning toward Pollex. "Thank you for the change you caused in my life. Winning is a great feeling but spending my life with you is the real victory."

It sure felt like a win all around.



2017 Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series Champion Martin Truex Jr. and his partner Sherry Pollex take their places at the champion's table at the year-end banquet. (JONATHAN FERREY/ GETTY IMAGES photo)



## Julian Maha, The NASCAR Foundation's Betty Jane France Humanitarian Award Presented by Nationwide: A Perfect Fit

LAS VEGAS, NV - The NASCAR Foundation's Betty Jane France Humanitarian Award Presented by Nationwide honors the philanthropic ideals and vision of the late Betty Jane France, who started the foundation in 2006. The award is annually presented to a NASCAR fan who embodies those ideals through service in their community.

Julian Maha, announced Thursday night at the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series Awards as the winner of the seventh annual award, is a most deserving honoree, with accomplishments that caught the attention of the thousands of NASCAR fans who made him the award winner via an on-line vote on NASCAR.com. Maha, a physician from Vestavia Hills, Alabama, is the award-winning founder of KultureCity, the cutting-edge organization that works to improve the lives of children with autism while also educating society about the inclusion of autistic children. In addition to the award, KultureCity received a \$100,000 donation from The NASCAR Foundation, NASCAR's charitable arm.

"Julian certainly had tough competition this year," said The NASCAR Foundation Chairman Mike Helton. "Collectively, this year's group of finalists continued the trend of the award attracting top-flight nominees who have performed outstanding service in their communities to improve the lives of children in need. The Betty Jane France Humanitarian Award Presented by Nationwide has become one of the true highlights of every NASCAR season."

Maha has a non-verbal autistic son, which inspired him to found KultureCity in 2013. A variety of accomplishments and accolades have ensued.

KultureCity – which has been named a Top-10 Non-Profit by Microsoft and the Top Non-Profit in Alabama – estimates that under Maha's leadership, the organization has impacted the lives of more than 100,000 autistic children. Maha is a past recipient of the Alabama Distinguished Citizen Award;

he was named "Top Southerner" by Southern Living Magazine and was a Top 40 under 40 Influencer in 2016. In addition, his Sensory Initiative program – which addresses sensory inclusivity in locations such as arenas, stadiums and other public settings – has been utilized at the Birmingham Zoo and Quicken Loans Arena in Cleveland, and by 12 NBA teams and two NFL teams.

"This award is truly an amazing honor," Maha said Thursday, after accepting the award at Wynn Las Vegas. "This award belongs to all members of the KultureCity family.

"KultureCity is a movement of many. It's a fabric, made up of many stories – and many successes – advocating for all to be accepted and treated equally."

Maha is a proud NASCAR fan, which makes sense. He lives just a short drive from Talladega Superspeedway. A native of Malaysia, Maha came to Montgomery, Alabama as a teenager to live with his sister, who attended Auburn University on a tennis scholarship. Living near Talladega in true "NASCAR country", he inevitably became interested in NASCAR, and now, at the age of 40, considers Denny Hamlin his favorite driver. And of course, his favorite track is the 2.66-mile 'Dega tri-oval.

"My initial exposure to the United States in Montgomery was pretty much in terms of through sports," Maha said. "That was the biggest thing that helped me connect with my classmates. The unifying aspect for me was sports, and it was largely basketball and NASCAR.

"For me, the biggest thing I like about NASCAR, is that everyone gets together and they create what is almost a community over a race weekend. It's an amazing display of enjoyment of a singular event and an amazing display of unity. People from different backgrounds, different demographics. It's everything that's great about America."

The charities represented by Maha's fellow award finalists all received \$25,000 from The NASCAR Foundation. Those finalists:

- Shannon Goldwater of Scottsdale, Arizona, the founder of Feeding Matters, an organization that strives to promote advances in both the diagnosis and treatment of pe-

diatric feeding disorders.

- Tammy Richardson of Las Vegas, representing the Nevada Childhood Cancer that provides programs and services to children with cancer and other life-threatening diseases. Richardson is a long-time active volunteer and committee member at the foundation's Camp Cartwheel.

- Two-time cancer survivor Chante Gonzalez Vido of Jamul, California, head counselor at a camp for young cancer patients that is operated by The Seany Foundation, which assists children

and their families battling cancer.

"Julian's work with autistic children serves as a heartwarming reminder that each of us can make a difference in the lives of others. The lengths that he has gone to improve the lives of children with autism are inspiring," said Mike Boyd, Nationwide's senior vice president of marketing. "We congratulate Julian on winning this year's Betty Jane France Humanitarian Award Presented by Nationwide and thank all of our finalists for their tireless dedication to helping children."

## Walter "Bud" Moore Passes Away NASCAR Hall of Famer, World War II Hero

DAYTONA BEACH, FL – Walter "Bud" Moore Jr., a decorated member of America's "Greatest Generation" who went on to win NASCAR championships as car owner and crew chief, died at the age of 92.

Moore, a Spartanburg, S.C., native who won the NASCAR premier series title in 1957 as crew chief for Buck Baker and car owner titles in 1962-63 with Joe Weatherly, had been the oldest living member of the NASCAR Hall of Fame. He was inducted in 2011.

After graduating from high school, Moore joined the military in 1943 at the age of 18 as a machine gunner, assigned to the 90th Infantry Division which landed on Utah Beach in France on D-Day, June 6, 1944. His unit was attached to General George W. Patton's "Third Army," which pushed to liberate Europe. In recognition of his heroism, Moore was decorated with five Purple Hearts and two Bronze Stars (the second with clusters).

Auto racing was a destination for many returning veterans. NASCAR was born in 1948 and Moore, as a South Carolinian who enjoyed fixing cars, would make the organization his life's work. Referring to himself as "a country mechanic who loved to make 'em run fast," Moore stood more than six feet tall and couldn't be missed in the garage – or in Victory Lane where his cars won during parts of four decades beginning in 1961. In all, Moore won 63 times as an owner.

Moore and Weatherly proved to be a virtually unstoppable combination. The duo won eight times in 1961 and 12 times during their back-to-back championship seasons. Weatherly died in early 1964 during a race at the old

Riverside (Calif.) International Raceway, ending what could have been a dynasty rivaling that of Petty Enterprises and other top teams of the era.

Moore's team would not win another title but came close with such top drivers as NASCAR Hall of Famer Dale Earnhardt and Bobby Allison, and NASCAR Hall of Fame nominees Buddy Baker and Ricky Rudd. Each managed to finish among the top 10 in the championship standings at least once..

Allison won the 1978 Daytona 500, a feat not previously accomplished by Moore or Allison.

Moore's final NASCAR premier series victory came in May 1993 at Sonoma Raceway.

Moore is survived by sons Daryl (wife Carol), Brent (wife Nancy) and Greg (fiancé Roberta), grandchildren: Melissa Moore Padgett (Tommy), Candace Moore Glover (Tommy), Benjamin Moore (Kristen), Thomas Moore, and Brittany Moore, along with seven great-grandchildren and three great-great grandchildren.

He is also survived by brothers, Ralph, William, and Richard Moore and sister, Ann Moore Elder. He was preceded in death by his wife of 64 years, Betty Clark Moore, and his brothers, Charles, Cecil and Donald Moore and sisters, Edith Moore Gregory and Helen Moore McKinney.

Services and arrangements will be announced at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to: Victory Junction, 4500 Adam's Way, Randleman, NC 27317; Wounded Warrior Project, 4899 Belfort Road, Suite 300; Jacksonville, FL or Hearing Charities of America, Hearing Aid Project, 1912 East Meyer Boulevard, Kansas City, MO 64132.

## Kyle Busch Wins 50th Annual Snowball Derby

PENSACOLA, FL - Even though in recent weeks there was a NASCAR Monster Energy Cup Series championship up for grabs, the 50th Annual Snowball Derby was near the top of Kyle Busch's wish list.

Busch poured over notes before arriving at Five Flags Speedway on Friday, fresh off the NASCAR

Banquet in Las Vegas. He hopped in the car for practice and immediately liked the piece he had.

A few small tweaks later, and a winning car was born, allowing the 2009 race winner to capitalize late and earn the coveted Tom Dawson Trophy.

"I didn't think we had it there for about 280 laps, and then that final 20 she came to life," Busch admitted to Speed51.com powered by JEGS.

Busch was not the dominant car at all throughout the course of the grueling event, but remained within striking distance. Bubba Pollard, who led the speed charts on numerous occasions during the week, led the most circuits - 155 in total - along with his Snowflake 100 challenger from the night before, Jeff Choquette, most of the way.

A long green flag run allowed Busch to reel in both experienced short track racers and eventually find his way by Pollard first and later Choquette with only 16 laps remaining.

"Just tried to persevere, save and work my way to those guys and finally be able to get my way around them," Busch explained. "I wasn't sure once I got there I'd have enough to be able to get by them, but they just kind of kept falling off and I just plateaued and kind of stayed."

Choquette and Pollard held on to round out the podium finishers, and recapped what the difference could have been in the closing laps.

"A little too loose in the corner and didn't have much control getting into the center," Choquette, a one-time Blizzard Series winner at the ½-mile, explained. "If I could get it settled down in the line that I wanted to do, which I could hit about fifty percent of the time, I could have good drive off."

"We freed it up there on this set

of tires to get ready for the last, and we just never got to make that short run at the end when we didn't get a caution," Pollard, the 2017 Blizzard Series champion, noted. "It's part of it, you know. We had a good racecar today. We'll try it again next year."

The biggest surprise to Pollard was that the conclusion did not play out like previous years, and a set of fresh tires were abnormally remaining in the pit area.

"It's crazy; you think you'd get the cautions, but it just shows you how good the racecars out here," Pollard complimented. "There's a lot of competition and good racers, so you don't see a lot of cautions."

Young Harrison Burton finished fourth and Maine's Cassius Clark rallied to complete the top five.

Fast qualifier Preston Peltier was a contender early and led laps, but was caught up in a multiple car wreck following the first round of pit stops.

Ty Majeski was running faster laps than leaders over the closing laps, but was caught two laps down when a different pit strategy backfired during a long green flag run over the first half of the race.

"Obviously it cost us a good finish," Majeski said. "I'm not sure where we would have ended up. I know I came through the field, saw Bubba and was catching him at the end."

"That's why they call it racing. Unfortunately, you never know how



**Kyle Busch kisses the snowball atop the Tom Dawson Trophy after winning the 50th Annual Snowball Derby at Five Flags Speedway. (Speed51.com photo)**

these deals are going to turn out. Got a bunch of cautions right away, decided to play our cards that way, and never got a caution after that."

Busch added his praise and respect for Super Late Model racing's finest.

"Fun to come out and race in these cars and have great competitors that ran me really clean all day long, so congrats to those guys," Busch remarked. "I hated being in that spot when (Erik) Jones beat me, but we had just enough here today in order to get it done. I'm real proud of my guys."

Although Busch has continued his winning ways at the premier level of American motorsport, he

had not visited the Derby as a driver since an intense battle to the finish with Jones in 2012. During that time his eyes have continued to be on Super Late Model racing.

The fact that he had to work hard and earn the victory the hard way against talented racers made it even sweeter.

"It wasn't just a short sprint and speed," Busch mentioned. "It was about handling, taking care of your tires, and managing your car. I think that's what means the most about this win."

Lastly, in his victory lane interview, Busch had a couple more important things to say regarding the

**(Continued Next Page)**

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Continued...

packed stands of fans and those that chose to tune in on Speed51 TV.

"Thank you for what you do to support short track racing. We need more of you. I know that this is a big race but don't forget they also have weekly races here at Five Flags Speedway. Thank you Tim Bryant, all the guys, and everybody here."

Preparations for the 51st Annual Snowball Derby are already underway. Race fans can find Snowball Derby information by visiting [www.snowballderby.com](http://www.snowballderby.com).

### Pollard Reminds Snowflake Field That It's Still His World

PENSACOLA, FL - All year long, Bubba Pollard read the articles, saw the videos and scrolled through pages of social media posts of how dominant a year Casey Roderick was having against Pro Late Model competition.

Roderick's 18 wins lit a fire under Pollard, and motivated him to show he still was the king of Deep South Late Model racing.

After a convincing win in Saturday's Allen Turner Hyundai Snowflake 100, Pollard showed the world that Five Flags Speedway is still his playground.

"To tell it like it is, we built this car because the 18 of Casey Roderick won every Pro race there was this year," Pollard told Speed51.com powered by JEGS. "We feel like we can compete with them, so we built this car. We have won the last two races we have run with it, so yeah; it's pretty good."

For much of the race, Jeff Choquette nipped at Pollard's rear bumper – and even got around the No. 26 machine for a portion of the race. However, when money time came late in the race, Pollard showed he was in complete control of the race, no matter what the running order was.

Through a run of restarts in the second half of the race, Choquette challenged briefly but Pollard always pulled away when the cars got up to speed. It was all part of the plan.

"I determine if I go inside or outside based on what the car behind



**Bubba Pollard waves the checkered flag in victory lane at Five Flags Speedway after winning the Snowflake 100 on Saturday night. (Speed51.com photo)**

me has done previous," Pollard explained. "I wanted to see what Choquette had, and I went to the outside. I could tell he was getting a little tight on restarts down on the bottom and he couldn't keep it down. I knew on the last couple of restarts, that I had to take the bottom. I knew he would get tight off two and wouldn't be able to get a run."

Choquette faded to fourth during the final run, allowing Spencer Davis and Anthony Cataldi to make late runs to the podium. Augie Grill rebounded from an early-race incident to finish fifth.

With a 'Flake win in his back pocket, Pollard has the chance to make racing history on Sunday. No driver has even swept a Snowball Derby weekend.

Friday afternoon, Pollard timed in second for the 50th Annual Snowball Derby and is one of the favorites to be in the mix Sunday afternoon. With the strong weekend in both divisions, confidence is

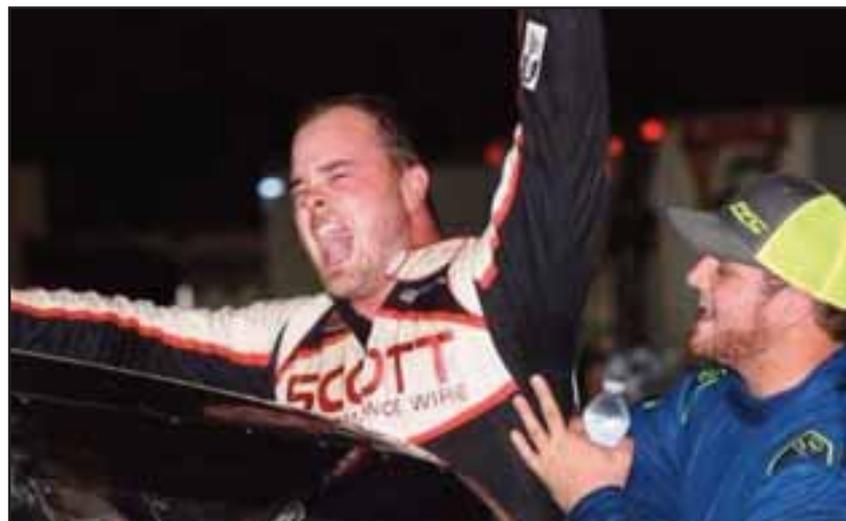
at an all-time high.

"It gives us a lot of confidence going in to tomorrow. We know these race cars are pretty much identical. Racing during the day versus at night is going to be a little tough. We will take some air pressure changes to put towards tomorrow afternoon."

Pollard has enjoyed this Snowball Derby weekend more than any other he has ever run. He has been seen lounging in the shade of the hauler and playing with his young daughter. He never practiced his Pro Late Model on Friday.

He is taking the successful weekend in stride and not getting tense about the possibilities of reaching racing immortality. Per the wheelman himself, it's all due to the rocket he straps in to.

"When you have good race cars, things tend to be a little easier for you," Pollard said. "The guys are confident, and I am confident. We have had a great weekend on both cars. It has gone smooth because



**D.J. VanderLey emerges from the car victorious after winning the Snowball Derby Pro Trucks feature at Five Flags Speedway. (Speed51.com photo)**

of how good our cars are."

One thing is clear. No matter how many, or few, asphalt races he runs. The Deep South is still Bubba's world. Everyone else is just living it.

### VanderLey Closes the Deal in Snowball Derby Pro Trucks

PENSACOLA, FL - D.J. VanderLey had not made a start inside the cockpit of a race car since the 2015 Snowball Derby. When the opportunity came up to drive a Pro Truck at the Snowball Derby, he made the most of it Saturday night at Five Flags Speedway.

The 2011 Snowball Derby runner-up inherited the lead after early-race leaders Cody Haskins and Jarrett Parker collided on Lap 32 and survived challenges from Logan Boyett and Andrew Johnson on a flurry of late-race restarts to pick up the Snowball Derby Pro Truck feature win.

"I was just thinking just finish it, just finish it," VanderLey told Speed51.com powered by JEGS, "We were coming to the white flag three or four times, and then caution, and then red, and then you'd just have to sit there and you think how do I outsmart these guys again on another restart. I pulled every trick I had and played over everything and I was about out at the end so I'm glad it's over with. That was a pretty good truck."

VanderLey started his return to Five Flags Speedway strong by going fastest in the lone practice session on the day. He started fifth in the feature and worked his way through lapped traffic before moving into third. He remained in the third spot until first and second-place drivers Cody Haskins and Jarrett Parker got together in Turn 2, ending both of their nights.

"I guess the 46 (Parker) ran out of talent. I don't know, my spotter said he drove in there over his head and bobbed off of us," Haskins said. "The whole race he was driving slapa- sideways and he was either gonna take one of us out or wad his own stuff up. We'll get it back together and come here the first race, and maybe try to win the championship."

Speed51.com was unable to reach Parker for comment.

VanderLey would take the lead after the incident and lead the rest of the way, though it was not easy. A flurry of red flags forced him to hold off several drivers, including two-time Snowball Derby Pro Truck

**(Continued Next Page)**

Continued...

winner Colt James and top-10 starter in tomorrow's Snowball Derby Logan Boyett. On the final restart, VanderLey got out in front and held off Andrew Johnson and Boyett to win in his first start in two years.

"I'm absolutely exhausted but it feels great," VanderLey said, "I haven't raced in two years or something like that, and I'm out of shape. That

was just awesome. Those guys there made me drive my butt off and that was everything that I had to give but it feels great to be back here. I have come close to winning a lot of big races here in a Pro Late Model and a Super and we always came so, so close, but we could just never close the deal. This for me is my biggest win here at Five Flags in my career."

## Grill Makes Snowball Derby History With Modified Victory

PENSACOLA, FL - Augie Grill is a two-time Snowball Derby champion. He is also a three-time and defending Snowflake 100 winner. On Friday night, he also became a Snowball Derby Modified winner, becoming the first driver to ever win a Super Late Model, Pro Late Model and Modified race in Snowball Derby history.

The Hayden, Alabama native started on the front row and led throughout the race to claim yet another trophy on Snowball Derby weekend.

"It was really good. I just kind of had to conserve there for the first thirty or forty laps," Grill told Speed51.com Powered by JEGS, "There at the end, the 46 (Doug Moff) was catching us there the last few laps, but I didn't figure he'd get to us, hats off to him. But this 112 was really good. I've just got to thank Robby White and John Howe for putting this thing together for us. Hopefully we can do many more of these."

Grill jumped out to a sizable lead early, but Doug Moff and Kyle Purvis caught up to Grill on a long run and put on a great three-car battle for the lead in the middle stages of the race. Moff was able to come home in second.

"We burned our stuff down a little early," Moff admitted. "My crew



**Augie Grill celebrates in victory lane after winning the Snowball Derby Modified race on Friday night at Five Flags Speedway. (Speed51.com photo)**

told me to save my tires but I budget my tires like I budget my money and I like to use it all up real quick. This car was upside down at Winchester a month ago, and I would've liked to win it, but if I finish second at Pensacola, it might as well be to Augie."

Meanwhile, the story was about Augie Grill making history and becoming a winner in the Modified race, Snowflake 100 and Snowball Derby.

"It's pretty cool to do that," Grill stated. "I don't know, I guess I'm on a plaque by myself."

He was then asked if he planned on running an Outlaw Stock during next year's Snowball Derby.

"I've been offered but I don't think I'll do that."

For now, history is made once again at the Snowball Derby. This time, it's Augie Grill's name going into the record books.

## Peltier Wins Pole, Nasse Survives Dramatic Derby Qualifying Night

PENSACOLA, FL - Friday at the Snowball Derby is called the most intense day of qualifying in short track racing, and it lived up to its billing this season at Five Flags Speedway (FL).

Going down to the last car, Stephen Nasse sat on the bubble with defending race champion Christian Eckes taking the track. Nasse had every reason to believe he would be forced to settle for his Southern Super Series provisional starting spot.

Instead, Eckes ran a 16.660-

second lap time, matching the lap posted by Nasse and Donnie Wilson earlier in the session. By virtue of being the first of the three drivers to turn his qualifying lap, Nasse kept the 30th and final lock-in spot for Sunday's 50th Annual Snowball Derby.

"It was definitely nerve-wracking. I was gritting my teeth," Nasse told Speed51.com powered by JEGS. "I could have sworn we were going to be out of it. Christian will normally lay down a pretty quick lap. He's had a good car all weekend, and we've been struggling on the speed side.

"We got really lucky there, but we've got a lot of work to do, and we can't shy away from that," Nasse added. "We're going to get to work tomorrow and going into Sunday's race."

At the top of the field, it was Preston Peltier taking the pole for Sunday, with a blistering lap time of 16.319 seconds – a lap so fast, it surprised Peltier himself.

"I didn't expect to be here. I thought it would be Bubba [Polard]," Peltier admitted.

"These guys just gave me a great car. This is the best piece I've ever strapped into. I'm really looking forward to Sunday, and we'll see what happens.

"It didn't feel fast at all. When it's like that, you know you have a good car."

While Eckes is guaranteed a provisional starting position in Sunday's race by virtue of winning

last season's race, he still faced bitter disappointment from not earning himself a better starting position in the race.

"It's definitely disappointing," Eckes said. "I made a mistake and it cost us. We have a good race car, I thought we were going to qualify about top-ten, top-fifteen. I think we have a strong enough race car to contend for the win on Sunday."

Eckes believes his performance in race trim still gives him a chance to win Sunday despite the qualifying effort.

"We worked on race trim a lot today and yesterday," Eckes said. "We have a really good race car in race trim, it's really consistent. We'll work on it a little bit more, contend on Sunday. It's not the spot we wanted, but still fortunate enough to be here."

Nasse finds himself on the other end of the spectrum. He finds himself once again placed near the rear of the field for the Snowball Derby, after transferring in from the Last Chance Qualifier in 2016. He also has been searching for stronger performance out of his car this weekend, but knows from last year's experience that gains can be made.

"I was hoping going into this weekend that I wouldn't put myself into the same position as I did last year," Nasse said. "Here we are, and I find myself there again. All I can do is overcome it. We proved last year we can come back and contend for a win, and I thought we had the best car at the end of that Derby. If we can do the same thing we did then, we'll be good again this weekend."

Peltier is happy with the pole, but hardly sentimental with the ultimate goal awaiting Sunday. He remains focused on the big picture, hesitant to celebrate going down as the pole-sitter for the 50th Snowball Derby.

"I don't get all caught up in the drama of things," Peltier said about the milestone. "I try to keep a level head. We've got to come here tomorrow and work on this thing, make sure we have a decent piece for Sunday."



## 2018 Schedule Unveiled For Pinty's Series

**D A Y T O N A** BEACH, FL - The NASCAR Pinty's Series will open at one of the preeminent road-course venues in North America, include the series' first championship points race in the United States, and will conclude at historic and refurbished Jukasa Motor Speedway in Ontario. The 2018 schedule, which was announced today, will feature some of the country's iconic tracks and will crown Canada's stock car champion over the course of 13 races from Nova Scotia to Alberta. The NASCAR Pinty's Series will

enter its 12th season and the 2018 calendar will host events five Canadian provinces, with nine oval track events and five road-course races.

"The NASCAR Pinty's Series continues to grow as new talent comes into the series and challenges some of the country's best stock car drivers," said Jim Cassidy, NASCAR senior vice president of racing operations.

"The 2018 schedule provides a strong platform for these competitors to showcase their driving and covers a number of high-profile events designed to further enhance the series."

One of those opportunities is the series' inclusion in the September showcase event at New Hampshire. The 100-lap race for the

NASCAR Pinty's Series will be on Saturday, Sept. 22, and will be part of a triple-header with the U.S.-based NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour and NASCAR K&N Pro Series East.

Jukasa, formerly known as Cayuga Speedway, returned to the NASCAR Pinty's Series schedule in 2017. The .625-mile paved oval will host two events in 2018: The season's second race on Saturday, June 16 and the finale on Saturday, Sept. 29.

The championship schedule once again kicks off with the traditional season-opening weekend at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park in Bowmanville, Ontario, on Victoria's Day Weekend (May 20). CTMP, the 2.459-mile road course that opened in 1961 and has hosted some of the world's top racing series over the years, will again include the NASCAR Pinty's Series

on Aug. 26 as part of the popular weekend event with the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series.

Other highlights of the 2018 schedule include:

- Two of the highest profile road course events will again highlight the season. The streets of Toronto will see the NASCAR Pinty's Series play a big part of the Honda Toronto weekend with its event on Saturday, July 14. And Circuit de Trois-Rivieres will bring the series to its technical Quebec street course on Sunday, Aug. 12.

- A trio of bullrings – Quebec's high-banked quarter-mile, Autodrome Chaudière, Nova Scotia's high-banked third-mile, Riverside International Speedway and the .4-mile Autodrome Saint-Eustache will test the driver's mettle.

The NASCAR Pinty's Series television broadcast schedule on TSN and RDS will be announced.

## 2018 Labor Day Weekend and Winchester 400 Dates Announced

**SALEM, IN** - Winchester Speedway owner Charlie Shaw has announced the 2018 dates for the very popular Labor Day Weekend World Stock Car Festival and the show no one wants to miss, the 47th Annual Winchester 400 Weekend. The Labor Day Weekend

World Stock Car Festival will take place on September 2nd and September 3rd. The 47th Annual Winchester 400 Weekend will take place on October 12th, 13th and 14th.

All four Champion Racing Association Powered by JEGS divisions will return to the famous High Banks of Winchester Speedway as part of the 2018 Labor Day Weekend World Stock Car Festival.

All four CRA Divisions will prac-

tice and qualify and there will be preliminary events for the JEGS/CRA All-Stars Tour Presented by Chevrolet Performance, Vore's Welding CRA Late Model Sportsman and Lawrence Towing CRA Street Stocks on Sunday, September 2nd.

The ARCA/CRA Super Series, Vore's Welding CRA Late Model Sportsman and Lawrence Towing CRA Street Stocks will all run feature events on Monday afternoon, September 3rd.

For 2018, the 47th Annual Winchester 400 Weekend has been moved a week later than events in recent years.

With the Monster Energy

NASCAR Cup Series October Charlotte Motor Speedway event moving to Sunday afternoon, Charlie Shaw decided to move the Winchester 400 Weekend back to its mid-October traditional date. With the change, Winchester 400 Weekend will not conflict with the ARCA Midwest Tour Oktoberfest event at LaCrosse Speedway and will be two weeks after the recent All American 400 date at Fairgrounds Speedway Nashville.

Additional track and event information can be found at [www.winchesterspeedway.com](http://www.winchesterspeedway.com).

More information on all four CRA Powered by JEGS divisions is available at [www.cra-racing.com](http://www.cra-racing.com).

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## New Events, Venues and Traditional Favorites Highlight 2018 WoO Craftsman Late Model Series Tour

CONCORD, NC - The 2018 World of Outlaws Craftsman® Late Model Series will celebrate the 30th anniversary of its inaugural season with 47 races in 18 states stretching from February to November, adding new venues and huge races to its solid foundation of exciting events.

In 1988, the inaugural season featured 17 races in 11 states. In 2004, the series was rekindled to push the sport, drivers and passion of the fans to a level unimaginable just 30 years ago. Now, February is just around the corner with six races in nine days to wave the green flag on this milestone season. For the fourth consecutive year, the season opens Feb. 9-10 with the Winter Freeze at Screven Motor Speedway in Sylvania, GA.

The Outlaws will then head to the DIRTcar Nationals at Volusia Speedway Park, where for the first time it will compete at the half-mile speedplant on four consecutive nights, Feb. 14-17, with more than \$150,000 up for grabs in addition to two nights of DIRTcar Late Model Feb. 12-13.

Several marquee events will return to the 2018 schedule, placing big paydays in nearly every month of the season together with several swings of \$10,000-to-win shows and new multi-day events.

One of those new events to the Outlaw schedule is the two-day Tennessee Tip-Off March 9-10 at Smoky Mountain Speedway, giving competitors a chance to win more than \$20,000 over two nights before heading north March 23-24 to Farmer City (IL) Raceway for the 11th annual Illini 100. The popular two-day event at the quarter-mile bullring in central Illinois features the always thrilling 25-lap Friday race followed on Saturday with the 75-lap, \$15,000-to-win main event.

The Outlaws will return in April to Whynot Speedway, and for the first time it's a two-day showdown with two 50-lap features paying \$10,000-to-win each night for \$20,000 at stake in this new anchor event April 20-21.

After jam-packed crowd watched the Outlaws last season at

Cherokee Speedway, the series returns there Friday, May 4, before heading Saturday, May 5, to Georgia for the highly anticipated Billy Clanton Classic at Senoia (GA) Raceway. The new First in Flight 100 weekend will be May 11-12 at Fayetteville (NC) Motor Speedway, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary season. A Friday night of qualifying will lead to the 100-lap finale on Saturday paying \$25,000 to the winner and \$2,000 to start.

May will conclude in Ohio with the new two-day Outlaw Invasion May 18-19 at high-banked Atomic Speedway. The Invasion will feature two \$10,000-to-win events for \$20,000 on the line to winners.

A big Tennessee weekend kicks off June with \$10,000-to-win events Friday, June 1 at 411 Speedway followed Saturday with another \$10,000-to-win feature at storied Volunteer Speedway. Then a three-race swing from Pennsylvania's McKean County Raceway to New York's Ransomville Speedway to Ohio's Wayne County Speedway sets the stage for the 12th annual Firecracker 100, a three-day destination event June 21-22-23 with thrilling on-track action and a \$30,000-to-win finale at Lernerville Speedway.

The summer begins to really heat up when the Outlaws battle the stars of the DIRTcar Summer Nationals tour in back-to-back \$10,000-to-win fests Friday, June 29, at Terre Haute (IN) Action Track and Saturday, June 30, at Federated Auto Parts Raceway at I-55.

The Outlaws set their sites on the Midwest in July, beginning Friday, July 6, at Farley (IA) Speedway and Saturday, July 7, at Deer Creek Speedway before heading out to their westernmost point of the year Tuesday, July 10, under the watchful eyes of Mt. Rushmore at Black Hills Speedway. The swing through the upper Midwest wraps up on Friday, July 13, at the always-thrilling River Cities Speedway, and on Saturday, July 14, at Ogilvie (MN) Speedway.

A new stop on Tuesday, July 24, at Davenport (IA) Speedway leads into the fan-favorite Prairie Dirt Classic July 27-28 at Fairbury (IL) American Legion Speedway. This event continues to grow not just by the level of competition on the track

but also by the party in the campgrounds. In 2017, the PDC nearly tripled the size of the all-American city as fans traveled from all over to watch more than 60 of the best Dirt Late Model drivers chase a huge payday. Long-time track promoter Matt Curl has recently come aboard as the World of Outlaws Craftsman Late Model Series Director. In this new role, Curl extends his commitment to Late Model racing.

Wisconsin becomes a focal point for one of the richest weeks of the season as more than \$250,000 is up for grabs when the Outlaws head north to the Plymouth Dirt Track on Monday, July 30, and Shawano Speedway on Tuesday, July 31, before heading to western side of the Dairy State for the three-day, \$50,000-to-win USA Nationals at Cedar Lake Speedway Aug. 2-3-4 in New Richmond.

The Outlaws return east for four consecutive nights Aug. 16 through Aug. 19 beginning at Georgetown (DE) Speedway and continuing Friday to Williams Grove Speedway, where the inaugural World of Outlaws Craftsman Late Model Series event was run in 1988. The series picks up on Saturday at Port Royal (PA) Speedway and wraps up the swing Sunday with the 2017 promoters of the year at Eriez Speed-

way.

The series will remain in the northeast in September with \$10,000-to-win events on Friday, Sept. 21 at Outlaw Speedway, followed on Saturday, Sept. 22, by a return to Selinsgrove (PA) Speedway, leading into October and the \$25,000-to-win Chi-Town Showdown Oct. 12-13 at The Dirt Oval @ Route 66.

All of those events set the stage for the championship-crowning World of Outlaws World Finals Nov. 1-2-3 at The Dirt Track at Charlotte. #AllDirtRoads once again lead to the only event on the planet featuring the sport's three premier series: the World of Outlaws Craftsman Sprint Car Series, the World of Outlaws Craftsman Late Model Series, and the Super DIRTcar Series Big-Block Modifieds. Qualifying on Thursday builds to Friday's and Saturday's 50-lap, \$12,000-to-win features. In 2017 the World of Outlaws World Finals featured a standing-room-only crowd with more than 70 Super Late Models in the field and nearly 200 total cars in the pits among the three divisions.

Tickets are on sale now for the DIRTcar Nationals at Volusia Speedway Park. Stay tuned to WoOLMS.com, Facebook, and Twitter for more information and tickets for other events.

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## New Super DIRTcar Series Dates and Changes Strengthens Dirt Racing in the Northeast

CONCORD, NC - The Super DIRTcar Series is excited to announce its 2018 schedule along with the DIRTcar 358 Modifieds, Sportsman Modifieds and Pro Stocks. A total of 27 tracks will see action in 2018 from February

through November across the four DIRTcar Racing divisions.

Super DIRTcar Series: The premier dirt racing series in the Northeast, the Super DIRTcar Series, will make its annual pilgrimage to DIRTcar Nationals at Volusia Speedway Park to celebrate the Speedway's 50th year of racing and unofficially kick off the season with a non-points event. The Super DIRTcar Series will benefit from the new expanded event schedule with the Big-Block Modifieds in action for five straight nights from Tuesday to Saturday, Feb. 13-17.

The quest for the Super DIRTcar Series championship will officially begin at Fulton Speedway on April 28 as the Big-Block Modifieds return to action at the High Bank Holdup. The Series heads to New Jersey on Wednesday, May 16 for a date at Bridgeport Speedway. Additional highlights on the Super DIRTcar Series schedule include a second date for Brewerton (NY) Speedway, now June 15 and Sept. 14. Brett Hearn's BIG Show 9 at Albany-Saratoga Speedway on June 26 is a can't miss event.

The end of July Weedsport Speedway hosts a monster back-to-back event when the Super DIRTcar Series visits the .337-mile oval for the Hall of Fame 100 on Saturday, July 28. The following night the World of Outlaws Craftsman® Sprint Car Series take center stage. Last year at the Hall of Fame 100, Stewart Friesen narrowly edged out Tim McCreddie at the finish line to take home the trophy, making it one of the most exciting finishes of the season.

"We're really excited to do a back-to-back at the end of July," said Weedsport Speedway Promoter Jimmy Phelps. "We tried to do this event in the spring and the fall the past couple of years, but the weather killed us; we're just really excited to get a mid-Summer date."

Coming off a big weekend at Weedsport, the Series will visit Fonda Speedway on August 1 for the fourth annual Jack Johnson Tribute race.

One change to Series schedule that will benefit race fans will be when Mr. DIRT Track USA switches from a Thursday night to Saturday, Sept. 1 at Lebanon Valley Speedway.

This year will mark the 47th annual NAPA Auto Parts Super DIRT Week. Race fans all agree, last year's NAPA Super DIRT Week was one of the greatest events in recent history. A last-lap pass for the win brought the near capacity crowd to their feet wanting more.

All Dirt Roads will once again lead to Charlotte for the crowning of the 2018 Super DIRTcar Series champion on Thurs-Sat., Nov. 1-3 with the running of the Textron Off Road World Finals.

In addition to the release of the 2018 schedule, DIRTcar Racing is also announcing a change to the DIRTcar Hometrack program. Hometrack points will no longer be collected for the Big-Block Modifieds starting in 2018. Traditionally, in order to compete for the Super DIRTcar Series championship, drivers needed the bonus points they were able to collect from the DIRTcar Hometrack program. Without these points, teams outside of the Central New York hotbed, challenged by the lack of proximity to these weekly tracks, now have a chance to compete for the championship.

"After working with the teams and track promoters, we are confident this will bring positive change to the sport," said Super DIRTcar Series Director, Mike Perrotte. "One of the many benefits we see with this change is it will alleviate travel costs on teams from having to travel hundreds of miles to a DIRTcar-sanctioned track to collect Hometrack points."

Year-long discussions were finalized at the Northeast Promoter Meetings in November when DIRTcar Racing officials and track promoters sat down to discuss the change. At the conclusion of the meeting everyone was in agreement that the elimination of Hometrack points will benefit fans, drivers, teams, and tracks all over

the northeast.

Big-Block Modified teams will have the opportunity to try their hand at new tracks and challenge themselves with less familiar territory, while weekly racers can maintain their hometrack advantage against new invaders.

"A change to the [DIRTcar] Hometrack program will open up the door to new faces giving them the opportunity compete at their weekly tracks," added Jimmy Phelps. "This change will also allow for a few more weekend shows at weekly tracks that traditionally ran on a week night, you will also see new faces popping into various weekly events."

358 Modifieds: The 358 Modified schedule is split into two regions, North and South. The 2018 season kicks off with a Mother's Day special on Sunday, May 13 at Utica-Rome Speedway. The 358 Modifieds will visit Mohawk International Raceway (Aug. 9), Fonda Speedway (Sept. 21), and a host of other great tracks before the combo events begin. From Oct. 2 to 13, the 358 Modifieds will run five events at five separate tracks beginning with Utica-Rome Speedway and moving onto Weedsport Speedway, Brewerton Speedway and Oswego Speedway before closing out the season with the Loud & Dirty Northeast Fall Nationals at Brockville Speedway.

Sportsman Modifieds: For the second year in a row, the Sportsman Modifieds will once again have a regionalized schedule with Cen-

tral, North and West regions. Each region will have six races spanning from late April to September. Points from every race will tally towards the Fall Championship at Brockville Ontario Speedway on Friday, Oct. 12 before drivers head south to Charlotte for a non-points event in the popular OneDirt World Short Track Championship.

"Super DIRT Week and The OneDirt World Short Track Championship in Charlotte are obviously two of the best events in short track racing nationally, and the Sportsman Modifieds are a big part of each," said DIRTcar Racing Northeast Sportsman Director Cory Reed. "The Outlaw 200 at Fulton drew an astounding 111 entries this year, proving it's high on the list of big ones for our competitors."

Pro Stocks: The Pro Stocks will have a 14-race skid for the 2018 season. The season will begin on Sunday, April 29 at Utica-Rome Speedway and grind throughout the summer before coming to a close in late October. A new exciting addition to the Pro Stock schedule: they will join the Sportsman Modifieds at the OneDirt World Short Track Championship at The Dirt Track at Charlotte Motor Speedway to close out their season with a non-points event from Oct. 25-27.

Visit SuperDIRTcarSeries.com or DIRTcarRacing.com to view the full schedules for the Super DIRTcar Series, DIRTcar 358 Modifieds, DIRTcar Sportsman Modifieds and DIRTcar Pro Stocks.

## USLMS SE Region Releases 2018 Working Schedule

CARNESVILLE, GA - Officials of the ULTIMATE Super Late Model Series SE Region today released a "working schedule" for the 2018 season which contains 26 total dates. 21 of the dates are booked with 5 additional dates set as "to be announced or TBA". "We anticipate filling the dates as the tracks we are working with complete their preparations for their 2018 season. We would still be open to adding one or two more dates but that would be about it. Anyone that is interested in a date should contact me as soon as possible." Said ULTIMATE SE Director Kelley Carlton.

The Series is again privileged to

return to the majority of the facilities on the 2017 schedule. The 2018 schedule is again highlighted by 2 \$20,000 to win one-day events at Virginia Motor Speedway in Jamaica, Virginia along with a \$10,000 one-day event at Volunteer Speedway in Bulls Gap, Tennessee. The Series is also proud to be working with the Carolina Clash Series on a pair of co-sanctioned events at Carolina Speedway in Gastonia, North Carolina and Modoc Raceway in Modoc, South Carolina.

Check out the official website for the ULTIMATE Super Late Model Series at [www.ultimatesupers.com](http://www.ultimatesupers.com), and continue to follow us on Facebook at ULTIMATE Super Late Model Series and on Twitter @ULTIMATESupers to get up to the minute news and details as they become available.

## Daytona Int'l Speedway

DAYTONA BEACH, FL - Dale Earnhardt Jr. is indeed returning to the DAYTONA 500, although in a different role than the previous 20 Speedweeks at Daytona International Speedway. Earnhardt, who has retired from Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series competition, will serve as the Grand Marshal for the 60th running of

"The Great American

Race" on Feb. 18, 2018. Earnhardt, who will deliver the famous "Drivers, start your engines" command, won a total of 17 races at the "World Center of Racing" during his career from 1998-2017. The only drivers to equal or surpass in DIS victories are his father Dale Earnhardt (34), Tony Stewart (19) and Bobby Allison (17).

In addition to his DAYTONA 500 victories in 2004 and 2014, in other Monster Energy Series competition at DIS Earnhardt won both the Coke Zero 400 Powered By Coca-Cola and the Advance Auto Parts Clash twice and captured Can-Am Duel victories five times. He also won the PowerShares QQQ 300 and the Coca-Cola Firecracker 250 – both NASCAR XFINITY Series events – three times apiece.

Earnhardt capped his career at Daytona in style this season, qualifying second for the DAYTONA 500 and winning the pole for the Coke Zero 400.

Earnhardt joins a star-studded alumni of DAYTONA 500 Grand Marshals. That list includes luminaries from the entertainment field such as actors Matthew McConaughey and Owen Wilson; politicians such as President George W. Bush; and, of course, past DAYTONA 500 champions Junior Johnson and Richard Petty.

"Talk about a perfect fit – on the historic 60th running of the DAYTONA 500, we will have a man responsible for so much of our history serving as the Grand Marshal," said Daytona International Speedway President Chip Wile. "He has meant so much to our facility, to NASCAR and all race fans through the years. It's an honor to have him back in this capacity for the 2018 DAYTONA 500."

"I was humbled when asked to be the Grand Marshal of next season's DAYTONA 500," Earnhardt

Jr. said. "The race has so much history and being a two-time winner of the event is something I am extremely proud of."

Tickets for the 60th annual DAYTONA 500 and other Daytona International Speedway events can be purchased online at [www.daytonainternationalspeedway.com](http://www.daytonainternationalspeedway.com) or by calling 1-800-PITSHOP.

Fans can stay connected with Daytona International Speedway on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube and Snapchat, and by downloading Daytona International Speedway's mobile app, for the latest news throughout the year.

## Texas Motor Speedway

FORT WORTH, TX - Texas Motor Speedway opened the holiday season in grand fashion Monday evening with nearly \$400,000 being distributed to North Texas children's organizations during the Speedway Children's Charities-Texas Chapter Grant Ceremony and Tree Lighting held on The Speedway Club Circle.

The annual outdoor public event also was highlighted by the lighting of one of the state's largest living Christmas trees, a holiday-themed fireworks show and distribution of bicycles to 100 less fortunate children.

The biggest gift under the 59-foot Douglas fir tree was a Founder's Grant for \$125,000 that was presented to the YMCA Collin County Adventure Camp. The grant will be used to build a handicap-accessible Alpine Tower with integrated awnings that will provide a high-adventure activity for children of all abilities.

"The YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas and Collin County Adventure Camp are excited to have the opportunity to partner with Texas Motor Speedway's Speedway Children's Charities in building the Alpine Tower," YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas President and CEO Curt Hazelbaker said. "The unique design of the tower will provide a challenging activity for all of our guests.

The YMCA Collin County Adventure Camp provides the opportunity for children and young adults to learn, grow and develop their teamwork and leadership skills all while experiencing the beauty of the outdoors. Activities include fishing, canoeing, zip lining, archery, shooting range, hiking and rock climbing.

Since opening in 2006, the camp has expanded its programs and currently offers summer camp for children, outdoor education for

schools and group retreats for organizations of all sizes.

In addition to YMCA Collin County Adventure Camp's Founder's Grant, those grants of \$25,000 or more were awarded to:

- A Wish With Wings (\$55,000) - The Silver Dollar at the Ranch Pediatric Grant will be used to grant wishes to children with cancer such as sending them on a trip to Disney World.

- Mary Crowley Cancer Research Center (\$44,459) - The Silver Dollar at the Ranch Pediatric Grant will be used to further their research for alternative treatments for pediatric cancer.

- Manegait Therapeutic Horsemanship (\$30,000) - The Silver Dollar at the Ranch Pediatric Grant will be used to fund specialized therapy sessions for children being treated for cancer.

- Denton Kiwanis Children's Clinic (\$25,000) - The Partner Grant will provide medical and dental treatment as well as prescriptions for children not covered by health plans.

- Food for the Soul (\$25,000) - The Partner Grant will provide backpacks to children in need that will be filled with snacks and week-end meals for the entire academic year.

- Texas Scottish Rite Hospital (\$25,000) - The Partner Grant will underwrite the cost of bracing shoes used in the treatment of infants and young children.

The other organizations receiving grants were Camp iHope (\$11,000), NASCAR Ride of a Lifetime (\$10,675), Health Services of North Texas (\$10,000), Journey to Dream (\$8,900), Texas Motor Speedway's Speeding To Read (\$7,792), Special Olympics Texas (\$7,000), Cowtown C.A.L.F. (\$5,384) and the Petty Family Foundation (\$4,599).

## Phoenix Raceway

PHOENIX, AZ - Phoenix Raceway will celebrate the 25th anniversary of Mario Andretti's final career win with a special reunion weekend April 6-7, 2018 for the Verizon IndyCar Series Phoenix Grand Prix.

As the stars of IndyCar take over the track in Saturday night's Phoenix Grand Prix, the weekend will be filled with events celebrating Andretti as one of racing's most iconic and renowned racing legends, as well as Phoenix Raceway's rich open-wheel history. The event will be highlighted by a reunion

of the drivers who participated in the 1993 IndyCar race that culminated in Andretti's last open-wheel victory, while racing for the legendary Newman/Haas Racing team. Fans can interact with legends of the sport such as Bobby Rahal, Lyn St. James, and Arie Luydendyk Sr. in a panel discussion and autograph session.

"There's no more important name in motorsports than Mario Andretti," said Phoenix Raceway President Bryan R. Sperber. "He is also a cultural icon and his name resonates around the world with fans and non-fans alike. To be in a position to host the anniversary celebration of his final open-wheel victory at Phoenix Raceway is truly special. I can't wait to welcome back the drivers and race cars that created history here 25 years ago."

A very special win for Andretti, the 1993 race at Phoenix marked his 111th and final career victory and his fourth at Phoenix during his career. At 53 years, one month and seven days old, he became the oldest recorded IndyCar winner on a traditional race course, as well as the first driver to win races in four different decades. He also became the only driver to win an automobile race in five-consecutive decades. Andretti still holds IndyCar records for most starts (407), most pole positions earned (67), most laps led (7,595) and most career top-three finishes (144). Phoenix Raceway will celebrate his remarkable accomplishments through special merchandise, trading cards, a tribute panel and special commemorative items for the fans.

In recognition of a long racing and automotive tradition in Arizona, a car corral will be featured on the DC Solar Power Pavilion, displaying historic cars. In a continuing partnership with Classic Racing Times, race cars from the 1993 IndyCar field will also be at the track for fans to enjoy the unique style and design of the IndyCar chassis during the 1990s, some of the sleekest and fastest ever produced.

Tickets to all events throughout the special "reunion" weekend at Phoenix Raceway will be available online at [PhoenixRaceway.com](http://PhoenixRaceway.com), by phone at 1-866-408-RACE (7223) or in person at the Phoenix Raceway ticket office.



## NASCAR Hall of Famer Jack Ingram Seriously Injured in Car Accident

NASCAR Hall of Famer Jack Ingram was seriously injured in a car accident in his hometown on Dec. 3.

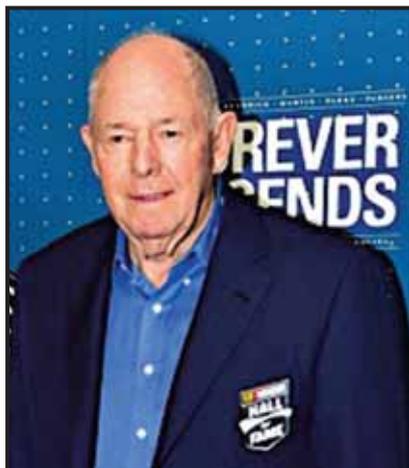
Ingram's family indicated Monday morning that the former driver, a multiple-time champion in what is now the NASCAR XFINITY Series, was receiving treatment in

the intensive care unit at Mission Hospital near his Asheville, North Carolina home.

"We are currently by his side, managing his care with his clinicians and will decide next steps," a family statement read. "We remain hopeful and positive, and appreciate all thoughts and prayers. We will provide updates as information becomes available."

According to an accident report filed by the Asheville Police Department, the 2002 Chevrolet driven by Ingram collided with a 1999 Ford pick-up driven by a 36-year-old man from nearby Henderson, North Carolina. Ingram's vehicle was struck in the driver's side door, according to the report.

The report stated that Ingram was transported to Mission Hospital with unknown injuries. One of



Jack Ingram at the 2017 Forever Legends Ceremony. (JOHN HARRELLSON/NKP photo)

two passengers in Ingram's car was also transported to the hospital with complaints of pain in his right arm, the report said. No injuries were listed for the driver of the other vehicle, according to police.

According to the report, the accident occurred within a tenth of a mile from the former site of Asheville Motor Speedway, where Ingram was a local legend. The 1/3-mile paved oval, which ended weekly racing after the 1999 season, has been preserved as a recreation area known as Carrier Park.

Ingram won the championship in what is now known as the

NASCAR XFINITY Series in 1982 and 1985. He also won three titles and scores of races in the Late Model Sportsman division, the precursor to the NASCAR Whelen All-American Series.

Ingram was inducted into the NASCAR Hall of Fame's 2014 class. He earned the nickname "Iron Man" both for his career's longevity and his ability to successfully compete in several events a week. By his count, Ingram scored 317 points-paying victories in NASCAR competition.

### Stafford Motor Speedway

STAFFORD SPRINGS, CT - Stafford Motor Speedway 2018 season ticket packages are available and time is running out to take advantage of the early buy discount on Paddock Passes, General Admission, Reserved Seat, and Kids Fast Pass tickets. All season ticket packages offer a great deal of savings versus purchasing a ticket at the main entrance for each of the 22 scheduled race events and the savings are the biggest if purchased before December 15th.

The 2018 Season Paddock Pass offers a 49% savings for those with a valid 2018 NASCAR License and 55% savings for those who do not have a NASCAR License and is available for \$420 if purchased on or before December 15th. After December 15th, the Paddock Pass increases to \$470. In 2017 race teams saved over \$440 per season pass. The Sea-

son Paddock Pass allows access to the paddock area as well as the general admission seating grandstands. A Paddock Pass with reserved seat upgrade is available for an additional \$50.

General Admission Season Tickets are priced at \$300 if purchased on or before December 15th which is a savings of 43% versus buying each week at the gate. After December 15th, the General Admission ticket increases to \$320. Reserved Seat Season Tickets purchased on or before December 15th are priced at \$350, which is a savings of 38%. After December 15th, the Reserved Seat Season Ticket increases to \$380. The Kids Fast Pass option for kids age 6 to 14 is priced at \$60 before December 15th, a 45% savings. After December 15th, the Kids Fast Pass increases to \$70. All season ticket prices include 10% CT Admission Tax.

Stafford Speedway will kick off its 2018 NASCAR Whelen All-American Series season with the 47th Annual NAPA Auto Parts Spring Sizzler on April 28 & 29. Stafford will showcase five NWAAS divisions weekly, SK Modified®, Late Model, SK Light, Limited Late Model and Street Stock (formerly known as DARE Stock). The upcoming season will offer a variety of touring events joining the weekly divisions. Stay tuned to Stafford-speedway.com and social media for continuously updated information.

# INDY CIRCLE TRACK EXPO 2018

## Swap Meet - Trade Show

**Date:**  
January 27, 2018 at 8:00 am

**Location:**  
Indiana State Fairgrounds  
Indianapolis, Indiana

**Buy, Sell & Trade**  
Collectables, Tools, Spare Parts, Race Cars, Vintage Parts & Safety Equip.

**Champions Pavilion**  
Nearby Lodging  
Parking just \$5

Sprint Cars - Modifieds - Midgets - Vintage - Street Stocks  
Karts - Mini-Sprints - Silver Crown  
Indy Motorsports Memorabilia

**GENERAL ADMISSION: \$10**  
Children Under 12: Free