



FEBRUARY 26, 2018

# FastTrack

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## Harvick Holds Class in Winning at AMS



# Welcome Camaro... Cup Racing is the Future

The Camaro ZL1 helped Chevrolet address two glaring problems in the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series for the upcoming season. Not only will the iconic muscle car revive fond memories for car enthusiasts and gearheads alike, it's helped the car company keep pace on the

racetrack with surging Toyota.

A year after newly redesigned Toyota Camrys dominated the 2017 season, Chevrolet responded by parking its SS model and bringing one of its most-popular models to a sport that's still driven by the notion that winning on Sunday leads to sales on Monday.

Chevrolet officials announced last August it was taking its SS model out of the garage area after the 2017 season. The SS originally was manufactured in Australia and had become Chevy's go-to car for NASCAR's top tier since 2013, winning 71 races and taking Jimmie Johnson to championships in 2013 and 2016.

The Camaro was first introduced in 1967 and is considered one of the most popular muscle cars in the company's history.

Years of planning and development led to one of the most-notable debuts with Alex Bowman's pole position and Austin Dillon's victory at the season-opening Daytona 500. It was an immediate reward for a car company that desperately needed to change its approach. Gone was the family sedan, replaced by a sporty, sexy car.

"Chevrolet, Camaro and ZL1 are all synonymous with winning, both on and off the track," said Mark Reuss, executive vice president of GM Global Product Development. "We are thrilled to run Camaro in NASCAR next year, with the time-honored and track-tested ZL1 badge, and we're just as excited for our drivers, teams, fans and customers."

While fans expected a switch, the Camaro was a welcomed surprise by many.

"There was talk about Malibu and Impala and all these others," said Jim Campbell, Chevrolet's

vice president for performance vehicles and motorsports. "It was the Camaro ZL-1.

With two wins in the first 17 races, Toyota stumbled out of the starting block a year ago with its new-look Camry. By midseason, however, teams, particularly Furniture Row Racing and Joe Gibbs Racing, figured things out and finished with 14 trips to Victory Lane in the final 19 races.



**DON COBLE**

Martin Truex Jr. drove the Camry to a series-best eight victories and the series championship, while Toyota celebrated the manufacturer's title.

"You always look to strive to be better," JGR driver Kyle Busch said.

Oddly enough, Chevy won at Daytona and Kevin Harvick drove a Ford to a victory last Sunday at Atlanta. Even more curious is the fact Toyota has only combined to lead 81 of 532 laps in the first two races.

With winless Chase Elliott carrying the bowtie banner with a fifth-place finish in the championship last season, Chevrolet never got completely up to speed.

Elliott tested the new car earlier this month at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway. And like most, he was impressed.

"The car looks great," Elliott said. "I don't know from a manufacturer standpoint, from the public eyes standpoint, I don't know how you could not identify the Camaro with the Camaro on the street. It looks the same. I think that is something to be very proud of from Chevrolet."

While Toyota and Chevrolet have overhauled its NASCAR package, Ford decided to stick with its Fusion model for 2018. Driver Brad Keselowski was concerned about Toyota's makeover a year ago, and he's fearful Chevrolet will push Ford further down the speed charts.

"When that car rolled out at Daytona, and I think we all got to see it for the first time, I think there was two reactions," Keselowski said. "One, we couldn't believe NASCAR approved it; and two, we were impressed by the design team over there.

"As to what will happen for 2018, you know, I don't know. I would assume that Chevrolet will be allowed



**Chase Elliott's pit crew goes to work on their #9 Chevrolet Camaro in Daytona's pits. (DAVID GRIFFIN photo)**

to design a car the same way that Toyota was for this one, but Ford doesn't have any current plans for that. If that's the case, we're going to take a drubbing [this] year, so we'll have to see."

With the Camaro at the Cup Series level, Ford likely will get more pressure to turn to its legendary muscle car – the Mustang. But for now, the company isn't giving any hints.

"This is racing, and we are always working on actions to improve performance and that includes engine, body, aero, everything on the car," said Mark Rushbrook, global director of Ford Performance Motorsports. "We will make an an-

ouncement on any future body actions when we are ready."

While to sport waits for the Camaro-Mustang rival to be reborn, Dillon likes what he sees from his new ride.

"It's an awesome-looking race car, and as far as the body goes, I hope we gain some of the speed we were missing last year," Dillon said. "This catches us up and puts us in a better position to be able to compete. As far as the wind tunnel goes, there are definitely differences between the SS and the ZL1."

And in the process, Chevrolet also is counting on seeing increased numbers in sales.

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ON THE COVER:

DAVID GRIFFIN

# Westward Ho!

After trips to Daytona and Atlanta, the top three series of NASCAR head west for three exciting weeks of action. The Monster Energy Cup (MECS), XFINITY, and Camping World Truck Series travel to Las Vegas, Phoenix, and Fontana, California in the next three weeks to provide a huge kick-off for NASCAR racing

on the West Coast.

All three divisions will race at Las Vegas Motor Speedway this week, the first of two trips to the Nevada track on the 2018 schedule. All three series will return in September and will be the first races of the playoffs for each division.

The XFINITY Series will join the Monster Energy Cup Series in Phoenix and Fontana for the final two weeks of the western swing. After Las Vegas, the Camping World Truck Series will have two weeks off before racing at Martinsville on March 24.

So, two weeks into the nearly ten month NASCAR season, what are key storylines thus far in 2018.

Competition in all three divisions appears to be at a high level. Even though two veterans, Johnny Sauter and Matt Crafton, highlight the Camping World Truck Series, a talented group of returning and new young drivers promises to challenge the veterans each race. With the occasional visit from a Monster Energy or XFINITY driver competing in the Series, look for a spirited season in the CWTS. Johnny Sauter (Daytona) and Brett Moffitt (Atlanta) have scored victories and locked in their playoff positions.

The XFINITY Series will have the usual mix of veteran and young, up-and-coming drivers in 2018. With a large group of MECS drivers competing in the majority of the races, look for the battle to secure a playoff spot very competitive among the XFINITY regulars. Tyler Reddick scored his first victory for JR Motorsports at Daytona, while Kevin Harvick dominated at Atlanta. Expect the majority of the race trophies to go home with a MECS driver in the XFINITY Series, but the talented group of "young guns" will keep the veterans on their toes this season.

Want to talk about competition,

let's talk Monster Energy Cup Series. In case you haven't heard, Dale Earnhardt Jr. will not be competing in the Cup Series in 2018. Neither will Tony Stewart, Jeff Gordon, Carl Edwards, or Matt Kenseth. However, the talent pool is still very full. In fact, there may be more teams winning this season than recent years. The veteran group of Kevin Harvick, Kyle and Kurt Busch, Brad Keselowski, Joey Logano, Denny Hamlin, and defending MECS Champion Martin Truex Jr. will face stiff competition from a maturing group of young drivers. Kyle Larson heads that group with Chase Elliott, Daniel Suarez, Eric Jones, Ryan Blaney, Austin Dillon, and Chris Buescher battling for race wins. Add to these drivers Alex Bowman, Darrell Wallace Jr., and William Byron to assemble a very competitive group of drivers and teams to challenge for stage and race wins each week.

While the "on track" racing will be competitive, the race on pit road may decide more than one event this season. NASCAR has changed the "over-the-wall" crew members to five from six last season. Plus, new rules with respect to the air guns used to change tires will, hopefully, even the competition on pit stops.

Of course, the inspection process has, and no doubt will continue to be, a major topic of discussion each week. Already in the first two weeks of the season, NASCAR has "thrown out" a crew chief and two car chiefs for inspection infractions. And, it wouldn't surprise me if there are more prominent crew members in each of the three major NASCAR divisions getting some "weekends off" during the year.

The car count in each major division will also be interesting to follow in the next three weeks. The MECS only started 36 cars at Atlanta (out of a possible 40), and the series must be concerned about the dwindling number of teams. The next three weeks should give a clearer indication as to the seriousness of this issue. While Daytona and Atlanta had a sufficient

number of cars in the XFINITY and truck in the CWTS, money and travel issues could be paramount for the west coast trip.

Another concern will be the attendance at the three west coast races. While Daytona was a sellout for the 500, Atlanta did not appear to have a traffic problem either Saturday or Sunday. I thought the doubleheader with the XFINITY and CWTS would produce a large crowd at Atlanta, but I'm sure pre-race expectations were not met. Weather was an issue on Sunday; however, the first "regular" race of the 2018 season for the MECS usually is a huge attraction in the Southeast. I guess the days of full grandstands are a thing of the past.

Las Vegas and Phoenix usually draw well for any NASCAR event, with Fontana sporting less than full stands for most of their recent races. Hopefully, the birth of a new season and the first major NASCAR races out west in 2018 will find race fans flock to these three races. All three are great tracks that provide very competitive racing.

Along with the attendance numbers, the television viewer numbers will be interesting to follow in the next three weeks. After a "down" Daytona 500 viewership number, here's hoping the trend doesn't continue out west. Sponsorship dollars are tough to attract; even tougher if the numbers don't reflect a positive viewership.

Heading west, who could ask for better media storylines? The "3 car" wins with Austin Dillon at Daytona twenty years after Dale Earnhardt won his only 500. Follow that with an emotional victory by Kevin Harvick at Atlanta. Harvick won at Atlanta seventeen years ago in his second race in the legendary "3" car. On his victory lap, Harvick dis-

played three fingers outside his driver window to honor Earnhardt. Last Sunday, Harvick again honored Earnhardt with the "3" salute, this time from his #4 car. The ties to history in our sport have certainly been obvious in the first two cup races. Could a rookie driving the "43" car provide yet another history memory on the west coast tour?

Traditionally, I make my annual championship predictions prior to the first race. I may be a couple weeks late this year, but here goes. I remind you that my predictions are for entertainment purposes only and are not influenced by any "outside" person or company.

In the Monster Energy Cup Series, I see a very tight battle between defending champ Martin Truex Jr., Kevin Harvick, Kyle Busch, and Brad Keselowski. My 2018 title choice is Kevin Harvick and the #4 Busch/Jimmy Johns Ford team at Stewart-Haas Racing. My Cup Rookie of the Year will be William Byron. Darrell Wallace Jr. will provide lots of excitement, but the consistency of Byron will prevail.

In the XFINITY Series, I pick Elliott Sadler to end his long championship drought. He face some tough competition, but will finally hoist the coveted trophy. My XFINITY Rookie of the Year will be Christopher Bell.

A veteran battle for the 2018 Camping World Truck Series title will go to the final lap at Homestead. I see Johnny Sauter edging Matt Crafton to repeat as the CWTS Champion. In a tough rookie battle, I predict Dalton Sargeant will surprise and capture the prize.

As always, we'll revisit my predictions in November. Until then, let's hear west and continue to get the 2018 season started.



**DENNIS PUNCH**



**Kevin Harvick is Dennis Punch's pick for Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series Champion. He made the Chase with his win at Atlanta. We will see... (DAVID GRIFFIN photo)**

# Kevin Harvick Gets Long-Awaited Victory at Atlanta

By REID SPENCER  
HAMPTON, GA - On Sunday night, after 17 barren years, Kevin Harvick finally completed the second chapter of his love affair with Atlanta Motor Speedway.

In the Folds of

Honor QuikTrip 500, the second Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series race of the season, Harvick delivered a proper thrashing to the rest of the field, leading 181-of-325 laps and beating runner-up Brad Keselowski to the finish line by 2.690 seconds.

Early in 2001, after Dale Earnhardt Sr. died in a last-lap crash in the Daytona 500, Harvick was thrust prematurely into a replacement role that would have cowed most rookies. Three weeks later, he notched his first Cup victory in a photo finish (.006 seconds) over Jeff Gordon.

Harvick's career victory total reached 38 on Sunday with his relentless performance at the 1.54-mile speedway, ending a frustrating drought that featured blinding speed foiled by ill fortune and inopportune mistakes.

Afterwards, in his victory celebration, Harvick gave a "3" salute to Earnhardt, a tribute he had waited years to perform.

"I'm just so proud of everybody on our team," Harvick said. "That was the first win in my career (in 2001), and to be able to do that and pay tribute to Dale was pretty cool. I've been

waiting a long time to do that...

"I love racing here, and it's good to be back in Victory Lane – finally. It took a while."

Harvick had led the most laps in the last four Monster Energy events at Atlanta, but victory continued to elude him. Nor was the road to Sunday's win free of obstacles.

On Harvick's second pit stop,

after his No. 4 Stewart-Haas Racing Ford had dominated the race's first stage, the air hose blew off the coupler of the pit gun wielded by the front tire changer Daniel Smith, and Harvick had to return to pit road to make sure his lug nuts were tight.

No problem. Harvick restarted 16th on Lap 94 to begin Stage 2. On Lap 126, he passed teammate Kurt Busch for the lead.

Denny Hamlin and Joey Logano tried divergent strategies, opting for a two-pit-stop strategy, instead of the typical three, over the last stage of the race. After Harvick came off pit road on Lap 289, Hamlin held a

1.819-second second advantage.

Harvick brushed the ploy aside as easily as swatting a fly. On Lap 291 he passed Hamlin for the lead and took off. Ultimately, Hamlin finished fourth and Logano sixth.

Harvick was out front by more than four seconds when Trevor Bayne's engine blew in Turn 2 on Lap 297, trailing a thick cloud of smoke that covered the corner and left Daytona 500 runner-up Bubba Wallace driving blind into the back of Ricky Stenhouse Jr.'s Ford.

On the subsequent restart on Lap 305, Harvick simply drove away, stretching his lead to nearly four seconds over the final 21 laps before easing up as he approached the finish line.

"It was great getting into this race car and knowing that everybody knew that they had to beat our car," Harvick said. "I'm just really, really happy with everything that we've done at Stewart-Haas Racing over the last five years, and this is a great start to getting ourselves in the Play-offs and doing everything that we need to do.

"We overcame a lot of things today. We got a late-race restart that we drove off and won the race with, so there are so many demons that seem to haunt us here for a long time, but the coolest part was being able to try to replicate that first win celebration."

SHR teammate Clint Bowyer finished third, putting Fords in all three podium positions. Martin Truex Jr. charged forward from a 35th-place starting position to run fifth. Logano, pole winner Kyle Busch, Kurt Busch, Kyle Larson and Chase Elliott completed the top 10.

Logano took over the series lead by six points over Ryan Blaney, who finished 12th. Daytona 500 winner Austin Dillon was 14th, the first driver one lap down.



"Happy" Harvick makes the celebrations a Busch shower in Atlanta Motor Speedway's victory lane after winning the Folds of Honor QuikTrip 500 Sunday afternoon. It was Harvick's first win in the Cup series at Atlanta in 17 years. (DAVID GRIFFIN photo)

# Kevin Harvick Makes Atlanta XFINITY Race a Runaway

By REID SPENCER  
HAMPTON, GA - Kevin Harvick put on a driving clinic in Saturday's Rinnai 250 at Atlanta Motor Speedway.

The driver of the No. 98 Ford dominated the action on the track, leading 141-

of-163 laps and winning both stages before taking the checkered flag 4.183 seconds ahead of runner-up Joey Logano.

Harvick collected his fifth NASCAR XFINITY Series victory at Atlanta and the 47th of his career. He has won four of the last six events at the 1.54-mile track, where he also has won for four different car owners, tying Tony Stewart for the distinction of winning for four different owners at a single

seconds under NASCAR's new rules that have reduced the size of the over-the-wall crew to five members. That same crew pits Harvick's No. 4 Stewart-Haas Racing Cup car on Sundays.

"The good thing is they've had a lot of reps," Harvick said. "We've had Clash reps, reps in the qualifying race, the Daytona 500, and they pitted on Saturday last week. They pitted on Saturday this week, and they're just doing a really good job.

"Those guys are pretty athletic, and they practice hard and have done a great job over the last couple years of getting this car off pit road. As long as I don't screw it up going too fast, they do really well making the pit stops."

Behind Harvick and Logano, pole winner Christopher Bell ran third, followed by John Hunter Ne-

mechek for fifth as the cars entered the tri-oval. Nemechek slid to the top of the track, right into the path of Elliott Sadler, who had exited Turn 4 with enormous momentum.

A tap from Sadler turned Nemechek's car into the No. 00 Ford of Custer, who nosed into the outside wall and damaged his machine beyond repair.

"It looks like the 42 got out of shape, and then the 1 (Sadler) had a run, and he didn't hit the brakes hard enough and he hit the 42, and the 42 hit me," Custer said after viewing the replay.

"We just got collected in something, and there's not much we could do. We had a pretty good car and was just kind of riding at that point, but, I don't know. We'll go on to the next one."

"I've got to apologize to Cole Custer," Nemechek said after climbing from his car. "I never meant to get into him off (Turn) 4 there. I got tagged from behind."

## Brett Moffitt Charges to Emotional NCWTS Win at Atlanta

By REID SPENCER  
HAMPTON, GA - Brett Moffitt streaked into the lead on an overtime restart in Saturday's Active Pest Control 200 at Atlanta Motor Speedway and pulled away

to win the second NASCAR Camping World Truck Series race of his career.

Diving to the inside and taking then-leader Myatt Snider and Johnny Sauter three-wide into the first corner on Lap 133 of 134, Moffitt beat Noah Gragson to the finish line by 1.326 seconds. Gragson charged from ninth to second on the penultimate lap and beat third-place finisher Johnny Sauter to the line by .014 seconds.

In a deal that came together late in the offseason, Moffitt signed with Hattori Racing after Ryan Truex opted to move up to the NASCAR XFINITY Series. Moffitt was the Sunoco Rookie of the Year in the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series in 2015 but hasn't had a full-time deal since then.

"It's unbelievable to even be in a race car at this point, let alone in Victory Lane," Moffitt said. "We had

a really good truck. Kyle (Busch) spun his tires a couple of restarts ago and put us back.

"But right at the end, the 13 (Snider) was a sitting duck, and I just needed a good restart. And hopefully they got into a battle behind us, which they did, and it's pretty surreal."

The victory was Moffitt's first since he claimed the trophy at Michigan in 2016 in the fourth of six starts that year. And it was the first win for team owner Shigeaki Hattori, who was 0-for-43 in the Truck Series entering Saturday's race.

Busch was on the verge of his 50th NCWTS victory when Josh Reaume crashed on Lap 125 of a scheduled 130 to cause the fifth caution of the race. With tires at a premium, the lead-lap trucks came to pit road under the yellow, but Busch left pit road with the lugs off his left rear tire, which fell off as he pulled onto the apron off Turn 1.

Sauter, who won the season opener last week at Daytona, was disappointed with his third-place finish but didn't think he could have done anything differently on the restart, which found him on the outside of the three-wide charge into the corner.

"I just feel like I'm going to beat myself up on this," Sauter said. "But sitting here watching the replay, I don't feel like I could have



Kevin Harvick makes the most of his win of the Rinnai 250 at Atlanta Motor Speedway after dominating the race all afternoon. (NIGEL KINRADE/NKP photo)

track.

Atlanta continues to be a special track for Harvick, who earned his first Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series victory here in 2001, after succeeding the late Dale Earnhardt in the Intimidator's vaunted Richard Childress racing ride.

"It's just been a really good place for me, obviously getting my first Cup win here," Harvick said. "We've run good cars throughout the years, and the race track has stayed very similar to what it's been for a number of years.

"And I think, as you look at the techniques and the things that I do in the car – and they give me what I want in the car, as far as the feel – it just applies here."

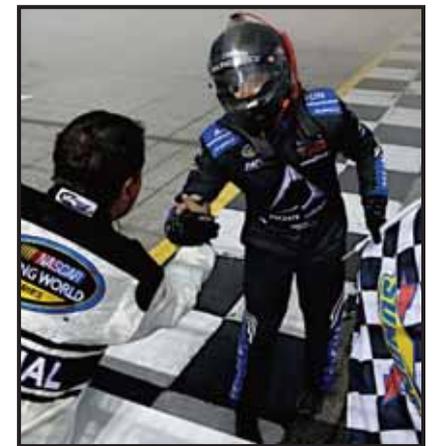
Harvick's pit crew got into the act, too, pulling off a stop in 14.4

seconds, who scored a fourth-place finish in his NASCAR XFINITY Series debut. Elliott Sadler (fifth), Justin Allgaier (sixth) and Austin Cindric (seventh) were the only other drivers on the lead lap when Harvick crossed the stripe for the last time.

"I don't think we were even close," Logano said. "Kevin played with us all day long."

Nemechek ran into early trouble on the bottom of the track and early trouble on the top. On Lap 7, Harvick bulled his way past Nemechek, who had just taken over third place. Nemechek's No. 42 Chevrolet turned sideways after the contact, but he managed to save the car off Turn 4.

Three laps later, Cole Custer cut to the inside of Nemechek in a bat-



Brett Moffitt gets his victory flag from the race starter. (MATT THACKER/NKP photo)

done anything different. When you have a shot to win, you've got to capitalize on it, and I didn't do that."

Ben Rhodes came home fourth and Matt Crafton fifth. Stewart Friesen ran sixth, and Snider, who took two tires on the pit stop before overtime, ran seventh. Sauter retained the series lead by 31 points over Crafton.

In addition to claiming the trophy, Moffitt is all but assured of advancing to the Playoffs.

"That's a hell of a way to start the year right there," he said.

## Griffith Outlasts Competition For PASS National Championship Win at Dillon

DILLON, SC - Derek Griffith bested a strong field of Pro All Stars Series (PASS) Super Late Models to win the 13th Annual South Carolina Clash 200 Saturday afternoon at Dillon Motor Speedway. While Griffith has found victory lane on the PASS North circuit in the past, Saturday's opening day win was his first in the south in PASS National Championship competition.

"We knew we had to do better here than we did last year and we were able to put it all together today to get the win," said Griffith in victory lane. "The track was hot and slick, but this win is big because we need to get all we can to compete with Ben [Rowe] for the national championship."

In qualifying, Tate Fogleman claimed his second career quick qualifying time with a lap of 87.998 miles per hour around the tough 4/10 mile, egg-shaped speedway. After the top 10 qualifiers redraw, two-time defending PASS South champion, Matt Craig, would move to the pole, while Fogleman would slot into the sixth starting position.

At the drop of the green flag, Craig quickly jumped into the lead, but would be quickly overtaken by rookie Matt Thomas for the top spot. Thomas would lead until lap 21 when he was passed by Chad McCumbee and Fogleman.

After starting 11th, Griffith would break in to the top five on lap 33, passing Ben Rowe for fifth. Another car on the move in the early going was the machine driven by Connecticut's Ray Christian, III, moving from the 14th starting position and into the top five by lap 59.

Following the first caution flag of the day for a spin by Charles Barnes on lap 69, Fogleman was able to take the lead from McCumbee on the restart. Likewise, after a caution eight laps later for Jody Measamer's mechanical problems, Griffith would move by Fogleman for the lead on the ensuing restart.

Action began to really pick up even after a spin by Jimmy Renfrew, Jr. on lap 100. On the restart, both Griffith and Fogleman appeared to spin their tires, slamming

together as they raced down the frontstretch. Fogleman's car broke loose entering turn 1, collecting the wall and ending his promising day.

The biggest incident of the day would occur on lap 116 when the machine driven by Matt Thomas was pinched into the front straightaway wall after contact with Kevin Floars. Thomas' car rode up the

wall, sliding down the track on its left side between Floars' car and the outside wall. After a few tense moments and a very brief fire, both drivers emerged from their racers unscathed.

Following a competition caution to change two tires, Ray Christian III emerged as a contender, leading the field back to green. Christian and Griffith would wage a 20 lap war for the lead, with Griffith finally able to take advantage in lapped traffic. Christian would continue to ride in second until being passed by Ben Rowe with nine laps to go. Griffith took the checkered flag to claim the South Carolina Clash win

over Rowe, Christian, Kodie Conner, and McCumbee. Rounding out the top 10 were Jeff Batten, scoring his best career finish, Craig, Jared Irvan, JP Josiasse, and Sammy Gooden.

The PASS South Super Late Models will be in action once again for the RGS Products 125 on Sunday, March 11th at Caraway Speedway, along with the season opener for the SMRS Tour Modifieds.

Entry forms can be found at ProAllStarsSeries.com. Be sure to "Like" the Pro All Stars Series on Facebook or follow us on Twitter at @PASSSLM14.



Derek Griffin climbs from his car in victory lane after besting the field to win the South Carolina Clash 200 at Dillon Motor Speedway. (PASS photo)

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## Super Late Model Leaders Announce First Piece of Racer Requested Economy Package

Officials with the United Super Late Model Rules Alliance (U.S.R.A) announced their first step in building an economy package for Super Late Model racers. The U. S. R. A. is lead by officials from the ARCA/CRA Super Series powered by JEGS, the Southern Super Series (SSS) and the CARS Super Late Model Tour.

At the end of last year, key industry stakeholders gathered with a group of car owners and builders

to look at areas to try and contain costs. The U.S.R.A. sanctioning bodies posted in November of last year, in their 2018 rules, that they would be reviewing cost containment options in the area of rear ends, transmissions and shocks. The first and only adjustment for 2108 was announced today. Effective immediately, cars that utilize a working spool/locked rear end will receive a 50-pound weight break (excluding Bristol). Officials will continue to research other options, with more input, for possible inclusion in the 2019 rules packages.

CRA went on to announce that

the weight break would also apply to the Pro Late Models in their JEGS/CRA All-Stars Tour presented by Chevrolet Performance. Other Pro Late Model groups are expected to follow soon.

Numerous car owners had shared with officials their concerns about the purchase and maintenance cost of higher quality rear end options and sought help encouraging a cheaper alternative. Earlier this month, during Speedweeks at New Smyrna Speedway, Chief Technical Inspector Ricky Brooks tested a similar weight break alternative, and it was met with very positive reviews.

Where Bristol is concerned, series and Hoosier Tire officials want to keep speed, weight and tire options the same for 2018. The rules package where weight and tire options were addressed were deemed successful last year, and

those parties want to keep cars at the same weight and speed for the 2018 Bristol event...thus, the 50-pound weight break will NOT apply for the Short Track U.S. Nationals at Bristol Motor Speedway in May. Officials plan to assess the new weight break, its success this year, and make a plan to include Bristol as a weight break option in 2019, following additional research and development.

The next event for Super Late Model teams will be the Southern Super Series season opener Rattler 250 the weekend of March 18th at South Alabama Speedway. The CARS Super Late Model Tour will begin their season a week later at Myrtle Beach on March 24th. The ARCA/CRA Series will kick off their season with a CRA/SSS/CARS tri-sanctioned event at Nashville's Fairgrounds Speedway on April 7th.

## American Sprint Car Series Closing In On 150 Nights of Racing For 2018

TULSA, OK - The American Sprint Car Series is just over a week away from kicking off a combined slate of 143 nights of racing, with the potential for seven additional events to be added between National and Regional competition. With some race nights on the docket being co-sanctioned, the overall number of sanctioned events so far is 166.

As of now, the American Sprint Car Series as a whole is slated to sanction races at 56 tracks across 18 states in 2018.

First on the agenda is the ASCS Southwest Region at Canyon Speedway Park in Peoria, Ariz. The desert based tour will also end out the year at Arizona Speedway in Queen Creek, Ariz. on November 23 and 24. The series saw its first new champion in 2017 with Arizona's Colton Hardy beating out nine-time champion, Rick Ziehl.

The ASCS Southwest Region is one of six regional tours that make up the ASCS Nation in 2018. Regional tour are the backbone of the American Sprint Car Series with some of the nation's top young talent earning their stripes before advancing to the Lucas Oil American Sprint Car Series National Tour presented by Sawblade.com, and

beyond.

On the subject of the Lucas Oil American Sprint Car Series National Tour presented by Sawblade.com, the top touring series of the American Sprint Car Series kicks off their 27th season of competition on March 16 and 17 at the famed Devil's Bowl Speedway in Mesquite, Texas. Sam Hafertepe, Jr. was the class of the field in 2017, winning his second title in as many years. For the 2018 season, the Sunnyvale, Texas driver will wheel for Canada based Hill Racing.

Driver and Crew Registration is open and continues through June 1, 2018 and can be done online at <http://www.ascsracing.com> or by phone to (918) 838-3777.

Live coverage of the Lucas Oil American Sprint Car Series National Tour presented by Sawblade.com can be found at <http://www.racinboys.com> as well as 13 nights of coverage on the MAVTV Motorsports Network at [LucasOilRacing.tv](http://LucasOilRacing.tv).

The Speedway Motors ASCS Warrior Region presented by Impact Signs, Awnings, and Wraps will feature live audio from all event in 2018 on [Racinboys.com](http://Racinboys.com) as well as the American Bank of Oklahoma ASCS Red River Region presented by Smiley's Racing Products.

For other news, notes, and information on the American Sprint Car Series, from the National Tour

to any of the Regional Tours that make up the nearly 150 races across the ASCS Nation in 2018,

log onto [www.ascsracing.com](http://www.ascsracing.com), follow on Facebook, on Instagram, and on Twitter (@LucasOilASCS).

## Lucas Oil Champion Gets Sweet Bonus in 2018

BATAVIA, OH - Sweet Manufacturing, an industry leader in steering and suspension components, continues to give back to racers.

"We are proud to partner with the Lucas Oil Late Model Dirt Series once again for the 2018 season," said Randy Sweet, President of Sweet Manufacturing. "Being

associated with the premier sanctioning body for dirt late models will allow us to showcase our products to teams across the country."

For the second consecutive year, the Sweet Manufacturing Championship Bonus will award the Lucas Oil National Champion with an extra \$10,000 in prize money, on top of their \$75,000 points fund earnings.

Sweet Manufacturing was incorporated in 1978 with the basic concept of providing racers with steering products that would offer a competitive advantage. Their extensive product line has been designed and built using the experience and knowledge gained from Randy Sweet's 50 years of racing

competition, plus continuous input from the nation's top drivers, engineers, and chassis builders.

To learn more, visit: [www.sweetmfg.biz](http://www.sweetmfg.biz).

"It's great to have brands like Sweet Manufacturing contributing to the growth of our organization," said Rick Schwallie, Series Director. "The Sweet Manufacturing Championship Bonus will make this season's championship battle even more exciting."

The stars of the Lucas Oil Late Model Dirt Series return to action with a visit to Atomic Speedway in Chillicothe, OH on Friday, March 16th - followed by Brownstown Speedway in Brownstown, IN on Saturday, March 17th. Both events will include a complete program of: Miller Welders Time Trials, Heat Races, B-Mains, and a 50-lap, \$12,000-to-win main event.

For the latest breaking news concerning the Lucas Oil Late Model Dirt Series, including the latest series standings, 2018 tour schedule, driver information, and more visit the official website at: [www.lucasdirt.com](http://www.lucasdirt.com).



## Mountain Speedway Tennessee Tipoff Features Two \$10,000-To-Win Complete Shows

MARYVILLE, TN - The Tennessee Tipoff on March 9-10 at Smoky Mountain Speedway is definitely going to be "two" big to miss. The World of Outlaws Craftsman® Late Model Series will lead an expected huge field of star drivers into two, complete \$10,000-to-win events.

The Outlaws are coming off four consecutive nights of DIRTcar Nationals action in Florida where four different drivers found their way to Victory Lane, including Tim McCreadie, Dale McDowell, Scott Bloomquist, and defending series champion Brandon Sheppard. The battle for the crown is as close as ever with racers setting their sights on Smoky Mountain to stake their claim to the championship lead.

Tennessee native Mike Marlar is especially excited to return home from Florida in February and Volusia's tricky, high-speed half-mile oval. Joining the tour full-time in 2018, Marlar is eager to take on the 4/10-mile just south of Knoxville, TN, as the competition ratchets up for the Outlaws' first back-to-back shootouts at Smoky Mountain with more than \$100,000 on the line

over the two nights.

"The Tennessee Tipoff is a pretty big event and the racetrack and facility at Smoky Mountain is a really awesome place," said Marlar, who had 11 top-five's in 16 starts with the Outlaws in 2017.

Marlar is hoping his Tennessee roots will give him an advantage, but he knows the Volunteer State is loaded with superstars all looking to Smoky Mountain to pocket some of the big money on the line.

"You know, living in Tennessee, it's hard to be the best guy from Tennessee," Marlar said. "There's some pretty good guys from right around the area. For starters, Scott [Bloomquist] has probably ran more laps [at Smoky Mountain] than anyone. Then Jimmy [Owens], it's close to home for him, too. Billy Ogle has won races there and Dale [McDowell] is pretty much from Chattanooga, so he's right there too. Some of the best guys in the country are in a three-hour radius [from Smoky Mountain]. ... If I can race in Tennessee with these guys, I know I have just as good of a shot winning anywhere."

Many of the top late model drivers from around the country will invade Smoky Mountain Speedway for the Tennessee Tipoff, including Brandon Overton, the 2015 Rookie

of the Year who won last year's one-day Outlaw event at Smoky Mountain. After his win in 2017 Overton attributed his success to his Randy Weaver Dream Team.

Additional drivers who have entered into the Tennessee Tipoff in the past include Bloomquist, who is the only two-time Outlaws event winner at Smoky Mountain Speedway (2015 and 2016). Chris Madden has already proved to be one of the most consistent drivers on tour, collecting the DIRTcar Nationals Big Gator Championship with his new Barry Wright Race Cars team. Defending series champion Sheppard is back on top heading to Smoky Mountain, but he'll be challenged by the likes of former series champions Shane Clanton and

Rick Eckert, plus last year's top rookie Devin Moran. In all, drivers representing at least 16 different states are expected to roll into the pits for this year's event, making it one of the biggest races in the track history.

A night of practice on March 8 will lead up to two nights of action featuring qualifying, heat races, Last Chance Showdown and 50-lap Craftsman Club Feature events each night. Joining the Outlaws will be the NeSmith Chevrolet Late Models and the Cajun Mini Stocks.

Advanced tickets are on sale now, including the special tiered parking area overlooking the backstretch. A three-day package is only \$50. Buy your tickets online today or call 844-DIRT-TIX.

## WoO Forced to Cancel February Texas Swing

CONCORD, NC - Due to saturated grounds on track property, the World of Outlaws Craftsman Sprint Car Series is forced to cancel this weekend's events at Cotton Bowl Speedway in Paige, TX and LoneStar Speedway in Kilgore, TX, scheduled for February 23 and February 24, respectively.

The Cotton Bowl Speedway race has been rescheduled for Wednesday, April 25, 2018, two days before the Outlaws return

to Devil's Bowl Speedway in Mesquite, TX for the Texas Outlaw Nationals and the Series' 40th birthday celebration. The LoneStar Speedway event will not be made up. Those who have purchased tickets for the East Texas LoneStar Shootout will receive a credit to their mytickets.com account, to be used for select World of Outlaws events in 2018.

The Greatest Show on Dirt continues its 40th Anniversary Season Wednesday, February 28 and Thursday, March 1 at The Dirt Track at Las Vegas Motor Speedway with the running of the FVP Outlaw Showdown.

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## **Auto Club Speedway**

FONTANA, CA - Local country artists, Temecula Road, will perform the National Anthem prior to the start of the NASCAR NXS 300 on March 17, 2018 with pre-race activities starting at 1:30 p.m. at Auto Club Speedway in Fontana. In addition, they will headline the pre-race concert at 12:00 p.m. in the O'Reilly Auto Parts Fan Zone. The young stars are a perfect fit to kick-off the NXS 300 race which features young NASCAR drivers battling for the checkered flag on one of the fastest and oldest two-mile oval tracks on the NASCAR circuit.

The country music trio is comprised of sisters Emma and Maddie Salute and longtime friend Dawson Anderson. With talent far beyond their teenage years, Temecula Road has an impressive online following with their series of song covers. A mashup video of the trio singing portions of 2016's top 20 country songs in a mere 3 minutes garnered them over 7 million views online.

Named after nearby wine country where they grew up, Temecula Road is signed to Buena Vista Records and has released three songs to date — "What If I Kissed You," "Hoping" and "Everything Without You" all of which combined have surpassed over 3.6 million streams. The band was named one of Huffington Post's "Top Country Artists To Watch" as well as Radio Disney "NEXT BIG THING" artist, putting them in great company with previously featured acts Shawn Mendes, Fifth Harmony and fellow country artist Kelsea Ballerini.

With a race ticket, fans will receive access to the O'Reilly Auto Parts Fan Zone including the Temecula Road concert, NASCAR driver appearances, autograph sessions, Monster Energy activations, celebrity appearances and other family fun.

Kids 12 and under with a Lefty's Kids Club membership get free general admission showing their membership card to the NXS 300 race with a paid adult. Tickets start at just \$30. Gates open to the O'Reilly Auto Parts Fan Zone at 9:00 a.m. and the NXS 300 race starts at 2:00 p.m. PT and airs on FS1. For more information go to

[www.autoclubspeedway.com](http://www.autoclubspeedway.com).

Follow @AutoClubSpeedway on Facebook/Instagram and @AC-SUupdates on Twitter and tag photos using #FastestSunday and #AutoClub400.

## **Dover International Speedway**

DOVER, DE - The Monster Monument at Victory Plaza, presented by Smithfield, is known around the sporting world as the symbol of Dover International Speedway, one of the unique venues in all of motorsports.

Now, charities and non-profit organizations have the opportunity to promote their causes using one of the mid-Atlantic's most recognizable landmarks.

A handful of months per year, the Monster Mile will light up the Monster Monument in the dominant color of certain organizations, causes or special community events and holidays.

"We consistently receive tremendous feedback when we light up Miles," said Dover International Speedway President and CEO Mike Tatroian. "We have decided to make it an ongoing effort so we can, literally, bring light to so many organizations, causes, events and holidays."

Colors already scheduled in 2018 include:

- Green – (Philadelphia Eagles win Super Bowl, St. Patrick's Day; February and March)
- Blue – (Autism Awareness; April)
- Pink – (Breast Cancer Awareness; October)

Organizations can make suggestions and requests in several ways, including using the hashtag #LightUpMiles on social media and sending recommendations to [info@doverspeedway.com](mailto:info@doverspeedway.com). Please note that there is no application process but the Speedway will keep a list of appropriate requests and use those suggestions whenever appropriate.

If an organization is selected, in addition to lighting up the Monster Monument, it can receive the following:

- Tickets to upcoming NASCAR tripleheader weekends
- An ad in the Dover souvenir program
- Table space along the vendor midway on NASCAR weekends
- An auction/donation item

Built in 2008, the Monster Monument stands 46-feet tall and is the largest fiberglass statue at any sporting venue in the world. The base of the monument pays tribute to race winners at Dover Interna-

tional Speedway and features dedications to legendary drivers who are recognized for their special accomplishments earned on the Monster Mile's high-banked, one-mile concrete oval.

Dover International Speedway is hosting two NASCAR tripleheader weekends in 2018, on May 4-6 and Oct. 5-7.

In the Spring, the "AAA 400 Drive for Autism" Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series race is set for Sunday, May 6, preceded by the "OneMain Financial 200" NASCAR XFINITY Series race on Saturday, May 5 and the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series race on Friday, May 4. In the Fall, the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series playoff race is set for Sunday, Oct. 7, preceded by the NASCAR XFINITY Series race on Saturday, Oct. 6 and the NASCAR K&N Pro Series East race on Friday, Oct. 5.

For tickets or more information, call 800-441-RACE or visit [DoverSpeedway.com](http://DoverSpeedway.com). You can also keep up with the Monster Mile at [Facebook.com/DoverInternationalSpeedway](https://www.facebook.com/DoverInternationalSpeedway), or on Twitter and Instagram at @MonsterMile.

## **Iowa Speedway**

NEWTON, IA - Race fans and music lovers will come together again this summer to celebrate three weekends of world-class entertainment at Iowa Speedway. The NAPA Auto Parts Concert Series returns for the fourth consecutive year, featuring a star-studded lineup complementing seven thrilling races. As in seasons past, each installment of the NAPA Auto Parts Concert Series will take place at the Party Pavilion following the conclusion of the first race of each event weekend.

"This lineup of music heavy-hitters for the fourth NAPA Auto Parts Concert Series is a testament to our mission of offering a compelling racing product while enhancing the overall fan experience," said Iowa Speedway President David Hyatt. "The return of the NAPA Auto Parts Concert Series is simply another way for fans to enjoy a full weekend at Iowa Speedway beyond the racing."

The 2018 NAPA Auto Parts Concert Series kicks off on Saturday, June 16, following the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series Iowa 200. After the stars of the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series find the "Eye of the Tiger," Iowa Speedway fans will see "The Search is Over" as rock legend, Survivor, takes center stage at the Party Pavilion overlooking Turn 4 imme-

diately following Casey's General Store's Victory Lane celebration.

Ultimate guitar-shredding showman, Ted Nugent, will keep fans cheering following the conclusion of the ARCA Racing Series Iowa 150 on Saturday, July 7. INDYCAR will speed things up the following day with the 12th running of the Iowa Corn 300, as the stars of the Verizon IndyCar Series solidify Iowa Speedway's affirmation as the Fastest Short Track on the Planet.

The NAPA Auto Parts Concert Series will close out in style on Friday, July 27, highlighted by rising country music star Dylan Scott. Scott's friendly charm and rhythm and blues-inspired music will be on full display following the NASCAR K&N Pro Series Casey's General Store 150.

Anchoring the 2018 season is the NASCAR Xfinity Series U.S. Cellular 250 on July 28. After the roar of the engines has subsided, Iowa Speedway will host its fifth annual Post-Race Party on the Frontstretch. A tradition born in Iowa – opening the catchfence for fans to party on the track – has become universally revered by everyone.

Season, Weekend and Individual Event tickets are on sale. Payment plans are available and offer great flexibility to fans who want to pay over time. Iowa Speedway is committed to maximizing the value of the investment made by our fans. To that end, there have been no price increases for the 2018 season; all products and packages have retained their 2017 season prices.

Iowa Speedway, The Fastest Short Track on the Planet, is a state-of-the-art 7/8-mile asphalt paved tri-oval race track and motorsports facility located in Newton, Iowa. Our 2018 schedule includes three exciting race weekends: June 16-17 (NASCAR Camping World Truck Series Iowa 200 and NASCAR XFINITY Series American Ethanol E15 250 presented by Enogen), July 7-8 (ARCA Racing Series Iowa 150 and Verizon IndyCar Series Iowa Corn 300) and July 27-28 (NASCAR K&N Pro Series Casey's General Store 150 and NASCAR XFINITY Series U.S. Cellular 250). For tickets, call 1.866.787.8946. To learn more, visit [www.iowaspeedway.com](http://www.iowaspeedway.com), "like" us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter and Instagram.

## **Talladega Superspeedway**

TALLADEGA, AL - With the official start of the 2018 NASCAR

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season just days away, Talladega Superspeedway fans have already spoken in a big way with their excitement for the track's Spring triple-header weekend, April 27-29. Officials at NASCAR's Most Competitive track announced today that fewer than 20 reserved RV camping spots remain in its infamous infield, the most coveted real estate in motorsports.

With more than 99% of the infield RV spots full, fans are encouraged to call 855-518-RACE (7223) to reserve their space, or they can visit [www.talladegasuperspeedway.com](http://www.talladegasuperspeedway.com). The anticipated weekend features the GEICO 500 for the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series (Sunday, April 29), the Sparks Energy 300 for the NASCAR XFINITY Series (Saturday, April 28) and the General Tire 200 for the traditional ARCA Racing Series Presented by Menards (Friday, April 27). Below are the reserved areas with remaining spots available in the infield:

**Reserved RV:**

- **GECKO Frontrunner's Club I** – A prime area inside Turn 4 for fans to catch all the action as drivers peel off the 33-degree banking and head toward the tri-oval.

- **Finish Line RV II** – Located past the start/finish line going into Turn 1, fans can watch their favorite drivers coming through the tri-oval into Turn 1.

- **GEICO Grounds Yellow RV** – This is a new area in close proximity of Turn 3, near the end of the famed Alabama Gang Superstretch.

**Reserved Cars/Tents:**

- **GEICO Grounds Blue** – Located close to Turns 1 and 2, this is the perfect spot for fans to watch the 3-and 4-wide racing action on the high banks.

- **GEICO Grounds Yellow** – Near Turn 3, this area gives fans a great spot to relax for the weekend.

"The fans are definitely making a statement," said Talladega Superspeedway Chairman Grant Lynch. "Our overnight parks and infield amenities are extremely popular among fans. With fun entertainment such as the 'Big One on the Blvd' on Friday night and our traditional Saturday Night Infield Concert, we are the Party Capital

of the sport and encourage fans to reserve their spots now while limited space remains. Talladega...the best racing and experience on the planet."

Talladega Superspeedway is NASCAR's Most Competitive (record 88 lead changes in 188 laps), highest banked (33 degrees), and longest track (2.66-miles), as well as the most fun and fan-friendly. Talladega offers something for everyone, including hundreds of acres of free camping, amazing kids' tickets and college student prices, along with special offers for military members and first responders. The historic venue, built in 1969, is deemed NASCAR's "Party Capital" thanks to the track's infamous infield, which features the traditional Saturday Night Concert and the world-renowned Talladega Blvd, home of Friday night's "Big One on the Blvd" party. It's the site of the most comfortable seats in motorsports, large ISM Vision HD video boards lining the frontstretch and endless pre-race activities for fans on race day, including special kids' VIP opportunities. Talladega's Spring 2018 triple-header race weekend is set for April 27-29. The weekend kicks off on Friday, April 27, with the General Tire 200 ARCA Racing Series Presented by Menards event, while the Sparks Energy 300 NASCAR XFINITY Series race is set for Saturday, April 28. The weekend concludes with the GEICO 500 Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series race on Sunday, April 29.

For more information, go to [talladegasuperspeedway.com](http://talladegasuperspeedway.com) or call the Talladega Ticket Office at 855-518-RACE (7223).

**Kansas Speedway**

KANSAS CITY, KS - Tickets for the 2018 Kansas Speedway racing season are on sale now and the track is offering more \$64 ticket choices for both Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series races than ever before. Also new in 2018 is more youth ticket options! In addition, several sections of Kansas Speedway grandstands have been enhanced with drink rails to offer race fans a more comfortable experience.

In addition to more \$64 tickets for the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series races, NASCAR Camping World Truck Series race tickets start at just \$25, while tickets for the NASCAR XFINITY Series race start at \$40. For both the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series and NASCAR XFINITY Series races, kids are free with an adult ticket

purchase in sections that offer youth pricing.

For fans wanting to attend both NASCAR race weekends, Kansas Speedway is still offering season tickets – the best value for race fans. Season ticket packages include four NASCAR races, a pre-race pass for each Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series races, a parking pass, and the opportunity to drive their personal car on the track this summer.

Kansas Speedway has introduced a new hospitality option, the Ignition Garage, for Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series race day that will include driver Q&A sessions, a pre-race pass, a guided tour of the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series garage, and much more.

For fans who want to enhance their race day experience, Kansas Speedway offers several options:

- **A pre-race pass** – allows access to the DC Solar FanWalk to watch the drivers meeting, plus access to the infield for driver introductions and the pre-race concert;

- **VIP package** – definitely a bucket list item for any race fan, this package includes special seating in the drivers meeting, a guided tour of the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series garage, VIP parking and a welcome reception in the President's suite;

- **Premium tailgate spot** – for the ultimate tailgate experience, fans get a reserved spot in the front row of the paved parking lot near the Midway Display to give fans a prime location to start their race day;

- **A paid parking spot** – secure a spot in some of the closest lots to the Kansas Speedway grandstand.

Fans who pre-purchase their tickets have the opportunity to get at least a 20% discount on scanner rentals, which allows them to listen to the drivers and crew chiefs communicate during the race.

To purchase tickets, fans can call 866.460.7223, log onto [www.kansasspeedway.com](http://www.kansasspeedway.com) or stop by the Kansas Speedway Ticket Office Monday – Friday between 9 AM – 5 PM CT.

Kansas Speedway, a premier motorsports facility in the Midwest, hosts two NASCAR race weekends a year, in addition to hosting approximately 200 other events throughout the year. Kansas Speedway's first race weekend of the sea-

son is May 11-12 with the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series and Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series under the lights. In the fall, the NASCAR playoffs return Oct. 20-21 with the NASCAR XFINITY Series and Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series. Also in the fall is the ARCA Racing Series presented by Menards series finale. To purchase season or single day tickets, call 866.460.RACE (7223) or log onto [www.kansasspeedway.com](http://www.kansasspeedway.com).

General parking is always free at Kansas Speedway and fans can bring in one 14x14x14-inch soft-sided cooler with their favorite food and beverages.

Fans can follow Kansas Speedway on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/kansasspeedway](http://www.facebook.com/kansasspeedway), Twitter (@kansasspeedway), Instagram (kansasspeedway) and Snapchat (kansasspeedway).

**Michigan Int'l Speedway**

BROOKLYN, MI - Michigan International Speedway continues to enhance the experience for guests all week long at NASCAR's most entertaining track.

In 2018, MIS will debut a new high-end campground, seating option, ticket package and hospitality area. A new high-end campground will overlook Turn 1 with upscale amenities. In addition, countertop seating will be added to rows in the Turn 1 Grandstands. The track is also introducing a new all-you-can eat ticket package and the track's hospitality area will move to Turn 1.

Fans can visit [www.mispeedway.com](http://www.mispeedway.com) to learn more or call 888-905-7223 to take advantage of everything in 2018.

"We are excited about the enhancements for our guests in 2018," track President Rick Brenner said. "The new high-end campground, countertop seating and the new hospitality location will enhance the race day experience. In addition, the all-you-can-eat ticket package provides an outstanding value to our fans."

Campers will get closer to the track than ever before. The track is

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building a new campground located right outside of Turn 1. Now the campers will feel the speed and energy of the cars as they go into the fastest part of the track.

The campground amenities include:

- Paved Sites
- Electric and Water
- Permanent Restrooms
- Private Game Room and Lounge

- Turn 1 Patio with Picnic Tables
- Outdoor Game Area
- Fire Pits
- Private Trackside Viewing Area
- Opens Wednesday of Race Week

- RV's and Fifth Wheels
- Includes: Sunday All-You-Can Eat in Turn 1M Pit, Paddock and Driver Introduction Pass, Infield Access

The speedway will be contacting fans that are currently on a camping waiting list and will fill the high-end campground based on years attended.

New in 2018 is the all-you-can-eat ticket package starting at \$85. Guests purchasing this package will enjoy hamburgers, hot dogs, macaroni and cheese, baked beans, potato salad, potato chips, cookies and iced tea. All of this will be available two hours prior to the green flag right behind turn 1. Now fans can get their fill on food and not miss any of the action. Groups of 10 tickets start at \$75 per person. Book a group and experience our race weekend activities like the mock driver meeting and tram rides around the track.

The track will make improvements to the Turn 1 grandstands to enhance the race-day experiences of the fans. In certain sections, the track is installing countertops. Now those guests will have a seat and a countertop to put their favorite snacks and drinks on while watching the race.

In addition, the track is moving the hospitality area from the Turn 4 area down to the Turn 1 area. Guests will still receive the same great service and amenities and be closer to their seat.

The start times for the two Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series races have been announced. The FireKeepers Casino 400 will start at 2 p.m. on June 10. Meanwhile the Monster Energy Series race on Au-

gust 12 will begin at 2:30 p.m.

As part of its facility optimization, Michigan International Speedway will remove some seats in Turn 1. The guests affected were personally contacted in advance to aid in the transition. The track will have seating options and pricing options available comparable to 2017.

NASCAR returns to Michigan International Speedway twice in 2018 and you can be part of the action. The Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series FireKeepers Casino 400 weekend is June 8-10. On Aug. 10-12 the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series will return to NASCAR's fastest track.

Tickets to the two NASCAR weekends go on sale to the public on February 8. And fans will want to get their tickets fast to save up to \$50 per grandstand ticket and up to \$30 per campsite.

Children 12 and under are free on Fridays and Saturdays. On Sundays, children 12 and under tickets start at \$15. Children 12 and under can attend three days of NASCAR action for just \$15, ensuring families a weekend of fun at affordable prices.

And fans can stay after the LTI Printing 250 in June for the free Saturday post-race concert featuring 38 Special. After the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series race in August, The Cadillac Three will headline the free concert.

All fans with a Sunday admission will gain access to the concert! The concert will take place behind Turn 3.

### **Darlington Raceway**

DARLINGTON, SC - Darlington Raceway announced Wednesday that the track will receive a significant investment for a capital improvement project, slated to begin immediately.

"Darlington Raceway and its parent company, International Speedway Corporation, are committed to providing a best in class guest experience for our fans when they attend our NASCAR events," said Kerry Tharp, Darlington Raceway President. "This investment in our facility further achieves that goal and solidifies our place as the Official Throwback Weekend of NASCAR."

The project, coined A Better Darlington...The Tradition Continues, will feature a renovation of the track's Tyler, Wallace and Colvin Grandstands, giving fans a more comfortable seating experience when they attend the Sept. 1-2 NASCAR race weekend. In 2018, the focus of Darlington's throwback

platform will be a celebration of the Seven Decades of NASCAR, in tribute to the 70th anniversary of the sport.

The pitch of the Tyler Tower Grandstands on the frontstretch will be improved, providing better sightlines and viewing experience for the fans. Stadium-style chair back seats with cup holders will replace the current metal seats in Tyler, providing a wider and more comfortable seating experience.

The metal seats in the Wallace Grandstands on the frontstretch will be replaced with bench style seats with backs, providing fans with a wider and more comfortable seating experience, as well.

The historic Colvin Grandstands will also receive a makeover, with wider, more comfortable bench seating, along with refurbished concession areas and restroom facilities.

All grandstands at Darlington Raceway will now be considered smoke-free. Designated smoking areas will be available throughout the concourses for guests.

Additionally, multiple cross-over gates will be installed along the frontstretch, providing fans with quicker and more efficient access to Bojangles' Southern 500 pre-race activities.

The project will also feature a one-of-a-kind Wall of Honor, unique to any other NASCAR track. This iconic banner signage will adorn the bottom of the Wallace and Colvin grandstands and will pay tribute to the former race champions at the Lady in Black.

"Darlington Raceway is appreciative of the support Governor Henry McMaster, the state of South Carolina, its political leadership, and the city and county provide our venue," said Tharp. "We are proud to be South Carolina's home track and we're confident that this capital improvement project will elevate our ability to host a premier sporting event that will benefit our state and our region for many years to come."

With all its success hosting NASCAR and other community events, Darlington Raceway is contributing \$64.6 million in economic impact to the state of South Carolina, according to an updated 2017 study conducted by Dr. Tom H. Regan of the University of South Carolina's Department of Sport and Entertainment Management.

That total includes \$58.5 million in direct and indirect impact annually for the Pee Dee region, where the track calls home. Additionally, Darlington Raceway and all of its

related business activity generates \$8.29 million in taxes and other public revenues each year for the federal, state, and local governments and \$7.43 million for the Pee Dee Region.

"Darlington Raceway is one of South Carolina's premier historical landmarks that has attracted millions of people over the last seven decades," said South Carolina House Speaker Jay Lucas (District 65-Darlington). "This capital improvement project is much deserved and will spur economic growth in Darlington County and the Pee Dee. I am confident that once renovations are complete, Darlington Raceway will be considered the most exceptional sporting event venue that is far 'Too Tough to Tame.'"

"I have worked for many years in support of a strong pro-business philosophy on behalf of Darlington County and her citizens," said South Carolina Senator Gerald Malloy, who represents the state's 29th District.

"Today's capital investment announcement by Darlington Raceway reflects the trust of International Speedway Corporation in the pro-business environment we have all worked so hard to achieve.

"For more than 65 years, Darlington Raceway has been a staple of our business and tourism community and I am proud to work alongside them in ensuring stable pro-business regulatory and tax policy at the state and local level to enhance continued growth and investment in South Carolina," Malloy said.

Ticket renewals for the 2018 season were mailed on February 1. The changes to seat locations in the Tyler, Wallace and Colvin Grandstands will be minimal and should only enhance the viewing experience. A representative from the Darlington Raceway ticket office will contact fans in the near future to discuss renewal and seating options for fans in those specific grandstands.

The Tradition Continues on Labor Day weekend as the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series Bojangles' Southern 500® is set for Sunday, Sept. 2, 2018. The NASCAR XFINITY Series Sport Clips Haircuts VFW 200 will race on Saturday, Sept. 1, 2018.

You can keep up with all of the latest news from Darlington Raceway at [DarlingtonRaceway.com](http://DarlingtonRaceway.com), on Facebook at [Facebook.com/DarlingtonRaceway](https://www.facebook.com/DarlingtonRaceway) and on Twitter at [Twitter.com/TooToughToTame](https://twitter.com/TooToughToTame).

## Caraway Speedway

Russell Harrison Hackett, age 76, of Randleman died Friday, February 23, 2018, at Randolph Hospice House in Asheboro.

Born January 13, 1942, and grew up as a tobacco and dairy farmer. At the age of 16, he began working in restaurants which eventually led to him owning his own. Dixie Dew Drive-In and Robinhood Restau-

rant.

He began going to Caraway Speedway in Sophia, NC as a spectator then became a championship winning car owner. The owners of Caraway Speedway, Thomas Bros. Country Ham had bought the track as a test facility for NASCAR Legend Sam Ard's NASCAR Sportsman car, coaxed the young Hackett into promoting the track in 1977. When the Thomas Brothers left the sport in 1989 they sold the track to Hackett.

Hackett's time as the promoter of Caraway Speedway were the best years the facility has ever seen. Legendary drivers such as Dale Earnhardt, Sr., Jimmy Hensley, Dennis Setzer, Bobby Labonte, Sam Ard and Mike Skinner all came through the track while Hackett was promoting events.

During the period while Hackett was the longest running promoter and owner of Caraway Speedway, he also owned Tri-County Motor Speedway in Hudson, NC buying the track in 1993 and selling it in 1998.

Hackett was the recipient of the Promoter of the Year award from Charlotte Motor Speedway on two different occasions. The first came in 1989, the first year with the track under his ownership and again in 1998. He also served on the NASCAR Appeal Board for over 20 years.

Hackett retired from the restaurant business in 2002 and following the conclusion of the 2010 season, he retired as the promoter of Caraway Speedway.

He is survived by daughter, Dee Dee Hackett-Kern; son, Darren Hackett and wife Renee; grandchildren, Justin Smith, Preston Hackett and Victoria Hackett; sister, Sylvia Cook.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Valastra Hackett; parents, Harlan and Johnsie Hackett; brother, Terry Hackett.



**Russell Hackett**  
1942 - 2018

## Southern National Motorsports Park

LUCAMA, NC - Racers are looking forward to the condensed five event schedule for the Late Model Stock Car division at Southern National Motorsports Park, which kicks off next Saturday.

Southern National's five event Late Model Stock Car schedule consists of a 150-lap race on March 3rd followed by twin races held on the nights of April 14th, May 26th, July 28th and September 8th. The condensed schedule allows racers to compete at Southern National Motorsports Park while also racing at other tracks or series, such as East Carolina Motor Speedway or the CARS Tour.

"I think the new schedule will be good to bring in some more cars," Ryan Wilson, winner of the track championship at Caraway Speedway, said. "Guys who may be running every week somewhere else should still be able to come and race several races, if not the full schedule at Southern National since there are not as many dates."

Wilson, who has made starts in the ARCA Racing Series presented by Menards as well as in the CARS Late Model Stock Tour, says he plans to run the full season at Southern National Motorsports Park.

Wilson will start his pursuit of the Southern National Motorsports Park track championship on March 3rd in the Dogwood 265 presented by Solid Rock Carriers. After competing in the March 3rd race, Wilson will head to the central-most area in North Carolina to compete in a race at Caraway Speedway on March 4th.

Ryan Haddock has been a regular at East Carolina Motor Speedway while also making occasional appearances at Southern National Motorsports Park and Carteret

County Speedway. This season, Haddock will run the full regular season Late Model Stock Car schedule at Southern National Motorsports Park in addition to racing a partial schedule at East Carolina Motor Speedway.

"I like it a lot," Haddock commented. "It's especially helpful for a team like mine that has an extremely tight budget. It's nice being able to run two tracks and not worry about schedules falling on top of each other if you are trying to run for points. I think the way they are doing it this year, bringing back true Late Model Stocks and a five-race schedule for the championship, is going to have more people motivated to make those five races."

The season-opening race, the Dogwood 265 presented by Solid Rock Carriers, is already drawing interest from other competitors, including four-time NASCAR Whelen All-American Series national champion Philip Morris, former Southern National Motorsports Park track champions Jonathan Findley and Tyler Matthews, Tyler Hughes, Garrett Bunch and Southern National local Melvin Langley, among others.

The Dogwood 265, which commences on Saturday, March 3rd at 2pm, will also feature racing for the Bandolero and Mini Stock divisions.

For more information about Southern National Motorsports Park, check out SNMP's website at [www.snmpark.com](http://www.snmpark.com), "like" Southern National Motorsports Park on Facebook or "follow" @SNM\_Park on Twitter.

## Stafford Motor Speedway

STAFFORD SPRINGS, CT - New for the 2018 season iRacing.com, the global leader in online racing simulation, will present a weekly \$125 bonus to the winner of the Late Model feature. iRacing is the leading online racing simulation on the market. Developed as a centralized racing and competition service, iRacing has evolved into the next generation of simracing software used by professional drivers and casual gamers alike. At Stafford, the list of drivers that prepare for the season by using the iRacing service is long with countless drivers improving their craft online.

The Late Model division was the most competitive division at Stafford in 2017 with 8 different winners. 27 different drivers competed in the Late Models over the course of the season with Glen Reen edging out 4-time track

champion Tom Fearn by 8 points to capture his first career Stafford Championship. The 2018 season promises to be much of the same with all but 1 of the 8 winners returning to compete.

"We are very excited to have an internationally recognized brand such as iRacing join our weekly contingency program at Stafford Speedway," explained Stafford Motor Speedway General Manager Mark Arute. "We are excited to have them as a weekly contingency sponsor on our Late Model division."

2016 champion Michael Bennett headed the win column in 2017 notching 5 with eventual champion Glenn Reen and 4-time champion Tom Fearn each scoring 3. In his second season at Stafford, youngster Tyler Leary scored two wins including a win at the NAPA Fall Final to cap off a breakout year. Kevin Gambacorta, Michael Wray, Paul Arute, and Josh Wood all each scored 1 win. Two new names set to compete in 2018 are brothers Al and Cliff Saunders, who are set to both make the jump from Limited Late Model division.

"We are excited to partner with Stafford and put up a weekly bonus for the winner of the Late Model division," explained Tony Gardner, President of iRacing. "At iRacing we bring online sim racing to the masses, having short tracks with so much history like Stafford is part of the experience on iRacing. We wish all the Stafford Late Model competitors the best of luck in 2018"

The Late Model division kicks off their season at the 47th Annual NAPA Auto Parts Spring Sizzler® on April 27-29. Tickets for the "Greatest Race in the History of Spring" are on sale now at the Speedway Box Office. Tickets are priced at \$40.00 for adult general admission tickets, \$5.00 for children ages 6-14, and children ages 5 and under are admitted free of charge when accompanied by an adult. Reserved seating is priced at \$42.00 for all ages. As always, Stafford Motor Speedway offers free parking with overnight parking available. All tickets are good for both Saturday and Sunday admission. All ticket prices include 10% CT Admission Tax. Discount Spring Sizzler® tickets will be available beginning in March at participating NAPA Auto Parts stores.

For more information contact the Stafford Motor Speedway track office at 860-684-2783 or visit us on the web at [www.staffordspeedway.com](http://www.staffordspeedway.com).