

NASCAR 2011

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Johnson gets close win at 'Dega

Jimmie Johnson, pushed by Teammate Dale Earnhardt Jr. drove low as the field neared the finish line to edge out Clint Bowyer, by two-thousandths of a second, in Sunday's Aaron's 499 Cup race.

"I thought we were in trouble," said Johnson. "Junior and I got disconnected with two to go. I talked with him on the radio and finally we got back together."

"He helped me win it. He made the decision that my car was the fastest to lead with and told me to stay in front of him."

Bowyer came oh so close, but had to settle for second.

"We did everything we could do," said Bowyer. "It was just circumstances. I saw them coming. If I had tried to block them it would have been hell."

Jeff Gordon finished third.

Johnson handed Earnhardt, who finished fourth, the checkered flag after his win.

"Well, I was more concerned about pushing him," said Earnhardt. "We couldn't stay together when I was leading, so as a teammate, I felt like it was better for me to push him."

"I told him to not to let off, let's give it all we've got."

Kevin Harvick, Carl Edwards, Greg Biffle, Mark Martin, David Gilliland, and Joey Logano were the remaining top-10 finishers.

The first 90 laps were run with just one caution flag for Brian Vickers' spin on lap 28. But the first big crash erupted on lap 90 when a huge puff of smoke erupted from David Ragan's car and then Kurt Busch tapped teammate Brad Keselowski, sending Keselowski spinning in a big pack of traffic and slamming into Marcos Ambrose.

Kurt Busch caused two different cars to spin out.

Kyle Busch spun out during lap 142. As he slid down the track he collected the No. 17 Ford driven by Matt Kenseth.

"I'm not sure what happened," said Kenseth. "The 18-car came down on us and hit us in the side. That ended our day."

Top-12 Chase contenders after 8 of 36: 1. Edwards-295, 2. Johnson-290, 3. Earnhardt-276, 4. Harvick-268, 5. Kurt Busch-267, 6. Kyle Busch-257, 7. Newman-253, 8. Kenseth-252, 9. Mon-

toya-246, 10. Bowyer-245, 11. Menard-242, 12. Stewart-240.

LOGANO PUSHES BUSCH ACROSS STRIPE

In a wild ending that had Mike Wallace's Chevrolet spinning upside down and landing on its roof, Kyle Busch won Saturday's Aaron's 312 Nationwide Series race at Talladega Superspeedway when a caution flag on Lap 124 froze the field.

Busch got the win on the second attempt at a green-white-checkered-flag finish that took the race seven laps past its scheduled distance at the 2.66-mile track. Busch's Joe Gibbs Racing teammate, Joey Logano, had just pushed Busch to the lead when Wallace's wreck brought out the record 11th caution of the race.

"I got hit like three times on the left side and I thought it was killed. I said it was killed," Busch remarked. "These guys did a great job putting it back together. The car doesn't look the best, but it was certainly the best right there at the end, especially with the guy that was pushing me."

Logano was credited with second place, followed by Joe Nemechek, Brad Keselowski and polesitter Elliott Sadler.

Trevor Bayne, Justin Allgaier, Dale Earnhardt Jr., Reed Sorenson, and Aric Almirola were the remaining top-10 finishers.

Top-10 leaders after 7 of 34: 1. Leffler-233, 2. Allgaier-231, 3. Sadler-228, 4. Stenhouse-225, 5. Sorenson-224, 6. Almirola-222, 7. Bayne-221, 8. Scott-206, 9. K. Wallace-184, 10. Nemechek-169

A huge 21-car chain-reaction crash on the backstretch after a Lap 88 restart thinned the field and collected several of the strongest cars, among them the No. 18 of Busch, the No. 1 of Jamie McMurray and the No. 66 of Steve Wallace.

Contact between Busch and Clint Bowyer started a spin that collected Michael Waltrip and sent half the field sliding and spinning out of control.

Waltrip blamed Sadler and McMurray who were separated on the track but were trying to hook up together in a two-car draft.

"It happened on the radio before the restart," Waltrip said. "The 2 (Sadler) decided that he would manipulate the restart so that the 1 could get behind him, and they could work together like they had



Jimmie Johnson

before. "It's the way you race, but the 1 and the 2 messing around got me crashed."

McMurray agreed that he and Sadler were trying to get back together.

"I really don't know what happened," McMurray said. "I was obviously trying to get back to Elliott—we worked together really well all day. Elliott was trying to get away from the 99 (Waltrip) so that I could get hooked up with him."

DALE JR SPEAKS OUT ON TALLADEGA RACING

Dale Earnhardt Jr. loves Talladega Superspeedway, but he hates the current two-car drafting.

"Y'all don't look at it and think it's strange?" he asked

"I'm hoping this kind of racing goes away fast so we don't have to talk about this no more. This is a mess. This is a bunch of crap."

"I think everybody thinks it's cool now because it's new and it's neat. Everybody's getting a big kick out of it. But over the long haul, man, it's not the best. It's not as good as 40 dudes in one pack, racing like hell, trying to get to the front. It's nowhere near as good as that."

"Give me that any day over this. Over the long haul, people will realize that. Once the newness of this wears off, how interesting this is and how unique it is, I think people will start to see."

Two-car drafting has been used at Talladega since it was repaved, but not to the extent it has been used this year. However, the tandem racing proved to be the way to race in February's Daytona 500, and in Saturday's Nationwide race.

"Look at the guys who's won here in the last couple of trips," Earnhardt continued. "They're good. They're talented. They won because they're talented. Nine times out of 10, that's going to be the case. Trevor Bayne won the Daytona 500. He's got enough talent to do it. He was smart and used his head and did what he needed to do."

"Anybody who wins, you've got to do something right to make it happen. It's not just a buffoon riding around there. You can't discredit what anybody's ever done to win a race, no matter what track it is or where it's at."

"I think NASCAR's doing what they think is right, and I don't want to say what they're doing is wrong, because I don't know. I don't know whether I'm right or wrong. I just know what I prefer and what I like. It's my opinion. I'm entitled to one. Everybody's got one. I don't know what's right or wrong."

Yesterday's Moments: Construction began on Talladega Superspeedway (it was then known as the Alabama International Motor Speedway) on May 23, 1968.

Weekend Racing: It is the Easter Weekend. NASCAR does not race on Easter Sunday. There will be Nationwide and Truck racing at Nashville on Friday and Saturday. The Cup teams are off until April 30.

Fri., Apr. 22, Camping World Truck race, 5 of 24, Starting time: 8 pm; TV: Speed.

Sat., Apr. 23, Nationwide Series race 8 of 34, Starting time: 3 pm; TV: ESPN.

All times are Eastern.

Racing Trivia Question: Where is Trevor Bayne's hometown?

Last Week's Question: Which Cup team does Martin Truex drive for? He drives the No. 56 Toyota for Michael Waltrip Racing.

You may contact the Racing Reporter at hodge@race500.com. NT(Apr20,C)Jae

Appalachian Trail closed to camping between Neels Gap and Jarrard Gap

Alerts & Notices
Appalachian trail closed to camping between Neels Gap and Jarrard Gap area(s): Appalachian Trail in Georgia, Byron Herbert Reece Trail, Dockery; Lake Recreation Area, Duncan Ridge Trail, Lake Winfield Scott Campground, Springer Mountain Trailhead, Woody Gap Trailhead.

The Appalachian Trail between Neels Gap and Jarrard Gap is closed to camping

Gold Wing Riders donate Easter baskets for kids



Georgia Gold Wing Road Riders Association Chapter J of Hiawassee recently spent time collecting toys and candy for local families struggling in these difficult times. The members held a garage sale, raffles and a dinner to raise money to purchase items for this project. On Saturday, April 9th, the members gathered to assemble Easter Baskets for the children

in our area.

They made 170 baskets to be distributed to family resource departments in Towns and Union Counties in Georgia, as well as, Cherokee County in North Carolina. The membership of the Chapter J "Blue Jays" comes from these counties.

The group had such a great response in this endeavor

that they will now be launching an effort to raise money and gather supplies to put together "Backpacks for Kids" prior to the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year. Anyone wishing to help in this project is encouraged to contact the Chapter Charity Coordinator, Melanie Walton, at (828) 360-4285 or the Chapter Director, Peg Jones at (678) 464-7340. NT(Apr20,Y)SH

VFW Golf League

The VFW Golf League kicked off their 2011 Season at Chatuge Shores Golf Course on Thursday, April 14th. Not only was the weather beautiful, we had a great turn out.

At the end of the round we had two teams coming in with a score of 67, -5 under par. So, we had to start with the number 1 handicap hole and work backwards to come up with the winning team. It came down to the number 2 handicap hole with the winning team birdening that hole #9.

The winning team was J.C. Berrong, Mel Halfon, Frank Geddings and Glenda Geddings. We do have to mention the runner ups being Bill Kiser, Robert Lyle, Glenn Greenwald, J.T. Garrett. Great job to all.

Looking for new members. Want to have fun and play golf with great people? Look no further than the VFW Golf League. Men and women wanted. Please call Myron Grizio 706-896-3183 or Glenda Geddings 706-896-7992. T(Apr20,G2)SH

2nd annual Ramp'n On The River

Hiawassee River Trout Lodge will be hosting Ramp'n On The River on Saturday, April 30, 2011 at the pavilion, from 11 AM till 5 PM. This will be the 2nd annual Ramp Festival, celebrating Appalachian culture.

Ramp'n On The River will have Live Music, Square Dancing, Horseshoe Competitions, Clogging, River Duck Race, Hoedown and lots of Great Food. The menu will consist of Ham, Fried Taters with Ramps, Cole Slaw, Cornbread, Tea and Desert: Moon Pie- \$8 per plate. Everyone is invited to join the fun.

Hiawassee River Trout Lodge Cabin Rentals has hosted several great events in the past and a spokes person for the trout lodge stated they plan to have many more for their visitors, the folks in Hiawassee and all surrounding area.

Hiawassee River Trout Lodge invites everyone to attend this event. If you need further information call (706) 896-7400 or contact us at hiawassee@windstream.net. T(Apr20,K1)SH

BCM Golf Tournament

The BCM Golf Tournament will be held on April 30, 2011 at the Butternut Creek Golf Course, Blairsville, GA. The event is Shotgun/Bestball.

Registration will begin at 7 a.m., 4 person scramble starts at 8 a.m. Entry fee is \$65 per player which includes 18 holes, cart, lunch and a free mulligan. Extra Mulligans are available at \$5 each (max 2 per player).

There will be prizes for: Closest to the Pin, Longest Drive and Winning Team.

For more information or pre-register call Stacey 706-781-7143 or Jeanette 706-781-5027. NT(Apr20,Z5)CA

Here comes Peter Cottontail

Here comes Peter Cottontail, hoppin' down the bunny trail, hip-a-dy, hop-a-dy, Easter's on its way! That's right boys and girls! The Easter Bunny is coming to the Towns County Recreation Ball Fields on Saturday, April 23, 2011, and Egg Hunt begins promptly at 10:30 a.m.

The Towns County Recreation Department, along with United Community Bank in Hiawassee, will be hosting its annual Easter Egg Hunt. All boys and girls through age 9 are invited to come out and join in on all the fun.

The hunt will be held on the recreation ball fields located on Highway 76 just east of Hiawassee. Entrance to the ball field complex will be through the upper gate - located near the Georgia Mountain Fair office. The hunt will begin promptly at 10:30 a.m.

TCES Reading Recovery to hold corn hole tournament



Mrs. Patty Dayton, Mrs. Sara Rogers, Bria Chastain, Brack Burrell, Micah Gibson, and Jeremiah Hooper.

The tournament will be held, April the 23rd at the High School Track starting at 11:30. Teachers, Sara Rogers and Patty Dayton are raising money to purchase new books for the Reading Recovery students and the 1st grade book room. Reading Recovery is a 1st grade reading program that enhances a student's skills and strategies.

There will be 3 divisions: Men's, Women's, and Co-ed. The cost is 20 dollars per team

and the Co-ed division will be 10 dollars per team.

Cash prizes will be awarded to 1st and 2nd place winners in all three divisions. Food and soft drinks will be sold. Children are welcome to play on the Elementary playground.

Come out the school campus after the Recreation Department Egg Hunt and enjoy an afternoon of fellowship and fun raising money for our students. T(Apr20,G2)SH

Face Mug Party at Union Powersports

On Saturday, April 23 at 10 a.m., Union Powersports in Blairsville, GA will be hosting a Face Mug Party.

Rob from Smoke in the Mountains Pottery in Brass-town, NC will be the pottery expert on hand to guide both kids and parents on the "how to's" of putting a face on a mug. Rob has an uncanny, humorous manner in which he guides participants on the details on making the various face parts. After the face is on the mug, Rob takes the time to put the handle on, glaz-

ing it and firing it to make it cure hard. You need no prior experience and everything you need will be provided.

So whether you're creating an Easter Bunny mug or one that resembles yourself, you be assured to have a great time and walk away with a treasure that will last a lifetime. Kids mugs are \$10 and adults will be \$15.

Make sure you reserve your spot today... for further information contact Doc at Union Powersports 706-745-9671. NT(Apr20,Z9)CA

Auditions for Summer Performing Arts Camp

Hiawassee's 4th Summer Performing Arts Camp is sure to be another smashing success. The camp, run by performing artist Robbie Dernehl, is unlike any other camp around. Robbie actually writes the story to be performed around the children who attend the camp and tailor makes parts for them. Because of this, children from as far away as Atlanta, Asheville, NC, and Florida come to attend. The staff is made up of professionals with over 65 years of combined experience in the arts. Boys and

girls ages 5 thru 14 will have the opportunity to be kings, queens, palace guards, court jesters, talking cats and mice, and many other characters.

The camp will end with 3 full musical shows and include full costumes, lighting and special song and dance numbers chosen especially for this production.

Private auditions will be held on Wednesday afternoons during the month of April at the Towns County Recreation Center. For an appointment call 706-897-1041. T(Apr20,F)SH

Local dancers perform center court!



Local dance students, Aspen Fine (age 10) of Hayesville, NC and Palmer Dernehl (age 12) of Hiawassee, GA along with other talented dancers from Studio 1 Performing Arts School in Blue Ridge, GA were invited to perform center court of the Atlanta Hawks vs. Boston Celtics basketball game, televised on ESPN on April 1, 2011. No, this was not an April fool's joke! Aspen and Palmer have been taking dance since they were 3 years old. Aspen recently auditioned for the local Who's Got Talent and has made the final cut for the top 20 acts of the competition for her original dance piece, "I Can Only Imagine". In addition to dance, Palmer is an accomplished vocalist. The Studio 1 dancers performed in front of a sell out crowd of 22,000. There were 3 talented group of dancers representing Studio 1 ranging from ages 5-14 years. Studio 1 Performing Arts School has been in business for 26 years. They offer top quality training in the disciplines of ballet/poente, jazz, tap, lyrical, hip-hop, voice, theatrical dance, tumbling, competition level dance as well as adult classes. Owner and director Kim

Haight is proud of her current students as well as her former students. Ms. Haight has had the privilege of training two other local residents, Andrew Jones (Hayesville recreational department) and Heidi Phillips-Aaron (Hayesville elementary teacher). Ms. Haight took Jones and Phillips-Aaron to perform on the McMahan's Star Search on National television. Additionally, over the past 26 years, many Studio 1 students have performed at the Orange Bowl in Miami, Florida, auditioned for America's Who's Got Talent, and some students have even gone on to work for Disney and are continuing a career in dance. Because of the dedication of the teachers, students and parents, Studio 1 has been invited to perform at the Atlanta Hawks game since 1990. This is due to the top performances they produce year after year.

Auditions for Star South Dance Company (ages 5 & up) and S1 Hip Hop Crew will be on May 19th at 4 p.m. at Studio 1. For more information on Studio 1 Performing Arts Center, please call Kim Haight at 706-632-3334 or www.studio1performingarts.com. T(Apr20,F4)SH