



Towns County Herald's Sporting News



NASCAR 2009 *By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter*

THRILLING WIN FOR JOHNSON AT DOVER

DOVER, Del.—Jimmy Johnson's Sunday win in the Autism 400 at Dover was nothing less than incredible.

Johnson, who led 298 laps of the 400-lap race, took on four tires with 30 laps to go. Many other teams only got two. The two extra tires cost Johnson 11 positions. He went from first to 11th.

It was a lot of ground to make up and a lot of cars to pass. But Johnson put his No. 48 Lowe's Chevrolet in overdrive and caught the leader Tony Stewart six laps from the finish.

Johnson and Stewart raced side-by-side for the next three times around the one-mile oval, and treated the fans to some exciting racing. But near the end, Johnson's four new tires made the difference. He was able to pass Stewart, who had only two new tires, three laps later.

"I really had to suck it up and get going there at the end," said Johnson. "But the only reason I could do it was because we had an awesome race car today. We've had a lot of fast cars, but this was a special one."

"At the end I just had to go. I got to running around at the top of the track with Tony and had a heck of a time."

Stewart's runner-up finish allowed him to take over as the new Sprint Cup points leader.

"The fastest car won the race today for sure," said Stewart. "I'm just excited for our guys that we're able to run as good as we do. We really didn't have a second-place car, but my guys on the pit crew did an awesome job there at the end and got me some track position."

Top-10 finishers: 1. Johnson, 2. Stewart, 3. Greg Biffle, 4. Matt Kenseth, 5. Kurt Busch, 6. Kasey Kahne, 7. Carl Edwards, 8. Ryan Newman, 9. Casey Mears, 10. Mark Martin.

Polesitter David Reutimann finished 18th.

Top-12 Chase Contenders after 13 of 26: 1. Stewart-1853, 2. J. Gordon-1807, 3. Johnson-1789, 4. Kurt Busch-1762, 5. Newman-1680, 6. Kyle Busch-1634, 7. Hamlin-1630, 8. Kenseth-1625, 9. Biffle-1618, 10. Burton-1587, 11. Edwards-1582, 12. Martin-1567

KESELOWSKI GETS DOVER NATIONWIDE WIN

Brad Keselowski raced to his first Nationwide Series victory of the season at Dover

on Saturday. Top-10 leaders after 12 of 35: 1. Kyle Busch-1836, 2. Edwards-1796, 3. Leffler-1683, 4. Logano-1670, 5. Keselowski-1663, 6. Keller-1434, 7. Gaughan-1364, 8. Ragan-1358, 9. Bliss-1355, 10. Allgaier-1344

SCOTT IS DOVER TRUCK WINNER

Brian Scott became the sixth different driver in seven races to win a Craftsman Truck Series race, as he took Saturday's AAA Insurance 200 at Dover. Top-10 leaders: 1. Hornaday-1056, 2. Skinner-1029, 3. Crafton-1027, 4. Kyle Busch-1000, 5. Scott-949, 6. Bodine-946, 7. Cook-920, 8. McCumbee-916, 9. Starr-903, 10. Benson-887

JUNIOR HAS NEW CREW CHIEF

Rick Hendrick has replaced Tony Eury Jr., crew chief and cousin of Dale Earnhardt Jr.. Eury was reassigned to Hendrick Motorsports' research and development group. Lance McGrew, who has worked with several NASCAR Sprint Cup and Nationwide Series drivers over the years, was named as Earnhardt's interim crew chief starting with the Cup race at Pocono next weekend.

Brian Whitesell, manager of Earnhardt's No. 88 Chevrolet team, called the race this past weekend at Dover. Earnhardt Jr. managed a respectable 12th-place finish.

Pressure on Hendrick to make the change had been building in recent weeks, but he didn't act until after Earnhardt finished 40th in the 43-car field Monday in the Coca-Cola 600.

"The frustration after Charlotte just reached a point with all of us that we said, let's try something different," Hendrick said in a teleconference.

"This year, our goal is to make the Chase and we think we can do it. Some guys are going to have to have some bad luck and we're going to have to run a ton better."

Hendrick said Eury has "tremendous talent" and that "we want him to be part of our organization for a long time."

But Earnhardt's struggle created "probably the most pressure that I've felt in racing since I don't know when," Hendrick said. "Hopefully we're going to ease some of that. We just need a fresh start."

Junior met with report-

ers at Dover and said the pain of his split with cousin Tony Eury Jr. "may linger for a long time."

"When you're at Hendrick Motorsports you're in the best equipment, and you should win races," said Junior. "And if you don't, that makes for a hard argument that you had any business being there in the first place."

"We've got to work hard the next six months to give ourselves that argument."

"And I really think we can do it."

"Everyone on that team knows we've got the microscope on us. That's sometimes a good thing, sometimes a bad thing."

"If you don't run top-five or top-10 every week, you're not that good."

"Most everyone else in the field doesn't get that kind of scrutiny, doesn't get ridden so hard."

"But we know those are the stakes, and that when we show up at the race track we have to live up to those expectations."

Meanwhile the issue over Jeremy Mayfield's drug suspension by NASCAR grew even more complex.

Mayfield and his attorney went to court Friday in attempt to get a restraining order against NASCAR. The judge denied Mayfield's request because Mayfield and his team did not show up for the Dover race.

Mayfield said he had been taking two medications; one was Claritin-D and the other was a prescription drug

for Anxiety and Attention Deficit Disorder.

NASCAR said he had tested positive for a third drug, which they labeled extremely dangerous. Mayfield said he had not been told about the third drug, which could have been amphetamines.

In the suit, Mayfield alleged that NASCAR did not follow proper testing procedures and failed to give him a chance to prove his innocence. He even said one of the samples had been tampered with before it was tested.

Another hearing has been set for next Wednesday.

Weekend Racing: All three of NASCAR's major series' will be at different tracks. The Craftsman Trucks are at the 1.5-mile Texas Motor Speedway, while the Nationwide Series will be at Nashville Superspeedway. The Sprint Cup teams travel to Pocono, Pennsylvania.

Fri., June 5, Craftsman Trucks Winstar World Casino 300, Starting time: 8:30 p.m. (EDT); TV: Speed.

Sat., June 6, Nationwide Series Federated Auto Parts 300, Starting time: 7 p.m. (EDT); TV: ESPN2.

Sun., June 7, Sprint Cup Pocono 500, Starting time: 12:30 p.m. (EDT); TV: TNT.

Racing Trivia Question: How many children does Jeff Gordon have?

Last Week's Question: Where is Tony Stewart's home town? Answer: Rushville, Indiana.

You may contact the Racing Reporter at: hodge@earthlink.net.



Jimmy Johnson, winner of Sunday's Dover Sprint Cup race



Local Racing Action

by Carl Vanzura

Large car count thrills Tri-County crowd

Under the best weather of the year, the cars and crowd returned to Tri-County Race Track in record numbers. The fans were not disappointed as racing was door to door all night.

The Southeastern Sportsman Series rolled in to town as the traveling series placed 21 cars on the super fast clay oval to vie for the \$1,200 first place money and huge trophy. David Conley from Franklin, NC lead the first 16 laps from the pole position until Tiger, GA's Wesley English made a high groove pass to take the lead.

Morganton, GA driver Bobby Panter then went to the high side to move through the pack and moved around Conley and Stephen Segars who was now in second place to take over that spot when the caution fell, moving Panter back to fourth. On the next lap Panter was involved in a wreck putting him out of the race.

The final 10 laps saw Segars make several challenges on English only to see the checkers fall ending his chance at victory. Rounding out the top 10 were Conley, Justin Sims, Jamie Oliver, Preston Crisp, Trig Parris, Jamie Lunsford, Mack English and Ricky Tallent.

Blairsville driver Jacob Grizzle made his first appearance at the "County" this year and blew the field away in the Nesmith Crate Series main event. His car was protested and the outcome will not be determined until Monday when Nesmith official tear the motor down. Randy Dillard, Brian Kinnersley, Jason Deal and Jacob Anderson Rounded out the top five.

Another first time visitor, Casey Cagle from Lawrenceville, GA won the highly competitive Modified Street feature as 15 cars took the green flag. Junior Whitmer, Heathor Taylor, Dale Fortner and Brandon Dills filled the top five positions.

Hiawassee driver Stephen Sofield made it five in a row in the Street Stock class as he led Josh Taylor, Charles Toomey, Harold Garrett and Joe Dockery across the stripe.

The Mini Stock feature saw 18 very competitive four cylinder cars take to the track to see who would come out on top. Sylvia, NC driver Justin Woodard made it to victory lane in his Mustang ahead of Lynn Burchfield, Ricky Dyer, Kasey Carter and June Cross.

Racing returned to Tri-County this Friday night with go karts and on Saturday with Super Late Models along with all six classes. In two weeks the popular Tennessee Thunder Series will be in action.

Racing action around the area also had good weather so some thrilling moment brought smile to many race fans. Jonathan Davenport bested 25 cars to win the Memorial Day special Monday night at Toccoa Speedway to take home \$1,000 for his efforts. The only information I have about Sugar Creek Raceway on Friday night is that Danny Ledford won the Super Late Model Race. I am sure that Johnny Chastain probably did well as did Brian Kinnersley. Chase Elliott ran his first dirt race at Boyd Speedway in Ringgold, GA and started 17th and finished seventh, a good job for the youngster. Ray Cook finished 12th at Florence Speedway in Kentucky among the 60 cars entered.



Colton made it two wins in a row Friday night.



Stephen Sofield won for the fifth time at Tri-County in his Chevy. Photos by Jack Appleget

Wild Facts: lowdown on toads

All toads are frogs, but not all frogs are toads. While most frogs have moist, smooth skin and long legs for leaping, typical toads have dry, warty skin and short legs for hopping. Despite common belief, touching toads does not result in warts; only viruses cause warts. But when toads are handled with any pressure, toxins may ooze from their skin as a defense mechanism. This

liquid sometimes causes mild irritation, especially if you rub your eyes or mouth after holding a toad. For this reason, either leave toads alone or be sure to wash your hands after handling them.

WILD Facts is a regular feature written by Linda May, a wildlife interpretive specialist with the Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division.



A hungry bear can ruin a camping trip

How to deter bears from taking up residence at campsites

Whether a summer camping trip or a stay at a cozy cabin in the woods, there's always a possibility for a black bear sighting or encounter in North Georgia. With more than 75 established campgrounds and an estimated 1,200-1,500 black bears in North Georgia, campers should always be aware and prepared for a black bear encounter. The key to preventing an unfavorable experience is to properly store food and garbage.

"Bears can become habituated to people when they are fed - whether intentional or not. When a bear knows it can get a 'free meal,' it will return again and again until eventually it loses its natural fear of humans. This is when the majority of human-bear conflicts occur and the bear is regarded a nuisance," explains Adam Hammond, wildlife biologist with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division.

Proper food storage while camping means that no food, drinks, coolers or garbage should be left out in the open and available to bears or other wildlife. Even non-food items

with strong odors, such as toothpaste, deodorant and soap should be secured. All food and scented items should be secured either inside a vehicle, or if backcountry camping, inside a knapsack and hoisted out of reach of bears and other wildlife.

Black bears commonly are found in three areas of the state - the north Georgia mountains, the Ocmulgee River drainage system in central Georgia and the Okefenokee Swamp in the southeastern part of the state. However, black bears can and do range over larger areas; especially in early spring and late summer, when natural food sources are scarce. Young male bears are also known to disperse in an effort to establish their own territory.

In urban and suburban areas, garbage, birdseed, and pet food are the most common bear attractants. In addition to properly storing food and garbage, homeowners in known bear areas are advised to bring pet food indoors and to remove bird feeders during the spring and late summer.

"The best and most ef-

fective way to resolve human-bear conflicts is to remove the attractant," says Hammond. "In most cases, that simply means making garbage, birdseed, pet food and other non-natural food items inaccessible."

Though the American black bear (Ursus americanus) is now considered the most common bear in North America and the only native bear found in Georgia, at one point the species was nearly eradicated from the state due to poaching and habitat loss.

Yet, because of sound wildlife management practices Georgia's current black bear population is healthy and estimated between 2,300 and 2,500 bears statewide.

For more information regarding black bears, visit www.georgiawildlife.com, contact a WRD Game Management office or call (770) 918-6416. The public also can visit their local library to check out a copy of an informational DVD entitled, "Where Bears Belong: Black Bears in Georgia."



Youth Football Registration

Registration for Towns County Youth Football will be held on June 6, June 13, June 20, June 27 and July 11 from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Field House located at the Towns County High School Football Field. The cost of registration is \$60.00. Each player will need to present the registration fee and a copy of the player's birth certificate upon registration. If the player played last year no birth cer-

tificate is required.

Towns County Youth Football along with the assistance of the Head and Assistant Football Coaches for the Towns County High School will also hold a mini camp on July 13 and July 14 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Towns County Soccer Field. There is no cost for this camp.

If you have any questions, you may contact Jimmy Smith at 706-896-2622 or 706-835-6176.

Herald's sports quote of the week

"You can't put a limit on anything. The more you dream, the farther you get."

- Michael Phelps, Olympic swimmer

Towns County Herald

Local sports covered by Carl Vanzura, Jim & Lisa Bryant, Jerry Kendall, Charles Duncan and Lowell Nicholson