



# Towns County Herald's Sporting News



## NASCAR 2009 *By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter*

### HAMLIN FINALLY WINS AT HOME TRACK

Richmond, Vir.-- Virginia native Denny Hamlin finally got a win at Richmond, where he had come so close, several times before. He dominated Saturday's Rock & Roll 400, finishing nearly two-seconds ahead of Kurt Busch.

"I mentioned before that I wanted to win this race before I won a (Daytona) 500, but now, of course, I know how special that race is to everyone," said Hamlin. "But this one in particular, was especially gratifying after all the heartbreak. It makes it more gratifying to win now."

"I was nervous for the pit crew. I knew what my nerves could do to me. I tried to do everything I could to get in the stall right, and not lose the race on pit road because that's where we lost it a couple times here. So I was nervous for those guys. I knew their eyeballs were popping out of their head to make sure they didn't make a mistake, and they just did what they had to do."

Hamlin, who had already locked up a berth in NASCAR's Chase For the Championship before the race, entered the event with nothing to lose and a no-holds-barred approach. Starting third, he needed only four laps to gain the lead and he went on to lead the field, seven times for a race-high 299 of 400 laps.

Hamlin's only serious challenge came from Jeff Gordon, who led five times for 97 laps and continued to hound Hamlin until an altercation with Clint Bowyer cost Gordon several positions.

Top-10 finishing order: 1. Denny Hamlin, 2. Kurt Busch, 3. Jeff Gordon, 4. Mark Martin, 5. Kyle Busch, 6. Clint Bowyer, 7. Brian Vickers, 8. Sam Hornish, 9. Kevin Harvick, 10. Ryan Newman.

Brian Vickers finished seventh and clinched the final Chase spot. Hamlin's teammate Kyle Busch fell eight points short. Matt Kenseth, the 2002 Cup champion also failed to make the cutoff for the first time.

With the points being adjusted for the last 10 races, Mark Martin is the leader.

"I'm certainly going to enjoy that for a week here," said Martin. "I feel like a whole new person, huge weight off my shoulders. It's just like

I said before, to make this thing is the icing and now we get to go race for the cake.

"Of course, I'm living in it now, but to me, this is certainly the best year of my career, the most fun, and since Chicago, some of that fun has been sort of smothered out by all of the pressure. We are in, we are out, we are in, all that. But the thing that I'm excited about is our race team has been so strong since Chicago. The cars have gotten better and better on the racetrack, and Chicago, Indy, Bristol, Michigan, and here, I don't think we ever ran outside the Top-5, and those are the kind of race cars and the kind of effort that you have to give to be a championship contender. So we'll see how things fare here."

"But anybody in this Chase can win. Every team that's in it is capable of putting together a ten-race row. That's all it takes is the magic ten races, and anybody can win it."

Tony Stewart was none too pleased with his 17th-place finish.

"I'm disappointed with my effort tonight," he said "I made mistakes as a driver that I normally cuss people for doing, but from an ownership standpoint, I'm ecstatic to have us locked in and extremely proud for Ryan (Newman) and everybody on the U.S. Army team to get themselves locked in."

Jimmie Johnson, the defending Cup champion, finished the race in 11th, but is third in points heading into the Chase.

"I'm optimistic and feel we have a very good chance," said Johnson. "We led a bunch

at Michigan and didn't get it done. Bristol we were fast and had troubles. Right now we have the speed."

Carl Edwards dropped four spots and is now 9th in points.

"This season is so much different than last season," he said. "We had six wins or something at this point last season. Right now, we have struggled a little bit as a group, at Roush Fenway, so I feel like this is our opportunity to only be a few points behind the leader, kind of gather all of our energy and all of the things we have been working on and head into these last ten races full force. So I'm real excited about it and hopefully we can have some good runs and get back up there the way we know we can run."

2009 Chase Contenders for the Sprint Cup Championship: 1. Martin-5040, 2. Stewart-5030, 3. Johnson-5030, 4. Hamlin-5020, 5. Kahne-5020, 6. J. Gordon-5010, 7. Kurt Busch-5010, 8. Vickers-5010, 9. Edwards-5000, 10. Newman-5000, 11. Montoya-5000, 12. Biffle-5000

Neither of the three Richard Childress drivers, Jeff Burton, Clint Bowyer, or Kevin Harvick made this year's Chase.

Top-10 Nationwide leaders after 27 of 35: 1. Kyle Busch-4379, 2. Edwards-4178, 3. Keselowski-4082, 4. Leffler-3599, 5. Allgaier-3152, 6. S. Wallace-3132, 7. Keller-2991, 8. Gaughan-2957, 9. Bliss-2950, 10. McDowell-2902

Top-10 Camping World Truck leaders after 18 of 25: 1. Hornaday-2875, 2. Crafton-

2678, 3. Skinner-2662, 4. Scott-2457, 5. Bodine-2389, 6. Braun-2372, 7. Starr-2310, 8. Peters-2307, 9. Sauter-2297, 10. Crawford-2297

### 2010 START TIMES TO BE MORE CONSISTENT

NASCAR races are expected to have more consistent starting times by the 2010 season. Officials confirmed they are working with the networks to standardize starting times that fans have criticized for years. Atlanta Motor Speedway president Ed Clark told reporters last week that the plan is to run most afternoon races at 1:00pm/et and most night races at 7:30pm/et.

Weekend Racing: It's on to Loudon, New Hampshire for the Camping World Trucks and Sprint Cup teams. The Nationwide Series has an off week. This will be the first of 10 races to determine the 2009 Sprint Cup Championship. The season will end November 22, at Homestead, Fla.

Sat., Sept. 19, Camping World Helluva Good 200, race 19 of 25. Starting time: 2:30 pm (EDT); TV: Speed.

Sun., Sept. 20, Sprint Cup Sylvania 300, race 27 of 36. Starting time: 1 pm (EDT); TV: ABC.

Racing Trivia Question: Who was the youngest NASCAR driver to win a Cup championship?

Last Week's Question: Richard Petty has 200 Cup wins. Who is the number two driver? Answer: David Pearson with 105 victories.

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

## Local Racing Action

by Carl Vanzura



Southeastern Sportsman feature goes to Jamie Oliver

The return of the Southeastern Sportsman Series to Tri-County Race Track saw 19 of the 23 cars that qualified last Saturday when the rain came, back to go after the \$1200 first place money. Hayesville's Charlie Parker and Peachtree driver Jamie Oliver started on the front row and raced that way for all 35-laps with Oliver taking the win. Parker drove to the inside of Oliver several times, but could not pull the pass off. Trig Parris made a valiant effort to get around both off the front runners.

Danny Ledford, Bobby Panter and Devin Dillbeck raced for fourth until a flat tire put Ledford out of the hunt allowing Panter to take fourth and Dillbeck fifth. Sixth through 19th saw Preston Crisp, Stephen Segars, Jason Payne, Ledford, Jamie Lunsford, Mack English, Daniel Wilson, Winford Morris, David Conley, Doug Sneed, David McCoy, Wesley English, Randy Dillard and Barnet Mayfield. Doug English, Jonathan Cope, Ronald Woods and Chris Henson did not return for the race.

For the second week in a row, Copperhill's Jason Deal edged out Jacob Anderson at the finish line stripe, taking the win on the last lap. Filling out the top five were Jacob Grizzle, Kevin Bradshaw and Kevin Sutton.

In an action packed Modified Street main event, Morganton driver Justin Thomas held off the challenge of Greg Sudderth, Ryan Stillwell, Brad Thomas and Jim Twigg.

Murphy driver Jeremy Woody had to race hard to win the Stock Street feature over Kurt Kelly, Steven Sofield, Harold Garrett and Josh Roberts.

Andrews Mini Stock driver Adam Creekmore battled Sylva's Justin Woodard to take the win in a strong field. Franklin Burk, Ricky Dyer and Shawn Robinson rounded out the top five.

Next up, Tri-County will run Saturday September 19 for the last points race in the 2009 season. They will return on September 26th with a make up for the rained out Georgia Mini Sprint Series race.

Bart Hartman won the biggest race covered by all dirt track racers when he after many tries won the World 100 at Eldora Speedway in Rossburg, Ohio. The race paid \$42,000, but I have heard more than one driver say, it is the trophy that they want to win. It must mean something because for the Dream at the same track, they had 92 cars race for \$100,000 and 172 showed up for this race that paid \$42,000. Ray Cook qualified 10th, made the race and finished 18th. Jonathan Davenport qualified 15th but had problems in the heats and missed the show.

A bunch of the tracks were off this week. Jamie Perry won at Cleveland Speedway. Lee Sutton took his third win in the last five weeks at Dixie Speedway



A field of 23 cars started the Southeastern Sportsman feature Thursday night. Photo by Jack Appleget



2009 Chase Drivers: Back row: L-R: Tony Stewart, Carl Edwards, Greg Biffle, Mark Martin, Jimmie Johnson, Jeff Gordon. Kneeling: Juan Montoya, Ryan Newman, Kasey Kahne, Kurt Busch, Denny Hamlin, Brian Vickers

## Dragons take first ToGA Softball Tournament

JIM BRYANT

Sports Writer

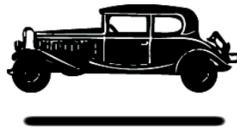
*Dragons and Rebels battle through nine before decision*

It took two days and a final outing of nine innings be-

fore the Pickens County Lady Dragons garnered the huge softball trophy. Eight teams from around the region played at both the Towns County and Young Harris College fields over the two day Top of Georgia Softball Tournament.

Leading 2-0 over the

Fannin County Lady Rebels in the seventh it looked like trophy time for Pickens County but the Rebels rallied to tie the game at 2-2, forcing two extra innings before the Dragons could plate the final run for the 3-2 championship win in nine long innings.



## Middle School Lady Indians say thank you

The TCMS Lady Indians Girls Basketball Team would like to say "Thank You" to all the family, friends, businesses, and community for supporting them in their fundraiser this summer. The Lady Indians were raising money, through a t-shirt sponsorship, to attend three team basketball camps this summer which included a camp in Pickens County, Clemson University and Brenau University. Coach Nelson carried 17 girls to camp and was very pleased with their results. "We played extremely well. The girls are beginning to learn each other's style of play and the team is coming together," Coach Nelson said. She also said that the team couldn't have done it without the support of the parents who helped with the



fundraiser. The Lady Indians wore the t-shirts to their last camp and will be wearing them during the season. Once again, the Lady Indians want to thank

all the family and friends for supporting them. The team would like to recognize the businesses and community sponsors below.

- Davenport Transportation
- Tree Tops Country Store
- Ga. Mtn. Farmer's Market
- Shake Healthy
- Moschetto's
- Blue Ridge Mtn. EMC
- Gibby Furniture
- A to Z Outlet
- Barrett Insurance
- Always Christmas
- McConnell Baptist Church
- Winn Landscaping
- North Ga. Family Medicine
- Synergy Health
- Speed Hunter Construction
- Ga. Mt. Restaurant
- Scrubs and More
- L & L Concrete Pumping
- Deer Lodge
- Davenport's Body Shop
- Lowe's Body Shop
- Anderson's
- Tammi Adair Hair Salon
- Kimsey & Wright Dental Lab
- Dare to Be Different
- Mossy Bottom Café
- Hedden Const. Co.
- Davenport Insurance
- Towns Co. Fire Dept.

- CB & T
- Bear Tanning and Day Spa
- Cleveland Took & Design
- Underwood's Construction
- Sparkle & Shine
- Happy Dayz Diner
- Gracies
- Cash Back Title Loans
- Holiday Inn Express
- Big Al's Pizza
- Ingles of Hiawassee
- Timberlake Builders
- Jay's Medical Equipment
- Time Out Photography
- Carol's Florist
- Penland's Construction
- Southland Pawn
- Service Master
- C & J Mountain Outfitters
- Parker Brother's Concrete
- Hayesville Well Drilling
- Asiano's
- Hayesville Trailer Sales
- Benny's Sanitation
- Spike's Vacuum Shop
- Superior Paints
- Century 21 Scenic
- Towns County Emergency 911
- Towns Co. Road Dept.

- J. McCarter Trucking
- Bear Nails
- Adam's Acoustics
- Mary Ann's
- Young Harris Florist
- Campus Café
- Hometown Properties
- Havoline Express Lube
- Goin' Postal
- McDonald's
- Smoke Rings BBQ
- Mountain Graphics
- Harrison Engraving
- Pro Therapy
- Something Special
- Jason Ledford, DDS
- Misty's Produce
- Bank of Hiawassee
- Larry's Insulation
- Mountain Realty
- Jack's Barber Shop
- JM Drilling
- Sean Thomas Tire
- Tangles Salon
- Sunny Bay Car Wash
- Fun World
- Marathon
- PCS
- Towns County EMS



Pickens County Lady Dragons, Champions 2009



Fannin County Lady Rebels Runner-Up 2009.