

One More Race For Johnson



Jimmie Johnson

By Gerald Hodges
THE RACING REPORTER

PHOENIX, Ariz. – Sunday's Sprint Cup race was supposed to be a Duel in The Sun, but no one told Jimmie Johnson, who led four times for 238 of the 312 laps, and at the end, Johnson's margin of victory was nearly two seconds over Jeff Burton.

"We could have been down after losing all the points last week, but we came in here to qualify well, race well and have great pit stops. That's what we did, and that's all we needed from our guys," said Johnson.

"We saw at Texas that anything can happen, and we're going out next week to do the same thing we did today. We won't be racing conservatively, because when you're in the middle of the pack, that's the worst place to be."

Johnson came to Phoenix with a 73-point lead over his teammate Mark Martin.

He left town with a 108-point lead. All Johnson has to do is finish 25th or better next week at Homestead, and he will become the first driver to win four consecutive Sprint Cup championships.

Much of the credit for Johnson's success goes to Chad Knaus, the crew chief on Johnson's No. 48 Chevrolet.

"We try to do what we did today every race," said Knaus. "But we knew we had to come to Phoenix and have a solid run. I know Mark had us in his sights, but we were able to stay just ahead of him, and that's what we needed to do."

If Johnson gets his fourth Cup championship, it will be the ninth one for Rick Hendrick.

"It's kind of tough to watch teammates race each other, but winning the championship is

what we start out to do at the beginning of the year," said Hendrick. "All the guys have shared information all year. We go to Texas, Jimmie gets wrecked and all the guys from the other teams helped get his car back together. That's what got us here."

Mark Martin ran up front most of the race and finished fourth.

"It was a great effort by this race team today," said Martin. "We gave it everything we had. The car was a little vulnerable on the restarts, and we lost some spots. The car was very good on the long runs."

"I thought we could get to Jimmie with 35-to-go, then it just got tight and fizzled out."

Jeff Gordon finished ninth and is now 169 points behind Johnson.

"I know at the start, Mark and I were able to drive right to the front. I thought we were going to be great, but the cars just got away from us," said Gordon.

Dale Earnhardt Jr. had another rough weekend. During the middle of the race, he lost control of his car and slipped down onto the Turn 4 apron, collecting Tony Stewart, Matt Kenseth, Ryan Newman and seven other drivers. He finished 35th.

Top-10 finishers: 1. Johnson, 2. Jeff Burton, 3. Denny Hamlin, 4. Mark Martin, 5. Martin Truex Jr., 6. Kurt Busch, 7. Clint Bowyer, 8. Juan Montoya, 9. Jeff Gordon, 10. David Reutimann

Top-12 Chase contenders after 35 of 36: 1. Johnson-6492, 2. Martin-6384, 3. J. Gordon-6323, 4. Kurt Busch-6281, 5. Stewart-6207, 6. Montoya-6203, 7. Biffle-6171, 8. Hamlin-6140, 9. Newman-6081, 10. Kahne-6016, 11. Edwards-5972, 12. Vickers-5826

Edwards wins race, Busch must wait

Carl Edwards dominated on the way to winning Saturday's Nationwide race at Phoenix, denying Kyle Busch the championship, but now all Busch has to do is start next week and he will win his first Nationwide championship.

While Busch has enjoyed the kind of Nationwide campaign that most of his competitors would envy, he hasn't enjoyed finishing second so often. As far as he's concerned, his series-high eight victories have been somewhat tainted by the fact that he has finished second a whopping 11 times.

"I've wished that we would have been further ahead than

where we are right now," Busch said of the points standings. "I would have liked to have wrapped the championship up a few weeks earlier, but we are where we are. Given the 11 second-place finishes, it's tough, and it's frustrating when you get those, but you know it's a good points day. You know after you recognize it on the plane ride home ... it was a good day, but you're still mad you didn't get to take the trophy home."

Top-10 leaders after 34 of 35: 1. Kyle Busch-5487, 2. Edwards-5297, 3. Keselowski-5242, 4. Lefler-4431, 5. Bliss-3960, 6. Allgaier-3946, 7. S. Wallace-3860, 8. Keller-3831, 9. Gaughan-3784, 10. Annett-3498

Hornaday gets record fourth title

Ron Hornaday clinched his fourth Truck championship after finishing fourth at Phoenix, and at 51 years of age, became NASCAR's oldest champion.

Hornaday raced conservatively in order to maintain his 197-point lead over Matt Crafton, the second-place driver in points.

"I knew that all we needed to do was come home in the top five, and that's what we did," said Hornaday.

Hornaday's truck owner, Kevin Harvick won the race.

Top-10 leaders after 24 of 25: 1. Hornaday-3817, 2. Crafton-3602, 3. Skinner-3452, 4. Bodine-3277, 5. Sauter-3193, 6. Scott-3180, 7. Braun-3168, 8. Starr-3125, 9. Peters-3124, 10. Crawford-3049

Not all is well with France family

Like all families, Brian France has his own personal problems that he would like to sweep under the family carpet. France, the NASCAR chairman filed a civil complaint against his ex-wife, Megan France, last year, a few months after the couple divorced in Florida. They married in California in 2005.

France's lawyers persuaded Mecklenburg County, N.C., Judge Todd Owens to seal the court file from public inspection, an unusual move in a court system that typically allows widespread access to courtrooms and documents. On Friday, France's attorneys petitioned a Mecklenburg judge to bar the public from the courtroom.

We'll have more on this as it unfolds, because even NASCAR's chairman shouldn't be above public scrutiny.

Weekend racing: The final race of the season will be held this weekend at the 1.5-mile Homestead-Miami Speedway and involves all three of NASCAR's major series.

Friday, November 20, Camping World Trucks Ford 200, starting time: 7:30 p.m. (EDT); TV: Speed Channel.

Saturday, November 21, Nationwide Series Ford 300, starting time: 4 p.m. (EDT); TV: ESPN2.

Sunday, November 22, Sprint Cup Ford 400, starting time: 2:30 p.m. (EDT); TV: ABC.

Racing trivia question: When did Homestead-Miami Speedway open?

Last week's question: Which driver has the most Sprint Cup championships? Answer: Richard Petty and Dale Earnhardt Sr. each have seven championships.

Contact the Racing Reporter at: hodgesnews@earthlink.net.

Racing Roundup

By Brad Vores

As the 2009 racing season is in the books, it's that time of year when we rank the best of 2009 in all local divisions for the season. We will go over the final rankings in this column, but if you'd like to see the complete write-up on each driver for the season, please visit www.ijustwannarace.com.

In the 410 Sprint ranks, Greg Hodnett sits on top of the list for the season after his 10-win season that included three World of Outlaws wins at Williams Grove and a top-20 finish in the Knoxville Nationals.

Following Hodnett in order are Todd Shaffer, Stevie Smith, Cody Darrah, Brian Montieth, Daryn Pittman, Fred Rahmer, Lance Dewease, Mark Smith and Doug Esh.

Over in the 360/358 Sprint ranks, young URC racer JJ Grasso heads the list for 2009 after his first career URC title and six-win season. Trailing Grasso are Cory Haas, Pat Cannon, Brad McClelland, Nate Snyder, Dale Hamaker, Jeff Rohrbaugh, Davey Sammons, Bill Dietrich and Scott Geesey.

We put Jason Covert on top of the Late Model ranks this season as he scored nine wins on the year, including a Lucas Oil win and had numerous top-five finishes with the Outlaws and Lucas series.

Jamie Lathroum finished a close second in the final deal over Jeff Rine, Roy Deese Jr., Scott Haus, Josh Richards, DJ Myers, Jack Pencil, Jeremy Miller and Frankie Plessinger.

Carmen Perigo Jr. is the top Super Sportsman driver for 2009 ahead of Chad Criswell, Frankie Herr, Bobby Hockenberry, Scott Dellinger, Rich Eichelberger, Russ Mitten, Rick Barr, Paul Miller and Jason Fry.

And finally in the 358 Late Model ranks, we gave the Best of 2009 to Hagerstown champion Kyle Lear over Gene Knaub, Ashley Barrett, Jake Jones and Bobby Beard.

Keeping it short till next time. And as always e-mail hits me up at Bvores@comcast.net.

Philly Newspaper Creditors Seek To Delay Auction

PHILADELPHIA (AP) – Creditors trying to take over Philadelphia's two major newspapers hope to delay next week's scheduled bankruptcy auction while they challenge the bid rules.

The creditors want to use \$300 million owed them to bid on The Philadelphia Inquirer and Philadelphia Daily News.

A bankruptcy judge had upheld the right to "credit bid," making it likely the creditors would prevail. But the newspapers successfully appealed, and the creditors must now bid in cash.

Creditors include the Royal Bank of Scotland and the CIT Group. They seek to delay the auction while they appeal the latest order. A hearing is set for Thursday.

The newspapers are owned by local investors who want to keep them in local hands despite the February bankruptcy.

Bags Mule Deer



Colten Wilhelm of Fort Loudon killed this mule deer while on a hunting trip in Colorado with his buddy, Case Smith, also of Fort Loudon.

Financial Focus

Here's Your Year-end Investment Checklist

By Edward Jones Investments

We've pretty much seen it all this past year – a bear market, a long rally and even a period of neither-up-nor-down. But even though we've only got a few weeks left of 2009, you still have time to make some moves that can pay off for you in 2010 – and beyond.

Here are a few suggestions to consider:

"Max out" on your IRA – and make regular contributions next year. For the 2009 tax year, you can contribute up to \$5,000 to a traditional or Roth IRA, or \$6,000 if you're 50 or older. And you have until April 15, 2010, to fully fund your 2009 IRA. Of course, it's not always easy to come up with lump sums of money, but do whatever you can to make up for any shortfalls in your IRA for 2009. And in 2010, consider setting up automatic monthly contributions to your IRA – it's a much more efficient way to maximize a great retirement-savings vehicle.

Increase your 401(k) contributions. If your employer permits it, try to add more money to your 401(k) or other retirement plan before the year ends. By increasing your 401(k) contributions, you can lower your adjusted taxable income while you potentially build more resources for retirement.

Convert your traditional IRA to a Roth IRA. Depending on your individual situation, a Roth IRA, which offers the potential for tax-free growth, provided you meet certain conditions, may be a better choice for you than a traditional IRA, which offers the potential for growth on a tax-deferred basis. Consequently, if you meet eligibility limits, you may want to convert your traditional IRA to a Roth IRA. However, this conversion is likely going to be a "taxable event," so you'll need to have money available outside your IRA for the tax bill. You'll want to discuss this move with your tax advisor.

Sell your "losers." If it's appropriate for your portfolio balance and long-term goals, you may want to sell some investments that have lost value to take the tax losses. If these losses exceeded your capital gains from selling appreciated stocks, you can deduct up to \$3,000 (or \$1,500 for married couples filing separately), against your other income, reducing the amount on which you must pay taxes. And if you lost more than \$3,000, you can carry over the excess into subsequent years. Consult with a tax advisor before selling investments to claim a tax loss.

Consolidate your investment accounts. Instead of having an IRA with one firm, some other investments with another and a cash-value insurance policy with a third, you might want to con-

solidate all your assets with one provider. That way, you'll be better able to align all your assets with a central, unified investment strategy.

Review your insurance coverage. Over the course of a year, you could experience significant changes in your life: marriage or divorce, the birth of a new child or the departure of an older child from your home, the start of a new job or retirement from an old one, and so on. That's why you'll want to make sure you have the right amount and type of insurance to protect your family and your financial future.

By making these moves, you can close out 2009 on a positive note – while positioning yourself for progress on your long-term goals.

Area Hunters Can Share Their Harvest, Says Hess

The Pennsylvania Game Commission and state Department of Agriculture have joined Pennsylvanians for the Responsible Use of Animals to inform hunters they can give a portion of their entire take to help feed Pennsylvania families, says Rep. Dick Hess (R-Bedford/Fulton/Huntingdon).

"Pennsylvania's sportsmen and sportswomen can help the needy by donating a portion of their harvest this year," Hess said. "Everyone deserves a nutritious meal and this program provides a means to meet this goal."

The Hunters Sharing the Harvest (HSH) program allows hunters to donate a portion of their deer to families in need. The HSH program calls upon hunters to donate anything from a few pounds of venison to an entire deer. On average, the meat from one deer can provide 200 meals for hungry Pennsylvanians.

Hess noted that to date, hundreds of deer hunters have donated tens of thousands of pounds of venison to local food banks and soup kitchens through the HSH program. An average of more than 80,000 pounds of venison are donated a year to needy individuals. Last year, HSH coordinated the delivery of nearly 200,000 meals of venison to hungry Pennsylvanians.

Hunters donating their harvest voluntarily pay a \$15 tax-deductible fee toward each processed deer. The remainder of the processing fee is covered through HSH sponsors and donations.

"This program touches many lives throughout the commonwealth," Hess said. "I encourage hunters in the 78th District to donate what they can to help the less fortunate."

Anyone interested in donating venison to the HSH program should call 1-866-474-2141.

Information can also be found at Hess' Web site at DickHess.com under "Hunters Sharing the Harvest."

FORBES ROAD BOYS VARSITY BASKETBALL

Dec. 15 at Hyndman	4:45	Jan. 18 at SHC	6:00
Dec. 18 at Belleville	6:00	Jan. 20 Everett	6:30
Dec. 22 Chestnut Ridge	6:30	Jan. 22 F-M	6:30
Dec. 23 Huntingdon	6:00	Jan. 25 at C. Ridge	6:00
Dec. 29 FM Tournament	6:30	Jan. 29 SF	6:30
Dec. 30 FM Tournament	TBA	Feb. 1 at Everett	6:00
Jan. 4 Belleville	6:00	Feb. 5 MHS	6:30
Jan. 5 NBC	6:30	Feb. 9 at NBC	6:00
Jan. 8 at Tussey	6:00	Feb. 12 at F-M	6:30
Jan. 12 Hyndman	7:15	Feb. 16 Tussey	6:30
Jan. 15 at MHS	6:30	Feb. 18 at SF	6:30

FORBES ROAD BOYS JR. HIGH BASKETBALL

Dec. 11 at SHC	4:00	Jan. 22 at F-M	4:00
Dec. 14 Hyndman	5:15	Jan. 25 at C. Ridge	5:15
Dec. 18 at Mt. Union	4:00	Jan. 29 at SF	4:00
Dec. 21 C. Ridge	5:15	Feb. 1 Mt. Union	4:00
Dec. 23 Everett	5:15	Feb. 2 at Everett	5:15
Jan. 5 NBC	5:15	Feb. 5 at MHS	4:00
Jan. 7 at Tussey	5:15	Feb. 8 at NBC	5:15
Jan. 11 at Hyndman	5:15	Feb. 12 F-M	4:00
Jan. 15 MHS	4:00	Feb. 15 Tussey	5:15
Jan. 18 SHC	4:00	Feb. 18 SF	4:00

Thank You!

I sincerely wish to thank the voters of Fulton County for your overwhelming support and kindness shown to me this election year. I am extremely honored and humbled by your vote of confidence and the continued trust you have placed in me. I especially want to thank my family, friends and staff for all your hard work. A special thank-you to the many of you who requested and allowed me to place election signs on your property. I look forward to serving this beautiful county and the great people who live in it as Fulton County Prothonotary another four years.

Patty Suders Fix
Fulton County Prothonotary

Premium Quality Checks for your business!

UNCONDITIONAL 100% GUARANTEE RISK-FREE

Fulton County News
717-485-3811

CONTACT US TODAY!