

The Racing Reporter

By Gerald Hodges
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Jimmie Johnson is the Man

FONTANA, Calif.-California native and rookie Jimmie Johnson won Sunday's Winston Cup NAPA 500 over another rookie, Kurt Busch, by taking on fuel only on the last pit stop.

Johnson also beat his teammate Jeff Gordon in the same car that Gordon won at Michigan in last year.

"Unbelievable," said Johnson in Victory Lane. "We knew it was going to be close. It's going to sink in, in a few days, but it's really cool."

"To do this with this competitive in Winston Cup racing has all ways been a dream of mine. I can't believe it actually happened, here, in front of all my friends and family up there in the grandstands. Thank you California!"

Johnson and the leaders pitted with 17 laps remaining after Dale Earnhardt Jr. hit the wall. This ended speculation as to whether or not teams had enough fuel to go the distance.

Neither Johnson nor Busch could make the remaining laps without a splash of fuel. Johnson's crew chief, Chad Knaus, called for a gas 'n' go stop only to gain track position, while Busch took two tires and fuel.

"I never thought anyone would beat us on fuel mileage," said second-place finisher Kurt Busch, driver of the No. 97 Roush Ford. "We just missed it a little today."

"We were pedaling as fast as we could. We just needed a little more on the top end."

It was Johnson's first Winston Cup win in 13 starts, as he led 62 of 250 laps. It was also the second consecutive victory for Chevrolet.

Finishing order: 1. Jimmie Johnson, 2. Kurt Busch, 3. Ricky Rudd, 4. Bill Elliott, 5. Mark Martin, 6. Dale Jarrett, 7. Sterling Marlin, 8. Rusty Wallace, 9. Dave Blaney, 10. Michael Waltrip, 11. Jeff Green, 12. Bobby Gordon, 13. Greg Biffle, 14. Ryan Newman, 15. Johnny Benson, 16. Jeff Gordon, 17. Kyle Petty, 18. Ward Burton, 19. Jeff Burton, 20. Matt Kenseth, 21. Terry Labonte, 22. Steve Park, 23. Brett Bodine, 24. John Andretti, 25. Joe Nemechek, 26. Jerry Nadeau, 27. Jimmy Spencer, 28. Casey Atwood, 29. Tony Stewart, 30. Bobby Hamilton, 31. Mike Skinner, 32. Rick Mast, 33. Steve Grissom, 34. Bobby Labonte, 35. Kevin Harvick, 36. Dale Earnhardt Jr., 37. Ricky Craven, 38. Jeremy Mayfield, 39. Elliott Sadler, 40. Hut Stricklin, 41. Stacy Compton, 42. Shawna Robinson, 43. Ken Schrader.

Top-10 points leaders after 10 of 36 events: 1. Martin-1515, 2. Busch-1372, 3. Kenseth-1363, 4. R. Wallace-1354, 5. Johnson-1352, 6. Martin-1292, 7. J. Gordon-1283, 8. Rudd-1279, 9. Earnhardt Jr.-1233, 10. Stewart-1214.

Robinson trying to get season on track

FONTANA, Calif.-Shawna Robinson and the BAM Racing Team attempted to revive Robinson's freshman season this weekend at the California Speedway. According to Robinson, she's been California dreaming for two weeks now.

Things didn't work out the way she would have liked.

She used a provisional to get into the NAPA 500, but after finishing 42nd, it's apparent her team has a long ways to go if they are to become competitive in Winston Cup.

"All I want to do is race and miss the race at Talladega was the most frustrating thing that's happened in my racing career," stated Robinson. "When I show up at the track for the weekend it's all about racing. I focus 100 percent on giving the car and team everything I have for three straight days. Sure we want to get momentum back on our side. More importantly we just want to race like we know we are capable of racing."

After an abortive attempt at the Daytona 500 in 1995, she finally made her Winston Cup debut in 2001, making four attempts for MK Racing.

After this year's Daytona 500, crew chief Eddie Sharp was released in hopes of improving the team's performance.

Her best finish of this season was a 24th at Daytona. The other finishes were 42nd at Las Vegas, 34th at Atlanta, 42nd at Darlington, and a 36th at Texas. She failed to make the field at Talladega.

Robinson and her team had 24 planned races for the 2002 season. "I've always wanted to compete," she continued. "And if I compete, I want to win. I was born competitive, and that's in my blood. I want this team to be a factor. Wherever I'm racing."

We feel like Shawna is good enough to drive in NASCAR's top series, but right now, she and her team like several others that run Winston Cup aren't competitive enough to run with the leaders.

Other Race Results

Riggs comes from last to win
FONTANA, Calif.-Scott Riggs had to start from the 43rd and last starting spot in Saturday's Busch Series. Auto club 300 after his team switched engines after qualifying.

Riggs took the lead on lap 102 of the 150-lap race and stayed in front for the remaining 48 laps.

Finishing order: 1. Scott Riggs, 2. Jeff Green, 3. Stacy Compton, 4. Jack Sprague, 5. Jason Keller, 6. Mike McLaughlin, 7. Tim Sauter, 8. Michael Waltrip, 9. Randy LaJoie, 10. Greg Biffle, 11. Jamie McMurray, 12. Scott Wimmer, 13. Hank Parker Jr., 14. Kenny Wallace, 15. Jeff Burton, 16. Ashton Lewis Jr., 17. Ron Hornaday, 18. Casey Mears, 19. Kevin Grubb, 20. Lyndon Amick, 21. Kerry Earnhardt, 22. Todd Bodine, 23. Shane Hmiel, 24. Jeff Purvis, 25. Tony Raines, 26. Bruce Bechtel, 27. Shane Hall, 28. Mike Harmon, 29. Casey Mears, 30. Phil Bonifield, 31. Larry Foyt, 32. Andy Kirby, 33. Stuart Kirby, 34. Chad Chaffin, 35. Jimmy Spencer, 36. Mike Wallace, 37. Bobby Hamilton Jr., 38. Rick Markle, 39. Johnny Sauter, 40. Scott Gaylord, 41. Joe Nemechek, 42. Austin Cameron, 43. Christian Elder.

Top-10 points leaders after 9 of 34 races: 1. Sprague-1334, 2. Keller-1302, 3. Riggs-1248, 4. LaJoie-1217, 5. K. Wallace-1190, 6. Biffle-1145, 7. Compton-1141, 8. McLaughlin-1114, 9. J. Green-1063, 10. Wimmer-1046.

Kimmel wins ARCA REMAX Race

Here are the results of the ARCA REMAX Series Kentuckyana Ford Dealers 200, held Sunday at Salem, Indiana. 1. Frank Kimmel, 2. Jason Jarrett, 3. Andy Belmont, 4. Randy Vanzant, 5. Matt Hagans, 6. Todd Bowsher, 7. AJ Hendrickson, 8. Damon Lusk, 9. Mike Buckley, 10. Norm Benning, 11. Jeff Caudell, 12. Michael Vergers, 13. Robert Brugh, 14. Kevin Belmont, 15. Mark Gibson, 16. Karla Lampe, 17. Neil McClelland, 18. Chase Montgomery, 19. Christi Passmore, 20. Billy Venturini, 21. Shelby Howard, 22. Ron Cox, 23. Tim Burrell, 24. Eric Nale, 25. Marty Burkovich, 26. Chuck Weber, 27. Brad Smith, 28. Chad Blount, 29. John Hayden, 30. Eric Martin, 31. Darrell Basham, 32. Tim Turner, 33. Tim Mitchell, 34. Greg Sarff.

Weekend Racing
The Winston Cup and Busch teams are at Richmond, Virginia while the Craftsman Trucks go to St. Louis, Friday, May 3. Busch Series Hardes 250, event 10 of 34 events. Starting time: 7 p.m. (EST); TV: FX Channel; Distance: 250 laps/187.5 miles.

Defending champion: Jimmy Spencer, Chevrolet.

Saturday, May 4: Winston Cup Pontiac Excitement 400, event 11 of 36 events. Starting time: 7:30 p.m. (EST); TV: FX Channel; Distance: 400 laps/300 miles; Defending champion: Tony Stewart, Pontiac.

Sunday, May 5: Craftsman Trucks Ram Tough 200, Madison, IL; Starting time: 4 p.m. (EST); TV: ESPN; Defending champion: Ted Musgrave, Dodge.

Richmond International Raceway track information: Size: 750 mile "D" shaped oval; Banking in turns: 14 degrees; Banking on frontstretch: 8 degrees; backstretch: 2 degrees; Length of frontstretch: 1,290 feet; backstretch: 860 feet; Grandstand capacity: 110,000.

Racing Trivia Question: Who is the crew chief on Tony Stewart's No. 14 Mobil 1?

SOUND OFF: If you have an opinion about NASCAR or Sunday's Winston Cup racing and want to be heard, call us within one hour after the end of the race at 1-800-726-7022. The call is free, and if we use your comments in our next column, we will send you a photo of your favorite driver.

Gerald Hodges the Racing Reporter is a syndicated NASCAR columnist. If you have a racing question that you would like answered send it to: The Racing Reporter, P.O. Box 160711, Mobile, AL 36616, or e-mail it to: 110335.405@compuserve.com

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Racing Dates

Saturday, May 4th

Late Model Dashes, Heats and 30 Lap Feature • Sportsman Dashes, Heats and 25 Lap Feature
Street Stock Dashes, Heats and 20 Lap Feature • Chevetttes Dashes, Heats and 15 Lap Feature
Open Wheel Dashes, Heats and 25 Lap Feature

Fri. & Sat., May 10-11 - The Spring Time 325

Gates Open 3 p.m.

Hot Laps 4:15 ¥ Qualify 5:15 and Racing 7 p.m.

--Drawing for a Microwave Oven on April 27th--

Adm. *10 Adults • Children 10 & Under free w/a paid adult • Srs. 65 and older *8

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