

The Racing Reporter

By Gerald Hodges
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Martin wins Coca-Cola 600
CONCORD, N.C.-Mark Martin, one of the old men of NASCAR Winston Cup racing won Sunday's 600-mile, Coca-Cola 600. Since the race was the second of five, No Bull 55, he also won an extra \$1 million.

However, Martin's No. 6 Viagra Ford failed to pass the post race inspection, measuring about an eighth of an inch below NASCAR's minimum height. But the win and points will likely stand. An official announcement as to the penalty will be announced later.

"I never drove that hard in my life to win a race," said Martin. "I might be gonna beat me. It's just great. This Viagra team, I'm gonna share a huge portion of my winnings with them because I can't win this race with a slow car. The money doesn't matter. We're taking this trophy home to Florida and that's what I care about. I want to thank these fans for coming out here tonight and let's keep that Winston here at Charlotte."

"Finishing second was his Rough Racing teammate, Mark Kenneth in the No. 17 DeWalt Tools Ford.

"We had an uphill battle all day," said Kenneth. "I think we broke a valve spring or something right at the end and I had to let off the gas a little early. I felt like we had a little bit better car than Mark, but he had a good car and I'm happy to see him win. Maybe that will put him in a better mood."

Polester Jimmie Johnson, driver of the No. 48 Lowe's Chevrolet led 263 of the 400 laps, but after overshooting his pit area late in the race, and having to back up, he lost valuable position.

"It's disappointing," he said. "We didn't lead that much at Charlotte and won. Here we lead the most and finished seventh. A lot of times the dominant car doesn't win, the smartest does. I made a mistake in the pits and it cost us."

Ricky Craven finished third, Ricky Rudd fourth, and Jeff Gordon, fifth. Finishing order: Mark Martin, 2. Matt Kenseth, 3. Ricky Craven, 4. Ricky Rudd, 5. Jeff Gordon, 6. Tony Stewart, 7. Jimmie Johnson, 8. Blaney, 9. Bill Elliott, 10. Rusty Wallace, 11. Sterling Martin, 12. Ten Labonte, 13. Kyle Petty, 14. Bobby Labonte, 15. John Andretti, 16. Robby Gordon, 17. Casey Atwood, 18. Ken Schrader, 19. Dale

Jimmie Spencer, 26. Frank Kimmel, 27. Brett Bodine, 28. Jerry Nadeau, 29. Hermie Sadler, 30. Joe Nemechuk, 31. Ken Busch, 32. Steve Grissom, 33. Elliott Sadler, 34. Kevin Harvick, 35. Dale Earnhardt Jr., 36. Ron Hornaday, 37. Stacy Compton, 38. Steve Park, 39. Jeremy Mayfield, 40. Jeff Burton, 41. Ryan Newman, 42. Ward Burton, 43. Kevin LePage.

Top-10 Winston Cup points leaders after 12 of 36 races: 1. Martin-1775, 2. Kenseth-1688, 3. Martin-1632, 4. J. Gordon-1584, 5. Johnson-1578, 7. R. Wallace-1576, 7. Stewart-1548, 8. Busch-1529, 9. Rudd-1495, 10. Elliott-1437.

Hamilton talks about driver age gap

IN NASCAR being taken over by the young gun drivers? Well, 44-year-old Schneider Electric driver Bobby Hamilton begs to differ. The veteran, who has four Winston Cup victories under his belt, still races every week-end with hopes of another win. Hamilton doesn't run on a treadmill every day to keep up with the young blood that is flowing through the garage area, but he still keeps up. Hamilton has time to operate three NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series teams, support his son's blossoming Busch Series career and race in 38 races in the Winston Cup Series. On top of all this, Hamilton still finds time to fulfill his sponsor commitments and is known to take the wheel in all three of NASCAR's prominent series just for fun.

"The question about the young guns running up front has been asked a lot lately, and I have something to say about it," said Hamilton. "Every one has their own theory and that is just what it is - a theory. The media are starting to ask all these questions about older drivers and how they can keep up with the younger generation. I think it all stems from looking at Dale Earnhardt. Our sport not only lost the best race car driver, but we also lost a person who was from the old school generation that kicked everyone's butt week in and week out. You didn't see Dale Earnhardt out there on a treadmill running six miles every day to keep up. When he had spare time he was either hunting or fishing."

"Then the day came when people started racing without him and people said that we couldn't keep up with the younger drivers. Well the way I have

it figured is that Jeff Gordon is probably the best guy out there now and Tony Stewart is not far behind him.

You don't see Tony out there running on a treadmill to keep up with the younger generation do you? He comes in every week and races his way up front - he's just that good. He's even won two races so far this year. So for someone to say that the younger generation is kicking all of us older guys out of there, then they're really mistaken. I mean look at who the NASCAR Winston Cup points leader is - Sterling Martin. And the Daytona 500 winner was Ward Burton."

Green holds off Biffle for Busch win

CONCORD, N.C.-Jeff Green held off Greg Biffle during a three-lap shootout to win Saturday's Busch Series Gargantua 300 at Lowe's Motor Speedway.

A late caution on lap 195 of the 200-lap race came when Dan Pardus spun out. Green inherited the lead from Jay Sauter, who pitted for fuel. Biffle also elected to pit for fuel and four fresh tires.

Biffle lined up seventh on the restart on Lap 197, but moved into second with two laps to go. He closed to the rear bumper of Green's No. 21 Chevrolet on the final lap, but Green held on for a 1.25-second victory.

Finishing order: 1. Jeff Green, 2. Greg Biffle, 3. Scott Riggs, 4. Mike McLaughlin, 5. Todd Bodine, 6. Kevin LePage, 7. Bobby Hamilton Jr., 8. Kevin Grubb, 9. Jay Sauter, 10. Jack Sprague, 11. Michael Waltrip, 12. Kenny Wallace, 13. Jason Keller, 14. David Green, 15. Hank Parker Jr., 16. Dan Radus, 17. Brian Vickers, 18. Larry Foyt, 28. Kerry Earnhardt, 29. Casey Kahne, 30. Jeff Burton, 31. Shane Hmiel, 32. Randy Laloie, 33. Ron Hornaday, 34. Robby Faggart, 35. Mark Green, 36. Dale Earnhardt Jr., 37. Jason White, 38. Jimmy Spencer, 39. Mike Wallace, 40. Jimmy Kitchens, 41. Stuart Kirby, 42. Jeff Fultz, 43. Josh Richeson.

Top-10 Busch points leaders after 12 of 34 races: 1. Keller-1838, 2. Sprague-1837, 3. Riggs-1821, 4. Laloie-1718, 5. McLaughlin-1693, 6. Biffle-1652, 7. K. Wallace-1641, 8. Hamilton Jr.-1619, 9. Compton-1586, 10. McMurray-1549.

Weekend Racing

All three of NASCAR's premier series are at Dover, Delaware this weekend.

Friday, May 31, Craftsman Truck Series MBNA America 200, 6 of 24 races; Starting time: 3:30 p.m.(EST); TV: ESPN; Distance: 200 laps/200 miles; Defending champion: Joe Ruttman, Dodge.

Saturday, June 1, Busch Series MBNA Platinum 200, 14 of 34 races; Starting time: 12:30 p.m.(EST); TV: FX Channel; Distance: 200 laps/200 miles; Defending champion: Jimmy Spencer, Chevrolet.

Sunday, June 2, Winston Cup MBNA Platinum 400, 13 of 36 races; Starting time: 12:30 p.m.; TV: FX Channel; Distance: 400 laps/400 miles; Defending champion: Jeff

Gordon, Chevrolet.

Dover Downs Speedway track information: Size: One mile concrete oval; Banking in turns: 24 degrees; Banking on straights: 9 degrees; Length of front/backstretch: 1,076 feet; Grandstand capacity: 145,000.

Racing Trivia Question: Which track on the Winston Cup circuit is called, "The Track Too Tough To Tame?" Answer: To Last Week's Question: Mark Martin's 45 wins make him the winningest driver in Busch Series history.

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 to:

110335.405@compuserve.com

Q&A with Tony Stewart and Greg Zippadelli

Tony Stewart decided to pass up this year's Indy 500.

"We're in a good position right now in the season," Stewart said. "We've been running really good every where we've been this year. I had the back injury after the Darlington crash, and we don't want to take a chance on doing anything that could jeopardize any of those chances for any of us. We feel like this is our best opportunity to win a championship."



Our performance on the track has been good enough to do that. We just need a little luck on our side. We Cont. to A-11

"Track"

(Cont. from A-9)

season. As a result, the boys' finished 9th overall, but had many outstanding performances.

Senior Josh Hale and sophomore Caleb Blair came through with clutch individual performances in the 400-meter dash, despite having to compete against the top-ranked 400-meter sprinter in the state from Lexington Catholic.

Josh established a new RCHS indoor record this season with his impressive indoor state championship win in the event earlier this year.

Both boys' sought to break the twelve-year old RCHS record for the event established in 1990. In Saturday's finals, neither Josh nor Caleb would disappoint.

Josh ran an unbelievable race that came down to the wire. He finished 4th overall with a new RCHS record time in the event. His spectacular effort of 52.87 seconds eclipsed the previous record by nearly one second.

Caleb also broke the record with an awesome effort of his own. He finished 6th overall with a time of 53.70, three-hundredths of a second better than the old record.

Senior Andrew Hammond performed exceptionally well in the high jump competition, an event in which he qualified for at last year's state championships. Andrew tied his season's best effort with a leap of 5'10". He finished 4th overall in the event, which was won by the top-ranked jumper in the state from East Jessamine. Andrew also competed in the long jump competition in which he placed 12th overall with an

effort of 16'0.5". Teammate Caleb Blair also competed in long jump and placed 6th overall with a superb effort of 18'9".

Senior Coty Reams qualified for the finals of the 200-meter dash on Saturday. He ran a spectacular final race and finished 8th overall with an impressive time of 25.27 seconds.

Freshman Brandon Cole, an all-state cross-country competitor this season, ran the grueling 1600-meter run against most of the best state has to offer. He finished with an RCHS regional record in the event. He placed 6th overall with an unbelievable time of 4:50.06. Brandon holds the all-time RCHS record in the 1600-meter run with a best of 4:49.38.

Sophomore Andrew Nelson, also an all-state competitor in cross-country, ran the challenging 3200-meter run. Andrew remained with the lead runners early and finished a very hard-fought race in 5th place overall with a spectacular time of 11:15.06. Earlier this season, Andrew shattered the RCHS record in the 3200-meter run with an effort of 10:36.42.

The boys' 1600-meter relay team, consisting of Andrew Hammond, Caleb Blair, Coty Reams, and Josh Hale, qualified for the state championships in the event for the second straight year in what turned out to be one of the most exciting races of the day. The group ran extremely well at region and finished 3rd overall with an impressive time of 3:41.23.

Currently, the foursome is ranked 7th in the state in the event and will seek to improve upon their position, as well as break the school record in the event this weekend.

Both boys' and girls' teams will compete this Friday and Saturday at the Shively Track and Field Complex at the University of Kentucky in Lexington. The track will be open at 11:45 with competition beginning at 12:30.

THANK YOU

I give my sincere, personal thanks to each of you who supported me during this race for re-election as County Judge-Executive, and my thanks to my opponent for the fine, competitive race he ran against me. My heartfelt thanks to those of you who worked on my behalf and entrusted me with your vote of confidence. You have given me the opportunity to become acquainted over the years with so very many fine families that I might otherwise have never had the opportunity to meet.

We have a wonderful community here in Rockcastle County - one of the many rural communities in the country that some only read about - and a community that many of us who live here too often take for granted. It is very gratifying, therefore, to see so many Rockcastle Countians volunteering their time and efforts to improve our community.

As I watched the election returns coming into the courthouse last night, I was still amazed with the drama of this great American exercise in Democracy in our local community, and it is my hope that I will continue to serve you to the best of my abilities.

*Thank You Very Much
Buzz Carleffis*

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