

NASCAR INSIDER

STANDINGS

How the top 10 stack up this week

NEXTEL CUP

Following the GFS Marketplace 400

- Tony Stewart**
3,268; previous: 1
- Jimmie Johnson**
3,142; previous: 2
- Greg Biffle**
3,016; previous: 3
- Rusty Wallace**
2,979; previous: 4
- Mark Martin**
2,899; previous: 5
- Jeremy Mayfield**
2,869; previous: 7
- Kurt Busch**
2,848; previous: 6
- Ryan Newman**
2,773; previous: 8
- Carl Edwards**
2,758; previous: 10
- Jamie McMurray**
2,702; previous: 9

A fourth-place finish at Michigan lifted **Carl Edwards** one spot in the standings to ninth place.



BUSCH SERIES

Following the Domino's Pizza 250

- Martin Truex Jr.**
3,606; previous: 1
- Clint Bowyer**
3,402; previous: 2
- Reed Sorenson**
3,282; previous: 3
- Carl Edwards**
3,255; previous: 4
- Kenny Wallace**
3,078; previous: 5
- Denny Hamlin**
3,053; previous: 6
- Paul Menard**
2,847; previous: 9
- David Green**
2,826; previous: 7
- David Stremme**
2,802; previous: 8
- Ashton Lewis**
2,728; previous: 10

A sixth-place finish in the Domino's Pizza 250 lifted **Paul Menard** two spots in the standings to seventh.



Ryan Newman scored his second consecutive Busch Series victory Saturday, passing Greg Biffle with six laps left to win the Domino's Pizza 250.

CRAFTSMAN TRUCK

Following the Toyota Tundra 200

- Dennis Setzer**
2,400; previous: 1
- Ted Musgrave**
2,222; previous: 2
- Bobby Hamilton**
2,188; previous: 3
- Ron Hornaday**
2,133; previous: 4
- David Reutimann**
2,114; previous: 6
- Jimmy Spencer**
2,089; previous: 5
- Matt Crafton**
2,017; previous: 8
- Mike Skinner**
1,996; previous: 11
- Flicky Craven**
1,982; previous: 9
- David Starr**
1,976; previous: 10

David Reutimann's win at Nashville Superspeedway moved the 2004 Rookie of the Year to fifth place in the standings.



THE RACING 411

NEXTEL CUP

Race: Sharpie 500
Where: Bristol Motor Speedway; Bristol, Tenn.
Track length: .533 mile (500 laps, 266.5 miles)
When: Saturday, 7:40 p.m., ET
Defending champion: Dale Earnhardt Jr. completed the week-end sweep at Bristol last year by dominating the 2004 Sharpie 500.
Track qualifying record: Ryan Newman, 128.709 mph; March 21, 2003.
Race record: Charlie Glotzbach, 101.075 mph; July 11, 1971.
Fast facts: Kurt Busch has recorded four wins in the past seven races at Bristol Motor Speedway. The race is sold out for the 15th consecutive year.

BUSCH

Race: Food City 250
Where: Bristol Motor Speedway
When: Friday, 7:45 p.m., ET
Defending champion: Dale Earnhardt Jr. outlasted Matt Kenseth in a green-white-checkered finish for his first career NASCAR win at Bristol.
Track qualifying record: David Green, 126.495 mph; March 22, 2003.
Race record: Harry Gant, 92.929 mph; April 4, 1992.
Fast facts: Martin Truex Jr. claimed his first career series win in the spring race at Bristol last year, garnering a season sweep for Busch Series owner Earnhardt Jr. and his Chance 2 Motorsports team.

CRAFTSMAN

Race: O'Reilly 200
Where: Bristol Motor Speedway
When: Wednesday, 9:15 p.m., ET
Race length: 200 laps, 106.6 miles
Defending champion: Carl Edwards pulled away from Shane Hmiel on a green-white-checkered restart to win last year's O'Reilly 200.
Qualifying record: Ken Schrader, 126.922 mph; Aug. 25, 2004.
Race record: Travis Kvapil, 88.813 mph; Aug. 20, 2003.
Fast fact: Bristol Motor Speedway was among 18 tracks comprising the inaugural schedule of the series in 1995.

GFS MARKETPLACE 400 REWIND



Jeremy Mayfield and crew celebrate Sunday's victory in the GFS Marketplace 400.

GAMBLE pays off

Jeremy Mayfield bets on fuel and comes out a winner at Michigan

By JEFF HOOD
Cox News Service

Brooklyn, Mich. — Jeremy Mayfield, a Nextel Cup driver known for winning in dramatic fashion, struck again Sunday. Mayfield turned a fuel-economy run into an unexpected victory in Sunday's GFS Marketplace 400 at Michigan International Speedway. Mayfield edged Scott Riggs by completing the final 51 laps on a single tank of gas. The driver of the No. 19 Dodge chose to pit for fuel before the race's final

restart. The Owensboro, Ky., native beat Riggs by 1.974 seconds and finished just ahead of Matt Kenseth, Carl Edwards and Nextel Cup points leader Tony Stewart, whose crew chiefs chose not to top off their fuel tanks on what turned out to be the race's last caution. "History says this place from Lap 150 on goes green," said Mayfield's crew chief Richard "Sluggo" Labbe, who made the winning call. We took a chance on history, and we took a chance on a test we did here when we ran 52 laps, then ran out of gas coming to 53. "Man, we had a 20th-place car and we robbed the bank." Mayfield's fifth career victory was as unpredictable as two oth-

ers, a final-lap bump-and-run on the late Dale Earnhardt at Pocono in 2000 and his run at Richmond last September when he clinched the final spot in the inaugural Chase for the Cup. He moved to sixth place in this season's championship standings after Sunday's race. "Every race I've ever won has been like that," said Mayfield, who lined up 26th on the final restart before making his charge to the front. Kenseth, who led nine laps but remains a long shot to qualify for the Chase at 15th in points, was bitter after the race. "I've always hated fuel-mileage races," Kenseth said. "We've been on the good side of it before, but I hate it. "I always like the fastest car to win, even if it's not me." Stewart narrowly avoided disaster on the third lap when his No. 20 Chevrolet made contact with Jamie McMurray's Dodge in Turn 2 of the superspeedway. The winner of five of the past seven Cup events entering Sunday's race was content with a fifth-place effort. "We got up to second there, which I was really proud of," Stewart said. "But we just couldn't stay there at the end with the pit strategy. "It's kind of frustrating to a certain degree, but at the same time we could have all come in and got fuel like everybody else."

NOTEBOOK

Stewart and Johnson clinch spots in Chase for Cup

By JEFF HOOD
Cox News Service

Brooklyn, Mich. — A pair of top-10 finishes on Sunday at Michigan enabled Tony Stewart and Jimmie Johnson to become the first two drivers to clinch spots in this year's Chase for the Nextel Cup. The 10-driver quest for the championship begins at New Hampshire International Speedway Sept. 18. Johnson, who started last following an engine change during the weekend in his No. 48 Chevrolet, climbed to third with 30 laps remaining in the GFS Marketplace 400. But the Hendrick Motorsports driver was relegated to a 10th-place finish Sunday after a pit stop for fuel with 12 laps remaining. "It's comforting to at least be in the top 10 in points," said Johnson, who remains second in the season standings, 126 points behind Stewart. "It's a testament to our guys to clinch it with three races to go."

Tough day for Sadler

Elliott Sadler's hopes to reach the Chase were dealt a setback on Lap 83 when he spun exiting Turn 2. Sadler's mishap collected teammate Dale Jarrett and Ricky Rudd. He lost 11 laps following the incident while his crew made repairs to his battered No. 38 Ford on pit road. "I don't know what to say," said Sadler, who finished 39th and slipped from 11th to 13th in the season standings, 66 points behind 10th place Jamie McMurray. "I just got loose behind [Kyle Petty] and [Ryan Newman] and it just came around. I think my worst nightmare has come true. "I've put us in a position where we've got to win the next couple of races to try and get into the Chase." Jarrett, whose No. 88 Ford suffered minor damage in the incident, returned to the track but finished 34th after running out of fuel with two laps left. He remained 11th in points, 51 points out of 10th. Rudd finished on the lead lap in 19th.

Raines comes close to upset

Tony Raines came within six laps of pulling off one of the greatest upsets in Nextel Cup history after he took the lead with seven laps remaining in the No. 37 Dodge owned by Roger Craven and John Carter of Toccoa, Ga. "Toward the end of the race they told me I was leading, and I thought to myself that if I win this race, it would be the Cinderella story of the summer," said Raines, who finished 31st on Sunday in his debut for R&J Racing. "We led two laps and put ourselves in a position to almost win a race. I don't know what else I could have done," he said.

RACE STATISTICS

Time of race: 2 hours, 49 minutes, 33 seconds
Margin of victory: 1.974 seconds
Caution flags: seven for 30 laps
Lead changes: 19 among 13 drivers
Lap leaders: Joe Nemechek, pole; Kasey Kahne, 4-18; Kyle Busch, 19-46; Nemechek, 47-73; Kurt Busch, 74-76; Mark Martin, 77-86; Kurt Busch, 87-91; Matt Kenseth, 92; Kurt Busch, 93-96; Scott Riggs, 97-109; Greg Biffle, 110-112; Kurt Busch, 113-164; Kenseth, 165; Kurt Busch, 166; Kenseth, 167-173; Carl Edwards, 174-190; Dale Earnhardt Jr., 191; Sterling Marlin, 192; Tony Raines, 193-194; Jeremy Mayfield, 195-200.

ON TV

- All times Eastern
- NEXTEL CUP**
Sharpie 500
7 p.m., Saturday
TNT
 - BUSCH SERIES**
Food City 250
7:30 p.m., Friday
TNT
 - CRAFTSMAN TRUCK**
O'Reilly 200
9 p.m., Wednesday
SPEED CHANNEL

COMMENTARY

NASCAR looks to gain Hispanic fan base

By JEFF GLUCK
Cox News Service
Fontana, Calif.

At first, it's hard to imagine that, at age 42, Adrian Fernandez might have a lot to do with the future of NASCAR. Sure, his popularity in Mexico is comparable to that of Michael Jordan in the United States. And yes, he is one of the world's best open-wheel race car drivers. But American fans don't know Fernandez, and he's run exactly one NASCAR race in his life, a Busch Series event at that. Fernandez, though, could be one of the most important figures in NASCAR history, depending on what happens over the next few months. Hendrick Motorsports has signed Fernandez to drive in four more Busch races this season, and if he likes the results, Fernandez just

might stick around long enough to help NASCAR unlock the Hispanic fan base. But first things first. Fernandez has to learn how to drive a stock car, taking his first steps toward that goal last week during a test session at California Speedway. It was his first experience in a stock car on an oval track, and his initial laps left him doubting his decision. "I thought, 'What am I doing here?'" he said. "This is crazy." Yet it wasn't crazy for Hendrick and sponsor Lowe's to approach Fernandez with an offer to drive the four races after a successful run in March's Mexico City Busch race. That day, Fernandez finished 10th after taking the lead, a moment so loved by race fans that the driver heard their cheers over the roar of the engines.

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