

NASCAR INSIDER

STANDINGS

How the top 10 stack up this week

NEXTEL CUP

Following the Banquet 400

1. Tony Stewart 5,684; previous: 1
2. Ryan Newman 5,609; previous: 2
3. Greg Biffle 5,596; previous: 5
4. Rusty Wallace 5,594; previous: 3
5. Jimmie Johnson 5,592; previous: 4
6. Carl Edwards 5,589; previous: 6
7. Mark Martin 5,571; previous: 9
8. Matt Kenseth 5,568; previous: 7
9. Jeremy Mayfield 5,527; previous: 8
10. Kurt Busch 5,460; previous: 10



Tony Stewart's lead in the standings grew to 75 points after a top-five finish in Sunday's Banquet 400.

BUSCH SERIES

Following the United Way 300

1. Martin Truex Jr. 4,206; previous: 1
2. Clint Bowyer 4,157; previous: 2
3. Reed Sorenson 3,955; previous: 3
4. Carl Edwards 3,820; previous: 4
5. Denny Hamlin 3,623; previous: 5
6. Kenny Wallace 3,574; previous: 6
7. Paul Menard 3,385; previous: 7
8. David Green 3,311; previous: 9
9. Greg Biffle 3,300; previous: 11
10. Jason Keller 3,256; previous: 10

Greg Biffle jumped into the top 10 in the standings following a second-place finish in the United Way 300.



CRAFTSMAN TRUCK

Following the Las Vegas 350

1. Dennis Setzer 2,877; previous: 1
2. Ted Musgrave 2,872; previous: 2
3. Ron Hornaday 2,677; previous: 3
4. Mike Skinner 2,627; previous: 5
5. Todd Bodine 2,593; previous: 7
6. Jimmy Spencer 2,593; previous: 4
7. Bobby Hamilton 2,577; previous: 6
8. David Starr 2,507; previous: 10
9. David Reutimann 2,493; previous: 8
10. Matt Crafton 2,483; previous: 9



Dennis Setzer leads the Craftsman Truck Series standings by only five points heading into the Oct. 22 race at Martinsville.

Did you know? Chevrolet is closing in on its sixth series manufacturer's championship, but Toyotas have led the most laps in the season's first 20 races. Toyota has 1,407 laps led while Chevrolet has 1,401.

ON TV

All times Eastern

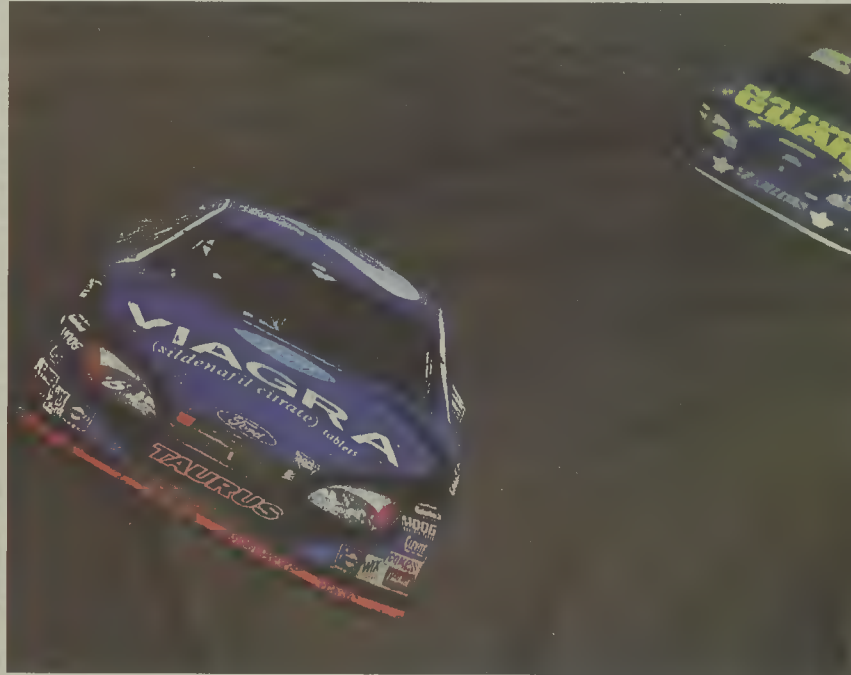
NEXTEL CUP UAW/GM Quality 500 7 p.m., Saturday	NBC
BUSCH SERIES Dollar General 300 8 p.m., Friday	TNT
CRAFTSMAN TRUCK Kroger 200 1 p.m., Oct. 22	SPEED CHANNEL

THE RACING 411

NEXTEL CUP

Race: UAW/GM Quality 500
Where: Lowe's Motor Speedway, Concord, N.C.
Race distance: 334 laps, 500 miles
When: Saturday, 8 p.m., ET
Defending champion: Jimmie Johnson won last year's UAW/GM Quality 500, leading teammate Jeff Gordon across the finish line for a 1-2 finish for Hendrick Motorsports.
Track qualifying record: Ryan Newman, 186.657 mph; Oct. 9, 2003.
Race record (500 miles): Jeff Gordon, 160.306 mph; Oct. 11, 1999.
Fast facts: Johnson has three wins, four top-fives and six top-10 finishes in seven starts at LMS.

BANQUET 400 REVIEW



Mark Martin holds off Greg Biffle to win Sunday's Banquet 400 at Kansas Speedway.

Martin ends skid at Kansas

Roush drivers sweep four of top five spots in fourth Chase event

By RICK MINTER
Cox News Service
Kansas City, Kan.

It was all Roush Racing all day at Kansas Speedway as Mark Martin ran away with Sunday's Banquet 400 and joined his teammates in sweeping four of the top five spots. Martin's victory, his first win in a points-paying Nextel Cup race since June 2004 at Dover, capped off a day in which Roush drivers led all but nine of 267 laps, with the rest of the field leading only during pit stops. Team owner Jack Roush stopped short of proclaiming the race a sweep because while Martin, Greg Biffle, Carl Edwards and Matt Kenseth were in the top five, Kurt Busch finished 14th after an unscheduled pit stop.

"We didn't have all five [drivers] in the top five," Roush said. "But certainly we had a good spread."

Tony Stewart, the points leader in the Chase for the Nextel Cup, was the only non-Roush driver in the top five on Sunday, and he's developing a nice spread of his own. His fourth-place finish was almost as good as a

win because it gave him a 75-point cushion over second-place Ryan Newman and clearly established him as the driver to beat during the stretch run to the title.

Stewart made the gains in spite of a broken alternator belt on his car and because Newman, who entered the 400 just four points behind, lost ground due to a 23rd-place finish, worst of the 10 Chase contenders.

Stewart said that while it's still relatively early in the Chase — only four of the 10 events are in the books — his strategy is becoming more conservative. He said he simply wants to run in the top five for the remaining races.

"That's what we need to do," he said.

Newman has dropped back amidst a group of drivers so close in the standings that only 41 points separate him from eighth-place Matt Kenseth.

Martin's victory boosted him from ninth to seventh in the standings, but because of his wreck during the previous race at Talladega Superspeedway, he's still 113 points out of the lead.

"That's too far back, but we're going to go out and get some more victories," Martin said.

The often pessimistic Martin — he says he's just realistic — said he

wondered Sunday what might go wrong as he sped away from the pack for the second half of the race, leading all but seven of the last 146 laps, including the final 48.

"That's the formula for heartbreak in my world, because more often than not, something goes wrong to spoil that," he said. Like fellow veteran Dale Jarrett, who won at Talladega, Martin, who is 46 and in what is supposed to be the final year of his Cup career, especially cherished the victory.

"I was relieved after the race," he said. "It wasn't the most exciting win of my career. It was one that is well deserved by my team, and as long as I live I will remember what it feels like to give to my team."

Sunday's dominance by Roush signals a daunting stretch of racing for the rest of the Chase contenders.

Four of the next six events are on 1.5-mile tracks like Kansas Speedway, and the horsepower and aerodynamic combination that worked so well for Roush at Kansas also should bring big results at Charlotte, Atlanta, Texas and Miami.

Even the pessimistic — or realistic — Martin is giddy about that.

"Charlotte is next," he said. "Woohoo!"

CRAFTSMAN TRUCK

Race: Kroger 200
Where: Martinsville Speedway
When: Oct. 22, 1:30 p.m., ET
Track length: 0.526 mile (200 laps, 105.2 miles)
Defending champion: Jamie McMurray held off Dennis Setzer on a restart with 12 laps to go to win last year's Kroger 200.
Qualifying record: Mike Bliss, 94.275 mph, April 16, 1999.
Race record: Jon Wood, 72.069 mph; Oct. 18, 2003.
Fast facts: The past two races at Martinsville have been won by first-time series winners, Jamie McMurray and Bobby Labonte. Bobby Hamilton and Scott Riggs won their first series races there.

KANSAS NOTEBOOK

Roush teammates not in giving mood

By RICK MINTER
Cox News Service
Kansas City, Kan.

The on-track cooperation between the five drivers at Roush Racing seems to be a bit strained as a tight race in the Chase for the Nextel Cup approaches its midpoint.

Kurt Busch seemed upset Sunday that Roush teammate Matt Kenseth didn't pull aside and let him lead a lap and pick up five bonus points — something Roush drivers have done routinely all season.

"When you get in the Chase, you've got to get all the points you can," Busch said. "It would be pretty stupid to give somebody a free five points and lose the championship by four at the end of the year."

"There comes a time when you've got to race, and that's all there is to it."

Greg Biffle agreed that the time for giving teammates free points has passed.

"It's probably not the thing we need to be doing," he said.



BUSCH

Talladega memories still fresh

The repercussions from the wrecks at Talladega the previous week were still being felt after Sunday's Banquet 400 at Kansas Speedway.

Kansas winner Mark Martin believes the crashes brought on by wreck-prone restrictor-plate racing at Talladega cost him a chance to close his Cup career with a championship. He'd hoped to retire from Cup this year but may stay on for one more season if his replacement, Jamie McMurray, can't get a release from his current team.

"We made the Chase, and unfortunately, we had some trouble — big trouble — at Talladega," Martin said.

Rusty Wallace, who is retiring for sure next month, said he too lost too many points at Talladega.

"If we hadn't got in that wreck at Talladega, we'd probably be 20 points down right now," he said. "Those restrictor-plate races are great for the fans, but too many things can happen in a plate race, and I don't think we need one in the Chase."

RACE STATISTICS

- Time of race: 2 hours, 54 minutes, 25 seconds
- Margin of victory: 0.557 seconds
- Winner's average speed: 137.774 mph
- Caution flags: Seven for 28 laps
- Lead changes: 16 among 12 drivers
- Lap leaders: Matt Kenseth, 1-16; Mike Wallace, 17; Kenseth, 18-72; Greg Biffle, 73-93; Jeremy Mayfield, 94; Biffle, 95-120; Mayfield, 121; Mark Martin, 122-179; Tony Stewart, 180; Carl Edwards, 181; Rusty Wallace, 182; Travis Kvapil, 183; Jeff Burton, 184; Martin, 185-217; Jimmie Johnson, 218; Kevin Harvick, 219; Martin, 220-267.

HOW THEY FARED

A look at how Chase competitors performed Sunday

- 1.) Tony Stewart: He pushed his points lead from four to 75 points over second-place Ryan Newman with a fourth-place finish, which he accomplished despite a broken alternator belt on his No. 14 Chevrolet.
- 2.) Ryan Newman: Having to start at the rear of the field because of a transmission change after qualifying led to his undoing. He was involved in a wreck and struggled to remain on the lead lap. He finished 23rd.
- 3.) Greg Biffle: A second-place finish boosted him two spots in the standings, but his 10-point gain was minimal because Stewart also finished well. He said his title hopes "just depend on what [Stewart] does."
- 4.) Rusty Wallace: Under most circumstances, a seventh-place finish would be a plus, but Wallace lost ground because six contenders finished ahead of him. He overcame time lost when his car slipped off the jack on a pit stop.
- 5.) Jimmie Johnson: He finished a respectable sixth, but lost a spot in the standings and 10 points to the leader. "Every point counts at this point, and everybody in front of me, really, was in the Chase, so it's going to be a dogfight all the way to Homestead," he said.
- 6.) Carl Edwards: He finished third at his home track and said rookie mistakes cost him a chance to win. "I tried some stuff on the top, and if I would have stuck to the bottom, we might have had something for them," he said.
- 7.) Mark Martin: His 35th career win might not be enough to overcome his points loss at Talladega, where he was 41st and lost five spots in the standings. He said the title "probably slipped out of my hands last week."
- 8.) Matt Kenseth: Starting on the pole, leading 71 laps and finishing fifth didn't improve his prospects for a second Cup championship. He lost one spot in the standings and dropped five points further behind.
- 9.) Jeremy Mayfield: He ran in the top five for the first half of the race, but his 16th-place finish puts him at a great disadvantage as the season nears its end. He said his car was sluggish on restarts.
- 10.) Kurt Busch: The defending Cup champion overcame an unscheduled pit stop for a flat tire to finish 14th, but because other Chase contenders were ahead of him in the finishing order, he's on the brink of elimination.

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