

ON THE TUBE

Winston Cup: Bass Pro Shops MBNA 500, pre-race coverage 12:30 p.m. EST Sunday on Fox.
Busch: Darlington Raceway, com 200, 12:30 p.m. EST March 15 on FX.
Craftsman Truck: Craftsman 200, 4 p.m. EST March 14 on SPEED Channel.



Mistake helps Nemechek claim victory in Busch race

Cox News Service

Joe Nemechek benefited from Todd Bodine's mistake to inherit the lead, then hung on to win the Busch series race Saturday at Las Vegas Motor Speedway.



NEMECEK

"I don't know what was going on there," Nemechek said. "He was underneath me and went up high and I tried to crowd him. I don't know if he lost a tire or what, but he got loose there."

It was Nemechek's first Busch race of the season. He sat on the pole at the season-opener in Daytona, but was too ill on race day to drive.

Fellow Winston Cup driver Kevin Harvick was second, 0.603 seconds back, and was followed by Mike Bliss, Winston Cup driver Steve Park and Jason Keller.

David Green was sixth, followed by Michael Waltrip, Stanton Barrett, Ron Hornady and Scott Wimmer.

Bodine ended up 19th.

Bad luck for McMurray

Jamie McMurray, winner of the Rockingham 200 two weeks ago, wrecked his primary car in an accident Friday night in practice. He came back Saturday a little sore and in a backup car covered with thousands of signatures because it has lately been used as a show car at appearances.

But he had moved it up from the back of the field into second place after the rain delay, only to see his day ruined on the restart when it had either an ignition problem or a battery problem.

More bad weather

Saturday's Sam's Town 300 was delayed 58 minutes by rain, a recurring theme so far this season. The Busch race at North Carolina Speedway was delayed two days due to rain.

THEY SAID IT

"I haven't come anywhere near figuring that place out. It took me 10 races just to get in the top 10 there, but that wasn't for lack of trying."



Tony Stewart,

defending champion of the spring race in Atlanta, on competing at Atlanta Motor Speedway.

A LOOK AHEAD

- March 16 — Carolina Dodge Dealers 400, Darlington Raceway
- March 23 — Food City 500, Bristol Motor Speedway
- March 30 — Samsung/Radio Shack 500, Texas Motor Speedway
- April 6 — Aaron's 499, Talladega Motor Speedway
- April 13 — Virginia 500, Martinsville Speedway

UPCOMING ON THE TRACKS

WINSTON CUP

Race: Bass Pro Shops MBNA 500
Where: Atlanta Motor Speedway
When: Sunday, 1 p.m. EST
Race distance: 500.5 miles, 325 laps
Track layout: 1.54-mile oval
Defending champ: Tony Stewart
Race record: Dale Earnhardt, 163.633 mph, Nov. 12, 1995.
Qualifying record: Geoffrey Bodine, 197.478 mph, Nov. 15, 1997.
Storyline: Atlanta Motor Speedway, which hosts two Winston Cup races each season, is one of the fastest tracks on the circuit.

BUSCH SERIES

Race: Darlington Raceway.com 200
Where: Darlington Raceway, Darlington, S.C.
Track: 1.366-mile oval
When: March 15, 12:30 p.m. EST
Defending champ: Jeff Burton
Race record: Michael Waltrip, 138.140 mph, Sept. 5, 1992
Qualifying record: Ryan Newman, 170.301 mph, March 16, 2001.
Storyline: After taking a week off, the Busch Series resumes at Darlington Raceway, a historic track which was part of the first season of the Busch Series in 1982.

CRAFTSMAN TRUCK

Race: Craftsman 200
Where: Darlington Raceway
Track length: 1.366-mile oval
When: March 14, 4 p.m. EST
Defending champion: Ted Musgrave
Race record: Jack Sprague, 130.801 mph, Nov. 8, 1998.
Qualifying record: Jack Sprague, 161.803 mph, Oct. 13, 2001.
Storyline: Following the Florida Dodge Dealers 250 at Daytona, the truck series is in the midst of a four-week break before resuming March 14 at Darlington Raceway.

POST-RACE NOTES

Skinner blames self for multiple-car wreck

Cox News Service

Mike Skinner accepted blame for Sunday's big crash in the UAW-DaimlerChrysler 400, which took out four cars, including Winston Cup points leader Kurt Busch. "I think I just got a little bit loose and hit Rusty (Wallace)," Skinner said. "I really apologize. I hate it. I hate it for all the other contenders who got caught up in it."

Following the crash, an angry Busch sat inside his car while his crew tried to make enough repairs to get him back on the track. They didn't and he finished 38th, dropping to six in the points.

"We were just trying to salvage the best finish we could out of it (after hitting the wall), and unfortunately we got the car loose and got back in the pack like that," Busch said. "It was just a tough day. We didn't expect it to end like this, that's for sure."

Along with Busch and Skinner, the wreck also sent Jeff Gordon to the garage and damaged Todd Bodine's car.



SKINNER

An aerodynamic advantage?

Jack Roush, whose car won the race Sunday, still says Fords are at an aerodynamic disadvantage, even though they lead the manufacturer's points standings.

Michael Waltrip, who took over the Winston Cup drivers' points lead, isn't buying it. He finished third in a Chevrolet behind winner Matt Kenseth and Chevy teammate Dale Earnhardt Jr. "The cars are alike. The cars are even and we can just drive the heck out of them," he said.

Biffle loses ground in rookie contest

Jamie McMurray gained some ground in his run for Winston Cup's rookie of the year honors when Greg Biffle failed to qualify for Sunday's race.

"He's got to feel horrible having to go home," McMurray said.

Stewart wins bidding war

Tony Stewart outdrew Dale Earnhardt Jr. and Jeff Gordon in a charity auction. A fan bid \$6,400 for the opportunity to ride around the track with Stewart during Sunday's pre-race activities.

The winning bid for Earnhardt was \$6,250. Gordon and Kyle Petty tied at \$5,500 and Bill Elliott commanded \$3,500.

The Las Vegas chapter of Speedway Children's Charities NASCAR driver auction raised \$145,720 for the children of southern Nevada.

Rudd gets tour of Raptor

Driver Ricky Rudd and car owners Eddie and Len Wood came to Las Vegas a day early to visit Nellis Air Force Base and tour the F/A-22 Raptor aircraft housed there.

Rudd, who has partial sponsorship on the No. 21 Ford from the Air Force, was particularly interested in the Raptor.

An aviation buff, Rudd has had a pilot's license since 1983.

Lucky at Vegas

Matt Kenseth gives owner Roush his 4th victory at Las Vegas

Cox News Service

The lucky streak at Las Vegas continued for Roush Racing Sunday as Matt Kenseth put his Roush-owned No. 17 Ford in Victory Lane in the UAW-DaimlerChrysler 400.

It was the fourth time in the track's six-year Winston Cup history that a Roush driver has won at the track.

A car owned by Jack Roush was favored all weekend to win on the 1.5-mile oval, but the odds makers believed Kurt Busch, a native of Las Vegas, would take the checkered flag.

Instead, the victory went to Kenseth, who won a Winston Cup-best five races last season.

A jubilant Kenseth gave credit for the win to his crew, which has won the annual pit crew challenge the past two seasons.

"We had some turnover this winter, but these guys are still the world champions," Kenseth said. "The guys worked really hard to get me out of the pits and it was key to be out front."

Indeed, Kenseth received a major boost in the pits. His crew gave his Ford four tires in 13 seconds on the final stop to jump out to a huge lead. Kenseth beat runner-up Dale Earnhardt Jr. to the finish line by 9.104 seconds.

Since the Winston Cup Series began racing in Las Vegas in 1998, Roush drivers Mark Martin, Jeff Burton



JOHNNY CRAWFORD / Cox News Service

Chevrolet took six of the top 10 spots in Sunday's UAW-DaimlerChrysler 400 at Las Vegas, but Matt Kenseth (above) claimed victory in a Ford.

and Kenseth have all made it to Victory Lane. Burton did it back-to-back in 1999 and 2000.

This year, however, the remainder of the Roush team didn't fare so well. Martin finished last, Busch was in a wreck and finished 38th, and rookie Greg Biffle didn't even make the race.

Meanwhile, Daytona 500 winner Michael Waltrip finished third in the No. 15 Chevrolet, assuming the lead

in the Winston Cup points standings. He was followed by Joe Gibbs Racing teammates Bobby Labonte and Tony Stewart.

Burton was sixth, while Ryan Newman came back from falling two laps down early in the race to finish seventh.

Defending race winner Sterling Marlin, Joe Nemechek and Steve Park rounded out the top 10.

Marlin's move costs Johnson several spots

With Matt Kenseth comfortably in the lead, contact between Sterling Marlin and Jimmie Johnson generated most of the excitement in the closing lap of Sunday's UAW-DaimlerChrysler 400.

The two drivers were running side-by-side competing for the sixth and seventh spots when Marlin rose just a bit coming out of Turn 4 and tapped Johnson, sending him spinning through the infield grass.

After several valuable seconds passed, Johnson maneuvered his No. 48 Chevrolet back



JOHNSON

on the track and past the finish line. Johnson wound up 11th, the last car on the lead lap.

"I hope it wasn't intentional," Johnson said of Marlin's move. "I raced clean with everybody all day long and don't put a tire mark on anyone, and then I get turned coming to the checkers and lose three spots. That kind of bums me out."

After Johnson crossed the finish line, the Fox telecast aired an audio clip of Johnson's crew chief, Chad Knaus, advising the driver to "stay cool; NASCAR's watching."

Johnson remains third in the points standings, 14 points behind leader Michael Waltrip.

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