

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Bobby Allison and Richard Petty share the record for most Cup wins (7) at Dover International Speedway.

# NASCAR INSIDER

**THIS WEEK**

**Race:** Neighborhood Excellence 400  
**Where:** Dover International Speedway  
**When:** Sunday, 1:30 p.m. ET  
**Television:** FX  
**Defending race winner:** Greg Biffle



An afternoon with the ...

# 'MONSTER'

Most drivers enjoy racing on Dover's concrete track

By RICK MINTER  
 Cox News Service

**Atlanta**  
 The NASCAR circuit went straight from the old asphalt of Darlington Raceway to the new blacktop at Lowe's Motor Speedway. This week the action moves to a track with no asphalt at all.

The Neighborhood Excellence 400 will be run on Dover International Speedway, one of the few concrete tracks on the circuit. The oval track, surrounded by 140,000 seats, is 1 mile in length, with the straights banked 9 degrees and turns banked 24 degrees. It's a recipe for high speeds, and not surprisingly, most drivers love it.

"I always like going to Dover because you can go out there and go real fast for a 1-mile track," said Matt Kenseth, who made his Nextel Cup debut at Dover in 1998. He filled in for Bill Elliott, whose father died that week, and drove the car to a sixth-place finish. A year later, Kenseth became a member of his current Roush Racing team.

Kenseth said the speeds at Dover do have a downside. "The challenging part the last few years has been not wrecking," he said. "Dover has always been notorious for the right-front tires blowing out, and we've had a few of them. But it seems like they've been able to fix that the last couple of years."

"I love the track, but I've kind of struggled there the last few years in my Cup car, so just to get my car to do what I

want to do for a whole run is my biggest challenge."

Mark Martin, who has four career Cup victories at Dover, tying him with Jeff Gordon for tops on the active-driver list, said he really likes Dover.

"I can't think of anything I dislike about racing at Dover," Martin said. "I liked it better when it was asphalt, but it's the best concrete track we race on."

"You can drive hard. You don't have to drive easy or be careful. You can race hard there."

And he said that in a sport where factors beyond a driver's control — aerodynamics and horsepower — often determine who wins and who runs in midpack, Dover is a place where driving skill can make a significant difference.

"A driver can carry a car a little bit

there," he said.

But sometimes tempers flare at Dover as much, or more, than on the short tracks of Martinsville and Bristol. It's because the racing sometimes is more like what's seen on a short track instead of a superspeedway.

Last year's first race at Dover featured marquee stars Tony Stewart and Jeff Gordon colliding on the track and trading barbs in the garage after the race.

"All I can say is the next time Tony's holding me up, it won't be very long before he's out of my way," an angry Gordon told reporters at the time.

Stewart's response: "Jeff's always whining like that. If somebody does something to Jeff, it's always their fault."

The monster on the trophy of last year's MBNA RacePoints 400 grips a model of race winner Greg Biffle's car.



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**DOVER INTERNATIONAL SPEEDWAY**

**Track length:** 1 mile  
**Race length:** 400 laps/400 miles  
**Banking in corners:** 24 degrees  
**Banking on straights:** 9 degrees  
**Frontstretch:** 1,076 feet  
**Backstretch:** 1,076 feet  
**Grandstand seating:** 140,000  
**First race:** July 6, 1989; Mason-Dixon 300  
**Qualifying record:** Jeremy Mayfield, Dodge; 161.522 mph, June 4, 2004  
**Race record:** Mark Martin, Ford; 132.719 mph, Sept. 21, 1997

What ever happened to ...

## Patty Moise

Patty Moise, from Jacksonville, Fla., was one of the most successful female racers ever in NASCAR. She ran five Cup and 133 Busch Series races from 1986-1998.

She had several strong runs in the Busch Series, finishing seventh at Talladega in 1995 and 10th at Bristol in 1998, but her best run was in 1987 in a Busch race at Road Atlanta. She started second and was leading with five laps to go. She was passed by eventual winner Morgan Shepherd, then slid off the track, racing for second, just as rain began to fall. She finished eighth.

Today, she works behind the scenes in television, co-producing the "24-7" Speed Channel show that chronicles the week for teams in the Busch Series. She sat down with Cox News Service writer Rick Minter at Charlotte last weekend to discuss life away from racing:

**Q.** Did you come along too soon in the sport?

**A.** "Do female drivers right now have it that much better?"

**Q.** Is the garage environment better for females today than in your era?

**A.** "So that's why there's such a plethora of [female drivers] in the Nextel Cup and Busch garage."

**Q.** Do you think [IndyCar driver] Danica Patrick is opening doors for female drivers?

**A.** "Well, there is the one, but at least she's got people thinking about it. Ask me that when there's five or six women racing competitively in these upper echelons. Don't just hang it on the one."

**Q.** Were there highlights during your driving career?

**A.** "There wasn't really a highlight. I honestly don't think I accomplished my goals. I didn't win races. Whether I didn't have the talent or didn't get myself in position with good teams or



NASCAR

didn't have the money, whatever the case may be, I didn't accomplish my goals. But I had a great time. I did get to lead a race or two, and I got to race with my hero, Dale Earnhardt. It was exactly two times that I got to pass him when he wasn't broke."

**Q.** Do you recall the 1987 race at Road Atlanta?

**A.** "I led a bunch. I was running second with a few laps to go, and I didn't manage to stay on the course. But I don't think about stuff like that ... If you don't have wins in your column, it can only mean so much."

## Catching up with Robert 'Bootie' Barker

Robert "Bootie" Barker, a 35-year-old crew chief from Brookneal, Va., has been a Nextel Cup crew chief for three years and currently oversees the No. 66 Chevrolet driven by Jeff Green. He previously has worked with Jason Leffler, Dave Blaney and Scott Wimmer.

He's also a regular guest on Speed Channel's NASCAR talk shows. He sat down with Cox News Service writer Rick Minter to discuss racing and life away from racing.

**On his favorite movie:** "I like 'The Shawshank Redemption' because it's about a guy that's out and came back."

**On his favorite book:** "I'd say 'The Count of Monte Cristo' for the same reason."

**On the best race he's ever been a**



NASCAR

**part of:** "The race at Darlington in 2008 between Ricky Craven and Kurt Busch. And the one [in 1999] when Dale Earnhardt wrecked Terry Labonte at Bristol."

**On his best race ever as a crew chief:** "The Busch race at Homestead [in 2002] with Scott Wimmer. We really dominated that race. We had fun."

**On his season so far:** "We're average. We're not bad, and in this garage, to be average ain't bad."

**On his budding career as a TV commentator:** "I enjoy it more than I thought I would, but racing is my first gig. Maybe that's why I'm comfortable, because I know racing is most important to me ... [TV] is not my bread and butter, so maybe that's why I don't feel any stress."

## NUMERICALLY SPEAKING

**381** Most laps led by a race winner (Jeff Gordon, 2001) in a 400-mile race at Dover International Speedway.

**38** Consecutive laps run by Jason Leffler in the Carquest 300 at Lowe's Motor Speedway without being passed; tops among all drivers.

**26** Most Nextel Cup wins by a manufacturer at Dover (Chevrolet).

**8** Fewest laps led by a Dover race winner (Dale Jarrett, 1998).



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**Greg Biffle** cruises to victory in last year's first race at Dover.

## Rick Minter's OBSERVATIONS

Here are some of the top storylines this week leading to Dover.

### Talking the talk

Dale Earnhardt Jr. is, without a doubt, the face of NASCAR for most of America. And now his voice is spreading the word about the sport.

Earnhardt Jr. is one of the celebrities lending his voice to the animated movie, "Cars."

"It's something that I felt was really important," he said. "The sport's starting to get that type of recognition to where people are actually going to spend millions of dollars to make movies about it. I want to jump in that pool and be a part of it. It sounds like a lot of fun."

To hear him talk, he's a natural behind the microphone.

"I'm a one-take guy," he said. "I don't need 60 takes. I got 'er done. I was in there five minutes."



EARNHARDT

### Stuck in a big hole

Even though Michael Waltrip was able to buy Derrike Cope's ride for the Coca-Cola 600, it didn't help him dig out of the owner's-points hole for the No. 55 team.

Waltrip's Dodge was too slow in qualifying, and he was one spot out of the top 35 in owner's points that are guaranteed starting spots for races. So he worked a deal to drive Cope's No. 74. But under NASCAR rules, Cope's car owner, Raynard McGlynn, got the points Waltrip earned in the 600. So Waltrip, who finished 41st in McGlynn's car, heads to Dover in an even worse position in owner's points. Waltrip's team dropped three spots to 39th, while McGlynn gained three, to 49th.

Jeremy Mayfield's No. 19 team holds the 35th position, while the teams of Scott Wimmer, David Stremme and Travis Kvapil moved ahead of Waltrip in owner's points.

### Stuck in a big hole: part 2

Defending Nextel Cup champion Tony Stewart had a brutal month in May. He took an upside down ride in his No. 33 Busch car at Talladega, then wrecked three times at Lowe's Motor Speedway — first in the All-Star Challenge, then in the Carquest 300 Busch Series race and again in the Coca-Cola 600.

The last two crashes resulted in hospital visits, but he left Charlotte expecting to race at Dover this week.

The crash in the Coca-Cola 600 also hurt him in the points standings. He came into the race second in points, 93 behind points leader Jimmie Johnson. He left in fourth place, 231 behind Johnson.

### Dodge tough

Car owner Ray Evernham obviously has his No. 9 Dodge missing strong, as Casey Kahne sped to his third superspeedway victory of the season in the Coca-Cola 600. But his other two drivers, Scott Riggs and Mayfield, also showed new strength.

Mayfield, who has struggled all season, started on the outside pole and finished 15th; Riggs started on the pole and led eight times for 90 laps before a late-race miscue on pit road dropped him to 43rd at the end.

Evernham called the pit miscue "a huge mistake," and he wondered whether NASCAR made the right call in penalizing the team. Still, he expressed confidence in Riggs and his crew.

"It's a first-year team, and Scott has shown he can win races," Evernham said.



NASCAR

Carl Edwards stops in the pits during the Carquest 300.

### Back on the right track

It seems impossible to carry momentum through NASCAR's offseason. At the end of 2005, it looked as if Carl Edwards could do no wrong. He won twice and had finishes of fourth and sixth in the final four Nextel Cup races. In the Busch Series, he closed the season with four top-five finishes, including a victory, in the final five races.

But for the first few races of 2006, he couldn't seem to recapture the magic he had enjoyed last year. His average finish in Nextel Cup, heading into the Coca-Cola 600, was 20.5 and he was winless in the Busch Series.

On Saturday night, in the Carquest 300 at Lowe's Motor Speedway, his victory drought ended thanks to a late-race surge that saw him move from sixth to first in the final 30 laps. He backed that up with a third-place run in the Coca-Cola 600 on Sunday.

Car owner Jack Roush said the strong runs at Lowe's allow Edwards and his team to look forward with great optimism.

"I look at Charlotte as really the end of the beginning as far as the year is concerned," he said. "If we can close the deal at Charlotte, whatever has happened in the first half of the year just passes in insignificance later in the year as you think back on it."

## STANDINGS

### NEXTEL CUP

Following the Coca-Cola 600

Driver	Cup next up:	Neighborhood Excellence 400:
1. Jimmie Johnson	1,861; previous: 1	Dover International Speedway
2. Matt Kenseth	1,752; previous: 3	TV: 1:30 p.m. ET, Sunday, FX
3. Mark Martin	1,652; previous: 4	<b>Busch next up:</b>
4. Tony Stewart	1,630; previous: 2	StonebridgeRacing.com 200;
5. Dale Earnhardt Jr.	1,590; previous: 5	Dover International Speedway
6. Casey Kahne	1,569; previous: 8	TV: 3 p.m. ET, Saturday, FX
7. Jeff Gordon	1,451; previous: 8	<b>Truck next up:</b> AAA Insurance
8. Jeff Burton	1,450; previous: 10	200; Dover International Speedway
9. Kyle Busch	1,437; previous: 7	TV: 8 p.m. ET, Friday, Speed Channel
10. Kevin Harvick	1,402; previous: 8	



Kasey Kahne is sixth in the Cup standings

### BUSCH SERIES

1. Kevin Harvick	2,092; previous: 1
2. Carl Edwards	1,744; previous: 4
3. Clint Bowyer	1,653; previous: 2
4. Denny Hamlin	1,642; previous: 3
5. J.J. Yelley	1,602; previous: 8

### TRUCK SERIES

1. Todd Bodine	1,140; previous: 1
2. Ted Musgrave	1,120; previous: 2
3. David Reutimann	1,034; previous: 3
4. David Starr	948; previous: 7
5. Johnny Benson	948; previous: 6