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Towns County's Leader In Sports



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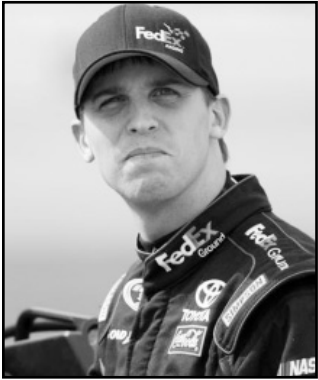
April 21, 2010

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Hiawassee, Georgia

NASCAR 2010

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter



Denny Hamlin

Hamlin Wins Texas Shootout

Denny Hamlin took advantage of a 9 car pileup with 17 laps to go to win Monday's rain-postponed Samsung 500 at Texas Motor Speedway.

"I never doubted the outcome," said Hamlin. "We were in this for the long runs and the team did a great job there at the end."

Hamlin's win was the second one in the last three races, both victories coming in races that were postponed by rain before being run on the first day of the week.

Hamlin never led until that final run, set up after a spectacular nine-car crash involving Jeff Gordon who had led 124 laps, and pole-sitter Tony Stewart.

After a brief red flag period while officials cleaned debris from the track, racing resumed with 13 laps to go.

Hamlin passed Jeff Burton the leader with 11 to go. After a brief battle with Kyle Busch, Hamlin pulled away and beat Jimmie Johnson to the finish line by about 100 feet.

The big crash came on lap 317 of the 334-lap race after Tony Stewart got loose coming out of turn-2. He slowed and was bumped from the rear by Carl Edwards. The left front of Stewart's No. 14 bumped into the rear of the No. 24 driven by Jeff Gordon.

"It was my fault," said Stewart. "I got up into the turn and got squirrely and came down. It wasn't Jeff's (Gordon) fault, it was mine."

Stewart finished 32nd and dropped from 9th to 14th in points.

Jeff Gordon led 124 laps, the most of any driver and had the dominant car, but wound up with a DNF.

"When you get a late caution every lap counts," said Gordon. "I saw Tony get loose and I tried to get under him, but we got together."

Gordon finished 31st

and remains fourth in points.

The other cars that involved in the lap 317 crash included Joey Logano, Juan Montoya, A J Allmendinger, Jamie McMurray, Clint Bowyer, and Paul Menard.

Top-10 finishers: 1. Hamlin, 2. Johnson, 3. Kyle Busch, 4. Kurt Busch, 5. Kasey Kahne, 6. Mark Martin, 7. Kevin Harvick, 8. Dale Earnhardt Jr., 9. Martin Truex, 10. Greg Biffle

Top-12 Chase contenders after 8 of 36: 1. Johnson-1248, 2. Kenseth-1140, 3. Biffle-1120, 4. Harvick-1107, 5. J. Gordon-1028, 6. Kyle Busch-1020, 7. Earnhardt-1013, 8. Burton-1005, 9. Kurt Busch-999, 10. Martin-994, 11. Hamlin-973, 12. Edwards-942

Kasey Kahne will be leaving Richard Petty Motorsports at the end of this season, for Hendrick Motorsports, but exactly which car he will be driving is yet to be determined, as Hendrick already has four teams, the maximum allowed by NASCAR.

Stewart-Haas Racing - which features drivers Tony Stewart and Ryan Newman - gets chassis and engines from Hendrick and could be a possibility for Kahne, who currently drives for Richard Petty Motorsports.

"If this opportunity was going to happen, I knew having some unanswered questions would be part of the scenario at this stage," Kahne said in a news release. "Hendrick Motorsports has a commitment to Mark Martin that they want to fulfill, and that's important. It's part of what attracts me to the team."

Kahne is in the final year of his contract at RPM. His sponsor, Budweiser, also is in the last year of its contract with RPM. A Budweiser executive said Tuesday the company has not decided on its 2011 plans.

The 30-year-old Kahne, who entered the Cup series in 2004 with Evernham Motorsports, has 11 career victories and is a two-time Chase For The Sprint Cup participant. He is 26th in the 2010 standings.

Kahne still must put energy toward determining his 2011 plans. A spokesman for JR Motorsports, another Hendrick affiliate, said that there are no current plans to go Cup racing next year, and a Stewart-Haas Racing spokesman said there are no definitive plans to add a third team.

Meanwhile there is

much speculation about what the fallout will be at RPM. A team can survive if there's a pile of cash in the bank and their teams are winning. RPM has neither of these.

Richard Petty Motorsports financial tank is about empty and all of their cars are sputtering. They need to find a way to get some fuel back in, which isn't too easy when your number one driver is pulling out.

Pretty soon, they will be coasting to the infield with the fuel light burning a bright red and no amount of after-hour back slapping, or press conferences is going to help.

While Kahne has been fortunate to land with good teams, most drivers that aspire to race at the Cup level are not so lucky.

To get started in racing, a young driver had better come into the deal with a great deal of available capital, no matter what form of racing is being considered.

With that said, one has to reason that many young, up and coming drivers must have rich dads, and in at least some cases that is correct.

This past weekend, driver John Wes Townley became part of the story of the Nationwide Series race in Phoenix. After a practice crash, team owner Richard Childress removed him from the No. 21 Chevrolet in favor of the more experienced Clint Bowyer.

The 20 year old Townley has raced in the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series and the Nationwide Series since 2008. And despite the fact that he has never recorded a top-10 finish in either of those series, he has driven for a team tied with Roush Fenway Racing and Richard Childress Racing.

So, how with virtually no racing resume to speak of did Townley land such high profile rides?

The simple answer to that question is money. His father, Tony Townley, is a co-founder and the chief financial officer of the Zaxby's restaurant chain, hence the reason why his son's cars are always sponsored by that company.

Townley's history in NASCAR is a story of one crash after another. If he has any racing talent it is difficult to see. The only thing he brings to the table, literally and figuratively, is money, not just chicken feed.

A number of other modern day stars and non-stars alike have similar stories. Could this be all we as fans have to look forward to in future race drivers?

Rusty Wallace's son, Stephen, got his break in racing through obvious means. Along the way he has left a trail of destroyed equipment. Crashes have become all too common for this young driver.

Brendan Gaughan's father operates the South Point Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, which is coincidentally the sponsor of his RWI ride. Gaughan has won eight truck series races and has competed in all three of NASCAR's top levels.

Sprint Cup driver Paul Menard's father owns a chain of home improvement stores, and has sponsored him throughout his racing career.

Racing could well become an exclusive playground of only the wealthy in the very near future.

Are drivers with no experience but a pocket full of money going to be crashing their way up the ranks until they reach the highest levels? Trends seem to indicate that may well be the case.

Weekend Racing The Cup and Nationwide teams are at Talladega Superspeedway, the longest track on NASCAR's circuit (2.66-miles). The Truck teams do not race again until May 2.

Sat., Apr. 24, Nationwide Series Aaron's 312; Starting time: 2:30 pm ET; TV: ABC.

Sun., Apr. 25, Spring Cup Aaron's 499; Starting time: 1 pm ET; TV: Fox.

Lady Indians headed to state tennis tourney

By Charles Duncan
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD
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The Towns County Lady Indians will make their first trip to the state playoffs in tennis on Thursday.

They're in the unenviable position of No. 4 seed out of Region 8-A following last week's region tournament at Lakeview Academy.

"We're happy to be there," Head Coach Shannon Floyd said. "However, we're learning a valuable lesson. That regular season loss to Lakeview Academy cost us. We ended up having to play Athens Academy in our second match and that put us in a bad position."

"If we had won that regular season match up, we very easily could have been the No. 2 seed and in a lot better position in this thing," Coach Floyd said.

The Lady Indians defeated Prince Avenue Christian 3-0 to advance to the state playoffs. Their second match against Athens Academy didn't go as well. The Lady Indians lost 3-0.

That pitted the Lady Indians against Athens Christian, a team they had beaten in the regular season.

"We'll make no excuses," Coach Floyd said. "We should have won, but we lost 3-2. They switched their lineup against us this time and put the pressure on our doubles teams."

The difference, Towns County plays No. 1 seed Pace Academy and Athens Christian plays The Walker School.

"It's a matter of picking your poison on that one," Coach Floyd said. "Both of those teams are incredible."

That won't deter the



Towns County Lady Indians Ginny Rhoades could be a significant factor in Thursday's state tennis playoffs. The Lady Indians travel to Pace Academy to take on the Lady Knights. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Lady Indians who right now believe they can beat anybody.

"We'll go down there and give them our best," Coach Floyd said.

The Lady Indians match against Region 5-A Pace Academy is at Pace Academy at 4 p.m. on Thursday.

"Hey, making the state playoffs in tennis is a big deal for Towns County," Coach Floyd said. "Who knows, we may just pull this off."

Of the 16 teams that made the tournament from North Georgia, there aren't many public schools left.

"Hey, we're proud to be representing the public schools of North Georgia," Coach Floyd said. "There aren't a whole lot of public schools in Class A tennis, so we're proud to be there representing the public school side of the coin."

The Boys' squad lost

early on in a tough match up with Hebron Christian, Coach Floyd said.

"We gave it our best shot," he said. "We had our chances, but it didn't pan out for us."

GWRRA meetings

Chapter J of the Gold Wing Road Riders Association (GWRRA) meets on the fourth Saturday of each month (excluding December) at Daniels Steakhouse, Hiawassee, GA. Fellowship and food at 11 AM with the meeting commencing at noon. We welcome riders of all brands of motorcycles and welcome participants of other GWRRA chapters. For further information, please contact Chapter Director Peg Jones 678-464-7340. NT(Apr21-GJ)gg

Hunter Moss gets his first turkey!



Hunter with his first turkey at the hunting cabin

Hunter Moss, 3rd grader at TCES, killed his first turkey on April 7, 2010 in Marion County, TN during spring break.

He was hunting with his dad and shot the gobbler 30 yards away. The bird had a 9 inch beard and 3/4 inch spurs. TA(Apr21-GJ)SH

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