

SPRINT CUP

Race: Quicken Loans 400
Where: Michigan International Speedway
When: Sunday, 1 p.m. (ET)
TV: TNT
2012 Winner: Dale Earnhardt Jr. (right)



NATIONWIDE SERIES

Race: Alliance Truck Parts 250
Where: Michigan International Speedway
When: Saturday, 2 p.m. (ET)
TV: ABC
2012 Winner: Joey Logano

CAMPING WORLD TRUCKS

Race: UNOH 225
Where: Kentucky Speedway
When: June 27, 8 p.m. (ET)
TV: SPEED
2012 Winner: James Buescher

NASCAR INSIDER

by RICK MINTER / Universal Uclick

Jimmie Johnson dominates from the pole at Pocono

A week after a penalty for jumping a restart cost him a likely win at Dover International Speedway, Jimmie Johnson responded with a flawless, dominating performance at Pocono Raceway.

As the Sprint Cup Series points leader, he started on the pole when qualifying was rained out. He then proceeded to lead 128 of 160 laps, including the final 31, to score his third win of the season and extend his points lead over second-place Carl Edwards to 51.

Although some suspected that Johnson's thorough thrashing of the rest of the field — Ryan Newman was second in laps led with just 19 — was in response to his disappointment from Dover, he and his crew chief, Chad Knaus, insisted otherwise.

"I don't really think so," Knaus said. "It would have been very easy to come in here with a chip on your shoulder or a grudge, and Jimmie is not that kind of guy. ...

"He doesn't carry a grudge. He is very laid back — the pinnacle Californian — and he just lets it go and come and go as it pleases."

Knaus said the entire No. 48 team at Hendrick Motorsports tries not to let what happened in the past affect their performance in the future, and he said that's one of the keys to their success.

"We always try to keep eyes forward, and I think that gives us always a little bit clearer view," he said. "Sometimes it's pretty easy to get clouded."

However, Johnson said he didn't have Dover completely out of his mind at Pocono.

"There was a little lingering for me," he said, adding that he would have liked to prove a point about gamesmanship in the restart zone, but doing so could have cost teammate Dale Earnhardt Jr., who was second to Johnson on several late-race restarts.

"I guess if things stay the way they do, I'll save that for another day and prove my point even more," he said.

Earnhardt, who lost second place to Greg Biffle on the final restart at Pocono and finished third, said the bottom-line story from Dover and Pocono is the strength and speed showed by Johnson's team, which operates under the same roof at Hendrick as Earnhardt's team.

"They had good cars two weeks in a row," Earnhardt said. "They won one race and didn't win the other one. They win championships. They win a lot of races."

"He's going to have his opportunities all year long. Fortunate enough for me I get to be in the same shop as those guys. I get to lean on them, and I get to know exactly what's happening under the hood, and I can learn and use that to my advantage."



Jimmie Johnson leaves the pack far behind as he crosses the finish line at Pocono.



Jimmie Johnson takes the checkered flag on a victory lap.



Jimmie Johnson, right, hoists the winner's trophy at Pocono with his crew chief, Chad Knaus.



Jimmie Johnson celebrates his Pocono win with wife Chandra and daughter Genevieve Marie.

Cecil Wilson, a fixture at Wood Brothers Racing, dies at 77

The rigors of racing at the Sprint Cup level can make for some tough times for drivers, team owners and crew members. But there always seem to be a few people around who have a knack for making things more enjoyable.

In the case of the Wood Brothers race team, for the past 40-something years, that person was Cecil Wilson.

Wilson, who died last week of cancer at age 77, grew up in the same Patrick County, Va., community as the Woods, and began working on their race cars in the late 1960s, while also working second shift at the local Fieldcrest Mills.

When he retired from the mill, he joined the Woods full time and stayed on the job until his failing health wouldn't allow him to do so.

He was fourth on the team's seniority list, trailing only Glen Wood and his wife, Bernece, and Leonard Wood.

"He was working here when I started," said Eddie Wood, Glen and Bernece's oldest son and one of the team's current owners. "My brother Len and I were young, and Cecil was in

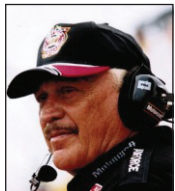
his 30s. He was very street-smart, and we sort of learned the ropes of life from him."

Wood said that Wilson drove high-performance Ford street cars back in the day and brought them to Leonard Wood to have them tuned. He hung around the shop so much that the team finally put him on the payroll.

"He was one of those people that always had your back," Wood said. "If you needed somebody to pick you up at the airport at 3 o'clock in the morning, he's the one you would call."

Wood said that for many years, he, his brother Len and Wilson ate breakfast together and discussed the upcoming workday.

"He was one of those people that everybody wanted to be around," Wood said. "Racing's not always fun. It's a lot of hard work and it can be really disappointing, but Cecil made it fun, especially for Len and me."



"Big C" worked at Wood Brothers Racing for over four decades.

Kyle Petty has his eye on several storylines as TNT ramps up its Sprint Cup coverage

Now that the TNT network has begun its six-race turn in the Sprint Cup Series broadcast rotation, Kyle Petty, the eight-time Sprint Cup Series race winner and a third-generation member of one of racing's most famous families, has stepped to center stage when it comes to the race-day broadcast.

For many race fans, Petty's commentary is refreshingly unbridled. Although it tends to confound the powers that be in NASCAR, as he can be critical of their decision-making, NASCAR officials ought to be pleased with Petty's outlook for the next few weeks.

"I'm looking forward to Michigan because I thought [the race at Auto Club Speedway] was a really good race for this new car," he said, referring to the Gen-6 design. "It was one of the better races we've had at California ever. Michigan, which is a similar two-mile track, can be a good race."

He's also upbeat about the circuit's first trip to a road course with the Gen-6 car.

"Sonoma I'm really looking forward to because NASCAR has finally gotten a new qualifying format where they turn four or five cars loose at the same time, which will be pretty interesting to watch," he said. "And the car itself has a lot more downforce and it's 150 pounds lighter. That'll show up even more on the road course than it's shown up even on the short tracks so far."

Petty also is optimistic about the return trip to Daytona, TNT's final race before turning the broadcast duties over to ESPN/ABC for the remainder of the season.

"I'm not a big fan of that kind of racing, but the restrictor-plate races at Daytona and Talladega have been incredible to watch over

the last few years," he said.

He said the big-picture story in the upcoming weeks will be about Denny Hamlin, who is trying to grab a wild-card Chase berth after missing several races because of back injury.

"Can he get in the top 20 in points and can he win at least two races?" Petty said. "I believe that's what it's going to take to make the wild card."

He's not expecting NASCAR's most popular driver, Dale Earnhardt Jr., to be a headline-grabber for the remainder of the season.

"You can look at the last four or five years and figure he'll do the same thing he always does," Petty said. "He starts strong, has mechanical troubles, has bad luck, falls off the face of the Earth, makes the Chase, then that's the last we ever hear of him because nobody ever talks about him in the Chase races."

"Everybody wants to see him win a championship, if you listen to the fans, but you can't run like he's run and not be in contention to win races, and expect to win a championship. That's just not going to happen."

Petty also will be watching to see whether defending Cup champion Brad Keselowski and his No. 2 Ford team can recover from the setback that came when crew chief Paul Wolfe and other key crew members were suspended for two races for rules violations.

"Paul being at home hurt Brad and that team a lot more than they thought it was going to hurt them," Petty said.

He also disagreed with the six-point, \$25,000 penalty assessed to the No. 2 team after the car was too low in a post-race inspection at Dover in Wolfe's first race back.

Petty said that although the penalties were



Kyle Petty is behind the mic for TNT's race-day broadcasts.

the same as the ones imposed on Martin Truex Jr.'s team for a similar infraction earlier in the year, Wolfe's should have been more severe, since he was on NASCAR probation for the earlier violation.

"Being on probation means nothing in this sport," he said. "If you go out and have another violation, all they do is extend your probation."

"I would have been more pleased if they'd penalized [Wolfe] 12 points and \$50,000."

NOTEBOOK

Nationwide win at Iowa caps busy week for Trevor Bayne

Austin Dillon appeared to be cruising to victory late in Sunday's rain-delayed Nationwide Series race at Iowa Speedway. But as the laps wound down, Trevor Bayne's No. 6 Ford began picking up speed and he took the checkered flag to deliver Ford Motor Co. its 200th series victory.



Trevor Bayne and Ashton Clapp dance following their wedding on Tuesday.

Bayne also got Ford's 600th Sprint Cup win driving for the Wood Brothers in the 2011 Daytona 500. He has two chances this week to get Ford's 1,000th overall victory, as he'll run both the Nationwide and Cup races at Michigan International Speedway.

Bayne's victory, his second ever in Nationwide, also was special because it came in the same week that he got married to his long-time girlfriend, Ashton Clapp.

"I was teared up on the altar on Tuesday, and I about teared up in victory lane on Sunday," Bayne said. "It is such a great week and to have her here supporting me. Not many women would be willing to get married on a Tuesday and come to Iowa as part of their honeymoon."



Trevor Bayne celebrates his win in Sunday's Nationwide race at Iowa.

SPRINT CUP STANDINGS

1. Jimmie Johnson, 521
2. Carl Edwards, 470
3. Clint Bowyer, 452
4. Dale Earnhardt Jr., 439
5. Kevin Harvick, 434
6. Matt Kenseth, 418
7. Kyle Busch, 412
8. Kasey Kahne, 400
9. Brad Keselowski, 398
10. Greg Biffle, 395

NUMERICALLY SPEAKING

5 Sprint Cup victories by Mark Martin at Michigan International Speedway — the most of any active driver

41 Highest number of drivers running at the end of a Sprint Cup race at Michigan (most recently on Aug. 21, 2007)

76 Points separating Denny Hamlin, 25th in the standings, and Ricky Stenhouse Jr., in 20th. (A driver must be in the top 20 after 26 races to be eligible for a wild-card Chase berth.)

1,441 Green-flag passes by Jamie McMurray in the past 16 Sprint Cup races at Michigan, tops among all drivers