

The Villages Motor Racing Fan Club

Visit our website at www.villagesracingclub.com

July, 2007



Inside This Issue

- 1 A message from the Crew Chief
- 1 June's Meeting – A driver's perspective
- 2 Special Events Committee Report
- 2 Special Announcement – *No July Meeting*
- 2 Special Report – 2007 Chase Format
- 3 Local Racing Corner
- 4 So You Don't Need to Look it up!
- 4 Club Contact Information
- 5 Changes made to Chase, Points system

A Message from your Crew Chief



An update directly from the Chief

I have been bothered with back problems for many years. After three surgeries, the last of which was a total failure, I decided it was time to do a better job of researching my need and try to find a doctor that knew what he was doing.

I finally found a Surgeon that I think has helped alleviate my pain. As many of you know, I had surgery on May 21 at Shands Hospital in Gainesville, and have been slowly

recovering since that date. I went for my one month check up last week and after seeing the X-rays, my back looks like the inside of a '68 Buick engine. Rods and screws everywhere.

I want to sincerely thank everyone for their prayers and concerns, their cards, gift baskets, calls, and emails. A special thanks to our talented Pit Crew for all the things they have done and accomplished during my absence, most notably the great June meeting and the raffle. My sincere congratulations to the three winners.

I also want to thank our members and our great friends, Olyn and Janice Guice, for their assistance during our time of need. They were there for Linda and I all the way through. I'll see you all soon.

Glen

June's Meeting – A Driver's Perspective



In keeping with what seems to have become a tradition for our club, our June 6 meeting featured another excellent speaker. Steven Griffin of nearby Inverness, a veteran of more than nine years as a race car driver, joined us to share his insights and experiences both on the local tracks and around some of the biggest names in the racing business. Steven spoke at length about his early years as a racer, going all the way back to the days of racing tricycles, remote controlled cars, bicycles, roller skates, jet skis, motocross, and street cars, before taking the step into organized stock car racing in 1998. According to Steven's dad, Don, he's been racing *something* since the day he started walking.

Part of Steve's message focused on his start in the mini-stock division at local tracks, beginning with the purchase of his first car in 1998 and continuing through his experience as a car-builder. He spoke of this experience in the Florida Pro-Truck series in 2000 (he was the leading rookie driver that year and finished 5th in the points race), and his several-year stint in Mooresville, North Carolina working as a fabricator, hanging body parts for such teams as Dale Earnhardt, Rusty Wallace, Jeff Gordon, Sterling Marlin, and many others. Following that, Steven recounted his move to Mario Gosselin's Hooters Pro Cup team, where he eventually assumed Crew Chief duties and led the team to victory circle that year. Steven reported that, shortly after his time with Gosselin, his inner passion to be a race car driver brought him home to compete on the local Florida tracks. The rest is history, as they say, and he is currently a regular competitor and mini-stock points leader at Citrus County Speedway. So far in his young career, Steven has raced at more than 50 tracks, from Florida to Virginia.

Steven fielded a number of questions from club members after his prepared remarks, addressing such subjects as the Car of Tomorrow, Cup drivers running the Busch series races, open wheel racers migrating to NASCAR, aspects of race car set-up, NASCAR procedures for positioning cars during a race, and many of the financial issues associated with running a race team.

Special Events Committee Report

Well, “The Villages Raffle to Race” came to pass at our June 6 meeting, after a last-minute blitz of ticket sales during the meeting. With guest speaker Steven Griffin doing the honors, the three prize winners were drawn and—can you believe it—the top prize was won by our own Wendy Touchette!



(By the way—we did subsequently verify that all 150 individual tickets were in fact in the bag). After Wendy calmed down, we were able to complete the drawing process, with Jesse Schultz from Lakeland, Florida and Club member Charles Miner rounding out the winners list. All things considered, this was a successful venture for the club, and will most likely be repeated in the future.

Our July trip to Daytona International Speedway is now only about a week away. The two-day package for the July 6 Busch Series race and the July 7 Pepsi 400 Nextel Cup race, including bus transportation to and from The Villages both days, is another excellent deal put together by Wendy and her Special Events Committee. The package includes a number of goodies, with welcome gifts, on-site assistance, and a “Fan Zone” add-on option. The most incredible thing about this package is the price: \$285 per person (\$305 with the “Fan Zone” option) for the whole two days. To make reservations, contact Wendy (at 430-0239 or email at mrswmt@comcast.net) or call our Speedway contact person (Sabrina Gardner 386-681-4297) directly. Seats are still available, and the deadline has been extended to **July 2**.

Our Special Events Committee is also in the early stages of developing plans for another trip to New Smyrna Speedway, so mark the date—Saturday, November 17—on your calendar. This will be the annual Governor’s Event, a 200-lap race complete with pit stops and a whole lot of action.

Hats and polo shirts are still available for order, and the club’s logo decals are still available (\$3 each). The decals look great on golf carts, and give us yet another avenue to publicize the club.

Special Announcement – No July Meeting

Don’t forget that there will be *no club meeting in July*. Our regular meeting date would be July 4, so that’s a conflict with many members’ personal plans. Any breaking news or important announcements will be posted on our club website...which is now back up and running after a momentary administrative problem.

In Memoriam

William Clifton France – 1933 - 2007



Special Report – The 2007 Chase Points System

Since there's been a bit of confusion concerning the revisions made for the 2007 "Chase for the Nextel Cup" format, we thought it would be a good idea to reprint an article that appeared earlier this year on Nascar's website. The reprint, appearing on page five of this newsletter, explains the changes that were implemented for this year, and provides some commentary on their intent.

Local Racing Corner

In keeping with our objective of promoting local racing interest, here's a recap of upcoming dates at several of our closest tracks. These venues offer great car pool, tailgating opportunities to watch real exciting grassroots racing.

Citrus County Speedway (http://www.citruscountyspeedway.com)	
Date	Event
July 14	Super Late Model, Sportsman, Mini Stock, Street Stock, Pure Stock, V8 Thunder Stock
July 21	Mini Stock Challenge/Southern Sportsman, Open Wheel Modified, Pure Stock, V8 Thunder Stock, 4 Cylinder Bombers, Fig 8
July 28	Super Late Model, Sportsman, Mini Stock, Street Stock, Pure Stock, V8 Thunder Stock, 4 Cylinder Bombers
Ocala Speedway (http://www.ocalaspeedway.com)	
July 13	Regular Divisions: (4 Cylinder Stock, V-8 Pure Stock V-8 Thunder Stock, Street Stock, Sportsman & Modifieds)...PLUS – School Bus Figure "8", Boat & Trailer race & Figure "8" cars
July 20	Regular Divisions: (4 Cylinder Stock, V-8 Pure Stock, V-8 Thunder Stock, Street Stock, Sportsman). PLUS – Goodyear Challenge & Kids Bike Races
July 27	Regular Divisions: (4 Cylinder Stock, V-8 Pure Stock, V-8 Thunder Stock, Street Stock, Sportsman & Modifieds). PLUS – Powder Puff Race & Figure "8" cars - (4 X 4 Race)
New Smyrna Speedway (http://www.newsmyrnaspeedway.org)	
July 4	Clyde Hart Memorial 100 Sunoco Sunbelt Super Series, FASCAR Pro-Truck 50, Southern Sportsman 50
July 14	Late Model 50 - double points night, Pro-Trucks, Sportsman, Super Stock, Mini Stock, Strictly Stock
July 21	Open Wheel Modified 50 - double points for modifieds, Late Model, Pro-Truck, Sportsman, Super Stock, Mini Stock, Strictly Stock
July 28	Mini Stock 50, Late Model, Pro-Truck, Sportsman, Super Stock, Strictly Stock
USA Speedway, Lakeland (http://www.usaspeedway.com)	
August 4	Guaranteed Concrete Florida Triple Crown Race #2 The 9th Annual Florida State Late Model Championship 200 FASCAR Sunoco Sunbelt Super Late Model Series

So You Don't Need to Look it up!

Last month we recapped the "Most Popular Driver" awards back to 1981, and offered a forecast that Dale Earnhardt Jr. might someday pass "Awesome Bill" Elliott as the most frequent winner of this award. Two things have happened since then that might cause a re-thinking of this forecast: (1) Jr.'s going to Hendrick Motorsports, and Elliott is making a strong comeback in the No. 21 for the Woods Brothers. So, we'll see. In the meantime, here's a different set of historical stats (excerpted from Nascar.com) for you to ponder...Rookie of the Year awards. Awarded since 1958, Rookie of the Year candidates are assigned points based on their 17 best finishes of the season. The points are calculated based on entry points, competition points, top-10 bonus points, segment bonus points, voting panel points and final championship standings bonus points.

YEAR	DRIVER	WINS	EARNINGS	YEAR	DRIVER	WINS	EARNINGS
2006	Denny Hamlin	2	\$4,389,220	1981	Ron Bouchard	1	\$139,605
2005	Kyle Busch	2	\$4,185,240	1980	Jody Ridley	0	\$166,000
2004	Casey Kahne	0	\$4,759,020	1979	Dale Earnhardt	1	\$237,575
2003	Jamie McMurray	0	\$2,699,970	1978	Ronnie Thomas	0	\$59,260
2002	Ryan Newman	1	\$4,373,830	1977	Ricky Rudd	0	\$54,956
2001	Kevin Harvick	2	\$3,716,630	1976	Skip Manning	0	\$45,820
2000	Matt Kenseth	1	\$2,150,760	1975	Bruce Hill	0	\$43,750
1999	Tony Stewart	3	\$2,615,226	1974	Earl Ross	1	\$64,830
1998	Kenny Irwin	0	\$1,433,567	1973	Lennie Pond	0	\$25,155
1997	Mike Skinner	0	\$791,819	1972	Larry Smith	0	\$24,215
1996	Johnny Benson	0	\$947,080	1971	Walter Ballard	0	\$0
1995	Ricky Craven	0	\$538,304	1970	Bill Dennis	0	\$15,670
1994	Jeff Burton	0	\$508,200	1969	Dick Brooks	0	\$27,532
1993	Jeff Gordon	0	\$623,855	1968	Pete Hamilton	0	\$8,239
1992	Jimmy Hensley	0	\$213,735	1967	Donnie Allison	0	\$16,440
1991	Bobby Hamilton	0	\$223,955	1966	James Hylton	0	\$29,575
1990	Rob Moroso	0	\$141,902	1965	Sam McQuagg	0	\$10,555
1989	Dick Trickle	0	\$273,432	1964	Doug Cooper	0	\$10,445
1988	Ken Bouchard	0	\$93,410	1963	Billy Wade	0	\$8,710
1987	Davey Allison	2	\$337,160	1962	Tom Cox	0	\$8,980
1986	Alan Kulwicki	0	\$83,450	1961	Woodie Wilson	0	\$2,625
1985	Ken Schrader	0	\$178,470	1960	David Pearson	0	\$5,030
1984	Rusty Wallace	0	\$172,615	1959	Richard Petty	0	\$7,630
1983	Sterling Marlin	0	\$119,375	1958	Shorty Rollins	1	\$8,515
1982	Geoffrey Bodine	0	\$247,750				

(Wonder what the story was in 1971 with Walter Ballard? \$0 in earnings? Maybe he was the only rookie that year, which I suppose is possible. I can recall races in the mid-1970's when NASCAR couldn't fill a field for some races.)

Club Contact Information:

Glen Carter, President	751-6442	glenlind@comcast.net
Silky Meegan, Secretary	259-2029	silkym@earthlink.net
Ted Cahalane, Treasurer	751-2638	tedanddiana@thevillages.net
Leigh Davenport, Program	259-7910	sandyjd@comcast.net
Gerry Hafer, Newsletter Ed.	751-3643	ghafer@comcast.net
Linda Carter, Admin. Asst./Historian	751-6442	glenlind@comcast.net
Wendy Touchette, Special Events Coord.	430-0239	mrswmt@comcast.net
Dave Bockman, Member at large	751-0381	dmbockman@aol.com
Bill Wilkie, Member at large	123-4567	wilkbilmar@earthlink.net

Changes made to Chase, points system

(Excerpted from Nascar.com)

Race victories will become more important than ever in 2007 as a result of adjustments to the points system and the Chase for the Nextel Cup format announced Monday by NASCAR. The adjustments are designed to establish more balance between winning and consistency, but there is a new emphasis on the former.

"The adjustments taken put a greater emphasis on winning races," NASCAR chairman and CEO Brian France said. "Winning is what this sport is all about. Nobody likes to see drivers content to finish in the top 10. We want our sport -- especially during the Chase -- to be more about winning." The Chase -- consisting of the season's last 10 races -- will further reflect the importance of racing to win, via a variety of adjustments.

During the format's first three years, the top-10 drivers in points after the 26th race of the season qualified for the Chase; in addition, any other driver outside the top 10 but within 400 points of the standings' leader also was eligible. Starting this season, the 400-point cutoff is eliminated and the top 12 drivers in the points after Race 26 will qualify for the Chase. All 12 drivers will have their point totals re-set to 5,000; each will then receive a 10-point bonus for each race victory they had during the first 26 races. The Chase drivers will be "seeded" to start the Chase based on the number of wins amassed during the regular season. "I like that the points for each of the now 12 drivers in the Chase will be set at 5,000 with an additional 10 for each race win," said team owner Richard Childress, who had two drivers in the 2006 Chase.

In line with the Chase adjustments, wins throughout the season will be more valuable. Race winners throughout the 36-race season will now receive 185 points, a five-point increase. "I'm happy to see NASCAR increase the points for winning a race," Childress said. "It makes winning that much more important. ... After all, winning is what this sport is all about." Counting the five-point bonuses available for leading at least one lap and leading the most laps, a race winner now can earn a maximum of 195 points, creating a possible maximum of 25 points between first- and second-place finishers.

"Will it help us at the gate? Time will only tell, but if No. 11 and No. 12 are Dale Earnhardt Jr. and Jeff Gordon -- or in last year's case two-time series champ Tony Stewart -- obviously the answer is a definite 'yes,' " said Eddie Gossage, president of Texas Motor Speedway. "This is a good move by NASCAR for the speedways hosting the 10 races in the Chase.

"Long term, NASCAR has to make sure that they don't go too far and water down the playoff field like we have seen in other sports. Water cooler talk -- even the debate over whether this is good or not -- is important to the sport." The 2006 season of Kasey Kahne provides a dramatic illustration of the adjusted Chase format's implications. Kahne qualified for last year's Chase, but started it in 10th place -- despite having won a series-high five races. Under the new format, Kahne would begin the Chase in first place, with 5,050 points.

"These changes should make the Chase for the championship even more exciting for the race fans and more competitive for the teams," Childress noted.