

Penske Racing Wins NASCAR Nationwide Race Title

Discount Tire and Penske Racing last week shared a historic milestone with the win of their first NASCAR championship, and they congratulate Brad Keselowski for driving the No. 22 car to victory in the 2010 NASCAR Nationwide Series this year.

Keselowski clinched the Nationwide points title with his third place finish at Texas on Nov. 6.

Discount Tire's involvement with NASCAR began in 2003. Since the onset, NASCAR has helped elevate the Discount Tire brand across the country as well as the excitement level among the company's approximately 13,000 employees working at more than 780 stores in 22 states. NASCAR has helped extend Discount Tire's brand awareness throughout the NASCAR community and is a rallying point for all who work at the company, which celebrated its 50th year in business in 2010.

Michael Zuieback, executive VP who leads Discount Tire's NASCAR program, stated:

"We brought the best of NASCAR together to help us achieve 'The Dream' of the Nationwide Series championship. The team we assembled as well as the No. 22 car have come to represent the winning culture of our company. Penske Racing and Discount Tire share the winning ideals that keep our companies growing, and our newly won NASCAR title is another

example of how we deliver our best to our customers and employees alike."

Discount Tire, the world's largest tire and wheel retailer, is the primary sponsor on the Penske Racing No. 22 Discount Tire Dodge Charger driven by Brad Keselowski in the Nationwide Series this year. Discount Tire began a multi-year agreement with Penske Racing for the 2010 Nationwide season.

"Discount Tire is delighted to be a partner with Penske Racing, and with our shared NASCAR championship, we will forever be a part of the winning heritage associated with Roger Penske," said Bruce T. Halle, founder and chairman of Discount Tire.

"I couldn't be more proud of our driver Brad and the No. 22 team led by crew chief Paul Wolfe," said Roger Penske. "They have been a model of consistency throughout the season and were able to bring a NASCAR championship to Penske Racing and Discount Tire"

During his championship run, Keselowski and the Penske Racing No. 22 Discount Tire Dodge Charger team were atop the leader board in the Nationwide Series for much of the year. Keselowski earned six wins in 32 starts this season and compiled a record that includes 24 Top 5 finishes and 27 Top 10 finishes, while extending his overall Nationwide Series record of consecutive finishes without a DNF (Did Not Fin-

ish) to 99 races. (Denotes racing stats thru Texas race Nov. 6)

"Winning a NASCAR championship is the culmination of a dream and is the result of hard work and sacrifice by the entire No. 22 team. I'll always take great pride in knowing we earned a place in motorsports history," said Brad Keselowski, No. 22 Discount Tire Dodge Charger driver and 2010 Nationwide Series champion.

In 2010, Penske Racing competes in the NASCAR Cup Series with former Cup Series champion Kurt Busch and the No. 2 Miller Lite Dodge, former three-time IndyCar Series champion Sam Hornish Jr. in the No. 77 Mobil 1 Dodge and Brad Keselowski in the No. 12 Penske Dodge. The team also

competes in the Nationwide Series with Justin Allgaier, the 2009 series Rookie of the Year, in the No. 12 Verizon Dodge and multiple race-winner and current series points leader Keselowski driving the No. 22 Discount Tire/Ruby Tuesday Dodge.

Competing in a variety of disciplines, cars owned and prepared by Penske Racing have produced more than 320 major race wins, over 390 pole positions and 22 national championships.

Finally, NASCAR faces any number of challenges going into 2011, but auto writers have said that having a Dodge car win the Nationwide Series helps reinforce the notion that the legacy domestic automakers still draw the most fans to the sports.



Race team owner Roger Penske, left, with Bruce T. Halle, founder and chairman of Discount Tire, together celebrate the No. 22 Dodge car's victory in the 2010 Nationwide Series.

NASCAR to Transition from Unleaded to E15 Blend

By JENNA FRYER
AP Auto Racing Writer

CONCORD, N.C. (AP) – NASCAR will move from unleaded fuel to an ethanol blend in all three of its national series beginning next season.

The switch to Sunoco Green E15 was announced recently by NASCAR chairman Brian France, who touted the switch as yet another step by the auto racing series toward environment friendly practices.

"This is the most visible thing that we can do to let our partners and our fans know that NASCAR is taking a slow, steady march as an industry," France said at Charlotte Motor Speedway.

The E15 blend is a mixture of 15 percent ethanol and 85 percent gasoline. It is a clean-burning, high-octane motor fuel, and the ethanol portion is produced from renewable resources that Sunoco will get from the Midwest.

"Domestic ethanol, for sure," France said.

The blend will replace Sunoco 260 GTX, a 98-octane fuel that is currently used at all three of NASCAR's national divisions. NASCAR made the move, with Sunoco, from leaded to unleaded gasoline at the start of the 2007 season.

Now comes a long-overdue change to an ethanol blend,

which becomes NASCAR's most significant green initiative. Others include a program that plants 10 trees for every green flag waved in a Sprint Cup race; a recycling program NASCAR touts as the largest in professional sports; Pocono Raceway, the world's largest solar-powered sports facility; and two new LEED certified "green buildings" that house NASCAR's offices in Charlotte and Daytona Beach, Fla.

But the ethanol fuel is their most advanced move yet.

"When we said we had to accelerate our green efforts, this was a centerpiece," France said. "It's certainly the most visible thing we can do. It's also one of the more difficult things that we do."

The E15 fuel will be blended at Sunoco's facility in Marcus Hook, Pa. The new fuel will be pumped directly from tankers at the track, rather than from onsite underground storage tanks.

Bob Owens, senior vice president of Sunoco, said development was a tricky process of overcoming reactions that occur when the ethanol and hydrocarbon are mixed and come into moisture from humidity or rain. A second issue was developing a strict chain of custody from mixture to the gas cans at the race track. The cans must be altered to eliminate any possibility of moisture contaminat-

ing the fuel.

"We didn't just take Sunoco race fuel and dump 15 percent ethanol on top of it," Owens said. "We did a significant amount of testing, and research of our own prior to getting it to the teams for their testing to ensure that we had the proper blend."

"Worst case: seamless transition. The best case, we were not surprised to hear of a little bit of horsepower gain."

NASCAR vice president of

competition Robin Pemberton said some teams already have tested the new fuel. It's too soon to determine how much of a horsepower gain teams noticed, but the fuel mileage effects were minimal, Pemberton said.

"We've had several hundred-mile runs at racetracks, and everything looks to be great as far as performance goes," Pemberton said. "Probably better than we had first anticipated."



Domestic sales of the Chevrolet in China are up over 50 percent, fueled by all-time monthly sales of the New Sail small family car, seen above. GM China is selling the New Sail in Chile, too.

GM's 2M Vehicles Sold in China In One Year Sets Industry Record

SHANGHAI, China – General Motors last week became the first global automaker to sell 2 million vehicles in China in a single year.

"This is another important milestone for General Motors in China," said Kevin Wale, president and managing director of the GM China Group. "It was only three years ago that GM became the first global automaker to reach the 1 million annual sales mark in China."

Wale added, "Over the past decade, China's vehicle market has experienced unprecedented growth. GM has grown with it, working with our joint ventures to expand our lineup of vehicles and brands, adding to our portfolio of services, and increasing our production capacity to meet the changing needs of consumers nationwide."

In 2007, GM and its joint ventures sold 1,031,974 vehicles in China. Last year, GM sold 1,826,424 vehicles nationwide. GM has been the sales leader among global automakers in China for five consecutive years. It has kept up the momentum in 2010.

GM and its joint ventures have benefited from record monthly sales throughout the year. In October, GM sold 199,641 vehicles in China, which represented an increase of 19.6 percent on an annual basis and was an all-time high for the month.

Shanghai GM, GM's passenger car joint venture, sold

99,003 vehicles in China in October. This was up 44.5 percent from the same month last year. Its overall sales, including exports, totaled 100,833 units in October.

October sales of Shanghai GM's Buick brand jumped 35.7 percent on an annual basis to 54,490 units. Demand for both the new LaCrosse upper-medium sedan and Excelle family rose more than 40 percent year on year.

Domestic sales of Chevrolet products in October increased 52.5 percent year on year to 50,813 units, fueled by all-time monthly sales of the New Sail small car family (14,563 units) and Cruze lower-medium sedan (17,798 units). Chevrolet from Shanghai GM finished first in the recently published 2010 China Automobile Aftersales Customer Satisfaction (CAACS) Index.

Cadillac sales were also strong, totaling 1,716 units in October. The SRX luxury utility vehicle accounted for nearly half of Cadillac sales during the month.

Sales in China by SAIC-GM-Wuling, GM's mini-commercial vehicle joint venture, rose 5.1 percent on an annual basis in October to 93,935 units. FAW-GM, GM's light commercial vehicle joint venture, sold 6,505 vehicles in October.

For the first 10 months as a whole, sales by GM and its joint ventures in China were up 35.5 percent on an annual basis to 1,976,913 units.

U.S. Auto Scene®

– First Published in 1993 –

P.O. Box 2040
Dearborn, Michigan 48123
313-565-5500

Info@SpringerPublishing.com

Gerald Scott, Editorial Dept.
News@SpringerPublishing.com

AD DEADLINE: Thursday 5:00 p.m. for the next edition
Ads@SpringerPublishing.com 586-939-5850 Fax - SPC Warren

William L. Springer II, Publisher
Hal Watts, Local News Editor
Debra Joswick, Ad Design
Chris Zawislinski, Circulation

Springer Publishing Co., Inc. © 2010
31201 Chicago Road South
Warren, Michigan 48093
586-939-6800

U.S. Auto Scene and Detroit Auto Scene are registered trademarks of Springer Publishing Co., Inc., a Michigan corporation.

Tensions High Among NASCAR Racing Teams

By JENNA FRYER
AP Auto Racing Writer

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina (AP) – The animosity on pit road began five weeks ago, when Jimmie Johnson's team broke an unwritten code by selecting the stall right in front of Denny Hamlin.

NASCAR championship contenders traditionally stay away from each other on pit road, and Hamlin crew chief Mike Ford was not pleased by the lack of respect from Johnson's crew chief Chad Knaus. Payback is fair play, though, and Ford repaid the slight last weekend at Texas Motor Speedway by selecting the pit stall in front of Johnson.

Then, when Johnson's pit crew struggled through some early stops that ultimately led to their benching, Ford couldn't help but wonder if the pressure of watching the flawless execution of Hamlin's crew a few feet away didn't play a part in their problems.

"You put the two pit crews toe-to-toe and those guys are going to make mistakes," Ford boasted after Hamlin's win last Sunday pushed him past Johnson and into the points lead.

"We went beside them, and those guys faltered, and it made them panic and push to the point where they made changes."

Knaus benched his crew midway through Sunday's race after Hendrick Motorsports teammate Jeff Gordon crashed, and his crew became available for the rest of the day. The swap became official this week when HMS said Gordon's crew would pit Johnson for the final two races in the Chase for the championship, in which Johnson trails Hamlin by 33 points.

So, did Hamlin and Ford and their team really get inside the heads of Johnson's crew to the point they couldn't perform at Texas? And, will mind games and mental warfare play a factor in deciding this championship?

Veteran driver Jeff Burton thinks the issue is black and white and a sports psychologist isn't needed to decipher the performance issues.

"I think a lot of people take a lot of credit for things that perhaps were just coinci-

dence," Burton said. "But (Johnson) has not had typical pit stops for a large part of the year. This wasn't the first race they've had a problem. If this was the first race they've had a problem then maybe (Ford) could make that case."

"But this isn't the first race they haven't been as good as you would expect them to be."

The fact is, of the three championship contenders, it's widely believed that Johnson's pit crew has been the weakest even though he's the four-time defending champion. Through attrition, promotion or being lured away by other teams, the core seven over-the-wall guys have changed from Johnson's first championship to the group that was benched on Sunday.

Still, it took 34 races for Knaus to make a change, and when he did in the middle of the race, Ford viewed it as a "desperation move."

Knaus pleaded ignorance on the slight – "my plate's been pretty full," he said – but denied Ford's claim that his team was better than Johnson's.

"I don't know that they're a better team by any means," Knaus said. "It's funny that they're more worried about us than worried about themselves. I think I would be worried about focusing on (their) car instead of (ours)."

That line of thinking has helped Johnson to his four titles. Not since losing to Tony Stewart in 2005 has Johnson worried about the competition.

It's hard to tell if Hamlin's group is subscribing to that theory. While the words flying back and forth between each team would seem to indicate a level of gamesmanship not seen in NASCAR in over a decade, both teams denied being worried about the other.

"Mind games only work if you let them," Ford said. "And if you get all caught up trying to mess with people, you lose sight of what you are supposed to be doing."

With two races to go – including Phoenix, where Johnson has won four of the last six races – it's clear both teams are looking for every edge they can find.

Ford Creates 500 New Jobs in Germany to Support Focus Build

Ford Motor Co.'s Saarlouis plant in Germany and the Michigan Assembly Plant in Wayne are each preparing for the manufacturing launch of the next-generation Ford Focus passenger car.

Developed in Europe for sale in over 120 markets worldwide with 80 percent parts commonality, the all-new Ford Focus is a key part of the One Ford plan to leverage the automaker's global assets.

The Focus is built from Ford's new global C-segment platform, which will account for more than 2 million units of annual production by 2012.

From mid-November, almost 500 people currently employed on agency contracts at the Ford Saarlouis Plant will be offered permanent Ford contracts ahead of the start of assembly of the new car on Dec. 6, 2010.

The Saarlouis Plant – which celebrated its 40th anniversary this year – will be the single source for next-genera-

tion Ford Focus production in Western Europe, producing all three Focus bodystyles – four-door, five-door and wagon – while production at the Michigan Assembly Plant will concentrate on the four-door and five-door derivatives.

Manufacturing will be expanded further in mid-2011, when Ford's plant in St. Petersburg, Russia, begins building the new four-door and five-door models of the Focus. Production in the Asia Pacific region will begin in early 2012, when the Chongqing plant in China, comes on line.

With more than 6,500 employees and over 3 billion Euros invested in the facility's ongoing development and continuous modernization, the Ford Saarlouis Plant is among the leading vehicle production sites in the entire European auto industry.

A further 2,000 people are employed at the adjacent supplier park that supports the Saarlouis complex.

Rising Car Shipments Boost CSX Rail Profits

By SAMANTHA BOMKAMP
AP Transportation Writer

NEW YORK (AP) – Railroad CSX Corp. said recently that its third-quarter earnings soared 43 percent as its trains ran more efficiently and shipments rose.

The Jacksonville, Fla., company is moving more freight with fewer cars and locomotives to control costs as the economy gradually improves. It's bringing back some employees it furloughed during the recession, but slowly, to contain expenses. The railroad is also increasing shipping prices for customers, allowing it to boost revenue while shipments slowly rise.

Shipments of cars and car parts improved the most in the third-quarter, driven by a boost in car and truck production. Intermodal shipments – transfers from trucks to trains – also accelerated as more companies chose to ship goods by rail. International shipments also increased due to new business, inventory restocking by U.S. customers and early holiday shipping.

Coal shipments improved, as demand grew for export shipments of coal used in making steel. That was offset by lower shipments to utilities still working through the stockpiles they have on hand.

CSX, which like other railroads is a window on the country's broader economic health, said shipments of lumber, food and retail goods were flat – indicating the construction market and consumer spending still lagged in late summer and early fall. In the consumer segment, CSX said higher demand for refrigerated goods and alcoholic drinks was offset by continued weakness in demand for appliances.

The railroad runs its signature blue and yellow locomotives from Canada to Florida and west to the Mississippi River. It earned \$414 million in the third quarter, or \$1.08 per share, compared with year-earlier results of \$290 million, or 73 cents per share.

Revenue rose 16 percent from the prior year to \$2.67 billion. Thomson Reuters says analysts expected a profit \$1.04 per share.