

DAY 1 – FRIDAY, AUG. 6, 2004

Page 1

Welcome to the 11th annual Brickyard 400 at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. The Brickyard 400 is the 21st race of the 2004 NASCAR NEXTEL Cup Series.

Notes, quotes, trivia, historical information and other items will appear on these pages through Sunday, Aug. 8. Our Media Center staff, headed by Indianapolis Motor Speedway Public Relations Director Ron Green and MCI Media Center Manager Bill York, is here to assist you and answer your questions during this event. Fred J. Nation, executive vice president of communications for the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, will also be in the media center throughout the weekend.

TODAY'S SCHEDULE (all times local):

9 a.m.	Indianapolis Motor Speedway public gates open
10 a.m.	Brickyard 400 Golf Challenge, Brickyard Crossing Golf Course
Noon-1 p.m.	Champions' Chat, Plaza Stage, Pagoda Plaza
2-4 p.m.	NASCAR NEXTEL Cup practice

Timing and scoring monitors are located throughout the Media Center with up-to-the-minute times and speeds.

Brickyard 400 information is available on the World Wide Web this week on the official Indianapolis Motor Speedway site, <http://www.indianapolis motorspeedway.com>, and the official NASCAR site, <http://www.nascar.com>. Included in the information will be practice summaries and performance histories, qualifying results, Daily Trackside Reports, driver quotes, race lineups and results.

Jay Drake led all 100 laps to win the J.D. Byrider 100 Weld Racing USAC Silver Crown event Thursday night at Indianapolis Raceway Park.

NASCAR NEXTEL Cup Series regular Dave Blaney finished fifth. 2004 Indianapolis 500 starter PJ Jones finished 17th.

Two-time Daytona 500 winner Michael Waltrip will attempt to compete in all three NASCAR events this weekend in the Indianapolis area: the Brickyard 400, and the Power Stroke Diesel 200 Craftsman Truck Series race tonight and the Kroger 200 presented by Tom Raper RVs Saturday night, both at Indianapolis Raceway Park.

Jason Leffler is also pulling "double duty" by attempting to compete in both the NASCAR Busch Series race at Indianapolis Raceway Park on Aug. 7 and the Brickyard 400 for team owner Gene Haas.

Also attempting a NEXTEL Cup-Busch Series double this weekend are Hermie Sadler, Kenny Wallace, Robby Gordon, Greg Biffle and Kevin Lepage. Ken Schrader will attempt to race in the Brickyard 400 and the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series race at IRP.

Scott Pruett, who drives full-time for NASCAR and Indy Racing League team owner Chip Ganassi in the Grand American Sports Car Series, will attempt to qualify the No. 09 entry owned by James Finch. He is also scheduled to complete in a Grand American race at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course in Lexington, Ohio. Pruett will take part in Brickyard qualifications Saturday then fly to Ohio for the sports car race that afternoon, then fly back to Indy for the Brickyard 400 on Sunday.

(More)

DAY 1 – FRIDAY, AUG. 6, 2004

Page 2

The Champions' Chat will take place from noon-1 p.m. today on the Main Stage in the Speedway's Pagoda Plaza.

Three-time Brickyard 400 winner Jeff Gordon and defending winner Kevin Harvick will join IMS Radio Network announcers Mike King and Doug Rice and IMS Public Address announcer Bob Jenkins at noon.

Two-time Brickyard 400 winner Jarrett and 1997 Brickyard 400 champion Ricky Rudd will take to the stage at 12:20 p.m., and 2002 winner Bill Elliott and 2000 winner Bobby Labonte will take part in the discussion from 12:40-1 p.m. Both events are free with the price of admission to the grounds for the day.

A media bullpen will be available adjacent to the stage for TV and radio media, and print media interviews will take place in Plaza Pavilion 1B from noon-1 p.m.

Chevrolet will pay tribute to one of NASCAR's recent champions with the introduction of the 2005 Tony Stewart Signature Series Monte Carlo. The limited-edition vehicle is the 10th NASCAR-inspired Monte Carlo that Chevrolet has created over the last five years.

The Tony Stewart Signature Series will be a black supercharged Monte Carlo built with many elements of Stewart's No. 20 Home Depot Chevrolet subtly incorporated into the vehicle.

The exterior of the vehicle is modeled closely after Stewart's night-race paint scheme with an all-black body complimented by Stewart's signature displayed on the sail panel and No. 20 graphics and Home Depot orange accents prominently lining the bottom trim of the vehicle. A Joe Gibbs Racing signature badge is also displayed on the rear deck lid. The attention to custom detailing is also prevalent within the interior of the Monte Carlo with Stewart's signature embroidered on the head restraints, displayed on the door sill plates and positioned within the gauge cluster. The gauge cluster also contains orange-outlined white numerals in the same typeface as exterior graphics and Stewart's signature while both front seats are accented with orange French seams.

Chevrolet will make a donation from the sale of the Tony Stewart Signature Series Monte Carlo to The Tony Stewart Foundation, a private, non-profit corporation which focuses on raising and donating funds to help care for chronically ill children, drivers injured in motorsport activities and to help other charitable organizations.

Facts about food and beverages that IMS Food and Beverage will sell or provide to Brickyard 400 fans and guests inside the Indianapolis Motor Speedway this weekend during the Brickyard 400:

- Coca-Cola: More than 15,000 gallons
- Ice: More than 475,000 lbs
- Indy Dogs: Enough to circle the 2.5-mile oval two times
- Brickyard Burgers: Nearly 10,000 pounds of hamburger
- Fries: More than 10 tons
- Ketchup: More than 700 gallons

Inside the track, there are 69 concession stands, 35 specialty stands, 50 ice cream/lemonade, pretzel locations. There are more than 1,200 workers and 60 beer and water vendors working for IMS Food and Beverage this weekend.

Acclaimed artist Carlo Beninati will sign autographs at the Plaza Gift Shop at the track at 1 p.m. today and Saturday, and 10 a.m. Sunday. Beninati is the Official Artist of the Brickyard 400, as he created the artwork that adorns the cover of the Official Program.

(More)

DAY 1 – FRIDAY, AUG. 6, 2004

Page 3

FROM THE NASCAR NEXTEL CUP MEDIA UPDATE FOR THE BRICKYARD 400:

- The first and only time in the modern era that three brothers led at least one lap in the same race occurred in the inaugural Brickyard 400 in 1994 with Geoffrey, Brett and Todd Bodine.

- None of the 14 drivers who have competed in all 10 Brickyard 400s to date have completed all 1,600 race laps run at the Speedway.

- Although he has not competed in the Brickyard 400 since 1998, Morgan Shepherd has an average finish of 10th in his four NASCAR NEXTEL Cup starts at the Speedway. Shepherd finished 10th in the first two Brickyard 400s, fifth in 1996 and 15th in 1998. He is entered in the No. 89 Red Line Oil Dodge for 2004.

- Of the 14 drivers who have competed in all 10 Brickyard 400s, only Joe Nemechek has yet to post a top-10 finish.

- Although he has competed in only five Brickyard 400s, Tony Stewart has a successful history at the Speedway. He has posted two top-10 finishes in the Brickyard 400. He started on the pole and finished 24th in the 1996 Indianapolis 500 en route to winning the Bank One Rookie of the Year Award for the race. He has finished in the top 10 in three of his five Indianapolis 500 starts, including a sixth-place finish in 2001 while doing “double duty” in Charlotte. Stewart won the Bud Pole for the 2002 Brickyard 400.

- Posted awards for the Brickyard 400 are \$8,771,458. Last place in this year’s race is set at a minimum of \$116,109.

- Six of the 10 Brickyard 400s have been won from a top-four starting position, and the last two have been won from the front row (Bill Elliott, second in 2002, and Kevin Harvick from the pole last year).

- The Brickyard 400 has been won from a top-seven starting position seven of 10 times.

- The furthest back a race winner has started in the nine races at the Speedway was 27th by Jeff Gordon in 2001.

- John Andretti, Robby Gordon and Tony Stewart are the only drivers to compete in an Indianapolis 500 and a Brickyard 400 in the same year: Andretti (1994), Gordon (1997, 2002, 2003, 2004) and Stewart (1999, 2001). Gordon started this year’s Indianapolis 500, but a rain delay forced him to head for Charlotte early and he turned the car over to Jaques Lazier.

- A.J. Foyt, Danny Sullivan, Geoff Brabham, Scott Pruett, Jason Leffler and Larry Foyt are the only other drivers to compete in an Indianapolis 500 and a Brickyard 400. Andy Hillenburg could be the 10th this year, having run the Indianapolis 500 in 2000 and entered for this year’s Brickyard 400.

- A provisional starter has posted a top-10 finish only three times in 10 Brickyard 400s: Rusty Wallace (37th to fourth in 2001, best-ever finish for a provisional starter at Indy); Morgan Shepherd (38th to sixth in 1996); and Jimmie Johnson (37th to ninth in 2002).

- Rusty Wallace has scored nine top-10 Brickyard 400 finishes in 10 races.

- Bill Elliott has a 9.10 average start in nine races at Indianapolis, best among active drivers with more than five starts.

- Jeff Gordon has led 309 of 1,600 laps raced at Indianapolis. Dale Jarrett is second with 186.

- Ryan Newman has started fifth or better in all three of his races at Indianapolis, one of just two drivers to do so. Bill Elliott is the only other driver to post top-five starts in the last three Brickyard 400s. Elliott’s last three starts were third or better.

- There have been six different Bud Pole winners in the six races at Indianapolis since 1998. There have been five different race winners in the five races at Indianapolis since 1999.

- Tony Stewart has completed all Brickyard 400 laps raced at Indy in his five races here.

(More)

DAY 1 – FRIDAY, AUG. 6, 2004

Page 4

FROM THE NASCAR NEXTEL CUP MEDIA UPDATE FOR THE BRICKYARD 400 (cont.):

•Bill Elliott (7.7), Rusty Wallace (8.5) and Jeff Gordon (9.6) are the only three drivers that have competed in all 10 races at Indianapolis with an average finish better than 10th. Elliott has a 9.1 starting average at Indy and is the only driver to compete in all 10 Brickyard 400s with both starting and finishing averages of better than 10th.

•All drivers in the current top 10 in NASCAR NEXTEL Cup points have had one or more top-15 finishes in their last three races at Indianapolis. Sadler has finished 21st or worse in all five of his Brickyard 400 starts.

•Drivers who have competed in all 10 Brickyard 400s to date: John Andretti, Jeff Burton, Ward Burton, Bill Elliott, Jeff Gordon, Dale Jarrett. Bobby Labonte, Sterling Marlin, Mark Martin, Joe Nemechek, Ricky Rudd, Jimmy Spencer, Rusty Wallace, Michael Waltrip.

Tickets are available for the 11th Brickyard 400. Fans can get tickets by calling (800) 822-INDY or logging on to www.indianapolismotorspeedway.com.

NASCAR NEXTEL Cup drivers Dale Jarrett, Kurt Busch, Elliott Sadler and Jeff Burton, Indy Racing League drivers Darren Manning, Townsend Bell and P.J. Chesson and 1998 Indianapolis 500 winner Eddie Cheever Jr. joined members of the media, including NBC NASCAR analyst Benny Parsons, in the Brickyard 400 Golf Challenge this morning at Brickyard Crossing Golf Course.

The winning foursome consisted of Sadler, Manning, WRTV (Indianapolis) sports director Dave Furst and ESPN 950 AM (Indianapolis) radio personality Greg Rakestraw. Their combined score was 2-under-par. No one made a hole-in-one on Hole No. 7, which would have earned that golfer \$1 million.

KURT BUSCH: “It’s just a great opportunity to come out. The nice four holes that are inside the track. We had a great time. This is my first opportunity to play on this course. It is just wonderful. It is a whole different atmosphere. You hear the speakers going on behind the scenes. You hear the racetrack, but it’s a lot of fun and an excellent golf course. There was more pressure standing on that first tee box than there will be tomorrow or any other time I have ever qualified. I was able to get the ball out of the tee box and not shuck it.

P.J. CHESSON: (About Kurt Busch’s golf game): “He’s pretty good. He hit some pretty solid shots that got us home and put us one under on the first tee. It was real cool. I don’t know how he was relaxed. Maybe he’s not, I don’t know. The shades are pretty dark.”

DARREN MANNING: “I’m totally addicted to golf, unfortunately. It’s take over my life. But don’t put money on me. Elliot (Sadler) is the real ‘ringer’ on our team.” (What is your golf handicap?): “Well, I don’t want to say anything too good. Oh, about 34. No, but I play to about 11. I’m very excited to be back here.”

ELLIOTT SADLER: (What is your golf handicap?): “I can pull off about an 8. Been playing pretty good actually lately the last few months, probably the best I’ve been playing golf in a long time. Been having fun with it.”

TOWNSEND BELL: “I’m a horrible golfer. In fact, if I make contact, I’m happy. As long as everyone stays clear to the last and the right of me, I’ll be all right. I’ve never played this course before.”

JEFF BURTON: “I enjoy playing golf, but I don’t play a lot. The last time I played was over a year ago. I do enjoy it. I just don’t have enough time to play it. I don’t play it very much.” (Have you played in front of a crowd before?) “Yes, I have. That doesn’t bother me much. If I was worried about what I looked like, I wouldn’t play golf. I have played this course before. I have played it a couple of times. It’s a really nice course. I really like the course. This is a really, really nice course.”

(More)

DAY 1 – FRIDAY, AUG. 6, 2004

Page 5

Jeff Green was the fastest driver during six days of Brickyard 400 testing in July at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Green posted a top speed of 181.641 mph in the No. 43 Cheerios Dodge on July 7, while rookie Brian Vickers was second overall at 181.554 in the No. 25 GMAC Financial Services Chevrolet, on July 13. Jason Leffler rounded out the top three at 180.787 in the No. 60 Haas CNC Racing Chevrolet, on July 13.

Six former champions of the Brickyard 400 participated in the Champions' Chat this afternoon at the Pagoda Plaza. The six drivers: Jeff Gordon (1994, 1998, 2001), Dale Jarrett (1996, 1999), Ricky Rudd (1997), Bobby Labonte (2000), Bill Elliott (2002) and Kevin Harvick (2003).

BOBBY LABONTE: (About race strategy): "You are not going to have side-by-side racing for 500 miles like you do at Talladega. Here, if it comes down to the last lap, you might have two cars running side by side on last lap across the start-finish line, and that will take away all the single-file racing throughout the day possibly, and it would be a great race. You can just look at it from different ways and how differently people categorize a great race. It was a great race because it had a great finish. Everybody says it is still a great race. It might not have greatness in the middle of it, but it might be great at the end." (About significance of Brickyard 400): "They are all key. This is a big race. Obviously, it is huge, one of the biggest races we are going to have all year. Same amount of points that we are going to have next week at Watkins Glen. Points-wise, next week at Watkins Glen, probably be more important in a lot of ways. There will be 34 cars on the lead lap, because it's stretched out and hard to get a lap down type of deal. You have something break on the last lap at Watkins Glen; you wouldn't be suffering more there than you probably would here because there will be less cars here at the end. Points-wise, that might be more of a critical race than here, but it depends on how you look at it. But, obviously, if you can run good here, that will get you going for the next few races, too." (About the diversity of personalities currently in NASCAR compared to years ago): "It is no different than it used to be, just that there's more people to talk about it. There was the villains, there was the good guys, there was the hard charger, there was the guy who would win at the end and not say a word. It was all the same, just now it's like a big mushroom cloud. That was the first explosion, and it just gets bigger and bigger. It is really no different."

KEVIN HARVICK: (About being one of the first 'younger guys' to win the Brickyard 400): "I think Jeff (Gordon) would get mad if you're saying he's one of the older guys at 33. To put your name in the history book with the very few people that have won this race in a stock car is really cool for me. Just to be a part of it is something I will always remember and always be at the top of what I accomplished in the sport."

JEFF GORDON: (About winning inaugural Brickyard 400 in 1994): "It was a surreal moment. It's unbelievable. It's still unbelievable when I look back at it. You dream about getting to a certain level. It's almost like that is too much to ask for. It's too much to dream of. To me, just being able to come here and race was it for me. That did it. Just to be able to drive a race car around this track and compete was it. To pull into victory lane, honestly that whole moment was a blur. I have no idea what went on or how it happened. Thank God it was on television because I can look back on it. It was just absolutely crazy. I couldn't believe I was living that moment. And I've had a lot of moments like that in my life where I couldn't believe that I was the one living it because I always thought that happened to other people. It happened to me, and then it continued to happen."

(More Champions' Chat quotes on next page)

(More)

DAY 1 – FRIDAY, AUG. 6, 2004

Page 6

CHAMPIONS' CHAT QUOTES (cont.):

DALE JARRETT: (About race strategy at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway): “With the lack of banking that (this track) has, you carry speed and make more speed to the corner, which we do, and which we have done. With the aerodynamics of getting the cars as soft as they are in the front, you’re traveling faster down the straightaways, so it’s going to be harder to keep the car, with the flat surface, in the corner and to keep it on the bottom. As we’ve gone to a different tire here, it’s a little bit softer compound but more, the softness of the sidewall, the flexibility of it. I think that’s when we see as the cars get probably 15 or 20 laps on them, you’re going to see the car slide around a lot as they get in the corners. But that’s what makes this place what it is. You have to get that balance. You have to decide if you are going to go fast for 10 or 15 laps or are you going to try to go at a good hard pace for the 35 or so laps that you can run on fuel.”

BILL ELLIOTT: “I feel like we have a great chance. We have a great car and a great group of guys behind us. With what Ray (Evernham) is trying to do with building a third team into the establishment. I think right now if we can just keep things going into a good direction and have a few things go our way, we have as good of a shot as anybody. Not having any baggage for the last two weeks, as far as I’m concerned, coming in here with an open plate, I feel like I have as good of a chance as anybody.” (About significance of Brickyard 400): “I think it is ranked among the top, in my opinion. Daytona, of course, always comes first, but it seems like once the second half of the season starts, Indy is the next place everybody wants to go and run well at. You know, I have been fortunate enough throughout my career to run well numerous times here. And, of course, winning here. I think everybody wants to win here. When Earnhardt Sr. was still around, and how hard he tried to win here, and it finally came together. You look at Jeff Gordon, and some of the guys that have won here numerous times. They look at Indy as being that special place. If you can’t win Daytona, then you want to win at Indy.” (About strong season by rookie teammate Kasey Kahne): “Since Kasey has come along, it has brought a new generation of fans over to Ray Evernham. You look at what that has brought along. I have got a group of fans, a fan base, and now he has brought in a new evolution of fans. It continues to change. It is healthy for the sport to change.”

RICKY RUDD: (Should NASCAR allow relief drivers to score points for the driver, in lieu of Dale Earnhardt Jr.’s injuries suffered in a sports-car race?): “Over my career, that’s one reason I’ve been fortunate to keep that consecutive streak. I never did do very well outside racing. My main focus has always been Cup racing. I always did think about getting in things like that. Getting in equipment always bothered me. What he got in was very good equipment. But over the years, the early years in my career, I got in some equipment like some Saturday-night-type places that you say once I’ve made it I’ll never get back in that again, seatbelts dry-rotted and things of that nature. But that’s not what happened to Earnhardt Jr. So you want to limit your risk as much as you can. But as far as looking at substitute drivers, I’ve always learned how to drive with pain and deal with it. It’s not a good thing that you had to do, but that was just how the system was set up. What really made me take a second look at it a couple of years ago, Sterling Marlin should have been the Winston Cup champion and ended up breaking his neck. I thought at that point that is a really tough way to lose a championship. I hated it for his team and him.” (Richard Childress said maybe if a guy could miss two races to let him heal up, but after two he would have used up his time?): “I think it needs to be looked and addressed and needs to be some consensus by some little give and take on that situation. I’m not saying now is the time to do that. I would not do it now but start the new season with new rules implemented, and that would take care of the situation. I am not a big fan of making rules as you go along. But over the winter it ought to be looked at. What Richard said does make sense. It’s not a bad way to go.” **(More Rudd quotes on next page)**

(More)

DAY 1 – FRIDAY, AUG. 6, 2004

Page 7

CHAMPIONS' CHAT QUOTES (cont.):

RICKY RUDD (cont.): (Has the appreciation for winning the Brickyard 400 changed over the years?): “I would say it has probably grown a little bit. When you win it is a big deal, don’t get me wrong. But then you don’t get a chance to enjoy it. We were testing that next day somewhere else. You don’t get a chance to really get in and enjoy the win. As time goes on, I think the win here will always mean a lot to me as a driver. The thing that I have never really considered is that there is not a whole lot of owners in this garage area that has won this race before (as a driver). I think as time goes on this (winning the Brickyard 400) will be something that I will be even more proud of.” (Where is your brick for winning?) “I’m not sure where the brick is, but I know where the trophy is. We had a flood in our basement the other week, and our trophy is pretty much destroyed right now. So I’m going to have to have it rebuilt. The check is long gone and has been spent. The check bought the house that destroyed the trophy. The flood was really hard to deal with. I lost some stuff that’s hard to replace. Some old photos, trophies, and the Brickyard 400 trophy. I’m sure that it can be rebuilt, but it’s pretty sorry looking now. It’s kind of crumbled into a few pieces. So hopefully we need to get a replacement or get that one rebuilt. The thing is, it shouldn’t have been in the basement in a closet to begin with. It should have been on display as it was. But didn’t have a chance to find a place and figure out what we want to do with it. The life we live is so fast paced that it stayed there, and we were going to find a place to sit it some day and never did. It’s really a shame. But maybe we can win another Brickyard 400 here soon to sit next to the repaired one once that is restored.” (As you get closer to the end of your career, and there are fewer and fewer chances to win sort of the big races. If you never get a Daytona and get one of these?): “Well I think my career is definitely on the winding-down process. When you do retire, well, then you look back and see some races carry more importance than others. I would say this race definitely carries a lot of importance. I would say this race is one of the biggest races I’ve ever won. But things are weird how they work. In my mind, 1971 I won the national championship go-kart race right down the street. That rates up there pretty close to this. Again, there obviously wasn’t a check that day back then, but just a trophy. My early career in go-kart racing was to win the big one, and we were able to do that. The biggest race obviously in Cup racing that I’ve won up to this point is the Brickyard (400), and that will always mean something special.” (What does the Brickyard mean to you and your career?): “You know the pay is awfully good, but that thought process doesn’t even enter in to it until a Monday or Tuesday. To me, it’s all about the prestige and history of this place. It means a lot. For a driver, racing here at Indy is special in different ways for everybody. To me, Indy is special because I came here as a kid racing go-karts down the street at Raceway Park. Our registration was right here at the Brickyard Crossing Motel. We got a chance to enjoy the race rack at that time. I think I first started racing at Indy in the National Championship when I was 11 years old. I finally won the championship when I was 13 years old. But going to the Brickyard Crossing Motel and looking over and seeing the big speedway, I had never seen anything like it. I never was exposed to the Daytona facility. This was the biggest racetrack I had ever seen in my life and thinking the way we race go-karts generally led you down the path to race at Indy one day. I knew at that time I wanted to come back and race here. Didn’t really make the career choice, it just sort of worked out that stock cars was the right thing for me to do. No regrets, but it looked like I would never have a chance to race here. So the reason is special for me. Being a small kid here seeing the history, museum and knew that I wanted to be a part of the history of this place someday. At that time we came in here the garages looked like horse stables. I had taken the tour through here and seen where A.J. Foyt had parked his race car and all the famous race guys that had raced here over the years. Seeing the names on the walls in the garages. Everything was kept up nice and perfect like today. Back then very few tracks were kept up. Most in very unpresentable conditions.”

(More)

DAY 1 – FRIDAY, AUG. 6, 2004

Page 8

Indianapolis Motor Speedway President and CEO Tony George presented 2003 Brickyard 400 winner Kevin Harvick with one of the bricks from the former surface of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway during the Champions' Chat in honor of his victory.

NASCAR GARAGE AREA QUOTES:

Quotes from selected Brickyard 400 competitors about this weekend's event:

BILL ELLIOTT: (Why have you run so well here, with a victory in 2002 and eight top-10 finishes?): "I can't answer that. I've been very fortunate. I've had a good crew here in the past. Just from that side, it's been good and I've had good equipment and I think that's the special part of it. Indy's always been a special place. I ran good the first time I showed up here. Hopefully, we can run good here again this weekend."

MORGAN SHEPHERD: (You've finished three times in the top 10 at this track but haven't raced here since 1998. What are your chances of making the field?): "First of all, we have to see what goes on in practice, but we're in the best shape we've been in car-wise. Joey Arrington has given us a great engine to run here, and I have a new crew chief on board, Terry Allen, so our chances of qualifying for this field should be better than any of the races I've been in this year." (Was it special for you to come to the Speedway and run so well in the early years of this race?): "I was hoping my career wouldn't have gone 'in' because I'd heard talk for many years before we came here that NASCAR was going to be able to be at the Brickyard. I was hoping I wouldn't be out of racing before that happened. It was such a great honor to come here and run with all the history this track has from way back when it started. For NASCAR to be here, it's a great honor." (Do you still roller skate in the garage area?): "I still roller skate anywhere. I'm 62 years old, I'll be 63 Oct. 12, so I'm the oldest active driver here. That's what my life is about, is encouraging people life's not over after 50 years old. You need to get up off the couch, need to do something with your life and take care of your health and just better yourself. I know everybody can't roller skate and drive 200 miles an hour at 62 years old, but you can get up and do something with your life and go about improving it."

JOE NEMECHEK: "We've had some great qualifying runs here in the past, and hopefully we'll have another one, too. For the race, the goal is to get the Army Chevrolet up there in the front. We've been running so strong here in the last dozen races, and we should have had some top-fives. We're just trying to be consistent right now. We had a great car last week at Pocono. We led the first 31 laps, and we ended up having a transmission or a gear failure about 50 laps into the race. We don't have to shift here, so that's not a problem for us. I had a great car there, and there are a lot of similarities between the tracks. We'll try to use what we learned there and try to apply it here. We had a great test. All we did was run race stuff. We didn't do any qualifying runs and thought we ran well. I've always excelled at qualifying here at Indy, especially since going to Saturday-morning qualifying and no laps on the track before you go. I think that kind of plays into my hands. I've always been able to step up to the plate and get the job done. As long as the car handles halfway close, I can go pretty good. Hopefully we'll have a shot."

ANDY HILLENBURG: "It's going to be a tough challenge tomorrow. We just put this deal together in the last week, and I sure hope we're able to pull it off. We got a good piece of equipment. We just have to make our car perfect for a couple of laps. For tomorrow's qualifying, I would be just one of the happiest persons being one of those guys. I've been doing a few NEXTEL Cup races this year and ran a couple of ARCA races. I would like to keep racing. You know someday even giving the (Indy) 500 another shot, but the times are changing. As far as the youthfulness of the drivers, the marketability, it seems like there are fewer sponsors in different series." **(More quotes on next page)**

(More)

DAY 1 – FRIDAY, AUG. 6, 2004

Page 9

NASCAR GARAGE AREA QUOTES (cont.):

RUSTY WALLACE: “I hope we have a great run this week. We had a good test here. I left and wanted to get a little more speed out of the car. We went back. We got more horsepower. We really worked on the car hard. As we’re doing this interview on Friday, we have two hours of practice before qualifying, and we’re going to try to get all we can out of the car today. A lot of changes are going to be made. Everybody has brought their best stuff. Everybody brings their best stuff to Charlotte, and they bring their best stuff to Indy. It’s going to be interesting to see how everybody runs with their equipment they brought. But we brought all we got. Having three second-place finishes here and being passed three times with 10 to go, it’s a tough one to take. I thought I had it won the year Earnhardt won the race (1995). I had a huge lead and had a big pit problem and couldn’t get out. The rest of them, I just got outrun at the very end. At least I can say that with 10 starts and nine top-10’s, that’s pretty strong.”

Supermodel Niki Taylor will serve as an honorary grand marshal of the Brickyard 400 on Sunday.

Taylor will attend the event with her 9-year-old twin sons, Jake and Hunter. Jake is a Jeff Gordon fan, while Hunter is a Dale Earnhardt Jr. fan.

Niki Taylor will attend the drivers’ meeting and will introduce country music superstar Vince Gill during the “Buckle Up Bash starring Vince Gill” pre-race concert at 11 a.m. Sunday in the infield, free to all Race Day ticket holders.

NASCAR NEXTEL CUP PRACTICE:

At 2 p.m., the beginning of NASCAR NEXTEL Cup practice, the ambient temperature was 71 degrees with a relative humidity of 42 percent and northeast winds at 13 mph. Skies were sunny.

2 p.m. – **GREEN.** #12 Newman first on track, followed by #48 Johnson, #6 Martin.

2:30 p.m. – **RED.** #09 Scott Pruett did a half-spin in Turn 1 and hit the SAFER Barrier between Turns 1 and 2 with the left side of the car. The car then spun across the track and stopped along the retaining wall on the inside of the track. Pruett climbed from the car without assistance.

Top Five Drivers of First Practice, 2:30 p.m.

	No.	Driver	Car	Speed
1.	38	Elliott Sadler	M&M’s Ford	182.741 mph
2.	9	Kasey Kahne	Dodge Dealers/UAW Dodge	182.157
3.	77	Brendan Gaughan	Kodak/Jasper Engines & Transmissions Dodge	181.774
4.	42	Jamie McMurray	Texaco/Havoline Dodge	181.756
5.	19	Jeremy Mayfield	Dodge Dealers/UAW Dodge	181.507

NASCAR NEXTEL CUP PRACTICE (cont.):

2:47 p.m. – **GREEN.**

2:49 p.m. – **RED.** #02 Hermie Sadler crashed in Turn 2. The car skidded up the track and hit the SAFER Barrier in Turn 2 with the right side of the car. Sadler climbed from the car without assistance.

HERMIE SADLER: “The throttle hung up on me going into Turn 2. We tested this SAFER Barrier. It is unfortunate for us. We had a good car. It’s our best car that we got. We put a lot of work and effort into getting here. Not sure what happened. Not sure if a rock got up in there. I don’t know. We’ve never had trouble with this car. It worked fine in the garage, but didn’t work when I needed it to.”

(More)

DAY 1 – FRIDAY, AUG. 6, 2004

Page 10

NASCAR NEXTEL CUP PRACTICE (cont.):

2:58 p.m. – **GREEN.**

3:15 p.m. -- #38 E. Sadler remains fastest at 182.741 mph.

Medical update from Dr. Henry Bock, Speedway medical director: #09 Scott Pruett was transported to Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis via ground for further evaluation and X-rays. #02 Hermie Sadler was released from the Clarian Emergency Medical Center without injury and cleared to drive.

Practice has been extended to 4:15 p.m., NASCAR officials announced.

3:40 p.m. -- #41 Casey Mears fastest at 184.222.

3:50 p.m. – Chip Ganassi Racing teammates Casey Mears and Sterling Marlin are 1-2 on the speed charts, with Mears at 184.222, Marlin at 183.217.

3:51 p.m. – **RED.** #16 Greg Biffle crashed in Turn 4. Car spun between 90 and 180 degrees, hitting the SAFER Barrier in Turn 4 with the left-rear side of the car. The car continued to slide through Turn 4 and onto the front straightaway, stopping on inside of track near entrance to pit road. Biffle climbed from car without assistance.

4:03 p.m. – **GREEN.**

4:11 p.m. -- #60 Jason Leffler fastest at 184.460 mph. That's the fastest unofficial lap by a stock car in Indianapolis Motor Speedway history, surpassing the pole lap of 184.343 last year by Kevin Harvick.

4:15 p.m. – **CHECKERED.** #60 Jason Leffler fastest at 184.460. Mears uncle Rick Mears won the Indianapolis 500 four times.

All 50 cars entered in the event were on track during practice.

Top 10 Drivers of First Practice, Final

	No.	Driver	Car	Speed
1.	60	Jason Leffler	Haas Automation Chevrolet	184.460 mph
2.	41	Casey Mears	Target Dodge	184.222
3.	40	Sterling Marlin	Coors Light Dodge	183.337
4.	48	Jimmie Johnson	Lowe's Chevrolet	183.158
5.	42	Jamie McMurray	Texaco/Havoline Dodge	183.042
6.	19	Jeremy Mayfield	Dodge Dealers/UAW Dodge	182.938
7.	01	Joe Nemechek	U.S. Army Chevrolet	182.919
8.	9	Kasey Kahne	Dodge Dealers/UAW Dodge	182.808
9.	38	Elliott Sadler	M&M's Ford	182.741
10.	6	Mark Martin	Viagra Ford	182.567

(More)

DAY 1 – FRIDAY, AUG. 6, 2004

Page 11

The track temperature during practice today was 130 degrees.

Medical update from Dr. Henry Bock, Speedway medical director: #16 Greg Biffle was released from the Clarian Emergency Medical Center without injury and cleared to drive.

GREG BIFFLE: “It just got away from me. I was just way too loose. That was our first qualifying run of the day, and even though that was a good car, they've got another good one in the truck so we'll be all right.” (Is the track slick?): “This place gets slick in the afternoon, but I don't know. Like I said, that was my first qualifying run, and it just got away from me. Well, we're still going to start in the back because they don't want to use that motor. If we used that engine, we'd be OK but the drive shaft shoved into the back of the transmission, and it broke the tail housing and stuff, so it could hurt the flywheel or the crankshaft. So instead of taking any chances, we'll just put a spare engine in it and start from the back.” (Were you down on the white line when the car spun?): “No, I was clear up by the wall. I just lifted on the gas and started to turn in and spun out. Mine got away in the worst possible spot – way early. Way early is worse than being down on the line already because in the middle of the corner, that's your slowest speed.”

Republican candidate for Indiana governor Mitch Daniels proposed the “Indiana MotorForce Initiative” to encourage development and growth of motor sports in Indiana.

Due to a family emergency, Daniels' campaign manager, Bill Oesterle, announced the “Indiana MotorForce Initiative” today at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway surrounded by motorsports industry leaders such as NASCAR driver and Indianapolis 500 veteran John Andretti; 1998 Indianapolis 500 winner and IRL IndyCar® Series team owner Eddie Cheever Jr., IndyCar Series driver Sarah Fisher, representatives of Hoosier Tire and Rollie Helmling, president of the United States Auto Club (USAC).

Daniels' “Indiana MotorForce Initiative” proposals include creating a state director of motorsports development, extending Indiana's venture capital tax credit to motorsports teams, modernizing Indiana's sales tax exemption for motorsports industries and establishment of a motorsports tech park and training programs.

Dale Earnhardt Jr. plans to drive the entire 400 miles of the Brickyard 400 on Sunday despite burns suffered on his legs and neck in an accident in a sports-car race July 18 at Sonoma, Calif., team spokesman Mike Davis said. Earnhardt started the last two NEXTEL Cup races since his accident but was relieved during both events.

John Andretti, who relieved Earnhardt last Sunday at Pocono, is at the Speedway this weekend, but Davis said the Dale Earnhardt Inc. team doesn't plan to use him as a relief driver for Earnhardt.

SATURDAY'S SCHEDULE (Sirius Satellite Radio and H.H. Gregg Qualifying Day):

7 a.m.	Indianapolis Motor Speedway public gates open
10:10 a.m.	NASCAR NEXTEL Cup qualifying (two laps, all positions)
2:10-2:55 p.m.	NASCAR NEXTEL Cup practice
3:45-4:30 p.m.	NASCAR NEXTEL Cup final practice

END DAY 1 (FRIDAY) NOTES

DAY 1 – FRIDAY, AUG. 6, 2004
POST-PRACTICE QUOTES - PAGE 1

JASON LEFFLER (No. 60 Haas Automation Chevrolet): “The Haas Automation Monte Carlo ran really good. The guys are doing a great job. We had a great test here, took the car home and worked on it and made it even better. Of course, you have all that Hendrick horsepower under the hood, which helps on these long straightaways. Indianapolis is incredible. I just love coming here. I’m really excited just to be a part of this race, and come tomorrow morning hopefully we can start somewhere up front. It is a really fast race car. Maybe we have a little bit left. We have a good draw, we go out 11th, and that’s going to be a lot of it. I’ll just be happy to start somewhere. I’ll be ecstatic to start somewhere in the top 10. I’ll just be happy starting the race tomorrow. We got a busy day going back between IRP (for the Busch race) and here. Once I run that lap tomorrow, I’m going to be happy man, and if we’re solid in the field, I’ll be real excited.”

ROBBY GORDON (No. 31 Cingular Wireless Chevrolet): “We’re pretty happy with it. The car was out of the box quick, and I think that’s real important because tomorrow we’ll come back and just do two laps. You’re going to have to make it count right out of the box, and that’s what we focused on today, being quick out of the box, not doing a lot of laps and not just bang off a quick lap as you can. Strategy for Sunday is to stay up front. Track position is worth so much. It’s a different tire than what we used last year, and tire management will be a little different. Last year, we were able to do two tires, and this year I don’t think you’ll be able to do that with this Goodyear tire.”

KURT BUSCH (No. 97 Sharpie/IRWIN Ford): “We went out for the first session and just grazed the wall a little bit so the crew guys will have to work overtime tonight. It was nothing severe, all the lasers turned out straight, just a little cosmetic damage. Our NASCAR boys can take cosmetic damage and get away with it, where Indy car guys can’t. Tomorrow we got a great draw for qualifying, we’ll be going out early, and we’ll have the nice, cool, morning sun draping down over our Sharpie Ford and hopefully give it a good run. I think we were sixth last year, so we hope to better that.”

DAVE BLANEY (No. 30 America Online Chevrolet): “We just went into race trim and did a bunch of race work. We are not looking much at speed charts today. I did like my car in race trim. We go out late to qualify tomorrow anyway, so we may be in a little bit of trouble on the draw. We will just take what we will get.”

TONY STEWART (No. 20 Home Depot Chevrolet): (About his chances for victory): “It’s hard to say. You don’t know until about halfway through the race where you’re really at, to be honest. But I’d like to think we have as good a shot this year as we’ve ever had.”

MATT KENSETH (No. 17 Smirnoff Ice/DeWalt Ford): (About his point situation being different going into this year’s Brickyard 400 than last year’s): “I don’t think it’ll really approach the race or how we run the race or anything like that. I think we’ll do everything the same. We’re fairly comfortable in the top 10, but with one or two problems, we could be out of it, so we have to be careful to make sure we’re still in the top 10. But at the same time, whether you’re fourth or fifth in points ahead doesn’t matter when it comes to race number 26, so you definitely go out there and run hard and try to win.”

(More)

DAY 1 – FRIDAY, AUG. 6, 2004
POST-PRACTICE QUOTES - PAGE 2

JAMIE McMURRAY (No. 42 Texaco/Havoline Dodge): “Our car is really good. I think all three of our cars are top five. So the car is good. We go out late tomorrow, and that’s not good here with the heat, but maybe since it’s so cool out, it will be this weekend. We qualified like 20-something last year, and I think by the first pit stop I was in the top five. So if your car is good here, you can pass. You’ve just got to hope you can turn down underneath guys. But qualifying is important everywhere.”

STERLING MARLIN (No. 40 Coors Light Dodge): “Pretty good. We wound up, I think, third quickest. It is pretty good. You want to be number one, but it was only our second time out on tires. We got a bad draw. It sucks how they do the qualifying up here.”

JIMMIE JOHNSON (No. 48 Lowe’s Chevrolet): (About new point system): “It is what it is. We just have to get to work and try to win the championship either way. There’s a lot of people talking about it, but there’s a lot of races left. We’re not the champions right now. We have about 16 or so races to go before we could ever be crowned that anyways, regardless of the point system. We’ll just keep up the good work and hopefully be there at the end when it counts.”

KIRK SHELMERDINE (No. 72 Freddie B’s/Embassy Suites Ford): “The day actually went pretty well, but, boy, we’re awful slow. The car is actually a lot better than it was when we tested a couple weeks ago. Everything is great. We’re just about three or four seconds off. That’s not going to get it. We always find a good bit, but it is not going to be enough. It is one of those ‘throwing good money after bad’ situations. It is time to fold this hand, I think.”

(More pre-practice quotes from various drivers available in Daily Trackside Report.)

...BY2004...

DAY 2 – SATURDAY, AUG. 7, 2004

Page 1

TODAY'S SCHEDULE (all times local):

7 a.m. Indianapolis Motor Speedway public gates open
10:10 a.m. NASCAR NEXTEL Cup qualifying (best of two laps)
2:10-2:55 p.m. NASCAR NEXTEL Cup practice
3:45-4:30 p.m. NASCAR NEXTEL Cup practice

Chad Chaffin won the Power Stroke Diesel 200 NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series race Friday night at Indianapolis Raceway Park.

NASCAR NEXTEL Cup regulars Ken Schrader and Michael Waltrip finished 34th and 36th, respectively.

Scott Pruett was cleared to drive this morning by Dr. Henry Bock, Speedway medical director. Pruett, who crashed during practice Friday afternoon, was released late Friday afternoon from Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis, where he was transported for X-rays and evaluation.

Event-record lap: 48.822 seconds, 184.343 mph, Kevin Harvick, Aug. 2, 2003

Fastest speed during July testing: 181.641 mph, Jeff Green, July 7

Fastest speed, Friday: 184.460 mph, Jason Leffler

At 10:05 a.m., the ambient temperature was 70 degrees with variable winds at 7 mph and a relative humidity of 51 percent. Skies were sunny.

POLE QUALIFYING CHRONOLOGY:

(Best of two laps)

Time

Of Day	Car	Driver	Time	Speed	Rank
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10:10 a.m.	8	Dale Earnhardt Jr.	48.657	184.968	1
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#8 Earnhardt takes pole with fastest stock-car lap ever turned at Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Previous best was 184.343 by Kevin Harvick during qualifying in 2003.

10:13 a.m.	72	Kirk Shelmerdine	53.264	168.970	2
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10:15 a.m.	99	Jeff Burton	49.173	183.027	2
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10:17 a.m.	00	Kenny Wallace	49.246	182.756	3
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10:20 a.m.	97	Kurt Busch	49.043	183.512	2
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10:22 a.m.	2	Rusty Wallace	49.529	181.712	5
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10:25 a.m.	0	Ward Burton	48.546	185.391	1
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#0 W. Burton takes pole with fastest stock-car lap ever turned at Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Previous best was 184.968 by Dale Earnhardt Jr. earlier today during qualifying.

10:28 a.m.	01	Joe Nemechek	48.655	184.976	2
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10:31 a.m.	31	Robby Gordon	49.191	182.960	6
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10:33 a.m.	25	Brian Vickers	48.737	184.665	4
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10:36 a.m.	60	Jason Leffler	49.456	181.980	9
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10:38 a.m.	43	Jeff Green	49.031	183.557	5
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10:40 a.m.	5	Terry Labonte	49.203	182.916	9
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10:43 a.m.	38	Elliott Sadler	48.606	185.162	2
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10:45 a.m.	6	Mark Martin	49.060	183.449	8
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(More)

DAY 2 – SATURDAY, AUG. 7, 2004

Page 2

POLE QUALIFYING CHRONOLOGY (cont.) (Best of two laps):

Time

Of Day	Car	Driver	Time	Speed	Rank
10:47 a.m.	19	Jeremy Mayfield	49.135	183.576	6
10:51 a.m.	20	Tony Stewart	49.435	182.057	14
10:54 a.m.	17	Matt Kenseth	49.305	182.537	14
10:57 a.m.	15	Michael Waltrip	49.514	181.767	17
10:59 a.m.	12	Ryan Newman	48.825	184.332	6
11:02 a.m.	16	Greg Biffle	49.657	181.243	20
11:05 a.m.	88	Dale Jarrett	49.135	183.169	11
11:07 a.m.	9	Kasey Kahne	48.955	183.842	7
11:10 a.m.	45	Kyle Petty	49.499	181.822	20
11:12 a.m.	41	Casey Mears	48.311	186.293	1

#41 Mears takes pole with fastest stock-car lap ever turned at Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Previous best was 185.391 by Ward Burton earlier today during qualifying.

11:15 a.m. 18 Bobby Labonte No attempt made

#18 B. Labonte pulled into pit lane before starting qualifying attempt after large plume of white smoke trailed from car in Turn 4 of warm-up lap.

BOBBY LABONTE: “We had no warning, or anything. It just sort of went. We’ll change the engine. We were hoping to start up front, but now we’re in the back. I guess now we’ll try to pass as many cars as we can. I guess that’s our strategy now.”

11:23 a.m.	23	Tony Raines	49.663	181.221	25
11:28 a.m.	10	Scott Riggs	49.505	181.800	22
11:29 a.m.	91	Bill Elliott	49.155	183.094	14
11:32 a.m.	49	Ken Schrader	49.597	181.463	26
11:35 a.m.	89	Morgan Shepherd	50.805	177.148	29
11:37 a.m.	77	Brendan Gaughan	49.570	181.561	26
11:40 a.m.	42	Jamie McMurray	48.854	184.222	8
11:42 a.m.	21	Ricky Rudd	49.742	180.934	31
11:45 a.m.	50	Todd Bodine	50.503	178.207	32
11:48 a.m.	32	Ricky Craven	49.666	181.210	31
11:51 a.m.	24	Jeff Gordon	48.937	183.910	9
11:53 a.m.	37	Andy Hillenburg	51.043	176.322	36
11:56 a.m.	51	Kevin Lepage	50.283	178.987	34
11:59 a.m.	48	Jimmie Johnson	48.889	184.090	9
12:01 p.m.	34	Geoffrey Bodine	52.014	173.030	39
12:04 p.m.	09	Scott Pruett	53.517	168.171	41
12:07 p.m.	13	Greg Sacks	51.036	176.346	38
12:10 p.m.	40	Sterling Marlin	48.924	183.959	10
12:13 p.m.	02	Hermie Sadler	50.801	177.162	38
12:16 p.m.	98	Derrike Cope	50.665	177.637	38
12:18 p.m.	29	Kevin Harvick	49.612	181.408	32
12:20 p.m.	22	Scott Wimmer	49.636	181.320	33
12:23 p.m.	30	Dave Blaney	49.740	180.941	37
12:26 p.m.	4	Jimmy Spencer	49.618	181.386	33

(More)

DAY 2 – SATURDAY, AUG. 7, 2004

Page 3

Former NASCAR driver and current NBC NASCAR analyst Wally Dallenbach Jr. drove a two-seat NEXTEL Cup Series car at speed after qualifying, giving a ride to supermodel Niki Taylor.

Casey Mears took a congratulatory cell-phone call from his uncle Rick Mears during post-qualifying ceremonies today. Rick Mears won the Indianapolis 500 four times and the Indianapolis 500 pole six times, both event records.

POLE QUALIFYING NOTES:

- This is the second career and second consecutive NASCAR NEXTEL Cup Series pole position for Casey Mears. He also won the pole for the Pennsylvania 500 last weekend at Pocono, Pa.

- Casey Mears' pole lap speed of 186.293 mph was the fastest official lap ever turned by a stock car at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. The record before this event was 184.343 set by Kevin Harvick during pole qualifying this year. The top six cars in qualifying today surpassed Harvick's mark.

- Casey Mears' uncle Rick Mears won the pole a record six times for the Indianapolis 500. Rick Mears won poles in 1979, 1982, 1986, 1988, 1989 and 1991. Rick Mears won the race in 1991 after claiming his final Indianapolis 500 pole. It was his record fourth and final victory.

- Rick Mears set a track record four times while winning the pole for the Indianapolis 500, in 1982, 1986, 1988 and 1989.

- Casey Mears' father, Roger Mears, started the Indianapolis 500 in 1982 and 1983, finishing 32nd and 28th, respectively.

- Casey Mears failed to qualify for the 2001 Indianapolis 500 in a Walker Racing car. It was the only year he attempted to qualify for the Indy 500. Mears waved off on his fourth and final lap on his only attempt, with five minutes remaining on Bump Day, the final day of qualifying.

- This is the third pole position at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway for Ganassi Racing but the first for the Brickyard 400. Arie Luyendyk won the pole for the 1993 Indianapolis 500 in a Ganassi entry, and Bruno Junqueira won the pole for the 2002 Indianapolis 500 in a Ganassi entry.

- Speeds continue to climb in the Brickyard 400. Casey Mears won the pole today at 186.293 mph, 13.879 mph faster than the pole speed for the inaugural Brickyard 400, 172.414, by Rick Mast.

- 2000 Brickyard 400 winner Bobby Labonte was forced to use a provisional starting spot for this race due to mechanical problems during his qualifying attempt. Labonte won the fall race in 2000 at Darlington, S.C., from the 37th starting spot, which was a provisional spot that season.

Ten-time Brickyard 400 starter John Andretti is at the track this weekend, working for Dale Earnhardt Inc. Andretti relieved Dale Earnhardt Jr., recovering from burns suffered last month in a sports-car racing accident, last weekend at Pocono.

Earnhardt will attempt to run the entire 400 miles Sunday, team officials said Friday.

JOHN ANDRETTI: (Any chance you will relieve Dale Earnhardt Jr. this weekend): "I have no clue. I doubt it. As far as the backup status, I'm really not sure. I think Junior is in good shape. I haven't spoken to him. I haven't seen him, and nobody has said anything to me. So really, in that perspective, it would be a wait-and-see. They know that if they need me for anything, especially Junior, then I am more than willing to help if I can."

(More)

DAY 2 – SATURDAY, AUG. 7, 2004

Page 4

Reigning Indy Racing League® IndyCar Series champion Scott Dixon visited the garage area and pits today. Dixon drives for Target Chip Ganassi Racing. His team owner, Chip Ganassi, also fields NASCAR NEXTEL Cup Series cars for pole winner Casey Mears, Sterling Marlin and Jamie McMurray.

SCOTT DIXON: “Just having a look. Catching up with Chip and some of the guys from NASCAR. It’s different for us, but I’ve been to a few of these races now, and it’s good to check out what the other side does.” (About his chances for repeating his IRL title): “It’s been a year to forget so far, so we’ll have to see how that goes, but hopefully can turn it around in the later part of the year. But we’ll just have to wait and see.”

BRICKYARD 400 STARTING POSITION NOTES:

- Ward Burton (second) recorded his best starting spot in 11 Brickyard 400s. His previous best was fourth in 2003. Previously, he had never started in the top 10 at Indy.
- Elliott Sadler (third) recorded his best starting spot in six Brickyard 400s. His best previous start was 13th in 1999.
- Joe Nemechek (fourth) recorded his best Brickyard 400 starting position since starting second in 1997.
- Ryan Newman (seventh) recorded his worst starting position in four Brickyard 400s.
- Sterling Marlin (10th) earned his fifth top-10 start at Indy.
- Bill Elliott (18th) recorded his second-worst starting spot in 11 races. He started 37th in 1998.
- Jeff Burton (19th) recorded his third-best Brickyard 400 starting spot in 11 races.
- Terry Labonte (21st) recorded his best Brickyard 400 starting position since starting eighth in 1998.
- Tony Stewart (24th) recorded his worst starting spot in six Brickyard 400s.
- Michael Waltrip (28th) recorded his worst starting spot since starting 29th in 1998.
- Kevin Harvick (32nd) recorded his only starting spot out of the top 11 in four Brickyard 400s.

NASCAR NEXTEL CUP FIRST PRACTICE:

At 2:10 p.m., the ambient temperature was 73 degrees with a relative humidity of 47 percent and calm winds. Skies were partly cloudy.

2:10 p.m. – **GREEN.**

2:37 p.m. -- #12 Newman fastest at 180.137.

2:45 p.m. – **CHECKERED.** End of session. #12 Newman fastest at 180.137 mph.

Top 10 Drivers of First Practice, Final

	No.	Driver	Car	Speed
1.	12	Ryan Newman	ALLTEL Dodge	180.137 mph
2.	9	Kasey Kahne	Dodge Dealers/UAW Dodge	179.773
3.	19	Jeremy Mayfield	Dodge Dealers/UAW Dodge	179.094
4.	38	Elliott Sadler	M&M’s Ford	178.710
5.	42	Jamie McMurray	Texaco/Havoline Dodge	178.504
6.	41	Casey Mears	Target Dodge	178.133
7.	17	Matt Kenseth	Smirnoff Ice/DeWalt Ford	178.038
8.	99	Jeff Burton	Roush Racing Ford	177.894
9.	16	Greg Biffle	National Guard Ford	177.873
10.	97	Kurt Busch	Sharpie/IRWIN Ford	177.852

(More)

DAY 2 – SATURDAY, AUG. 7, 2004

Page 5

1985 Indianapolis 500 winner Danny Sullivan visited the track today. Sullivan made the only NASCAR start of his career in the 1994 Brickyard 400.

DANNY SULLIVAN: (Thoughts on this weekend's race and his experience here at the inaugural Brickyard 400 10 years ago): "Well, I think it's great. It's always great to be at the Speedway. But I did the inaugural Brickyard 400 a long time ago. But it's great to come back to see a bunch of people, the Speedway, and Indianapolis is always a great place."

NASCAR NEXTEL CUP FINAL PRACTICE:

At 3:45 p.m., the ambient temperature was 73 degrees with a relative humidity of 50 percent and west-southwest winds at 7 mph. Skies were partly cloudy.

3:45 p.m. – **GREEN.**

4 p.m. -- #9 Kahne fastest at 179.723 mph. No cars on track.

4:07 p.m. -- #21 Rudd first to return to track, followed by line of other cars.

4:30 p.m. – **CHECKERED.** End of session. #9 Kahne fastest at 179.723 mph.

Top 10 Drivers of Final Practice, Final

No.	Driver	Car	Speed	
1	9	Kasey Kahne	Dodge Dealers/UAW Dodge	179.723 mph
2.	38	Elliott Sadler	M&M's Ford	179.612
3.	19	Jeremy Mayfield	Dodge Dealers/UAW Dodge	179.598
4.	91	Bill Elliott	Visteon Dodge	178.798
5.	17	Matt Kenseth	Smirnoff Ice/DeWalt Ford	178.777
6.	31	Robby Gordon	Cingular Wireless Chevrolet	178.742
7.	6	Mark Martin	Viagra Ford	178.579
8.	48	Jimmie Johnson	Lowe's Chevrolet	178.405
9.	12	Ryan Newman	ALLTEL Dodge	178.384
10.	29	Kevin Harvick	GM Goodwrench Chevrolet	178.168

NASCAR NEXTEL CUP FINAL PRACTICE QUOTE:

KEVIN HARVICK: "The car is pretty good. It's a lot better than it was in qualifying. It pretty much sucked in qualifying. The car was really good there in practice. Looking forward to getting tomorrow once we get some track position." (About race strategy): "I don't know. We will just have to wait until tomorrow to find out."

SUNDAY'S SCHEDULE:

7 a.m. Indianapolis Motor Speedway public gates open
1 p.m. NASCAR NEXTEL Cup driver introductions
1:30 p.m. Start, Brickyard 400 (160 laps)

END DAY 2 (SATURDAY) NOTES

DAY 2 – SATURDAY, AUG. 7, 2004
POST-QUALIFYING QUOTES - PAGE 1

CASEY MEARS (No. 41 Target Dodge): “I think this is a good feeling of redemption a little bit. We came here in 2001 and tried to qualify for the ‘500,’ and I dreamed of everything as far as qualifying for this place. To have such a horrible month and not qualify for the show was just heartbreaking and to come in now and qualify toward the top, and hopefully I will have a good race on Sunday. It would just mean everything in the world.” (About fan support at Indy): “It’s cool that people support you, and I enjoy signing autographs. There’s a lot of times though when we’re busy here, and this is our office. A lot of times I step away from the office and sign autographs. A lot of times when we’re focused and thinking about racing, it’s like someone sitting at your desk while you’re trying to do paperwork. You love the people that support you, but there’s a time and a place for it. But I really enjoy it. I enjoy people yelling my name and supporting me. (They say) ‘We watched your uncle, and now we watched you,’ and it’s a really cool feeling.” (Mears transcript coming later.)

JASON LEFFLER (No. 60 Haas Automation Chevrolet): (About qualifying run): “It sucked.” (Did you brush the wall?): “Yeah, but it didn’t slow us down, just skimmed the paint off the right side. The motor ran great. The car pulled good. I just don’t know why it was so slow. It’s a little disappointing. I thought we had something. It is what it is, and hopefully it gets us in the show. Our main goal is to stay out of trouble and run the race.”

JOE NEMECHEK (No. 01 U.S. Army Chevrolet): “Not bad. I’m proud of our U.S. Army team. My Chevy was good. I almost had the perfect lap going and got a little bit loose going into Turn 4. As race car drivers, we’re always trying to get more, and I got a little bit greedy on the entrance there and the back end stepped out. I think we all saw Greg Biffle crash one pretty hard there yesterday, and I didn’t want to do that, so I had to let off the gas, and it cost me some time. I think we’ll have a top-five starting spot, and that’s a pretty good day at Indy.”

TONY STEWART (No. 20 Home Depot Chevrolet): “It’s just the luck of the draw. It’s that way every week. It was quite a bit freer than we thought bit was going to be, so it wasn’t the lap we wanted.” (About race): “It’s hard to say. We’ll know better when we get through the two happy hour sessions. But we’ll have to run the car way from the back.” (About the week): “No matter what happens today and tomorrow, we’re going to have fun this weekend. It’s been that way all week. It’s been a fun week. When I got up here Thursday, Jay Drake won in our Silver Crown car at IRP, and I went and watched Danny Lasoski at Eldora last night. I’m doing things I enjoy instead of things people try to make us do. I saw my Mom yesterday, and I’m going to see some friends up in a suite here shortly. If we finish 43rd, if I wreck on the last lap while I’m leading, we’re going to have fun, no matter what.”

RYAN NEWMAN (No. 12 ALLTEL Dodge): “From when we ended practice yesterday, we picked up half a second from there, so it’s a good run for the ALLTEL Dodge. The track was definitely better at the start of qualifying, and the schedule’s still messed up, but I think for sure we’ll come away with a top-10 qualifying effort, and that’s definitely good for us going into tomorrow.”

(More)

DAY 2 – SATURDAY, AUG. 7, 2004
POST-QUALIFYING QUOTES - PAGE 2

WARD BURTON (No. 0 NetZero Hi-Speed Chevrolet): “The team did a really good job. The NetZero Chevrolet guys worked really hard, and I feel we’re heading in the right direction. This was obviously a big step for us to run that quick, a second-plus what we ran yesterday. It’s easy to drive a car when they’re right. It’s hard to drive a car when they’re not right. They made the right changes to the car today, and that allowed me to go fast.”

BRIAN VICKERS (No. 25 GMAC Chevrolet): “The draw definitely makes a difference here. The car did well. It was tight. We were definitely fighting it yesterday toward the end of practice, and we made a few changes to help it, but we didn’t get quite far enough, I don’t think.”

KURT BUSCH (No. 97 Sharpie/IRWIN Ford): “It wasn’t a bad lap. I believe our car’s going to be better for the race run and going out early is going to help us start up at the front and give us the opportunity to make better calls throughout the race. This is the most unique qualifying situation we have all year. Normally, we’re in the car for two hours, have a couple-hour break, and we’re right back in it. This is late-afternoon practice and come back the next morning and go cold turkey. It’s a good challenge.”

MARK MARTIN (No. 6 Viagra Ford): “I’m real disappointed. We had a major problem there. We’ll start in the back and go to the front. It’s just going to make it a little bit more difficult, that’s all.”

JEREMY MAYFIELD (No. 19 Dodge Dealers/UAW Dodge): “The car’s handling great. It’s the best car I’ve ever had here, I think. The car drives awesome. We should be in good shape. Track temperature just keeps getting hotter and hotter. From the first guy to sixth, the difference was big. It doesn’t take much.”

MICHAEL WALTRIP (No. 15 NAPA Chevrolet): “It wasn’t what we hoped for, for sure. We ran about what we did yesterday. Conditions are a little bit cooler for it, so we’re disappointed, obviously.”

KYLE PETTY (No. 45 Georgia-Pacific/Brawny Dodge): “We had a good qualifying run. We hadn’t been too fast since we’ve been here but we picked up, and in the heat of the day here, that’s good.”

TONY RAINES (No. 23 Bill Davis Racing Dodge): “It wasn’t very good. They said there wasn’t any fluid down there in (Turns) 3 and 4, but it really didn’t feel like it. We ran slower than we practiced, so we’re disappointed. We didn’t get the RPM we had been.”

SCOTT RIGGS (No. 10 Valvoline Chevrolet): “It was tighter that time than it’s been all weekend. It’s not what you expect when you keep freeing it up all day and freed it up even more for qualifying, and you got out there and it’s tighter than it’s been since I’ve been here. It’s frustrating. It’s got to be something that’s out of our control that we didn’t have a handle on. We just missed it somewhere.”

TERRY LABONTE (No. 5 Kellogg’s/Delphi Chevrolet): “It’s not as good a qualifying run as I hoped for. I think we’re going to be pretty good for the race. That’s what we’ve been focusing on in testing.”

(More)

DAY 2 – SATURDAY, AUG. 7, 2004
POST-QUALIFYING QUOTES - PAGE 3

KEN SCHRADER (No. 49 Schwan's Home Service Dodge): "It was terrible." (Thoughts about the race) "Ask me that tomorrow."

JAMIE McMURRAY (No. 42 Texaco/Havoline Dodge): "It was a little too tight. It was good, just wasn't good enough. It's hard to blame it on track temps. It's just hard to get the balance right."

TODD BODINE (No. 50 Arnold Development Co. Dodge): "It was terrible. It's the worst the car has been since we've been here."

GEOFFREY BODINE (No. 34 City of El Paso Dodge): "Terrible. Things have gone really badly for us since we've been here. We missed a lot of practice yesterday; we only got two laps in. It really put us way behind. The car just hasn't performed very well. This is a tough business."

SCOTT PRUETT (No. 09 Miccosukee Resorts Dodge): "I'm sore. That was a backup car. We just wanted to go out and make an attempt to qualify. The guys did a good job getting everything together. It's tough not coming here and testing and having a big shot and then going in the fence yesterday. I can feel it -- it's sore. It hurts today. We just went out to be sure the car was OK. I didn't think we'd go fast enough to get in on speed just because we hadn't run the car. We'll see if we can get in on provisional. I'm racing tonight (in Grand-Am sports car race). I'll head out of here right after the first practice. We're going to helicopter out of here to the airport, catch a private jet to Mid-Ohio, helicopter to the track. It's going to be close to get there right before the race. Max (Papis) is going to start. We're on the pole there. Then I'll get in and finish the race."

DALE EARNHARDT JR. (No. 8 Budweiser Chevrolet): (About pain from burns): "It's tough, just standing up builds up a lot of pressure and a lot of stinging pain. But sitting in the car is fine." (What was the difference in the car from yesterday to today?): "Well, we made some changes to try to get the car tighter getting in the corner, and it really helped. We were running a lot of race trim yesterday. We really weren't doing any practice qualifying run until the end yesterday. We were a little bit off, so we were really glad the guys made the changes they made, and helped the car." (How excited are you to get back to doing a full race?) "Yeah, I'm planning on doing it. I shouldn't have any problem doing it. I'm really looking forward to this whole weekend. We got a brand-new car. We got a lot of excitement about this car. We're looking forward to see how it does this weekend." (What makes it more comfortable in the seat?): "Just sitting down, not putting no pressure on it. All the blood's going down there right now putting pressure on it and just stings real bad." (What gives you the confidence that you can finish this week?): "I don't know, just get in there and do it. I feel a lot better. I got to go sit down; it hurts right now."

KIRK SHELMERDINE (No. 72 Freddie B's/Embassy Suites Ford): "Well, it was a little faster than yesterday, but we were so far off, we didn't even put any new tires on there. It wasn't even worth wasting them. We made our lap, and we are going to the next race."

KENNY WALLACE (No. 00 Aaron's Chevrolet): "Well, it was a good lap. It felt like I hit all my marks, so we will just have to see where it hangs up."

(More)

DAY 2 – SATURDAY, AUG. 7, 2004
POST-QUALIFYING QUOTES - PAGE 4

RICKY RUDD (No. 21 Keep It Genuine Ford): “We weren’t real good yesterday. We sort of picked up where we left off yesterday. We made some changes overnight. Picked it up a couple tenths, but not what we needed, for sure. It seems to be pretty stable. The car is going to probably race good if we get the right setup. Not really sure about the qualifying deal. We came here a couple weeks. We didn’t do nothing but work for race runs for two days. I got pretty confident racing-wise. We are a lot more competitive racing than we are qualifying, obviously. A little baffled right now.”

HERMIE SADLER (No. 02 SCORE Motorsports Chevrolet): “Well, it was a good effort by my guys. We were just too far behind. We were late getting the car out. We tore up a good car yesterday. We did the best we could, just came up a little bit short. We’ll regroup, and try them again next time.”

ANDY HILLENBURG (No. 31 Quality Equipment Dodge): “We picked up a little bit. I was pretty pleased with that part of it. We just didn’t have enough time. We needed to come up here and test. Had we ended up today at the end of the first day of testing, it would have been great.”

DERRIKE COPE (No. 98 Lucas Oil Ford): “For a late draw, the car actually drove pretty well. We don’t have a lot of engine. We’re just here to try to do the best we can. For what we had, we ran a little bit faster than we did in practice. The car was pretty solid; it just wouldn’t get down the straightaway very well. We had some issues. We’re going to try to keep digging. We’re up against a lot of odds right now.”

DAVE BLANEY (No. 30 America Online Chevrolet): “We just haven’t been very quick yesterday or today. We’ll take what we can get here. Get in the race and see if we can get better in race trim. The track was fine. I think it slowed down a little bit there at the end of qualifying, but not as much as it could have.”

JIMMY SPENCER (No. 4 Featherlite Trailers Chevrolet): “We had to get in the race, and we did. It was a good lap. We thought we could have run that yesterday. If we would have ran that yesterday, I believe we could have run a low 49 (second lap). But that is a big accomplishment for Morgan-McClure Motorsports. Featherlite came on board for this race. We are in the race, and that’s the big thing. I think a lot of the cars went home from this race in the past. You need to get in the top 38. That’s the key. I guess we ended up 33rd, which is nothing to brag about, but on other side of it, we are in the race, and now we can focus on it, get our car handling good, and hopefully be a top-10 car on Sunday.” (About going out last for qualifying): “I don’t think you can sit on the pole sitting last. But then on the other side of it, the track was the first time in a long time that I didn’t see the temperature change a whole lot like the previous years. I think going out last with the track changing 25 degrees, you can’t even think about it. You have a hard enough time even making the race. I don’t think that happened today. The weather was a lot different. No humidity, and the sun didn’t just bake the track heat into it. Yeah, I’m sure going out last cost us a couple tenths, but it doesn’t matter. It is only a couple spots. We knew we couldn’t be in the top 10, because when we tested up here, we just didn’t have the car the way we wanted to. So Tim and the guys brought a different car back. A lot of different things. Our focus in on finishing races . We are finishing them. We’re making some mistakes. Little odds and ends is costing us better runs. That’s what we got to do. We’re trying to find a sponsor and get better runs. We need to be in the top 10 is where we need to be.”

(More)

DAY 2 – SATURDAY, AUG. 7, 2004
POST-QUALIFYING QUOTES - PAGE 5

JEFF BURTON (No. 99 Roush Racing Ford): “We thought we’d be a lot better than that. Just didn’t have the grip we had yesterday. Didn’t pick up quite as much as most people are going to pick up. So I can tell we are going to be disappointed.” (Any problem in any particular corner?) “Turn 1 was pretty slow, I thought. Turn 1 and Turn 3, it seemed we couldn’t get to the corner like we needed to.” (Did this car seem like it’d be a good race car?) “I am really excited about this car and its race geometry. It races well and seems like it has a good grip. I think it will be fine in race trim.”

JEFF GREEN (No. 43 General Mills/Boxtops for Education Dodge): “The run went really well. But we just got too tight coming out of (Turn) 4. I lost about a tenth or so there. I think we have a good Cheerios Dodge. When we tested here, we were pretty much one of the fastest cars all week testing. It stood up for us. We’ve been struggling here lately so we need some good runs for us.”

MATT KENSETH (No. 17 Smirnoff Ice/DeWalt Ford): “The run was all right. The car handled good in Turn 3 and 4. But wasn’t that great in Turn 1 or Turn 2. It wasn’t great, but the track’s getting hotter. It’s so lopsided how they do qualifying here. We got a decent draw here (on qualifying time slot) so I think we’ll still end up decent. We were running about what everyone else was running here around this time period.”

ROBBY GORDON (No. 31 Cingular Wireless Chevrolet): “We freed our car up knowing the track was going to be tighter in the morning because that’s just the way it is around here at Indianapolis, and we didn’t go enough. We just plowed the front tires all the way around the racetrack.” (What do you have to do for Sunday?): “Pass a lot of cars. We came back and thought we’d have a real shot at it (starting in the front). Unfortunately, we didn’t.”

ELLIOTT SADLER (No. 38 M&M’s Ford): “Life’s good right now in Indy. To win the golf tournament yesterday ... That’s not the pole, and I was a little disappointed being that close, but we’re going to be close enough to see them. As good as we were here in testing and race runs, I’m pumped up, and I think we have a good shot at this race. They gave us a lot of horsepower. We don’t care anything about the points this weekend. It’s all about kissing those bricks. They brought me a great race car. We’ve been very good at this racetrack in the past, and I think we have a good setup for the race Sunday, and I can’t wait.”

KASEY KAHNE (No. 9 Dodge Dealers/UAW Dodge): “It’s a good lap for us. It’s the best one we’ve made so far since we’ve been in Indy, so it was good. We were a little bit tight from the center off and didn’t run quite as fast as we probably could have, but it was still a good lap. It was hotter than that yesterday, and I think we should’ve run faster than that, really. Mears just went fast. Obviously, there’s some speed in the track.”

BRENDAN GAUGHAN (No. 77 Jasper Engines & Transmissions/Kodak Dodge): “We had a really good race car. We knew we were fast, just tight in two corners. Indianapolis, they say it’s perfectly symmetrical and that each corner’s the same. There’s still differences. In (Turns) 3 and 4, it was really good, but (Turns) 1 and 2 were really bad for us. I was going to use track temps as an excuse, but Casey Mears blew that out of the water. Not a very good start for the team that has Indiana roots, but we’ll be all right.”

(More)

DAY 2 – SATURDAY, AUG. 7, 2004
POST-QUALIFYING QUOTES - PAGE 6

BILL ELLIOTT (No. 91 Visteon Dodge): “Former winner, I like that title. That’s a good part of what this sport is all about. But Indy has always been special, when I came here back in 1992, I really enjoyed this place. I’ve enjoyed it ever since. You know it’s a great opportunity to be back with the Visteon folks on board. Ray (Evernham) and all the guys put together an awesome car for here. We need to get it just a little bit better. But you know, we’re not bad. The thing is just get in this race and get going and worry what we need to do tomorrow.” (About limited schedule this year): “I’ve been trying to help Kasey (Kahne) and Jeremy (Mayfield) with what ever I can from that standpoint. Kasey don’t need much help. He’s done a heck of a job on his own. He’s a heck of a good race car driver. Really proud where he’s at, it’s made my transition a whole lot easier. But all in all it’s any way we can fit in and make this team stronger, that’s what it’s all about.”

JEFF GORDON (No. 24 DuPont Chevrolet): The car is excellent, a good qualifying effort, and we came here for the race. Wanted to qualify better than we had. Now we really got to get this DuPont Chevrolet up to that number-one spot. If it takes 400 miles to do it, no problem. But the way my pit crew has been lately, the chemistry of the team, the race car has been fantastic, horsepower, everything at Hendrick Motorsports has been going so well, I think we got a shot.” (About the Jeff Gordon Foundation) “We’ve had tremendous support from the racing community, from the community around Indianapolis, and the state of Indiana. Riley Hospital for Children is just a great children’s hospital. We did a lot of research when we found it. You know they’re right here in Indianapolis, and it’s one of the best and very fortunate to be able to have events like the bowling tournament the other night and have some fun. Get together and knock down some pins and raise a lot of money. We gave \$150,000 to them the other day and want to do more. We plan to do more and step it up each year.” (We see a lot of Jeff Gordon shirts out in the crowd. What shirt did you wear growing up? Who did you look up to growing up?): “I was a big Rick Mears fan. He was the man. I remember coming here and getting his autograph back one year. So I was certainly a big fan of his. I was also a big sprint car fan, Steve Kinser, Doug Wolfgang, Brad Dody and all those guys. I raced sprint cars so much that I got a chance to race with a lot of those guys, as well. Wish I could have had a chance to race with Rick Mears. I never have. Certainly a hero of mine. So it’s unbelievable for me to get out here and race at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and actually have the opportunity to go to victory lane.” (About competing against another Mears in NASCAR): “Casey, boy, that was really a great run for him. He’s really been on top of qualifying lately. I’m proud of him and proud of them. I’ve seen him go through the ups and downs of this sport. Right now, he’s on an upswing, and I’m very happy for him.” (Is there an optimum place to start at this race?): “Well, two out of the three wins I have here I started in third spot. So, I’ve got to say I like third. It’s very hard to get up front here more than any other place out there.”

MORGAN SHEPHERD (No. 89 Racing with Jesus/Red Line Oil Dodge): “It would’ve probably been pretty decent, but we found out when I got in the car there, we had no front-wheel brakes. That’s not very exciting going down in the corners because if you just have rear-wheel brakes and get on them hard, you’ll just spin out. That knocked our run way back.”

(More)

DAY 2 – SATURDAY, AUG. 7, 2004
POST-QUALIFYING QUOTES - PAGE 7

KEVIN LEPAGE (No. 51 Marathon Oil Chevrolet): “We struggled a little bit when we got here. We didn’t come up and test. It’s a new race team. I’m just disappointed for Marathon Oil. They stepped up for us this weekend. Their regional office is right across the street here. We picked up a second over yesterday, but we were two seconds off yesterday. We needed to find two seconds, and we just weren’t able to. I hate it for the guys.”

JIMMIE JOHNSON (No. 48 Lowe’s Chevrolet): “Things are really looking good for this weekend’s Brickyard 400 for us. We brought a new car along. It only has 15 laps on it. We’ve been able to put it in the top 10. So we’re very pleased with that. Hopefully we’ll get through race practice and have everything sorted out like we need to. Pocono went very well for us last weekend, so we’ve got some tricks up our sleeve to try for the race.” (If you had a CD player in your race car, what band would be playing?) “Depends on the day. If it was a nice, mellow day, probably some Jack Johnson. If it was an aggressive day, maybe throw in some old school Limp Bizkit and try to take the steering wheel off.” (Will passing be difficult?) “I think it’s getting better. But sad to hear that the track is going to be resurfaced for next year. The track’s finally developing some character, in terms of bumps. It may hurt Indy cars, but it helps us for our cars. So you actually look to the outside for some outer groove. They also ground the track and took some grip away from the bottom.” (With qualifying at the end of the day does the heat hurt your lap times compared to the first out in the morning?) “It definitely slowed us down some. I don’t think if I went out earlier I would have been able to beat Casey Mears’ time. He put out such an incredible lap that I couldn’t have touched that one. But think it would have put us in the top five. So it does make a big difference in terms of track temperature going up. The track temperature went up over 25 degrees since the start of qualifying to the time we went out at the end of qualifying. But definitely makes a big difference.”

...BY2004...

DAY 3 – SUNDAY, AUG. 8, 2004 (RACE DAY)

Page 1

ORDER OF THE DAY:

- 7 a.m. Public gates open
9:15 a.m. Julie Roberts concert, infield stage
10:20 a.m. Parade lap, featuring Dale Earnhardt Jr. Signature Series Chevy Monte Carlo SS
10:30 a.m. True Grit Award presented
11 a.m. “Buckle Up Bash starring Vince Gill” concert, infield stage
11:30 a.m. Drivers/crew chiefs meeting
12:20 p.m. Pace Car Lap of past Brickyard 400 Pace Cars
12:25 p.m. Indianapolis Police Department Motorcycle Drill Team Parade Lap
12:28 p.m. Indiana State University band performs
12:30 p.m. Pit lane open only to “hot” credentials
12:46 p.m. Introduction of General Michael Hagee, Commandant of U.S. Marine Corps
12:50 p.m. Driver introductions and ceremonial lap/NASCAR awards presentation
1:26 p.m. Presentation of colors, Military Department of Indiana Ceremonial Unit, Indiana National Guard
1:29 p.m. “America the Beautiful,” Indiana State University band
1:32 p.m. Invocation, Rev. Howard Brammer, Trader’s Point Christian Church
1:33 p.m. National anthem, Rascal Flatts
1:34 p.m. Flyover, four F-16 fighter jets from 181st Fighter Wing of Air National Guard, Terre Haute, Ind.
1:39 p.m. “Gentlemen, start your engines,” Mari Hulman George
1:40 p.m. Parade lap
1:50 p.m. Start of 11th Brickyard 400 (160 laps/400 miles)

RACE SPECIFICS:

- Eight-time Brickyard 400 starter Brett Bodine drives the Chevrolet Monte Carlo Pace Car during the race. Bodine finished second to Jeff Gordon in the inaugural Brickyard 400 in 1994.
- Pit-road speed limit is 55 mph.
- The Pace Car speed will be 65 mph during caution periods.
- There will be three Pace Laps before the green flag flies to start the race.
- The race distance is 160 laps/400 miles on the 2.5-mile oval.
- The estimated pit window is every 38 to 42 laps, based on fuel mileage.
- The drivers will use Goodyear tires with codes D-6826 for the left side and D-6828 for the right side. The same tire combination is used at Las Vegas Motor Speedway, Bristol Motor Speedway and Pocono Raceway.

PRE-RACE NOTES:

- The best Brickyard 400 finish by a driver who also has competed in the Indianapolis 500 is fifth by Tony Stewart in 2000.
- Kevin Harvick is the only driver to win the Brickyard 400 from the pole, achieving the feat last year.
- The last time a driver with the last name Mears was on the pole at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, he won the race. Rick Mears earned his record-tying fourth Indianapolis 500 victory from the pole in 1991.

(More)

DAY 3 – SUNDAY, AUG. 8, 2004 (RACE DAY)

Page 2

PRE-RACE NOTES (cont.):

- Three drivers who have started outside of the top 10 have won this race: 1995 winner Dale Earnhardt, who started 13th, 1996 winner Dale Jarrett, who started 24th and 2001 winner Jeff Gordon, who started 27th.

- The Brickyard 400 has only been affected by rain one time. In 1995, the race was scheduled to start at 12:17 p.m. but did not start until 4:25 p.m. due to rain.

- Bobby Labonte holds the record for the fastest average speed in Brickyard 400 history. He averaged 155.912 mph when he won the 2000 Brickyard 400.

- The closest margin of victory in Brickyard 400 history was in 1997 when Ricky Rudd defeated Bobby Labonte by .183 of a second.

- The car starting on the pole has led the first lap of all 10 previous Brickyard 400 races.

- The winner of the Brickyard 400 has gone on to win the NASCAR championship in the same year four times. Drivers who have completed the Brickyard 400/NASCAR championship “double:” Jeff Gordon (1998), Dale Jarrett (1999), Bobby Labonte (2000), Jeff Gordon (2001).

The Indianapolis Motor Speedway’s 2.5-mile oval will be repaved after this race.

The historic oval was last repaved in the fall of 1995. The 2004 repaving will mark the first time the warm-up lanes and current pit lane, which were constructed in 1993 and 1994, respectively, receive new asphalt.

The Speedway’s 2.605-mile road course, which was built in 1999, will not be paved.

According to Kevin Forbes, IMS director of engineering and construction, 36,500 tons of asphalt will be laid in two or three layers, covering 1,085,085 square feet per layer.

The height of the racetrack, and the track’s SAFER Barriers – the energy-absorbing system located on the outside walls in each of the four turns – will not be affected, as 4 inches of the surface will be milled and replaced with an identical amount of new asphalt.

The 9 degrees, 12 minutes of banking in the turns will remain the same. The Speedway oval’s banking and overall configuration will not be altered.

Preliminary work is scheduled to begin Aug. 9, the day after the 11th Brickyard 400, and paving should be completed by mid- to late October, Forbes said. Formal private testing among teams will not likely resume until spring 2005 to allow the new surface to cure over the winter, Forbes said. Hall of Fame Museum track tours will resume within days of the completion of paving.

The Indianapolis Motor Speedway’s racing surface has taken several forms since the track’s construction. The original coal-tar emulsion and crushed stone surface proved dangerous immediately upon the inaugural weekend of racing in August 1909, and 3.2-million paving bricks were laid down in late 1909, giving the track its venerable nickname, “The Brickyard.”

Patches of asphalt were placed on rough portions of the turns in 1936, and by 1939 all but the middle portion of the main straightaway was covered with asphalt.

In 1961, the main straightaway was finally covered with asphalt.

The track did not receive its first comprehensive repaving until summer 1976, and the process was repeated in the summer of 1988 and again in the fall of 1995.

Kyle Busch, younger brother of NEXTEL Cup Series regular Kurt Busch, won the Kroger 200 NASCAR Busch Series race Saturday night at Indianapolis Raceway Park. Jason Leffler, who will start 25th today in the Brickyard 400, finished third.

(More)

DAY 3 – SUNDAY, AUG. 8, 2004 (RACE DAY)

Page 3

James Spencer of Fredericksburg, Va., will wave the green flag to start the 11th Brickyard 400 today.

Spencer won the honor as the grand-prize winner of the Checkers®/Rally's® 2004 Brickyard 400 Sweepstakes. Checkers Drive-In Restaurants, Inc. is the Official Burger of the Brickyard 400.

Checkers/Rally's flew Spencer and three other first-prize sweepstakes winners to Indianapolis for a three-day weekend getaway, including meeting drivers and VIP hospitality. Spencer's name was randomly selected from the four winners during a gala Saturday night in Indianapolis to earn the honor of waving the green flag to start the race today.

Robbie Reiser, crew chief of the No. 17 Smirnoff Ice/DeWalt Ford driven by reigning series champion Matt Kenseth, was presented with the True Grit Award and a \$10,000 check this morning.

The award, sponsored by C&R Racing and Visteon Climate Control, honors a dedicated mechanic or crew chief that exemplifies the definition of a hardcore mechanic.

The flagman for today's race is Jimmy Howell. Rodney Wise will be the assistant flagman.

During the race, the audio from the NBC telecast will be broadcast through the overhead speakers and mult box in the Media Center. The IMS Radio Network broadcast will be available at each workstation through the headphone jack. There are a limited number of headphones available at the front desk. Please see a Media Staff member if you need a set.

After the race, the NBC, IMS Radio Network and Public Address feeds will be broadcast through the overhead speakers during their interview with the winner. The NBC telecast audio will be available at all other times until the post-race press conferences begin. During post-race press conferences, the Trackside Conference Room audio will be broadcast through the overhead speakers, each workstation and mult boxes.

The 12th annual Brickyard 400 is scheduled for Sunday, Aug. 7, 2005.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta is a visitor to the track today.

RACE RUNNING:

•#18 Bobby Labonte will move to the rear of the field on the pace laps from his 39th starting position due to an engine change after qualifying Saturday.

•All 43 starting cars were on the grid by 1:25 p.m.

•Race distance: 160 laps.

•At 1:30 p.m., the ambient temperature was 77 degrees with a relative humidity of 53 percent and variable winds at 4 mph. Skies were partly cloudy.

1:42 p.m. – Command to start engines by Mari Hulman George, Indianapolis Motor Speedway chairman of the board.

1:45 p.m. – All 43 starters pull away on first of three pace laps.

Lap 1: **GREEN**. #41 Mears, #0 W. Burton touch entering Turn 1, Burton on the outside, Mears on the inside. Cars side by side in Turn 1. Mears holds lead, while #38 Sadler passes Burton for second.

Top five after first lap: #41 Mears, #38 Sadler, #8 Earnhardt, #0 W. Burton, #01 Nemechek.

Lap 2: #41 Mears leads #38 Sadler by .124 of a second.

Lap 3: #38 Sadler passes #41 Mears for lead.

(More)

DAY 3 – SUNDAY, AUG. 8, 2004 (RACE DAY)

Page 4

RACE RUNNING (cont.):

Lap 5: **YELLOW**. #60 Leffler brushed outside wall between Turns 1 and 2. #60 Leffler then crashed in short chute between Turns 3 and 4. Car slid up track and hit outside wall between Turns 3 and 4. Car slid through Turn 4 and stopped on inside of start of rear straightaway. Heavy damage to right side of car. Leffler climbs from car without assistance.

#6 Martin brushed outside wall between between Turns 1 and 2.

Lap 5: #09 Pruett to pits due to ignition problems, 61 seconds. #00 K. Wallace to pits, four tires and fuel, 20.25 seconds.

Lap 6: #6 Martin to pits, crew pulls out sheet metal from right front fender, 22.97 seconds. #98 Cope to pits, fuel only.

Lap 7: #10 Riggs to pits for chassis adjustment to correct tight handling condition. #40 Marlin to pits, right side tires, add rubber to left-rear spring, 10 seconds. #18 B. Labonte to pits, four tires, fuel, chassis adjustment, tire pressure adjustment, 16 seconds.

Lap 9: **GREEN**. Restart order: #38 Sadler, #41 Mears, #8 Earnhardt, #0 W. Burton, #01 Nemechek. #8 Earnhardt, #41 Mears touch in Turn 4, with Earnhardt passing Mears for third. #24 Gordon climbs to fourth, #41 Mears falls to fifth. #38 Sadler leads #0 W. Burton by .989 of a second.

Lap 10: #38 Sadler leads #0 W. Burton by 1.170 seconds.

Lap 11: #09 Pruett runs slowly on pit road, crew reports broken valve spring.

Lap 12: #24 J. Gordon passes #8 Earnhardt for third. #38 Sadler leads #0 W. Burton by 1.687 seconds.

Lap 13: #38 Sadler leads #0 W. Burton by 2.146 seconds.

Lap 14: #38 Sadler leads #0 W. Burton by 2.629 seconds. #24 J. Gordon third, 2.742 seconds behind leader. Pole sitter #41 Mears falls to 13th.

Lap 15: #24 J. Gordon passes #0 W. Burton for second. #38 Sadler leads by 3.136 seconds.

Lap 16: #38 Sadler leads #24 J. Gordon by 3.214 seconds.

Lap 17: #38 Sadler leads #24 J. Gordon by 3.269 seconds.

Lap 18: #88 Jarrett up to 12th after starting 18th. #42 McMurray has fallen to 25th after starting eighth.

Lap 19: #38 Sadler leads #24 J. Gordon by 2.851 seconds.

Lap 20: Top 10 after 50 miles: #38 Sadler, #24 J. Gordon, #0 W. Burton, #12 Newman, #8 Earnhardt, #19 Mayfield, #48 Johnson, #20 Stewart, #97 Busch, #01 Nemechek.

Lap 21: #38 Sadler leads #24 J. Gordon by 2.790 seconds.

Lap 22: #38 Sadler leads #24 J. Gordon by 2.627 seconds.

Lap 24: **YELLOW**. #20 Stewart did a half-spin exiting Turn 2 after dropping left-side tires on rumble strips on inside of turn. No contact, Stewart continued.

Lap 24: All cars running in the race except for #00 K. Wallace to pits. #48 Johnson, four tires, fuel, wedge adjustment, 17 seconds; #19 Mayfield, four tires, fuel, 16 seconds; #24 J. Gordon, four tires, fuel, air pressure adjustment, 15 seconds. #0 W. Burton, four tires, fuel, 16 seconds; #8 Earnhardt, four tires, fuel, wedge and tire pressure adjustment, 16 seconds, #38 Sadler, four tires, fuel, 15 seconds; #97 Busch, four tires, fuel, left rear repair due to tire problem, 1 minute, 44 seconds; #20 Stewart, four tires, fuel, 19 seconds; #12 Newman, four tires, fuel, 19 seconds; #99 J. Burton, four tires, fuel, trackbar adjustment, 15 seconds.

Restart order: #38 Sadler, #24 Gordon, #8 Earnhardt, #19 Mayfield, #6 Martin, #17 Kenseth, #48 Johnson.

Lap 27: **GREEN**.

(More)

DAY 3 – SUNDAY, AUG. 8, 2004 (RACE DAY)

Page 5

RACE RUNNING (cont.):

Lap 27: #24 J. Gordon passes #38 Sadler for lead with inside pass entering Turn 1. #24 J. Gordon leads #38 Sadler by .405 of a second at line.

Lap 31: **YELLOW.** #48 Johnson spins in short chute between Turns 3 and 4. No contact, Johnson continued. #48 Johnson to pits, four tires and fuel, 22 seconds.

Lap 31: More pit stops. #48 Johnson returns to pits, 26 seconds; #42 McMurray, four tires, fuel, 17 seconds; #00 K. Wallace, fuel only, six seconds; #15 Waltrip, four tires, fuel, 15 seconds; #21 Rudd, four tires, fuel, 17 seconds; #40 Marlin, left-side tires, fuel, 12 seconds.

Lap 32: #6 Martin to pits, right front tire change, fuel, eight seconds.

Lap 33: **GREEN.**

Lap 37: #24 J. Gordon leads #38 Sadler by .386 of a second.

TODD BODINE: “Not real sure. Something internal in the motor. It felt like it knocked the rocker arm off. When you do that, everything happens from there, rods and cam and so forth. It hurt the motor pretty good, so we’re out of the race.”

SCOTT PRUETT: “Everybody gave it a valid effort, but it just wouldn’t run up top. It felt like something broke inside. I’m not sure I could have made it anyways. I’m really hurting right now. We were in and out two or three times, trying to find out what was wrong, and just couldn’t find it. It wouldn’t run over 8,000 (rpm). I just didn’t want to be in the way.”

Lap 42: #24 J. Gordon leads #38 Sadler by .466 of a second. #17 Kenseth up to third, .933 of a second behind leader, after starting 23rd.

Lap 44: **YELLOW.** #23 Raines has deflated left-front tire, driving slowly to pits. Crew replaces tires, fixes minor left-front sheet metal damage, four tires and fuel, 52 seconds. #19 Mayfield ducks in toward pits but then veers back on track before entrance to pit road. #0 W. Burton to pits, crew changes battery, 1 minute, 53 seconds.

Forty of 43 starters still running. Cars out: #60 Leffler, #09 Pruett, #50 Bodine.

Medical update from Dr. Henry Bock, Speedway medical director: #60 Leffler was released without injury from Clarian Emergency Medical Center and cleared to drive.

Lap 45: #0 W. Burton to pits, two tires, 10 seconds.

Lap 46: All cars running except #98 Cope to pits. #2 R. Wallace, four tires, fuel, 15 seconds; #12 Newman, four tires, fuel, air pressure and track-bar adjustment, 16 seconds; #20 Stewart, four tires, fuel, air pressure adjustment, 14 seconds; #16 Biffle, four tires, fuel, 16 seconds; #8 Earnhardt, four tires, fuel, chassis adjustment, 21 seconds; #19 Mayfield, four tires, fuel, 17.5 seconds; #97 correction to rear panel, rubbing against fuel-filler neck; #24 Gordon, two tires, fuel, track-bar adjustment, 12 seconds; #99 J. Burton air-pressure adjustment; #88 Jarrett, two tires, fuel, wedge adjustment, 10 seconds; #17 Kenseth, four tires, fuel, 15 seconds.

Lap 47: #98 Cope leads before pulling into pits just before restart.

Restart order: #24 J. Gordon, #38 Sadler, #88 Jarrett, #17 Kenseth, #31 R. Gordon, #20 Stewart, #2 R. Wallace, #91 Elliott, #12 Newman, #19 Mayfield.

Lap 49: **GREEN.** #24 J. Gordon leads #38 Sadler by .386 of a second.

Lap 50: Top 10 after 125 miles: #24 J. Gordon, #38 Sadler, #88 Jarrett, #20 Stewart, #17 Kenseth, #31 R. Gordon, #12 Newman, #2 R. Wallace, #9 Kahne, #91 Elliott.

Lap 53: #24 J. Gordon leads #38 Sadler by .256 of a second.

Lap 54: #24 J. Gordon leads #38 Sadler by .223 of a second.

Lap 56: #24 J. Gordon leads #38 Sadler by .964 of a second.

Lap 57: #9 Kahne up to seventh. #98 Cope to garage, overheating, out of race.

(More)

DAY 3 – SUNDAY, AUG. 8, 2004 (RACE DAY)

Page 6

RACE RUNNING (cont.):

Lap 58: #24 J. Gordon leads #38 Sadler by 1.346 seconds. Pole sitter #41 Mears 27th, points leader #48 Johnson 31st.

Lap 59: #9 Kahne brushes SAFER Barrier in Turn 3, continues to pits, deflated right front tire.

Lap 61: #24 J. Gordon leads #38 Sadler by 1.919 seconds.

Lap 69: **YELLOW**. #40 Marlin flat left front tire on backstraight. Fire in left front wheel well as Marlin continues around track.

Lap 69: #40 Marlin stops on inside of track at entrance of Turn 2, with fire still in left front wheel well. Goodyear engineers visiting pits to instruct teams to keep tires inflated to at least minimum required levels, NBC reports.

Lap 69: Pit stops. #8 Earnhardt, four tires, fuel, track-bar adjustment; #88 Jarrett, four tires, fuel, air pressure adjustment, 14 seconds; #12 Newman, wedge and air-pressure adjustment; #24 J. Gordon, four tires, fuel, air pressure adjustment, 14 seconds; #20 Stewart, four tires, fuel, air pressure adjustment, 16 seconds; #31 R. Gordon, four tires, fuel, wedge adjustment, 23 seconds; #42 McMurray, wedge adjustment, #17 Kenseth, four tires, fuel, wedge adjustment, 23 seconds; #91 Elliott, four tires, fuel, 17 seconds; #38 Sadler, four tires, fuel, 16 seconds; #19 Mayfield, four tires, fuel, 16 seconds; #2 R. Wallace, four tires, fuel, 18 seconds; #12 Newman, four tires, fuel, 14 seconds; #16 Biffle, four tires, fuel, #16 Biffle, four tires, fuel, 13 seconds.

Lap 70: Leader #4 Spencer to pits, four tires, fuel, 20 seconds; #48 Johnson to pits, four tires, fuel, 28 seconds.

Restart order: #38 Sadler, #24 J. Gordon, #17 Kenseth, #88 Jarrett.

Lap 73: **GREEN**.

Lap 74: **YELLOW**. Multi-car crash on front straightaway just before Turn 1. Eight cars involved: #0 W. Burton, #10 Riggs, #2 R. Wallace, #21 Rudd, #5 Labonte; #22 Wimmer; #45 Petty; #99 J. Burton. On restart, #16 Biffle made contact with #2 R. Wallace, sending Wallace into wall, triggering chain-reaction collision, with #10 Riggs hitting inside retaining wall with front of car. #10 Riggs hit #5 Labonte when rebounding across track and also hit #0 W. Burton.

Lap 73: #2 R. Wallace in pits, team attempting to pound out sheet-metal damage on left front of car, 59 seconds. Front end was bent so badly that the engine was revving without Wallace touching the gas pedal. Team also covering hole on left front of car.

Lap 74: #45 Petty to pits for repair of crash damage, 1 minute, 2 seconds.

Lap 75: #21 Rudd to pits for repair of crash damage, 1 minute, 7 seconds; #18 B. Labonte to pits, repair of body damage, 1 minute, 46 seconds.

SCOTT RIGGS: "I just saw the 2 get in trouble there and get in the wall. It was a big chain reaction and everybody trying to drive by instead of taking care of it. We just can't seem to make it to the checkered flag."

Medical update from Dr. Henry Bock, Speedway medical director: #40 Marlin released without injury from Clarian Emergency Medical Center and cleared to drive.

Garage report: Crews attempting to repair cars of #5 T. Labonte, #40 Marlin. #5 T. Labonte out of race after crew attempted repairs.

Restart order: #38 Sadler, #24 J. Gordon, #17 Kenseth, #88 Jarrett, #20 Stewart.

Lap 79: **GREEN**. #24 Gordon passes #38 Sadler in short chute between Turns 1 and 2. #24 J. Gordon leads #38 Sadler by .165 of a second.

Lap 80: Top 10 after 200 miles: #24 J. Gordon, #38 Sadler, #20 Stewart, #17 Kenseth, #88 Jarrett, #12 Newman, #31 R. Gordon, #29 Harvick, #19 Mayfield, #16 Biffle.

(More)

DAY 3 – SUNDAY, AUG. 8, 2004 (RACE DAY)

Page 7

RACE RUNNING (cont.):

Medical update from Dr. Henry Bock, Speedway medical director: #0 W. Burton and #5 T. Labonte both were released without injury from Clarian Emergency Medical Center and cleared to drive.

Total time for crash-damage repairs on #2 R. Wallace: Four minutes, 17 seconds. Total time for crash damage repairs on #45 Petty: Three minutes, 54 seconds.

Lap 89: **YELLOW**. #48 Johnson slows. Reports engine failure to crew. Wrecker pushes car to pit road. Out of race.

Lap 89: Pit stops. #8 Earnhardt, four tires, fuel, track-bar adjustment, 15 seconds; #88 Jarrett, right-side tires, fuel, track-bar adjustment, 9 seconds; #24 Gordon, two tires, fuel, 12 seconds; #38 Sadler, four tires, fuel, 12 seconds; #19 Mayfield, four tires, fuel, 16 seconds; #31 R. Gordon, two tires, fuel, 9 seconds; #12 Newman, #20 Stewart collide on pit road. #12 Newman, four tires, fuel, track-bar adjustment, 19 seconds; #20 Stewart, four tires, fuel, track-bar adjustment, 17 seconds; #29 Harvick, rubber removed from left-rear spring; #16 Biffle, four tires, fuel, rubber added to left rear spring, 16 seconds; #6 Martin, four tires, fuel, wedge adjustment; #17 Kenseth, two tires, fuel, 9 seconds; #97 Busch, four tires, fuel, wedge adjustment, air pressure and track-bar adjustment.

JIMMIE JOHNSON: “That was a freak deal there, I am certain. It seems like maybe the crank or something just let go coming off of (Turn) 4. That car was so loose into the turns. I spun out once and had a few more good saves, but just one of those bad days that you have. Last week, we were the heroes, and today we definitely weren’t that, but maybe our teammate can do it. The Lowe’s team, we just missed it today and had an unfortunate break of the engine.” (Under the old points system this would have been a dagger, but under the new system does this really hurt at all?): “You can look at it either way. We have a nice cushion, and it would have been nice to have that under the old system. Now it all resets here in a little bit anyways, but we don’t want to have failures, period. We want to be out there competing for every win, so we’re more disappointed in that than anything.”

Lap 93: **GREEN**.

Lap 95: #24 Gordon leads #38 E. Sadler by .541 of a seconds.

Lap 97: **YELLOW**. #77 Gaughan crashes between Turns 1 and 2. Gaughan did half-spin and hit SAFER Barrier with left front and left side of car. Car slid down track and stopped on inside of track at exit of Turn 2. Gaughan climbed from car without assistance.

TERRY LABONTE: “I really don’t know what happened. They kept trying to wreck on every restart, and they finally accomplished it. I knew if they kept trying, they’d probably get it, and they did. Unfortunate for us and the Delphi/Kellogg’s Chevy that we got caught up in it. Just one of these deals.”

WARD BURTON: “The 15 went to the inside. I was full throttle to the outside, then when he pulled out, I noticed everybody checked up. At that point, I was just sliding. That created getting in the wreck. It was just one of those things I couldn’t avoid. I didn’t see it happen.”

Lap 98: #97 Busch to pits, four tires, fuel, repair of right front damage, 50 seconds.

Restart order: #24 J. Gordon, #38 Sadler, #17 Kenseth, #31 R. Gordon, #88 Jarrett.

Lap 102: **GREEN**. #24 J. Gordon leads #38 Sadler by .202 of a second.

Lap 104: #24 J. Gordon leads #38 Sadler by .630 of a second. Thirty-two cars on lead lap.

Lap 105: #17 Kenseth passes #38 Sadler for second. #24 J. Gordon leads #17 Kenseth by 1.334 seconds.

Lap 106: #31 R. Gordon, #88 Jarrett pass #38 Sadler, who falls to fifth.

Lap 107: #24 J. Gordon leads #17 Kenseth by 1.544 seconds.

Lap 108: #24 J. Gordon leads #17 Kenseth by 1.661 seconds.

Lap 109: #24 J. Gordon leads #17 Kenseth by 1.911 seconds.

(More)

DAY 3 – SUNDAY, AUG. 8, 2004 (RACE DAY)

Page 8

RACE RUNNING (cont.):

BRENDAN GAUGHAN: “Thanks to NASCAR and SAFER walls. It still hurts when you hit them. But it has to take some impact out. I feel bad for the Jasper guys here at the Brickyard, their home track. We had our first Penske chassis. Shane made a great call, gave us two tires to get us up there.”
(About accident): “He (Kasey Kahne) left-rear tired us and gave us a flat before we could do anything.”

Lap 114: #24 J. Gordon leads #17 Kenseth by 2.181 seconds.

Lap 115: #00 K. Wallace out of race due to engine problem.

Lap 116: #24 J. Gordon leads #17 Kenseth by 1.950 seconds.

Lap 117: #24 J. Gordon leads #17 Kenseth by 1.898 seconds. #24 Gordon reports tight handling condition to crew.

Lap 118: #24 J. Gordon leads #17 Kenseth by 2.106 seconds. #31 R. Gordon third, 5.090 seconds behind leader.

Lap 120: Top 10 after 300 miles: #24 J. Gordon, #17 Kenseth, #31 R. Gordon, #88 Jarrett, #38 Sadler, #6 Martin, #20 Stewart, #16 Biffle, #9 Kahne, #19 Mayfield.

Lap 123: #24 J. Gordon leads #17 Kenseth by 1.880 seconds. #38 Sadler fifth, team reports loose-handling condition.

Lap 125: **YELLOW.** #31 R. Gordon has flat left front tire. Sparks shooting from left-front wheel well.

Lap 125: Pits. #31 R. Gordon enters pits with left-front wheel well on fire due to burning brakes. Crew uses fire extinguisher in pits on fire, creating cloud of smoke on pit road, R. Gordon exits pit after stop of 1 minute, 30 seconds; #88 Jarrett, four tires, fuel, wedge and air pressure adjustment, 14 seconds; #6 Martin, four tires, fuel, 14 seconds; #20 Stewart, four tires, fuel, wedge adjustment, 16 seconds; #12 Newman, four tires, fuel, 19 seconds; #16 Biffle, four tires, fuel, wedge adjustment, 17 seconds; #8 Earnhardt, four tires, track-bar and wedge adjustment; #9 Kahne, four tires, fuel, track-bar adjustment, 14 seconds; #19 Mayfield, four tires, fuel, air pressure adjustment, 14 seconds; #38 Sadler, four tires, fuel, 16 seconds; #17 Kenseth, four tires, fuel, 14 seconds; #24 J. Gordon, four tires, fuel, 14 seconds; #29 Harvick, two tires only.

Lap 126: #31 R. Gordon returns to pits for more service, 1 minute, 5 seconds. #49 Schrader leads.

Restart order: #24 J. Gordon, #17 Kenseth, #88 Jarrett, #6 Martin, #38 Sadler.

Lap 129: **GREEN.**

Lap 133: #24 J. Gordon leads #17 Kenseth by 1.706 seconds. #9 Kahne up to fifth, 4.397 seconds behind leader. Kahne was one lap down after suffering flat tire earlier in race.

Lap 134: #24 J. Gordon leads #17 Kenseth by 1.741 seconds.

Lap 136: #24 J. Gordon leads #17 Kenseth by 2.028 seconds.

Lap 137: #24 J. Gordon leads #17 Kenseth by 1.948 seconds.

Lap 138: #24 J. Gordon leads #17 Kenseth by 1.789 seconds.

Lap 139: #24 J. Gordon leads #17 Kenseth by 1.733 seconds.

Lap 140: Top 10 after 350 miles: #24 J. Gordon, #17 Kenseth, #88 Jarrett, #38 Sadler, #9 Kahne, #6 Martin, #19 Mayfield, #8 Earnhardt, #20 Stewart, #16 Biffle.

Lap 141: #24 J. Gordon leads #17 Kenseth by 1.458 seconds. #88 Jarrett third, 3.093 seconds behind leader.

Lap 142: #17 Kenseth to pits for right-side tires, fuel, eight seconds. #88 Jarrett inherits second.

Lap 144 **CAUTION.** Debris, possibly brake rotor from #31 R. Gordon. R. Gordon then pits three to attempt to fix brake problem. Unsuccessful. Crew reports car has no brakes on left front wheel and said car has 25 percent of normal overall braking power. Total time of repairs, 1 minute, 38 seconds.

(More)

DAY 3 – SUNDAY, AUG. 8, 2004 (RACE DAY)

Page 9 (REVISED, corrects to green-white-checkered finish, final two laps of race running)

RACE RUNNING (cont.):

Lap 144: Pit stops. #12 Newman, fuel, eight seconds.

Restart order: #24 J. Gordon, #88 Jarrett, #38 Sadler, #6 Martin, #9 Kahne.

Lap 147: **GREEN.**

Lap 150: **YELLOW.** #22 Wimmer crashes in Turn 1. Wimmer skates up track and hits SAFER Barrier in Turn 1. Heavy damage to car. Event-record 11th caution period of event. Previous record for caution periods was nine in 1998. Crew of #24 J. Gordon reports that he hit debris on track.

Restart order: #24 J. Gordon, #88 Jarrett, #38 Sadler, #6 Martin, #9 Kahne.

Lap 153: **GREEN.** #24 J. Gordon leads #88 Jarrett by .540 of a second.

Lap 154: #24 J. Gordon leads #88 Jarrett by .504 of a second.

Lap 156 **YELLOW.** #12 Newman crashes in Turn 2. Car does three-quarter spin in Turn 2 and hits SAFER Barrier with rear of car. Slides down back straightaway, stops along wall. Newman climbs from car without assistance. #25 Vickers also involved in accident, heavy damage to rear of car. Vickers to pits, returns to track with heavy rear-end damage. Event-record 12th caution period.

Restart order: #24 J. Gordon, #88 Jarrett, #38 Sadler, #6 Martin, #9 Kahne.

Lap 159: **GREEN.**

Lap 160: **WHITE.** #24 J. Gordon leads #88 Jarrett by .522 of a second. #21 Rudd slows exiting Turn 4.

Lap 161: #6 Martin slows with flat tire. **YELLOW.** #8 Earnhardt, #21 Rudd collide on backstretch.

YELLOW/CHECKERED. #24 Jeff Gordon wins the 11th Brickyard 400 by .900 of a second over #88 Dale Jarrett. #38 Elliott Sadler finished third, 1.272 seconds behind Gordon. It's Gordon's record fourth Brickyard 400 victory. Gordon stops car at Yard of Bricks on start-finish line and stand on car, raising arms in celebration.

Gordon joins four-time Indianapolis 500 winners A.J. Foyt, Al Unser and Rick Mears as four-time winners of a race at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Gordon's three previous Brickyard 400 victories came in 1994, 1998 and 2001.

POST-RACE QUICK QUOTES:

JEFF GORDON: "What an amazing week it has been. That Yard of Bricks is so special. It feels so incredible. This guy, Robbie Loomis, what an amazing job. What a great effort. I'm so excited." (About hitting debris late in race): "I thought it was all over. I thought we were done. I hated it for Matt Kenseth that he hit it. He had a strong car and was coming on. To win at this Speedway, I can't even describe the emotions going on. It means so, so much. I don't get cheered often, so it means so much to me to hear this here in Indianapolis. Man, I don't know how we pulled that off."

DALE JARRETT: "You always want to win. Jeff had the best car. I want to congratulate him on a great run. Certainly we wanted to win; this is a great place to race."

ELLIOTT SADLER: "I was a little bit tight behind him. It's great to have two Robert Yates cars in the top three. We had one car better than us. I have to congratulate Jeff Gordon on his fourth Brickyard."

(More notes to follow)

(More)

DAY 3 – SUNDAY, AUG. 8, 2004 (RACE DAY)

Page 10

BRICKYARD 400 POST-RACE NOTES:

•Jeff Gordon earned his fourth Brickyard 400 victory in his 11th start. Rick Mears earned his fourth Indianapolis 500 victory in his 14th start, in 1991. A.J. Foyt earned his fourth Indianapolis 500 victory in his 20th start. Al Unser earned his fourth Indianapolis 500 victory in his 22nd start.

•The average speed of the race was 115.037 mph, the slowest average speed in event history. The previous slowest average speed was 125.033 when Bill Elliott won in 2002.

•There were 13 caution periods for 47 laps, both event records. The previous record for number of cautions was nine in 1998, while the previous record for caution laps was 36 in 2002.

•Jeff Gordon won from the 11th starting spot, only the fourth time the winner has come from outside the top 10. Dale Earnhardt won from the 13th starting spot in 1995, Dale Jarrett won from the 24th starting spot in 1996, and Gordon won from the 27th starting spot in 2001.

•Jeff Gordon led 124 laps today, an event record. The previous record was 117 by Dale Jarrett when he won in 1999.

•Jeff Gordon led 47 consecutive laps between Laps 79-125 today, an event record for consecutive laps led. The previous record was 43 laps (Laps 118-160) by Dale Jarrett when he won in 1999.

•Jeff Gordon extended his event record for laps led to 433 laps in 11 starts.

•Greg Biffle gained 29 spots from start to finish today, more than any other driver. He started 35th and finished sixth.

•Jeff Gordon became the fourth driver to win a major event at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway four times. The drivers, events and years of victories:

-- A.J. Foyt, Indianapolis 500, 1961, 1964, 1967, 1977

-- Al Unser, Indianapolis 500, 1970, 1971, 1978, 1987

-- Rick Mears, Indianapolis 500, 1979, 1984, 1988, 1991

-- Jeff Gordon, Brickyard 400, 1994, 1998, 2001, 2004

Wolf Henzler has recorded four victories in Porsche Michelin Supercup series support races to the United States Grand Prix at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway since 2000. Henzler won once in 2002, 2003 and both races in 2004.

•Dale Jarrett's second-place finish was his fifth top-three finish in Brickyard 400 competition.

•Elliott Sadler's finish of third was his best in six Brickyard 400 starts. His previous best was 21st in his first start in 1999.

•Tony Stewart's fifth-place finish tied his career best in this event. He also finished fifth in 2000.

•Kevin Harvick's eighth-place finish was his third consecutive top-10 finish at Indy.

•Bill Elliott's ninth-place finish was his ninth top-10 finish in 11 Brickyard 400s.

•Jeremy Mayfield's 11th-place finish was his second best in 10 Brickyard 400 starts. His best was fifth in 1997.

•Rusty Wallace's 13th-place finish was his second worst in 11 Brickyard 400s. His only other time out of the top 10 was 1997, when he finished 38th.

•Casey Mears' finish of 26th was the worst by a Brickyard 400 pole winner since Jeff Gordon finished 37th in 1996.

•Kasey Kahne finished fourth, the second-best finish by a first-time Brickyard 400 starter other than the inaugural race in 1994. Jamie McMurray finished third in 2003 in his first Brickyard start.

END DAY 3 (SUNDAY) NOTES

DAY 3 – SUNDAY, AUG. 8, 2004
POST-RACE QUOTES - PAGE 1

MARK MARTIN (No. 6 Viagra Ford): “I just wanted to have a chance, and we did. It was a great effort by the Viagra team, and we ran awfully good. We ran good today, but unfortunately things set us back. I’m awfully proud of this team. They put their hearts in this stuff. They give me great race cars, especially today and last week and every week. We’ve just had a little bad luck.”

DALE EARNHARDT JR. (No. 8 Budweiser Chevrolet): “I blew a left front tire. I finished in the back.” (About his physical condition): “I’m fine. I still have got some open wounds that ain’t healed yet. They hurt some, but when I sit down, I’ll be all right.” (About the end of the race): “That’s unfortunate, man. We had a good car. We fought hard all day. It’s tough. Tough sometimes running in this circus.” (About going the distance for the first time since accident. Does it feel good?): “No, it don’t. My damn left front tire blew out. I had a sixth-place finish. I’m pissed off about it.” (Were you in the running all day long?): “No, we weren’t. We were kind of a top-10 car. We got a little bit better at the end. I was pretty happy about that. It’s just that left front tire blowing out really upsets you there, coming there that close to the end.”

JIMMY SPENCER (No. 4 Featherlite Trailers Chevrolet): “Not bad. We had a fuel problem or something that messed us up. We just didn’t have the straightaway speed. We had a top-10 car and ended up 18th.”

BILL ELLIOTT (No. 91 Visteon Dodge): “Well, that was a good day. I was proud where we ended up. You know, the bad thing about it, the green-white-checked, it’s good for the fans, but it’s bad for the competitors because they’re the ones that end of paying in the end.” (On his ‘developmental’ car): “Well, they went well. We finished. We had a decent day, just fought a few things, but we’re going to continue to work on it and try to get better.”

JEREMY MAYFIELD (No. 19 Dodge Dealers/UAW Dodge): “There were a lot of people having cut tires. Let’s put it that way. I guess they was just running over stuff and cutting tires down.”

RICKY CRAVEN (No. 32 Tide Chevrolet): “It was not very eventful for us. It was very, very frustrating. I don’t know what was causing the cut tires. We had one, but I don’t know what the problem was. There’s not a clear indication of it. In practice, there were a few cars with problems. I know the 19 cut one down yesterday, but it certainly was an issue today.”

CASEY MEARS (No. 41 Target Dodge): “We just didn’t have a good day. Our left front went down under caution, so I don’t know what happened, to be honest. We just had a bad day. The thing didn’t handle very good, and then there at the end, we were riding along under caution and getting ready for the restart and the left front tire was flat. So we had to come in right before that restart and just lost a bunch of spots.”

JAMIE McMURRAY (No. 42 Texaco/Havoline Dodge): “We struggled there at the beginning. Made some incredible changes to our car. I’m shocked we ended up where we did. But overall, good day. We fell back to like 38th at one point in the race, and we just kept adjusting on it. Track position worked a little bit to our favor. Pretty good finish.”

(More)

DAY 3 – SUNDAY, AUG. 8, 2004
POST-RACE QUOTES - PAGE 2

ROBBY GORDON (No. 31 Cingular Wireless Chevrolet): “It’s not working. Whatever we got to do, we’ve got to change something different about it. The key is, we’re fast. We build cars for when we come here for Indy or when we come here for here. We had a shot at winning, and that’s the key. We’ll be back next year.”

ELLIOTT SADLER (No. 38 M&M’s Ford): “We had a great race car. Track condition was everything. I was just a little tight behind my teammate. I didn’t really get the run on him that I needed. Great run both for both of us. We finished second and third. This shows really how hard this team has been working. It’s come a long way in twelve months. It’s great to race your teammate like that for the top five, it’s pretty cool.” (Did you feel if you had a draft you could have gotten around your teammate?): “I wanted to get around him bad, just to get a shot at No. 24. It was just on one of those deals where it got a little bit loose on that one run and lost our track position, came back and finished third. I’m really proud of my guys; they really got the job done.” (How did this work out with your qualifying effort?): “It was great. I think any time you come to Indy and run as good as we just ran to finish third and run in the top three and four all day long, it says a lot about our race team. Says a lot about our character and having a teammate like that and great for the full Robert Yates organization. One car was better than our teams today. That was Jeff Gordon. I’ve got to say my congratulations to Jeff Gordon. But I’m really, really proud of my race team right now.” **(More Sadler in upcoming transcript.)**

DALE JARRETT (No. 88 UPS Ford): “We had hoped we could get one more victory here. Jeff is stringing along a lot of victories here. He did a great job. These guys worked really hard. I have to thank my teammate for not running over me when I cut him off there the last four or five laps. He could have easily knocked me out of the way. We both had good runs. We got the Robert Yates cars up in the top three. Certainly, we’d like to win. This is a great place to race. It knew Jeff was awful good on the restarts. He could get away; it looked like his car hooked up a little better. No matter how much I tried to get my tires heated up, I just couldn’t get going those first couple corners, and he could get away from me there. **(More Jarrett in upcoming transcript.)**

TONY STEWART (No. 20 Home Depot Chevrolet): “All day long, we were battling and battling. (What about the spin?): “It was a spin.”

MATT KENSETH (No. 17 Smirnoff Ice/DeWalt Ford): “They had cars out there running slow, or whatever. There was brake rotor all over the track. We hit it hard enough we knocked the front clip off our car. When something hits that hard and it hit on the right front, it went straight to the wall and I just assumed we had a flat tire and if I continued around the track WITH a flat, we would’ve lost a lap so I just came down pit road and did the safe thing. Even if we would’ve stayed out, it was bent up enough we wouldn’t have held on to second. We wouldn’t have finished any better than we did.” (did he think he could move on Gordon?): “I think we would have gotten there but getting there and passing are way too different things. We were about a tenth better than he was on a long run but that’s not usually enough to get around someone. So I think we could’ve gotten there and made a race out of it if it had stayed green but I don’t know if we could have beaten him or not. He was pretty good all day.”

(More)

DAY 3 – SUNDAY, AUG. 8, 2004
POST-RACE QUOTES - PAGE 3

KASEY KAHNE (No. 9 Dodge Dealers/UAW Dodge): “I really like this place. I enjoyed it. It was a lot of fun to race all day. I moved around, you can go top or bottom (in the corners). Evernham engines ran awesome, and everything felt good. We just needed a little bit better through the center of the corner.” (Do you think you need the experience here to do well?): “Yeah, I think the experience really helps. Having a great race car like we had today also helps, too. Tommy Baldwin and the whole Dodge Dealers team gave us a great car.” (How much of a boost is it for you to come here and have this type of performance and make a big gain in the points like you did?): “I’m not sure about the gain we made, but hopefully it’s pretty good. It’s a good boost; we had a great car, Dodge Dealers/UAW Dodge was fast. Tommy and the guys made great changes and great pit stops to get us back in there after we had a left front (tire) go down. It kind of destroyed the right side of the car.” (How much anxiety was there knowing that this would go into overtime, so to speak?): “It was a little bit. Junior started there at the end and had to try to hold him off on the outside between (turn) 1 and 2. It actually worked out pretty well for us. So we got a good boost down the backstretch and ended up in fourth.” (How do you feel that you got your first Brickyard 400 under your belt?): “To finally get here and to race in the top five is sure a great day for us. I just wish we wouldn’t have had that tire go down. But that’s racing.”

GREG BIFFLE (No. 16 National Guard Ford): “It was a good run for the National Guard Ford. You know, sixth. I had to come from the back. I started 35th. Long day for us, coming from the back. We fought back, got track position all day, and it was a good run for us. It was a pretty good day. I’ll tell you, it was a little bit tight all day. I wish I could get it to turn a little bit better. But it wasn’t a bad day. I felt bad for Dale Jr. He got a flat tire there at the end. I saw it was flat right before we went back to green. Tough break, but great run for the National Guard car. The guys did a fantastic job in the pits.”

JEFF GREEN (No. 43 General Mills/Boxtops for Education Dodge): “Ordinary Indianapolis. You push up off a corner, and try to make your car turn up off a corner better than everybody else, and traffic makes it worse. We were in the middle of traffic there. Started 14th. Ended 14th. Never really got any better than that. The last set of tires were our best set. We just ran out of time. We had too many cautions there with 10 or 15 laps to go to make any time up. It was a good day for our Cheerios Dodge. Anytime you finish in the top 15, it’s pretty good.”

KYLE PETTY (No. 45 Georgia-Pacific/Brawny Dodge): “I’ll tell you what, my crew worked their butts off all day long. I got in a wreck, and they did a really great job. They got me in and out of the pits. But more importantly, when I got in the wreck, they kept working, they kept hammering, they kept jacking, they kept fixing. They showed that we might be 50th in points. but we’re not a 50th-place team.”

ROBBY GORDON (No. 31 Cingular Wireless Chevrolet): “Disappointed, obviously. We had a really good race car. To come from 20th up to third, we might have had something for them. We’ll never know. (About tire problems): “To get the car to turn, you’re running over these rumble strips, and maybe those little spikes in the rumble strips are cutting tires. I don’t know exactly what the problem is. Goodyear normally makes pretty good tires.”

BOBBY LABONTE (No. 18 Interstate Batteries Chevrolet): “Finished 15th.” (Anything good?): “No, not really. We just didn’t hit the right combination today.”

(More)

DAY 3 – SUNDAY, AUG. 8, 2004
POST-RACE QUOTES - PAGE 4

KEN SCHRADER (No. 49 Schwan's Home Service Dodge): "We started out real bad, and we kept getting the car better and better. We never got it quite where we wanted it. We got it good enough where we could hang on and be up there when something happened to try to take advantage of it. So we wound up 19th, so we'll take it."

DAVE BLANEY (No. 30 America Online Chevrolet): "The car ran great. I couldn't ask for a better-handling race car. The guys did great with it. We just got a penalty on pit road, and we lost a lap, and then had a flat left front and lost a lap, so we were just playing catch up all day. We could never get back up to the front."

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For Immediate Release

**BRICKYARD 400 NASCAR PRESS CONFERENCE
Jimmie Johnson, Kasey Kahne, Jeremy Mayfield
Friday, Aug. 6, 2004**

MODERATOR: We have with us Kasey Kahne who drives the No. 48 UAW Dodge. He was eighth in practice today. He has had four poles this season, six top-fives, seven top-10s and he sits twelve in points. He is 69 out of being 10th place. Kasey, just give us an idea, this is your first time running at Indianapolis Motor Speedway. You seem so comfortable to have run well here and then the differences in IRP versus here.

KASEY KAHNE: You know, this track we came and tested at about three weeks ago, and that definitely helped. I mean, it's really cool to be here and to get to race here finally at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. It's somewhere I always wanted to go, and I've watched a lot of races here. So I've kind of always watched the track and knew a little bit what to expect. Then when you get on it, you can learn a lot more. So I really feel pretty good today. I feel like we're pretty close. We got a little loose there at the end. The front of our car is really good, and the back just slid all over the racetrack. We'll fix that for tomorrow morning and go out 23rd and see if we can't qualify in the top five.

MODERATOR: Your practice run obviously should encourage you somewhat being your first time on the track and the fact you're only 69 points out of being in 10th place. What's your focus going to be tomorrow for qualifying?

KAHNE: Just try to -- to get a Bud Pole here at Indianapolis would be the ultimate goal. We haven't got one in a while, and this would be probably the greatest track to start first on. It would be pretty neat. I think it matters a lot when you go out and if there's a cloud of how the track is at that time, if the sun's really been beating down on the track. So we'll just have to see how it ends up in the morning. I think to go for a pole would be what we have to do.

MODERATOR: I'm going to open it up for questions. Do we have any questions for Kasey? No? No questions? You have a question, sir?

Q: At this point of the season, do you feel like you're racing for that 10th spot or are you racing for first and did that seem odd with the new chase for the Nextel Cup?

(More)

KAHNE: Obviously we can't race for first right now, we're too far behind. But to 10 races, but once we get to those 10 races, if we're in the top 10, then, yeah, we can race for that. It is definitely, it's a little different trying to race for 10th. Actually, I think we're racing, I'm looking all the way to sixth place because that's only 150 points away. If we can run really good, we can end up sixth by the time of the next 10 races, start over and be 14th. You don't know, you just have to -- but definitely run for the top 10 right now.

MODERATOR: Do we have any other questions for Kasey?

Q: Kasey, how far after Homestead did you officially take the job that you have now with Evernham?

KAHNE: Officially it was during the NASCAR banquet a day before that in New York, the Cup banquet there. So that was when it was all official. I don't know the date, middle of December.

MODERATOR: Do we have any more questions for Kasey? No? OK, good job today and good luck tomorrow qualifying, Kasey.

KAHNE: Thanks.

MODERATOR: We'll start with Jeremy Mayfield, also Kasey's teammate. Jeremy was sixth fastest in practice today. Thus far this season he's had one pole, three top fives, eight top 10s, and is 11th in point standings with only 40 points being out of 10th place. And also right behind, as we just mentioned, Kasey is 69 points, so there's a tight race between teammates. He's finished consistently, three straight top-10s over the last three weeks obviously and nine races here, though, he's only finished in the top 10 once. Based on that, what are you going to have to do tomorrow, more so Sunday to have a top-10 finish?

JEREMY MAYFIELD: That's something we've been working on a lot of places just trying to finish not just top 10 but top five. Indy's been weird for me. I've run here good in the past and had good cars, but it seems like something happened, something would break, a wreck in practice or not even be able to run the race. I feel real good about it this time. We had a great test, car handled great and we came back today and unloaded off the truck. So usually when you do that, everything is going our way so far. So we just have to wait and see what happens. But the main thing is we're trying to stay focused on what we've got going on and not let everything around us get to us as far as how well someone else is running; or if we're running bad, we just keep doing what we've been doing and I think we'll be OK, you know, and not get hyped up about – Indy is so big that sometimes you come here overhype yourself and get all stressed out over how big it is and what a prestigious race it is to try to win. We're going to try to treat it like a normal race and do the best we can.

MODERATOR: Do you feel like at this point in the season you're racing for that 10th spot or are you going to race Sunday for a win here? Are you going to play it safe?

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MAYFIELD: We're not going to play it safe. We've come here with everything we've got. I think that's the difference between being 11th or 12th or 13th or whatever in back right now than being in the top 10. If you're sixth, seven, eighth, ninth and 10th, you're probably a little safer than we're going to be. We have nothing to lose really. We've got to run hard, we've got to try to win the race. If we know our car is not capable of winning, you've got to get the best finish you can out of that day. That's our goal and that's our plan, and we'll try to stick to that and not get wrapped up in trying to win the race and mess ourself up.

Q: As you have your logo there, were you surprised to see that Jimmie was fined last week?

MAYFIELD: I know that Mike (Helton) said in the driver's meeting a couple weeks ago, be respectful to the items on the car there in Victory Lane or anything around Victory Lane. I heard that, and I had no idea that it was going to become fines and all that stuff. That's pretty crazy, because if you stop and think about that, you look at the guy in Victory Lane and you see, let's say it's Jimmie, for example, he's got logos on his car and if there's competitive sponsors on top of his car that didn't help him get there, if I was the guy at Lowe's, I'd be mad, too. I'd be pretty pissed off because Victory Lane is all about what got you there, who got you there. It's not fair, let's say for example, the Dodge car would be in Victory Lane and have a Chevrolet emblem on top of it. Chevrolet didn't do nothing to help him get there. That's kind of the same thing I'm looking at there. I'm not sure what their problem was there, what he did. But I can say that maybe we need to stop and look at Victory Lane itself. If a company that's competitive to your sponsor, they shouldn't be on your car anyway; and maybe NASCAR needs to look at that side of it instead of just saying it's OK and let's be respectful. I mean, that's not respectful, either, putting your competitor's product or whatever on top of the car that's in Victory Lane. That's not very respectful in their area.

Q: Jeremy, I guess this thing with the points depends on where you are in the standings. Might not be very rewarding for Jimmie, but can you talk about that and if you could be in charge of NASCAR for a day, what would you do?

MAYFIELD: First of all, if I was in charge of NASCAR for a day -- I don't know if you want to repeat that question --

MODERATOR: He's so excited. The question was referring to the new changes in the points standings. For Jimmie this could be his worst nightmare but for you it could be a dream come true. What would you do if you --

(More)

MAYFIELD: What I would do first of all is give Dodge more downforce, bigger carburetor intake. (Laughter) I guess you'd say if you had to change it, at the beginning of the year when they first came up with this deal, I was like, I was just open-minded about it because we were back in the points, we were 19th last year. So you really don't know how it's going to help or hurt you at that point where we were at. Now that we're going into it, I have to say I like the system, I love it. Yeah, it's bad for Jimmie, but that's part of the deal, you know. For us it's going to be good because what we can -- we're sitting here going, OK, we're on the edge of being in the top 10 and still have a chance to win a championship with 10 races to go. I think that's great for the sport. At the beginning of the year, you didn't hear the hype about all the new points system, we all wanted to know how it was going to work out, I think we all were. Not real for sure how it was going to happen, and now that it's getting down to the wire, it's making it more exciting, and I think the fans are liking it, and more people are talking about it. I think it's great, that's going to be my answer. I'm sure Jimmie will differ a little bit, if he's not already been here. He's probably not liking it. That's what's going to make it exciting, because with 10 to go, you're not going to know who's going to win the championship. I think it's going to be cool for an underdog like myself to come in there running 11th right now, come back and win the championship.

Q: Jeremy, a little bit off the beaten path, I don't know if you've had much of a chance to think about this, but next year Dodge will go to the Charger instead of the Intrepid, what's your thoughts on that? Are you worried?

MAYFIELD: I'm not really worried. I've seen the car. If you see it, you won't be worried either because it looks real good. It's a great race car, something they've been working on for a while. It's not something that just happened overnight. That's the good thing about Dodge I've noticed is how involved they are in motorsports and NASCAR NEXTEL Cup racing, they give us all the support and resources we need, and they're already working on the stuff for the future. That's what's got them so competitive so early in the sport right now when they came back in. The Charger is going to be great, I'm excited about it. It's awesome. It's pretty mean looking. If I was a guy driving anything else but that and look up in the mirror and see this thing, it's going to be pretty cool. We know what our balance numbers needs to be now and about where we need to be aero-wise, and I know that NASCAR is going to help them if they're off any get where it needs to be, too.

Q: Having a muscle car in there.

MAYFIELD: That's what I am excited about, it's not an Intrepid, something that's just a street rod, this is a hot rod and the brand of hot rod, so it's going to be cool for us.

MODERATOR: Just a side note, it's not necessarily a Charger or Intrepid yet, they have not identified the actual name of the car. It is the Dodge, 2005 Dodge.

MAYFIELD: I didn't even know that, so sorry. All I know, it looks mean.

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Q: Two years ago Evernham received a win here, a very hot day. Cooler weather this weekend. Can you use any of the information from two years ago to try and pick up a win here?

MAYFIELD: I think so. I don't know if you use any information from that, but we've built off that. We've been building off that same program for a long time and just keep getting better and better and better and better. We still are back, we're kind of running the same type setup but we've made things a little bit better along the way downforce-wise and drag-wise and all the way. Temperature-wise I think it's going to be great, it's going to be good. It's going to be a different race than you've seen here because of the weather. It's going to be more grip, run more faster, you'll probably see faster qualifying speeds tomorrow. You look at some of it, which is a baseline you had a long time ago that you built off of but I'd say we're going to be pretty far off of that come Sunday.

Q: Jeremy, how much does momentum play week to week? Even if you have a bad week you have another race, but you've got a good streak, bad streak.

MODERATOR: The question is how much does momentum play in your success week in and week out? If you have a bad week, can you come back and do well?

MAYFIELD: I think it's the most important thing anymore in this type of racing is that it's all about people anymore and to keep the morale up and keep the excitement up and enthusiasm up in the shop and around you, that's what it's all about. Every car has good race cars, great teams, great motors, and it's all about the good teams working together through thick and thin. Ray and I kind of struggled the first year, year and a half with our team and each other. We made it through that. That's nothing that was any harder when you're starting over and trying to get that momentum going. Now that we got that going, I don't see it ever going back to where it was. I think it's probably, if I had to say, OK, what's the main thing you need in a NASCAR Nextel Cup team to win races and championships, it's people. Like I said, we've all got the resources and everything else, so that people thing is part of the momentum. When you have a good run, OK, you go back and have another good run, another good run, then when you have the bad run, that's when people come into play, because you don't have any finger pointing. You don't have anybody going I can't do this or whatever. It could take one person to change a whole race team. I think that's how important momentum is. That's what you're talking about and referring to. Once you get on a roll like that, I seen Jeff Gordon get on that a while back, two or three poles in a row and a couple wins and it's just all about getting the thing going. You see the 24 team, they might not run well a couple weeks, they'll come right back and have it again. That's the sign of a good race team.

MODERATOR: Are there any more questions? Good luck on Sunday.

MAYFIELD: You want me to play Jimmie for a while? Chad has got my car messed up and -- no. (Laughter) I would like to thank Home Depot and Dodge. (Laughter)

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MODERATOR: We're joined now by Jimmie Johnson, driver of the No. 48 Lowe's Chevrolet. He's had four wins this season, including last weekend's dominating performance at Pocono. He is leading the points, 232 ahead of his teammate Jeff Gordon.

JIMMIE JOHNSON: I hope that doesn't cost me anything.

MODERATOR: In his two races here he's finished ninth in 2002 and eighteenth in 2003. This time around he was fourth in practice. Basically with your performance here, what are you guys going to have to do on Sunday to obviously crack into the top five or either have a solid top-10 finish?

JOHNSON: I think we've really learned some stuff at Pocono. You know, in the spring race and rule change was made that we had to go back to the drawing board and find something again. We found something obviously real good last week in a different area to find speed in the race car. So bringing that here, very excited, and I think that we're very optimistic on the Lowe's team. To be fourth on the board with only 13 laps on the track this year, we didn't test up here, this is one of the most difficult tracks, I feel, from a driver's standpoint to find your marks. The last two times I've raced here, I had two days of testing prior to the race weekend to sort things out. I still don't feel like I'm doing my job right or sorting out a brand new race car that hasn't been raced all year long with 13 laps on both of us and being fourth on the board, I'm very happy with that. I'd hope, we drew late in qualifying, so it's going to hurt us some, but I think once we get into race practice and get into the race, we're definitely hoping we have a performance like we did at Pocono.

MODERATOR: Thus far this season your team has been consistent at diverse tracks, whether superspeedways, mile tracks, short tracks, it doesn't matter, and despite the conditions you seem to finish consistently. What are you doing to your program so that each week you're pretty much ensured that you're going to have a good finish?

JOHNSON: You know, it's, I think -- I think a lot of that, the changes from the years past and seeing the diversity out of the 48 car has a lot to do with me getting more experience on the smaller tracks and also restrictor-plate races and really at all the tracks in general. I've been fast at tracks with a lot of banking and grip where you can drive aggressive. Over time with more and more experience I think I've been able to understand what I need to do in the car to be faster everywhere. I think our foundation has always been there. You look at Jeff's success, it doesn't matter if it's a road course, superspeedway, Martinsville, Bristol, here. Wherever it is, he's always fast. I think it just takes a little bit of time to hit the rhythm for all the tracks. Now year three, more experience, more time, I've seen the tracks six, seven times now, it's made a big difference.

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Q: Jimmie, former winners here, Dale Jarrett and even Kevin Harvick today are talking about the two Hendrick cars have got everybody covered so much, especially if you can't translate a lot of Pocono to here. Do you and Jeff go in feeling like the clear favorites in this race, the guys to beat? And do you feel you have a psyche advantage over the rest of the guys going in?

MODERATOR: The question is former winners here have said that the two Hendrick cars, yourself and Jeff, are the teams to beat. Do you feel like coming into Sunday's race you have a psychological advantage but also your car is just a better car, do you feel like that?

JOHNSON: We definitely come in high and confident, especially the 48 team after the performance at Pocono. But I think between the 24 and the 48, we have seen our success on the track, and from our team we've noticed that we maybe do have a small advantage mentally on the competition. That's very tough to do, and in most cases it's usually short-lived. So we're hoping we can keep that. The sport is too aggressive and too much changes in a short period of time. In the beginning of the year, I think the 9 car probably had everybody mentally, had an advantage on everyone mentally. You have a new driver on the car, he's knocking down seconds left and right and that was the car we had our eyes on. We've hit our stride, and hopefully we can hang on to it and have a final 10 and get it when it's really important.

Q: Jimmie, I'm sure you've been asked this question a few times, with the points, Jeremy was in here earlier, he's very happy about the system.

MODERATOR: The question is regarding with the new point system, come September after Richmond, obviously the situation is going to change dramatically, whereas with Jeremy it would benefit him and with you it still may or it may not.

JOHNSON: Yeah, I've been pretty vocal about it before the season, throughout the season, especially now I have the points lead. But we are in a great position, and even if it was the old rule system, there's still a lot of racing to be done. In some ways people have given us a lot of credit and say we'll be the champion. But there's a lot of racing left. So with that in mind, looking at the point system, there's a lot of racing left until that final 10, and there's a lot of teams excited about this new point system. For me it's not -- when I watch all the broadcasts now, everything is for the drivers from eighth to 15th. And in any form of sports, I don't think you look at the eighth-place team in NFL and wonder is he going to win the Super Bowl this year or the 15th-place team. So it's something different for me, and I'm not a fan of. It's created a lot of excitement for the fans and lots to talk about. So there are people in favor of it; but for myself, to win a championship in this sport is very tough to do. In the past it was something that was always done over the course of 36 or whatever the number was over the past years, and that's what I've always been a fan of and still am. Then my points situation definitely makes that even more concrete. So to make a long story short, it's what it is, and I've got to race and try to win the championship just like all the other competitors do regardless of the point system and, you know, if it turns out that we don't have our best 10 at the end of the year and we're not the champions, you have a lot to write about. (More)

Q: Jimmie, would you tell us about your relationship with (crew chief) Chad (Knaus) and your relationship and communication and all that that's led to the success?

MODERATOR: The question is, will you comment on your relationship with Chad and that's led to your success so far.

JOHNSON: I think communications and chemistry on a race team is everything. You have a lot of relationships in this garage area. If you counted them all up, you could take the top 20 cars and look at four car owners possibly and that would be the top 20 teams. What makes the teams different, what separates team to team, I personally think it's communication, and it's, you know, it's within the team and how the guys communicate, that connection that you have to do that. Chad and I have been able to really see each other eye to eye. I believe in him; he believes in me. Today he sent me out with a whole new package that he wasn't sure it was going to work entirely like he had dreamed of and was very -- thanked me for believing in him and just giving something off the wall a shot today. You've got to have that confidence in one another, and the communication is everything. It's so cool that I can describe what I feel. I don't have to worry about what he's put being in around me because I believe in him. I just describe what I'm feeling, where I need some help, where the car may not be right and he can visualize what I'm saying and fix it. It's really an amazing deal.

Q: Jimmie, you talk about going on 40th tomorrow, do you worry about being set back by luck of the draw, a place that typically changes as the day gets hotter?

JOHNSON: Yeah, it's definitely going to hurt us. You know, you roll the dice like that. I think the Lowe's Motor Speedway earlier this year, it's another track that's sensitive to the sun, we drew dead last, and it worked in our favor. Here we're going out near last, and it's the opposite because we're starting qualifying first thing in the morning. So sometimes they work for you, sometimes they don't. I wish I had an early draw, but I can't do anything about that. We just worked on getting our car to drive good today in the hot weather so that we can hopefully be in the top 10. Tomorrow our goal is it to be in the top 10 to get a good pit stall down towards Turn 1.

MODERATOR: The question is have you gotten much feedback from your fellow drivers about the fine handed down this week?

JOHNSON: Haven't had a chance to run into everybody yet; a few walking through the garage. I think there's been some chuckling about it and laughing about it. But, you know, it is what it is. I was trying to defend my sponsor and do what I could there. NASCAR had to do what they had to do to honor relationships that they have with people that sponsor them. So I guess we're all doing our job to look good for our sponsors and it's given us something to talk about.

Q: Have you and Ed Scheul talked about a strong chance for you getting in Victory Lane again Sunday, and have you and Ed talked about any sort of strategy?

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MODERATOR: The question is have you talked to Ed Scheul, I'm assuming he's from Gatorade, about your Victory Lane plan if you visit Victory Lane on Sunday?

JOHNSON: No, absolutely not. I haven't been contacted from any of my sponsors to handle Victory Lane in a certain way. What's taking place has just been something that I've decided on my own to do and what I wanted to do to defend my sponsors and not endorse people that are competitors of my sponsors. So from six months ago until today, I have not received a phone call from anyone at Gatorade saying we would like you to do this or that. They appreciate the fact that I look out for them, but there's no one pushing anywhere to do that stuff.

Q: Is there any chance they would pay the fine for you?

JOHNSON: There's been lots of -- many people have offered to help pay that fine. I might make some money on this. (Laughter)

Q: You talked earlier about possibly having a small advantage over the competition, mental advantage. How do you see that or can you further explain that and maybe I guess talk a little more about how Kasey Kahne's mental advantage played on you guys earlier?

MODERATOR: The question is earlier you mentioned having a small mental advantage over the competition. Can you explain that but then if Kasey has a mental advantage as well?

JOHNSON: It's kind of a hard thing to explain. But I'm trying to think back to maybe past champions or people who have been able to win a lot of races. You look at Ryan Newman last year, maybe when he'd qualify, he hits the track and, OK, here comes the 12 and, boom, he does it. We're qualifying for second. And last year he won eight races, so it's like 'Newman won again.' I think Kasey Kahne led us all to think that at the beginning of the year. The guy couldn't stop finishing second and third and just running incredible. So, you know, I think when you're able to put together a stretch of races like that, competitors know that, they see that; and it's not that they don't expect it, but when it happens, like, OK, there's just a small thing there. I really don't even know how to describe it, but there's something little there. But again it's usually short lived. In our sport, you'll race at Talladega one weekend and be at Martinsville the next weekend, and it takes a totally different package, totally different style of driving to do that. So it usually grounds itself from week to week. We've had a few big tracks that have played into one another here that kind of gives us an upper hand coming here. But once qualifying starts, I usually think that whatever mental advantage that did exist is usually gone unless you backed it up and sat on the pole.

Q: You guys had strong runs the last couple years, have you noticed any perceived advantage different now as opposed to other years or do you kind of get the same sense?

MODERATOR: The question is you've had some strong runs over the last few years. Do you notice a perceived advantage now versus other years?

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Q: Is it about the same thing or is it any different?

JOHNSON: I think it's about the same. I think what's different is maybe the duration that we've been able to be on our game as a race team. Where we would hit it every once in a while in the rookie year and last year we had maybe a little longer stretch of it. This year we've been pretty solid from the beginning. So I think that thought, if there is such an advantage does exist maybe, it's been over a longer period of time this year instead of just flashes of it.

Q: Can you recall the story when you were 8 years old going for a motocross championship?

JOHNSON: In my first championship that I won, I broke my knee and had reconstructive knee surgery on my left leg at, of all things, on my eighth birthday. There was I think four or five more races left in the season, and I needed -- the way it worked out after I got home from the doctor's office and everything, there was two races left, and you had a starting point if you started the event. I didn't want to lose my championship, I was upset about that. My dad looked at the points and figured out that if I started the last two events and rode one lap and got the starting point, that I would tie with the other kid in points and then the tie-breaker would then go to the one who won the most races during the season; and I would win it on the tie-breaker. He asked me if I was up for it, and I said absolutely. We went down the street to the local place where we would ride and tried it out one day, built a bracket that held my leg in the cast and everything and let me ride around on the track and figured it out and started the races, the two races. Rode around and did what I needed to do and almost killed my dad from having him chase me around the whole track and won my first championship. I still have that trophy and the pictures.

Q: Jimmie, do you think they can change the schedule? It's essentially a two-day event here, can it be put to better use?

JOHNSON: I think so. I think what changes the schedule here is that only the Cup cars run. If we could bring the Busch cars over and have them run here, also, I think it would be more of a jam-packed day and wouldn't seem to have so many dead spots throughout the weekend. But without any other competitors here, it's tough to stay occupied. We've been sitting around all day doing nothing.

Q: When you look at tomorrow's schedule, I mean 10:10 qualifying and then you've got a 2:00 and 4:00 practice. Wouldn't it make more sense to have a 9:00 practice and 1:00 qualifying and 4:00 practice?

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JOHNSON: Yeah, I think so. I think putting everything on one day for qualifying, even if we come in today and did it. The biggest thing I have trouble with is the racetrack sits all night long, and then tomorrow the first guy goes out without any traffic on the track; and the track is dirty, so the first four or five or six guys are track cleaners. Then on top of that you have such a huge advantage from going at 10:00 versus going out, we'll go 41st at noon, 1:00 or whatever that is. Personally, I would like to see it all in one day or in a little different format so that we didn't have that big dead spot from practice to qualifying. Having to go home and go to sleep -- or go to the bus and go to sleep and kind of forget about today and wake up and everything's on the line with one lap, first lap, first time by tomorrow in qualifying. That's pretty tough.

Q: On that same subject Jimmie, even though it might not work for this big a race at this racetrack, might a Saturday/Sunday format for Cup be a good thing as you try to cut away from this grueling schedule for your everyday rank-and-file racer, would you like to see if you're just running Cup, you come in and practice and qualify on Saturday and race on Sunday and that's it, would it help the week for everybody?

JOHNSON: Yeah, I think any day at home would help. The thing that probably a lot of us don't factor in would be the amount of time we're here at the track and the days the track is open. So I think there's some other issues with putting people in the stands and stuff like that that probably keeps that decision from taking place. Here we come to one of the biggest races of the year and have a short schedule and you don't have all the hype and buildup, it probably wouldn't work here. You need to have it drawn out to a point and have a lot of excitement around it because it's the Brickyard. I think they could do it in a better way and even bring the Busch cars over, I think would help us a lot to make the days go by. I'm in favor of any more days home. Even if it's one, it doesn't matter.

Q: Other tracks and/or lesser races?

JOHNSON: Any days home. An extra day home, I wouldn't know what to do with myself. It would be awesome.

Q: Jimmie, can you make a comment on racing a four-time champion and also your car owner for this year's championship?

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JOHNSON: I've got a lot of views on it. First of all, it's great for motorsports to have two cars competing for a championship. Rick (Hendrick) would really like to have all four cars competing but to have two this year is a huge accomplishment and says a lot for the organization. You know, another way I look at it is in order to be the best you have to beat the best. So I want to race against these guys and the best in the business. If I am able to win a championship, I want to beat them when they all have a great year and it's a great dogfight to the end. You know, both cars being assembled in the same shop, it's really hard for the 24 to have an advantage on the 48 or vice versa. I mean you have the same guys assembling the cars, open notebook on setup. So it's really tough to find an advantage over the 24 and same for Jeff over me. You look at different situations, and there's some that really equalize us, there's others that are very cool and respectful. I mean, it's just a mixed bag. It's hard to really nail it. But I think at the end of the day I'm happy for Rick to have two cars competing for the championship. If it does come down to it and I have to race my teammate, I think that would be the best situation possible. I know I'm going to be racing with someone that I can trust, be door to door with, and put on a good show and not be in a situation to be wrecked or taken out in order for somebody to win that championship. So we've got a lot of racing to get to that point before that would play out. But if it does get to that scenario, I think it may be a problem, but it's a good one.

MODERATOR: Good luck qualifying tomorrow. Thank you.

JOHNSON: Thank you.

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BRICKYARD 400 POST-QUALIFYING PRESS CONFERENCE

Casey Mears, Chip Ganassi

Saturday, Aug. 7, 2004

MODERATOR: Now we're joined by our man on the pole, man of the hour, certainly continuing a great Mears tradition here at Indianapolis Motor Speedway, Casey Mears in the No. 41 Target Dodge who set a track record, shattered a track record, incredible run, 186.293 miles per hour. Just the other drivers that have been in here were congratulating you. They were seemingly equally impressed and stunned. What an incredible qualifying effort. Why don't you take us through it?

CASEY MEARS: Thank you. I mean, we knew we had a really good car in practice and a shot at the pole. But when those guys started running those real fast times right out of the gate, Dale Earnhardt Jr., put a pretty good number on the board, I'm went, "We're going to have to step up to the plate here." The guys did an awesome job. We never changed one thing on the car from the time we unloaded it. All we did was wipe it down, put tape on it, go qualify with new tires. Real proud of the guys and Jimmy Elledge for making that call to take the same setup we in Pocono and just bring it here. As far as the lap goes, you know, I knew I put in a good lap yesterday, but I felt like I gave some up in certain areas. I knew we were going to have to be at the top of our game and hit all the marks I possibly could. Went into Turn 1, the thing got a little bit loose, got back on the gas hard, come off of turn one good, but I was a little worried because on new tires, if it gets loose like that, you're worried the next corner it's going to be even looser. A little bit timid in turn two, just a little bit, more than I wanted to be. But got through Turn 2 really well, that gave me the confidence to go ahead and just bury it on into Turn 3. Turn 3 just went off. I mean, about the time I got out of the gas, as soon as I turned to get in the corner, I was back wide open, barely cracked the throttle for Turn 4. Just come off the floor just enough to get the nose to cut. And I knew if I come off of Turn 4 good, we had a really good shot at it, and we did. So it was pretty awesome.

MODERATOR: Two weeks in a row on the pole, Pocono. This has to be just for you and your team such a pump to have these kind of weeks going on in a row like this.

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Q: It's huge. You know, I mean, last year was such a struggle. I said it a million times. But really it was. I was just so green as a race car driver, as far as driving goes in general and stock cars, you know. I mean, in Indy cars, I just didn't get the seat time that you do over here, running 36, 38 races a year. Running all those races I did last year, running the Busch races really attributed a lot to that. And we're really chipping away at it now. You know, I mean, this year I was able to take a lot of experience and go, OK, now, what was good, what was bad, and start applying it to this year. And it just keeps getting better all the time. You know, we took the same setup we had there at Pocono, brought it here, and it worked great.

MODERATOR: We've been joined by Chip Ganassi, who will also want to remark on that qualifying effort and the way the team has come together. You were talking to your Uncle Rick for a few moments before coming in here. What sort of advice with Uncle Rick Mears have to say for you?

MEARS: You know, just like Rick does, he said just be patient, you know, do the best you can in this Happy Hour to get things right. And then, you know, if things aren't right right off the bat, just remember it's a long race and get your car right, think about where the track is going. That's a big thing here. This track changes a lot. If you continue this track and make the right adjustments for that last pit stop at be good at the end, it's going to be big. He said be patient, be smart, try to make the right calls in getting the car right.

MODERATOR: Chip, can you talk about this pole effort for Casey?

CHIP GANASSI: Well, obviously, you know, we had -- we've been working very hard. One of the mantras in our team is to have all three cars -- we try to prepare all three cars equally. You know, that's good when things are good and bad when things are bad. We were lucky, we were fortunate last week, I should say, we had all three cars in the top 10. Again, this week now all three cars in the top 10. But, boy, if I had to pick one guy to have to qualify, I'd pick this guy right on my right here. I mean, he's the guy that can qualify. You know, it's just -- it's very nice to be a part of the Mears legacy here at Indianapolis and keep that alive and keep it growing. I'm sure this is -- you know, as you know, Casey and I embarked on this NASCAR project a year or two ago, and it's been a good process. It's been a learning, stepping-stone kind of thing. This is just another step along the way. I like this kid and I hope he's driving with us for a long time.

MEARS: The first I saw -- one thing on that, the first stock car I ever drove, period, was a car for Chip. We went and tested like in 2000, 2001. That was the first opportunity that I ever got in a stock car. And it's kind of cool that we're together today and doing so well.

GANASSI: Yeah.

MODERATOR: We'll open it up to questions now.

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Q: A lot was made, Casey, about the time of day for qualifying. The early runners were supposed to have the advantage. You went out like 25th. Could you tell much difference? Is there any way to compare what happened today?

MEARS: The track was a little bit slick, but it was actually pretty close to the same temperature that we practiced in yesterday. So when I go to qualify, I kind of -- if you -- historically, if you go out first here, it's the best time to go out. The later you go, the worse it gets. If you kind of put that in your mind, you're giving yourself an excuse right off the bat. You know, so I just went out there and acted like, hey, this track is going to have all the best grip in the world, it's going to be the best track out there, just go out there and try to put the best lap I can in. If you do that, nine times out of 10 sometimes you can pull something out. It worked out pretty good.

Q: Were you following the track temperatures up till the time you qualified?

MEARS: I really wasn't. I wasn't following it, but I overheard Elledge talking to somebody and saying that the temperature was, you know, right about where it was in practice or maybe even a little bit cooler. So just hearing that it was a little bit cooler gave me even more confidence to go ahead and stay on the gas.

Q: Can you talk about standing behind him when you were going to go this way or that way, Chip? You said, "No, let's see it through." Then to see him after making that decision be so successful the last couple of weeks, what does that feel like?

GANASSI: Well, you know, I remember they used to say that a guy has to drive a hundred stock car races before you can tell what kind of driver he is. We're not even close to that yet. I you know, I think -- obviously we still have a lot to learn. And, you know, this business is not only about driving ability, you know, and it's not only about the team, it's about personalities and people and who you like to work with, who you get on with. That's the nice thing about Casey's and our relationship. So, I mean, you know, I've known Casey since he was probably knee-high, so it's nice to be able, from an owner point of view, provide him with a vehicle, you know, to help his career along. It's great, believe me. His father and I used to race against each other. His uncle and I. So it's nice.

MODERATOR: You might want to be getting more of your drivers on soap operas.

GANASSI: We were looking back, trying to figure out what the turning point was. Yes, that was probably it, the soap opera debut.

MEARS: I hope I don't have to do much of them things.

Q: Casey, I've heard there is a little bit of Mears family history at this place. Is that a cool thing? Is that pressure? How do you take that?

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MEARS: Yeah, I don't look at it so much as pressure, as just kind of an excitement, you know. I mean, it's exciting come back to a place that has a lot of family heritage. I'm sure there are a lot of people that look at it, well, you know, his uncle was successful here in the past, he should be successful. I think for the most part, people are realistic and they know that I'm a young guy growing up just like everybody else, trying to learn just like everybody else. Fortunately I have a strong family background in racing, and I was able to learn some things early. But I think it's just awesome, you know, to be able to come to a place where you're so well received before you even do well. Just the fans, just because my uncle has done well here, the fans are on your side, a lot of guys are on your side just coming to this track. It's neat to not only give us a good run, but to give the Speedway a good run and all the fans and everybody that has supported my family for so long. It's really cool.

Q: Chip, you've had such success in open-wheel. Now you have such success in NASCAR. Is it you or is it the people that you surround yourself with?

GANASSI: It's certainly the people I surround myself with. We have a lot to learn here in NASCAR yet, I can assure you. I've just been lucky to work with great people over the years.

Q: I was going to say, are you really that good? I thought that might sound argumentative.

GANASSI: My mother may think so, but...

Q: You said that third turn was awesome. Describe what "awesome" is in the third turn?

MEARS: Turn 3 is probably the fastest corner on the track, and the corner that has the most grip. It was just one of those corners where I didn't hesitate. You know, when you go into the corner and you get on the brakes as late as you possibly can, as soon as you get off the brakes, if you let it roll at all, you're hesitating. As soon as I got off the brake, I was back on the gas, and the car stuck, you know, all the way out at the wall when I entered and all the way out at the wall when you come off. That's what makes a good qualifying run. If you almost hit all four walls and you didn't, you missed, you put in a pretty good lap (laughter).

Q: Casey, aside from your extracurricular activities, is there a point this season when you knew, before you had two poles in a very short period of time, is there a point that you knew you could run for poles? Any changes on the team or your attitude?

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MEARS: You know what, I think early on, early on this year, you know, right out of the gate, things felt better. You know, the engine program really stepped up. The cars are good. Jimmy Elledge and I worked a lot together, but were missing each other, going by each other left and right. We were trying to get the car right. That just comes from my totally different experience compared to what he's got. It was nice to do everything that we did last year, have the offseason, the talk, become awesome friends. I mean, we're really, really good friends. And I think that our communication has really helped us out this year. He knows my big and my small. If I say big, he thinks it's four rounds, when I really mean 10, that's what it takes. And it just takes time to learn that. I think that's a lot of our success. You got these short practice sessions, you got to utilize the time well, and you can't be making wrong adjustments and wasting time. So that was a big deal. And I think that early on, right at the beginning of the year, we noticed that our communication was a lot better. You know, last year we were like, "Man, you know, we got the speed, it's just a matter of hitting it right. If we can just hit it right, we know we can set on poles." This year we started hitting it right.

Q: You talked about how awesome "awesome" was, but you also seemed to say that Turn 2 was the critical area for this lap. How timid or what was timid in Turn 2?

MEARS: It wasn't a lot. You know, obviously couldn't be a whole lot. But I have expectations of what my perfect lap's going to be. You know, you picture that in your head. You say, if I got a perfect lap, I get out of it here, get on it here. I just got into it just a tick later than I wanted to, and the car stuck. Turn 2 was the only corner that I didn't almost hit the wall coming off. You just go, "Gosh dang it." Barely made it, then you just feel like you didn't get everything out of that corner. Out of all four corners, that was the one I felt like I might have just missed a tick. But we made up for it at the other end.

Q: How are you feeling inside about getting this pole? Are you humbled by it? You probably haven't really soaked it in. Where you were out on the grid, "So much could go wrong." Now you're sitting up at the podium at Indianapolis Motor Speedway as the polesitter for the race. How does that feel?

MEARS: It's just crazy. You know, I mean, I don't even know yet. I'm just giving you guys the best answers I can (laughter). I don't know. What really set it home was when you walk up to go do your pole pictures and you got grandpa and your dad and brother there, you know. That's cool.

Q: Chip, when you got into this, some of us were kind of surprised that you went this way. Did you ever drive a stock car competitively, even sports cars maybe?

GANASSI: Sports cars, yes.

Q: You did have some fenders?

GANASSI: But nothing like these.

(More)

Page 6 ... Mears-Ganassi transcript (Aug. 7)

Q: Nothing like these?

GANASSI: No.

Q: Casey, what are your recollections of Rick's wins here?

MEARS: Well, really the one that stands out most is the last one, that's when I was probably the oldest to remember the most about it, and I think the most impressive. You know, I mean, I know his first win, even Rick said himself, he didn't really feel like he appreciated it that much. It was only like his second year here. It was just another racetrack for him. He just did the best job he could and won the race. The last race I think is special just because, you know, he had matured a lot as a driver, obviously won a bunch of championships, knew what it took to win the race, knew the significance of winning the race, and the way that he did it. You know, it was just unreal, passing on the outside going into (Turn) 1. Then Michael (Andretti) passed him I think it was on a restart. When Rick passed him back, they were going at full speed. I'll never forget getting the chills, watching the right rear tire lay a big black streak around both corners. It was pretty cool.

Q: You talked about communication before. Again, with these performances, your confidence level has to be up. How soon can we expect a win?

MEARS: I expect a win Sunday. I mean, we got the equipment to do it. We just got to do everything right. You know, these NEXTEL Cup races are like a puzzle. You got to put all the right pieces in the right places at the right time. You know, it's not only being fast, you know, it's having good pit stops. Myself as a driver, getting in and out of the pits right, staying out of the crashes, not pitting in the caution coming out. There's just so many variables that can keep you from winning the race that you got to have all those things on your side and you got to drive to try to make all these things happen on your side and the team's got to make the right calls. There's two million things that go into a race win, but I know that we got the team, we got the cars, we got the motors to do it. You know, we just got to put all the pieces of the puzzle in the right places.

Q: Casey, it's a 400-mile race. What are your plans when the green flag drops tomorrow?

MEARS: To lead. To lead. You know, I mean, I want --

GANASSI: Clean air is your friend.

Q: Chip, what would it mean to you as a NEXTEL car owner to kiss those bricks on Sunday?

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MEARS: Yeah, absolutely. This place really, this place and Pocono are two of the biggest places where clean air is just enormous. With these cars now have become so aero dependent, if you can get out and get clean air on the front end of the car, you can run 4, 5/10ths faster than second place. So if I can get out and lead, you know, lead the first few laps, you know, evaluate our car, see where we need to be, that's my plan.

GANASSI: Well, it would obviously be the biggest win of our stock-car career, I guess, our NASCAR career. I mean, I think, you know, what could you say? I mean, I'd love to kiss the bricks in August here.

Q: Is it a hunger?

GANASSI: I think, you know, when you're in racing as long as I have been, I don't know how to explain the feeling, I just know that I like it when we win, you know (laughter). I'm not the greatest with a lot of words at times about how to put things in perspective, but I can tell you I like the feeling. That's why we're involved in all facets of racing. I enjoy winning. I enjoy the competition. I enjoy the fellowship. That's why I'm here. We're here to win.

Q: How are you going to celebrate tonight? Are you going to have a family dinner, team get-together, just sit and think about the race? What will you do tonight?

MEARS: I don't know. I think the pole's more gratifying than something to really, really celebrate. You know what I mean? I think a race win is something to celebrate. We'll probably get back tonight, I mean, just having my family here is awesome. I think we'll just hang out. I use that word a lot. But I think grandma and grandpa are here, probably just hang out at the motorhome, barbecue a bit, reflect on the day, try to get some good sleep for tomorrow.

GANASSI: Same. It's gratifying for the team. You know, so much of this business is momentum and confidence and it just puts another feather in the team's hat, you know, that they can build upon.

Q: Chip, back in the early '80s when you came here as the Indy-car driver, Mears was setting the records then. Did you ever dream even that this occurrence would --

GANASSI: You don't even think about that. I mean, in those days, you know, I was just trying to catch up to Rick. You know, he set the bar, and he set it pretty high, I can tell you. You know, between he and Roger, you know, they set the pace back in those days. That was who you wanted to be like, whether it was as a driver, you know, in later years as an owner. That's what you wanted to be.

MODERATOR: Congratulations to our polesitter for the Brickyard 400.

MEARS: Thank you, guys.

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BRICKYARD 400 POST-QUALIFYING PRESS CONFERENCE

Elliott Sadler, Ward Burton, Brian Vickers

Saturday, Aug. 7, 2004

ELLIOTT SADLER: We've had some little problems here, there, but we've been very consistently around the top 12 or 13 every single week. That's how you build on a championship-type team. Todd is just absolutely amazing. He's got this team working so hard. Every time we get to the racetrack on Fridays, we're just so fast and it's so much fun to drive for these guys. M&M's have been so supportive. Robert and Doug in the engine shop working their butts off. Man, it's just been great. I'm living the time of my life right now, just having a good time with each other. My pit crew is leading the McDonald's Pit Crew Challenge. We got a lot of good stuff going on. We're still under everybody's radar. It's been a lot of fun, which has taken a lot of pressure off us. We're just doing the job we think we needed to. We just want to be in that final 10. When we get to that point, it's pretty much take the gloves off and let's go after it.

MODERATOR: You won't be under the radar much longer you make that chase for the NEXTEL Cup. If you're in the Top 10, there will be a lot of media exposure. Questions for Elliott Sadler.

Q: You're sixth in points currently. To what extent, this being the Brickyard 400, would you be willing to risk that position for a win tomorrow?

SADLER: I'm probably the worst points race there is. I really pay attention to it a lot. Every Sunday night, Monday morning after the race, I know exactly how many points I'm ahead of the next guy, how many I'm behind the next guy, how many positions I need to finish in front of him. I do all the math. I'm bored on Monday so I got to do a lot of math to figure out what's going on. This weekend I could care less about points. We came to kiss the bricks. That's pretty much our motto this week. When we built this car, we built it for this race, for this racetrack, Todd did. He's won a couple times here with DJ. Points, just no matter. We're going to turn the motor, whatever RPM we feel we need to turn to be competitive. We're going to put whatever setup in the car we need to be competitive. Points, we'll worry about them Monday, for next week for Watkins Glen. This week, this race is so prestigious to so many different sponsors and teams, there's so much history here at this racetrack and with the George family, we want to try to win this race no matter what it takes.

Q: How did you do in the golf tournament yesterday morning?

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SADLER: I had a great week so far at Indy. I was able to win the golf tournament yesterday morning that the speedway put on, and then to qualify third for the race. Things are going good. So I kind of might stay in Indy for a little while if things keep going this way. It's the first time I actually got to play the golf course. I got to play it Thursday, and I got to play it again yesterday for the shootout. We were able to win. I got to play with Darren Manning, who drives on the IRL circuit. He's a great guy. I definitely got a new friend and a new person to pull for in the IRL series. I definitely enjoyed playing golf with him yesterday. We had a good time. It's been fun.

Q: Bobby Labonte was also talking about staying underneath the radar. What are the benefits of staying under the radar in the points chase? What would be the benefit of that?

SADLER: Just no pressure, really. I mean, just the only pressure on our race team is put on by ourself, not really the media or anything like that. Y'all are so busy talking about the same two cars all year long, we're just kind of hanging out, racing, and doing what we need to do. I think it's fun. We just working hard. My guys, makes us more determined to be a factor in every race that we go to. It's been good. I got the best crew chief in the world as far as being competitive and keeping our guys fired up and on the same page. Before Casey Mears ran today and sat on the pole, I thought it would be funny, the two slowest-talking guys from Virginia would be on the front row today. I thought that would have been cool. Good job.

Q: Talk about that, two guys from a small Virginia town making great racing history. The whole aspect of two gentlemen from the fine state of Virginia, small towns, steeped in racing tradition here at Indy, arguably the greatest racetrack in America.

SADLER: Yeah, I think it's great. I mean, Ward and I grew up pretty much about 40 minutes apart. We both kind of cut our teeth at South Boston Speedway, Orange County, late-model stock cars, kind of knew the same people growing up. I think we learned a lot racing at those tracks. South Boston was probably one of the toughest places to race. Instead of running 25- and 50-lap features, we were running 150- and 200-lap features. You had to learn to drive your car on old tires. A lot of great drivers have come from that area. I remember watching Ward drive the 12 car there many times, going to watch those guys race. It's just a great area to come from. Him and his brother, Ricky, people like Ricky Rudd have definitely set a great path for Virginia drivers to come up through. A guy last night in the truck race made his first truck race debut, Denny Hamlin's from that same area. I think he's going to be another one to look out for. We got some great drivers in that area. They kind of following the lead of Ward and Jeff and Ricky. It's been cool to really come up through that part of the country.

MODERATOR: Before Ward answers that question, in the NetZero Hi Speed Chevrolet qualified second with 185.391. Fantastic effort. Why don't you address that, coming from South Virginia, being here at Indy, what this means to you to qualify so well, No. 2.

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WARD BURTON: It means a lot. Comes at a good time for all of us with the NetZero team. We're trying to, you know, build for the future. We made some changes in the last couple weeks that's definitely getting the light brighter at the end of the tunnel. This is another, you know, example of that. But back home, you know, most of all of us live in the Charlotte area. Elliott and I have both chose to stay where our heritage and our roots feel true to ourselves. I'm not going ever to say "never," because the older you get, you learn not to do that. But the chances of me leaving, leaving old Virginia, are very slim. I think Elliott's the same way. It is fun to be able to see, you know, even though I'm a little bit older than Elliott, you know, our parents have made a big difference in our lives as well as a lot of other people to get us to this point. We didn't do this on our own. There's a lot of talented people out there, but you got to be around people that support you and help you. You also got to be around racetracks that you learn from some of the best. My heroes were the Barry Begleys and Maurice Hills of the world. They were guys, when I came to Winston Cup, at that time I looked up to the Dale Srs. in the world. I had the same folks back home, I'm sure Elliott did too. It means a lot to see Elliott and his brother and other folks that come from that area and do well.

MODERATOR: The only tradition that got you today was the Mears family tradition.

SADLER: The Mears family has done a great job here at Indy.

BURTON: He did. He kicked it good. Kicked me by 2/10ths. He was on a roll last week, too. So I think it's two poles in a row for him. The two tracks, I guess, are a little bit similar. But Casey is a good guy. Casey is one of the guys that's going to be in this sport for a long time. He's a good kid. I'm glad for him.

Q: Are you still living in Virginia?

SADLER: I still live in Virginia. I have an apartment or whatever in Charlotte. I still live in Virginia. I love being around my family. I love being around where I was raised at. Kind of the same reasons Ward does, we both like the outdoors so much. We're both pretty much outdoorsmen, do a lot of hunting and fishing and stuff in the wintertime, in our time off. Can't really do that in downtown Charlotte. I love my family a lot. I love being around my mom and dad. I love being with my brother and my sister, and my four nieces mean more to me than anything. If I live in Charlotte, that's time I can't speed spend with them in Virginia.

Q: Obviously, starting up front here is important, this is a track-position track. Are there guys, as you look at the lineup, guys towards the back, that you're concerned about seeing working their way through?

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SADLER: Yeah, I mean, track position is very important. Track position is the No. 1 thing to help you win a race. There's no better way to start that on Friday or on qualifying day any weekend. We don't have to really take the chances on pit strategy some of the other guys might have to take to try to get ourselves up to the front because we're ready there. The 9 and 19 are running good last few races. The 48 and the 24, no matter where those guys are, the 17, no matter where he starts at, the 97, those guys are coming to the front. Some guys are going to use different types of pit strategy, probably two tires their first stop, things like that, to try to get track position. You are going to have the same old guys running up front that you had I think last week. Hopefully we'll just be one of them to kind of be consistent, stay up front, see what happens.

Q: Ward, who are you looking for?

BURTON: Shoot, there's 42 of them other than us two (laughter). You got to look for a whole lot of different things. I think the other thing y'all know, too, the qualifying setup and race setup are a little bit two different animals. Even though some of the qualifying setup we have on the car today, we will use like a shock absorber, we are going to have a work a lot on the cars coming up here the next hour or so. It could change a lot of things. Guy that's starting dead last or close to it could be the car to beat come tomorrow. We just got to work hard today.

MODERATOR: Elliott, congratulations. Another solid showing. We'll see you tomorrow. Ward, why don't you take us through your qualifying effort. Obviously, you had the benefit of starting early on. That seemed to be beneficial. Take us through your qualifying run. Did you sense at that time not only it was going to be good enough to be No. 2 but also breaking the track record?

BURTON: You know, yesterday in practice, we had some shocks on the car that made the car pick up a bounce in the middle of the corner. That bounce would send me up the track. So we changed our package with the shocks. That's really what picked our car up because that's about the only thing we changed. Getting up to speed was good. Going through one, two, three was pretty much uneventful. Was able to drive in pretty deep, get on the gas pretty quick. Car was real stable. Got into four and picked up a push and did the same way yesterday. I don't think I lost two and a half tenths to Casey off that corner, but I did lose a little bit off that corner. It looked like to me from the film, Casey was in the gas just a little bit harder all the way around the racetrack than the rest of us. That's where he beat us at.

MODERATOR: You were speaking earlier when you first walked in about what this means to your team to be qualified up here, maybe get the momentum going over the rest of the course of the season. Obviously, I assume that this must be a real confidence booster also for your crew, for your team, to be starting in the No. 2 spot for the Brickyard 400.

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BURTON: It is. You know, we made some pretty significant personnel changes three weeks ago. Respect and feel like even the people that are no longer with us add a lot to our team, and we lost some when we made changes. At the same time the direction that we're going now, we're using all of the available resources. The sport has changed so much in the last really three years that if you don't use all your resources, and if you don't have an open mind and are willing to listen and learn and whatever position you are, you're going to fall behind. The sport has changed so much that we're seeing even experience in some ways is not as important as it used to be because the cars are so important and the attitude of the cars and having the right support group, which is allowing basically someone like a Casey Mears to come in from nowhere a year ago and sit on two poles in a row. We didn't see that three or four years ago. So the changing of the guard, not really the changing, but as the sport is evolving, it's going through some changes, and it's going on right in front of us. I got to add one thing. There's two words out there this week called "hot seat" that I been on all week. Of course, I wouldn't even know about it if it hadn't been for my wife. But it's amazing to me sometimes the ability that y'all have and the job that y'all have to make things look negative or positive. There's a lot of y'all out there that we, being in the limelight, trust, OK? When that trust is discarded, when that trust is - what's the right word for it? - violated, it really makes the relationship between the media and the ones that you're interviewing questionable, whether you're going to get an honest answer. You know, I'm not going to bring up the individual's name, but you don't want to lose that trust because we all have a job to do. And you don't want to create a story just for the hell of creating a story. And I'm not going to sit here and say that I'm an angel in any way, but I do know that I'm someone that you can trust, and I think we need to be able to trust y'all, too.

MODERATOR: With that, Ward Burton, thank you.

MODERATOR: Now joining us, the highest qualifying rookie, Raybestos Rookie in the Brickyard 400. Qualified in the No. 6 position, Brian Vickers in the No. 25 GMAC Chevrolet. Not only qualified at 184.665, but he was one of the six drivers who broke the track record. Congratulations on not only being amongst those who broke last year's track record but also qualifying top six, top rookie. Take us through your qualifying.

BRIAN VICKERS: Yeah, I appreciate it. The GMAC Chevy team, all the guys did a good job all week throughout testing. We had a really good car. We entered practice a little tight - actually real tight. We made a lot of changes to help fix that. We got most of it fixed, but we were still just a little too tight to sit on the pole for the Indianapolis 400, Brickyard 400. But it was, you know, it was still a solid run for us. To come out and be the top Raybestos Rookie qualifier is really a pretty cool honor, especially here at Indianapolis. It's a neat track. It has a lot of history to it. You know, I've had a blast coming up here and being out there on the speedway and everything. It's one of those deals where it's so much that it's not really even going to hit you till the week after, I think.

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MODERATOR: Obviously, coming into a track like this, you want to make a good impression, you want your sponsors to be excited. But did you think you were going to be able to put a track record qualifying effort together? Also, starting where you did, when you did qualify, early cars in the qualifying realm had a bit of an advantage. Did you still feel that you guys were going to be able to put out that kind of performance this morning?

VICKERS: Yeah, you know, the team has really done a good job from the very start with qualifying. They've done a good job with -- you know, we've gotten better as the year's gone on and everything, not just qualifying, but also in the race trim. I knew we had a shot at it. You know, I felt like we even had a shot at the pole if everything went right, if we had a good draw, and the situation was right, and the car was just right. And, you know, everything was pretty close, but not just enough. You know, I think in every little category, we missed just a little bit. But that's part of it. You know, we'll learn from it, we'll come back next time. But still we're very happy with a top-10 start. It will be good for the race and, you know, give us a good pit box as well along with a lot of other things.

MODERATOR: Even qualified ahead of a couple teammates named Gordon and Johnson, which is pretty cool, too. Questions for Brian Vickers.

Q: Funny you should ask about Gordon and Johnson because they both wanted a top 10. Both said out on the grid that they were both hoping for a top 10. You beat both of them. When you look at that, what are your thoughts? They said you felt like a kid in a candy store just being here this weekend, now here you beat both of them. Gordon of course is so good here. What do you think about that?

VICKERS: It's a pretty neat experience, you know, to be here. And I have been like a kid in the candy store, to be here, period. I came here so many times, whether it be for, you know, NASCAR stuff, IndyCar, Formula One stuff. I've always had a lot of respect for the racetrack, and also for my teammates, as well. To beat them in qualifying is always a lot of fun. You know, I look at my teammates like brothers. You know, you help each other. I help them and they help me in any way possible. But at the end of the day, you know, we still want to beat each other. You know, it means a lot. You know, Jeff is obviously one of the best drivers out there - if not the best on the circuit right now. You know, he's obviously probably the best at this track, you know, if you look back at track record. So that's pretty neat. Now we just got to do it again on Sunday.

Q: Brian, typically Atlanta Motor Speedway is considered the fastest track on the circuit. This looked, if not as fast, faster today. Describe what it's like to go that fast around a track that doesn't have the banking to really help you like Atlanta.

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VICKERS: It's a neat experience. You know, to go -- to be traveling that fast, period, it's something that not many people will have the opportunity to do. You know, I'm fortunate to be able to do it every weekend. I love it. This track, you know, to do it here I think is even more impressive because of how flat the racetrack is. It's amazing how much banking helps our cars. You know, an Indy car is different. They've got so much downforce already. We need all the help we can get. Plus like Atlanta, Texas, with a lot of banking, makes a tremendous difference. To be able to come here and run as fast as we do is pretty neat. And today I think you really saw, you know, the track conditions were great and the cars, the teams in general, are just getting better and better every week and every year. And that's why the speeds keep going up. But like you said, for this track to be as flat as it is, to go that fast off into a turn, it's a pretty neat experience.

Q: Being a rookie here the first year and running at this race, as big as it is, as much attrition as you see in this event, what is your strategy for this thing? Do you pick a driver like a Jeff Gordon, Jimmie Johnson, set behind them, get a feel for the track, get your pace going? What do you do for this race?

VICKERS: You know, it's probably not much different than most races. You know, there's some situations where you want to fall in behind a veteran driver and try to, you know, learn a lot. And I think that's always the case to a point. But at a place like this, you can't ride behind somebody too close for very long or you're going to get extremely tight, and then you're going to start going backward. When you get to them, you got to pass them or you got to let them get some distance on them so you can get some good air on your car or you will eventually build up too much air pressure in the right front tire and cause problems. I think right now our focus is on practice, to get the car the best we can, and to get it turning good, to get it turning good in traffic, and then to getting clear air come Sunday, get to the front as soon as possible, at least maintain where we are until the pit stops. You know, I think we saw it last week at Pocono, you know, just track position means a lot. It always does no matter what series or what form of racing you're in, and no matter what track you are. I think track position always means a lot. But at this track in particular, it's going to mean that much more.

MODERATOR: Congratulations. Excellent effort.

VICKERS: Thank you.

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BRICKYARD 400 POST-RACE PRESS CONFERENCE

Dale Jarrett, Elliott Sadler, Kasey Kahne

Sunday, Aug. 8, 2004

MODERATOR: We're joined in the trackside conference room by Elliott Sadler, driver of the No. 38 M&M's, and we're also joined by Dale Jarrett, driver of the No. 88 Ford. Give us an idea of your race from the driver's seat, what it was like for you both today. Racing against a teammate is something than just racing against another competitor.

ELLIOTT SADLER: I had a great race car all day long. Probably the most fun I've ever had for 400 miles. I think the worse we ran all day was fifth. I got a little loose on one set of tires, kind of lost some track position, then we come on back up through the front there at the end. Just a little bit tight behind my teammate here. As far as the day goes for points and for a team effort in the shop, that shows you how hard Robert Yates Racing has been working. We only got beat by one little car today. I do congratulate Jeff Gordon on his fourth Brickyard. For us two to run as good as we did, to be able to compete like that for second and third, we've come a long way in the last 12 months, you could say. Our race teams are poised. Both of us want to be in the top 10. I think this is a great way to start going in that direction.

DALE JARRETT: Yeah, our day was good from the start, too. We actually -- my car started off a little bit loose. It actually was probably working to our advantage as the track tightened up a little bit. But we probably didn't -- we kept adjusting, but seemed that after we'd run 20, 25 laps, I started losing a little bit of time through the center of the corner. I wasn't as good on restarts. My car just wouldn't hook up the front tires. I was probably holding Elliott up. I know I was holding him up there at the end. He could have probably given Jeff a little better run on fresher tires. But I was hoping we wouldn't have that last caution because it seemed that after we ran about two laps, I started going back toward Jeff a little bit. I was really getting off of (Turns) 2 and 4, and it looked like I could gain on him a little. But getting to him and past him would have been something totally different. He had the best car looked like all day. Very proud of what Robert Yates Racing has done here today. These are the type days we've been working extremely hard for. A good points day for us. I have no idea where anybody else finished, but I know they didn't finish in front of us, other than that one car, so I know we had to gain some points. I know it was a good day.

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MODERATOR: Dale, for you to finish second, Elliott to finish third, the level of intensity that you drive against each other, is that the same as if you were driving against Jeff Gordon or Ryan Newman? Do you guys race as hard with each other or against each other?

JARRETT: Yeah, I raced him pretty hard. He was probably kind to me there at the end. He had a couple of shots that past me and I blocked him, just trying to go. But, you know, I think we race each other hard, and that's what Robert has always told us, since I've been here, since 1995. We race each other hard, but certainly we're not going to do anything crazy. But, you know, we also have an understanding, you know, during the race, I think you seen that at times, different places, not necessarily here today, but if we catch one another, we let the guy go that's the faster one. So we work together. We share our notes. We talk, we have fun together. So to me it couldn't be in a better situation, especially whenever we have good days like this.

SADLER: Yeah, I echo what he says. I love racing against him. There comes a time and place, sometimes do you let each other go. I remember in Michigan we both let each other go at different times in the race to try to win the race. But today was fun. I had a little bit better car there at the end but just couldn't get the momentum I needed to get up beside him. Of course, I'm not going to do anything stupid to take out two great race cars. I know that's one of his favorite cars he was driving today, and it was one of my favorite I was driving. I wouldn't dare do anything like that. I knew second would do DJ a lot of good in the points, and third would do me a lot of good in the points. It's great to race. We do have a lot of fun together on the racetrack and off the racetrack. I'm just as happy for his team and my team. I know when we go into the shop on Monday, those guys are going to be smiling ear to ear. That's what makes us feel the best.

Q: Dale, you and Jeff have won over half the Brickyard 400s, never been contested. What is it about this race that brings out the best in the two of you?

JARRETT: I'm not sure. I don't know. I mean, I think once you win here, you certainly get an idea of what your car needs to do and a feel for the racetrack. You know how to win then here. You know what it takes, what you're looking for in your car. So it's easier to adjust toward that. If you haven't, then you're still searching a little bit for that. It's just a racetrack that I enjoy racing, the challenge that it presents with the four different corners. You know, Jeff, obviously, I mean, you could put him with anybody else and they about won half of them, so I appreciate you putting my name in there (laughter). We have had a lot of success here. We've been fast a lot of times. And certainly it hasn't hurt that the majority of the races I've been in here have been in Robert Yates cars. Horsepower plays a big part. We had great engines today, as we have every time I've been here.

Q: Dale, when I talked to your crew chief, he was saying that was it for you guys, your car was maxed out, that he really doesn't think there's anything you guys could have done different. What do you do when you go back to the shop and say, "How do we make that better?" Where do you see you would need improvement after a day like today?

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JARRETT: Yeah, I think what I saw mostly was Jeff's car, it didn't seem to fall off. You know, it wasn't like he had to start his car sideways, like a lot of people were at the beginning of a run, not to be just pushing a lot at the end. He could start off fast and didn't seem to fall off from there. So we have some work to do in that area to where I think we're abusing the left front tire a little too much. You know, it works good for early parts of the race. We're going to have to go back and see early parts of a run, we're going to have to go back and see what we can do to keep that from happening. I think it's been something we've been fighting. We've come a long way with that, with our cars, but there's some areas there we have to continue to work in, and we'll do that. We're a lot closer now. It's not that we've got to go make big steps now. We can just do some small things to help us.

Q: Seems that when the 48 isn't dominating, the 24 is. Have you guys talked among yourselves and wondered how they got the field covered the way they do?

JARRETT: Kind of pisses us off, one of the two of them. If it's ain't one, it's the other one. I think you have to look right now, and I'll be short so Elliott can talk, maybe he has a better answer, but it looks like that group has the total package right now. As good of engines as we have, they are out-horsepowering us a little bit. Aero-wise, they are probably a little bit better than we are, and maybe even chassis-wise they're just a little. So it's just a little bit in each area that allows them. Apparently the two teams, I don't know if they share a lot of notes or what, but it's one or the other of both up there.

SADLER: I echo his words. A couple times today when I was running second to Jeff, I didn't make any adjustments on the car. I told Todd my car is good, I don't know what else I can do to really run the speed the 24 is running for that long. I can run with him six or seven laps. Like DJ said, his car wouldn't fall off as much as ours. We just got to tweak on little things. I was definitely giving feedback to Todd, Robert and everybody, what I thought the 24 car was doing, and how he was carrying his speed, areas we need to work on. We'll go back and crunch all the numbers and massage them a little bit, go from there. As far as chassis-wise, spring, shocks, bars, stuff like, that my car was maxed out, too. That was as good as I could get my race car for 400 miles to run this racetrack. We got to be able to carry a little bit more speed through the center of the corner. That's where Jeff was really I think getting us the most and really could stay on the gas. He didn't really have to start off sideways at all like we did on restarts. We just got to keep working at it. They definitely have raised of the bar every week. If it's not one, it's the other one.

Q: Dale, has your view on the championship system changed now that it may benefit you?

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JARRETT: Oh, yeah, sure. I'd be crazy to say no. I mean, it changed a long time ago because after I was explained what the reason was behind it, and what we were looking to do, and I never really viewed it that much. Now, I just assumed because that's the way that it had been for so many years, we race for a season-long champion. You know, we still are to a certain extent. But those last 10 weeks, of course the battle tightened up quite a bit today with the 48 having problems, I guess. But, you know, it's still going to be 10 teams there that you're going to have vying for a championship. So I think it has a lot of potential to be very, very exciting. Does there need to be something put beside the champion this year if it's somebody other than who is leading after 26? No. I mean, the championship wasn't the same when my dad won his championships in '61 and '65, and Richard Petty won his in the '60s, what he won in the '70s. I don't know if he won in the '80s or not. But things changed there. They used to do it totally different. There's always going to be change. I think it has the potential to be very exciting. Whether we make the Top 10 or not, I think we need to give this a shot and see what happens with it. As I said all along, if it's not exactly right, NASCAR doesn't seem to have a problem in making a change.

Q: Elliott, you made it clear yesterday it was all or nothing, you were going for the win. Third is by far your best finish here. Do you feel maybe a little bit hollow feeling?

SADLER: Yeah, I mean, when I walked up and congratulated Jeff, see all the excitement they're going through, to go kiss the bricks and all, I feel bad. I told my guys on the radio, when we have 12 or 13 laps to go, we had a restart, I said: "Guys, no matter what happened, you have given me a car good enough to win this race. You've done everything you can do. I just lost a little track position. I'm going to try to get by the 88 and have a shot at 24. You have done everything y'all can do to get me in a position to win this race." I mean, yeah, I want to be up there celebrating a win. But this is by far the best I've ever ran here. I've had more fun today in a race car than I've ever had in my entire life. Gives me something to look forward to. This was a new style of race car that we're building now in-house. We're building a couple more for these final 10 races. If we can run this every week, doggone it, y'all are going to have to talk about us by the time the end of the year is over. I hope we're going to give these guys something to worry about when we show up at the racetrack from now on. Today was nothing about points. Doug Yates gave us unbelievable motors. We weren't worried about whether they were lasting. He gave us the most horsepower we could have. The gears and stuff we pulled. Points did not come into play on either one of our race teams, and I think you can tell by the way you ran.

Q: Kasey, you spent a lot of time racing in this area. Give us your thoughts about being able to run at the Speedway.

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KASEY KAHNE: It was very neat, very cool to finally be here. I lived here for three years. You know, to come to these races and watch, now be part of it, go through the qualifying, go through the race day, it's unbelievable. I mean, there's still more fans out there right now than there are at most racetracks. It's just pretty neat to be part of this race. To finish top five our first time here, it's a really good feeling.

Q: Dale and Elliott, this is NASCAR's first attempt at a green-white-checkered. It still went checkered and yellow. What were your thoughts on how that went?

JARRETT: It seemed to go OK. It didn't affect the outcome of the race. I don't know what happened back in the back, if they had an accident or what. I don't know exactly what the caution was for as we were coming to the line. Yeah, I mean, we'll find some places that it will make a difference. We'll have probably a lot to talk about. Today there's not much to talk about as far as the way it affected the race. Everything was fine.

SADLER: Same way. I think NASCAR should be happy. Had a green-white-checkered, one of the biggest races of the year, the leader didn't change hands. Didn't really affect the front guys, the way we were running I don't think. All in all, it was a good day for that.

Q: Did any of you have any problems with that chunk of debris that Gordon or Kenseth hit or did they knock it out of the way?

JARRETT: I saw Matt hit it. I didn't realize Jeff hit it. He obviously didn't hit it quite hard enough (laughter). I thought Matt got a right front tire down. I didn't actually see it until it came out from under his car. I think that -- I know it messed up his day. He had a really good car. It looked more like a piece of lead to me. Somebody said something about a brake rotor. It looked more like a piece of lead. I'm not sure exactly what it was. I obviously didn't see it until Matt hit it.

Q: The other question is, it took like 60 years for the Indianapolis 500 to have a four-time winner. Got one here in 11 years in the Brickyard. Should there be any comparison? Does anything translate there?

JARRETT: Yeah, he's probably as good as a driver as ever been here. I don't care how many years they have been racing. He'll win a lot more than four. I think it just shows what a great talent Jeff Gordon is. He's beat the very best here because everybody brings their best stuff. Aside from Daytona, we prepare for this race as much as any that we do. And for that guy to come here and win a little over a third of them is pretty incredible. It shows they have a great team, but they have a great driver right there, too. You have to consider him one of the best drivers of any kind that's ever been here.

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Q: Dale, how far does this go in quelling some of the frustrations you've had in recent months, times? Elliott, address it from the standpoint of it was a challenge, you had some challenges when you first joined this series, but just as a year where you're proving yourself, just address it from that viewpoint, if you would.

JARRETT: From our standpoint, yeah, I mean, the last two months have been really good for us. This year's been much better. We've been much more competitive. But, you know, we've gone now from what the beginning of the year was, just kind of an average team, you know, from 12th to 20th basically was where we were running. Now we're a solid top-10 team week in and week out. We're able to compete. A day like today, to do this in one of our biggest races means a lot to us, gives us a lot of confidence. Even going to Watkins Glen next week, where I'm not considered one of the better road racers, we finished in the top five there a number of times, in the top 10 quite a few times. That's kind of what we needed. Our team is headed in the right direction. A lot of that credit goes to Elliott and his team because there's a lot of things that they have done that have helped us tremendously. You know, this is a solid team effort, making this happen. A lot of gratification to come to a place like this and finish well.

SADLER: Yeah, as far as when I got started, I think the biggest challenges I faced is being with a single-car team. I never really had notes to compare with anybody else. A lot of places I go, I just try to go off the wind, try to feel it out. Didn't always know what my car needed to feel like on Saturday to be good on Sunday. I became teammates with DJ. I've learned more in the last year and a half about racing than I've learned in 17, 18 years. The reason because of that is we both had terrible seasons last year, but his attitude didn't change towards his guys, his determination, things he wanted in his race car never changed. Man, I learned so much from him on that and places that we go, I get ideas from him on Saturday, can go talk to him. I love having a teammate. I can't imagine now going back to a single-car team after having a teammate that likes the same things I do, we like our cars pretty similar, our cars are pretty close today, as you can tell. I've learned more, a lot from him, and I drive for the best car owner in the business, Robert Yates, whose willing to take time any day of the week to sit down, explain things to you about what's going on on and off the racetrack. A lot of teams, people wouldn't really take that time to mess with you about it. I'm in a perfect situation. I'm living the time of my life. I feel like I am with the best team I have ever been with. We get along better than any team I've ever been around. Hopefully be around a long time.

Q: Kasey, would you consider today frustrating considering you were powerful early on, had a slight incident, rallied back to finish fourth?

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KAHNE: Yeah. I think we had a great race car early on, blew a left front, hit the wall, and came back to fourth. So, you know, I think that was a good job by the pit crew. They really did a good job all day to get me in and out of the pits quick, make the changes, fix the fenders. Everything they did, Tommy made a lot of good calls, they got me back on the track. They got the track position for me. Our team did a good job.

Q: Elliott, middle part of the race, you were running second to Jeff the whole time. All of a sudden one lap there you slipped back to fifth or sixth. What happened there?

SADLER: We just got loose. We put two tires on. My car is a lot looser on two tires than four. When the 17 got to me, really made me loose. By the time I got it up to me, the 31 got up and made my loose again. I about wrecked both those corners. I figured I'd let the 31 and 88 go by and settle in in line behind them and heat my front tires up as much as I could to tighten the car back up. I just lost a little track position there. But that was probably -- probably ended up being the turning the point of our race, why we probably didn't have a shot at the win. I wanted to make sure the car was in one piece at the end of the race. I could have tried to stay in front of them, but I also could be windshield deep right now and finish 30th. I didn't want to do that either. I was on the edge of my talent level. I was about to run out of talent there.

Q: DJ, I don't recall whether you had any particular setbacks in '99 when you started to build your points up to several hundred points. How nice would it be to be in Jimmie Johnson's seat as the points leader and come out and try new things and blow up a motor and it really not matter all that much?

JARRETT: Yeah, it would probably be a different situation in looking because, I mean, he knows that he's definitely in the Top 10 here. You know, he's sitting in a very good position to where they can experiment a little bit. But I'm sure still on the other side of it, they want to be carrying momentum into that 10-race deal, too. So I would look for them to get back to some things that have worked for them. They'll leave the experimenting to test days and things like that. But they're a very good team, and you can't look and say that today was anything other than I would assume a parts failure there somewhere. So they were still -- they have a great race team. But that would be kind of neat. You know, when we left here in '99, I'm not sure, we had a pretty good-sized lead. We still had to race because we were racing right till the end. There was a lot of racing yet to do.

Q: Dale, on those restarts where you were in second place, was there any one of them that you might have had a shot to get him?

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JARRETT: No. He could get away in turn one. As I would get down there, the harder I tried, the front of my car just would not stick there. I would lose time getting back to the gas. I tried backing out a little bit early. He could just stay in the gas through Turn 1. Elliott was a lot the same way. I knew from previous restarts when I was behind them that those two cars were just quicker than I was on the restart. Turns 1 and 2 and basically 3, I could start getting a little bit of feel by turn four of that first lap. They could just get away from me too much. You know, I was on his bumper. He was doing different things as we came to the green, slowing us down, getting me right to his bumper. But I was able to get in the gas with him. But once we got to Turn 1, he was pretty much gone.

Q: Kasey, this has been a season of almost and what ifs, oil, different issues. How did you manage to keep your composure running well early, then you had the tire problem? Crew chief have a lot to do with saying, "It will be OK, stay calm," or did you think, "Oh, no, not again"?

KAHNE: Tommy has done a good job all year of keeping me calm. Even last week at Pocono when I run into Stewart, bent the front of the car up, I thought the race was over, too, we came back to third. I think just listening to Tommy, he always gives me lap times, tells me we're still in the race. Says a lot of things that just keep me calm. I'll race as hard as I can till it's over.

Q: Dale, does this race kind of showcase driver ability more so than the Daytona 500, where so much -- is so dependent being in the right place, right time, drafting?

JARRETT: Absolutely, no doubt (laughter). I think we got two, three, four sitting in here. This is no doubt this is a driver's racetrack. Car makes a little difference, but the driver really. No, seriously, it is. Probably more so for a lot of reasons. I mean, the driver, there's a lot of different things that you can do as a driver here. But first and foremost, your job is to relate to your crew chief through practice time and your testing here, what your car is doing, try to explain that. But as you get into the race, there are different things you can do. So you do really make a difference here, whereas Daytona, you know, your car -- if you don't have the car, it doesn't really matter how good a driver you are at times. So you still have to do the job, and it's not taking away from anybody that's had success at Daytona, but, I mean, it's easy to sit here and say that now, but it is a lot of driver ability here because I think that's why I put Jeff Gordon up there with the best drivers that have ever been in this sport. I think that's why you see him having a lot of success here.

MODERATOR: Thank you very much, congratulations, gentlemen. We have a couple more questions for Kasey. I think Kasey jumped to 11th in the point standings ahead of Jeremy, only about 31 points out of 10th place.

Q: They're talking about teammates. I just wondered how much having Jeremy and also having Bill Elliott as the former winner here, if they helped out for the fourth place finish today as well as all season up to now?

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KAHNE: Yeah, I think it's really helped out the first half of this season a lot to have a teammate like Jeremy. Jeremy, every week, we talk, kind of talk about engine stuff or the way the car's handling, just different characteristics of the car. Bill, he helped me early in the season a lot. He was always around. To have him back here this weekend racing, I made my way over to his garage stall a couple times this week just to talk to him about different things. You can always learn a lot from Bill, especially from Bill and Jeremy all the time, too. Just two good guys to talk to.

Q: On the track, are you aware of like the guys that you're racing in the chase, the guys that you have to be ahead of? Do you know where Harvick is? Are they telling you that kind of thing?

KAHNE: You know, I really don't. Today would have been the best day to try to figure that out with that big board on the front straightaway, gives all the spots. But, no, I never really look. The only time I look on that board is to see who's in front of me, how many laps we're down, just trying to get more position, see where we're at on the track. Other than that, I obviously care where everybody is at the end of the race, but throughout the race, we're just trying to do as good as we can. When it's over, we see where everybody's at, see if they gained some points.

Q: I'm sure there's a lot of people in this town that would love to see you run here sometime in May. Your upbringing in USAC, how much do you hear that, hear people try to influence you someday to maybe give it another shot?

KAHNE: I don't really hear it a whole lot. I hear it once in a while, you have people ask you about that. But I kind of bring it up with myself a lot, wonder if I'll get that chance or if I can ever kind of find an opportunity to make that chance. I definitely, you know, would love to race here twice a year instead of just once.

Q: You did gain a position in the green-white-checkered. Has your opinion changed of that?

KAHNE: My opinion's been the same all year. You know, with seven laps to go, it's the same situation as you're in with two laps to go on the green-white-checkered. I feel everybody goes for it late in the race. I was saying all along, I think give us one chance at a green/white checkered. If it doesn't work, it doesn't work. If there is wrecks and we're in it, then that's a bad thing. But I think there's also times we're going to pass a car or win the race or gain a couple positions because of that, too. I think it all evens out. The fans get a green-white-checkered, they get a race that finishes on the green.

MODERATOR: Congratulations.

KAHNE: Thank you.

For Immediate Release

BRICKYARD 400 WINNER'S PRESS CONFERENCE

Jeff Gordon, Rick Hendrick, Robbie Loomis

Sunday, Aug. 8, 2004

MODERATOR: We've been joined by team owner Rick Hendrick, who I know this has to be a particularly gratifying moment for you and for the 24 team. Fourth-time winner at Indy in the Brickyard 400. Why don't you give us your sentiments and feelings?

RICK HENDRICK: You know, I remember the first time I came up here, and the heritage. Then when you see it with all the people in the stands, it's pretty special. To be able to win it one time was just neat and unbelievable. I don't know what, today was so special. It felt to me better than the first one. I guess a lot of emotions and things because of my family, but it was a really good win, and Jeff did it in a dominant fashion. All I could think about was Martinsville when he hollered, "There's debris, we're done." I think that's what he said. I could see the hole in the fascia, so I never dreamed he would be able to hold them off. I think he was just as determined today as I've ever seen Jeff Gordon.

MODERATOR: Questions for Rick.

Q: He tied A.J. Foyt, Rick Mears and Al Unser, four-time winners here at this track. Jeff has done a lot of historic things, but now we're talking some serious history. When you put your name alongside those guys at this racetrack, that's out there. He did that in cars you owned. I know how much you know about racing, how much you care about racing. At this track, how unbelievable is that for you?

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HENDRICK: You know, it's really hard to put into words, you know. You think about it more tomorrow morning and the next day. When you see the trophies, you look back, you know, you kind of grow up never even thinking you'd get to go to Indianapolis. I mean, that's the deal. So I don't know, I think it will all sink in. I really like these trophies, I tell you, these are neat. You know, you'd like to think at the end of the day you worked all your life. My dad and I, since I was five years old, I remember going to Wilksboro in dirt and watching Buck Baker, Buddy Baker, Lee Petty, Richard Petty in a match race, and Junior come in there with a Dodge on the back of a flatbed, that tells you my age, doesn't it? Then to see what the sport's done, but then to be a piece of it, then to be -- be able to win or win championships, win these deals. It's something that you've done all your life and you love and you live for. I mean, you know, it's really neat. Now my son's coming along. I like to think about how the organization, you know, can do. I mean, I used to be the youngest guy on pit road, now I'm the oldest. So the guys behind me, I hope we can keep this thing going, then look back one day. I mean, you know, our 20-year book and all, I look back at some of those old pictures of (Geoffrey) Bodine. It's kind of humbling when you get old, when you think about it. But to be even mentioned with Mears and those guys, it's unbelievable.

Q: When Dale Jarrett was in here, somebody asked him the same thing about it took 60 years for a four-time winner, Jarrett's response was, "That's because Jeff is probably as good as any driver that's ever raced here." The fact that some people have been able to come in here and really excel, talk about that fact.

HENDRICK: Well, Jeff, I've seen some phenomenal things he's done at this track. I remember the day he qualified, I thought he hit the wall off of (Turn) 4, left those black marks and still set on the pole. He can answer this better than I can, but this is a special place to him. You know, it's one of the places he lived, is from, and he dreamed about being here maybe in an open-wheel car. I know when I lined up that Formula One deal, it was Formula One, but it was here at Indy, and it made a big difference. But he's just got so much talent. I told somebody out there, I mean, I told him on the radio when he said, "We're done," I said: "I've seen you beat people with two tires, I've seen you beat people with four tires, you the man." I knew it was going to be hard to pass, we didn't know how bad it was. But you guys seen a lot of guys drive, but that guy's unbelievable here.

MODERATOR: We'll switch over to Mr. Loomis here, Robbie Loomis, crew chief who also has had the chance to enjoy the fruits of victory at the Brickyard. What does this mean to you? We were talking tradition and history. Tell us what this means to you.

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ROBBIE LOOMIS: Winning the Brickyard is extremely special. I mean, I remember the first time I came here with the King and we took a parade lap around, then I think they took the car and put it in the museum. Just the history of Indianapolis. I mean, anybody that's involved in motorsports as a kid, you grow up, I think about racing at short tracks, Indy is one of the places that you always respect. I know when I walked in here and we drove in the tunnel, you look at it and you can't see much unless you get out there. But it's extremely special, and to be able to do it for a second time, and with Mr. Hendrick, the things he gives us makes it a lot easier, the tools he gives us. Put Jeff Gordon on top of that. Jeff came to the drivers' meeting this morning, he was extremely quiet. I knew it was something special. He was on a mission, for sure.

MODERATOR: Before Jeff settles in here, let's talk about the race itself. Your car obviously not only was strong throughout, but your car also had the ability on restarts to pull away. Why don't you take us through as crew chief your feelings about what transpired over the course of the day.

LOOMIS: First let me say the man has entered the house (laughter). But, yeah, the restarts are something that, you know, really got to give a lot of credit to the engine shop, Brian with the gearing. When we test up here, sometimes it's pretty stressful for me, but we spend time working on things like that for the restarts. That's one thing that Jeff is extremely good at. I know that a few weeks ago we kept trying and trying, and we wound up coming home second. So today it was really good to close the deal, especially a place as special as the Brickyard.

MODERATOR: Your concerns after Jeff ran over the debris on the track, what was your communication between each other? What were your immediate concerns?

LOOMIS: Well, I was extremely sick to start with, and then I just knew that our only shot of winning was to stay on the racetrack. That was the simple part, as long as the tires were up. What I didn't know is how the tires were, how much air pressure was in them. I had binoculars and could see the nose, knew we had some damage on the right front. I figured being up front the car might balance out a little bit with the clean air. Fortunately with Jarrett behind us, we knew he wasn't the strongest car. Hate to be in that situation with a couple of the other guys out there lined up behind us, but with Jarrett's car behind us, I knew we were a little bit stronger than him anyway. It was pretty clear we had to stay out there. We got real fortunate. Actually did cut a right rear tire. After the race, the thing had five or six pounds of air in it. It was one of those days that was just meant to be.

MODERATOR: Questions for Robbie.

Q: You say it was down to five to six. What would it normally have?

LOOMIS: Typically you'll start anywhere -- Goodyear's recommended pressure is 36 pounds. It will build up to 10 or 12 pounds of air in that right rear. I think over there we had to put like 30 something pounds of air to get it up to what it would be for inspection air.

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MODERATOR: We'll start with Jeff now.

Q: Jeff, I don't think you answered this yet, but when the piece of whatever it was hit the car, and after you got back under green, did you feel a huge difference in the car? If so, what was it doing?

JEFF GORDON: Well, luckily it wasn't a huge difference. I mean, I was really upset at the time, you know, because it was so significant, such a significant piece of debris. It wasn't just something small, it was something pretty big. All I could do was envision Martinsville all over again. I remember how torn up that right front was. I didn't know if it cut a tire, if it damaged anything up underneath the car. I knew the air dam had some damage, but after we came by, they said the air dam didn't look too bad. You know, I drove it. I felt it around a little bit under caution, drove it down into turn one. I think it may have knocked the toe out a little bit so I did pick up more of a push. But other than that, it didn't drive that bad. I was quite surprised that it drove as good as it did.

Q: Jeff, when Dale Jarrett was in here, somebody asked him about how long it took for a four-time winner here at Indy. It's taken you 11 years to become a four-time winner of the Brickyard. Jarrett's response was "That's because Jeff is probably as great a driver that's ever run here." When you hear another driver like Dale Jarrett say that, how do you feel about all that?

GORDON: You know, I have a lot of respect for Dale Jarrett, so it means a lot because I think he's a great driver, as well. You know, I think he's a very gracious guy, and he's very good at giving credit, you know, to his team when they deserve it and to other people when they do. You know, I think that means a lot coming from a two-time champion of this race. So, you know, it means a lot. I mean, I think he knows as well as we all do that we're the ones behind the wheel of the cars, and we get a lot of the publicity, you know, that comes with it, but if we don't have the team and the car and everything behind us, then we're really not going to stand out. And when we do, you know, we look like we're the heroes out there.

Q: Do you agree with his assessment?

GORDON: I'll always say, and I've said this for many years, that I don't think anyone will ever know who the best is because I just don't think there's any really fair way to figure that out. I know there are guys that I've raced with that have done, you know, better than anybody that I've ever seen. To put myself in that category, I try not to because all I care about is winning races and being behind the wheel of a race car that allows me to do that and allows me to be with a team that gives me that. That's all that really matters to me.

Q: Could you have ever imagined four? Where would you put yourself among the other four-time winners at this place?

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GORDON: I'm blown away with four. I can't believe it really. You know, the thought went through my mind a couple times during the race today when we were really strong, we were out there running up front. I kept having to shake it off, going: "Stop thinking about that. Stop thinking about that." Even there toward the end at the caution there at the end, I knew that we had, you know, three laps to go basically, I felt how special it was. It was starting to really get to me. I was like, "You know, wow." I didn't realize how much, you know, this really meant to me, to win four. Then I had to shake that off because I had to get it done first (laughter). You know, I don't compare myself to Rick Mears and A.J. Foyt, Al Unser. To me, the Indy 500 is always something unique and totally different than the Brickyard 400. You know, I just will never allow those comparisons. I'm very proud to be a four-time winner, but I just will never allow those comparisons to really put us among equals with those Indy 500 winners.

Q: What sort of statement does this make for you and your team today toward the championship this year?

GORDON: I think it's a pretty loud statement (laughter). You know, this team, man, they are just really on top of things right now. It's just so much fun going to the racetracks when you know that you've got a chance at winning, just pretty much every weekend you feel like you've got some kind of a shot at it. You know, the guys, they're together, the chemistry's there, the communication's there, the momentum's there. I mean, just things feel really, really good. You know, it's such a unique championship this year that it doesn't matter how those things feel right now, it's nice to have it, and we're going to try to continue and keep that momentum. But, you know, it's really all what we do in those last 10. I think that's what makes this so sweet today, you know, really it's not about points, it's not about a championship, it's just about winning, and that's what we came here to do. It's really cool to pull it off.

Q: Can you talk a little about this season, the way that the 24 and 48 have run, how your organization has responded this year?

HENDRICK: You know, I really -- Jeff and Robbie can help me, but I think we started rebuilding back in 2000. We said at a media tour, we're going to win together, and we're going to lose together, but we're going to be together. And every crew chief and every driver that's come into the organization since then, and everybody that's been involved in a management-type position, we've had the goal of working together, sharing information, and making it work. And Jeff, when we put our heads together and he saw Jimmie run that race in Michigan, said, "That's the guy we got to get." You know, to Robbie's credit, I've never seen four crew chiefs work together. Everybody talks about it, but our guys really do work together. And the engine shop, chassis shop, the chemistry's the best I've ever had in 20 years, at least the 18 that I've run multiple cars. I think that's paying off for us. I think that's hard, when you look at teams and you ask yourself, "Are they really working together? Is it an open book? Are they sharing?" I think right now the chemistry, these guys can tell you what they think, but from where I sit, I think it's the best chemistry we've ever had. I owe a lot of it to these two guys. Jeff has been the dominant guy. He didn't take the attitude in 2000 that "It's all got to be for me." He wanted to build the whole organization. I think it's really paying off for us today.

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Q: With everything you've been through in the last couple weeks, is this one even more special?

HENDRICK: Yeah, it really is. Well, it is. You know, I can't tell you how humble my family is for the cards and the letters and all the fan support that other teams' drivers and guys like Richard Childress that showed up today, you know, it just really humbled all of us. I don't remember racing without my dad. I told these guys earlier, some of you weren't here, since I was 5 years old, I mean, we've been together. I took off time earlier this year to stay with him. And then I don't want to get emotional here, Stevie Waltrip said today that his heart's here, and you got his heart. That to me means more than the race. But every time that we have success now, I think it's like I'm doing it for him or we're doing it for him. Jeff and Robbie said that today. We got some great memories. It's a lot of emotions and a lot of things that have happened. But this sure makes you feel -- it just gives you almost a sense of fulfillment. We'll try to take it on to next week.

Q: NASCAR's first attempt at the green-white-checkered, prolonged it by an extra lap, but did that kind of add to the tension level for you guys?

LOOMIS: Yeah, it definitely added to the tension level. We would have liked it, four laps, would have been over. But we were fortunate the way the fuel window fell. We had about five laps extra of fuel. That's why we just tried to get some clarification if that green-white-checkered was going to be it, was that going to be the end of the race. You know, fortunate for us, that didn't happen. Everybody got to see a finish. I think that's the first time that's happened that I know of in NASCAR. So that was exciting to be a part of that, too.

GORDON: I mean, we all knew it was going to happen eventually. I was unclear, and I was kind in the same boat that Robbie was, just hoping that, you know, we'd just get the checkered eventually (laughter). But I was unclear when they said, "We're going green-white-checkered, running one extra lap," if that meant that that was the official green-white-checkered. That's something that we're really going to have to get clarification on in the future. We all know there's only one opportunity to get the green-white-checkered. I mean, I'm glad that we finally got one. You guys can talk about it. We're the ones that won it. It worked out. I mean, I think it is really cool for the fans and for us, the teams, to see your car come across there under green-flag conditions and those checkered flags waving. It does mean more. It just takes away a little bit when you come across there under caution.

HENDRICK: You know, I remember we did a lot of racing in the truck series. I won a lot with the green-white-checkered, I lost a lot with that. I get so nervous when I think we got an opportunity to win a race, anyway. One more thing thrown on it won't make any more difference with me (laughter). I'm thankful because it's been that way ever since I won my first race. You never count 'em till they're done. Last night was great. Today was great. You don't count 'em till it's over. I think it's better for the fans. I think it's going to be much better for them.

Q: (Inaudible)?

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GORDON: Well, you know, in the heat of the moment, your adrenaline's flowing. You're leading one of the biggest races of your life, and you see something -- you're running a hundred and, whatever, 60 miles an hour, and you don't have time to react. You just hit it. I mean, one is I was worried I was going to hit it and it was going to put me in the wall. The other is that it was going to take us out of contention to win. You know, I just remember I reacted, I was very upset that as big a piece of debris as it was when I hit it that nobody saw it, that nobody even no it was there until we came through there. That's because I'm in the heat of the moment. I don't know how long it was there. I don't even know what it was. But I do know I looked in my mirror, and Matt Kenseth certainly got the worst of it. I don't know how in the world that piece of debris went through, underneath wherever it went from my race car, then got him the way it did, and didn't get us. But I was, you know, pretty animated on the radio about that I felt like somebody should have recognized that. I think any time that there's a piece of debris on the track, it seems like we get cautions when there's debris that really doesn't seem to be much, and then when it's really significant, sometimes it doesn't come out as soon as we'd like it to. You know, we got fortunate. Matt was very unfortunate. I feel bad for them and for what they had to go through. And I don't know, I'd like to know how long it was out there and whether or not we could have prevented all that from happening.

Q: Not to open up a can of worms, although that pretty much is my job.

GORDON: Don't be doing "Pit Bull" on me here in the media center.

Q: What strikes me about this whole weekend, some of the things you said here, we heard guys talk about how much they enjoy not racing, having to worry about points, just coming here to try to win the big race. I guess the philosophical question I'd like to ask you is, wouldn't it be a good thing if it was like that every week?

GORDON: Well, in a way it is. I mean, more so for us right now because the way the points system is, and where we're at in the points right now. You know, when you start the season, it's like that. When you are battling for points positions that are critical, it's like that. But for us, we're kind of in a comfort zone right now over the next five or six races. I know what you're saying. I mean, in a way we do go out there to win every weekend, but when there are points on the line, we do watch a little bit more of how much RPM we're going to turn, how aggressive we're going to be on the setup, is this going to be a day that we can use as a test, you know, for down the road. To me it just seemed like this weekend we're feeling very little pressure as far as the points are concerned and more just pressure of just to go out there and perform and to win. It would be nice to have that every weekend. But that's part of a championship in general. You know, it doesn't matter -- if you're in the Super Bowl, you got a seven-point lead, you protect your seven-point lead. But it's just kind of the nature of the game and the business and the sport that we're in. We all want that championship. But right now I do like it. I mean, I like the position that we're in. It's awesome. Let me tell you, when it comes down to those last 10 races, it's not going to feel anything like this.

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Q: I'll open up a can of worms maybe. When three other wins here, did you forget where Victory Lane was?

GORDON: I must have. I think it slipped my mind. I thought Victory Lane was where those bricks are out there. You know, you just react. I went down there, you know, thinking about a burnout or something like that. I stink at burnouts, so I just locked them up on the bricks and, you know, told the team to get out there. You know, your emotions are just going, and you're excited, the adrenaline's flowing. You know, I'm sure I'm going to get in some kind of trouble over it. But, you know what, right now I don't care (laughter).

Q: There was a lot of cautions, 13 cautions. You had a little time to think. Did you think during any of those: "Is there going to be another Martinsville? Is it going to get me?" Did you have a premonition?

GORDON: You mean, the debris?

Q: The debris that you eventually hit. In the back of your mind, during the cautions, did you think that it could be another Martinsville?

GORDON: Oh, yeah. Heck, yeah. Every lap I was rolling around there, I would wiggle the wheel back and forth just to make sure the right front tire was still up. Honestly, when it happened, I thought we were done.

Q: That wasn't the question.

GORDON: I'm confused because all I know in Martinsville, we hit a piece of debris and we were done.

Q: Today during the cautions when you were leading, did you think it could be another Martinsville, and then, boom, it happened?

GORDON: No (laughter). I never, ever think about hitting a piece of debris on the racetrack until I hit it.

Q: Is it important at all to catch Jimmie and be leading going into those last 10 races?

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GORDON: It's worth five points. That's about it. I mean, five points are five points. I mean, the championship can be won or lost by five points. You know, right now I think that we're in the mode of getting all that we can get and really I want to go into those last 10 breathing down those guys' necks, leading laps, showing that our pit crew's the best, that our cars are the best, that we are the team and the guys to watch coming into those last 10. Now, you know, once we get in those last 10, you know, I think there's going to be a little bit more strategy than what we think. Obviously, you know, we're all going to try to win races, but the first five -- how the first five or six are dealt with versus the last four or five is going to be very interesting as to where we're at, what position we're in and everything. You know, I mean, I look at this points championship, and I shake my head at it all the time, about I don't know how in the world we came up with this. Then there's times I look at it and go it's the greatest thing I've ever seen. I really don't know what to think. I think that David might get his wish. We might just be charging hard every single lap of every race all the way to the finish. You know, I guess when I said that, when I said we came here just focused, thinking of winning, it's not that we really tried any harder, it's just that we didn't have that pressure. We just didn't have that on us. If any decision came about in the setup, the gear, all those things I mentioned before, or decisions I made on the racetrack, I never once was thinking about points, I was only thinking about getting the position and trying to get the win. We're out there doing that a lot, but there is just that thing in the back of year mind that thinks about the points, if this is a typical year. That will be the case when we get down to these last 10.

Q: Can you remember the first racetrack in Indiana you won a race on when you came from California? Can you remember the first time you came to the Speedway?

GORDON: I wish my stepdad was here right now. I think the first track that I ever won on was in the quarter-midget, it was either at Big Z or Kokomo, something like that. There was a quarter-midget race that I ran back here in like '81, '82, something like that. I have no idea where Big Z is, I know that was the name of the track. The coolest thing about racing midgets in Indiana is it paid money to race. I was just blown away that you could get 30 bucks if you won the feature. We'd run two classes. I'd run, you know, an A and a B class, little bit different horsepower. If I won them both, I could get 60 bucks. I remember I won that trophy, and I won that \$60. I think we won both of them one time we were back here.

Q: How about your first visit here?

GORDON: First visit here? Would have been around the same time. I remember the very first time I came here, I don't remember who won the 500 that year, but we didn't come to the 500, we came here the day after, and I went to the museum and rode around on the bus. I remember seeing the names of all the drivers and their teams painted on the wall, kind of like they do it now, but they had the fuel tanks still there. I thought that was just the coolest thing. "Oh, man, that's where A.J. Foyt was pitting his car." But it had to be around '81, '82, as well. And then I came here, I think the first race I ever saw here was when Sneva won. I think that was also the same year when -- was Unser Jr., rookie that year? Yeah.

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Q: Robbie said something about a left rear tire was down severely.

GORDON: Right rear.

Q: Were you aware of that? Did you ever feel it at any time?

GORDON: I didn't. It could not -- I just don't see how it could have possibly been going down before that last caution, you know. I'm wondering. I don't know. Maybe I ran something over after the race was over or something. The car felt normal, as normal as it could be, with the right front crushed to me. I mean, I was pushing. I wasn't loose. If the right rear tire goes down, I would have thought I would be real loose. I don't know. It had air in it when I came off Turn 4, that's all I know, because I made it to the finish, and it didn't do anything weird.

Q: Was there any concern when Jimmie's motor let go?

GORDON: Oh, yeah, definitely. I mean, what's crazy is, you know, all weekend long, I've just been raving to Randy and our engine guys about our horsepower, just how great of a job that they did coming into this race, how the engine just felt so good and everything. When you get out there in the race, every little thing that vibrates, that rattles, you just think the motor's getting ready to explode. Anyway, regardless of whether the other engines have trouble. So when they told me that Jimmie blew up, every little vibration, "Oh, here it goes." I was watching the oil pressure, the water temperature, everything I could because I just knew. And even on those last restarts, I thought I was running out of fuel. When I took the white flag, I went into (Turn) 3, and the motor did something weird. I was like: "Am I blowing up? Am I running out of fuel?" I don't know if it's just my mind playing tricks on me or what, but those things definitely weigh on your mind when those things happen. I didn't realize till Robbie just told me that he spun, and when he spun, you never know, sometimes when you spin, those things can damage the engine. Jimmie is the absolute best at not hitting anything. A lot of times because he lights the rear tires up on the thing, I'm not saying that played a role, but it could have.

Q: Greg Maddux just won his 300th game as a pitcher. These accumulate one by one. Your next up is 70. The next guy on the list is a fellow named Earnhardt. Do those things run through your mind at all?

GORDON: Not until you mention it. You know, I never really pay a lot of close attention to statistics until after the fact. I mean, like I wasn't thinking about it till you mentioned it, then I'll go home tonight and I'll usually get a rundown sheet or something from the race today, then it will start to kind of pop in my mind about how many wins that we've accumulated over the years, how incredible it's been, what a great run. I knew that Earnhardt was the next one in line. That's something that I'd love to accomplish. I'll take it one at a time just like Greg Maddux does. I'm looking forward to going to Watkins Glen this year. What's amazing is every time we win, we do back to back. I can't think of a better place than to come out of here and go to Watkins Glen with an opportunity to do it again.

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Q: (Inaudible).

GORDON: Oh, I'm out there (laughter). I'm out there. You have no idea.

Q: I'm going to go fishing here. I don't know what I'm going to get. When you were running around here in the sprint car in Indiana, did you ever in your mind sit in class and doodle, "I'm A.J. Foyt," anything like that? Were those guys idols of yours, stuff like that?

GORDON: They were, but it was almost -- to me they were too far out there for me to even comprehend. To me, you know, racing at that level and at this speedway, I mean, that was just something I couldn't even comprehend. To me, if I thought about somebody that I wanted to be or somebody that I wanted to race with, it was Steve Kinser. You know, I was so heavy into sprint cars and the midgets and everything at that time, that's really what was on my mind. In high school, I thought I was going to be a sprint-car driver. I was very happy and content with that. I thought, man, that was the ultimate, is to be on the World of Outlaws circuit and race with those guys week in and week out. Then this thing came around called "Thursday Night Thunder." A guy named Rollie Helmling, who had a midget, and Bob East, who was building them, they just said, "Hey, we got this opportunity. Are you interested?" I can remember being in Brownsburg, Indiana, sitting in that seat, getting a seat fitted in that car on whatever day it was, it was probably like a Friday, and then we went to the Night Before the 500, which was Saturday, went out there and set a new track record, won the race. I'd never even been to the track, never been in the car before. That was on ESPN. From that point on, my whole thought process of where I was headed and what I was doing started to change. Then I started thinking -- see, I was racing Outlaws, sprint cars stuff, those guys at that time, especially Indianapolis, racing Indy cars, all that stuff, that wasn't even anything that you wanted to do. It wasn't till I got into USAC, that was when I started being around guys that said, "I want to be at Indy one day." I think it's because they were racing pavement. They were racing pavement in sprint cars and midgets. Them pavement drivers, you didn't want to have anything to do with them. It was like separate classes. All I know is that we wanted to race -- I loved the pavement, I thought it was fun. We started winning. Then we did it on TV. All of a sudden my career took off. All those sprint cars are going, "We didn't even get on TV in those USAC races."

Q: Probably young people look up to you as a hero, given the historic nature of this. You were talking about people that might have been your heroes, now the shoe is sort of on the other foot.

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GORDON: Well, I always try to remember in the back of my mind how important first impressions are and how we are role models through our actions and our words. You know, I have to remind myself from time to time of that because I know the first time I met Steve Kinser, I just thought he was the coolest thing ever. And the first time he came to me and congratulated me because I won a race or told me, "Hey, you're going to go on to do good things," to me my world ended right then. Then when I came here, whatever year it was I came to the 500, we were at Carburetion Day, I think Rick Mears was on the pole that year, and I was just a kid sitting on the fence with a T-shirt, I think that T-shirt had a list of all the different winners on the back of it, who had won four times, he hadn't at that time, and I yelled at him, and he came over and signed that autograph. He like had somebody grab the T-shirt, he signed it. Back then they didn't have Sharpies. I wore out that shirt. My mom would have to (inaudible) every time she washed it. I remember moments like that. As difficult as it is, you know, to be out there with the big crowds that we have here and whether it be qualifying or whatever, hear the screaming, yelling, everything, you want to do something like that for everybody. But that's why I probably focus more on the kids because I know what kind of impression that made on me. I would love to be able to do that for others.

Q: Rick said he has to go to NASCAR. Were you invited to stop by?

GORDON: No. I let him handle those type of things. I heard he was invited. It doesn't surprise me. The funniest thing is the whole time, you know, I mean, one I just enjoyed the moment. I didn't care. I will care tomorrow when we find out what happens, but now I don't. As soon as he walked away from the front straightaway, I was like: "Are we OK? Are we OK? Are we in trouble? Are we in trouble?" Everyone went, "No, it's fine, it's fine." After the adrenaline started to wear off, I was like, "This could be good." You know, I mean, everyone has their sponsorships to take care of. I think that there really needs to be a meeting of the minds to work this out because I don't think it's being worked out in everybody's favor. It just seems like -- you know, we all need to understand what it's worth to one another, you know, because there's things that are worth an awful lot to our race team, that mean a lot to our race team, and there are things that mean a lot to NASCAR, as well. We need to figure out what those meanings are and what those numbers are and how to come up with an understanding of it. And I told Mike that when I talked to him about Jimmie's fine, let's be creative, let's work together, let's think about how we can accomplish what we all need to accomplish here. I think there's a better way of doing it than what we're doing it. I didn't do that purposely, to go out there and cause that and stir that up, and to make sure that Powerade bottle wasn't on my car. I went out there because that's where I wanted to celebrate with my team. To me, too often these days, as big as the sport has gotten, and I understand that it wouldn't be as big as it is today and we wouldn't be able to, you know, race at this level without all the TV, the media, the fans, the sponsors and all that, but to me we take away so much from these victories when we pull into Victory Lane and all about getting the interview and it's all about putting the hat on, it's all about mentioning the sponsor. I want to just, you know, jump up and down and hang out with my guys. I lose so often, and I try to get it back, and today I did.

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Q: Talk about the thrill of victory, after Talladega, among other things, there was Sonoma where the crowd genuinely appreciated you. How did that feel to you today? Does that balance the books for Talladega?

GORDON: Absolutely. Even though I did see a couple bottles thrown, there still are diehards out there, it feels amazing. I mean, to go through the whole weekend and hear the applause and the cheers. One, just to see how big the Brickyard 400 is, how the people supported NASCAR here I think is awesome. But the support that I get and our team gets is just incredible. We really don't get that many places. So, you know, I can't think of a better place to have that than to have it here. You know, the fans here are loyal. They're loyal to their Indiana natives and to those adopted. It's just awesome to be able to give them back a great day and a victory like today.

Q: Do you kind of feel like the situation at the end of the race, you're going to be portrayed like Emmo drinking the orange juice instead of the milk in '93?

GORDON: Except I think I've got a lot more people on my side on this one than Emmo did. You know, there are certain traditions that you need to stick with. But, you know, I think what the people watching at home and the people here want to see is they want to see the real, you know, emotions and feelings of what it's like to win a race that's this big. They understand commercialization. They know. They see it all the time. Even though we live in that world, you know, every once in a while it's nice to break the rules, and it's nice to just show that raw emotion. And I think that's what people got. It wasn't about, you know, orchards in Florida, oranges in Brazil, versus milk and dairy. A little bit different.

Q: A little while ago you were talking about your early career, some turning points that you had in your career, where your career could have gone a different direction if something hadn't happened. You developed a relationship with Frank Williams. How much money did Frank offer and how big of a pay cut would it have been? More seriously, if something like that had come up 10 years ago, do you think your career might have taken a completely different direction?

GORDON: Well, there's two ways to answer that. One is that 10 years ago that would have never happened. I think the only reason that there's been any conversations or interest or spark in the media, any of that, is because Formula One wants an American driver, but they don't want an American driver that's unknown. So 10 years ago, it wouldn't have done him much good to put me in there, whether I had the ability to do it or not, because I was really basically an unknown. What they're asking for is a known name that's been brought up doing the exact opposite type of racing that exists in Formula One, and that is going to be next to impossible to pull off. Number two is that Frank and I never got to numbers.

MODERATOR: In closing obviously a hugely historic day, we'd like to congratulate you and the folks at NEXTEL would like to congratulate you on a wonderful day.

GORDON: Yes, it was. Thank you.

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