

NASCAR's Kyle Busch bristles at criticism

Last year's Nextel Cup top rookie says advice from veterans would be appreciated

By Mike Harris
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FONTANA, Calif.

Kyle Busch admits he sometimes makes bad decisions on the track. But the youngster says, instead of criticism, some good advice would be appreciated and far more constructive.

It was natural for Busch to wind up in the spotlight Friday at California Speedway. He won his first Nextel Cup pole at the track a year ago and then became the youngest driver in NASCAR history to win a race in its top stock car division when he took the checkered flag in the September event on the 2-mile oval.

But the 20-year-old racer, last year's top Cup rookie, wasn't particularly happy that the questions kept going back to last week at Daytona, where Busch's driving was blasted by reigning Cup champion Tony Stewart after the two tangled during the Daytona 500.

"He's the one guy who's probably going to hurt somebody out here," Stewart said of Busch in the heated aftermath of the race. "He's all over the

place. He's what we like to call a dart with no feathers. He just doesn't know where he's going."

Busch pointed out that Stewart, also penalized for rough driving during that race, has not called or approached the youngster to talk about the situation.

"That's how a lot of stuff gets started," said Busch, younger brother of NASCAR's sometime bad boy, Kurt Busch, the 2004 series champion. "People run their mouths with the media instead of actually confronting the driver."

"Help me out. I'm a young guy, and I'm trying to learn. If you want to teach me something, come up and discuss it with me and tell me what I need to do differently. I'm out there doing the same stuff that he's doing, or Jeff Gordon, or Jimmie Johnson, or anybody else, not thinking that it's anything wrong."

"But I'm inside my car. I'm not inside anybody else's car watching my car go around the racetrack. I could use any kind of help out there."

Dale Earnhardt Jr. said Busch is pretty wild.

"But most rookies are," Junior added

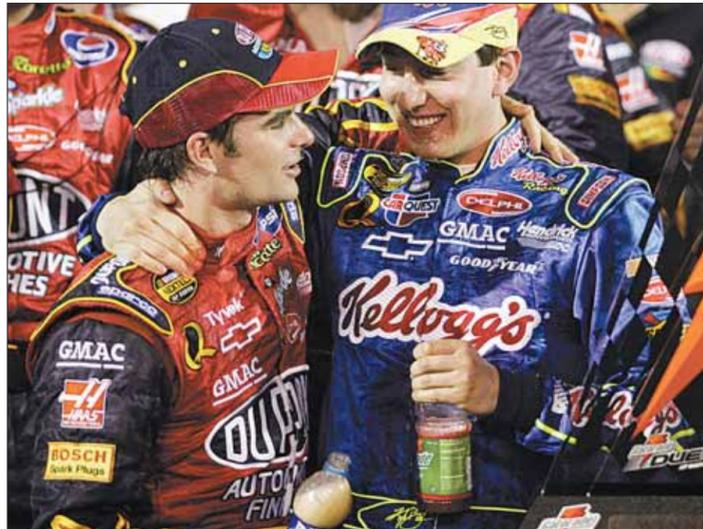
Friday. "I can't say I did any better when I was in his position. But he could turn it down a notch. ... You make mistakes, and he hasn't made any real big ones. But he just needs to realize that he's right on the brink of really ticking off somebody he doesn't want to tick off."

"I think he'll figure it out. A lot of rookies come in here pretty wild."

Brian Vickers, Busch's 21-year-old Hendrick Motorsports teammate, starting his third season in Cup, said it's true that young drivers often make mistakes, adding "and I've made my share."

"Guys under 25 are young and wide open and full of energy and inexperienced," Vickers said. "That's part of the sport, part of growing up. Every veteran out here has been young at one time, and they were probably aggressive and sometimes over their heads."

"I've never seen a 20-year-old in a car with 800 horsepower doing 200 miles an hour that wasn't (over his head) a little bit. You know, the older you get, the calmer you get, the more patience you get, the more experience you get."



Kyle Busch, right, congratulates teammate Jeff Gordon on placing first in qualifying for the NASCAR Daytona 500 in Daytona Beach, Fla., on Feb. 16.

State official: Hunting permit not just a license to kill

Innovative Department of Natural Resources Director Kyle Hupfer is offering rank-and-file Hoosiers a chance to get fiscally involved in the development of wildlife management programs offered by the Division of Fish and Wildlife.

As the keynote speaker at the annual meeting of Hoosier Outdoor Writers Association on Feb. 18, Hupfer unveiled a program aimed at encouraging those who do not fish or hunt to help finance management programs for both game and non-game species of fish and wildlife.

Explaining that many division programs are concerned with species that are not pursued by hunters and anglers, Hupfer noted that many Hoosiers make contributions every year to numerous Department of Natural Resources programs.

Hupfer added that a portion of these donations could well be channeled to the Division of Fish



'Bayou' Bill Scifres
OUTDOORS

and Wildlife by simply buying a license.

"By purchasing a \$25 combination hunting and fishing license, Hoosiers can do much more than hunt and fish," Hupfer points out in a brochure that is available this week at the Indianapolis Boat, Sport & Travel Show.

"Even if you do not consider yourself a sportsman or sports-woman, your annual combo license purchase will help the DNR buy critical wildlife habitat, like the new 8,000-acre Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area," the brochure notes.

Best of all, Hupfer says, each

combo license is matched by an additional \$20 in federal funds to help manage Indiana's valuable fish and wildlife resources.

The combo license is available at the DNR exhibit in the Marsh Blue Ribbon Pavilion at the Indiana State Fairgrounds and hunting and fishing license vendors throughout the state.

Licenses can also be bought online at by following links titled "Licensing Info" and "Purchasing Hunting, Fishing Or Trapping Licenses."

Licenses also can be purchased by phone at 233-4976. These procedures are fully explained in the DNR's 2006 "Recreation and Fishing Guide," a slick-paper, magazine-format publication that covers both recreation and fishing in one thorough, eye-catching piece of work.

The new guide also is available for free at the DNR Sports Show exhibit, or at fishing and hunting license outlets, including DNR properties, throughout the state.

Waterfowl seasons

The Division of Fish and Wildlife will host a series of public open houses to gather public opinion about waterfowl hunting for the 2006-07 seasons. Results of the 2005 Waterfowl Hunter Survey will be available at these events.

All open houses will be from 3 to 7 p.m. Dates and locations are:

- March 6: Sugar Ridge Fish and Wildlife Area, Winslow
- March 8: Atterbury Fish and Wildlife Area, Edinburg
- March 9: Willow Slough Fish and Wildlife Area, Morocco

Also available at the open houses will be preliminary season dates for the 2006-07 waterfowl hunting seasons.

The preliminary dates have been developed using results from the 2005 Waterfowl Hunter Survey and are offered for public comment. Preliminary dates are subject to revision and must be approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service this summer.

The DNR also will accept comments on additional waterfowl hunting issues such as zone and split seasons.

Written comments may be sent to Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife, Waterfowl Zone Comments, 553 E. Miller Drive, Bloomington, IN 47401. All comments must be received by April 15.

Icy speculation

The recent cold nights, when the bottoms seemed to have dropped out of thermometers around the state, have spawned some speculation among hard-water anglers that we may be benefactors of more safe ice for fishing.

"Don't count on it," said the boys from the Tackle Box, a far north-eastern bait shop in the natural lakes country where ice comes first (also last and always). The extremely cold nights also had their share of wind, and that is a no-no for the production of natural ice.

They say temps above freezing this week will likely thwart the possibilities.

Tree book

In last week's column on the Purdue University Press' hot new book, "Native Trees of the Midwest," I failed to list the telephone number for ordering this book.

The toll-free phone number is (800) 247-6553. The book can also be ordered online at pupress@purdue.edu.

The price is \$49.95, plus \$9.50 for handling and mailing. The book probably will be delivered in three to five days in Indiana.

Join the Purdue Press Pilot Program for a year (\$50) and you can get the book for free, including postage.

"Bayou" Bill Scifres' outdoors column appears Saturdays in the Daily Journal. Comments can be sent to P.O. Box 699, Franklin, IN 46131.

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