

## • Cup

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Motor Speedway will be only half full for the Brickyard 400 because NASCAR fans spent all of their money attending the Formula One U.S. Grand Prix instead.

• TV analyst **Darrell Waltrip** will forget the words to "Boogity, boogity, boogity."

• **Derrick Cope** will end a 16-year drought by winning his second Daytona 500.

• In an effort to discourage bump drafting, NASCAR will equip all cars with driver side airbags.

• **Carl Long** will dominate the regular season and then take all of the drama out of the Chase for the Cup by winning the first five races of the playoffs.

• Or, **Larry Gunselman** (who?) will dominate the regular season and then take all of the drama out of the Chase for the Cup by winning the first five races of the playoffs.

• Or, **Andy Belmont** (no, really, who?) will dominate the regular season ...

• NASCAR will return to its Southern roots by canceling all races north of the Mason-Dixon line and west of the Mississippi River. For the remaining races, free admission to anyone carrying or wearing a Confederate flag.

• **Stanton Barrett** will become a household name.

• In an effort to slow cars on superspeedways, NASCAR announces that, starting in 2007, all of its cars will resemble the aerodynamically challenged Chevy Aveo and Ford Focus.

• NASCAR will ban beer sales at all of its tracks.

• In an effort to discourage bump drafting, NASCAR will strap dynamite to the front and rear bumper of each car. It should make for some explosive racing.

• In an effort to discourage bump drafting, NASCAR will ban all motorsports writers from predicting what NASCAR will do to discourage bump drafting.

### Pit stops

• **Jake Scott** of Morgantown opened some eyes with his driving recently in the sprint-car portion of the Winternationals at East Bay Raceway Park in Tampa, Fla.

On Jan. 31, Scott surged past both **Travis Rilat** and **Dave Darland** to win the day's third heat race. After making the cut for both main events, a late spin while competing for the final transfer position while in lapped traffic in the "B" feature cost him a starting berth in the day's final race.

Jeff Decker covers motorsports for the Daily Journal. He can be reached by phone at 736-2734 or by e-mail at [jdecker@thejournalnet.com](mailto:jdecker@thejournalnet.com).

## LOCAL RACER BIOS

### Gary Ragsdale

Age: 50  
Hometown: Greenwood  
Family: Wife, Sherrill; daughter, Natasha, 26; son, Hezekiah, 24

Occupation: Engine final inspector for Rolls Royce Engine Co. in Indianapolis

Type of racing: RAGSDALE

Ragsdale started drag racing in the 1970s at Brown County Dragway and recently returned to the sport after an extended break to devote more time to his family. He hopes to race for the points championship in the Sportsman category in the VP Fuels E.T. Bracket Racing Series at Indianapolis Raceway Park this season. He also will compete in the Super Chevy Show and Goodguys Hot Rod Nationals at IRP.

Racecar: 1970 Chevrolet Chevelle SS with a 427-cubic-inch Chevy engine. Ragsdale has owned the car since April 1976.

Of note: Ragsdale's son and daughter have drag raced with their father.

### Andy Ferguson

Age: 43  
Hometown: Franklin  
Occupation: Works at Hunter Auto in Greenwood

Type of racing: FERGASON

Drives a sprint car in the weekly series at Paragon Speedway

Racecar: 2003 Stealth chassis with a 406-cubic-inch Chevy engine. Ferguson has owned the car two years and built it himself.

### Kenneth Owens

Age: 18  
Hometown: Whiteland  
Parents: Kenna and Pat Owens  
Occupation: Senior at Whiteland Community High School

Type of racing: OWENS

Is in his third season of driving a Baby Grand stockcar in the Miniature Motorsports Racing Association. Owens will race once at Indianapolis Raceway Park this season (July 22) and will visit tracks on the MMRA tour. He also will race at Music City Motorplex in Nashville, Tenn., and Shenandoah (Va.) Speedway.

Racecar: Baby Grand car with a 2000 Chevy Monte Carlo body powered by a 1,300cc Yamaha engine

Of note: Owens was ninth in the MMRA points standings last season.

### Gib Ham

Age: 24  
Hometown: Martinsville  
Occupation: Works at KYB Manufacturing in Franklin

Type of racing: HAM

Races in the bombers class at Paragon Speedway

Racecar: 1986 Chevrolet Monte Carlo SS powered by a 406-cubic-inch small-block Chevy engine

Of note: The former go-kart racer earned a season championship at Whiteland Raceway Park in 1998. He and his family were chosen as Racing Family of the Year at the Whiteland track in 1999. Ham has earned six feature wins in the past two seasons at Paragon and was second in the point standings last season.



RAGSDALE



FERGASON



OWENS



HAM

# Drivers leery of new policy

## Some call NASCAR bump-drafting rule too arbitrary

By JENNA FRYER

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla.

Across the garage, only one thing is agreed upon: Tony Stewart wasn't exaggerating when he warned that aggressive driving could kill someone during the Daytona 500.

What isn't so clear is how NASCAR can fix the dangers of bump drafting.

There were mixed reactions Wednesday over NASCAR's decision to police the racing technique in Sunday's season-opening race. The sanctioning body has been vague about where and when bump drafting will be prohibited, and they haven't indicated what penalties the violators would be subjected to.

NASCAR's first attempt to monitor the practice comes today in the twin 150-mile qualifying races.

"Look, Tony is 100 percent right; we are going to maim or kill somebody real soon if we don't do something," Mark Martin said. "Something has to happen, and I applaud NASCAR for taking the first step. But we still have major issues."

Bump drafting is an aggressive rear-ending maneuver that calls for one driver to slam into the back bumper of the car in front of him to maintain momentum. It was used heavily during last weekend's exhibition race, prompting Stewart to issue his dire prediction.

Even though Stewart admitted he was one of the culprits, he took his argument



AP PHOTO

Tony Stewart steers his car as it is pushed by a crew member after a practice session Wednesday at the Daytona International Speedway in Daytona Beach, Fla. Stewart has spoken out against the aggressive maneuver known as bump drafting.

to NASCAR in a 20-minute closed door meeting to express how out of control it was. NASCAR listened carefully to the two-time series champion, then announced it would place officials around the track to monitor the practice on Sunday.

What makes drivers nervous is giving NASCAR the right to arbitrarily decide when bump drafting is OK and when it shouldn't be done. The drivers already fight that battle at Daytona with a rule that prohibits them from going below the

yellow line on the bottom of the race track.

So Ryan Newman doesn't want to see NASCAR making more judgment calls in the biggest race of the season, especially when he thinks bump drafting could have been resolved among the drivers.

"NASCAR needs to control the drivers, not control the rules," Newman said. "If they want to stop bump drafting, then take the drivers that are screwing up out back, the way they used to do things around here."

## CALLING ALL RACERS

Those of you who race, and even those who just watch, are no doubt preparing for the 2006 season.

Daily Journal Full Throttle columnist Jeff Decker also is preparing for the season. And the best way to get ready is to find out what our local racers have planned for the new season.

If you live in the county or in the Daily Journal's circulation area just outside the county, then we want to hear from you.

All racers should contact Decker either by e-mail ([jdecker@thejournalnet.com](mailto:jdecker@thejournalnet.com))

or by mail (The Daily Journal, 2575 N. Morton St., Franklin, IN 46131, attn: Jeff Decker).

Here's what we need to know:

- Your name
- Your age
- Your hometown
- Your family (spouse and children)
- What you do for a living
- What kind of racing you do, where you race and in which series you compete
- Information about your race vehicle (year, make, model, engine, how

long you've had your vehicle)

• Contact information, including phone number and/or e-mail address. This information will not be published in the Daily Journal.

• A high-quality head-and-shoulders photo of yourself. Even if you've been featured prominently in the Full Throttle column before, drop us a line to tell us what's new with your racing efforts this season.

The Full Throttle column will resume its regular rotation in the Daily Journal in March.



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If you have not voted in the past two general (November) elections or if you have a change of address or name change, you need to register to be able to vote in this May's Election

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