

Kyle Busch waits while his team prepares for Friday's qualifying session for Sunday's Auto Club 500 at California Speedway in Fontana, Calif. Busch, 21, drives the No. 5 Carquest-Kellogg's Chevrolet.



AP PHOTO

Maturing Busch catching on

By Mike Harris
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FONTANA, Calif.

Age is no longer an issue for Kyle Busch.

For a while, his accomplishments were attributed to precocious driving. His mistakes? Simply youthful error.

Now, starting his third Nextel Cup season and approaching 22, Busch is ready to be judged strictly on his merits.

Busch had a good week at Daytona, but a rookie-like miscue on the final lap of Sunday's Daytona 500 ruined everything he had built to that point.

"We were running in second at the green-white-checked finish, and I was on Mark Martin's bumper pushing him because that was two Hendrick Motorsports engines working together," Busch said. "I tried to move up for a block (on Kevin Harvick), but it was too late."

"I settled back in line, and when we went down the front stretch, I

got loose from the air off the 17 car (Matt Kenseth) and went down to the apron and spun out."

Busch slid into Kenseth, and a seven-car crash ensued. Harvick, ahead of the melee, outraced Martin to the finish line by the length of a hood to win the season-opening race.

Busch couldn't even face the media following the race, scrambling out of his battered No. 5 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet and walking off to be alone with his thoughts.

"It was the last lap of the biggest race of the year, and there were five guys going for a win," said Busch, ready to bounce back in Sunday's Auto Club 500 at California Speedway. "It could have happened at any point during the race, but it happened then."

"I didn't want it to end that way, and I know no one else did, either. It's unfortunate because we really stepped up this year and had a dominating performance throughout the entire week."

Busch held the lead in each of the four NASCAR events he entered at Daytona and led more laps (120) than any other driver during the nine-day stretch. He led 39 laps in the Budweiser Shootout, 31 in his 150-mile qualifying race, 46 in the Busch Series race and four in the Daytona 500.

Busch finished seventh in the Shootout, fourth in his qualifier, 37th in the Busch race, due to a bad fuel pump, and 24th in the 500. "That certainly wasn't what we expected going into Daytona," Busch said. "This team is capable of better, and so is the driver. Now, we just have to put that behind us and get ourselves headed in the right direction."

Busch, along with Hendrick teammates Jeff Gordon and Jimmie Johnson, will be among the favorites at California Speedway, a track where he has already had some success. In a six-race introduction to Nextel Cup in 2004, a 24th-place finish in September at California Speedway was his best finish.

It's time to start believing: Trojans just keep winning

At the beginning of the season, I doubt that anyone thought the Center Grove girls basketball team could make it to semistate. Everyone had better believe it now.

Being focused on winning a sectional all season, I never really had my eyes set on winning a regional. After our sectional victory two weeks ago, a former coach of mine told me that we really had a good chance of winning our regional. At the time, I was not focused on anything except celebrating our sectional championship, and I did not think much of his words. Now I see that he was right.

Since few people outside of our team expected us to win our highly competitive regional, we have officially been classified as "underdogs."

I think that not being a favorite to win has advantages. We were expected to lose in both of our regional games last weekend. My teammates and I knew we could win. Being an underdog makes winning a regional championship seem even greater.



Lydia Feldman
WINTER SPORTS DIARY

We started by beating Ben Davis in the regional semifinal game. Earlier in the year, Ben Davis beat us by 14 points.

Then for the championship game, we knocked off undefeated, top-ranked Hamilton Southeastern by a single point. That single point was a free throw from Hillary Bowling with one second left. I might add that she shot an air ball on her first attempt. Sorry, I just had to put this in, Hillary.

It probably seems quite surprising to many people, even me, that we are the same team that lost the Johnson County Tournament earlier this year. We are the same team, but we are playing with more intensity and passion.

Earlier in the season, our team had a hard time playing up to

our opponent's level of intensity. Now, our opponents are having a hard time matching our intensity. This intensity has allowed us to execute in close games.

There is a difference in playing to win and playing to not lose. We are now playing to win.

This week, we are playing the Columbus East Olympians. They beat us in our holiday tournament earlier in the year. Not only are we going to avenge a loss, but hopefully we can come up with a semistate victory. It is hard to beat the same team twice, as Ben Davis found out last weekend.

It has been a great honor to make it this far in the postseason. Representing Center Grove and feeling so much support from the school has been a great experience. The past couple of weeks have been the best times in my basketball career thus far. I am just hoping that we can keep our underdog status for another week.

Lydia Feldman is a senior on the Center Grove High School girls basketball team. Her Winter Sports Diary entries appear each week in the Daily Journal.

Seniors' fishing license bill hot topic

It is crunch time for the so-called senior citizen fishing license bill currently in the House.

That controversial concept probably will be called to the floor of the House sometime soon. And it surely will die a seventh time unless the people (or at least a good many of them) get their duly elected representatives to back the measure.

That's the way it is. The bill passed the House Natural Resources Committee on Feb. 14 and will probably, as well as I can tell you, be on the floor of that chamber some time soon. They may get to it right away.

It is going to need help from everybody. It is believed by insiders that this is, indeed, its last shot, that the state will continue to give away money that rightfully belongs to the Division of Fish and Wildlife and the people of the state.

If the bill gets to a third reading in the House and is ultimately adopted, it still must pass the Senate, but that chamber is Republican in numbers and is believed to be offering a good shot. We will just have to wait to see how the wind blows.

Conservationists and conservation organizations throughout the state are urging their constituents and others to call or contact their representatives for support of the measure.



'Bayou' Bill Scifres
OUTDOORS

The bill passed the House Feb. 16, 2006, as a compromise. Very briefly it "grandfathers in" all those now 64 (born before April 1, 1943) and those now 65 who do not now require a fishing license. They will never have to buy a license. In the future, any person born after March 31, 1943, may buy an annual license for \$3 as they become 65 years old, or a lifetime license for \$17.

The DNR would receive \$2.5 million in Wallop-Breaux federal excise tax funds during the next 10 years as a result of this legislation should it become law.

Snow impact unknown

Having talked several days ago with a few folks involved in wildlife management, the consensus seems to be that it is a bit early to tell what snow did to the critters, where and when.

Bob Porch, the pheasant man and a knowledgeable biologist at Willow Slough, sounds a note of encouragement with the notion (or sneaky feeling) that it won't

be too bad. The thaw is now on, but it is difficult to predict what that will do.

"A lot depends on habitat," says Porch, who explains that we have gone through weather cycles before that made us suspect bad damage to the critters (especially pheasants), but that the wildlife always turns up when the snow turns down. There will be some problems where the habitat consists mostly of grass, Porch notes, but adds that heavier habitat helps.

Eastward from the state's western border, Jason Wade, manager of the Pigeon River State Fish and Wildlife Area, sees only about 9 inches of snow and doubts there will be great damage to wildlife.

The snow situation is worse in the northern two-thirds of Indiana.

Dr. Jim Mitchell, deer biologist for the DFW with offices at Bloomington, says they have only an inch or so of snow there, no problem for deer.

There was, however, some ice involved in the area south of Indianapolis, and that could deal out some concern.

The southern third of the state is not threatened.

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

2007 Is Bringing BIG Changes To Associates For Women's Health

Please join us in welcoming Swati Jain, M.D. to our practice. She will begin seeing patients on March 1. Dr. Jain recently completed her residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology (OB/GYN) at Bethesda, North and Good Samaritan Hospitals in Cincinnati, Ohio. Originally from Delhi, India, she and her husband (also a physician) have two grown sons. We look forward to adding Dr. Jain to our excellent team of providers.

We are also excited to announce the relocation of our office. Beginning February 26 all patients will be seen at our new location. Please make note of our new address below. Our phone number will remain the same.

Indiana American Office Park
533 E. County Line Road, Suite 102
Greenwood, Indiana 46143

(317) 859-6626

The new office is located on the south side of County Line Road, approximately 1 mile west of I-65 South. Our offices will be closed on February 22 and 23 as we make our move to the new location.

We will continue to accept new patients and offer a full range of OB/GYN services.

Thank you for your continued trust. Our staff is looking forward to serving you at our new location.

Associates for Women's Health, P.C.

Tessa M. Asdell, M.D.

Soheila Boyer, D.O.



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