

NASCAR Triple Header Weekend at Atlanta Motor Speedway

Story by Phillip Prichard, MSA

Jimmie Johnson won the 56th Annual Folds of Honor QuikTrip 500 holding off a valiant challenge from his Hendrick Motorsports teammate Dale Earnhardt Jr. on a restart with 14 of 325 laps remaining. After Johnson cleared Earnhardt on the restart, Kevin Harvick got around Earnhardt but couldn't get near enough to attempt a pass for the lead and finished second. Earnhardt finished third, Joey Logano was fourth and Matt Kenseth rallied from two laps down to finish fifth.

Johnson led six times for 92 laps, including the final 21, to win for the fourth time in his career at AMS. This was Johnson 71st victory in his 473 NSACAR Sprint Cup Races. Johnson started in the 37th position, because his car could not get through tech inspection on time to make a qualifying lap on Friday. Johnson thanked his pit crew for great pit stops.

Kevin Harvick dominated the first half of the race after passing pole sitter, Joey Logano.

With 20 laps to go, the field was red flagged with a multiple car wreck on the back stretch. The wreck involved Gordon, Newman, Hamlin, and McMurray. Jeff Gordon suffered the worst when he impacted a non-safer barrier wall. Gordon had a fast car but he was, also, forced to start in the rear of the field due to his car not getting through tech inspection on time to qualify.

Brett Moffitt filling in for Brian Vickers in the 55 finished an impressive eighth place. Jeb Burton was the highest finishing rookie with a 35th place finish.



JOEY GETS THE POLE FOR SUNDAY RACE

On Saturday, in a rare double header race, Kevin Harvick scored his fourth career win at Atlanta Motor Speedway in the NASCAR XFINITY Series in Hisense 250. The win made Harvick the all-time leading series race winner at the Georgia track and was his third straight. Harvick's 45th career victory ranks him third on the series' all-time win list.

Harvick dominated the second race of the 2015 season and led 101 of the 163 laps on his way to giving JR Motorsports another trip to Victory Lane.

Joey Logano, finished second, Ty Dillon, third, Chris Buescher, fourth and Chase Elliott, fifth. Paul Menard, Brian Scott, Matt Kenseth, Regan Smith and Kyle Larson completed the first 10 finishers.

Buescher and Dillon are tied for the lead in the XFINITY Series point standings headed into Las Vegas.

Matt Crafton won the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series Hyundai Construction Equipment 200. The two-time defending series champion led two times for 85 laps, including the final 72, he was 8.8 seconds ahead of second place. The win was Crafton's sixth of his career and his first at Atlanta.

Ty Dillon finished second after coming home third earlier in the day in the XFINITY Series race. Pole winner Ben Kennedy finished third after battling Daniel Suarez at the end of the race to match his career best finish. Suarez finished a career-best fourth and Daytona winner Tyler Reddick rounded out the top five. Johnny Sauter, Erik Jones, James Buescher, Timothy Peters and Joe Nemechek completed the top-10 finishers.

Reddick leads the point standings by two points over Crafton as the series gets ready to head to Martinsville Speedway on March 28.

The most talked about news of the weekend was Travis Kavil's Team Xtreme No. 44 race car, trailer and tow truck being stolen Friday morning from a hotel parking lot in Morrow, Georgia. Gwinnett County police found the car in Loganville, Georgia -- northwest of Atlanta on Saturday but the trailer and tow truck are still missing. Kavil's team was forced to withdraw from the Atlanta race.



Photo: MSA Staff

XFINITY RACE START

See all the photos we took at the AMS race weekend on next 2 pages

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