

ATLANTA MOTOR SPEEDWAY TO REPAVE IN 2017

Twenty years after it was last resurfaced, Atlanta Motor Speedway's historic racing surface is scheduled to be repaved this spring, following the March 3-5 NASCAR Weekend triple-header. Work is scheduled to begin in late March with an expected completion in mid-April.

The current asphalt at AMS is the second-oldest racing surface on the entire NASCAR Cup Series circuit, and officials credit its longevity to a combination of the mild Georgia winters and a meticulous maintenance program over its entire two-decade lifetime.

Since its last repave in 1997, the track has hosted 31 premier NASCAR series races, 19 NASCAR XFINITY Series races, 15 NASCAR Camping World Truck Series races, eight ARCA Racing Series races, four IndyCar Series races and countless U.S. Legends and Bandolero car races on its quarter-mile "Thunder Ring."

Despite the wear and tear of aging in recent years, the track has been a favorite of many competitors who have raved about the challenging nature of the track. Its

aged surface, slick driving conditions and multiple racing grooves have produced not only exciting races and close finishes for fans in attendance, but a technical challenge for drivers who have battled slick corners, fast straightaways and ample opportunity for passing.

Some of the most notable NASCAR races have taken place on the current surface, including Dale Earnhardt's 0.010-second margin of victory over Bobby Labonte in 2000, Kevin Harvick's emotional and record-setting 0.006-second margin of victory over Jeff Gordon in Earnhardt's Richard Childress Racing car the following year, Carl Edwards' first Cup Series victory in 2005 and subsequent season sweep of both Atlanta races that year and the first-ever Atlanta night race in 2009.

Geoff Bodine's amazing AMS qualifying record was set at the very first race on the current surface in 1997, when he blazed around the track in 28.074 seconds at an average speed of 197.478 mph. And currently, Bobby Labonte and seven-time NASCAR champion Jimmie Johnson are tied at five

for the most Cup Series victories on the surface. Johnson can break the tie in the final race on the surface at the 2017 Folds of Honor QuikTrip 500 as he attempts his third consecutive victory at Atlanta.

"Whichever driver can take home the Folds of Honor QuikTrip 500 trophy in 2017 will mark the end of one era of great racing in AMS history and the beginning of another," said AMS president Ed Clark.

The repaving project calls for a brand-new asphalt surface to be lain over top of the current surface. AMS's quad-oval layout and 24-degree banking in the turns will remain unchanged.

While a smoother surface and blended seams will accompany the new repave, the high speeds and multiple racing grooves unique to Atlanta Motor Speedway are expected to endure and produce the same, thrilling racing experience for both fans and drivers for many years to come.

Drivers who have enjoyed the unique quality of the existing AMS racing surface will have one more opportunity to etch their name in the track record books when



NASCAR returns March 3-5.

NASCAR Cup Series qualifying will kick off the weekend on Friday, March 3 before the only same-day doubleheader will take to the track on Saturday, March 4 with the back-to-back Rinnai 250 XFINITY Series and Active Pest Control 200 Camping World Truck Series races. The Folds of Honor QuikTrip 500 Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series race will round out the weekend on Sunday, March 5 with a scheduled 2:30 p.m. green flag.

For more information or to purchase tickets, contact the Atlanta Motor Speedway ticket office at (770) 946-4211, (877) 9-AMS-TIX or visit www.atlantamotor-speedway.com.

NASCAR RACE FORMAT CHANGES COMING TO AMS

In collaboration with industry stakeholders, NASCAR announced earlier this evening an enhanced competition format that will be implemented in all three of its national touring series, including at Atlanta Motor Speedway for the Folds of Honor QuikTrip 500 Weekend March 3-5.

Increasing the sense of urgency and emphasizing aggressive racing and strategy, the format will deliver more dramatic moments over the course of an entire race and season, with playoff point incentives on the line throughout.

Now, more than ever, each of the 36 races on the NASCAR schedule will play a significant part in where a driver will finish in the point standings after the 26-race regular season, while also impacting their overall seeding in the playoffs.

The enhanced format will consist of the following:

Races will now consist of three stages, with championship implications in each stage.

The top-10 finishers of the first two stages will be awarded additional championship points.

The winner of the first two stages of each race will receive one playoff point, and the race winner will receive five playoff points. Each playoff point will be added to his or her reset total following race No. 26, if that competitor makes the playoffs.

All playoff points will carry through to the end of the third round of the playoffs (Round of 8), with the Championship 4 racing straight-up at Homestead-Miami Speedway for the title.

Championship points following the first two stages will be awarded on a descending scale, with the stage winner receiving 10 points, second receiving 9 points, and so on.

The race winner following the final stage will now receive 40 points, second-place will receive 35, third-place 34, fourth-place 33, and so on.

"Atlanta is a challenging track," said Ed Clark, Atlanta Motor Speedway president. "What we typically have seen throughout the years, is that as the race goes on, we rubber down the track from top to bottom, and it takes a while to get that done. But now, we're going to see guys really have to get after it from the start, and the strategy will come into play. But we're going to see better racing in the early- to mid-segments

of the race in stead of that last half of the race, like we've typically seen.

"I think it's going to be a little more compelling action, and everybody is going to be figuring this out. It will be a big learning curve, I think, for all the crew chiefs and the drivers participating in the event."

NASCAR also announced a playoff bonus structure that will see the regular season points leader honored as the regular season champion, earning 15 playoff points that will be added to the driver's playoff reset of 2,000. In addition, the top-10 drivers in points leading into the playoffs will receive playoff points, with second place receiving 10 playoff points, third place will earn 8 points, fourth place will receive 7 points, and so on. All playoff points will carry through to the end of the Round of 8.

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