

Jimmie Johnson dominates Martinsville for his eighth win at the track

By Reid Spencer

Jimmie Johnson made eight the easy way.

Leading 346 of 500 laps in Sunday's April 6 STP Gas Booster 500 at Martinsville Speedway, Johnson racked up his eighth NASCAR Sprint Cup Series win at the .526-mile short track and the 62nd win of his career. For the second straight event at Martinsville, Johnson won from the pole.

Clint Bowyer ran second, followed by Jeff Gordon, Kasey Kahne and Kyle Busch.

The first repeat winner through six 2013 Cup races, Johnson regained the series lead by six points over sixth-place finisher and defending champion Brad Keselowski.

If a victory at a short track can ever be called a walk in the park, Johnson enjoyed a Sunday stroll from start to finish. At no point in the race did he run below fifth.

"I think the fact that we had just such a calm weekend was the biggest part," Johnson said. "It's easy to start chasing things here and get yourself off track. We always race well, and fortunately here you pit a

and you can make big changes to your race car to get you in the ballgame.

"We've won races where we were just terrible to start the race, having no fun. (Crew chief) Chad (Knaus) is throwing spring rubbers in the car and the track bar is coming up or down, wedge in and out, all those huge, huge changes, and we get ourselves in contention.

"I don't know where we were - someone said the worst I was on the track was fourth [actually, fifth]. We just executed from the first laps in practice to where we were at the end of the race, and that was fun. We weren't chasing a setup or track conditions or a variety of things that we've done in the past."

Johnson passed Earnhardt as the driver of the No. 88 Chevrolet tried to re-fire and right his car, putting Earnhardt a lap down. Earnhardt finished 24th and fell from first to third in points, 12 behind Johnson, his Hendrick Motorsports teammate.

Note: The 346 laps led are the most for Johnson in a single race in his career. Johnson also became the seventh driver in Cup history to lead 2,000 or more career laps at Martinsville. His total now stands at 2,327.



Jimmie Johnson, driver of the #48 Lowe's Chevrolet, celebrates with a burnout after winning the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series STP Gas Booster 500 on April 7, 2013 at Martinsville Speedway in Ridgeway, Virginia. (Photo by John Harrelson/Getty Images)

NASCAR Drivers Turn Laps In Gen-6 Car For First Time At Richmond International Raceway

Four NASCAR drivers turned laps at Richmond International Raceway during a test session April 1 marking the first time NASCAR's Gen-6 car has run at America's Premier Short Track. Juan Montoya, Jamie McMurray, Marcos Ambrose and Aric Almirola will be back Saturday, April 27, for the Toyota Owners 400 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race. Tickets, including seats in Turns 1 & 4, start at \$45 in advance and can be purchased by clicking here or calling 866-455-7223.

Cool track temperatures this morning made it easy for the drivers to find grip, resulting in blistering speeds that would challenge the official track qualifying record, which Brian Vickers set in 2004 (20.772 seconds, 129.983 mph).

"The track is extremely fast," said Almirola. "When we rolled out on the track at 9:00 this morning, it was still kinda cool and the track had a lot of grip. We were running lap times close to the pole speed in race trim. Really surprised at how fast the track was and how fast our cars were."

"This morning was a lot of fun," said Montoya. "The track was really cool this morning so it was crazy fast. It's a good place when you need to find some traction. There's a lot of things you can work on here."

"(The Gen-6 car has) so much more grip than what we had last year," said McMurray. "I think it would be hard to find anybody say they don't like that. It turns

better, it has more drive off, everything's better about it."

Tickets are on sale now for the Toyota Owners 400 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race at Richmond International Raceway. Advance tickets, including seats in Turns 1 and 4, start at \$45, and can be purchased online by clicking here or by calling 866-455-7223. Tickets for the ToyotaCare 250 start at \$30 in advance and can be purchased online by clicking here or by calling 866-455-7223. Children 12 and younger are admitted free with a ticketed adult in general admission sections on Friday. The weekend begins Thursday, April 25, when the NASCAR K&N Pro Series East returns to RIR for the BLUE OX 100 and Denny Hamlin Short Track Show-



Aric Almirola, driver of the #43 Smithfield Ford, drives during testing at Richmond International Raceway on April 1, 2013, in Richmond, Va. (Credit: John Harrelson/Harrelson Photography Inc. for Getty Images)

down presented by FedEx, benefiting the Children's Hospital of Richmond at VCU. Advance tickets are \$25, with children 12 and younger admitted free.



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