

Seven Drivers test the 2016 Rules Package at Atlanta Motor Speedway

By Phillip Prichard, MSA

Atlanta Motor Speedway hosted seven teams for a NASCAR open team test on the 2016 rules package on October 29.

The teams at Atlanta were the:

No. 17 Roush Fenway Racing team with Ricky Stenhouse Jr.; No. 19 Joe Gibbs Racing team with David Ragan; No. 21 Wood Brothers Racing team with Ryan Blaney;

No. 22 Team Penske team with Joey Logano; No. 25 Hendrick Motorsports team with Chase Elliott;

No. 41 Stewart-Haas Racing team with Kurt Busch and No. 43 Richard Petty Motorsports team with Aric Almirola.

The new rules package, which will be run for the first time in 2016 at

Atlanta Motor Speedway, includes a 3.5-inch rear spoiler, a .25-inch front splitter leading edge and a 33-inch-wide radiator pan. It is designed for drivers to play a larger role in handling and maneuvering and allow for easier conditions to pass on the race track.

The 2016 rules package is similar to the rules packages that were in place this year at Kentucky Speedway and Darlington Raceway where reduced downforce was prevalent.

Early on in the morning session, Aric Almirola clocked a lap time of 30.544 seconds, hitting 185.198 miles per hour, while Ricky Stenhouse Jr. touched



KURT BUSCH & CHASE ELLOITT ON TRACK

just under 185 miles per hour and a lap time of 30.698. Later in the afternoon, Kurt Busch hit a speed of 176.518 miles per hour, and Joey Logano broke 177 miles per hour with a lap time of 31.004 in the warmer afternoon air.

Like many drivers, Almirola, who finished 12th at Kentucky and 11th at Darlington, is a fan of the direction the sport is heading.

Chase Elliott, who will be driving the No. 24 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet in the sport's top series in 2016, believes that this package should be just the first step.

"I think it's a step in the right direction. Keyword, step," the defending NASCAR XFINITY Series champion said. "I don't think we need to be satisfied and happy with the location that we've landed at right now. I think we need to continue to try and improve and get better.

"There's always room for improvement, definitely, on our side, trying to get better from a driver's perspective, try to make the cars drive better. Also, from a package



standpoint, trying to put on a good show for the fans. I think this is a great step and I think this is the direction we need to go in."

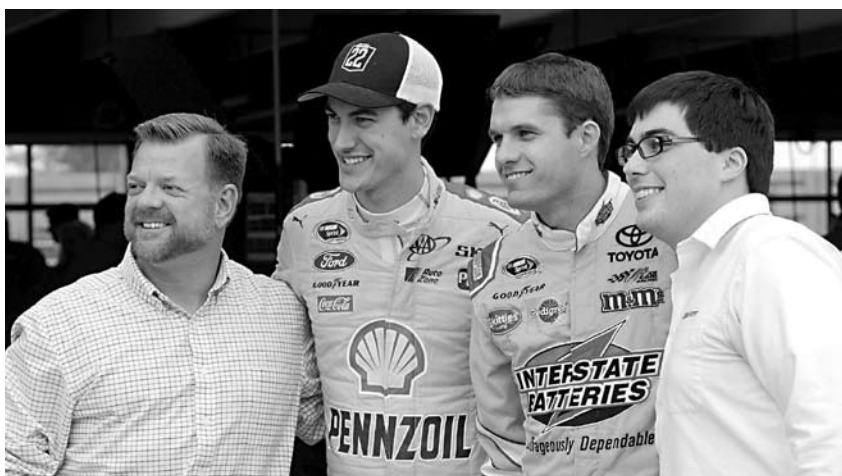
Chase Elliott commented on being featured in a forthcoming Atlanta Motor Speedway TV commercial: "I appreciate everyone here at AMS giving me the opportunity to do that. I think it's pretty cool, and I was happy that Dad agreed to do it too. I think that's special. This is our home track on the circuit. It definitely is mine, and I know it has been for my Dad for many years. Hopefully we can put on a good show for them here in February."

Chase, also, commented on his upcoming Atlanta debut in the Sprint Cup Series at the Folds of Honor QuikTrip 500 on Feb. 28, 2016: "I'm definitely excited. And I don't really think it's all quite set in just yet. I'm really looking forward to next season, and the more days we spend doing tests like this, the more it starts to set in for me that the next time we come to this track will be next year in the No. 24 car, and we'll be racing Sprint Cup full time. All of those things are things that I've dreamed to do for a long time."

Photos by MSA Staff



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