

# Junior Wins the Talladega GEICO 500; Logano Wins Winn Dixie 300

Story by: Phillip Prichard/Photos: MSA Staff

An emotional Dale Jr. earned his 6th Talladega victory, winning the GEICO 500. The 88 led a total of 67 of the 188 laps. With 10 laps to go, the front pack of 10 cars, led by Junior dominated the race. However, with 8 laps to go, Junior picked up trash and his grill causing his car to overheat, but he maintained his line to the checkered flag. Jimmie Johnson, Paul Menard, Ryan Blaney and Martin Truex Jr. rounded out the top five.

Junior had a big grin as he saluted his Earnhardt Country fans by doing a Polish Victory Lap on the front stretch on his route to victory circle. He is the eighth driver to seal his place in the Chase for the year. The victory gave Crew Chief Greg Ives his first victory with Junior. In an interview with Darrel Waltrip on Saturday, Junior said, "I am happy with who I am".

There were 27 lead changes among 15 drivers. There were 6 cautions for 23 yellow flag laps. On Lap 47, the "Big Crash" occurred when Paul Menard got Trevor Bayne loose causing him to spin, collect-

ing 15 cars in the crash, sending 6 cars to the garage. With Lap 80 to go, it was 4 wide racing and with 65 Laps to go, it was 3 wide racing, 8 rows back from the lead. On the last lap, a number of cars crashed but NASCAR pleased the fans by allowing the leaders to race back to the checkered flag.

Jeff Gordon won the Coors Light pole for the GEICO 500 Sprint Cup Series race at Talladega Superspeedway with speed of 194.793mph for his 3rd pole of 2015, 4th at Talladega and 80th of his career. Gordon was three tenths of second faster than Kahne. All of his Hendrick teammates were in the top five: Kahne was second; Earnhardt Jr. fourth; and Johnson, fifth. A modified qualifying format debuted at Talladega Superspeedway called a Rapid Fire Format that consisted of two rounds of qualifying, with the top-12 posted lap speeds advancing to the second round. Rookie Ryan Blaney in the Woods Brother's 21 qualified third and finished the race in the fourth position. Gordon led 47 laps and ran up front most of the race until late in the race when he sped on pit road and had to start at the



rear. He was caught up in a wreck of Carl Edwards at the end of the race.

Kevin Harvick maintains the Chase points lead with 394 points, 40 points over Martin Truex Jr.

WOW! What a finish in the XFINITY Winn-Dixie 300 race. Joey Logano, Chris Buescher, Elliott Sadler and Austin Dil-

lon battled for the lead on the final laps. Longano slid up the track to block Buescher's line, sealing the deal for the win. Rounding out the top five were: #2-Brian Scott; 33-Austin Dillon; #28-JJ Yeley; and #52-Joey Gase.

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