

Denny Hamlin wins at the Glen

Story by Rose Ward / Photos by MSA Staff

It was a perfect day for racing on the newly repaved track at Watkins Glen International. Clear blue skies greeted the sellout crowd. While attendance at many racetracks has diminished, WGI sold out for a second year in a row.

Carl Edwards won the Coors Light Pole Award for the 31st Annual Cheez-it at the Glen with a lap of 69.68 seconds, 126.56 mph. Kyle Larson was second and the retiring fan favorite, Tony Stewart, was third.

The first part of the race was uneventful with only one caution in the first 48 laps. Although the penalties were mounting during that time, including four penalties for #88 Jeff Gordon who was racing for Dale Earnhardt Jr., Joey Logano and AJ Allmendinger both received penalties for speeding.

On lap 49 there was debris on pit row

causing a caution flag for three laps. After that, they couldn't get more than 10 laps in without a caution flag coming out.

The first red flag came on lap 54 with a multi-car accident on turn five involving Austin Dillon, Greg Biffle, Ricky Stenhouse Jr. and Jimmie Johnson. Stenhouse got loose and came across the racetrack, he then came back onto the track and took a very heavy hit from Jimmy Johnson, who hit his driver's side door. This took Stenhouse, Biffle and Johnson out the race and stopped the race for 13 minutes.

On lap 58, another accident occurred in turn five, this time with Carl Edwards, Clint Bowyer and David Ragan causing a caution flag. Additional caution flags came out on laps 66, 78 and 82. Restarting with 10 laps remaining, Brad Keselowski was first with Kyle Busch in second. A caution on turn one resulted when Ryan Newman spun around.

Restart again: Keselowski and Busch



JEFF AND TONY'S LAST GLEN!!



CARL TOOK THE POLE

went wide on turn one leaving the door open for Denny Hamlin to take over the first position. With five laps to go, another accident involving seven cars produces a red flag. Harvick, Ragan and DiBenedetto are out of the race. Buescher gets his car back to the pits and the crew does a great job in record time to get him back on the track before the race ends. Red flag duration was 16 minutes and 14 seconds.

Green flag with four laps to go puts Hamlin in first and Logano in second, Stewart restarts in ninth place. Denny Hamlin won the Cheez-its 355.

This is Hamlin's first road course win. Logano came in second, Keselowski was third, followed by Allmendinger and Stewart in fifth.

Hamlin slowly and painfully walked into the media center for an interview. He said he knew he was in trouble that morning, he must have slept wrong and woke up with a bad back. If it had been Friday or Saturday, he probably would not have driven on Sunday. "It's the most pain I've driven in," he said. Hamlin has had back problems before, but has a routine to help. "I'll be better by Tuesday," he added.



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