

THE ART OF RACING

ART
LARSON

Time to make changes

The Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series took the Father's Day weekend off, giving me a chance to discuss a problem, (as I see it), in NASCAR.

When a driver wins a race and then fails post-race inspections, his win is deemed encumbered. That means the win does not count for the playoffs. The win and the playoff points do not count in the standings. The team is fined, the crew chief is suspended for several races, but the money and trophy are given to the penalized driver. Why doesn't NASCAR just take away wins for failing post-race inspections?

The official line is that NASCAR doesn't want fans to leave the track having seen a race winner, only to get home and find out they didn't win after all. With today's technology, if the winning car failed post-race tech, fans would know by the time they got home, possibly before they left the parking lot. Most fans are knowledgeable enough to understand what happened and accept the penalty.

There's no reason to award a win to a car that's not legal after a race in this day and age, and it's high time NASCAR starts making sure the winner raced a car that's within the rules.

Another problem area is that teams are failing pre-race inspections and missing qualifying. All that is done is that the offending team has to start at the back of the field. It's called "qualifying" for a reason. Teams are trying to bend the rules and get an illegal car into the race. Well, it's time for a little tough love. It's a simple concept. If you can't make a qualifying attempt for one reason or another, you don't make the race.

These are the best teams with the best drivers in stock car racing, so why should it be so hard to bring a properly prepared car to the track? They've been going through the process for 15 weeks now, yet inevitably, each week someone is getting their crew chief booted and having to start at the tail end of the field. If all the teams are going to make the race no matter what, why not just draw names out of a hat for starting positions?

NASCAR seems to think that the teams owe it to their sponsors to be in the show. Perhaps the team owner should emphasize the importance of making sure the car is on the right side of the rulebook. That way, he doesn't have to make a call to the company that rented out an entire suite to tell them they won't have a car on track Sunday afternoon.

The current system isn't really looking to punish the teams that overstep the boundaries. Instead, it's catering to the organizations with the most money and the biggest fan draw, and it's time to take a serious stand by toughening up its rules.

Chopping the competition



Taylor Smith threw four strong innings to push Gary Steele Karate past Beasley's Brawlers 5-2 Tuesday in the boys 12-14 senior league tournament. The win pushed Gary Steele into the championship game, where it will meet Womack Printing Friday at the Dottie West Field.

Jeffery Simmons photo

Gary Steele bests Beasley's Brawlers

BY JEFFERY SIMMONS
Sports Editor for the Southern Standard
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

Gary Steele Karate saw itself finish third in a three-team senior league this season, but standings flew out the window Tuesday when the single-elimination tournament started.

Flamethrower Taylor Smith propelled Gary Steele Karate to the tournament finals with a 5-2 victory over Beasley's Brawlers.

Smith was lights out on the mound, throwing a no-hitter in the dominant performance. The Brawlers only had five batters reach base, all on walks – including Isaac Beasley and Brady Melton scoring on wild pitches after drawing free passes.

Alex van Vuuren helped Gary Steele Karate get off to a quick start, dropping in a two-run triple in the first inning. The Gary Steele slugger drilled a 1-2 pitch from Balor Melton to the fence, sending the Brawler outfield scrambling as van Vuuren put on the burners to reach third.

Melton, who had three strikeouts while taking the loss, was able to limit the damage to two runs with a strikeout, stranding van Vuuren at third.

Smith set the tone with the very first batter, humming in three straight strikes for his first of six strikeouts. Beasley was able to reach on a walk and steal around to third and score on a passed ball, but Smith followed with a strikeout and groundout to preserve a 2-1 lead.

Dominique Padin pushed the lead to three in the second, ripping a bases-loaded double to score Jax Patterson and Seth Cruze after both drew walks. Talan Mullican followed with a single to score Padin and make it 5-1.

Jared Scruggs entered in the second and shut down Gary Steele going forward, striking out seven of the 10 batters he faced. It was too late though.

Smith continued to rip through the Brawlers, keeping batter off balance with his speed and imposing curveball.

Beasley's had one final chance to cut into the lead in the fourth, getting Melton on with a lead-off walk before moving over on a Kadin Tackett groundout. Melton scored on an Alex Tallent groundout, pushing the Brawlers to their final out.

Alex Johnson gave the team life by drawing a walk, but he was tagged out trying to steal home to end the game.

Gary Steele Karate will meet Womack Printing, the regular-season champion, Friday to decide the tournament title.

Post 173 holding Dr Pepper tourney

BY JEFFERY SIMMONS
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If you're looking for something to wash down the peanuts and cracker jacks, the Dr Pepper Invitational is coming to town this weekend.

The American Legion Post 173 will hold the Invitational at Patrick Ramsey Field Friday and Saturday, featuring five 15U legion teams – including the local Post 173 team. The Dr Pepper Invitational also includes teams from Tullahoma, Columbia, Manchester and Tuscaloosa.

Admission is \$5 for the games, with proceeds going to local American Legion. Games are set to start at 2 p.m. Friday and 10 a.m. Saturday.

The invitational kicked off Thursday night,

though rain forced the postponement of one of three games slated to be played. Event organizers are hopeful games can be played as scheduled throughout the weekend, though more games can be moved to Saturday's slate if necessary.

Currently, Friday's games include Columbia Post 19 facing Manchester Post 78 at 2 p.m., followed by Columbia taking on Tuscaloosa Post 34 at 4:30 p.m. Post 34 is also scheduled to play at 7 p.m. against Post 78 from Manchester. Post 173 is slated to play at 12:30 p.m. Saturday against Tuscaloosa Post 34 and again at 5:30 p.m. against Columbia Post 19.

Post 173 played Thursday, with the score unavailable at press time.

Continued on 3B

Dashing Damon



Jeffery Simmons photo

Huck Damon beats the throw to Malachi Walker during Tuesday's tournament action in the boys 6-8 league. Scores can be found on 2B.



July 21st

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