

THE ART OF RACING



A tale of two tracks

The past two Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series races have shown us the problem fans have with the race schedule. The Overton's 400 race in Chicagoland was 267 laps long but the only thing worth talking about was the final two laps. Granted, the last two laps were probably the most exciting two laps this year, but the first 265 laps were probably the most boring.

Kyle Busch won the race after trading paint with Kyle Larson during the final two laps. Larson came from more than three seconds back to catch Busch for the lead. On the white-flag lap, Larson hit Busch in the left-rear quarter panel. While running side-by-side, Busch returned the favor, causing Larson to spin. Larson managed to straighten his car out but finished second behind Busch.

There are too many 1-1/2 mile tracks on the Cup Series schedule where fans see this type of racing all too often.

The following week, the Cup Series ran a restrictor plate race in Daytona and the excitement was seen during the whole race. It was a race of survival as only 18 of the 40 cars finished the race.

The first major wreck occurred on lap 54, involving 26 cars. Brad Keselowski, Chase Elliott, Denny Hamlin, Daniel Suarez, Joey Logano, Kurt Busch and Ryan Blaney were all knocked out of the race because of the incident. Two more major incidents occurred during the race knocking out several other major contenders including Kyle Busch, Jamie McMurray, Jimmy Johnson, Clint Bowyer and Kevin Harvick.

Erik Jones was involved in one of the wrecks but was able to continue racing. At one point of the race, Jones was a lap down but managed to get back on the lead lap. Because of wrecks at the end of the race, two over-times were necessary. It seemed that Truex was in control of the race but Jones managed to slip ahead of him on the final lap to win his first Cup Series race. Jones becomes the seventh driver to go to Victory Lane this year, leaving only nine playoff positions for drivers to get in on points.

"Today was not a day that I necessarily thought was going to be our day," Jones said. "I just didn't. We were laying back and dropping back and at one point, we had to repair quite a bit of damage and went a lap down. I didn't give up at that point, but thought, OK, we've really got to do our best to salvage a solid day."

Kyle Busch continues to lead the standings but had his lead shrink by five points over Harvick. Truex gained 22 points on Busch to remain in third place. Logano and Keselowski round out the top five.

35 DAYS TO KICKOFF

Pioneers grinding

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

Handling the heat has been both literal and figurative for the Pioneers this week.

During the humid dog days of July, the Warren County High School football team has embarked on trips to Cookeville to test their mettle against teams in 7-on-7 games.

Coach Tom Moore, entering his fourth season with the Pioneers, saw his team improve on day two of games at Cookeville Tuesday. Adapting to the competition, and the 95-degree heat, was evident.

"The first day, we weren't throwing the ball on time. Tuesday, our quarterbacks threw the ball on time better and the receivers ran their routes better," said Moore. "We were much more confident."

The Pioneers took on Livingston Academy, Smith County and Lebanon Tuesday after facing Cookeville, Stone Memorial and Upperman Monday. Cookeville will be the only team Warren County will face again as the teams are set to square off Friday, Aug. 31.

The 7-on-7 work lends itself to addressing the passing game, an area the Pioneers knew would need some revamping with a three-year quarterback graduating. Sophomores Bryson Elrod and Clay Thompson saw significant action in Tuesday's workout and will continue to share snaps during pre-season work.

"Both quarterbacks had improvement. It's good to have two guys who you feel confident in and who can play," said Moore. "They both played and they will both play when we get to the scrimmages. There's nothing wrong with a little competition."

Weapons on the outside should ease the burden on Elrod and Thompson.

Continued on 2B



Photo courtesy of Scott Wilson/Herald Citizen
Sophomore quarterback Bryson Elrod got plenty of work during 7-on-7 competitions in Cookeville Tuesday. Elrod and fellow sophomore Clay Thompson are vying for the starting spot this fall.



Photo provided
Members of the Pioneer offensive line made the trip to Goodpasture Tuesday. Members of the group include, kneeling, Aiden Cummings. Second row, from left, assistant coach Ben Matheny, Austin McBride, Ethan Bernhardt, Alex Juarez, Dean Galloway, Jessie Lira, Buddy Hillis, Dillon Haley, Kaden Jordan and assistant coach Matt Turner. Back row, Ethan Sanchez, Douglas Wells, Caleb McCormick, Garrett Ashburn and Devin Jordan.

Pioneers compete in lineman challenge

BY JEFFERY SIMMONS
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(McMinnville, Tennessee)

The guys doing the grunt work got their time to shine Tuesday in Goodpasture. Members of the Pioneers offensive and defensive lines made the trek to Nashville to take part in the lineman challenge.

The big men upfront for the Pioneers are used to operating in the shadows, paving holes for big runs or protecting the passer. On Tuesday

though, their skills were put to the test against some of the best groups in the state.

Assistant coaches Ben Matheny and Matt Turner took a group of 14 players to the event. Devin Jordan, Garrett Ashburn, Caleb McCormick, Douglas Wells, Ethan Sanchez, Kaden Jordan, Dillon Haley, Buddy Hillis, Jessie Lira, Dean Galloway, Alex Juarez, Ethan Bernhardt, Austin McBride and Aiden Cummings were put through a gauntlet of workouts, which tested the Pioneers both

as a unit and individually.

Some of the events were a sled push, obstacle course, farmer's carry, trip flip and a 225-pound bench press challenge. Coach Tom Moore, who said in the spring he believes the line will be a strength in the fall, believes the competition was important for the group.

"It gives them a challenge and they work hard," said Moore. "There's only one way to get stronger and that's being in the weight room. They are all working hard."

The Pioneers were without Austin Jakes and Noah Martin, two players expected to be major contributors. Both were in Cookeville for 7-on-7 action.

The full unit will get its chance to join the skill players this fall when the Pioneers participate in two scrimmages before the start of the season Friday, Aug. 17 in DeKalb County. Warren County is set to scrimmage Lincoln County Friday, July 27 and Tullahoma on Aug. 3. Both scrimmages will be on the road.

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