

THE ART OF RACING



Truex Jr. can't be stopped

Fortunately for most of the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series teams, there are no more 1-1/2 mile (cookie cutter) tracks on the schedule before the playoffs begin. Last Saturday's race in Kentucky saw the top three Cup teams run at the front of the field, with Martin Truex Jr. dominating.

For the second straight year, Truex Jr. swept both stages and won the race. Kyle Busch and Kevin Harvick constantly ran near the front of the field, but they had no answer for Truex Jr. Harvick dominated the start of the season with Kyle Busch taking over at the midway point, but Truex Jr. has put his team in the playoff picture with his third win in the last six races.

Leading 174 of the 267 laps, Truex Jr. was rarely passed on the track. Several drivers used two-tire pit strategy to get the lead, but Truex Jr. eventually ran them down. This was his fourth series victory this year, just behind Harvick's and Busch's five wins.

"It feels good," he said after reaching Victory Lane. "You never know how these races are going to play out. You never know what is going to happen and we had such a strong Toyota tonight. They weren't going to beat us."

Jimmy Johnson, Chase Elliott and Alex Bowman are all in the playoff field with just seven races to go. Ricky Stenhouse, Paul Menard and Ryan Newman are outside the top 16-driver field, but they feel like they have a chance to get in because of the uniqueness of the seven remaining tracks.

Johnson has been making the news lately. First, his longtime sponsor Lowe's announced that it will end its sponsorship with Hendrick Motorsports at the end of this season. Lowe's is one of the few sponsors that funded most of the Cup Series 36-race schedule. Ever since Johnson's Cup debut in 2001, the pairing of Johnson and Lowe's have gone on to win a record-tying seven Cup Series championships, as well as 83 race wins and counting.

Johnson's contract with Hendrick Motorsports runs through 2020 and it was just announced that his crew chief Chad Knaus has re-signed with Hendrick Motorsports and the No. 48 team through 2020. This probably puts a timetable on his quest for a record-breaking eighth Cup Series Championship, as it looks like the 42-year-old Johnson will put away his racing gear and enter the NASCAR Hall Of Fame after 2020.

The Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series will resume racing this Sunday in New Hampshire at the Magic Mile track.



Jeffery Simmons photo
Edge Carroll finds room in the flats to pick up a chunk of yardage during Wednesday's 7-on-7 workout against Tullahoma. The Pioneers will put on pads next week for a full-scale scrimmage against Lincoln County.

28 DAYS TO KICKOFF

Defense dominates workout

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

Predictability is something football coaches strive to avoid at all costs. In 7-on-7 work, it's unavoidable.

Defense ruled the day Wednesday when Warren County worked out against Tullahoma. Knowing a pass was coming every play made the secondary shine, something coach Tom Moore was happy to see for his stop unit.

"I was happy with our back four. We corrected some mistakes that we have been making," said Moore. "We made some plays. We also made some mistakes, but we can see it and correct it."

The backend snagged several interceptions, getting one each from cornerbacks Clay Thompson and Eric Haywood. Raven Lewandowski, the captain of the backend from his safety position, also had a pick.

CJ Taylor also made his mark defensively, showing the kind of smothering coverage during on 10-play sequence that will make defenses avoid the Pioneer corner this fall. Taylor broke up one pass in the flat, dropped off deep coverage to nearly snag an interception over the middle and then followed with two pass breakups in the end zone.

On the flip side, the Pioneers had their share of struggles finding open windows against an athletic Wildcat defense. Warren County rotated Thompson and Bryson Elrod at quarterback, who each seemed to find some success working short.

Continued on 2B

All-Star teams ready for tournament

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

Standouts from the McMinnville Youth Baseball and Softball leagues will get a chance to represent the area this weekend in Murfreesboro. Four All-Star teams, selected from this spring's leagues, will make the trip in hopes of bringing banners back to McMinnville.

Teams were selected to participate in the girls 7-9 tournament, along with the boys 6-8, 9-10 and 11-12 competitions.

Caleb Graves and assistant coaches Daniel Hullett, Jeff Chisam and Mike Mullins will lead a group of girls this weekend in a quest for a title. The girls team features Ruby Denning, Lola Wells, Hope Gilley, Ashlynn Graves, Aubrey Oleksik, Brynlee Chisam, Kaidence Crouch, Jenna Mullins, Cortlyn Porter, Chloe Wanamaker, Bella Campbell and Kenzie Hullett. The Lady Americans will take the field at Barfield Crescent Park - the location of all four tournaments - on Friday night at 7 p.m.

Graves will pull double duty as a coach over the weekend. He's also helping with the boys 6-8 team, along with Ryan Smith, Ryan Boyd and Aubrey Green. Their Americans roster includes Issac Smith, Jacob Graves, Issac Boyd, Eastlan Green, Anden Green, Aiden Carter, Brand Damon, Huck Damon, Lawson Denning, Adam Oleksik, Harrison Sparkman, Braylon Burch and Malachi Wilcher. The youngest boys teams from the area kicks off this weekend's action with a game



Cortlyn Porter will play for the girls 7-9 Americans in Murfreesboro.

Friday at 6 p.m.

The boys 9-10 team will be coached by Chris Key, JW Holt and Josh Gillespie and has three games scheduled for Saturday. The team will take the field at 9 a.m., 1:30 p.m. and 3 p.m. Andrew Key, Jacob Holt, Ryder Gilispie, Brady Norris, Aaron Tallent, Daylon Holguin, Syler Simmons, John Gillespie, Cameron Glover, Talon Vinson, Adrian Harris and Corban Felton make up the roster.

Matthew Laxson, along with fellow coaches Bo McKnight and Heath Cruse and batboy Ezekiel Laxson, guide the 11-12 baseball team. The team includes Seth Cruse, Paige Sweeton, Hayven Jones, Alex Tallent, Braylan Holguin, Aiden Miller, Josiah Laxson, Asher Laxson, Baler Melton, Jaytton Baker and Camron Perry. The team's first game is at 9 a.m. Saturday.



Jeffery Simmons photos
Huck Damon corral a fly ball during Tuesday's practice. Damon is one of 12 All-Stars who will play for the Warren County Americans this weekend in Murfreesboro.

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