NASCAR Plate Racing Yields Another Frantic Finish

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (AP - There's one certainty about racing at NASCAR's most unpredictable tracks: a chaotic ending.

Jimmie Johnson dominated the latest restrictor-plate race Saturday night, winning at Daytona International Speedway for the second time this year and joining another exclusive list at the famed venue.

The five-time Sprint Cup champion became the first driver since Hall of Famer Bobby Allison in 1982 to sweep both points races at Daytona in the same season. Fireball Roberts (1962). Cale Yarborough (1968) and LeeRoy Yarbrough (1969) also accomplished the feat.

Johnson joined them after leading 94 of 161 laps, including 55 of the final 57

But like so many other races at Daytona and Talladega, where horsepower-sapping plates generally keep speeds below 200 mph, it came with a frantic finish.

There were two multi-car wrecks on the final lap, the second one just a few feet shy of the finish line.

"Be glad you were sitting in the stands and not in the cars, runner-up Tony Stewart said.

Scott Speed and Carl Edwards got together in turn 2, starting a six-car pileup. Instead of ending the race under



A crash on Lap 149 sends Danny Hamlin (11) airborne near the finish line during the Coke Zero 400 at Daytona International Speedway on Saturday in Daytona Beach, Fla.

caution, NASCAR decided to let the cars race to the line.

With drivers maneuvering for position through the final turns, David Gilliland and Danica Patrick got tangled, turning Patrick's car into several others. Kyle Busch, Ryan Newman, Ricky Stenhouse Jr., Jeff Burton and other were involved.

"I asked my crew when the checkered fell to remind me why I do this," driver/owner

Michael Waltrip said. "What's fun about it? ... I just know that 200 miles an hour pushing and shoving — this is fun for the fans and it's going to be fun to watch back on TV. I wasn't having any fun doing it.

"I was too nervous. I'd much rather watch. Why don't I just watch all the time? I've got that option. I don't know what's wrong with me.' There's little drivers can do

to avoid all the turmoil that comes with plate racing. It happens at just about every race at Daytona and Talladega, where drivers, fans and everyone watching are always waiting for "the big one."

It usually happens late, too. Two months ago at Talladega, Stenhouse Jr. and J.J. Yeley triggered a frightening crash in the final few laps that sent Kurt Busch's car airborne

and on top of Newman's car. On Saturday night, the race was fairly clean until a six-car accident with 11 laps remaining prompted a red flag. That wreck included another vicious hit for Denny Hamlin. Hamlin's

car inexplicably turned right and spun hard into the frontstretch wall. It then turned back into traffic and was tagged hard by AJ Allmendinger in a hit that caused his car to lift off the ground.

'We knew it was coming," Johnson said. "Getting down to the end of these things, we knew it was going to get excit-

ing." That excitement can be painful, too.

Hamlin and Allmendinger had to collect themselves after climbing from their wrecked cars. Hamlin missed four races earlier this season with a compression fracture in a vertebra in his lower back, and took a hard hit last Sunday at Kentucky.

'There's a 50-percent chance you're going to wreck,' said Kevin Harvick, who finished third. "The odds are 50/50, and we've had a lot of good luck on them and we've had some bad luck lately on them.

Several drivers, included Stewart and his teammates, have opted to move to the back of the field early in the re-

strictor-plate races, hoping to avoid any early wrecks and then make a move toward the front late.

"You go back there to try to give yourself a little bit of a buffer," Stewart said, acknowledging that some spectators would rather not see the tacti-cal move. "If you're up there in the mix, if something happens, it's hard to get away from it when you're crammed in there. This is a 195-mile-an-hour chess match, and the lap that pays is lap 160.

"A lot is said about guys that lag back like that, but we're in the most competitive series in the country, and when vou're running in the most competitive series in the country, you have to do what you think is in the best interest of you, your car, your team and your situation to get to the end. And part of winning races is knowing to be where at what times

Johnson seems to have that feel as well as anyone in 2013.

The Sprint Cup points leader won his fourth race of the season and etched his name in the Daytona record books.

"That's amazing, gosh," Johnson said. "To tie anything that Bobby did is really special.



SIOUX FALLS - The Yankton Spitfire completed the regular season with a 1-2-1 record at the Ringneck Invitational softball tournament on Sunday in Sioux Falls.

The Spitfire play the Brandon Crush on Friday at 8 p.m. to open the 18-under 'A' division at the South Dakota ASA youth girls' state tournament at Sioux Falls' Sherman Park. Games in other divisions will also be played at Harmodon

Park in Ŝioux Falls. K.C. CHAOS 5, SPITFIRE 2: The Spitfire were eliminated in the 'B' bracket

with a loss to Kansas City Jessica Wirth and Andi Sprakel each had a double, a single and a RBI for

Yankton, Haley Hinseth and Taylor Ruby each had hits. Lizzy Bye took the loss, striking out

POOL PLAY

SPITFIRE 3, WEST FARGO IMPACT 13: Lizzy Bye helped her cause, going 4-4 with a home run, as Yankton played West Fargo, N.D., to a draw. Andi Sprakel had two hits, Abby

Schulte had a run-scoring single, and Karlee Kozak and Taylor Ruby added hits for Yankton.

Bye struck out 11 West Fargo batters in the effort.

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MINNESOTA STING 4, SPITFIRE 2:

Karlee Kozak doubled and singled, and Andi Sprakel had a RBI double to lead Yankton. Jessica Wirth, Lizzy Bye and Abby Schulte had hits.

Bye took the loss, striking out seven. SPITFIRE 8, GRETNA CYCLONES 0: Jessica Wirth went 4-4 with a triple, a double and a RBI to power Yankton past the Nebraska foe.

Also for Yankton, Lizzy Bye doubled and singled, driving in two. Haley Hinseth posted a RBI triple. Karlee Kozak, Andi Sprakel and Abby Schulte each had a hit and a RBI. Taylor Ruby had two singles and Brooke Loecker added a double in the win

Katie Koletzky struck out two in the shutout victory





JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

A young Lesterville fan relaxes in his "box" seat at the Broncs' South Central League amateur baseball game with Tabor on Saturday in Lesterville. Though Tabor took the game 17-3, the home fans still were sent home happy with a fireworks display after the game.

SCL: Crofton Clips Avon 13-7



CROFTON, Neb. — Carl Schieffer had three hits and Crofton scored in six of eight innings in a 13-7 victory over Avon in South Central League amateur baseball action on Sunday night.

four.



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D Fireworks illuminate the vehicles of some of the onlookers during a fireworks display after Saturday's Tabor-Lesterville baseball game on Saturday night in Lesterville. Several SCL teams have fireworks displays after home games around Independence Day.

Alex Mueller tripled and Rand Thygeson doubled in the victory.

For Avon, Nick Honke doubled and singled, and Joe Vogt tripled to lead the way. Trevor Arens pitched eight innings for the win.

Nate Harington took the loss. Crofton, 13-1 in SCL play, takes on Tabor on Tuesday. Avon travels to Lesterville on Thursday.

100 200 103 - 7 7 3 AVON . CROFTON Trevor Arens, Rand Thygeson (5), Arens (6) and Carl Schieffer

Tabor 17, Lesterville 3 LESTERVILLE — The Tabor Blue-

birds opened the floodgates with a sevenrun fifth, beating Lesterville 17-3 in SCL action on Saturday.

Lance Ranek had a double and two singles, and Jason Humpal and Ross Kortan had three hits each to lead Tabor. Wes Kloucek added a pair of hits in the

Andy Gall had two of Lesterville's five hits. Tyler Edler added a double.

Nathan Kloucek went the distance in the seven-inning game for the win. Edler took the loss.

Lesterville hosts Avon on Thursday.
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 Nathan Kloucek and Wes Kloucek; Tyler Edler, Alex
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 TAROR . LESTERVILLE. Wagner (5), Ryan Auch (7) and Zach Johnson



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