

NASCAR THIS WEEK

QUESTIONS & ATTITUDE
Compelling questions ...
and maybe a few actual answers



Associated Press/CHUCK BURTON

Jimmie and Kevin, one-on-one, for a million bucks. Would you watch? Of course you would.

SPEED FREAKS
3 questions we had to ask — ourselves

3 THINGS WE LEARNED AT KANSAS



Getty Images/JAMIE SQUIRE

Jimmie Johnson, right, is No. 1 in the Chase standings after Kansas with three wins. But he can expect to battle Kevin Harvick all the way through the Chase playoffs.

A Johnson-Harvick duel for the championship: Inevitable?

GODSPEAK: Looks like they'll go into the Chase 1-2, but watch out for that knockout format.
KEN'S CALL: As of now, yes. In case you haven't noticed, momentum is only as strong as your next set of Goodyears.

You up to speed on the All-Star race format?

GODSPEAK: No. They switch the format more than Lady Gaga changes costumes.
KEN'S CALL: Let the Boys in the Booth sort it out as the rest of us just wait for the final 10-lap sprint.

Any surprise pick to win Friday's Sprint Showdown?

GODSPEAK: Kasey Kahne.
KEN'S CALL: No big surprise: Kyle Larson.

1. Johnson/Harvick

Jimmie Johnson has scored the most wins (three) this year, and Kevin Harvick has led the most laps (1,006) and has finished in the top-two eight times in his past 11 starts. Look for this to continue into the Chase. Since J.J. won Kansas, it's time for Harvick to answer the bell at Charlotte.

2. Stewart's demise

Tony Stewart is having the worst season of his career. The three-time Sprint Cup Series champion has one top-10 finish in 11 starts this season. He has led only 14 laps and has three DNFs. Ouch. You got to figure his pressure valve is going to pop if this doesn't turn around fast.

3. Mighty Martin

It's safe to say after 10 top-10 finishes in 11 Cup races Martin Truex Jr. is the real deal and this is no statistical fluke. The only void on his performance chart is a win. He desperately wants that next win, which would be the third of his career and give Furniture Row Racing validation.

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Questions? Contact Godwin Kelly at godwin.kelly@news-jrnl.com or Ken Willis at ken.willis@news-jrnl.com

CUP POINTS

1. Kevin Harvick.....	437
2. Martin Truex Jr.....	391
3. Jimmie Johnson.....	389
4. Joey Logano.....	375
5. Dale Earnhardt Jr.....	360
6. Brad Keselowski.....	343
7. Matt Kenseth.....	331
8. Jamie McMurray.....	328
9. Jeff Gordon.....	317
10. Kasey Kahne.....	313
11. Aric Almirola.....	312
12. Paul Menard.....	306
13. Ryan Newman.....	305
14. Kurt Busch.....	292
15. Denny Hamlin.....	284
16. Clint Bowyer.....	272
17. Danica Patrick.....	270
18. Carl Edwards.....	265
19. AJ Allmendinger.....	259
20. Casey Mears.....	242
21. Greg Biffle.....	242
22. Kyle Larson.....	237
23. David Ragan.....	235
24. Ricky Stenhouse Jr.....	227
25. Austin Dillon.....	225
26. David Gilliland.....	212
27. Sam Hornish Jr.....	210
28. Justin Allgaier.....	207
29. Trevor Bayne.....	190
30. Tony Stewart.....	179
31. Cole Whitt.....	177
32. Brett Moffitt.....	161
33. Michael Annett.....	137
34. Alex Bowman.....	132
35. Josh Wise.....	116
36. Matt DiBenedetto.....	109
37. Michael McDowell.....	87
38. Jeb Burton.....	53

3 THINGS TO WATCH FOR AT CHARLOTTE

1. All-Star dud?

Will this Sprint All-Star Race be a dud or offer some excitement? When you have to show clips of the '87 and '92 All-Star races to promote the event, maybe it's time to do away with it.

2. Boldly go

The end of the race usually is boring, but in the first or second segments, look for somebody to be a hero and try to make an ill-advised pass that results in negative consequences.

3. No points

The All-Star Race carries no championship points, so drivers are racing for pride and to pocket the first-place prize money of \$1 million. The Chase has taken away the All-Star luster.



NASCAR via Getty Images/JARED C. TILTON

Did you remember Jamie McMurray won the 2014 Sprint All-Star Race? That's what we thought.

GODWIN'S CHARLOTTE PICKS

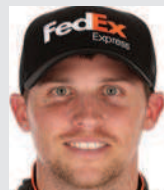


Godwin Kelly is the Daytona Beach News-Journal's motorsports editor and has covered NASCAR for more than 30 years. Reach him at godwin.kelly@news-jrnl.com

WINNER: Kasey Kahne
REST OF THE TOP FIVE: Kevin Harvick, Jimmie Johnson, Brad Keselowski, Joey Logano
DARK HORSE: Aric Almirola

FIRST ONE OUT: AJ Allmendinger
DON'T BE SURPRISED IF: Kahne finally puts it all together in the No. 5 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet on one of his best tracks.

FEUD OF THE WEEK



DENNY HAMLIN



DALE EARNHARDT JR.

DENNY HAMLIN VS. DALE EARNHARDT JR.: "Earnhardt) came up and ran me into the No. 9 (Sam Hornish Jr.) and we cut a tire," Hamlin said.
GODWIN KELLY'S TAKE: "Complaining about a Junior move is one thing. Taking action against Earnhardt is another story."

WHAT'S ON TAP

SPRINT CUP: Sprint All-Star Race/ Sprint Showdown
SITE: Charlotte Motor Speedway
SCHEDULE: All-Star Race — Friday, practice (Fox Sports 1, 4:30 p.m.), Saturday, qualifying (Fox Sports 1, 7 p.m.), race (Fox Sports 1, 9 p.m.). Showdown — Friday, practice (Fox Sports 1, noon), qualifying (Fox Sports 1, 4 p.m.), race (Fox Sports 1, 7 p.m.)
CAMPING WORLD TRUCKS: North Carolina Education Lottery 200
SITE: Charlotte Motor Speedway
SCHEDULE: Friday, qualifying (Fox Sports 1, 5:30 p.m.), race (Fox Sports 1, 8:30 p.m.)



WEEKLY DRIVER RANKINGS — BASED ON BEHAVIOR AND PERFORMANCE

JIMMIE JOHNSON He's familiar with these surroundings	KEVIN HARVICK Might not be No. 2 for long	JOEY LOGANO Mr. Hot & Cold the past month	JUNIOR EARNHARDT On a nice mini-roll past two weeks	JEFF GORDON One final All-Star race	KURT BUSCH From "all done" to All-Star	MARTIN TRUEX JR. More top-10s than Vince Dooley	BRAD KESELOWSKI Has slipped out of gear a bit	MATT KENSETH Back to his numbing consistency	JAMIE McMURRAY Shares hometown (Joplin, Missouri) with Hale Irwin
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Mon. & Thurs. 8:30-8:30
Tues., Wed., Fri. 8:30-6
Sat., 8:30-2

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