

# TRACK TIME



# Sponsor, Race Changes

After a year that saw an overall decline in TV ratings, NASCAR is looking to re-energize its fan base by updating the name of its premier series: The Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series. Plenty of other changes are also on the horizon for the sport, including a new race structure that rewards teams with points after segments during races.

NASCAR is betting the changes will win back some fans while also earning the love of new ones throughout the season.

NASCAR and Monster Energy announced a multi-year partnership on Dec. 1, 2016 making Monster the title sponsor of NASCAR's top series, the title sponsor of the NASCAR All-Star Race and the Official Energy Drink of NASCAR.

## A NEW MARK

NASCAR surprised many diehard fans when it announced it would be replacing the familiar bar mark that had been in place since 1976. The new mark uses the colors and feel of past brand identifiers while also adding a modern touch.

The new mark incorporates pieces of each of NASCAR's previous marks, including the red, yellow and blue coloring from the first three marks, respectively, and the racing bars that accompany the acronym NASCAR from the prior version.

Changing logos and sponsorship names is not something NASCAR does often. Sprint/Nextel had sponsored NASCAR's top series since 2004, concluding a 13-year run last season. That followed Winston's title sponsorship from 1971 through 2003.

## RADICAL CHANGE TO RACES AND POINTS FORMAT

NASCAR's new title for its top series will be complemented by a major upheaval of the points format. The sport's sanctioning body and its members announced sweeping changes to



how championship points are tallied and how the sport will crown its champions at the end of the season.

Races will now consist of three stages, with each stage awarding bonus points that will count toward the post-season. These points will be added to points awarded from a restructured scale, which now rewards race win-

ners with more — both during the 26-race regular season and the playoffs.

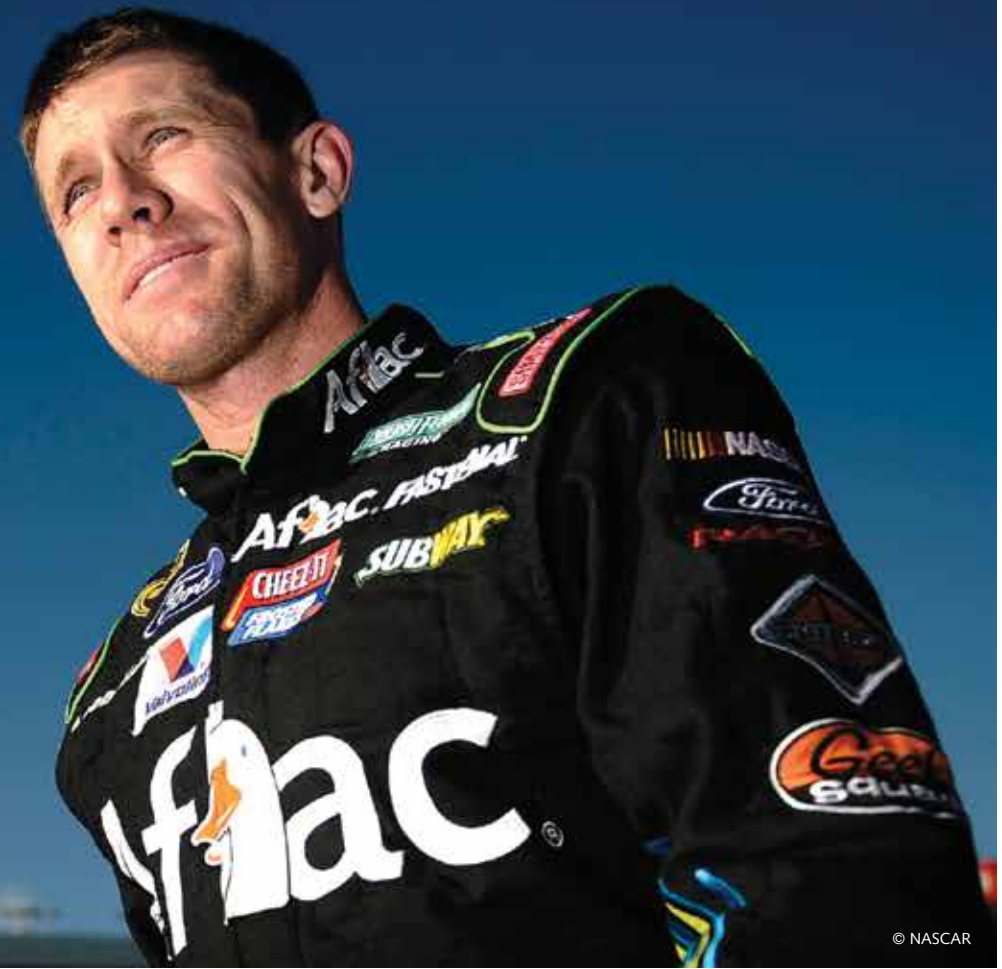
NASCAR is hoping that dividing races into segments and rewarding the winner of each will bring a renewed excitement for both fans who are at the track and those who are taking in the sport from home.



# Bye Bye Backflips



Carl Edwards, 37, shocked the NASCAR world in January when he announced he was stepping away from full-time driving in the premier series.



Known for launching into backflips upon entering victory lane, Edwards cited his family and an overall satisfaction with his career achievements as the major factors in his decision.

The Mexican driver Daniel Suarez will replace Edwards for Joe Gibbs Racing this year in the Cup series. Suarez became the first foreign-born racer to win a NASCAR national series in 2016 when he claimed the title in the lower-level Xfinity Series.

## WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

What makes Edwards' decision so surprising is how close he was to

claiming his first Cup title in 2016. Just a few short months ago, he came 10 laps away from the championship after a wild finish to the season's last race.

Edwards waited until early January to make his retirement announcement but still hasn't ruled out an eventual return.

With a year remaining on his contract with Joe Gibbs Racing, there is no question Edwards still has plenty left in the tank.

During interviews with the media upon his announcement, he noted an interest in agriculture, aviation and politics.

## A CAREER TO REMEMBER

Edwards is famous for performing back flips off his car after winning races — and did so 28 times throughout his career. Among his signature career achievements, he won the lower-level NASCAR series (then named the Busch Series, after the sponsor) in 2007 and spent 13 years driving in the Cup series.

One of his closest calls to a title came in 2011, when he finished second in the Cup series standings, losing on a heartbreaking tiebreaker. Edwards has indicated he still wants to be involved with Joe Gibbs Racing and could prove

to be an invaluable mentor to the 25-year-old Suarez.

## A NEW TREND IN NASCAR?

Edwards is part of a recent trend in the sport, as a handful of high-profile drivers have announced their retirements over the past two years, including Jeff Gordon at the end of 2015.

In Formula One, Nico Rosberg retired in December at 31. His announcement came just five days after winning the series championship. As the NASCAR season starts to heat up, we can now add Edwards to the list as well.



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# Get To Know the Drivers

DRIVER NAME	CAR #	PRIMARY SPONSOR	TEAM/OWNER
A.J. Allmendinger	#47	Kroger	JTG Daugherty Racing
Aric Almirola	#43	Smithfield Foods	Richard Petty Motorsports
Austin Dillon	#3	Dow Chemicals	Richard Childress Racing
Brad Keselowski	#2	Miller Lite	Team Penske
Chase Elliott	#24	Napa Auto Parts	Hendrick Motorsports
Chris Buescher	#37	Kroger	JTG Daugherty Racing
Clint Bowyer	#14	Mobil 1	Stewart-Haas Racing
Dale Earnhardt Jr.	#88	Nationwide	Hendrick Motorsports
Danica Patrick	#10	Nature's Bakery	Stewart Haas Racing
Daniel Suarez	#19	Arris	Joe Gibbs Racing
David Ragan	#38	Snap Fitness	Front Row Motorsports
Denny Hamlin	#11	Fedex	Joe Gibbs Racing
Erik Jones	#77	5-Hour Energy	Furniture Row Racing
Gray Gaulding	#30	Curtis Key Plumbing	The Motorsports Group
Jamie McMurray	#1	McDonalds	Chip Ganassi Racing
Jimmie Johnson	#48	Lowe's	Hendrick Motorsports
Joey Gase	#23	Best Home	BK Racing
Joey Logano	#22	Shell-Pennzoil	Team Penske

DRIVER NAME	CAR #	PRIMARY SPONSOR	TEAM/OWNER
Kasey Kahne	#5	Farmers Insurance	Hendrick Motorsports
Kevin Harvick	#4	Jimmy John's	Stewart-Haas Racing
Kurt Busch	#41	Monster	Stewart-Haas Racing
Kyle Busch	#18	M&M's	Joe Gibbs Racing
Kyle Larson	#42	Target	Chip Ganassi Racing
Landon Cassill	#34	Snap Fitness	Front Row Motorsports
Martin Truex Jr.	#78	Furniture Row	Furniture Row Racing
Matt Dibenedetto	#32	Can-Am	Go Fas Racing
Matt Kenseth	#20	Dewalt	Joe Gibbs Racing
Michael McDowell	#95	Leavine Family	LFR
Michael Waltrip	#55	A. Dream Machine	Michael Waltrip Racing
Paul Menard	#27	Menards	Richard Childress Racing
Ricky Stenhouse Jr.	#17	Fastenal	Roush Fenway Racing
Ryan Blaney	#21	Motorcraft	Wood Brothers Racing
Ryan Newman	#31	Caterpillar	Richard Childress Racing
Timmy Hill	#51	Rick Ware Racing	Rick Ware Racing
Trevor Bayne	#6	Advocare	Roush Fenway Racing
Ty Dillon	#13	Geico	Germain Racing

# Drive for Diversity Class

After a highly successful season, NASCAR is even more excited about this year's Drive for Diversity class.

The drivers were selected after a competitive combine held in October and will compete for Rev Racing in the NASCAR K&N Pro Series East and NASCAR Whelen All-American Series in the upcoming season.

Major accomplishments for the 2016 group included a Premier Series win and playoff appearance for Kyle Larson and an XFINITY Series championship by Daniel Suarez — a favorite by many to claim rookie of the year in the upcoming campaign.

NASCAR Drive for Diversity links drivers with a team of executives, athletic directors, crew chiefs and mentors who help them improve their chances of reaching one of the three NASCAR national series.

Since it began fielding NASCAR Drive for Diversity cars in 2010, Rev Racing has registered 17 wins and 65 top-five finishes in the K&N Pro Series East.

The 2017 class is led by four returning drivers: Collin Cabre, Jay Beasley, Madeline Crane and Ruben Garcia Jr. Collin's younger brother, Chase Cabre, joins 16-year-old Macy Causey as this year's Drive for Diversity newcomers.

Here's a closer look at this year's class members:

**Collin Cabre:** Cabre looks to capitalize on his second-year success in which he nabbed four top-five and six top-10 finishes and a sixth-place finish in the K&N Pro Series East championship standings. This up-and-comer was named to the

2016-2017 NASCAR Next class after winning the 2015 season finale at Dover International Speedway.

**Chase Cabre:** Three years younger than his older brother, Chase, 20, earned 12 race wins in 21 starts in a 600 Mini Sprint Car and is a two-time Fall Brawl Champion at Florida's Ocala Bullring. In 2016, he averaged a fourth-place finish in races at Hickory Motor Speedway.

**Ruben Garcia Jr.:** Another 20-year-old, Garcia is a Mexico City native and the youngest NASCAR PEAK Mexico driver to win the series championship in 2015. Garcia was also part of the NASCAR Next program in both 2015 and 2016.

**Jay Beasley:** Beasley made history in 2013 by becoming the first African-American driver to win a Super Late Model race at the Bullring at Las Vegas Motor Speedway. He returns to the series for his third season with Rev Racing.

**Macy Causey:** Just 16, Causey earned the NASCAR Young Racer Award in 2016, as well as the NASCAR Whelen All-American Series Virginia Rookie of the Year in 2015. There is a bloodline in Causey's family: In 1978 her grandmother became the first woman to win a NASCAR-sanctioned race at Langley Speedway in Hampton, Va.

**Madeline Crane:** Crane, 19, returns for a second season with Drive for Diversity and will compete in the Whelen All-American Series following two top-five and 12 top-10 finishes in 2016.



# Rookie of the Year Battle

If you listen to gearhead prognosticators, this year's rookie of the year contest won't even be close. Daniel Suarez enters as the overwhelming favorite — and for good reason.

The rookie on Joe Gibbs Racing team is poised to repeat his early career successes from last year, when he became the first foreign-born racer to win a NASCAR national series (Xfinity Series). But Erik Jones and Ty Dillon also look to claim some ROY ballots.

Here is a breakdown of NASCAR's top three rookies, which make up a solid class of young, bright talent:

## DANIEL SUAREZ

Behind the wheel of the No. 19 Toyota Camry for Joe Gibbs Racing, Suarez competes full-time in the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series. In his two full years in the XFINITY Series, Suarez built a reputation as a consistent performer with sparks of pure racing excellence.

Heading into this season with one of the sport's best pit crews, Suarez looks to build upon his past success to lead all rookies this year. He previously drove in the NASCAR Toyota Series in Mexico for Telcel Racing, and the K&N Pro Series East for Rev Racing as a member of the Drive for Diversity program.

## ERIK JONES

Jones looks to make it three straight years in NASCAR's top three series winning ROY honors. The 2015 NASCAR Camping World Truck Series champion currently competes full-time in the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series, driving the No. 77 Toyota Camry for Furniture Row Racing.

Jones ran all three national series in November 2016 in Texas and Phoenix. In the Sprint Series, he finished 12th after blowing a tire late at Texas Motor Speedway. He later drove to a 19th place finish at Phoenix.

## TY DILLON

Dillon replaces veteran Casey Mears in the GEICO Chevrolet for 2017 as part of Germain Racing, and will experience his first full-time season in the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series.

Dillon raced three years in the XFINITY Series under his grandfather Richard Childress at Richard Childress Racing and struggled to find sponsorship to transition into the Cup series last year. Now with a secure spot on the circuit, he looks to make a name for himself as an emerging rookie.



# Johnson's Top Challengers

Some NASCAR fans may still be in shock about how the 2016 season ended. Jimmie Johnson held off Kyle Larson, Kevin Harvick and Joey Logano on an overtime restart, sailing to the lead for his first lead at the Ford EcoBoost 400 at Homestead-Miami Speedway.

The win gave Johnson his seventh NASCAR championship, helping him best Logano, Kyle Busch and Carl Edwards in the third edition of the elimination-style Chase for the Sprint Cup.

So how does 2017 look to shape up? Here's a look at the defending champ, as well as a few contenders to his crown:

**Johnson:** Johnson's team — Hendrick Motorsports — looks to continue its amazing run. Johnson seeks to rattle off consecutive wins like he did during his five-championship streak that ended in 2010. Could he break out of a three-way tie with Dale Earnhardt and Richard Petty for the most career championships? History seems to be on Johnson's side.

**Brad Keselowski:** Coming off a solid 2016 performance with four race victories, Keselowski looks to win multiple events again in 2017. The driver of the No. 2 Team Penske Ford is rebounding from a concussion that forced him to miss the second half of last season. Always vocal and ready to speak his mind, "Kes" is one of the most entertaining title contenders driving in 2017.

**Dale Earnhardt, Jr.:** Earnhardt also missed half the season last year while recovering from a concussion but won the sport's most popular driver award again. The fan favorite



looks to get his season off on the right foot by going after his third Daytona 500 victory on Feb. 26.

**Logano:** This could be the year Logano finally breaks

through. He nearly tasted championships in 2015 and 2016, and has picked plenty of playoff experience along the way. With a little luck and some help from the new points

system, Logano could be driving his way to title No. 1 in 2017.

**Matt Kenseth:** Nicknamed Mr. Consistency, Kenseth looks to benefit from NASCAR's new

rules changes that appear to reward consistent performers. His steady, always-in-it approach could make him a title contender for years to come.

# 2017 Hall of Fame Class

In January, NASCAR celebrated its 2017 Hall of Fame inductees with a ceremony in Charlotte, N.C. Fans, media and professional drivers showed up in droves to honor the newest members of the hall. Here is a breakdown of the inductees.

## RICHARD CHILDRESS — OWNER

Childress, known by most as a championship owner, also put together a solid racing career behind the wheel. Between 1969 and '81, he had six top-five finishes and 76 top 10s in 285 starts.

After forming Richard Childress Racing in 1972, Childress retired from driving in 1981. His winning ways as an owner are linked to NASCAR hall of famer Dale Earnhardt, who won six titles and 67 races between 1984 and 2000 for Childress' team. Childress was the first NASCAR owner to win championships in all three of NASCAR's national series, and his 11 titles are second all time.

## RICK HENDRICK — OWNER

Hendrick Motorsports has grown into a powerhouse NASCAR team, owning the all-time record with 11 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series car owner championship titles — six with Jimmie Johnson, four with Jeff Gordon and one with NASCAR hall of famer Terry Labonte.

Hendrick also has 14 total NASCAR national series owner championships, most in NASCAR history. Gordon and Labonte combined to win four consecutive titles from 1995 through '98. In 2010, Johnson won a record-extending fifth consecutive championship.

## MARK MARTIN — DRIVER

Martin never won a title during his illustrious career, but that didn't keep him from being named one of NASCAR's 50 Greatest Drivers of all time. He finished second in the championship standings five times, finishing



just 26 points behind Dale Earnhardt in 1990.

He also finished second in 1994, 1998, 2002 and 2009 — just missing out on NASCAR's most prized accomplishment. Arguably, his greatest season came in 1998 when he set career highs for wins (seven), top-five finishes (22) and laps led (1,730). Martin found success at every level of NASCAR, winning 49 times in the NASCAR XFINITY Series, and retiring with 96 wins across NASCAR's three national series.

## RAYMOND PARKS — OWNER

Parks began his career as a stock-car owner in 1938 and put together a brief — yet wildly successful — NASCAR ownership career.

His teams competed in 1949, 1950, 1954 and 1955, producing two premier series wins, two poles, 11 top fives and 12 top 10s in 18 events. Legendary drivers Red Byron, Bob Flock and Roy Hall drove his cars during the 1949 season before Parks retired from racing in the mid-1950s.

## BENNY PARSONS — DRIVER

Parsons won 21 times in 526 career starts, including the 1973 NASCAR premier series championship. Another of his landmark victories came in the 1975 Daytona 500, a win that helped cement him as one of NASCAR's top drivers of all-time.

Parsons transitioned to television following his NASCAR career, serving as a commentator for NBC and TNT until 2007, when he passed away at the age of 65.





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# PHOTO FINISH

**CLOSEST MARGINS OF VICTORY IN FIRST FOUR RACES OF SEASON**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2002</b>
<b>AVG. MOV</b>	<b>0.232</b>	<b>0.436</b>	<b>0.520</b>	<b>0.539</b>	<b>0.577</b>
<b>2009</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	
<b>0.735</b>	<b>0.770</b>	<b>0.810</b>	<b>0.862</b>	<b>0.862</b>	



# NASCAR GEN-6 Car Features

**Eligible Models:** Chevrolet SS, Ford Fusion, Toyota Camry

**Engine:** Cast-iron 358 cubic-inch (max.) V8 with aluminum cylinder heads

**Horsepower\*:** 850@9000 RPM

**Compression Ratio:** 12:1

**Torque:** 550 ft/lb@ 7,500 RPM **Top**

**Speed:** 200 MPH (est.)

**Transmission:** 4-Speed

**Fuel:** Sunoco Green E15, a 15 percent ethanol blend; 17.75-gallon capacity

**Front Suspension:** Independent coil springs; Upper, lower "A" frames

**Rear Suspension:** Trailing arms, coil springs, panhard bar

**Chassis:** Rectangular steel tubing with integral roll cage

**Body length:** 196.5 inches

**Body Width:** 77.0 inches

**Height:** 54 inches

**Weight:** 3,300 pounds without driver

**Rear Spoiler:** 61 inches wide by 7 1/4 inches high\*

**Gear Ratio:** 3.60 to 6.50

**WheelBase:** 110 inches

**Wheels:** Steel 15" x 9.5"

**Tread Width:** 61.5 inches maximum

**Front Brakes:** Disc

**Rear Brakes:** Disc

\*Specifications may vary for restrictor-plate tracks

# NASCAR GEN-6 Car Features

## **CARBON FIBER**

The hood and decklid are constructed from carbon fiber. The hood tether squares are not visible.

## **THE ROOF**

NASCAR added roof structure for increased driver safety.



## **UNIQUE BODY PANELS**

Each manufacturer will now run unique panels that better represent their production counterparts.



## **REAR DECK FIN**

The fin that runs down the left side of the back glass and intersects with the spoiler will be constructed from clear polycarbonate.

## **PAINT SCHEME CHANGES**

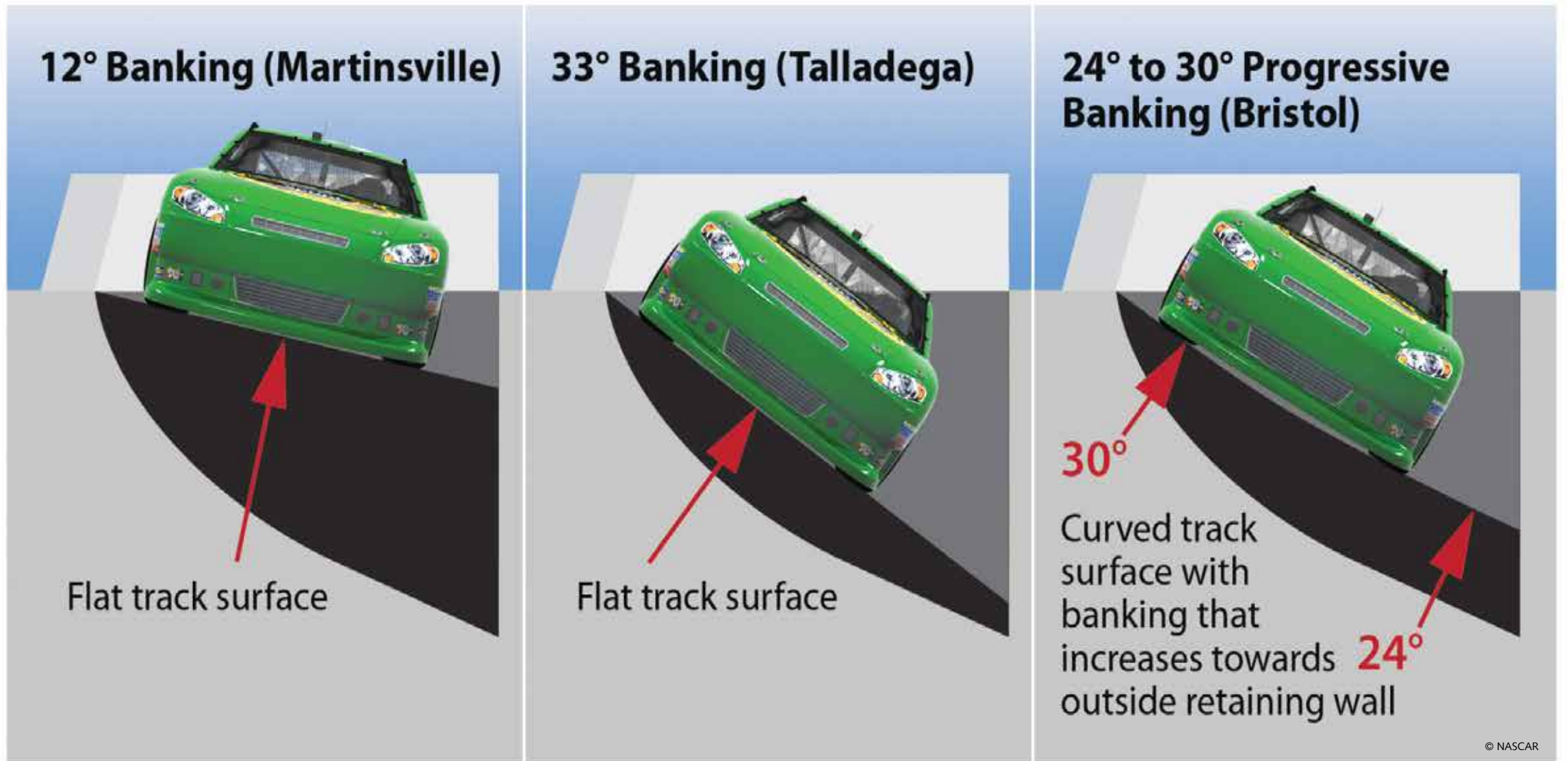
Driver's last name on windshield, sponsor on roof, step and repeat designs behind number.

## **GEN-6 VS. GEN-5: TALE OF THE TAPE**

SPECIFICATION	GEN-6: 2013	GEN-5: 2012
TOTAL WEIGHT	3,300 lbs	3,450 lbs
RIGHT-SIDE WEIGHT	1,620 lbs	1,700 lbs
LEFT-SIDE WEIGHT	1,680 lbs	1,750 lbs
LENGTH	196.2 in.	198.5 in.
WIDTH	77 in.	74 in.



# UNDERSTANDING TRACK BANKING



Most oval NASCAR tracks are banked at various degrees to create greater momentum and velocity through the turns. Banking on the 23 tracks that host NASCAR Sprint Cup Series races range from a relatively steep 36 degrees at Talladega Superspeedway, to a somewhat flat 12 degrees at Martinsville Speedway. “Progressively banked” oval tracks, such as Bristol Motor Speedway, feature a racing surface that gradually increases in degrees of banking — 24 to 30 degrees — as the track gets closer to the outside retaining wall. This permits cars in the longer outside lanes to maintain higher speeds through the corners than those in the shorter inside lanes, resulting in more competitive racing.