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30 Years of NASCAR: Sonoma Raceway Still Tough, Technical and Thrilling



By Bill Sessa

Drivers define Sonoma Raceway as a “tough” track. Some call it “technical.” Michael Waltrip calls a lap around Sonoma’s 12-turn roller coaster “thrilling.” Perhaps it’s because he gave himself a big thrill in his first-ever qualifying effort at the track, which went off the rails by Turn 2.

“In qualifying, I took the green flag and made it through Turn 1,” he recently recalled. “But, when I got to Turn 2, I flipped the car.”

When he got back to the pits, he jokingly told the crew, “Can you imagine how bad I would have wrecked if I actually made a few corners and got up some momentum?”

As it was, the car looked sufficiently torn up that the crew was already getting ready to unload the back-up car before Waltrip stopped them. “I told them I thought we could fix it,” said Waltrip, telling them that the car made a soft landing against some tires and wasn’t as badly hurt as it looked.

“The crew thought I was delirious after landing on my head,” Waltrip joked. But he was persistent. The crew used duct tape to keep the car together for the remainder of the weekend in what turned out to be a very satisfying run for him.

“I raced a car that I flipped in qualifying and still finished in the top 10 on Sunday,” he said proudly.

Waltrip’s experience reflects how most NASCAR drivers feel about racing at Sonoma. Getting a 3,400-pound stock car around Sonoma’s 12 turns in a twisty layout and with hundreds of feet of elevation change can be a bruising experience at first, but uniquely satisfying when you master it.

“I love how much fun it is when you complete a perfect lap. It feels like a unique accomplishment, but then you have to do it again,” added Waltrip, who subsequently went on to win the Toyota/Save Mart 350 twice as a car owner.

When the Cup series debuted in Sonoma in 1989, the track presented a unique



Photo by Joe Jacobson

Vallejo native Jeff Gordon finished second at the 1997 Save Mart Supermarkets 300.

challenge. The combination of tight, low-speed corners and fast, high-speed sections was the exact opposite of the only other road course on the NASCAR schedule in Watkins Glen, New York, with its sweeping corners and long high-speed sections.

Some teams taped maps to the dashboard with the turns numbered so that drivers, who were still learning the track’s layout, could better describe to their crews where their car worked well, where it needed changes, or even where they were if they were stuck on-track. Some teams hired experienced road racers, such as Boris Said or Scott Pruett, to improve their chances of a good finish.

As we fast forward 30 years, much has changed. Teams in the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series are more evenly matched than ever. A new scoring system for championship points makes every lap of every race critical to end of the season standings. As a result, all drivers in the NASCAR series have become more accomplished as road racers.

“In the beginning, there were very few drivers who knew how to road race and there were two or three who were favorites to win,” recalled Steve Page, Sonoma Raceway president and general manager. “Now, the competition is wide open.”

A Track to Be Attacked

“I just love the Sonoma course and it was a track we really attacked,” said Jeff Gordon, who has five wins in Sonoma, the most of any Cup Series driver. “It fit my driving style where you have to push hard in some areas and where you need a lot of finesse in others.”

Not surprising, he also has some special memories of Sonoma. “It was the year I got engaged to my wife,” he recently recalled.

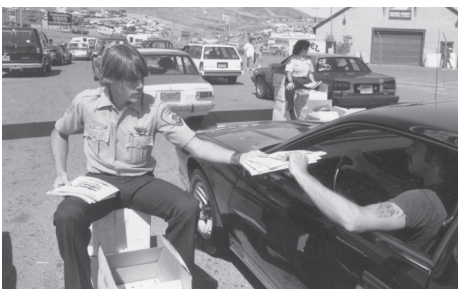


Photo courtesy of Sonoma Raceway



NASCAR driver Ricky Rudd drives the No. 10 Tide car at Sears Point Raceway.

“I called my crew chief and said, ‘guess what? I just got engaged, so now we can go out and win this race.’” And guess what? He did.

Clint Bowyer, the 2012 Toyota/Save Mart 350 winner, says he has “always enjoyed the road courses because it’s so different from our normal of going down a straightaway and turning left.”

Bowyer cherishes his Sonoma win because of the years-long progress it took to get to victory circle.

“When I got on the track the first time, I was like a fish out of water, out of control and scared to death,” he said. “But without a doubt, after a few years, Sonoma became one of my best tracks. And, now, it is the most entertaining product we have in our sport.”

The Toyota/Save Mart 350 has certainly provided its share of entertainment over the last 30 years. The closest margin of victory was the first race in 1989, when Ricky Rudd won by a mere 1.1 seconds. Dale Earnhardt claimed his only road race win at Sonoma in 1995. Mark Martin broke into NASCAR’s winners’ club at Sonoma, his first of 40 career victories. Three-time NASCAR champion Tony Stewart claimed the last of his 49 career wins at Sonoma in 2016 after a shoving match with Denny Hamlin in the hairpin Turn 11.



Photo by Joe Jacobson

Jeff Gordon at the 1997 Save Mart Supermarkets 300.

Return of The Carousel

The 2019 Toyota/Save Mart 350 may be more grueling for some drivers with the return of The Carousel, one of Sonoma Raceway’s most challenging corners, which hasn’t been used by NASCAR since 1997. With elevation changes, g-forces and a tricky set of turns to get set up for it, The Carousel promises to be more challenging than an amusement park ride.

“Turn 6 is the most iconic corner on the track and one of the most iconic in racing,” noted Page, which connects the highest spot on the track with the lowest in a 190-degree sweeper. “We thought this 50th anniversary year was the right time to re-introduce the full road course and bring these cars back to it.”

The change will add two sharp right-hand turns at the top of the hill and bring the cars out on the drag strip, the tracks longest and fast straightaway, before they hit the slow, hairpin turn at the top of the hill at Turn 7.

“It’s going to bring a totally unique dynamic to the race,” contended Gordon. “You’re going to have a hard-braking zone at Turn 7 after a long straightaway, so it’s going to create a new passing zone and give drivers who are good road racers a chance to shine.”

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Sonoma Tops Martin Truex Jr.’s ‘Most-Memorable’ List

By Lori Worley

Martin Truex Jr. has 20 Monster Energy Cup Series wins to his credit, two of which have come at Sonoma Raceway.

While every trip to Victory Lane has been special for the 39-year-old former Cup Series champion, there’s no question that the two at Sonoma, in 2013 and in 2018, rank at or near the top of his most-memorable list.

“Sonoma is just such a cool place to win,” said Truex. “Everybody wants to be known as a guy that can win everywhere, on any kind of race track, and Sonoma is probably one of the toughest road courses in the country.

“To be able to win there twice has just been amazing and the fact that we have been the guy to beat there the last three or four seasons is pretty awesome. I love the place — and it’s sure going to be a lot of fun trying to figure out the new course this year with them bringing the Carousel back. I just hope we can continue our success there.”

Last year’s win in the Toyota/Save Mart 350 came after Truex’s crew chief, Cole Pearn, employed a bit of trickery. Pearn pretended to call his drive to the pits with just under 40 laps remaining in the race, which led Kevin Harvick, who was pacing the field at the time, to pit. Pearn then told Truex to stay out, which proved to be the cool move of the race. Truex was able to use fresher tires later in the race to move

past the leaders and ended up winning by more than 10 seconds over runner-up Harvick.

“We snookered them a little bit there but that was all Cole and his pit call,” said the 2017 Cup champion, “but I thought we had the best car that day and we were sitting there in good shape either way. The last 10 laps of the race were easy. I was just hoping for no cautions because we had a big lead. It’s funny but when you start to take care of your equipment and have time to think, it almost gets harder.

Pearn, who has been with Truex since 2015, feels the pit call fake-out was simply a chance to make something good happen for his driver.

“You’ve got to take the opportunities when they present themselves,” he said. “You know, we were fortunate — (in 2017) we had a really great car, by far better than they were, and they were the second-best car, and we blew up and they won.

“We were fortunate enough for it to work out and win. But you never know what’s going to happen. That win last year was a strategy win. We wanted a chance at victory lane and it worked out for us. It was really cool to get to go to victory lane there.”

Last year’s win came while Truex was driving for Barney Visser and Furniture Row Racing. After five years with the Colorado-based team, both Truex and Pearn joined Joe Gibbs Racing beginning with the 2019 campaign. Because of Furniture Row’s

alliance with Joe Gibbs Racing, however, the move has proved to be seamless.

“It’s been good so far,” said Truex. “It’s exciting to be part of such a storied organization with the kind of success they’ve had over the years. To be part of a four-car team has been pretty fun so far. The season started off a little bumpy at Daytona but that’s Daytona. I feel really good about things and really good about the team.”

Toyota teammate Kyle Busch, who has raced against Truex for 15 years, says it’s great to finally have him as a teammate.

“Martin and I have known each other for a long, long, long time,” said Busch. “He and I competed against each other in 2004 for the Xfinity championship and we’ve kind of been on and off the track friends ever since then. It’s been pretty cool to have him in our fold with Furniture Row Racing the last three years and now he’s at JGR so it just kind of solidifies the relationship that he and I have had.

Teammate Denny Hamlin says he’s enjoyed having Truex as part of the JGR team.

“It’s great having Martin and Cole at the shop,” he said. “They’ve kind of been teammates of ours the last couple of seasons but to have them in the shop and see they work and operate... there’s a lot to be learned from that. They make our team stronger.”

For his part, Truex, who notched his first win with JGR at Richmond in April, feels fortunate to be able to continue doing what he loves with such a well-respected organization.



Photo by Getty Images
Toyota’s Martin Truex Jr. hoists the Champion’s Goblet in Wine Country Winner’s Circle in 2013.

“It’s just a blessing,” he said. “I feel really fortunate to be around great people and all that started in 2015 at Furniture Row. Getting started with Cole and Barney and those guys and then getting Toyota on our side in and starting to work with JGR, it’s just been incredible.

“I had a lot of years where I had enough success to continue to go and continue to push me and drive me forward, and I won a few races and probably should have won a lot more than I did, but I didn’t have all the things around me that I needed to be consistently successful. That was a trying time, but I will definitely say that it’s definitely made me a better driver.

“It made me who I am on the racetrack and I’ve definitely learned a lot from those things, especially getting the most out of the race car, working with the team and being positive, and being a good team leader even when things aren’t going great. All of that has really helped me the last couple of seasons to win a championship and to be in position to win multiples (titles).”

The Carousel is Back! Sonoma Raceway’s original 12-turn road course returns

By Lori Worley

What’s the best way to commemorate a 50th anniversary? Something epic is generally in order and Sonoma Raceway, which celebrates half a century this year, definitely went big.

When the track open in 1968, then-Sears Point Raceway’s 12-turn road course featured a sweeping downhill corner affectionately dubbed “The Carousel.” The challenging course plummeted from Turn 4, down through Turns 5 and 6, navigating a more than 200-degree radius turn before dropping onto the raceway’s longest straightaway into the Turn 7 hairpin. It was an exhilarating ride, to say the least.

In 1998, however, Sonoma switched up the layout for NASCAR in an effort to create more passing zones. A bypass called “The Chute” was added that connected Turns 4 and 7, eliminating the Carousel and shortening the circuit to 10 turns and 1.99 miles. This year, for the first time in more than two decades, the thrill ride that is the Carousel is back for the Toyota/Save Mart 350, a move that has been met with great enthusiasm from drivers.

No current Monster Energy Cup Series drivers have ever driven on Sonoma’s full road course layout in a Cup car. Kevin Harvick and Kyle Busch are the only two drivers with any experience in the Carousel, but it will mark their first time hitting the Carousel in a modern stock car.

Harvick competed in the Southwest Tour Series at Sonoma in the mid ‘90s, while Busch raced Legends cars on the road course. Both enjoyed the

configuration that utilized the Carousel portion of the track.

“There are more corners,” said Harvick, who won the Toyota/Save Mart 350 in 2017, “which means more opportunity. There are more technical corners and I feel like Sonoma is a technical race track, so coming down the hill and having to make the right (turn) and going back up to the Carousel and making a left and when you get to Turn 7, the shape of the corner is much slower.

“It’s a little different than what it has been in the past, so there will be some things that you’ll have to go through that are quite a bit different than what we’ve done in the past on that end of the track. It won’t take long to have it all figured out – we’ll do that on a simulator before we go. It’s going to be a lot of fun though, and I’m really looking forward to it.”

Busch raced Legends cars when the Carousel was part of the course.

“I think it’s going to really good,” he said. “I know the Indy guys ran that course and some of the other sports cars do, so I’m really looking forward to it. It’s going to be interesting, that’s for sure.”

Busch, who has two Sonoma wins to his credit (2008, 2015), says both were memorable.

“That race I won in 2008 has to be one of my favorite memories,” he said. “And then in 2015, too. Being able to win just five races after coming back from the injuries (broken right leg and left foot) I sustained at Daytona that year and being able to get in Victory Lane in one of the toughest, most grueling races I feel I have ever been in, was really something.”



Photo by Rico Ramirez
Jeff Gordon and Rusty Wallace battle it out inside “The Carousel” at Sears Point Raceway in 1995.

Kurt Busch, like his brother, can’t wait to test the Carousel.

“I’m really looking forward to it,” he said. “Coming over Turn 3A and then dropping down that hill and having to cut right to cut into the infield section and then do that long left-hander, then back up the dragstrip toward Turn 7. Turn 7 was wild before, but now... that’s where fans are gonna want to be because that’s where the craziness is gonna happen. It’ll be a lot of fun.”

Martin Truex Jr. says the return of the Carousel is going to make him reset his brain a bit.

“The biggest challenge for me is that when I come up over that hill I don’t have to go to the bottom of it,” he said. “I have to make a right turn, so it’s going to be tricky the first couple of times to remember that. It’s going to be weird to have to retrain your brain and say “OK, we gotta turn here now. It’s definitely going to be interesting.”

Clint Bowyer found his way to victory lane at Sonoma in 2012 and says that continues to be one of the highlights of his career.

“Winning at that place is really special,” he said. “That track is like a bottle of wine... you drink your first ever glass of wine and you know it’s not the best thing



Photo by Larry Kovaly
NASCAR drivers will tackle ‘The Carousel’ part of the road course for the first time since 1997 at this year’s Toyota/Save Mart 350.

that’s ever touched your lips and that’s how it is when you first race there because you don’t know the place. But then when you get to be almost 40 years old, like me, you’re like ‘yeah, let’s open that bottle of wine instead of that case of beer’ because you’ve gotten used to the wine, just like you’re used to the track now.

That, of course, will change this time around.

“Yeah, so now they’ve changed it,” Bowyer said. “And I don’t know what to think about that yet. It could change things, I don’t know. Now I gotta learn something new. The race will be longer – fuel mileage has always been part of that race – even the year I won. Anybody who wins there stretches it on fuel so that’s going to play a role in it.”

And no matter what, Bowyer knows the fans will get a great show from the drivers.

“All I know is Sonoma, the road courses, that’s been NASCAR’s best product the last six or seven years. It’s our most entertaining product and I’m just calling it like it is. The beating, banging, the long runs, the tire management, the fuel runs, that race has everything.

“There’s carnage, somebody’s going to be mad, there’s adversity you have to battle through if you’re going to win. Sonoma’s a good time, I’ll tell you that.”

TOYOTA/SAVE MART 350 EVENT SCHEDULE SONOMA RACEWAY – JUNE 21-23

Friday, June 21 - Metro by T-Mobile ‘That’s High Speed’ Fast Friday

| | |
|---|------------------------------|
| Spectator gates open..... | 10 a.m. |
| Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series Practice..... | 11:35 a.m.-12:55 p.m. |
| NASCAR K&N Pro Series West Practice..... | 1:05-2:25 p.m. |
| Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series Final Practice..... | 2:35 – 3:55 p.m. |

Saturday, June 22 – Procore 200

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Spectator gates open..... | 9 a.m. |
| NASCAR K&N Pro Series West Race Qualifying | 11 a.m. |
| Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series Qualifying | 12:10 p.m. |
| Procore 200 West Series Pre-Race Ceremonies..... | 1:15 p.m. |
| Procore 200 NASCAR K&N Pro Series West Race (50 Laps) | 1:45 p.m. |

Sunday, June 23 – Toyota/Save Mart 350

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Spectator gates open..... | 7 a.m. |
| NASCAR Driver/Crew Chief Meeting (Turn 11) | 10 a.m. |
| Pre-Race Show Powered by Friedman’s Home Improvement..... | 10:15 a.m. |
| Stunt Plane Demonstration by Brad Wursten..... | 10:15 a.m. |
| Legends Pre-Race Q&A | 10:25 a.m. |
| Patriots Jet Team Air Show | 10:45 a.m. |
| Toyota/Save Mart 350 Driver Introductions | 11:20 a.m. |
| Toyota/Save Mart 350 Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series Race (90 laps) | Noon |
| Track Walk | Post-Race |

**Schedule subject to change without notice*



Race Fans Invited to “Legends Chat” During Toyota/Save Mart 350 Pre-Race Show

Race fans are invited to join a celebration of Sonoma Raceway’s 50th anniversary with three NASCAR legends during the Toyota/Save Mart 350 at Sonoma Raceway on Sunday, June 23.

Ernie Irvan, Richard Childress and Hershel McGriff will be the featured guests during the pre-race Legends Chat, which will serve as the centerpiece of the Pre-Race Show Powered by Friedman’s Home Improvement just hours before the green flag falls on the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series main event in Sonoma.

Irvan, Childress and McGriff have each left indelible legacies in NASCAR and at Sonoma Raceway:

- **Ernie Irvan:** A two-time Daytona winner, Irvan earned two Sonoma victories, including one of the road course’s most memorable. In 1992, he won the Save Mart Supermarkets 300 after being black-flagged for crossing the starting line ahead of pole winner Ricky Rudd. He came back to pass 41 cars to take

the checkered flag. Just two years later, Irvan became the first two-time winner of a NASCAR Cup event in Sonoma. Irvan was inducted into the raceway’s Wall of Fame in 2016.

- **Richard Childress:** Richard Childress Racing (RCR) also celebrates its golden anniversary in 2019. RCR has accumulated 15 championships and more than 200 victories across NASCAR’s top three series, including three Daytona 500 wins. The NASCAR Hall of Famer has two Sonoma victories, including Dale Earnhardt’s only Cup Series road-course win in 1995.
- **Hershel McGriff:** McGriff competed in the 1969 Sta-Power 150 Pacific Coast Late Model Division race during Sonoma’s inaugural season. He’d go on to make 31 starts in Sonoma in the Cup Series (5), Southwest Tour (6) and West Series (20); garnering three wins. In 2018, McGriff became the oldest racer to compete in a NASCAR-sanctioned event when he drove in the K&N Pro

Series West event at Tucson Speedway at the age of 90.

The best way to secure stage-front access for this special celebration is to purchase the raceway’s NASCAR Total Access pass. This package includes the Q&A session with NASCAR legends, as well as a Sunday reserved seat, NASCAR Drivers’ Meeting access, Pre-Race Pass for driver introductions and festivities, plus a FanVision unit for as little as \$149; a savings of 20%. For fans who have already purchased their NASCAR tickets, the Pre-Race Pass can be added for \$75 each.

The Pre-Race Show Powered by Friedman’s Home Improvement will also feature the popular Patriots Jet Team six-jet air show, an aerial stunt performance by Brad Wursten, skydivers, driver introductions and a dynamic anthem flyover by F-15s from the Oregon National Guard. The Total Access pass also includes exclusive access to the NASCAR Drivers’ Meeting, which will be held on Turn 11 of the road course prior to the Legends Chat.



NASCAR Hall of Famer Richard Childress will take part in a pre-race Q&A with fans, June 23.

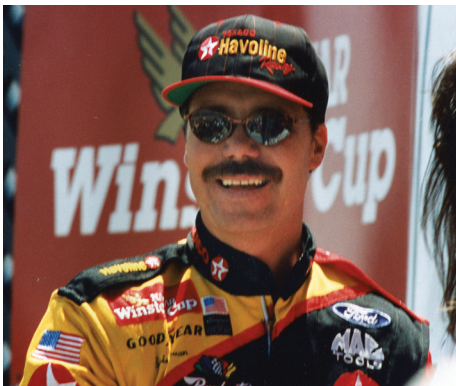


Photo by Chucke Walkden
NASCAR legend Ernie Irvan is the first two-time NASCAR Cup Series winner in Sonoma.

NASCAR Ticket Information

Race Tickets

Friday - \$30
Saturday - \$40
Sunday – \$49-\$140
Weekend Pass - \$95-\$180

Kids (12 and under) Tickets

Friday – Free*
Saturday – Free*
Sunday - \$10
*Accompanied by adult ticketholder

Ticket Packages

50 Acres Campground + Weekend Tickets

NASCAR camping is selling out fast, so make sure to secure your spot. Located just across Highway 121, 50 Acres is known for letting the good times roll! Minimum two Weekend Passes required with each camp space. **50 Acres Campground space + 2 Weekend Tickets:** \$544.40

NASCAR Total Access

Save 20% on a Sunday reserved seat, Pre-Race Pass, NASCAR Drivers’ Meeting access and a FanVision Controller rental! All this for **just \$149** (Turn 2), **\$159** (Lower Main Grandstand) or **\$189** (Upper Main Grandstand).

Best Value! Chase the Savings

Head to your nearest Save Mart, Lucky California or Lucky Supermarket store and pick up the lowest price race-day adult ticket for the Toyota/Save Mart 350, for just \$45! Plus, free kids tickets with purchase of an adult race-day ticket. Seats are located in the Turn 9 Terrace (a \$69 value).

Turn 7 Reserved Parking*

Get the closest access to the Turn 7 and 9 seating areas and enjoy parking just a short walk from your seats. This



Photo by Justin McFarland



Photo by Mike Finnegan

reserved parking lot is a must-have for first-timers and veterans alike and inventory doesn’t last long. **\$20 Sunday**
**Not Valid for Gate Entry - Must be accompanied with a race ticket.*

Ride the Bus to NASCAR

Ride to the race with fellow NASCAR fans on Rally, the official bus rideshare of Sonoma Raceway. You’re

welcome to bring food and beverages on-board, plus there’s a private restroom and you can keep your belongings locked on the bus while you enjoy the race. Hop on a luxury coach to your favorite race from one of 17 confirmed locations. Prices range from \$84 - \$129. Already have your race tickets? Take the bus to/from the track from any location starting at just \$35!

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WEEKEND HIGHLIGHTS

FRIDAY - METRO BY T-MOBILE
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FRIDAY

Free Shuttle to Downtown Sonoma,
10 a.m.-9 p.m.
11:35 a.m. – Monster Energy NASCAR Cup
Series Practice
2:35 p.m. – Monster Energy NASCAR Cup
Series Final Practice
3 p.m.-3:45 p.m. – NASCAR K&N West
Series Autograph Session
Save Mart/Lucky Breaking Zone
(behind grandstand).

SATURDAY – PROCORE 200
Free Shuttle to Downtown Sonoma,
10 a.m.-9 p.m.

STEM Race Car Challenge, presented by
Friedman's Home Improvement, 10 a.m.,
Sunoco Victory Lane
The final round of the STEM Race
Car Challenge will take place in
Sunoco Victory Lane as elementary
students from 45 Bay Area class-
rooms and Boys & Girls Clubs go
head-to-head in a gravity-powered car
challenge.

NASCAR Kids-Only Autograph Session,
10:45 a.m.
Don't miss the kids-only autograph
session with Monster Energy NASCAR
Cup Series drivers Landon Cassill and
Corey LaJoie in the Save Mart/Lucky
Breaking Zone. Your little NASCAR
fan WILL need a wristband to access
this event which will be available at the
Sonoma Raceway Kid's Zone beginning
at 9 a.m. and are limited to the first 100
kids to check in.

Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series
Qualifying, 12:10 p.m.
Qualifying will consist of two elimi-
nation rounds that will determine the
starting grid for Sunday's Toyota/Save
Mart 350.

Procore 200 Pre-Race
Ceremonies, 1:15 p.m.
Pre-race ceremonies will include
a performance of the national anthem
by 13-year old NASCAR fan Lila
Angelopoulos from San Francisco,

as well as the unfurling of a giant
American flag in front of the Main
Grandstand.
Procore 200 NASCAR Pro Series West
Race (50 Laps) – 1:45 p.m.
Happy Hour at the RevZone,
presented by Ally – 4-6 p.m.
California Dueling Pianos by 2
Grand Entertainment will set the stage
with two Grand Pianos and two out-
rageously talented entertainers. This
is a high-energy, all-request Dueling
Pianos show featuring a combination of
sing a-long, comedy bits, dedications,
dancing and most important; audience
participation.

SUNDAY- TOYOTA/SAVE MART 350
Trackside Live - 8:30-9:30 a.m.
Trackside Live will feature driver
appearances from top stars, including
NASCAR Cup Series driver and Elk
Grove native Kyle Larson at 8:30 a.m.,
as well as fun, family-friendly contests
and games. The Trackside Live stage will
be located in Sunoco Victory Lane next
to the main grandstand.

NASCAR Q&As at Save Mart/Lucky
Breaking Zone beginning at 8:45 a.m.
Don't miss race-day Q&As begin-
ning with NASCAR star Austin Dillon
at 8:45 followed by Jimmie Johnson's
spotter, Earl Barban at 9 a.m. and a kids
Q&A with driver of the No. 10 Aric
Almirola at 9:30 a.m.

NASCAR Drivers' Meeting, Turn 11 – 10 a.m.
For the sixth year, fans will be granted
access to the NASCAR Drivers' Meeting
shortly before the green flag for the
Toyota/Save Mart 350. The offer is only
available to fans who purchased the Total
Access package.

Pre-Race Show Powered by Friedman's
Home Improvement
10:15 a.m. Stunt Plane Demonstration
by Brad Wursten
10:25 a.m. NASCAR Legends Pre-
Race Q&A with Richard
Childress, Ernie Irvan and
Hershel McGriff
10:45 a.m. Patriots Jet Team Air Show

11:20 a.m. Toyota/Save Mart 350
Driver Introductions
National Anthem performed
by Oakland music legends,
Tower of Power
Noon Toyota/Save Mart 350
Monster Energy NASCAR
Cup Series Race (90 laps)

Post-Race Track Walk
The post-race Track Walk returns with
great prizes! The fun doesn't end when
the checkered flag falls on the Toyota/
Save Mart 350; that's when you head
down to the racing surface to hunt for
Sonoma Raceway 50th anniversary spe-
cially-designed commemorative coins,
a collectors' edition, placed around the
road course to be redeemed for prizes!

Cheers to 50 Years!!
Check out what's new as Sonoma
Raceway celebrates its 50 years of
racing in wine country!

Vintage NASCAR Stock Car Display
Sonoma Raceway has assembled a
display of iconic stock cars to repre-
sent some of the most memorable cars
and drivers from NASCAR's history in
Sonoma. Check out Kyle Busch's 2015
No. 18 M&M's Toyota, Jeff Gordon's
2006 No. 24 DuPont Chevrolet, as well
as the No. 4 Kodak Oldsmobile driven
by Ernie Irvan in 1991-1992 and Dale
Earnhardt's No. 3 Goodwrench Monte
Carlo from his 1995 win in Sonoma.

Live Art by David Arrigo
Renowned artist David Arrigo will cre-
ate a custom canvas painting commemo-
rating 50 years of racing history. Arrigo
has been painting professionally for 25
years for a list of high profile clients and
events such as the Winter Olympics,
U.S. Open, various professional All Star
Games and the NFL Super Bowl. You can
watch him in-action in the Ticket Pit Stop
on Saturday and Sunday.

Get to "The Point"
Sonoma's newest fan viewing area
is a must-visit, featuring the closest spot
to watch drivers tackle the 200-degree
Carousel turn. It's also a great place to
catch the green flag and restarts as the



Photo by Joe Jacobson

Enjoy the races from a shaded pergola
above Turns 2 and 9.
field battles up the hill to Turn 2. Enjoy
shade under a new redwood pergola, food,
beverages, games and plenty of action at
The Point! Access to this area is open to
all ticket holders.

JOYRIDE Golf Cart Service
Looking for a better way to get around
Sonoma Raceway? JOYRIDE will offer
golf cart rides throughout the entire facil-
ity for a \$5 minimum tip to the driver.

AROUND THE TRACK
FEATURED DISPLAYS AND
FAN ZONES

Toyota Arcade Inside Turn 10
Check out the Toyota Arcade located
inside Turn 10 where you can play
arcade games including Ricochet and
Football Toss in the back of a Toyota
Tundra. You can also get an airbrush
tattoo and shop the latest Toyota Racing
merchandise.

Play Toss Up at the Big O Tires Display
Try your hand at the giant Big O
Tires/Sonoma Raceway Toss Up display
in the main paddock, where you can hit
your target on a customized game-board
to redeem prizes.

Turn 7 RevZone
Located above Turn 7 on the road
course, the RevZone features a 200-foot
stand-up bar, expanded shade tent with
picnic tables, permanent restrooms,
refreshments, an array of food options,
entertainment, games and more - all
overlooking one of the most exciting
corners of the road course. Access to this
area is open to all ticket holders.

Continued on Page 6

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WEEKEND HIGHLIGHTS (Continued)

Save Mart/Lucky Breaking Zone

Your one-stop shop for shade, relaxation and interactive fun all weekend in the main paddock. Fans can enjoy Q&As with drivers and NASCAR personalities, music, a ball pit for kids and much more!

Toyota Racing Experience

Toyota's interactive racing experience will be onsite all race weekend and features the latest Toyota vehicles as well as appearances by Toyota NASCAR drivers, photo opportunities and the 'Pandra' Tundra, which was charred in the 2018 Butte County Camp Fire in Northern California while helping people evacuate to safety.

United States Military Tanks

Enjoy an incredible display of vintage United State military tanks, including a 1943 M22 Locust airborne light tank, one of four remaining in the world, a 1951 M47 Patton battle tank and a 1953 M41 Walker Bulldog light tank. All of the tanks were provided by Team Ghilotti, Inc.

U.S. Air Force Air Commando Experience

The Air Force Special Ops Air Commando Experience is an immersive experience showcasing what it takes to make it in Air Force Special Operations. Visitors will test their mental and physical strength with a skills challenge, Virtual Reality experience of Special Ops missions and

interactive games — all inside an Air Force C-130.

Family RV Display

Inexpensive and memorable family trips start here. Stop by the Family RV booth in the main paddock and "Enter to Win" a weekend getaway in a new luxurious motorhome or travel trailer! It's Family RV's goal to provide its customers with the highest standards so that they have the peace of mind on the road to fully relax and enjoy their vacation! Let Family RV help plan your next adventure!

Sonoma Raceway Kids Zone

Stop by the Kids Zone to pick up your official Kids Club badge and souvenir poster, plus say hi to Burnin' Bovine, have your picture taken with real race cars, and more! Located in the main paddock, free all weekend.

Kids Invited to Build a Race Car

Step into the Kids Club "garage" where real racing machines are made! Located in the Sonoma Raceway Kids Zone, kids can build and race their own gravity-powered car while learning about STEM. Free all weekend.

Ticket Pit Stop

Stop by the Ticket Pit Stop (TPS) featuring Real. Strong. Humboldt Redwood arbors behind the Main Grandstand. Renew your tickets for the 2020 race season and receive a Sonoma Raceway commemorative pin set as well as a Loubier

Gourmet BBQ Gift Box. You can also get answers to your questions, ticket upgrades, purchase race tickets for future events, plus news about upcoming events.

Portacool Cooling Stations

Feeling the heat? Take a break and cool off at one of six Portacool Cooling Stations located in Turns 2, 4, 7, 9, The Point and under the Main Grandstand. Portacool evaporative coolers provide relief from the scorching temperatures through the natural process of evaporation. Plus, there is no messy mist involved!

CHP Designate a Sober Driver Booth

Visit the California Highway Patrol Designate a Sober Driver Booth in the main paddock to pledge to be the designated sober driver for your group. Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Xfinity Zone

Stop on by the Xfinity Zone to take on your friends at the Xfinity xFi Fastlane game, win cool prizes, learn about Xfinity products and catch your favorite TV shows on their large Xfinity X1 LED screen.

FOOD AND DRINK

Get a Taste of Loubier Gourmet

Benicia-based Loubier Gourmet, the **Official BBQ Sauce and Rubs**

of Sonoma Raceway, will sample a selection of their award-winning line of products at their booth in the main paddock. Have a taste!

High-Powered Gourmet Coffee

Devil Mountain Coffee Company, the **Official Coffee of Sonoma Raceway**, will sample its high-octane coffee at a booth in the main paddock. Devil Mountain Coffee Co. will also sell a variety of hot and cold coffee drinks from their location under the Main Grandstand. Be prepared to experience the best tasting and surprisingly powerful gourmet blend of coffee you've ever had!

Nor Cal Craft Beer

Morris Distributing has assembled some of Northern California's most popular craft beers just for you! Be sure to visit one of the many stands featuring Nor Cal's best craft brews including Bear Republic Brewing Company's Racer 5, Lost Coast Brewery's Great White, Barrel & Sons Pilsner and Oskar Blues Brewery's Dale's Pale Ale.

Relax in the Shade at Turns 2 and 9

Check out the Grill Gardens located above Turns 2 and 9. These seating and shade areas, highlighted by redwood arbors from the Humboldt Redwood Company, offer a place to relax, cool off and enjoy a bite to eat throughout the weekend.

NASCAR Pre-Race Show Powered by Friedman's Home Improvement



Be part of history during a once-in-a-lifetime celebration of Sonoma Raceway's 50th anniversary during an action-packed pre-race show featuring everything from jets to aeronautical aerobatics to a special "Legends Chat."

Aerial Stunt Performance by Brad Wursten, 10:15 a.m.

Wursten will take to the sky in one of the most highly-sophisticated airplanes in the world, the MXS-R, made by MX Aircraft. This plane features a complete carbon-fiber airframe that weighs an impressive 1,100 lbs. The Lycoming engine has 385 HP and can reach a top speed of over 300 MPH, a roll rate at 420 degrees per second and "G" loading at +/- 15 Gs.

"Legends Chat" Q&A with Ernie Irvan, Richard Childress and Hershel McGriff, 10:25 a.m.

NASCAR legends Ernie Irvan, Richard Childress and Hershel McGriff, will come together to celebrate Sonoma Raceway's 50th anniversary with a special "Legends Chat" on the pre-race stage.

Patriots Jet Team Air Show, 10:45 a.m.

The Patriots Jet Team will electrify race fans with a 25-minute air show just one-hour before the green flag drops! The demonstration will feature six-L-39 albatross jets strutting their fast-paced formation flying, choreographed six-jet diamond-formation aerobatic maneuvers and their signature "Tail Slide," where the aircraft actually slides backwards toward the ground.

Driver Introductions, 11:20 a.m.

The field of Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series drivers will walk the "cat-walk" before taking their pre-race parade lap. Ten local quarter-midget racers will step into the spotlight alongside the top-10 qualifiers during driver introductions, representing the future legends of motorsports.

Save Mart Giant Shopping Cart

Save Mart Supermarkets will take its giant 12-foot shopping cart "Big Red" for a lap around the road course.

Vintage Stock Car Parade

Three iconic NASCAR stock cars will thunder around the road course, including Ernie Irvan's No. 4 Kodak Oldsmobile, Dale Earnhardt's famed No. 3 Goodwrench Monte Carlo and Kyle Busch's No. 18 M&Ms Toyota.

Large American Flag

Representatives from Beale Air Force Base will unfurl a 100-foot American flag in front of the Main Grandstand during the national anthem.

National Anthem performed by Tower of Power

Soul music legends and Bay Area natives, the Tower of Power, will perform the National Anthem. The renowned horn section, including Doc Kupka and Emilio Castillo, will join lead singer Marcus Scott in performing our nation's anthem.

Drivers, Start Your Engines!

Representatives from Toyota Racing Development, including President and General Manager David Wilson, will give the most famous words in motorsports to fire up the engines for 90 laps on the Sonoma Valley road course!



Photo by Getty Images

Fans can get stage front for pre-race festivities and driver introductions with their Pre-Race Pass.



Photo by Getty Images

The Patriots Jet Team will perform a 25-minute air show beginning at 10:45 a.m.



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NASCAR History in Sonoma

June 8, 1969: Sears Point Raceway hosts its first NASCAR Pacific Coast Late Model Division race. The race was won by Ray Elder in his 1969 Dodge.

April 25, 1987: The raceway hosts its first NASCAR Featherlite Southwest Series race, won by Roman Calczynski.

June 11, 1989: Ricky Rudd wins the inaugural Winston Cup race, beating Rusty Wallace by just 1.1 seconds. Bill Elliott was third and Dale Earnhardt fourth.

June 9, 1991: Ricky Rudd crosses the finish line first, but Davey Allison is declared the winner after Rudd was assessed a penalty 2 ½ hours after the race.

1992: Save Mart Supermarkets becomes title sponsor of the annual NASCAR Cup Series event.

May 15, 1994: Ernie Irvan becomes the first two-time winner of a NASCAR Cup event in Sonoma.

May 7, 1995: Dale Earnhardt wins his only NASCAR road-course race.

Oct. 7, 1995: Sonoma hosts its first NASCAR Truck Series race, which is won by Ron Hornaday Jr.

May 4, 1997: After finishing second in 1990, 1995 and 1996, Mark Martin wins his first NASCAR Cup race in Sonom.

June 28, 1998: The first race with the modified course using The Chute instead of the Carousel. The modification cut the 2.52-mile configuration to a 1.49-mile course.

June 25, 2006: Jeff Gordon captures his fifth NASCAR Cup win in Sonoma, a track record.

June 24, 2007: Juan Pablo Montoya becomes the first rookie to win a NASCAR event in Sonoma and the third foreign-born driver to win a NASCAR Cup race.

June 22, 2008: Kyle Busch earns his first NASCAR Cup Series road-course victory and Toyota’s first victory on the Sonoma Valley road course.

June 21, 2009: Kasey Kahne takes the checkers, earning his first NASCAR Cup Series road-course victory and the first victory since 1999 for team owner Richard Petty.



Photo by Zane Terry
Kyle Busch slides over the start/finish line after his Sonoma win in 2008.



Photo by Getty Images
It's a champagne celebration for Tony Stewart in 2016.



Photo courtesy of Sonoma Raceway archives
Ray Elder celebrates his win in 1969.



Photo courtesy of Sonoma Raceway archives
1989 trophy celebration with Ricky Rudd.



Photo by Chuckle Walkden
Jeff Gordon sips from the Champions Goblet in 2006.

June 28, 2015: Kyle Busch claims his second Sonoma victory on the way to his first Cup Series championship.

June 26, 2016: Tony Stewart claims the last victory of his historic Cup Series career

with a last-lap pass of Denny Hamlin. It marked his third Sonoma Raceway win.

June 25, 2017: Kevin Harvick becomes the first driver in Sonoma history to sweep both the Saturday and Sunday main events.

Toyota Racing Development (TRD) Named Toyota/Save Mart 350 Grand Marshal

In celebration of Toyota Racing Development’s (TRD, U.S.A.) 40th anniversary, Sonoma Raceway has named TRD, represented by president David Wilson, as Grand Marshal of its Toyota/Save Mart 350 Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series event.

Toyota, which made its NASCAR debut in the Goody’s Dash Series in 2000, has been the official vehicle and NASCAR event co-title sponsor at Sonoma Raceway since 2007. The raceway joins TRD in celebrating an anniversary in 2019, as the raceway marks 50 years of racing in wine country.

Since TRD’s debut in NASCAR, the organization has achieved more than 450 wins across all three professional series, including two NASCAR Cup Series Championships. In Sonoma, TRD has visited victory lane five times, including

Kyle Busch’s first NASCAR Cup Series road-course victory and Toyota’s first Sonoma victory in 2008.

TRD has also seen success in the other two NASCAR national series, NHRA, USAC, CART, IndyCar, IMSA, various grassroots series and Off-Road racing series, with multiple titles and race wins. Off-the-track, TRD has been successful in adding technology gleaned from racing into its production vehicles.

“On behalf of all of our team members at TRD in both Costa Mesa and Salisbury, North Carolina, we’re honored that our partners and friends at Sonoma Raceway have chosen to pay tribute to TRD’s 40th anniversary by making TRD the Grand Marshal of this year’s Toyota/Save Mart 350,” said Wilson, president of TRD, U.S.A. “From humble beginnings as a simple speed shop in

Southern California to an organization employing more than 250 team members that contribute to championships and victories spanning numerous motorsports entrants across America, we’re proud of the rich history of our company, and we look forward to celebrating at Sonoma Raceway.”

Wilson, TRD and Sonoma Raceway’s 50th anniversary will be honored on Friday, June 21, at the Children’s Champions NASCAR Banquet at beautiful Viansa Winery in Sonoma. The gala is a fundraiser for the Sonoma Chapter of Speedway Children’s Charities. Wilson and TRD representatives will also take part in the Pre-Race Show Powered by Friedman’s Home Improvement on Sunday, June 23, including giving the official command of “Drivers, Start Your Engines.”



Toyota Racing Development President David Wilson talks with NASCAR driver, Kyle Busch.

“Sonoma Raceway’s relationship with Toyota and TRD dates back to their first entry in the NASCAR Cup Series in 2007, and their success on the track has been mirrored by our growing and robust promotional partnership with Toyota Motor Sales and the regional dealers,” said Steve Page, Sonoma Raceway president and general manager. “To top it off, David Wilson is celebrating his 30th anniversary with TRD this year, so we are delighted to honor David and his team of innovators at Toyota Racing Development as our 2019 Grand Marshals.”



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