



EARLY ON — Polesitter Sterling Marlin shows the way early in Sunday's Slick 50 500 at Phoenix Int'l Raceway. Rusty Wallace and Ricky Rudd give chase. (Patrick photo).

'COOL MAN' LABONTE SIZZLES IN SLICK 50

By BRUCE MARTIN

PHOENIX — Terry Labonte, who has earned his reputation as "The Iceman" for his stoic demeanor, has enjoyed the hottest season of his NASCAR Winston Cup career since he won the championship in 1984. But even after he won last Sunday's Slick 50 500k Winston Cup event at Phoenix Int'l Raceway, Labonte radioed his crew on the cool-down lap in typical, low-key fashion.

LOW-KEY WINNER

"Bring me a drink of water, a wet towel to wipe off with and my sunglasses," said Labonte, sounding as if he had just finished mowing the lawn instead of outclassing the field in a grueling, 312-mile race on an 80-degree day.

The victory was Labonte's third this season. The Texan finished 3.09 seconds ahead of second-place Mark Martin. Labonte led the race three times for 112 laps, averaged 107.463 miles an hour and won \$67,885.

Prior to this season, Labonte was winless for 4 years. Now that he is with Hendrick Motorsports, however, only Rusty Wallace (eight) and Dale Earnhardt (four) have won more races than Labonte this season.

"The big difference is I think it's a great team," Labonte said. "We have good people, good engines, good cars, a great owner that gives everybody what they need to work with as far as the guys at the shop there. They go all out and are serious at it."

"For me, it was a dream come true to drive for Rick Hendrick because I knew he had a great team and some really good people there and they worked hard. I was excited about it. I felt like the first time I went down to the



IN TRAFFIC — Terry Labonte (5) works his way through traffic, following Lake Speed and Ken Schrader (25). Labonte won Sunday's Winston Cup race at Phoenix Int'l Raceway for his third triumph of the year. (Dorsey Patrick photo).

shop before I started driving for them, I could not believe the facility they had and the things they had going on down there. I knew it was a great team and a great opportunity for me to get back in a first-class car."

In fact, Labonte had almost become the forgotten man in NASCAR Winston Cup racing. Rarely did his name come up as a contender for a race victory.

Labonte never gave up on

his ability to drive a race car, however, and he has proven this year he is still an outstanding stock car driver.

"There is one good thing about this sport—people on the inside know more about what is going on than people on the outside looking in," said Labonte, who drove the team owner Billy Hagan the past 3 years. "I think I was fortunate there were people in

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Carelli Breaks Phoenix SWT Slump

By OWEN KEARNS, Jr.

PHOENIX — Being bold, in the old Arizona Territory, wasn't a good prescription for a long life. Nothing appears to have changed in the succeeding 100 years, judged by the results of Saturday's GM Goodwrench/Delco Battery 300, which wrapped up the NASCAR Featherlite Southwest Tour season at Phoenix Int'l Raceway.

BREAKS JINX

Rick Carelli, who broke a five-race NASCAR jinx at the 1-mile superspeedway, was one of only two top-10 starters to survive unscathed on an afternoon punctuated by multi-car accidents and expiring engines. He brought his TOTAL Petroleum/Chesrown Automotive Chevrolet Lumina to the front in the waning laps of the \$80,000 race to hold off defending winner Scott Hansen, whose AFco/Brunswick Ford Thunderbird was 0.34 seconds back at the checkers.

Carelli led just twice, from laps 99 through 101, and the fi-

nal 27 trips around the 1-mile superspeedway after a final round of pit stops under caution generated four lead changes during a wild, 9-circuit shuffle. Carelli, who came out of the pits fifth, then passed Hansen, Ken Boyd, Ron Eaton and Gary Smith—the son of three-time NASCAR Winston West Series champion Roy Smith—to decide the contest, which took 2 hours, 19 minutes, 52 seconds to complete.

The race's final caution created a 4-lap shootout between the leaders but Carelli, with an obvious handling edge, kept his Wisconsin rival at bay as an announced record crowd of more than 50,000 rose for the outcome.

Carelli's 17th NFSWT victory, second of the current season, was worth a career best \$9,875. He averaged 84.631 mph as 10 caution flags consumed 55 laps. There were eight lead changes among seven drivers with Carelli, whose best previous NASCAR finish at PIR was a second,



RICK CARELLI
...SW Tour star.

and Hansen the only ones to head the field more than once.

"I held my breath those last 10 laps," said Carelli, who twice threaded his way through multi-car

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Record Crowd Bids Goodbye to Prudhomme:

Bernstein Hits 314!, Alderman PS Titlist

POMONA, Calif. — It was only fitting that Kenny Bernstein, "The King of Speed," returned to his throne Sunday, thanks to winning the fastest drag race in NHRA history. Bernstein's dazzling speed down the Pomona Raceway strip was not the only weekend record as the spectator turnout of 107,000 established a new attendance standard.

STUNNING RUN

The Top Fuel driver provided the most stunning highlight of one of the most memorable events in NHRA Winston Drag Racing Series history, setting a national NHRA speed record of 314.46 mph in a final-round victory over Cory McClenathan at the Winston Select Finals.

Bernstein's record pass was one of 19 at the event, a record for 300-mph runs at a single NHRA Winston Drag Racing Series event. Bernstein had three 300-plus mph runs, including a 311.85 mph semi-final victory over Connie Kalitta.

The record run also arguably was the most stunning speed since March 1992, when Bernstein became the first driver to break the 300 mph barrier.

Other professional winners in the final national event of the season were John Force in Funny Car, Darrell Alderman in Pro Stock and John Myers in Pro Stock Motorcycle. Alderman clinched his third NHRA Winston championship.

Bernstein's victory capped a weekend of Top Fuel racing that was soaked with emotion, as NHRA legend Don "The Snake" Prudhomme competed in his final race.

In the final, McClenathan had a slight advantage at the starting line in his McDonald's dragster but could do nothing when Bernstein's Budweiser King dragster reached full power. McClenathan couldn't see Bernstein at 900 feet but could hear the roar of the 5,500-horsepower monster that crew chief Dale Armstrong and his crew tuned for Bernstein.

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Kinser, As Tyro, Feels 20

By BRUCE MARTIN

PHOENIX — Steve Kinser has gained the respect of the entire racing world as the best driver in sprint car racing today. But Kinser is willing to give that up in favor of wearing a yellow rookie stripe on the bumper of a Ford Thunderbird in NASCAR Winston Cup racing.

STARTING OVER

In essence, Kinser is starting over in racing, preparing to meet another challenge when he begins the 1995 Winston Cup season as the driver of the Quaker State Ford for Kenny Bernstein's King Racing.

"It's going to be definitely starting over again," said Kinser, the 14-time World of Outlaws champion. "I've

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RJR Ups '95 NHRA Bonus to \$2 Million

POMONA, Calif. — To commemorate its two decades as principal sponsor of the NHRA drag racing series, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. announced at the season-ending Winston Select Finals that it will double its level of support beginning with the initiation of the Winston Select 10 program in 1995.

\$1 MILLION MORE

The Winston Select 10 program will pay out \$1 million in bonuses to the top point producers in Top Fuel, Funny Car, Pro Stock and Pro Stock Motorcycle on a race-to-race basis during 1995. Each of the top 10 drivers in the NHRA point standings at the beginning of each national event (and the Winston Invitational at Rockingham, N.C.) will share in the bounty. Each member of the Winston Select 10 in Funny Car and Top Fuel will earn \$2,000 per race; each Pro Stock driver \$1,000 per race.

"The Winston Select 10 raises our payout to drivers to \$2 million each year," said T. Wayne Robertson, president of RJR's Sports Marketing Enterprises subsidiary. "Next year marks the beginning of the third decade of our partnership with the National Hot Rod Ass'n and we think the Winston Select 10 is an innovative new beginning for our Winston Drag Racing Series sponsorship."

In addition to the new Winston Select monies, RJR's existing \$1 million year-end bonus fund has been restructured to increase the top end payouts to \$200,000 in Top Fuel and Funny Car, \$125,000 in Pro Stock and \$30,000 in Pro Stock Motorcycle.

Bottom line impact of the expanded program is that Winston Champions in Top Fuel and Funny Car should earn almost a quarter of a million dollars in Winston bonus money in 1995—\$200,000 from the points fund and another \$40,000 in Winston Select 10 bonuses for remaining in the Top 10 throughout the 20-race season.

In Season-Ending Club All Star Show:

Blaney Wheels New Car to Crossville \$

By ROBY HELM

CROSSVILLE, Tenn. — Dave Blaney warmed a chilled crowd sitting in 30-degree weather by winning the 40-lap The Club All-Star Circuit of Champions sprint car feature Friday night at Crossville Raceway.

SUBBING FOR CHARLIE
Blaney was behind the wheel of Charlie Fisher's Summit Racing Equipment Fisher/Gaerte for the weekend.

The new ride took some getting used to by Blaney. After setting fast time with a lap around the three-eighths-mile high-banked clay oval in 10.803 seconds during United Expressline qualifications, Blaney spun the car in his heat race, but came back to make the show with a third-place finish.

Blaney lined up sixth to start the feature and took the outside groove to take the lead from Mark Kinser, who was sitting in for Kenny Jacobs in the Motter Motorsports No. 71m, started on the pole, and held the lead for the first 12 tours.

Kinser began to fade at the halfway mark, as Gary Wright came from the 10th starting spot and took over second on lap 25. Jac Haudenschild was also on the move from the 13th starting hole, moving into third on lap 29.

Dale Blaney brought out the caution flag on lap 34 after stalling on the backstretch with a flat tire. On the restart,



DAVE BLANEY
...All Star ace.

Joey Saldana and Bobby Davis, Jr. tangled on the backstretch while dueling for fifth.

When racing resumed, Blaney checked out on the field and left Wright and Haudenschild to battle for second.

Wright and Haudenschild swapped the position back-and-forth for several laps before Haudenschild took the runner-up spot for good on the last lap with a move in turn one. Kevin Huntley took fourth and Frankie Kerr finished fifth with a charge from 18th.

Rounding out the top 10 were Kinser, Tim Shaffer, Joe Gaerte in his first ride in Al Hamilton's No. 77, Dale Blaney and Saldana.

In other action, Danny Yanders won the 20-lap UMP modified feature and Vernon

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