

NIGHT OF CHAMPIONS

LARRY FITZGERALD AND RUSTY WALLACE
HOST OCTANE LOUNGE CHARITY EVENT
DURING THE JIMMIE JOHNSON FOUNDATION 100
NASCAR K&N PRO SERIES WEST RACE

Photos by Randall Bohl (www.randallbohl.com)

All-Pro Arizona Cardinals wide receiver Larry Fitzgerald joined 1989 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series champion and current *NASCAR on ESPN* analyst Rusty Wallace at Phoenix International Raceway's luxury lounge, Octane, for a "Night of Champions" charity event in April. Held throughout the Jimmie Johnson Foundation 100—a NASCAR K&N Pro Series West race—PIR used the event to

raise funds and awareness for the Arizona State University College of Nursing & Healthcare Innovation. Guests enjoyed fine food and drink in the Octane skybox, high above the stands, an exclusive silent and live auction, the opportunity to interact with the host sports personalities, and a wine tasting created by Kevin Buckler, NASCAR team owner and owner/founder of Adobe Road Winery.



RUSTY WALLACE is a former NASCAR Winston Cup Series champion, NASCAR Nationwide Series car owner, and television broadcaster with ESPN and ESPN on ABC and co-host of *NASCAR Angels*. Wallace had his first live broadcast of the Indy 500 on May 28, 2006. Wallace appeared in the 1990 film *Days of Thunder*.



LARRY FITZGERALD, JR. is a wide receiver for the Arizona Cardinals, drafted third overall by Arizona in the 2004 NFL Draft. He played college football at Pittsburgh. Fitzgerald is also a spokesperson for EAS® sports nutrition products

MYERS TAKES POLE

Nearly five years after Andrew Myers won his first Coors Light Pole Award in 2005, he demonstrated that he still knows how to get the job done. Myers set the fastest time in NASCAR K&N Pro Series West qualifying with a speed of 126.689 mph, edging Nick Lynch, who started alongside him on the front row.

Greg Pursley, who set a track record in qualifying a year ago, was third quickest, followed by Eric Holmes and David Mayhew, who topped the speed charts in both practice sessions earlier in the day. Myers is a series veteran with two career wins, one of which came in this event in 2006.

HOLMES TAKES TROPHY

Eric Holmes was looking for a good points day after a rough start to his NASCAR K&N Pro Series West season. He accomplished his goal with a win in the Jimmie Johnson Foundation 100.

Holmes outlasted runner-up Jason Bowles and third place Greg Pursley to collect his 10th career series win in a race that ended under caution after one attempt at a green-white-checkered.

Jonathon Gomez and David Mayhew rounded out the top five. Mayhew was second when the final caution came out, but came down pit road instead of

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KOBALT TOOLS 500 WEEKEND PREVIEW

NOVEMBER 11-14, 2010

JIMMIE JOHNSON • KEVIN HARVICK
MARK MARTIN • JEFF GORDON • KYLE BUSCH
RON HORNADAY • CARL EDWARDS



The Kobalt Tools 500 event weekend, November 11-14, includes races in four different NASCAR series: Sprint Cup, Nationwide, Camping World Trucks and the K&N Pro Series West. The NASCAR K&N Pro Series West season finale on Saturday brings double-header action following PIR's WYPALL* 200 in the Nationwide Series. Teams from the K&N Pro Series West will qualify on Thursday, after which fans will have unprecedented access: the entire West Series garage will move into PIR's interactive midway for a West Series Garage Open House from 12 noon till 5pm on Friday. Fans can see K&N Pro Series West cars up close and interact with teams and drivers, as well as catch the official pre-race inspection process, autograph sessions and driver/team Q&As. PIR Season Ticket holders will be granted early entry at 11:30am.



Four-time defending Sprint Cup Series champion Jimmie Johnson drives the Lowe's/Kobalt Tools No. 48 Chevrolet. Johnson and his team have owned PIR the past several seasons, winning the fall Cup event in Phoenix three straight years—all but clinching season championships in the Valley of the Sun in the process. Johnson has taken the checkered flag in four of the last six Cup races overall at Phoenix and will look to muscle his way to an unprecedented fifth straight title when he appears in the desert once again on November 14.

Johnson, a native of El Cajon, California, likes coming back to the West Coast and to races at PIR, where he attended races as a fan before his career took off. "This track is a lot of fun to drive, with the two different ends of the track," he says. "We've been very strong (at Phoenix) in the fall race."

Just one man other than Johnson has won a fall Sprint Cup race at Phoenix International Raceway in the past four years. That driver? Another Californian, Bakersfield native Kevin Harvick, who—perhaps not coincidentally—has been one of Johnson's biggest challengers during the 2010 NASCAR season, leading the "regular season" points standings for most of the year. Like Johnson, Harvick has a special place in his heart for racing in the West and a deep history at PIR.

"Phoenix is one of those places that I grew up racing on," Harvick said. "I raced a lot in the Southwest Tour, Winston West and Truck Series races at Phoenix. I have learned the characteristics of the race track and the little things that you can do when your car is not handling perfect. I like the flat race tracks. Racing on Phoenix my entire career has also translated into flat track success on the entire circuit."

Who else might challenge Johnson's late-season dominance in the desert? Hendrick Motorsports teammates Mark Martin and Jeff Gordon are also recent

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taking the checkered flag on the track.

The win was a long time coming for Holmes, who has twice finished runner-up at Phoenix (2006 and 2009) and ran out of gas after dominating the first half of the 2008 race.

"I've been wanting to win a race here for quite some time," said the two-time series champion from Escalon, California. "We had a good car all day. I just save it for the end. The team did a great job on the last pit stop making the call. We had some great restarts at the end and got us the win."

Holmes and his Bill McAnally Racing team altered their strategy during the race, opting to pit for fresh right-side tires on the No. 20 NAPA Toyota midway through the event in order to chase down NASCAR K&N Pro Series East regular Brett Moffitt, who led a race-high 36 laps. "Moffitt was faster than us at the beginning," Holmes said. "So, we made the decision to go ahead and change tires. I was a little nervous starting back there in the pack, but I got through that good."

Moffitt was knocked out of the lead on Lap 89 after contact with second-place Greg Pursley.

In the final restart, Holmes opted to restart in the outside lane—not an easy decision for him. "I complained all last year that we needed to be able to make that choice, because certain tracks we go to, the outside is definitely the way to go," he said. "Well, I had to make that decision tonight. I had beat Pursley on the outside. So, I knew I was better on the outside and I could control the race better. Sitting under that red for 10 minutes making that decision, I wanted to throw up. That's not my style. Usually, I'm pretty calm. I made the decision and went with it. I took the chance and it paid off."

Holmes had arrived at Phoenix looking to get his season on track after he broke an axle and finished 20th in the season opener on March 27.

The win also clinched Holmes a spot in the post-season NASCAR Toyota All-Star Showdown. ■

Phoenix Sprint Cup race winners. Kyle Busch, meanwhile, has five total wins at PIR in NASCAR's top three series since 2006.

Of course championships are also being chased—and sometimes clinched—at Phoenix in the Nationwide and Camping World Truck Series as well. While his team owner Kevin Harvick won last year's Lucas Oil 150 at PIR, Ron Hornaday clinched the 2009 trucks season championship in the Valley of the Sun with a fourth-place finish. Said Harvick after the race: "To see Hornaday lock up the championship tonight and for me to win the race... I don't think you could script it much better."

The Nationwide Series season championship will also be coming down to the wire at Phoenix this fall and—just as in Cup—a new title sponsor promises new fan-friendly elements during event weekend. The inaugural WYPALL* 200 has already been a hit with racing enthusiasts in and around Phoenix, as the new title sponsor offered fans the chance to win a VIP weekend to PIR on its Facebook page: Facebook.com/WYPALLWipers.

On the track in the Nationwide Series, Busch—the defending series champion—has been a dominant force at Phoenix. The younger Busch brother has won three of the past seven Nationwide Series races at PIR. Carl Edwards, the Nationwide champion in 2007, has two career wins in the desert.

With so many contenders vying for championships in all three major NASCAR series at Phoenix International Raceway this November 11-14, fans won't want to miss a second of the action.

Single day tickets to the Kobalt Tools 500—NASCAR's semi-final race in the Chase for the Sprint Cup—start at just \$25. Fans may also add to their weekend excitement with PIR's Extreme NASCAR Value Packages, including two-day (Sprint Cup and Nationwide Series) tickets priced at only \$40 and three-day (Sprint Cup, Nationwide and Camping World Truck Series) ticket packages for just \$47.

PIR is also now accepting \$50 deposits for 2011 season tickets. Get your seats today at 866-408-RACE (7223) or PhoenixRaceway.com/Tickets. ■

