



## Aaron's 499 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series FAST FACTS

- WHAT:** Aaron's 499 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race at Talladega Superspeedway. Race 8 of 36-race schedule.
- WHEN:** Sunday, April 17, 2011; 12:00N CDT
- WHERE:** Talladega Superspeedway, Talladega, Ala.
- TV/RADIO:** Live on FOX and MRN Radio Network
- RACE LENGTH:** 500.08 miles (188 laps)
- PURSE:** \$5,944,315.00
- DEFENDING RACE WINNER** Kevin Harvick (3 hr., 31 min., 58 sec.)
- QUALIFYING:** Qualifying for the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series is Saturday, April 16, starting at 10:35 a.m. CDT
- DEFENDING POLE SITTER:** Jimmie Johnson (set by points)
- QUALIFYING RECORD:** Bill Elliott, 212.809 mph; April 30, 1987
- RACE RECORD:** Mark Martin, 188.354 mph (2 hr., 39 min., 18 sec.); May 10, 1997
- TICKETS:** Contact the Talladega Superspeedway ticket office at 1-877-Go2-DEGA or log on to [www.talladegasuperspeedway.com](http://www.talladegasuperspeedway.com).
- :** Qualifying for the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series followed by the Aaron's 312 NASCAR Nationwide Series race is set for Saturday, April 16: Two-day Saturday/Sunday tickets start at \$49; Single-day Saturday tickets are \$40 for grandstands and \$50 for towers. Kids age 12 and younger admitted free with a ticketed adult on Saturday and Sunday in the Allison Grandstands.
- The Aaron's 499 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race set for Sunday, April 17: Two-day Saturday/Sunday tickets start at \$49; Single-day Sunday tickets start at \$60.

**PARKING:** Day parking for automobiles is free on Talladega Superspeedway grounds.

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**NOTES OF INTEREST:**

**AUBURN UNIVERSITY NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP CAR**

Auburn University's BCS National Championship victory did more than bring just the crystal trophy Auburn, it also brought a few surprises to Talladega as well.

This weekend, Michael Waltrip's No. 15 Sprint Cup Aaron's Dream Machine Toyota will feature Auburn's trademark orange and blue while competing at the school's home racetrack.

**COCA-COLA CARS ON DISPLAY**

Coca-Cola will have its show car simulator and the No. 12 Coca-Cola car driven by Bobby Allison on display in the Talladega Experience Fan Hospitality area on Sunday.

**BEST TRACK FOR SURGING EARNHARDT**

Born in Kannapolis, N.C., Dale Earnhardt Jr.'s actual home track is Charlotte Motor Speedway. But really, it should be Talladega Superspeedway.

The Earnhardt family has practically owned the joint going on 30 years now. His father, Dale Earnhardt, won 10 races at Talladega, more than any other driver. Junior has five wins there – including four consecutive victories from 2001-03 – making the track his most successful. This weekend, he looks to end a career-long 100-race winless drought.

Earnhardt Jr., second in pre-race Driver Rating at Talladega (92.7), heads into this weekend with momentum not seen in three years. His points position – sixth – is his best after seven races since 2008, his first year with Hendrick Motorsports.

He scored a ninth-place finish at Texas, his fourth top 10 of the season. Last year, he had eight. In 2009, he had five.

### **ROUSH FENWAY RACING: SHORT LIVED DOMINANCE?**

Roush Fenway Racing placed all four of its cars in the top seven last weekend at Texas Motor Speedway, including race winner Matt Kenseth. In doing so, Carl Edwards vaulted back into the series points lead, and Kenseth moved to third.

But a big test awaits Roush Fenway this weekend. Talladega has always presented problems for the team. It has three wins at Talladega, but only one since 1997. The team's average finish at Talladega – 18.9 – makes the track its worst in terms of average finish.

### **RCR: RESTRICTOR PLATE WHIZZES**

Richard Childress Racing swept last year's Talladega races – Kevin Harvick won the first, Clint Bowyer the second – and have won three of the last four restrictor plate races.

Three of the four RCR drivers are in the top 12 (Harvick is ninth, Paul Menard is 11th and Clint Bowyer's 12th), with Harvick the only driver with multiple wins this season.

RCR is the all-time leader in owner wins at Talladega, with 11 (one ahead of Hendrick Motorsports' 10).

### **GO TIME**

There are some big surprises – in the form of big names – outside the top 20.

Chase for the NASCAR Sprint Cup favorites Jamie McMurray (24th in points), Jeff Burton (25th), David Reutimann (27th) and Joey Logano (28th) are all in danger of missing NASCAR's "playoffs" if their respective seasons don't improve – and fast. Same goes for 2010 runner-up Denny Hamlin, who sits 20th in points.

The Chase "wild card" offers a bit of hope to some of the marquee names toiling outside the top 10. After race No. 26 at Richmond, the top 10 drivers will earn a Chase berth. Spot 11 and 12 will go to the two drivers outside the top 10 with the most victories, provided they are in the top 20.

The above names might soon need to rip off a few wins over the next 19 races, or else find themselves out of championship contention.

### **BAYNE GOES FOR REPEAT**

Trevor Bayne returns restrictor plate racing, a style that clearly suits him.

Bayne, of course, won the Daytona 500 to open the 2011 season, the last trip the series took to a restrictor plate track.

In that event, Bayne famously worked well with Jeff Gordon as a drafting partner throughout. Gordon is the active leader in Talladega wins, with six.

### **COMPETITIVE BALANCE**

There are lead changes and leaders galore at Talladega.

The same holds true in terms of race winners. There have been seven different winners in the last seven races.

### **FAN HALL OF FAME**

Talladega Superspeedway will induct the inaugural Fan Hall of Fame Class of 2011 during pre-race ceremonies. The three inductees are: Lem Adams, Jenny Philips and Talladega Tire Man Chris MacNicol.

Adams has been attending races at Talladega Superspeedway since the track opened in 1969. Philips too attended the first race when she was only 5 years old. MacNicol is known throughout the infield and around the NASCAR circuit for his unique use of a racing tire.

All 3 inductees will be recognized throughout the year at a permanent display in the International Motorsports Hall of Fame.

### **PRE-RACE DIGNITARIES**

Recording artist Ashton Shepherd will sing the national anthem for Sunday's Aaron's 499. Mike Jackson, Director of Alabama Raceway Ministries, will deliver the invocation prior to the race. Auburn University Head Football Coach Gene Chizik will deliver the driver's command as Grand Marshal and the winner of the Aaron's Weekend of Your Dreams promotion will serve as honorary starter.