



STEWART-HAAS RACING

Daytona 500 Time Trials

Date: Feb. 17, 2013
Event: 55th Daytona 500 Time Trials (Round 1 of 36)
Series: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series
Location: Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway (2.5-mile oval)
Pole Winner: **Danica Patrick of Stewart-Haas Racing (45.817 seconds at 196.434 mph)**
SHR Lineup: **Danica Patrick (1st, 45.817 seconds at 196.434 mph)**
Ryan Newman (4th, 45.931 seconds at 195.946 mph)
Tony Stewart (5th, 45.936 seconds at 195.925 mph)

Danica Patrick, driver of the No. 10 GoDaddy.com Chevrolet SS, led the Stewart-Haas Racing (SHR) contingent in time trials for the 55th annual Daytona 500 by qualifying on the pole for the season-opening NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race at Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway.

Patrick turned a lap of 45.817 seconds at 196.434 mph on the 2.5-mile superspeedway to earn her first career Sprint Cup pole. The Daytona 500 will mark her 11th career Sprint Cup start, as her pole locked her into the Great American Race.

“Everything went smoothly,” said Patrick, whose Sprint Cup debut came in last year’s Daytona 500. “This is very much a moment to talk about being proud of the guys who prepare the car. For us drivers, it’s very important for us to hit our shifts and be smooth. But, there is a certain amount of speed that the car has as potential, and that’s what you’re getting to. Thanks to the Go Daddy crew, Hendrick for the power, and Chevy for the car – those are the elements that are really important. The driver plays a part, but a small part.”

Patrick is the first female to win a Sprint Cup pole. Janet Guthrie previously held the record for top starting position by a female in Sprint Cup, twice starting ninth in 1977. She started ninth at Talladega (Ala.) Superspeedway on Aug. 7, 1977 and at Bristol (Tenn.) Motor Speedway on Aug. 28, 1977. The previous best starting position for a female in the Daytona 500 was 18th, by Guthrie in 1980.

“Those are nice things,” said Patrick in regard to the historical significance of her pole. “For someone like Go Daddy who has been really patient waiting for me to get to Sprint Cup fulltime, it’s very important. All the people who have been supportive along the way, that’s who it really pays off for.”

Patrick’s quick time secured the 11th Sprint Cup pole for SHR, with the last one coming 11 races ago at Atlanta Motor Speedway where Tony Stewart took the pole on Aug. 31, 2012. Patrick is also the 11th different pole winner in the last 11 Daytona 500s.

Ryan Newman, driver of the No. 39 Quicken Loans Chevrolet SS for SHR, qualified fourth after posting a lap of 45.931 seconds at 195.946 mph. It was Newman’s best Daytona 500 qualifying effort in 12 attempts. His previous best was seventh for the 2008 Daytona 500, which Newman won.

“The guys did a lot of hard work last night and gave me the confidence to hold the Quicken Loans Chevy wide open today. I just went for it,” Newman said.

Stewart, driver of the No. 14 Bass Pro Shops/Mobil 1 Chevrolet SS for SHR, qualified fifth after reeling in a lap of 45.936 seconds at 195.925 mph.

“Mobil 1 deserves a lot of credit for this,” said Stewart, who has 18 career victories at Daytona across the Sprint Cup Series, the NASCAR Nationwide Series and the defunct IROC Series. “Their engine oil, chassis lubricants, gear oil – even their power steering fluid – helped get us the pole and place all of our cars in the top-five. To put up a fast lap here at Daytona, it’s about reducing friction, heat and rolling resistance, and after looking up at the board, I’d say it’s mission accomplished.

“We have a sponsor in Mobil 1 that actually contributes to making our cars go faster. They work as hard as our guys do. This is a day that showcases what their products are about.”

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Also locking up his starting spot for the Daytona 500 was Jeff Gordon, who qualified second to Patrick. Gordon missed the pole by .033 of a second. He turned a lap of 45.850 seconds at 196.292 mph.

With the front row of Patrick and Gordon, along with the fourth-, fifth- and sixth-place qualifying efforts made by Newman, Stewart and Kasey Kahne (45.953 seconds at 195.852 mph), respectively, Hendrick-powered Chevrolets took five of the top-six qualifying spots. The lone interloper was third-quick Trevor Bayne (45.924 seconds at 195.976 mph) in a Ford. Toyota was the third-fastest make thanks to seventh-quick Denny Hamlin (45.972 seconds at 195.771 mph).

Forty-five drivers made a qualifying attempt for the Daytona 500.

While Sunday's time trials locked in the front row, the remaining positions will be determined following Thursday's Budweiser Duel – twin 150-mile heat races that set the majority of the 43-car Daytona 500 field.

Those cars earning odd-numbered positions from qualifying will be assigned to the first Duel race. Those cars earning even-numbered positions from qualifying will compete in the second Duel race. The starting positions for each Duel race will be based on qualifying times.

Patrick and Stewart will compete in the first Budweiser Duel race and start first and third, respectively. Newman will start second in the second Budweiser Duel race.

The top-15 finishers in each Duel race – excluding the already locked-in front row – will earn a spot in the Daytona 500 and fill positions 3-32. Based on their finishing position in the first Duel race, the top-15 will line up on the inside row (odd-number starting positions). Based on their finishing position in the second Duel race, the top-15 will line up on the outside row (even-number starting positions).

Positions 33-36 will go to the four fastest cars from qualifying that have not already earned a spot. Positions 37-42 will be provisional positions, and go to the highest six cars in 2012 owner points that have not already qualified via the Duel or qualifying. The 43rd starting position will be assigned to any car owner who has the most recent eligible past Sprint Cup champion who did not make the field by any other method, providing the driver had competed in the 2012 Sprint Cup season. If the 43rd position remains unused, it will be assigned to the next highest car in 2012 owner points not already locked into the field.

All three SHR drivers are guaranteed a starting spot in the Daytona 500 no matter their respective finishes in the Budweiser Duel. Patrick is locked in via her pole, and Newman and Stewart each finished high enough in 2012 owner points (14th for Newman, ninth for Stewart) to secure their spots in the Daytona 500.

The Budweiser Duel gets underway at 1:40 p.m. EST on Thursday, Feb. 21 with live coverage on SPEED. The green flag waves for the Daytona 500 at 1 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 24, with live coverage provided by FOX beginning with its pre-race show at noon.

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