



Five-Time Is Now a Two-Time

Five-Time Sprint Cup Champ Johnson Scores Second Career Daytona 500 Win

- Date:** Feb. 24, 2013
Event: 55th Daytona 500 (Round 1 of 36)
Series: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series
Location: Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway (2.5-mile oval)
Start/Finish: 9th/1st (Running, completed 200 of 200 laps)
Point Standing: 1st (47 points, 5 ahead of second)
Winner: **Jimmie Johnson of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)**
Hendrick Motorsports Finish: Jimmie Johnson (Started 9th, Finished 1st / Running, completed 200 of 200 laps)
Dale Earnhardt Jr. (Started 19th, Finished 2nd / Running, completed 200 of 200 laps)
Jeff Gordon (Started 2nd, Finished 20th / Running, completed 200 of 200 laps)
Kasey Kahne (Started 6th, Finished 36th / Running, completed 150 of 200 laps)
Hendrick Motorsports Points: Jimmie Johnson (1st with 47 points, 5 ahead of second)
Dale Earnhardt Jr. (2nd with 42 points, 5 out of first)
Jeff Gordon (19th with 25 points, 22 out of first)
Kasey Kahne (34th with 8 points, 26 out of first)

Jimmie Johnson and crew chief Chad Knaus developed a game plan for the 55th Daytona 500 at Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway during testing in early January. On Sunday afternoon, Johnson played the plan to perfection in the No. 48 Lowe's Chevrolet SS, leading the final 10 laps around the 2.5-mile oval for his second career victory in the Great American Race.

"There is no other way to start the season than to win the Daytona 500," said Johnson, who also won this race in 2006. "I'm a very lucky man to have won it twice. I'm very honored to be on that trophy with all the greats that have ever been in our sport. Amazing day for myself, for this team. As the year goes, we are excited. But next week is a whole different game. We will have to make sure we are buttoned up and ready to go there.

"I just want to send my thoughts and prayers out to everyone that was injured yesterday, and I hope they are healing up and doing well," Johnson said, referencing the fans injured during the final lap of the NASCAR Nationwide Series race Saturday at Daytona.

The Daytona 500 marked the first points race of the new sixth-generation NASCAR racecar. Teams learned quickly during January testing that the car, along with rule changes, could make for a dicey Speedweeks. Multiple-car accidents plagued testing, and that theme returned during practice for last week's Sprint Unlimited. So preservation became the name of the game for Johnson and the Lowe's Racing Team.

Johnson was the picture of patience throughout Speedweeks and the first half of the 200-lap race Sunday. When it was "go time," five-time Sprint Cup champion Johnson made his charge to the front of the field, taking the lead with 10 laps to go and holding off a last-lap charge from his Hendrick Motorsports teammate Dale Earnhardt Jr. to score the victory in the 400th start of his Sprint Cup career.

"This Lowe's Chevrolet was so fast," said Johnson, who led four times for a total of 17 laps. "Chad (Knaus) did an amazing job. We wanted to get this car to the 500. We knew it was the best car for us, and it certainly did its job for us. We stuck to our plan all week long, kept the car straight through the practice sessions and the Duel. We knew it was a very fast race car and it would race well. We got that done here today."

The win was the 61st career Sprint Cup victory for Johnson, who became the 10th driver to win multiple Daytona 500s.

Earnhardt finished .129 of a second behind in the runner-up spot. Mark Martin, Brad Keselowski and Ryan Newman took spots three through five. The rest of the top-10 consisted of Greg Biffle, Regan Smith, Danica Patrick, Michael McDowell and JJ Yeley.

There were six caution periods for 24 laps, with eight drivers failing to finish.

With the first of 36 races complete, Johnson leads the Hendrick Motorsports stable in the championship point standings. He is first with 47 points, five ahead of second-place Earnhardt, who has 42 points. Jeff Gordon is 19th with 25 points, 22 out of first, and Kasey Kahne is 34th with eight points, 26 out of first.

The next event on the Sprint Cup schedule is the Subway Fresh Fit 500k Sunday, March 3 at Phoenix International Raceway. The race starts at 3 p.m. EST, with live coverage provided by FOX beginning with its pre-race show at 2:30 p.m.