

RACING CORNER

TOYOTA MAY KICK-START US TEAMS

By **GERALD HODGES**
SPECIAL TO THE ATLANTIC NEWS

DAYTONA | From a driver's perspective, the 2006 Nextel Cup season will mark the end of an era.

Teams and American car manufacturers are also facing numerous concerns.

What's causing all the fuss is Toyota's entry into the Cup series, and NASCAR's "car of tomorrow."

Beginning with the 2007 Daytona 500, Toyota plans to have three Nextel Cup teams, and NASCAR's "car of tomorrow," will make its debut one month later at Bristol.

Gone will be the dominance of the three American companies that have for so long provided cars for the sport. Japanese car maker, Toyota will put its Camry model in the starting lineup with Chevrolets, Fords, and Dodges.

With the introduction of the new, boxier, less aerodynamic Cup car in 2007, it means Toyota will be at the same starting point as all the other established American teams.

While Toyota has a wallet full of cash to fund its factory teams, American car manufacturer's budgets have been slashed due to slow car sales and high production costs.

"They've (Toyota) got a lot of money, and they can buy up all the best drivers

and best teams, and the best of everything," said Doug Yates, who's team will run the Ford Fusion. "They could put the series out of business if they want to. So NASCAR needs to balance the playing field."

However, not everyone in racing thinks their emergence into NASCAR's major touring series is a bad thing.

Bruton Smith owns several tracks where Nextel Cup races are held including Lowe's Motor Speedway, as well as some Toyota dealerships.

"Toyota will add greatly to the sport," he said. "A lot of people working in this sport will be making more money next year because Toyota is coming in."

"Toyota has enough money to buy General Motors and Ford. They have more money than God."

Jack Roush, who has five Cup teams is able to see the good and bad, but says NASCAR needs to be sure they maintain a system of checks and balances among all teams.

"Like it or not Toyota is a very important part of our economy today," Roush said. "We've got a lot of dealer investment dollars out there and we've got a lot of our population that works in Toyota plants around the country. So they have every right to be here."

"Based on the way that they have dealt with the other series that they've been in and what's happened to the series after they

arrived and what happened to the series after they've left, NASCAR will have to think about what they allow them to do here in terms of changing the order of things technologically or the way we staff and the other things that we do.

"They have a way of carrying a different level of investment than would otherwise be justified based on the business aspects of the business, and we're yet to see how that will unfold."

"I welcome their being involved because I think they'll be good for the sport. I think they'll be great for the fans and the enthusiasm, I think, will sell more tickets to our race tracks."

The Japanese car maker's three teams could have up to seven drivers, depending on sponsorship in 2007.

They include Bill Davis Racing (two teams), Michael Waltrip (two teams), and Team Red Bull, a startup team.

While no details have been announced about Red Bull, there is speculation that Toyota will attempt to recruit top drivers, like Kevin Harvick, whose contract expires at the end of this season, and turn them over to Red Bull.

From a business standpoint, Toyota's entry is big news, but what's to prevent Nissan, Honda, BMW, and others from doing the same?

Safety, cost reduction, and improvements will highlight the new race vehicle. Teams will use the newly-designed "car of tomorrow" for 16 events next season, beginning with the spring race at Bristol Motor Speedway - currently the fifth event on the Cup Series schedule.

Aside from Bristol events, teams will use it in 2007 events at Phoenix International Raceway, Martinsville Speedway, Richmond International Raceway, Dover International Speedway and New Hampshire International Speedway.

With the exception of the 2.66-mile Talladega track and the two road courses, all tracks where the new car will debut in 2007 are short tracks.

In 2008, it will be implemented at 26 events, and the following year, used exclusively at all events.

"We went to the race track four times with the car of the future," continued Roush. "We've cut it up and changed it three times and we invested \$300,000 in it and bought our own tires and rented the race track at Talladega and did all the other things, so I don't know exactly how that's helping me."

"But we've had just about all the cost containment the teams can afford so far and I don't think we've got a car yet that will race on a mile and a half race track. I guess we're gonna put the mile and a half race tracks to the end and say if we get it working on road races and short tracks, then we'll have to make it work on two-mile tracks and speedways."

"But they're moving it out three years, which will be in the interest of limiting the cost. At least the teams won't have to absorb it all in one year, and to have that kind of a rollout is something we'd asked for and it certainly is in the interest of the teams."

"We're not gonna wait for this car of the future. They're gonna continue to be made safer and whether or not the car of the future was necessary to incorporate the changes they want is the decision I didn't make and I didn't have the prerogative to make that or I probably would have made a different decision. But we're on our way. We're on schedule. We'll comply with whatever the requirements are and we'll race them."

For additional stories by Gerald Hodges/ the Racing Reporter visit www.race500.com or e-mail hodgesnews@earthlink.net.

HISTORIC HAPPENINGS

A London Diary ~or~ 'A Taste of Britain'

By **DOROTHY DEAN HOLMAN (1895-1984)**
EDITED BY **JOHN M. HOLMAN**
SPECIAL TO THE ATLANTIC NEWS

(Editor's Note: The following column, the third in an ongoing series, is a personal account of a week-long trip to London taken by the author in 1974.)

WEDNESDAY

May 1, 1974

Woke at 7:30, bathed and dressed. First, to describe our room. Twin beds, two chairs, table between beds with lamp, radio and telephone, a larger table on which to write (with lamp), a small one in front of huge picture window, with net curtain and burnt orange drapes to match the bed spreads, a television, and a good sized closet. Bathroom connecting with bath and shower, wash basin and toilet.



A girl came in every morning after we went out, to make beds, clean, and leave fresh towels. Face cloths weren't provided, so I had to buy one the first time I went out, at Woolworth's, no less.

Breakfasted at 10 and had an English breakfast consisting of orange juice, corn flakes, bacon and eggs, a sausage and coffee. They only half-fry the bacon, I like mine crisp, and we didn't like the taste of the sausage. So from then on we partook of a continental breakfast, which was included in the price of the tour ticket, and was just like I have at home. It consisted of orange juice (tumbler size) corn flakes (the only other choice was porridge), rolls and coffee, hard rolls at first (a plate piled high with them), later crescent or whole wheat.

Mailed cards to John and Bill. Wore new pant suit today and raincoat and old shoes. Addressed cards. Frannie tried to get accommodations at a farmhouse for overnight in Stratford, but they were no long taking

guests. I was disappointed. Frannie made reservations for a trip to Shakespeare country for the next day. Had lunch in coffee shop, then took taxi to Paddington station to catch a bus for orientation tour of the city, included in tour itinerary. At lunch met two couples from Connecticut.

On tour of the city saw sign "No Entry" instead of our "Do Not Enter". Advertising signs on trucks say "Ring 1234" instead of "Tel. 1234". Thrift shops are called "Reject Shops". Window boxes on buildings full of mixed primula, very colorful. Passed a goat house where people board their goats through the winter, the driver said.

Went over the Chelsea suspension bridge, saw Chelsea tower and the River Thames, through Parliament Square, over the Yorkshire bridge into Vauxhall. Saw Big Ben and were allowed to leave the bus to take a picture. I took two, and one of Frannie standing in front of the bus. Crossed Westminster Bridge, Parliament Square and saw statue of Winston Churchill, and was told there was one of Abraham Lincoln, but did not see it.

Along Downing Street and into Trafalgar Square with statue of Lord Nelson, and the Strand Theatre District. Ran into traffic jam caused by demonstrators for socialism, it being May 1st, marching with banners and placards. Were held up for a time. Crossed London Bridge and saw the Tower of London, which is more than a single tower, but a set of buildings of stone.

Driver remarked that the old London Bridge had been sold to someone in Arizona, he thought. Saw Tower Bridge from London Bridge, went through industrial district, bricks blackened. Noticed neon signs on buildings here and there

LONDON Continued on 39A.

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— Michael P. Connelly

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TOWN NEWS

Agreement made in contract talks

By SCOTT E. KINNEY
ATLANTIC NEWS STAFF WRITER

EXETER | It's one down, one to go. The town and the firefighters union have come to a new 3-1/2 year agreement. Among the changes in the contract are employee contributions to health insurance programs and a change to a 24-hour shift.

Starting in 2006, workers will begin paying 5 percent of their health insurance costs, with the contribution increasing to 10 percent in 2007 and 12 percent in 2008. The plan is a change from the town contributing 100 percent of healthcare costs for firefighters.

The new 24-hour shift will replace a 10-hour day and 14-hour night shift that was previously employed by the department. The total number of hours worked

by each firefighter would not change, but instead of firefighters would work two days as opposed to two day shifts and two night shifts.

The shift change was modeled after several area departments already utilizing the 24-hour shift and was much desired by the department, according to Town Manager Russ Dean. The new 24-hour shift is for a one-year trial basis with the option to continue based upon trial's outcome. Town and fire officials will meet on a quarterly basis to see how the new scheduling is working.

"They (firefighters) like it because I think it will allow them to spend more time with their families," said Dean. "We would like to see it work and produce some real benefits."

Dean said the town's research into the

new shift found that the new shift was being utilized by roughly 68 percent of the countries departments and sited a reduction in sick leave by the department among the possible benefits.

The new contract will appear on the town's warrant in March as Article 17, which asks voters to raise and appropriate \$8,236.

Contract negotiations between the town and the union that represents town office workers and employees of public works, with the key issue revolving around health insurance. As with the firefighters contract, the town is asking public works and office employees to pay a portion of their health insurance.

"We've got some work to do there," said Dean, "but it's looking pretty positive."

Trio arrested on drug charges

By SCOTT E. KINNEY
ATLANTIC NEWS STAFF WRITER

DURHAM | A Seabrook woman was among three people arrested on drug charges last week on the University of New Hampshire campus.

Kathleen McCarthy, 19,

was arrested on Saturday, Jan. 21, on a charge of conspiracy to sell a controlled drug.

Also arrested was Courtney Weston, 20, of Boston and Mark Grazewski, 19, of Acton, Mass. Both were charged with sale of a controlled drug.

The arrests followed a two-month joint investigation into the on-campus sale of drugs by University of New Hampshire and Durham police departments.

As a result of the arrests, the three students have been placed on interim suspension

by the university pending the outcome of an internal policy review and hearing.

The three were processed and released on \$7,500 bail and are scheduled to appear in Durham District Court on Thursday, March 9, at 8:30 a.m.

'Skimming' cause of snowmobile death

By SCOTT E. KINNEY
ATLANTIC NEWS STAFF WRITER

CONCORD | A Massachusetts man died over the weekend while on a snowmobile trip in Moultonborough.

Daniel Harper, 51, of Bellingham, Mass., died on Sunday, Jan. 29, at approximately 12:30 p.m., after attempting to operate his snowmobile over open water on Lake Winnepesaukee.

According to state officials, the tragedy has highlighted a dangerous activity within the sport.

"This loss of life underscores just how dangerous the practice of skimming is, which is why this risky activity is now illegal in New Hampshire," said Maj. Tim Acerno, coordinator for NH Fish and Game's Off-Highway Recreational Vehicle(OHRV) program.

The operation of a snowmobile over open water, known as "skimming" has been illegal in New Hampshire since January 2005. First-time offenders can expect to pay a \$500 fine. Environmental fines may also be issued because machines that sink to the bottom of a lake can cause haz-

ards for fish and wildlife through the release of gas and oil in the water.

Harper was among a group of five snowmobilers when he attempted cross a section of open water 350 feet wide. Officials said he man-

aged to cross two-thirds of the distance before his machine sank in 15 feet of water. Fellow snowmobilers and local residents managed to retrieve Harper from the water and call for medical assistance.

Members of Moultonbor-

ough Fire and Rescue and Stewart's Ambulance Service responded to the scene and attempted to resuscitate Harper, and transporting him to the Lakes Region General Hospital in Laconia where he was pronounced dead at 1:50 p.m.

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