

42nd SNOWBALL DERBY

December 2 - 6, 2009



Crew members gas up the No. 43 car driven by Dennis Schoenfeld in last year's 41st Snowball Derby. Schoenfeld finished 8th.

NASCAR drivers face stiff test on nation's premier short track

by Joe Culpepper

Race fans might have thought the 2009 racing season ended on Nov. 22 when NASCAR's three major series competed at Homestead-Miami Speedway.

But they were wrong.

Racing purists know the racing season is never complete until a champion is crowned in the Snowball Derby, the country's most prestigious short-track race that occurs each December at Five Flags Speedway in Pensacola.

The 42nd Snowball Derby is slated for Sunday, Dec. 6 and will culminate four days of exciting racing action at Northwest Florida's half-mile gem. Several NASCAR stars, including

2009 Nationwide Series champion Kyle Busch, will compete against the country's best Super Late Model drivers, all of whom are seeking to affix their name to the coveted Tom Dawson Memorial Trophy.

NASCAR legends Pete Hamilton, Donnie Allison and Darrell Waltrip used Snowball Derby victories to springboard their careers. Others, including Dale Earnhardt, Rusty Wallace and Mark Martin, to name a few, never found their way to Victory Lane in Pensacola.

Hoping to earn a spot in this year's elite 38-car field will be former Snowball Derby champion Steve Wallace and

David Stremme, who race on the Nationwide Series. James Buescher and Brian Scott from the Camping

World Trucks Series also hope to make the big show.

"We'll have a handful of guys that might be seen on TV on any given weekend," said Tim Bryant, track manager and co-owner of Five Flags Speedway. "Coupled with that is the cream of the crop in short-track racing, which, frankly, is what the majority of fans come here to see. Having the best of

both worlds is icing on the cake. We're going to have a stellar field of cars."

Other former Snowball Derby champions expected in the race include local favorite Eddie Mercer of Pensacola, two-time defending champion Augie Grill of Hayden, Ala., Bobby Gill of Concord, N.C., and Wayne Anderson of Wildwood, Fla.

Track record-holder Grant Enfinger of Montrose, Ala., also is entered.

First place in the Snowball Derby pays \$20,000. Total purse in the feature event is \$109,000.

Many eyes will be trained on Pensacola's own Johanna Long, who at age 17 captured the Blizzard Series title this summer at Five Flags Speedway to automatically lock up a

TICKET PRICES

Four-day reserved season ticket: \$75 each

Snowball Derby only reserved: \$45

General admission at gate: Thursday \$15;

Friday \$20; Saturday \$30; Sunday \$40



Tim Bryant: Navarre resident is co-owner and manager of Five Flags Speedway.

Kyle Busch, the 2009 NASCAR Nationwide Series champion is a favorite in this year's 42nd Snowball Derby.



The racing always gets wild and wooly during the 300-lap Snowball Derby at Five Flags Speedway. Last year, Ryan Crane (10) of Panama City went for a spin in Turn 1 early in the race. He finished 37th.

Continued on page 5