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**ALSO INSIDE :**

- WELCOME TO DARLINGTON
- KERRY THARP COLUMN
- LADY IN BLACK 2019
- HAROLD BRASINGTON'S LEGACY
- DALE EARNHARDT JR.'S CRASH
- FLASHBACK TO THE '90s





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# Welcome to the City of Darlington!

Welcome race fans to the City of Darlington and the Bojangles' Southern 500. Our city extends to all its Raceway visitors the most cordial welcome. We want you to enjoy yourselves and come back often to Darlington Raceway or just to visit.

We are proud of the Darlington Raceway and the many improvements made to enhance your experience at the track "Too Tough to Tame". The Bojangles' Southern 500 and Darlington Raceway have made the City of Darlington one of the best known small places in the United States.

Thank you for your patronage of Darlington Raceway and please drive carefully. We want you back next year to watch another exciting Bojangles' Southern 500.

Sincerely,  
Gloria C. Hines  
Mayor  
City of Darlington



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## Welcome race fans!

By Lisa Chalian-Rock  
DDRA Executive Director

While you are here for the race, the Darlington Downtown Revitalization Association invites you to #ShopDarlington with our local stores, restaurants and shops.

Take a photo of you at your favorite, and tag the DDRA, @ddraSC, using the hash tag #ShopDarlington. We will cross-post it to our Facebook page, DarlingtonDowntown, and we will post our favorite in The News & Press.

We have a slate of events for Race Week, starting with the Car Hauler's Parade and Racefest Party on Thursday night, beginning at 6 p.m. with Lil' Rusty on the Public Square.

The party continues Friday night as The Bonding Company brings downtown alive with a free concert at Liberty Lane on Pearl Street.

Thanks to the Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority, there will be a shuttle to take visitors between the track and downtown Friday night from 6:30-10:30 p.m. Round out the weekend with the Southern 500 Parade at 7 p.m. running from the Square along Pearl Street.

Find buried treasures on the Darlington Antiques Trail. Stops include B&B Variety & Antiques, 703 Pearl St.; Darlington County Historical Commission, 204 Hewitt St.; Darlington Raceway Stock Car Museum, 1301 Harry Byrd Highway; Scarlett's Antiques, 500 E. Broad St.; So-lina Auction Market Inc., 2085 Lamar Highway; The Collectors Box, 114 Cashua St.; and The Jeweler's Bench, 60 Public Square.

Or play a round of golf at the Darlington Country Club,



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

125 Country Club Road.

Getting hungry? Fill up at a meat-and-three full of Southern charm at Jewel's Deluxe on the Public Square or Joe's Grill, 306 Russell St.

Stop in at Carolina Drug Store on the Public Square for a milkshake or sandwich. New flavors to try at Chianti's Wings & Things at 136 Cashua St. or Fahrenheit 255 at 26 Public Square. Try Italian favorites at Mamma Mia's Italian Kitchen or Mexican fare at Tenampa Mexican Restaurant.

All are downtown within walking distance of the Darlington Veterans Memorial and Old Darlington Mural.

Try some tasty seafood at Bay Island Seafood, 1316 S. Main St., or Mayflower Seafood, 1765 Harry Byrd Highway. For more barbecue, there's Nick's BBQ, 310 S. Main St., or Lindbergh's BBQ, 1215 S. Main St.

Step back to the 1950s for American and Greek specialties for breakfast, lunch, or dinner at Taki's Diner, 609 Pearl St. Look for the race car on the roof of Raceway Grill, 1207 Harry Byrd Highway, to check out some great racing memorabilia and tasty American food right next to the track.



Check out unique fashions at Merle Norman, 84 Public Square; Raven's Closet, 18 Public Square; Emmanuel Beauty Supply, 14 Public Square; or Roses, 502 Pearl St. Looking for something more than the average gift? Drop by Flower Baskets By Becky, 204 Russell St., or Shannon's Salon & Gifts, 1033 Pearl St.

Stop by the Liberty Lane Walk of Fame to see the Southern 500 mural and the handprints of all the Southern 500 winners from 1950 to 2000. The brick walkway connects downtown parking to Pearl Street and the Public Square.

We hope you enjoy your time in Darlington, and come back to see us!





# Darlington Raceway – The Track Too Tough To Tame

By Kerry Sharp  
President, Darlington Raceway

In the fall of 1949, Harold Brasington had a vision of turning an old cotton field in Darlington into a paved superspeedway for stock car racing.

That vision became a reality one year later as Darlington Raceway hosted its first race on Labor Day 1950. Brasington and his partners expected a crowd of around 8,000 for that first race and when more than 25,000 fans showed up, it was the start of a love affair with the Lady in Black that has been going strong ever since.

In just a few days, Darlington Raceway will celebrate the 70th running of the Bojangles' Southern 500. Over the span of seven decades, this race has become one of NASCAR's "crown jewels" and has established itself as one of the premier sporting events in South Carolina.

Fans from all 50 states and 14 foreign countries descend upon Darlington each Labor Day to attend the race weekend and visit the track dubbed "Too Tough to Tame." The annual economic impact that the race weekend realizes is enormous, with nearly a \$65 million yearly impact on the state, including better than a \$58 million annual impact on the Pee Dee Region.

When it was announced that Darlington's spot on the NASCAR calendar would return to Labor Day weekend beginning in 2015, there was a rousing round of applause from the racing faithful. Darlington and Labor Day had been a staple on the NASCAR schedule and the state of South Carolina's calendar for more than 50 years and at last there was a return to normalcy.

Darlington and Labor Day go together

like peanut butter and jelly. You can't have one without the other.

The return to Labor Day included another important twist. The wise folks at International Speedway Corporation, along with NASCAR officials, also had a vision about what Darlington's race weekend could mean for the industry.

Why not create a "throwback" weekend honoring the former heroes, Hall of Famers and legends of the sport, which would include retro paint schemes, retro uniforms and other nostalgic elements? What better venue to showcase the sport's past, present and future than Darlington Raceway?

The concept of the throwback weekend was born and introduced to the fans, teams, drivers, media and others in the industry. Under the direction of former Darlington Raceway President Chip Wile, Darlington's 2015 Labor Day Throwback Weekend was a huge success and laid the groundwork for the continued development of the platform. Shortly thereafter, the weekend was ratified as the "Official Throwback Weekend of NASCAR." In four short years the throwback theme has taken the sport by storm and helped re-energize the entire industry with its reunion-like atmosphere.

This year, Darlington Raceway will celebrate the 1990-94 era, honor the legendary David Pearson and recognize the 70th running of the Bojangles' Southern 500.

In addition, Dale Earnhardt Jr., the 15-time NASCAR Most Popular Driver Award recipient who retired from full-time racing two years ago, will be behind the wheel of the No. 8 Chevrolet for the Aug. 31 running of the Sport

Clips Haircuts VFW 200. It will be Dale Jr.'s only on-track racing appearance of the entire season and will be a race that fans won't want to miss.

On March 26 of this year, the 2020 NASCAR Cup Series schedule was announced and for the sixth straight year, the Darlington event will once again be held over Labor Day Weekend.

The 71st running of the Bojangles' Southern 500 will take place Sunday, Sept. 6, and will be the first race of the 2020 NASCAR Cup Series Playoffs. This is great news for our fans, our community and South Carolina.

The vision that Harold Brasington had more than 70 years ago to build a race track in Darlington quickly came to fruition and has provided the Pee Dee and beyond with countless memories that will last a lifetime.

Darlington Raceway invites you to experience its 2019 Throwback Weekend Aug. 30-Sept. 1. Tickets are on



sale by calling 1-866-459-RACE or by visiting [www.darlingtonraceway.com](http://www.darlingtonraceway.com). The Lady in Black promises to provide plenty of exciting racing action conducted against the backdrop of the sport's rich heritage and tradition.



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# Meet the new Lady in Black

Hartsville native Haylee Johnson is the Raceway's Lady in Black for 2019.

As the Lady in Black, Johnson will serve as a key ambassador for Darlington Raceway throughout the year.

She will represent the track at various community and media events as well as the 70th annual Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series Bojangles' Southern 500 on Labor Day weekend. "We are pleased that Haylee Johnson will be our Lady in Black for 2019," track President Kerry Tharp said.

"Haylee has a wonderful personality and understands the importance of Darlington Raceway in our community, having grown up in nearby Hartsville. She will be a great ambassador for the track."

Johnson is excited to get started in her new position.

"This is a great opportunity for me to serve as Darlington Raceway's Lady in Black," Johnson said.

"I'm excited to get started and represent the track at many events this year."

Johnson is a 2018 graduate of Hartsville High School. She is currently a student at Francis Marion University, where she is studying nursing. She is also currently employed at The Retreat of Carolina Bay assisted living facility in Hartsville.



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# Talking about your generation

By Harold Brasington III  
Special to the News & Press

"My generation! Yeah! Yeah!"

Even for folks like me born a couple years after The Who's 1965 hit, you have to admit – that's an awesome song.

All that angst, optimism and defiance rolled up into one satisfying wallop. Every generation has songs like that. A soundtrack to your coming of age. A sonic cue for your launch into the great wide open. (Hope you get the Tom Petty reference – he always did it for my age group. And the "Back in Black" album from AC/DC, and vintage Aerosmith, and Led Zeppelin....

So it's throwback time again in Darlington, and I've got a question for all of you race fans . . . what do racing and rock-and-roll have in common?

Here is the short answer: D-I-Y, or "do it yourself" for those of us still getting the hang of communicating with acronyms. It's an ironic thing to ponder when you think about it.

In a time when TV shows about fixing stuff yourself is more popular than ever, it is getting harder all the time to do it because of a little thing the marketing wizards started a long time ago called planned obsolescence. Has a sinister ring, doesn't it?

A lot of stuff is so cheap and computerized that there is just no fixing it, and that was the plan all along. So while we gear up to "throwback" this weekend and get nostalgic about the music and the cars from the past, let's send up a salute to all

those drivers, mechanics and crew members from days gone by. Men like Junior Johnson and Smokey Yunick. People who could fix things. People who invented things. People who had a big hand in creating the framework for our iconic car culture and what we think of as the "American Way of Life."

Our early rockers customized their gear because the stuff they wanted had not been invented yet. Eddie Van Halen famously created the "Frankenstrat" by combining parts from Fender and Gibson guitars and changed the sound of rock overnight.

In the same way, our masterminds in the garages worked wonders out on the racetrack to increase speed, efficiency, tire performance and safety. All of these innovations made their way into the cars we came to rely on.

The automobile was key to transforming 20th century America. It democratized mobility, and the asphalt oval is the laboratory where the details got worked out. And that is the significance of Darlington Raceway and the visionary men who built her, and those who came later and continued to build upon the dream that Harold Brasington started so many years ago.

This year we throwback to 1990-94. If this was your generation, then I feel sure you were rocking hard to "Smells Like Teen Spirit" by Nirvana. And while the grunge bands in the Northwest were putting the grit back in rock and roll, NASCAR was polishing up its image and getting ready to head 'em up and move



'em out – the westward expansion was under way.

We were dialing back the mustache/mullet combo and Hollywood was back in Darlington with big-name actors to make "Days of Thunder." Tom Cruise got a speeding ticket on Cashua Street and we got our first look at a new actress named Nicole Kidman (I reckon Tom got a good look, too).

I recently had a chance to visit with Darlington Raceway President Kerry Tharp about the 1990s Throwback theme and I think we were both a little surprised about how much has changed in one generation – for NASCAR and the world in general.

I asked Kerry what he thought was special about that time and we went through the list of all the obvious things like the epic rivalry between Jeff Gordon and Dale Earnhardt Sr. And then he paused and looked at me and said something that really stuck with me. "It was also a time when we sat down at the table at night and talked with your family and friends and you looked people in the eye because we didn't have phones at the table."

Kerry – you are preaching to the choir, my friend!

That is another reason to love race weekend even more. A lot of people are going to put their phones down for a few precious hours and connect with their fellow race fans and enjoy living in the moment, right where they are, in Darlington.

I think my granddad would agree with the sentiment. He liked to keep it

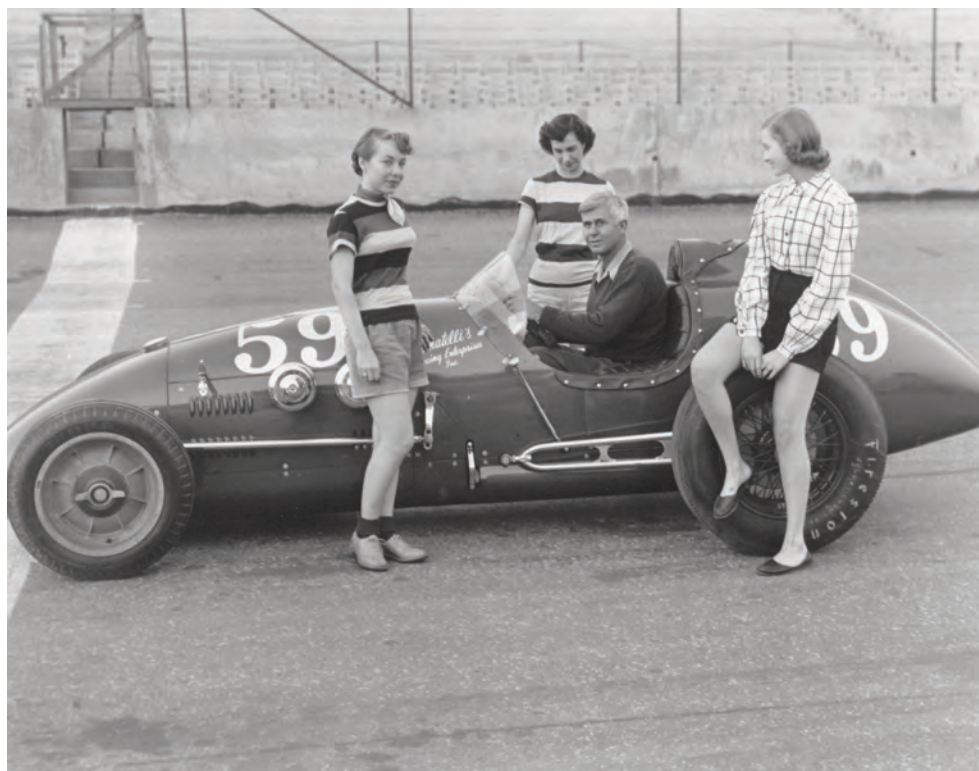
simple. Some folks said he preferred to do things the hard way. Sometimes that might be the right way if you like the end result. And what was that result? A smooth ride on an engineered highway in a reasonably safe and reliable car. That is what my generation got out of the deal.

Granddad was a man of few words, but he made a few comments that I remember to this day. "Racing fixed the tires and the brakes on cars, then we had to go and build the roads, too."

I'm ready to get nostalgic for the '90s. And that can be the launching point to go wherever you want to in the history of stock car racing here in Darlington.

This is where racing on asphalt began. This is where some of the legendary cars still live. If you get the chance to visit with Marshall Griffin and one of his "Roaring Relics," count yourself lucky. He takes his cars out of the museum every year to let fans touch or even sit in a piece of NASCAR history. Help a young fan meet a driver or check out a race car. These young fans are the innovators of tomorrow and will be solving the mobility challenges that face America.

We might not be the rough-hewn rabble we once were. I know a lot of my rowdy friends have "rowdied on down" as Hank Jr. once said. But we still know how to have a good time. I just hope I'm not the only one yelling "Free Bird!" when Better Than Ezra takes the stage for the pre-race show.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



# Busch's heart dropped when he heard about Earnhardt Jr.'s crash

By Hunter Thomas  
Special to the News & Press

When Kyle Busch heard that Dale Earnhardt Jr.'s airplane had crashed at Elizabethton Municipal Airport in Tennessee, his heart, along with the rest of the world's, absolutely dropped.

Earnhardt, his wife, Amy, daughter, Isla, dog Gus and two pilots, climbed from the fiery crash after his Cessna Citation Latitude slid off the runway and nearly reached the nearby highway. The scene was horrific, but no one suffered any serious injuries.

"Amy and I want to thank everyone who has lifted us up with phone calls, messages and prayer since last Thursday," Earnhardt posted on social media Aug. 19.

"We are truly blessed that all on board escaped with no serious injuries, including our daughter, our two pilots and our dog Gus. With respect to the investigation, we will not be speculating or discussing the cause of the accident. I am thankful for the quick response of my pilots, local law enforcement, emergency personnel and hospital staff. Lastly, Amy and I continue to be very appreciative of the privacy extended to us to process everything. It has been important to do that together and on our own time."

Busch, who has competed against Earnhardt for most of his career, said that his heart dropped after his

own pilot told him about the crash. The first thing Busch wanted to know was if there were any survivors.

"It's scary any time you hear about those things or see those things," Busch said. "Certainly when I heard about it -- my pilot actually called me and was like, hey, have you heard this or seen this yet -- and I was like, no, and he explained to me what all happened. As soon as he said Jr.'s plane went down, my heart just dropped. My first thing was like well, are there any survivors because you don't know any of the details originally and then a lot more of the details start coming out and you start hearing things, but it's a scary situation."

The 2015 Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series champion actually travels in the same model airplane that Earnhardt does each week. Without knowing any additional details other than what has been reported, Busch spoke very highly about the airplane model.

"With as much as we do travel and things like that -- I know Jr. has had his pilots for a long, long time. I don't know any of the details past what you guys all know because I haven't spoken to anybody," Busch said. "It's just everybody has procedures and protocols and things like that. I feel like Cessna and Textron Aviation -- those guys do an amazing job. They actually help me manage my aircraft. I have the exact same plane Dale Jr. has, a Citation Latitude, and it's

been a fantastic aircraft to get me from Point A to Point B and it's always been there for us and it's done a phenomenal job, so I'm not sure the details as to what happened if it was whose error or whose accident it was, I don't know."

With Busch and his wife, Samantha, traveling separately on some weekends, he knows that anything is possible, just as if they were to drive to the racetrack separately. However, when an airplane crashes, it can certainly become a tragedy very quickly.

"There's a lot of airplane flights that happen throughout the days, throughout the years and everything else and there's a few that have issues and for as many flights that are successful, it's certainly a tragedy when there's flights that aren't a success," Busch said. "I'm glad that everybody was okay."

While in Tennessee, Busch started the Bass Pro Shops NRA Night Race at Bristol Motor Speedway in the 31st position, but he fought his way through the pack and captured a fourth-place finish, marking his 12th top-five effort in 24 races this season.

"I was just too loose at the end," Busch said. "The car just wasn't there really all weekend long. I just never really found what I was looking for. We were kind of all over the place. Early on, we were so loose that I was just barely hanging on and trying to make up time there."

"We finally got it tight-

ened up enough there when I was racing with the 2 (Brad Keselowski) and got the lead from the 2 before that caution came out. Then we tried to make it a little bit better for exit after that because we were going to go a long ways on tires we figured and just made it too loose. I just had no rear traction getting into the corner. We salvaged a hard-fought day for fourth. That's about it."

Now, the Joe Gibbs Racing driver heads to Darlington Raceway, a track where he has captured a win, three top-five and nine top-10 finishes. Busch is always a strong contender at the Lady in Black, but this season, he enters the Bojangles' Southern 500 as the points leader with four wins.

Busch is showing no signs of slowing down with an average finish of 7.2, and he has completed 99.9 per-



Kyle Busch talks to fans on pit road prior to the Bass Pro Shops NRA Night Race at Bristol Motor Speedway.

cent of the laps this season. With momentum in his favor, Busch is looking forward to the throwback weekend at Darlington.

"Every time we go to Darlington they have kind of a different era that you're supposed to fit within for criteria I guess on how they're going to theme it," Busch said. "We didn't par-

ticipate the first couple of years, but lately, we've been a participant of that and it's been pretty cool, so I've been pretty excited."

The 70th running of the Bojangles' Southern 500 will broadcast live on the NBC Sports Network (NBCSN) and the Motor Racing Network (MRN) at 6 p.m. Sept. 1.



Dale Earnhardt Jr.'s airplane sits along Highway 91 in Tennessee as officials prepare to remove the cockpit. PHOTOS BY HUNTER THOMAS/THE FOURTHTURN.COM

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# Earnhardt Jr. returns to the Lady in Black for one more dance

By Hunter Thomas  
Special to the News & Press

For the first time in nearly a year, Dale Earnhardt Jr. will return to competition in the NASCAR Xfinity Series on Aug. 31 at Darlington Raceway.

Earnhardt, who retired from full-time competition in the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series following the 2017 season, has only made one start since hanging up the helmet, and it was at Richmond Raceway in September of last year.

Earnhardt started the NASCAR Xfinity Series race in second. He led 96 laps and finished fourth. Now, the 15-time National Motorsports Press Association (NMPA) Most Popular Driver will strap into his Chevrolet one more time and take to the high backs of the track, Too Tough To Tame in the Sport Clips Haircuts VFW 200.

“It will mean a lot to me in the same way it meant a lot to me at Richmond last year,” Earnhardt Jr. said. “The only expectation I bring into the weekend is to give the fans their money’s worth. Otherwise it’s no pressure, maximum fun. It’s not about the results anymore; it’s about the experience. Make no mistake, though – I’m going to try to win.”

Not only is Earnhardt planning on putting a show on for the fans, but he will race a No. 8 Chevrolet for the first time since 2007. The iconic number adorned Earnhardt’s race car when he first broke onto the scene in NASCAR’s premier series; however, come Labor Day weekend, he won’t be piloting a red No. 8 Budweiser car, instead, popular mayonnaise brand Hellmann’s will serve as the sponsor. The scheme was inspired by Dale Earnhardt Sr.’s first-ever NASCAR scheme

that was blue and yellow back in 1975.

“Hellmann’s is once again the primary sponsor, and I will drive the No. 8,” Earnhardt said. “I had an idea for a throwback scheme, but with this being my only race I knew it would’ve been justified for Hellmann’s to prefer a current scheme. They supported my idea, and I am thankful.”

The last time that Earnhardt competed in a NASCAR Xfinity Series race at Darlington Raceway was back in 1999, the year that he won his second consecutive series championship. The North Carolina native has 140 series starts, amassing 24 wins, 10 poles, 68 top-five and 92 top-10 finishes.

“We are thrilled to have Dale Earnhardt Jr. race in our NASCAR XFINITY Series Sport Clips Haircuts VFW 200 event at Darlington Raceway



Dale Earnhardt Jr. speaks with the media following his only NASCAR Xfinity Series start of 2018 at Richmond Raceway. PHOTO BY HUNTER THOMAS/THE FOURTHTURN.COM

President Kerry Tharp. “Dale has a tremendous amount of passion for Darlington and we are all excited to see what kind of special throwback paint scheme he will run at the track Too Tough To Tame. Fans don’t get many opportunities to see him race, so it will be something special to see on Aug. 31.”

Earnhardt has always been a fan of NASCAR’s history, so the throwback race at Darlington Raceway fits his style perfectly. While Earnhardt is known world-wide as one of the most iconic NASCAR drivers of all-time, believe it or not, his racing career began in South Carolina.

Earnhardt grew up racing at Florence Motor Speedway and Myrtle Beach Speedway as well as other tracks throughout the Carolinas. That’s one reason why race fans in the Pee Dee and Grand Strand regions love to see Earnhardt compete out on the track. He was a top competing NASCAR Weekly Series competitor in the area back in the 1990s.

“I raced the beach for four years in the ’90s when I was growing up trying to figure out how to drive,

and the beach is just like this place,” Earnhardt told TheFourthTurn.com at Richmond last year. “The surface is slick and worn out.”

Earnhardt continued: “It’s funny, you think back, somebody was asking me out there how much fun I had, or when was the last time I had that much fun. I always think back to the Late Model days as probably the funnest racing that I did.

“You went with your buddies. Whoever would go got in the truck. You’d stop halfway down to the beach and get out and get a Mountain Dew and a Slim Jim and drive the rest of the way. You’d stop down in South Carolina after the beach, you went to the Huddle House. You didn’t go to Waffle House, because the Waffle House doesn’t have French toast, but the Huddle House does.

“I’m a big Waffle House fan, but the Huddle Houses down at the beach were big time after the race unless you wrecked somebody, then you didn’t stop. Because they’d be there. I miss how free and easy that was, and as you got higher, it’s obviously bigger busi-

ness.”

The worn-out surface that Myrtle Beach Speedway and Florence Motor Speedway features is what helped lead to Earnhardt’s success at particularly Darlington Raceway and Richmond Raceway. While he has never won at Darlington, Earnhardt has finished 21 of his 22 Cup Series starts at the track, and in the Xfinity Series, he has finished all four starts at the track. That speaks volumes when navigating around NASCAR’s toughest tracks.

“There are many things I love about Darlington that contributed to my decision to run there this year, but the main reason is the track surface,” Earnhardt Jr. said. “I love races where you have to be smart and manage your tires. Darlington is slick, and it wears out tires. It’s one of the few stops on the circuit that provides that challenge.”

The Sport Clips Haircuts VFW 200 at Darlington Raceway will start at 4 p.m. on Aug. 31, and it will broadcast live on NBC and the Motor Racing Network (MRN).

# Earnhardt set the benchmark in the early ’90s

With Darlington Raceway celebrating the 1990-94 era of NASCAR for its throwback weekend, it’s only fitting that the track recognizes one of the most dominant drivers of that time period – Dale Earnhardt.

During that five-year period in the early 1990s, Earnhardt won an incredible four NASCAR Cup Series championships (1990, 1991, 1993 and 1994), accumulating 24 Cup wins, 75 top-five and 105 top-10 finishes in that span. The 1994 championship would be Earnhardt’s seventh and final series title.

“It was a special time to be part of Dale Earnhardt’s team back in the early 1990s,” Danny Myers, Earnhardt’s fuel man in those years, said. “We had a tremendous amount of success in those days and were part of something truly special. The No. 3 team was hard to beat then and I’m just happy I was a part of it.”

Mark Martin would be one of Earnhardt’s biggest nemesis in the early ’90s having lost the championship to The Intimidator by a mere 26 points in 1990. A 46-point penalty Martin suffered from a Richmond race earlier in

the season for an illegal carburetor handed the title to Earnhardt that year.

After winning the 1991 championship comfortably over Ricky Rudd, 1992 was a trying year for the No. 3 team. Earnhardt finished 12th in the point standings, earning just one victory with six top-five showings, while Alan Kulwicki won the championship that year. It was his first finish outside the top-10 in points since the 1982 campaign.

After a disappointing 1992, the No. 3 team regrouped and cruised to another comfortable championship in 1993 over Rusty Wallace. The 1994 and final Cup title for Earnhardt was his best yet. He battled with Ernie Irvan for the points lead throughout the season, but Irvan suffered a near-fatal incident in the August race at Michigan, handing the title to Earnhardt. The next closest finisher was Mark Martin, who was 444 points behind.

“The dominance that Dale Earnhardt had during the early ’90s was as an impressive feat that we’ve seen in our sport,” Darlington Raceway President Kerry Tharp said. “Very few drivers over the last 70 years have

had the kind of success that he had from 1990-94. He definitely lived up to his nickname of The Intimidator and was almost always the guy up front that everyone was chasing. It was an impressive run for the No. 3 Richard Childress Racing team for sure.”

Four of Earnhardt’s victories in the 1990-94 era came at Darlington Raceway. He won both races in 1990, and the 1993 and 1994 spring races at the Lady in Black.

Despite losing Earnhardt in 2001, the sport continues to recognize the icon and NASCAR Hall of Famer on a regular basis and Darlington Raceway will celebrate his achievements during its throwback weekend festivities.

Dale Earnhardt Sr. by the numbers: Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series

Wins – 76 (8th all-time)  
Poles – 22  
Top-5 Finishes: 281  
Top-10 Finishes: 428  
Laps Led: 25,684  
Most wins at track (Cup): Talladega Superspeedway (10), Atlanta Motor Speedway (9), Bristol Motor Speedway (9), Darlington Raceway (9)



Dale Earnhardt Jr. carries on his dad’s tradition PHOTO BY HUNTER THOMAS/THE FOURTHTURN.COM



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## Events to Attend

**Car Hauler's Parade** heading down Main Street, through the Square, and ending at the infield of Darlington Raceway at 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 29

**Racefest Party with Lil Rusty** on the Public Square at 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 29

**Bringing Downtown Alive! Free Concert** by the Bonding Company from 7 to 10 p.m. Friday, Aug. 30

*Free shuttle between Darlington Raceway and downtown from 6:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.*

**Southern 500 Parade** at 7 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 31

## Things to Do



### Visit Antique Shops

B&B Variety & Antiques at 703 Pearl St., Scarlett's Antiques at 500 E. Broad St., So-lina Auction Market Inc. at 2085 Lamar Hwy., The Collectors Box at 114 Cashua St., and The Jeweler's Bench, 60 Public Square

**Zipline** at the playground between Siskron and Hampton Streets

**Play Basketball** at the Sgt. Terrance Carraway Memorial Park on Southern Pines Street

**Play a round of golf** at Darlington Country Club, 843-393-0236

Take the pups to the **dog park** on Hampton Street

**Chill out in the City Pool** on Gary Street or at the YMCA on Exchange Street downtown

Tour one of the **City's historical districts**, West Broad Street, Cashua-Spring, St. John's, or downtown

## Places to eat

### On the Square & Downtown

Carolina Drug Store  
Chianti's Wings & Things, 124 Cashua  
Fahrenheit 225  
Joe's Grill, 306 Russell St.  
Mamma Mia's Italian Kitchen,  
114 Ward St.  
The Purple Fish Coffee Company,  
110 W. Hampton St.  
Tenampa Mexican Restaurant

### Other Spots

The Dairy Bar, 318 Pearl St.  
Lindbergh's BBQ, 1215 S. Main St.  
Mayflower Seafood, 1765 Harry Byrd Hwy.  
Nick's BBQ, 310 S. Main St.  
Raceway Grill, 1207 Harry Byrd Hwy.  
Sara's Porch, N. Governor Williams Hwy.  
South of Pearl, 117 Edwards Ave.  
Taki's Diner, 609 Pearl St.



## Places to See

Walk through NASCAR history at the **Darlington Raceway Stock Car Museum**, 1301 Harry Byrd Highway

**Liberty Lane Winston Walk of Fame** handprints of all the Southern 500 winners from 1950 to 2000 and a racing mural

**Darlington Veterans Memorial and Old Darlington Mural** at Orange and Main

**Williamson Park**, a 70+ acre nature preserve near downtown with more than 300 types of flora and fauna



# McCain follows his S.C. roots to Raceway

Pop music icon and Greenville native Edwin McCain will participate in the award-winning Official Throwback Weekend of NASCAR by performing the National Anthem for the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series Bojangles' Southern 500 at Darlington Raceway on Sunday, Sept. 1.

McCain will perform the anthem for the track's 70th anniversary of the Bojangles' Southern 500, which first competed at the track Too Tough To Tame in 1950.

"With South Carolina being my home state, I'm excited to be performing the National Anthem at one of the sport's biggest races of the year at Darlington Raceway," McCain said. "I've always embraced my South Carolina roots so to perform at my home state's NASCAR track is an honor."

Called the "great American romantic" by the New York Times, McCain has built an enviable career over the past 20 years by balancing his massive pop success with the year-round

touring schedule of a tireless troubadour.

His hit songs, authentic spirit and surprisingly affable sense of humor keep fans coming back time and time again for nights that feel more like parties with old friends than rock concerts.

After recording two of the biggest love songs in the history of pop music and experiencing the success that comes with a television show on Animal Planet ("Flipping Ships"), McCain now performs upwards of 100 shows annually throughout the U.S. as a solo artist, with his full band or his acoustic trio.

Recently, he's added orchestras to his repertoire, performing with symphonies in select markets where he brings his powerful songs to majestic new heights.

Those enduring love songs (and wedding must-haves) "I'll Be" and "I Could Not Ask For More" aren't just for the romantic at heart; "American Idol" and "The Voice" contestants turn to Edwin's ballads every single year to help them win over

judges and fans alike (just ask last season's AI winner, Nick Fradiani). Even Justin Bieber has been known to belt out "I'll Be" during his own concerts.

2018 marked the 20th year of the success of "I'll Be," which topped the Billboard charts in 1998 and has proven to be a timeless classic over the past two decades.

"We're excited about having South Carolina's own Edwin McCain perform our National Anthem for the 70th running of the Bojangles' Southern 500," track President Kerry Tharp said.

"It's great to see South Carolina natives like McCain being involved in their home state's NASCAR events. It means a lot to Darlington Raceway and the sport. Pre-race ceremonies for the Bojangles' Southern 500 will be a can't-miss opportunity for fans."



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## 1992: Gordon begins his NASCAR Hall of Fame career

It was the final race of the 1992 NASCAR Cup Series season at Atlanta Motor Speedway and Alan Kulwicki edged Bill Elliott out for his first and only championship in a banner year for the Wisconsin driver.

However, as Kulwicki was celebrating his championship (and Richard Petty celebrating his final NASCAR Cup Series race in an illustrious Hall of Fame career), another story quietly unfolded with a driver that would change the narrative of the sport forever, eventually leading to a NASCAR Hall of Fame career, — driver of the No. 24 Chevrolet Jeff Gordon.

In that Atlanta race, Gordon, who had won three races, captured 11 poles and finished fourth in the NASCAR Busch Series standings that same year, made his NASCAR Cup Series debut in the season

finale (in a Rick Hendrick owned car), qualifying 21st and finishing 31st after suffering a crash 164 laps into the race.

Despite the brief setback in Atlanta in 1992, Gordon's success that season still resonated with team owner Rick Hendrick, who signed him to a full contract for the 1993 Cup campaign earlier that year. After placing 14th in the final 1993 NASCAR Cup Series standings, Gordon would finally breakthrough in the 1994 season with two victories, his first at the Coca-Cola 600 at Charlotte and his second in the inaugural Brickyard 400 at Indianapolis.

He would finish 8th in the 1994 standings, but followed with seven race wins and his first championship in 1995. It would be the start to a tremendously successful NASCAR Hall of Fame career that ended

with his retirement from full-time racing in 2015 (he raced eight races for Dale Earnhardt Jr. in 2016). He accumulated 93 career NASCAR Cup Series wins, which ranks third all-time in the sports history behind Richard Petty (200) and David Pearson (105).

Gordon was inducted into both the NASCAR Hall of Fame Feb. 1, and the NMPA (National Motorsports Press Association) Hall of Fame Jan. 27.

"Jeff Gordon is one of the greatest drivers in our sport's history and his illustrious NASCAR career began during the time period we are celebrating for throwback weekend this year," Darlington Raceway President Kerry Tharp said. "He has had such a positive impact on NASCAR and his popularity and contributions have transcended our sport."

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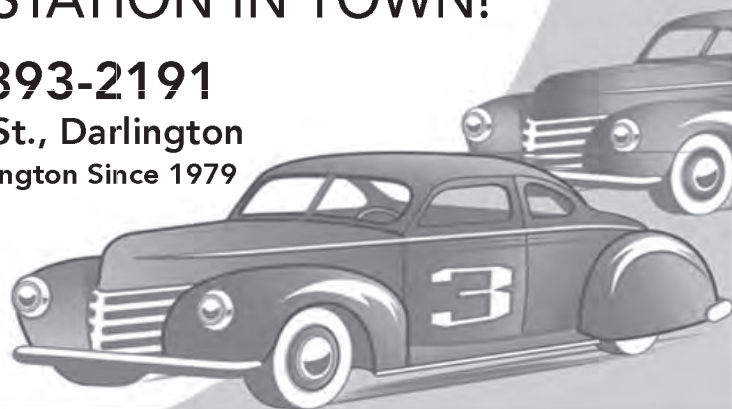
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# Flashback to 1992: 'No one was looking at us to compete for the win'

Darrell Waltrip entered the 1992 Bojangles' Southern 500 on a hot streak and was looking for more.

The three-time NASCAR Cup Series Champion and owner of 83 career victories (at the time) traveled to Darlington Raceway that summer for the annual Labor Day Southern 500 weekend festivities with momentum after winning at Bristol Motor Speedway and posting a second-place showing at Michigan International

Speedway the two races prior.

Little did Waltrip know that after winning the Bojangles' Southern 500 for his 84th career win, it would be the last time he visited Gatorade Victory Lane in NASCAR's top series. It was also his first and only Bojangles' Southern 500 victory (his other four wins at Darlington were in spring events).

"It was interesting, because we didn't have the fastest car in the field for sure. All eyes were on

Davey Allison trying to win the Winston Million that weekend and no one was looking at us to compete for the win," Waltrip said.

"It ended up being a rain-shortened event about 5-6 laps after I took the lead and was in front of Mark Martin. The race never got restarted so I got the victory, which I never would have thought would be my last Cup victory in the sport.

"It was pretty remarkable that up to that point all my wins at Darlington

were in spring races and I had never won a Southern 500 on Labor Day weekend," Waltrip continued. "I was fortunate that the weather gods were on our side that day and we were able to get the lead and keep it with around 70 laps to go in the race.

"I hated it for Davey, because he had a great car and raced up front most of the day, but they pitted 12 laps before the rain came and could never get back up front. It is a victory I will cherish forever

despite the circumstances of how it played out."

Waltrip competed in NASCAR's top series for another eight seasons until 2000 and posted nearly 40 top-10 finishes in those years but another trip to Gatorade Victory Lane eluded him. Despite that, Waltrip is considered one of the sport's all-time greatest drivers, culminating with his election into the NASCAR Hall of Fame's third induction class in 2012.

Waltrip's 84 career NASCAR Cup Series is

tied for fourth all-time with Bobby Allison, just one ahead of current driver Jimmie Johnson, who has 83 (who is tied with Cale Yarborough).

"I can't complain about my career at all. I'm fortunate that I had so much success in NASCAR over a nearly 30 year career. We won a few championships and a lot of races and I'm blessed to still be part of it with my television career. It's been a great ride for sure," Waltrip concluded.

## Better Than Ezra: Another way to salute the '90s

Highlighting its award-winning Throwback Weekend, celebrating the 1990-94 era of the sport, Darlington Raceway and the Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce have announced that multi-platinum rock/alternative group Better Than Ezra will headline the Visit Myrtle Beach Pre-Race Concert for its Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series Bojangles' Southern 500 race Sept. 1.

"It's exciting that we will be performing the pre-race concert at a historic NASCAR track like Darlington Raceway," Better Than Ezra frontman Kevin Griffin said. "It will be a fun show we know race fans will enjoy. The '90s were a special time for Better Than Ezra so it's a great fit for us to play during the track's celebration of the early '90s for their throwback weekend."

"Better Than Ezra continues to put on great performances for their fans and our Visit Myrtle Beach Pre-Race Concert will be no different," said Darlington Raceway President Kerry Tharp. "They had many of their most notable hits in the

'90s and are a perfect fit to get the fans excited for what will be an amazing Bojangles' Southern 500 event."

After being founded while students at Louisiana State University (LSU) in 1988, frontman Kevin Griffin and bassist Tom Drummond comprised the core of the band at its onset as they hit the road and won over one fan at a time beginning in 1989.

This fan base would go on to be known as "Ezralites" by the time the first pressing of Deluxe landed independently in 1993. As the audience dramatically grew, Elektra signed the boys in 1995 and officially released Deluxe.

A fixture on radio and MTV, "Good" captured #1 on the Hot Modern Rock Tracks Chart and went multi-platinum. 1996's Friction, Baby yielded definitive anthems such as "Desperately Wanting" and "King Of New Orleans." A string of fan favorite albums followed, including How Does Your Garden Grow? [1998] and Closer [2001].

2005's Before The

Robots represented another creative high. Its lead single "A Lifetime" peaked in the Top 15 of the Billboard Adult Top 40 chart as "Juicy" went on to famously soundtrack a Desperate Housewives campaign. Paper Empire followed in 2009 and then the band released their latest album in 2014, All Together Now. Produced by Tony Hoffer [M83, Beck,] it spawned the hit "Crazy Lucky," which notched 10 million-plus streams.

At the same time, their touring presence burgeoned year after year as Better Than Ezra continue to sell out amphitheaters and arenas worldwide. A force of nature on stage, the group consistently deliver on tour as countless fans sing along to every word nightly. Their gigs further uphold a growing legend.

Outside of Better Than Ezra, Griffin established himself as a sought-after hitmaking songwriter, having songs recorded by the likes of Taylor Swift and Train. He also penned #1 hits for Howie Day and Sugarland in addition to writing with The Struts



and Moon Taxi. In 2015, Griffin co-founded the Pilgrimage Music & Cultural Festival, which counts Justin Timberlake among others as partners.

Along the way, they launched the Better Than Ezra Foundation ([www.BTEFoundation.org](http://www.BTEFoundation.org)) in order to support their hometown. Chaired by Drummond, its charity endeavors span coastal restoration projects, after school programs for underprivileged kids, and more. Since 2008, it has

raised over \$1.7 million for causes throughout greater New Orleans.

Celebrating 25 years of Deluxe in 2018, the guys reissued the record on double vinyl. In the end, you'll never forget the songs on Deluxe or any other release from their discography — and that's better than anything.

The Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce will be sponsoring Darlington's pre-race concert for the second consecutive year after partnering

with the track for country star Clay Walker's show in 2018.

Darlington Raceway has had a long-standing relationship with Visit Myrtle Beach, as many race fans visit the track each year for its Labor Day weekend NASCAR events, followed by a vacation to Myrtle Beach. With Darlington only located 75 miles from Myrtle Beach, its proximity makes it a prime destination for family and friends.



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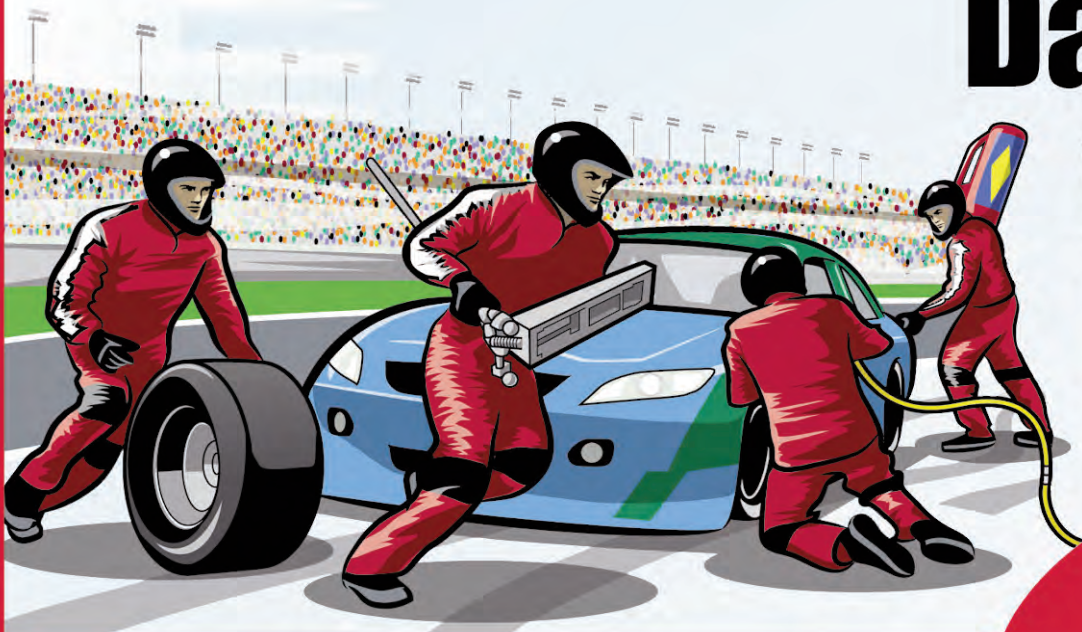
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