



# TONY STEWART

## Great Expectations

KANNAPOLIS, N.C., (Feb. 4, 2010) – Who knew? It is a question that resounds vividly in the hearts and minds of Tony Stewart and his Stewart-Haas Racing (SHR) teammates precisely one year after they first made the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series scene on the hallowed grounds of Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway.

As the two-time Sprint Cup champion gets set to start his second full season as a driver/owner, who knew that in its first year Stewart's two-car racing operation, built on the foundation of Haas CNC Racing, could win five races and sit on the pole twice before all was said and done? And it would add another 14 top-three, 20 top-five and 38 top-10 finishes, lead 628 race laps and, to top it all off in grand style, qualify both of its teams in the Chase for the Championship?

Who knew? Certainly not Stewart, and certainly not in his very first year as a driver/owner behind the wheel of his No. 14 Office Depot/Old Spice Chevrolet Impala. After all, it had been two decades since a Sprint Cup driver/owner showed it was possible to win races and contend for championships with regularity.

But in his first year, Stewart did just that, starting with his team's maiden victory in the non-points NASCAR Sprint All-Star Race at Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway on May 16. First-year Sprint Cup teams aren't supposed to do such things, are they? Who knew?

Then, two weeks later came a milestone seven-day stretch during which SHR trumpeted its arrival as no typical driver-owned, first-year operation. With his runner-up finish at Dover (Del.) International Speedway on May 31, Stewart became the first driver/owner in 556 races to lead the championship standings. And with his breakthrough first points-paying victory one week later at Pocono (Pa.) Raceway, he became the first Sprint Cup driver/owner to lead the championship standings in 375 races. The last to lead the standings was Alan Kulwicki, who clinched the championship over Bill Elliott on Nov. 15, 1992, at Atlanta Motor Speedway. The last to score a victory was Ricky Rudd on Sept. 27, 1998, at Martinsville (Va.) Speedway.

Stewart went on to occupy the top spot in the standings for 13 consecutive races until the start of the Chase in September, when the points were reshuffled and seeded him second. He added victories in the July 4 Coke Zero 400 at Daytona (his 14<sup>th</sup> career win at Daytona in Sprint Cup, Nationwide Series and IROC competition), on the road course at Watkins Glen (N.Y.) International in August, and at Kansas Speedway in Kansas City in October.

Finally, who knew that first-year Sprint Cup teams could become models of consistency and reliability right out of the box? It certainly didn't take long to iron out whatever wrinkles needed to be ironed out as Stewart and his SHR teammate Ryan Newman each completed an astounding 10,468 of a possible 10,492 laps (99.8 percent) over the 36-race season to lead all Sprint Cup

drivers. Next best was David Reutimann, who completed 60 fewer laps than Stewart and Newman.

As the page turns to a new season, one filled with perhaps no more anticipation but understandably greater expectations than the last one for Stewart and his SHR brethren, the focus turns to the high banks of Daytona and the prospects of the driver/owner's first career Daytona 500 victory. Who knows? The sound of hoisting the prestigious Harley J. Earl trophy on Feb. 14 for the driver of the No. 14 Office Depot/Old Spice Chevrolet has a pretty nice ring to it.

***TONY STEWART, Driver of the No. 14 Office Depot/Old Spice Chevrolet Impala for Stewart-Haas Racing:***

**You've said that you were a little nervous before the start of last season, not knowing exactly what to expect. What is your level of anticipation heading into this season, and is it any different than last year?**

"I can promise you one thing: a year ago at this time, none of us knew what to expect and it was a big question mark. Obviously, getting the first year under our belt, there's a lot more relaxation from my standpoint as far as my nerves are concerned. But I'm so extremely proud of the group we have here, the relationship that (crew chief) Darian (Grubb) and I have built over the last year, the relationship with (co-driver) Ryan (Newman) and (Newman's crew chief) Tony Gibson and (competition director) Bobby Hutchens. I mean, this group is a really tight-knit group to me and I'm very, very proud of what these guys have done over the last year. And, honestly, I'm expecting a great year. I feel like, with both of us being able to get in the Chase last year, that's something that I expect both teams to do this year, and I feel like the changes we went through and the work that we did over the winter have prepared both of these teams to have a shot at running for a championship. So, versus last year at this time, saying that we just wanted to make the Chase and hopefully win some races, I feel like this year we have two teams that are legitimate contenders to not only make the Chase, but also have a shot at the championship."

**As a team owner, in addition to being a driver, do you drive with the feeling that you have a lot more at stake than in the past?**

"I don't think so. I don't think that adds to the stress, or takes away from it, at all. You just want to be successful and you want the whole organization to be successful. It was that way when I was with (Joe) Gibbs (Racing), too. I obviously wanted the (No.) 20 car to run well, but I wanted my teammates to run well, too. I think that's helped me with the attitude of how I approach being a driver/owner at Stewart-Haas Racing."

**When you look back on your first year as a driver/owner, is there any particular thing that you feel warrants a pat on the back?**

"I think you're always looking at things that you can do better. I think the one thing that I felt like I could pat myself on the back for is having assembled such a fine group of people. I don't feel like I could've found anybody better than Bobby (Hutchens) as our competition director. I feel like having Tony Gibson and Darian Grubb are the two best fits for the crew chief positions. And, obviously, Ryan (Newman), our relationship over the year, I've had more fun with Ryan than I've had in a long time, and I've had a lot of great teammates that I've had a lot of fun with. Ryan and I are just a great fit and I think that's the one thing that as the year kept going on and the relationships between this group kept getting stronger and building, that I was really proud of and felt fortunate I was able to get this particular group of people together and knowing how well

we work together. It's really hard in this business to get a group of guys who really click with each other, and I feel like that's something we have is a core group of people who really have the same vision, have the same passion and have the relationship that we have, and that's what I really felt proud about at the end of the season."

**Looking down the road for you and your teams this season, what can you do differently should one or both cars make the Chase?**

"We will make sure we focus on doing everything we can so that when the Chase comes, we are prepared and ready for a strong, 10-week stretch and not get ourselves in a situation like we did last year. We don't know why we fell off in the Chase. I think a lot of it was that we were worried about just making the Chase. I think it's a situation, now, where we are going to be a little more focused on trying to make sure that when the Chase gets here, that's when we are at our best, and that is at the start of that last, 10-week stretch."

**In terms of accomplishments, what would you like to do at this point in your career perhaps more than anything else?**

"You know, I would love to see one of our two cars win a championship, from an organization standpoint. To see this group come together in such a short amount of time last year and to have the success that we had last year, that obviously would be the ultimate accomplishment in my mind. Personally, there are still things I want to do. I mean, I still haven't won a Daytona 500. I still haven't won at Las Vegas and I still haven't won at Darlington, and those are three variables I want to accomplish for my personal side. Looking at it from the organization standpoint, I want to see one of our cars win a championship, and help Gene Haas (co-owner) to not only get his first win and his first poles, but to be a part of getting him his first championship, too."

**What do you think about NASCAR's rule changes at the restrictor-plate tracks where drivers will be allowed to go below the yellow line, and also be allowed to bump-draft, once again?**

"I'm comfortable with the yellow line rule going away. We understood why they brought it into the series. The sport has evolved, obviously, since they put that rule in effect. But, you know, I think the one thing about it, I'm kind of proud of NASCAR for it because they constantly are looking at things. That's a rule they put into effect that they've taken away, now. I think the drivers will be comfortable with it. We all know what it feels like when you get in the grass with tires with no grooves in them. It's not very fun. It's always been a self-policing deal. Even with the yellow-line deal, we would occasionally get in the grass. It gives the drivers a little more flexibility to not have to worry about. I think there were times when we got ourselves in positions we didn't necessarily want to be in, where we were passing guys, knew we had to give that spot up. In doing so, we caused more problems behind us than initially. As far as bump-drafting, I think it was a bigger issue before than now. The nice thing with flat bumpers, we're not picking each other up when we're pushing each other. That seems to be less dramatic than it used to be. When we had cars that had slanted noses on them, you could get underneath the car in front of you, physically pick up the back of the car, and wreck them. Those two things, I don't believe, are going to be a big drama."

**NASCAR also has said it will give the drivers more of a chance to be themselves on the racetrack this year, and leave it up to the drivers to police themselves. Do you think that will work?**

“I know when I started, every driver used to self-police the etiquette out there, and trust me, NASCAR from day one doesn’t want to have to get involved in that. But there has to be a level of control involved before it gets out of control. I don’t think NASCAR will change that side of it, necessarily. I think they have to be in that position because it can quickly get out of control if you don’t get a handle on it. But you know, I think things with drivers will continue to sort themselves out. The thing you’ve got to remember is that the average age of drivers keeps going down every year, and I think a lot of that is why you still have to have the sanctioning body policing everything. When you had veteran drivers that had been there for 10 or 12 years, that was how we policed it and that’s why we policed it. You get younger guys in there who don’t necessarily understand it like some of the veterans do, but you used to have guys who could sit them down and make them understand. Now, a ‘veteran’ driver is 25, 26 years old. So a lot of times it just takes a little more of an older hand that’s been around a while to explain it in a way to get the younger guys to understand what they’re doing.”

**Danica Patrick has gotten a lot of attention as she is about to begin her stock car racing career while also continuing her Indy car career. Having made the transition yourself from Indy cars to stock cars, what challenges do you foresee for her?**

“It’s going to be difficult for her. It’s a lot easier when you can get in the car and then the next week get in the same type of car. Bouncing around is difficult, for sure. But I think, versus looking at it strictly from this year’s standpoint, she’s trying to get a head start for the future and get her feet wet and start building that base of information that she needs for the future. It’s not the most advantageous thing if you want to go out and get results right away, but it is advantageous if that’s what your goal down the road is – to be able to start building that database in your mind about how to drive these cars and to learn that new feel. So, it does make it harder going back and forth between the cars and especially, taking a break for the Indy 500 during May. After that, it will take some time to get re-acclimated, but at least she will have that feel and she will be able to pick back up on it. It may not happen right away each time she gets back in it, but at least it will be somewhat familiar each time. I think everybody has to be fair to her and realize she’s going through a learning curve. You look at how many drivers before her have tried to come from Indy cars and have struggled. I think she will learn it. It’s just a matter of time. I don’t think she will focus on what everybody says. I think she’ll go off of what she feels and, if the media and everybody gives her a fair shake, I think she will do just fine.”

**You got a chance to do something different this past off-season when you traveled to Australia to race with your World of Outlaws Sprint Car Series driver, Donny Schatz? How did that go?**

“I had a lot of fun with it. I got to run four races in a winged Sprint Car down there and that was something. Getting to race with Donny down there was a lot of fun. It was a little different off-season than normal, where you sit at home, and normally in Indiana that time of year, there’s not much you can do. So you spend a lot of time laying around and relaxing. Even though we raced in Australia, we relaxed and had a lot of time to have fun. To me, it was the perfect vacation, being able to run four races but still have time to relax at the same time. Two and a half weeks I was down there. It’s the most time I’ve got to spend with Donny. I got to learn him a lot better. Obviously, being able to race with him down there was something that was a great learning experience. It really helped me understand those cars a lot more and makes me want to run more of those races this year.”

**You recently signed a new teammate for Donny in Steve Kinser. What's your outlook for your World of Outlaws program?**

“I'm definitely excited about it. I've got the guy who's the most successful driver in the history of the World of Outlaws joining us in Steve Kinser. And to have the guy who's kind of the modern-day Steve Kinser, I call him, in Donny Schatz. Donny is the guy who's been the most successful in the last three or four years, and we've got him teamed up with Steve. That's something that's exciting. Not too many people have had the honor of having Steve drive their racecar. I'm really honored about that. I don't think you could ask for a better lineup. I feel like I really have a “Dream Team” when it comes to the World of Outlaws side this year.”

**TONY STEWART'S DAYTONA PERFORMANCE PROFILE**

Year	Event	Start	Finish	Status/Laps	Laps Led	Earnings
<b>2009</b>	*Daytona 500	5	8	Running, 152/152	15	\$371,371
	†Coke Zero 400	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Running, 160/160</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>\$349,873</b>
<b>2008</b>	Daytona 500	6	3	Running, 200/200	16	\$871,049
	×Coke Zero 400	17	20	Running, 162/162	0	\$141,286
<b>2007</b>	×Daytona 500	3	43	Running, 152/202	35	\$283,781
	†Pepsi 400	6	38	Running, 125/160	0	\$131,086
<b>2006</b>	×Daytona 500	15	5	Running, 203/203	20	\$529,661
	<b>Pepsi 400</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Running, 160/160</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>\$369,586</b>
<b>2005</b>	×Daytona 500	4	7	Running, 203/203	107	\$389,411
	<b>Pepsi 400</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Running, 160/160</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>\$368,261</b>
<b>2004</b>	Daytona 500	5	2	Running, 200/200	98	\$1,055,553
	Pepsi 400	17	5	Running, 160/160	12	\$149,628
<b>2003</b>	*Daytona 500	8	7	Running, 109/109	6	\$285,828
	Pepsi 400	13	21	Running, 160/160	0	\$114,128
<b>2002</b>	Daytona 500	6	43	Engine, 2/200	0	\$162,065
	Pepsi 400	29	39	Handling, 111/160	0	\$102,038
<b>2001</b>	Daytona 500	24	36	Accident, 173/200	0	\$113,700
	Pepsi 400	36	26	Running, 160/160	0	\$67,325
<b>2000</b>	Daytona 500	7	17	Running, 200/200	0	\$118,875
	Pepsi 400	7	6	Running, 160/160	1	\$71,425
<b>1999</b>	Daytona 500	2	28	Running, 181/200	0	\$102,204
	Pepsi 400	6	6	Running, 160/160	0	\$52,475

\* Race cut short due to weather.

† Qualifying canceled due to weather, starting position set via car owner points.

× Race length extended due to green-white-checker finish.

o Race was started by Stewart, but finished by J.J. Yeley, who took over for Stewart in a relief role on lap 72.

### **DAYTONA 500 Notes of Interest:**

- The Daytona 500 will mark Stewart's 393<sup>rd</sup> career NASCAR Sprint Cup Series start, his 23<sup>rd</sup> career point-paying Sprint Cup start at Daytona and his 45<sup>th</sup> career point-paying start in a restrictor plate race.
- Stewart made his Sprint Cup debut at Daytona on Feb. 14, 1999.
- Stewart has **14 wins at Daytona** (13 on the 2.5-mile oval, one on the 3.56-mile road course):
  - 2009 Coke Zero 400
  - 2009 NASCAR Nationwide Series season-opener
  - 2008 NASCAR Nationwide Series season-opener
  - 2007 Budweiser Shootout
  - 2007 Gatorade Duel
  - 2006 Pepsi 400
  - 2006 IROC race (road course)
  - 2006 NASCAR Nationwide Series season-opener
  - 2005 Pepsi 400
  - 2005 NASCAR Nationwide Series season-opener
  - 2005 Gatorade Duel
  - 2002 IROC race
  - 2002 Budweiser Shootout
  - 2001 Budweiser Shootout
- Stewart has a career total of 37 wins, 10 poles, 144 top-fives, 230 top-10s and 10,650 laps led in 392 career Sprint Cup races. **His most recent Sprint Cup win came eight races ago on Oct. 4, 2009 at Kansas Speedway in Kansas City. His last pole came 148 races ago on Oct. 21, 2005 at Martinsville (Va.) Speedway.**
- **Stewart is the most recent Sprint Cup champion not named Jimmie Johnson.** Stewart scored his second championship in 2005, book-ending the first championship he earned in 2002. Johnson has won the past four Sprint Cup championships (2006-2009). Stewart, however, remains the only driver to win a championship under the old Winston Cup-style format (2002) and the current Chase for the Championship-style format (2005).

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