

# Finally, we can get back to racing



Don Fosdick

## Life in the Fast Lane

On the local scene, I saw a couple of new cars that were close to being finished up on trailers last week. One of them was in front of JL Graphics getting new graphics installed, and as I passed them I rolled down my window and yelled NICE CAR, they all looked at me like I had lost my mind or something.

The other one I saw was over here around Hill St. sitting on a trailer with no numbers just painted white with some graphics down the sides. This one was hard to figure out, due to the fact that the racecar was a Chevy, and the haul truck was a Ford. When I was building and racing on this level, my haul truck was the same as my race car, so if needed I could rob parts from one to another to keep racing, or to get home after the race. The budget I had back then is probably like what our local racers have now, which is slim to none, with a lot of help from friends and others.

I had a time back then that the battery quit in the racecar one night in a heat race, so we took the battery out of my haul truck, and installed it in the race car to be able to race the rest of the evening. When the races were over and we were loading up to go home, due to some race damage we couldn't get the battery out of the racecar. So with some help from fellow racers, we rigged up the two sets of jumper cables, loaded them on our race car on the trailer and left it running, hooked the cables to the good battery on our race car and threaded the cables up to the cables on my haul truck. With a little creative rigging and a couple of beer cans, and bailing wire, we started the haul truck and drove back to the shop to unload.

Well, I thought last weekend was never going to get over. I understand it was Easter and all that family time, I need my NASCAR fix, and the news coming out of the sport was almost nonexistent. The biggest news story to pop up is the fact that Jimmy Eledge, crew chief for the #88 UPS Ford, resigned today. Reasons for leaving is due to the fact that Todd Parrott wouldn't give up any control on the #88 car to Jimmy. So Jimmy said that there was no sense in staying and getting paid to do nothing.

Talks with Robert Yates are going on to see if Robert can use Jimmy in some other area of Robert Yates Racing Inc.

Dale Jarrett is a super good driver and should be running up front as he use to, so there are some problems there that need to be fixed. And of course I know that D. J. would be doing a lot better if he was driving one of General's steeds, but that's me. Ya know that he won his first Daytona 500 in a Chevy Lumina owned by Joe Gibbs, need I say more.

Since we're in the area, I really like Rusty Wallace #2 Miller Lite Ford, and Rusty would like to win another Championship, and say's he can, which I believe. Problem is Rusty and Roger Penske is going to have to change brands. Rusty won his only Championship in what make of car? Yes, a GM in 1989, and the majority of all of his wins came in a GM, nuff said. I just don't believe that Ford has the complete package to dominate races and win championships at this point. Now the newcomer Dodge is another story. They have been working in the background for several years and preparing for a return to NASCAR. Dodge ran their engines in Outlaw Racing for several years working the bugs out of their blocks, heads, and valve train. When I heard that Dodge/Mopar was furnishing engines to a few Outlaw Racers, I knew then that it was on its way back to NASCAR. Chrysler understood from the past that what wins on Sunday, sells on Monday from the seventies. With the Mercedes purchasing Chrysler, I knew that they would follow through on the racing program here in the states. Mercedes is knee deep in racing overseas and they understand that marketing concept very well.

As always, if you made it the far, thank you for your time. Pull those belts tight, get up on the wheel, and DRIVE safely.

Don Fosdick is a local guy who loves racing. E-mail him at dfosdick@grapevine.net.

# Big 12 conference signs four-year deal

DALLAS (AP) — The Big 12 Conference has signed four-year contracts to send its teams to seven bowls, including the Bowl Championship Series.

"This ensures outstanding postseason competition for our schools," commissioner Kevin Weiberg said Thursday. "We have been fortunate to have produced five BCS teams in the first four years of that relationship, and we have quality matchups in the other six bowl games."

The conference will continue its association with the BCS through the 2005 regular season, and the

league champion will play in the Fiesta Bowl. The league champion also has a chance to play for the national championship in the four-year cycle, including when the Fiesta decides the BCS title.

The conference also extended agreements with the Cotton, Holiday, Alamo, Independence and Houston bowls.

An addition for the Big 12 is the Tangerine Bowl. The predecessor to the New Year's Day Florida Citrus Bowl existed from 1947-82. It was revived after the 2001 season, sharing the Citrus Bowl Stadium in Orlando as a pre-Christmas bowl.

# Rockies beat Cards 6-1

ST. LOUIS (AP) — The secret to John Thomson's season debut was simple.

"It's like real estate: location, location, location," the Colorado Rockies right-hander said after working seven strong innings in a 6-1 victory Thursday over the St. Louis Cardinals.

"If you make pitches, you're going to get guys out."

Thomson allowed a run on seven hits with three strikeouts and no walks, and induced 14 pop-ups.

After the first inning, when the Cardinals manufactured a run on Fernando Vina's single and J.D. Drew's sacrifice fly, Thomson didn't allow a runner past second base.

Thomson has been on the comeback trail since undergoing shoulder surgery for a torn labrum after the 1999 season.

He gave the Rockies encouragement when he finished 4-2 with a 3.63 ERA

over his final 11 starts last year, and allowed three runs in his last 16 spring training innings.

The hard times helped Thomson grow up.



"When I first got to the big leagues in 1997, I was a lot of times in awe when I was on the mound," Thomson said.

"It was a process of getting past that to 'I've got to get these guys out.'" Manager Buddy Bell said it's too

early to say whether Thomson, who has a 21-35 career record, has arrived.

"He's too young and he's too inexperienced to say he's over the hump," Bell said. "It takes a long, long time for anybody to get over the hump, and obviously he's got a lot of learning to do."

Thomson outpitched the Cardinals' second straight comeback bid.

Andy Benes, who wasn't used in the final month last year and was left off the Cardinals' playoff roster because of a 7.38 ERA, struggled just as Garrett Stephenson had a night earlier.

Benes, hampered by a knee injury most of last season, made his first start since Aug. 3 and first appearance since Aug. 30.

He lasted four innings and gave up five runs — four earned — on four hits.

Juan Uribe and Benny Agbayani homered for the Rockies.

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