

# About welding chassis



Don Fosdick  
Life in the Fast Lane

team has its own chassis shop and is building their own chassis in house.

One of the first things you see and get told about is that everything is put together in a jig of some sort, so they can keep everything the same. A few race teams have even went as far as having a favorite chassis measured by a digital measuring machine that feeds all of the information into a CAD type computer. With that type of information, manufacturers and race teams thought they could build other chassis exactly like their favorite chassis, or ones that worked well for them. So far from what I've heard and read no one has been able to accomplish that task as of yet. Now I'm going to let you in on a little secret that I know, and I'm giving this one to you for free, this time.

In my first life, pre 1989, I owned and ran a welding and construction business in Oklahoma, and was an A.S.M.E. certified welder on every type of metal that could be welded. Numerous jobs required fitting of piping to be within 10 thousands of an inch to fit or closer, some of these pieces were built in jigs and hauled to the job site and installed, a lot of the time these pieces needed to be tweaked to be installed. In our jobs we used some of the same high carbon steel pipe and square tubing that is used in NASCAR today to build chassis and roll cages.

No matter how hard we tried even with jigs, you can't build any two pieces the same, due to the fact that each piece of metal reacts differently to heat, bending, or welding. So now that you know that little secret, and that all the chassis parts are made from this type of steel, and built from scratch in jigs and various other ways to keep things uniform.

NASCAR checks all manufacturers and race teams that build chassis to make sure that all metal meets NASCAR specs. for safety and uniformity. So now when you hear a driver or a crew chief talk about one of their cars being a good one, or as we heard lately that some team brought a new car to the track and they can't get it to handle at all, you'll kind of know why.

Every once in awhile a chassis is just built to where all the pieces bend and wrap the right way, and you've got a favorite hot rod.

Don Fosdick is a regular guy who loves racing. You can get a hold of him at [dfosdick@grapevine.net](mailto:dfosdick@grapevine.net)

As you all know I'm not a journalist, I'm just a car guy that likes fast Chevys with highly tuned engines, wide tires, headers and tuned exhaust systems (with no mufflers) and on and on. In watching the replay of the race at Talladega, I noticed that I made a mistake about the laps left towards the end of the race when the big wreck came. So I apologize for the mistake and in the future I will keep a note pad close to keep better notes.

Okay let's see if I can get this right the first time around. I really thought that the Ford Boys were going to have something to cheer about on Sunday.

Scott Riggs #10 Nesquik Ford won the Busch Race on Saturday, and I really thought one of them Fords were going win on Sunday, but strategy by a new crew chief and a rookie driver that didn't know any difference drove the wheels off the #48 Lowe's Chevy and won his first Winston Cup Race in 13 starts. The rookie driver I'm talking about is Jimmie Johnson and his crew chief is Chad Knaus, and they are the new race team with Hendricks Motor sports. Yes I know that Jeff Gordon is half owner of the #48 Lowe's racing team.

After listening to D.W., Larry, Hammond, and the others on Fox over the last few weeks, it started to make sense as to why Jeff Gordon #24 Dupont Chevy is having the type of year he is having. The #48 Lowe's team has all of the winning #24 Dupont Chevy cars in it's stable, that means the ole Jeffy is having to break in all new cars from the ground up, and that can be a tough row to hoe.

We hear from time to time how a driver or a crew chief will talk about their favorite car or cars that they have in their stable. The teams will talk about how they name a certain car that wins a lot, or a driver will have his favorites that feels good to him and he runs well in or wins with, those cars are kept around and rebuilt time and time again unless they end up in the wall hard and they can't get it straightened out. When a great car is wrecked beyond repair it's almost like a death in the family, or losing a good friend to them. Now your saying yea right, but it is true.

We hear that a chassis is from a certain manufacture or that the race

# Derby anybody's race to win

By BETH HARRIS

AP Sports Writer

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Trainers from California to Ireland to Dubai cling to the belief they'll win the Kentucky Derby, a race in which many doubt the ability of the 20 colts.

Take Hall of Famer Bobby Frankel, who will saddle Medaglia d'Oro on Saturday. The 3-year-old with the Italian name was second in the Wood Memorial, but has run in just four career races.

"He's got something better — talent," Frankel said. "Which would you rather have, a horse who could run or a horse who had run a lot? Talent makes up for a lot of things."

Or how about two-time Derby winner Bob Baffert? He acquired Illinois Derby winner War Emblem just three weeks ago. His other entry, Danthebluegrassman, is one of four colts at 50-1 on the morning line.

"If this horse wins the Derby, it'll be the best and shortest training job ever," Baffert said about War Emblem. "He's as ready as he can be. Whether he's good enough, you can't predict in a 20-horse field."

Three months of prep races around the world failed to produce a compelling favorite, leaving the Derby picture as muddled as the Churchill Downs track after heavy downpours Thursday.

Harlan's Holiday is the early favorite at 9-2, but even those odds are the highest since the morning line was first published in 1949.

"It doesn't matter to me what his odds are," trainer Ken McPeck said. "I know he is going to run well."

The knock on Harlan's Holiday is that he's an Ohio-bred, and the state hasn't produced a Derby winner since Wintergreen in 1909.

"The Derby is a Pandora's box because you never know what is going to

happen," said Edgar Prado, who'll ride Harlan's Holiday.

The 20-horse field is a bettor's delight but guarantees a rough running that will leave several horses with excuses.

"There's 10 good horses in there that can win," Baffert said.

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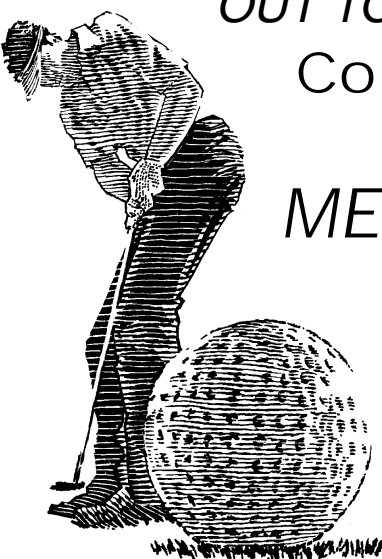
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