

Reports From The Road

By Linda Beattie

A Day At The Races - Sponsorship Has Its Privileges

On Saturday, July 19th, Oscar Wilson (an 'all products' distributor of BOB-CAT, Classen, Little Wonder, Mantis, Ryan and Steiner brand equipment in the Arkansas (North), Illinois (Central & South), Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska (Central & East) territories), and Midwest Equipment (Little Wonder & Mantis Distributor for the



Illinois (South), Indiana, Kentucky and Missouri territories), hosted a Dealer Appreciation Event at Gateway International Raceway in Madison, IL (just a few short miles outside of St. Louis, MO). Dealers were treated to the NASCAR National Series Dodge Dealers 250 and were on hand to see Carl Edwards win the race at his own home track!

Under a promotional sponsorship agreement with Gateway International Raceway, Oscar Wilson and Midwest Equipment have supplied Gateway International Raceway with BOB-CAT Mowers, Ryan Turf Care Equipment and Little Wonder Debris Management Equipment

to aid Gateway in maintaining the raceway property. In return, Gateway has supplied the distributors with tickets and other perks for various Gateway events.

The NASCAR National Series Dodge Dealers 250 race is just the icing on the race day cake for fans at Gateway! There's a reason why the term "Race Day" is used in NASCAR. At Gateway, races are an all day event for fans. At each race, GIR opens their gates to the public early and fans are invited to partake in the carnival like pre-race atmosphere. Food vendors offering everything from cotton candy and funnel cake to fried chicken and polish sausage emit wafting aromas that take you back to childhood. Adding to the feel were trailers upon trailers of NASCAR retailers offering memorabilia from just about every NASCAR driver you could possibly think of. And, even sponsors are given booth space to showcase their products and services to fans. Barkers with bull horns and loudspeakers taunt fans with logoed freebies galore enticing the passerby's into their booths to learn more about their products and services.



Oscar Wilson, received booth space and filled it to the brim with an assortment of fan pleasing product. The gates opened to fans at 1:30 pm. With race time not until 8:30 pm, Oscar Wilson Sales reps, Eric Lacefield and Jim Curtis, joined by Bill Owens (factory RSM), Justin Naumowitz of Midwest Equipment, and myself, all had ample time to engage attendees about our products and attain contact information for dealers to follow-up on. The fans certainly did not disappoint! They came out in droves, seemingly unaffected by the blazing heat of the mid-day sun. The near 100 degree temperatures of the day were

only made bearable through the grace of a steady wind. Much like the wind, there was a steady stream of potential customers flocking to the booth right up until race time.

Oscar Wilson President, Steve Purdy (who also worked the booth), commented on the importance of the Gateway relationship, "Gateway appreciates the support of their sponsors and doesn't accept competitive sponsorships. In the non-competitive environment Gateway supplies for its sponsors, we are afforded the spotlight to showcase our products to a demographic that truly appreciates the value of power equipment."

≈And They're Off!

Once the booth was closed down and the equipment was safely on the trailers, it was time to meet up dealers in the stands and enjoy the race. Edwards started the NASCAR National Series Dodge Dealers 250 third. Driver fought for position through various cautions (six overall for 25 laps), a competition caution flag at lap 20, a track power outage, a red-flag condition for nearly 25 minutes after a nice chain reaction accident that took out three racers by rookie Landon Cassill, who incidentally went on to finish sixth. David Reutimann was strong early on, leading twice for 33 laps, but was involved in an incident with Brad Keselowski on Lap 142, relegating Reutimann to a 25th-place finish. Edwards fought through the pack and went on to dominate the NASCAR Nationwide Series event for a race-high 79 laps, in the end he coasted to victory beating Joey Logano of Joe Gibbs Racing by a margin of 6.877 seconds. With this win, Edwards moves into 3rd position in the overall Nationwide Series points standings and within 31 points of 2nd.



Rounding out the top-ten were Joey Logano (second), Jason Keller (third), Jason Leffler (fourth), Keselowski (fifth), Landon Cassill (sixth), James Buescher (seventh), Clint Bowyer (eighth), David Stremme (ninth), and Edwards' Roush Fenway Racing teammate David Ragan (tenth).

NASCAR returns to Gateway International Raceway Sept. 6 when the Craftsman Truck Series makes its annual trip to the St. Louis area.

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Photo of Carl Edwards, courtesy of Gateway International Raceway