

Speedweeks At Daytona International Speedway

Wheels are turning in earnest as NASCAR Sprint Cup Series teams rev up for the 2013 season. The beginning of Budweiser Speedweeks at Daytona International Speedway is less than a month away.

Daytona Preseason Thunder testing wrapped up during the past weekend. More drills for the new NASCAR Sprint Cup Gen-6 car are due Thursday and Friday at Charlotte Motor Speedway.

Speedweeks begin with the non-points Sprint Unlimited for 2012 Coors Light Pole winners and past event winners at 8 p.m. EDT Saturday, Feb. 16. The 55th Daytona 500 follows at 1 p.m. ET Sunday Feb. 24. FOX Sports will carry both events live as will MRN and SiriusXM.

Reigning Daytona 500 champion Matt Kenseth is the top name to debut with a different organization this season, moving from his longtime home at Roush Fenway Racing to Joe Gibbs Racing's No. 20 Toyota.

Penske Racing and its 2012 NASCAR Sprint Cup champion Brad Keselowski, now paired with Joey Logano, fields Fords for the first time since 2002.

But first things first. On Feb. 8-10 at a pair of Charlotte events comprising the NASCAR Acceleration Weekend – the induction of the NASCAR Hall of Fame Class of 2013 on Friday night followed by NASCAR Preview 2013 on Saturday.

NASCAR SPRINT CUP SERIES – SPRINT UNLIMITED, SATURDAY, FEB. 16, 8 P.M. ON FOX

Charlotte Test Next Up For NASCAR Sprint Cup's Gen-6 Car

Next up for the NASCAR Sprint Cup Gen-6 car is this week's two days of testing at Charlotte Motor Speedway. Many teams will take to the 1.5-mile superspeedway on Thursday and Friday. The test, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET with an hour off for lunch each day, is open to the public. Media opportunities also are planned. Hendrick Motorsports, Penske Racing, Roush Fenway Racing, Richard Childress Racing are among the teams expected to participate during the two days.

Daytona International Speedway wrapped up its three days of Preseason Thunder over the weekend with teams engaging in single-car and drafting



runs in preparation for the 2013 edition of Speedweeks. Single-car lap speeds were in the mid-190s. "We're right in the ballpark," said Robin Pemberton, NASCAR vice president of competition. "We don't foresee any changes."

Drivers were unanimous in praising the look of the Gen-6 car – as were the thousands of fans who attended driver meets and autograph sessions. Many are predicting the Feb. 24 Daytona 500 (FOX, MRN, SiriusXM, 1 p.m. ET) could be the wildest and most wide-open of the Great American Race's 55 editions. All are eager for the 2013 season to get underway. "I couldn't be looking forward to it more," Carl Edwards said.

Speedweeks gets underway with the Feb. 16 Sprint Unlimited (FOX, MRN, SiriusXM, 8 p.m. ET), the traditional non-points event that returns to its roots in 2013. The race is open to all 2012 Coors Light Pole winners plus previous winners of the Sprint Unlimited.

Daytona 500 Champion Kenseth Among "Movers" For 2013

Many teams return with lineups intact from 2012. Eleven of the 12 drivers who qualified for last year's Chase for the NASCAR Sprint Cup™ occupy the same seat this season. The notable exception?

Reigning Daytona 500 champion Matt Kenseth, who moves to the No. 20 Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota. Kenseth's speeds during last week's Preseason Thunder at Daytona suggest last year's Daytona/Talladega winner (1.5 average finish in the four restrictor-plate races) will be equally competitive for JGR as he was for Roush Fenway Racing on the schedule's biggest tracks.

RFR will have a Sunoco Rookie of the Year contender at the wheel of the vacated No. 17 Ford. Two-time NASCAR Nationwide Series champion Ricky Stenhouse Jr. moves to NASCAR's premier series in 2013.

Joey Logano is now a member of the championship team of Penske Racing and will compete alongside reigning NASCAR Sprint Cup Series champion Brad Keselowski in the No. 22 Ford. Penske Racing resumes its relationship with Ford in 2013 after a 10-season run with Dodge.

Danica Patrick begins her first full NASCAR Sprint Cup campaign at Daytona in the No. 10 Stewart-Haas Racing Chevrolet. Patrick, a Sunoco Rookie of the Year contender, posted her best series finish – 17th – in her final 2012 start at Phoenix.



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