

NASCAR's 'Dancing Chickens' In 2011

Back in the day, carnival arcades used to feature an attraction called the 'Dancing Chicken.' Basically, it was a small glass booth that when you put a coin in the slot, a door would open and a live chicken would come out and appear to dance.

Little did anyone know that the bird was standing on a hot plate griddle that made it move its feet in a 'dancing' motion.

Eventually, animal rights groups got the attraction taken off the market. The same can't be said of the NASCAR Sprint Cup tour where several drivers will be wearing the 'chicken suit' in 2011 as they search for wins, a solid season, or a Cup championship.

Here's a look five drivers will be on the 'griddle' this season.
Brad Keselowski

Keselowski will move to the No. 2 Miller Lite Dodge at Penske Racing this year taking over one of the most iconic rides in the last 20 years of the sport.

Keselowski – who never had a full-time Cup ride until last year and finished 25th in the final standings – will be under pressure to produce this season. That's especially true as in addition to the history of the car, Miller's marketing rival Budweiser is almost sure to see Victory Lane with Kevin Harvick and Richard Childress Racing doing the honors.

Bottom's up.
David Ragan

The Miller-Bud rivalry that could give Keselowski a giant hangover if he doesn't produce is the same kind of brew that could have David Ragan in another zip code if he doesn't fare well in 2011.

Ragan has no wins in 146 Cup starts and has never made the Chase. That's a dead letter file scenario for the driver of the No. 6 UPS Ford if Denny Hamlin and his FedEx Toyota clip off another half-dozen wins and contend for the championship again this year.

Bobby Labonte

Truth be told, Labonte has not been relevant in the Cup Series for years last winning a race in 2003 and posting just one top-five in the last four seasons. Now, the 2000 Cup champion has a full-time seat in the No. 47 Toyota which at times ran well with Marcos Ambrose behind the wheel.

Unless there's some consistency and a top-20 finish in the points, Labonte – who will be 47 in May – will be looking for work again in 2012.
Jeff Gordon

It's hard to imagine someone who has finished in the top-10 in Cup Series points an amazing 16 out of the last 17 years being on the hot seat, but Gordon will be just that in 2011.

Winless since the spring race at Texas in 2009, Gordon has had to sit back and watch his Hendrick Motorsports teammate Jimmie Johnson sweep the last five consecutive Cup championships.

To be clear, Gordon has a lifetime contract at Hendrick, so he's not going anywhere until he wants to call it a career. But nearly two years of not winning and playing second fiddle to his teammate for the last five seasons can't sit too well for one of the fiercest drivers – and greatest talents – to ever strap on a stock car.

There's always pressure to win, but you can be sure that Gordon will be turning up the heat on himself and his team to break into the win column and capture another Cup championship this season.

Anything else will be a disappointment.
Dale Earnhardt, Jr.

You thought we forgot, but any discussion about who is on the hot seat in NASCAR in 2011 begins and ends with 'Junior.'

NASCAR's most marketable star has just one win and has missed the Chase in two of the three seasons since heading to Hendrick Motorsports. During that period, they've changed everything but the number on Earnhardt's Chevy's in an attempt to get him to Victory Lane.

Nothing has worked.

Sooner or later, this deal is going to have to click and frankly, it's got to be sooner if Earnhardt is going to be able to continue to draw the kind of sponsorship and endorsement deals he has now. Without the funding, Earnhardt's odds of winning will be even less.

Hold The Mayo

Travis Pastrana – the king of all things extreme in the world of motor-sports, will head to NASCAR as a driver and team owner in 2011.

The Moto X, X Games and American rally racing dude will compete in the NASCAR Nationwide Series under the Pastrana-Waltrip Racing banner



by John Close

this season.

That begs the following question – When Pastrana is in the middle of a three-wide battle, will that be a Pastrana Sandwich?

Make mine with dark mustard, please.

Time To Choose?

Danica Patrick stated last week that she has time and doesn't have to decide now if she wants to have a career in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series.

Really?

Remember when performance, strong runs and maybe even a championship in a lower NASCAR division was necessary to even be considered for Cup?

2011 GMP Schedule



-Saturday, March 19
Georgia Electric Vehicle Rally

-Saturday, March 26
Pre-Season Open Practice

-Saturday, April 23
GMP Pro Late Models - Season-Opening Race Event! - Georgia Racing Hall Of Fame Night

-Friday-Saturday, June 3-4
American Cancer Society Relay For Life

-Saturday, June 11
NASCAR K&N Pro Series Returns To GMP

-Thursday, July 14
Opening Ceremonies - Dizzy Dean Baseball World Series of Speed

-Saturday, July 16
Pro All Star Series (PASS) Late Model Race
GMP World Series of Speed

-Saturday, August 13
GMP Back To School Racing Classic - Pro Late Models

-Saturday, September 17
CRA Super Series/Second-Annual
George Elliott Memorial Event

-Saturday-Sunday, October 1-2
2nd Annual Georgia Bluesfest

-Thursday-Sunday, November 10-13
28th-Annual World Crown 300



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