

Dale Earnhardt's Last Win - NASCAR's Deserted Decade

Race fans ... ten-years-ago, we all watched as The Intimidator made a masterful drive from 18th-to-win, with only four laps to go, at the famous Talladega Superspeedway. Old Earnhardt fans like me have to thank Kenny Wallace and Joe Nemechek, in their Andy Petree chariots, for giving him the final "shove" to the front! He won the Winston Million, and his 76th and final win

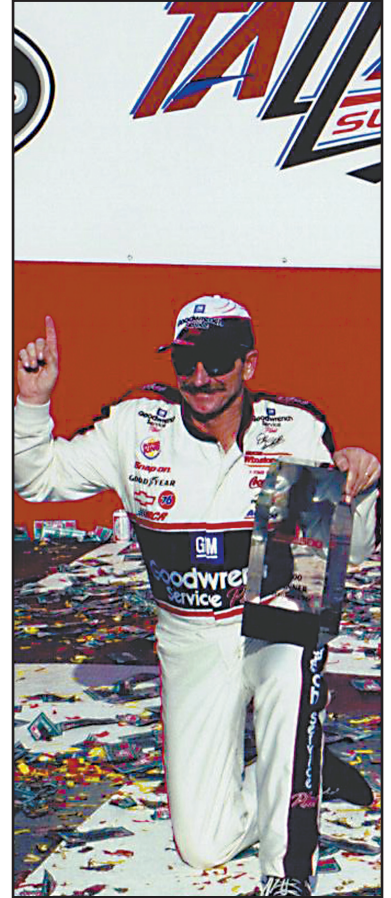
adays, with the COT and bumper-to-bumper driving styles, going from the back to the front in four or five laps maybe commonplace ... but not in Earnhardt's day!

Every old race fan knows that Earnhardt "could see the air" ... and if you watched the 2000 Winston 500 ... or any other restrictor-plate race before that time, you would believe that he could! He

YouTube" the 2000 event ... and compare that race to this year's 2010 affair ... you will see the differences. Back then, there was not any "bumper-to-bumper-drafting" for laps ... no safe barriers ... no Hans Device. And there were still a few "real men" out there racing in those days ... not a "group of boys" like today.

On a Saturday afternoon in North Georgia, just before a rain storm, I briefly spoke with David Ragan. (He was at Lanier Raceway hoping to get in some test laps.) I said, "NASCAR needs to open up the restrictor plates so that a driver can run at 200 mph on qualifying laps". He responded something like, "we are qualifying at 184 to 186 now ... and racing at 200 mph. What do you expect?" Then the rains poured and I ran in one direction and David ran in another. Friends ... I wish that we could have finished that conversation. David is a great person and a good driver ... but truthfully, his answer "sums up NASCAR's last ten-years"!

Race fans ... I believe that we all must agree that Dale Earnhardt's departure has hurt NASCAR tremendously. Their attendance has fallen off ... their TV ratings are down. And nobody has the courage to step up and become the leader that Earnhardt was in this sport.



Race fans ... Talladega died with Earnhardt ... it has been a "lonely ten years"!

- Rocky Sinyard

(Archive photos by Fred Hanyon)



on that day, as he would die in "the crash" the next February.

For you younger race fans out there, racing wasn't the same back then. The cars were different ... bump drafting was different. Now-

won 10 Winston Cup races at Talladega! (Now Talladega since Earnhardt is gone.) He also scored 3 IROC wins and one Busch win at the 2.66 mile tri-oval.

How racing has changed! If you



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