



GRADUATE SCHOOL  
EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

East Tennessee State University  
Digital Commons @ East  
Tennessee State University

---

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Student Works

---

12-2008

## Exploring Changes in NASCAR-Related Titles in the New York Times and the Johnson City Press.

Wesley Michael Ramey  
*East Tennessee State University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.etsu.edu/etd>



Part of the [Journalism Studies Commons](#), and the [Public Relations and Advertising Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Ramey, Wesley Michael, "Exploring Changes in NASCAR-Related Titles in the New York Times and the Johnson City Press." (2008). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. Paper 2015. <https://dc.etsu.edu/etd/2015>

This Thesis - unrestricted is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Works at Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University. For more information, please contact [digilib@etsu.edu](mailto:digilib@etsu.edu).

Exploring Changes in NASCAR-Related Titles in the *New York Times*  
and the *Johnson City Press*

---

A thesis  
presented to  
the faculty of the Department of Communication  
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
Master of Arts in Professional Communication

---

by  
Wesley M. Ramey  
December 2008

---

Dr. Patricia A. Cutspec, Chair  
Dr. Jack Mooney  
Dr. Brian C. Smith

Keywords: NASCAR, *New York Times*, *Johnson City Press*,  
Titles, Media Coverage, Burke's Method of Indexing, Indices of Meaning

## ABSTRACT

Exploring Changes in NASCAR-Related Titles in the *New York Times*  
and the *Johnson City Press*

by

Wesley M. Ramey

NASCAR has become one of America's fastest growing spectator sports, and corporate sponsors have played an important part in this upsurge in popularity. Race teams, drivers, and sanctioning bodies use the income that sponsors provide to operate at NASCAR events. This study provides an analysis of how corporate sponsorships have changed the way that NASCAR is presented in print journalism. Using Burke's method of indexing, NASCAR-related titles in the *New York Times* and the *Johnson City Press* from 1950 to present day are analyzed. The analysis reveals not only a steady increase in the number of NASCAR-related titles, but 4 indices of meaning that are most often used (Specific Races/Locations, NASCAR, Specific Names, and Sponsors) and that organizations should consider before they plan to promote their products using NASCAR.

Copyright 2008 by Wesley M. Ramey

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the following people:

My mom and dad who taught me to dream big and to always follow the path it takes to reach those dreams. Without you, I know I would not be where I am today. Thank you.

To Dr. Patti Cutspec for believing in me and encouraging me when deadlines seemed all too close. At times, I doubted my ability to complete the project and you brought me through. You truly are my “Fred.”

The countless men and women who have chosen to step behind the wheel, jump across pit wall, or in some way shape the face of auto racing. Thank you for making a sport more than just a sport.

And to my loving wife who has had to listen to my worries, fears, and complaining during the course of this project, I am nothing without you. I am honored to have you with me on life’s journey. Fasten your seatbelt!

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the following individuals for their help in guiding me along the way. I hope each person understands the impact they have made on my life and this project.

Dr. Patti Cutspec for helping calm my fears during my time in the ETSU Communication Department and for giving me the opportunity to write about my passion. You have no idea the power of your convincing abilities.

Dr. Jack Mooney for agreeing to serve on my thesis committee and being so helpful no matter how many times we had to redo my Plan of Study. Dr. Brian Smith for taking on this project before he had even met me face-to-face. Without each of you, this project would still be at the starting line.

To my classmates at ETSU who showed me that I am not the only one to face this kind of pressure, thank you. Please call me if you ever need to talk about the difficult road of Grad School.

To my professors at ETSU and Carson-Newman, thank you for giving me the gift of education. The tuition checks will never repay what you have taught me along the way.

To my co-workers for allowing me to take time off to attend classes. Thank you for your support in helping me grow in this industry.

To my family and friends, thank you for putting up with my constant whining, moaning, and complaining. I am finished...but I could not have done it without all of you.

To Lyndsey, you are the only one who knew each worrisome moment I spent working on this project. Thank you for helping me have fun along the way. Without you, nothing else matters.

# CONTENTS

|   | Page |
|---|------|
| ABSTRACT .....                                    | 2    |
| Chapter   |      |
| 1. INTRODUCTION .....                             | 11   |
| Literature Review.....                            | 11   |
| NASCAR Defined .....                              | 11   |
| Sprint Cup Series .....                           | 12   |
| History of NASCAR .....                           | 13   |
| The Development of the NCSCC .....                | 15   |
| The Introduction of NASCAR .....                  | 16   |
| Evolution of the NASCAR Race Car .....            | 17   |
| The Motor City 250 .....                          | 18   |
| The Birth of NASCAR Sponsorship.....              | 18   |
| The Changing Face of NASCAR Media Coverage .....  | 19   |
| The Influence of Junior Johnson and Winston ..... | 21   |
| Media Attention .....                             | 22   |
| Television Coverage .....                         | 22   |
| NASCAR’s Partnership with ESPN .....              | 23   |
| Newspaper Coverage .....                          | 24   |
| The Next Generation of NASCAR Coverage.....       | 24   |
| Alternative Form of Advertising.....              | 26   |
| Fan Loyalty .....                                 | 27   |
| Sponsorships In-Depth .....                       | 28   |
| Logo Placement .....                              | 29   |
| The Increasing Values of NASCAR.....              | 30   |

| Chapter   | Page |
|---|------|
| Sponsors Placed on the Car .....                    | 30   |
| Primary Sponsors .....                              | 32   |
| Associate Sponsors .....                            | 32   |
| Sponsorship Benefits .....                          | 33   |
| The Growth of NASCAR Sponsorships .....             | 34   |
| Sponsorship Studies .....                           | 35   |
| Sponsorship Impact on Stock Prices .....            | 35   |
| Corporate Branding .....                            | 36   |
| Specific Marketing Campaigns .....                  | 37   |
| Sponsoring the Winner .....                         | 38   |
| The Case of STP .....                               | 39   |
| Sponsorship Recall .....                            | 40   |
| Agenda Setting .....                                | 42   |
| News Value of Sports .....                          | 43   |
| The Growth and Development of Sports Coverage ..... | 43   |
| The Golden Age of Sports .....                      | 43   |
| Sports Coverage .....                               | 46   |
| Basking in Reflected Glory .....                    | 46   |
| Public Relations Shapes Opinions .....              | 48   |
| Public Relations Efforts in NASCAR .....            | 50   |
| Press Releases .....                                | 51   |
| Research Questions .....                            | 52   |
| 2. METHODS .....                                    | 54   |
| Research Rationale .....                            | 54   |
| Unit of Analysis .....                              | 54   |
| Procedure .....                                     | 55   |



| Chapter   | Page |
|---|------|
| Methodology .....   | 56   |
| The Propositions of Indexing.....   | 57   |
| All Social Inquiry Yields Texts .....   | 57   |
| Words are Facts .....   | 57   |
| How Inferences are Made .....   | 58   |
| Facts to Inference .....  | 58   |
| The Process of Indexing.....  | 58   |
| Emerged Indices .....   | 59   |
| Emphases Discovered .....   | 59   |
| Changes Over Time .....   | 60   |
| Regional Changes Versus National Changes .....  | 60   |
| Positive and Negative Connotations .....  | 61   |
| 3. RESULTS .....  | 63   |
| Propositions of Indexing.....   | 64   |
| Results for Research Question 1 .....   | 66   |
| <i>New York Times</i> .....   | 66   |
| Number of NASCAR-Related Titles in the <i>New York Times</i> .....                    | 66   |
| Indices of Meaning Discovered in the <i>New York Times</i> .....                      | 68   |
| NASCAR Mentions in the <i>New York Times</i> .....                                    | 68   |
| Specific Names in the <i>New York Times</i> .....                                     | 69   |
| Controversial Titles in the <i>New York Times</i> .....                               | 69   |
| Positive and Negative Connotations in the <i>New York Times</i> .....                 | 70   |
| Changes in Indices of Meaning in <i>New York Times</i> NASCAR-Related<br>Titles ..... | 70   |
| <i>Johnson City Press</i> .....   | 71   |
| Number of NASCAR-Related Titles in the <i>Johnson City Press</i> .....                | 71   |

| Chapter   | Page |
|---|------|
| Indices of Meaning Discovered in the <i>Johnson City Press</i> .....      | 72   |
| Specific Location .....   | 72   |
| NASCAR .....  | 73   |
| Specific Names .....  | 73   |
| Controversial Titles in the <i>Johnson City Press</i> .....               | 74   |
| Positive and Negative Connotations in the <i>Johnson City Press</i> ..... | 74   |
| Changes Over Time in <i>Johnson City Press</i> Titles .....               | 75   |
| Comparison of <i>New York Times</i> to <i>Johnson City Press</i> .....    | 76   |
| Results for Research Question 2.....                                      | 77   |
| Most Important Indices Found in <i>New York Times</i> .....               | 77   |
| Specific Races .....  | 77   |
| NASCAR .....  | 78   |
| Specific Names .....  | 78   |
| Most Important Indices Found in <i>Johnson City Press</i> .....           | 80   |
| Specific Races and Locations .....  | 80   |
| NASCAR .....  | 80   |
| Specific Names .....  | 81   |
| Sponsors .....  | 82   |
| 4. DISCUSSION .....   | 84   |
| Evolution of NASCAR-related Titles.....                                   | 84   |
| Number of Titles .....  | 85   |
| Titles Grow to be More Descriptive .....                                  | 85   |
| Controversial Titles .....  | 86   |
| The Case of Reagan Smith .....  | 87   |
| Impact of Positive and Negative Connotations on Drivers and Sponsors .... | 88   |
| Indices of Meaning .....  | 89   |

| Chapter  | Page |
|--|------|
| Locations and Specific Race Names .....  | 89   |
| NASCAR .....   | 89   |
| Specific Names .....   | 90   |
| Sponsors .....   | 90   |
| National Coverage Compared to Regional Coverage .....  | 91   |
| Challenges and Limitations .....   | 92   |
| Future Research .....  | 93   |
| Applied Value .....  | 94   |
| Heuristic Value .....  | 94   |
| The Finish Line .....  | 95   |
| REFERENCES .....   | 96   |
| APPENDICES .....   | 106  |
| Appendix A: Indices of Meaning from NASCAR-Related Titles in the <i>New York Times</i> .....     | 106  |
| Appendix B: Indices of Meaning from NASCAR-Related Titles in the <i>Johnson City Press</i> ..... | 108  |
| VITA .....   | 114  |

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Corporations continuously seek ways for potential customers to learn about their products. Sponsorships of sports organizations are ways organizations have successfully advertised their products to the masses. Sponsors give money to these organizations in exchange for signage and other forms of product placement. Income from sponsors supplements monies received from ticket sales, concessions, and souvenir sales at sporting events. One league that relies heavily on the influence of corporate sponsors is NASCAR. Sponsors help balance many of the costs faced by race teams, race facilities, and the sanctioning body.

NASCAR is a relatively young sport, and very limited research has been conducted in regard to the sport. Currently, no research has been conducted to determine the impact sponsors have on media coverage, specifically newspaper coverage, of the sport. The purpose of this study is to analyze newspaper coverage from two newspapers (one national and one regional) to determine how corporate sponsors have emerged as a force in NASCAR and the coverage of NASCAR in newsprint.

#### Literature Review

##### *NASCAR Defined*

The National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing, or NASCAR, is the sanctioning body that oversees several automobile racing series based in the United States, Canada, and Mexico (NASCAR, 2008a). NASCAR creates and enforces rules, sanctions events, and promotes the drivers and races that make up the schedule of each of its racing series. According to Martin (2000), “A racing series is similar to a baseball league, featuring a group of

competitors who compete in a set number of events and follow a set of rules determined by the sanctioning body” (p. 10).

NASCAR is responsible for sanctioning several different racing series throughout North America. The racing series that comprise NASCAR include the Sprint Cup Series, the Nationwide Series, the Craftsman Truck Series, the Camping World East and West Series, the Canadian Tire Series, NASCAR Mexico, the Whelen Modified Tour, the Whelen Southern Modified Tour, and the Whelen All-American Series (NASCAR, 2008a). The Whelen All-American Series is the bottom rung on the ladder of NASCAR’s racing series. Drivers in this division compete at “nearly 60 tracks across North America” (p.56). This series provides a weekly schedule of NASCAR racing at local tracks for fans who cannot attend races in the other series. Drivers can build cars for a relatively small amount of money and use the series as a stepping stone to begin their ascent through the NASCAR Developmental Series. Drivers progress through the various NASCAR series with the Sprint Cup Series reserved as the pinnacle of NASCAR competition.

### *Sprint Cup Series*

Competitors in the Sprint Cup Series race in 36 events each year that help them earn points to determine the season champion. The season begins at February’s Daytona 500 in Daytona Beach, Florida and ends in November at the Ford 400 at Homestead-Miami Speedway. Selected drivers also are invited to compete in two exhibition races in Charlotte, North Carolina and Daytona Beach based on their previous season performance. The Charlotte event is called the “All-Star Race,” while the Daytona event has featured different names, including “Busch Clash” and “Budweiser Shootout.” These races provide no points toward the championship

standings (NASCAR, 2008c). Because the Sprint Cup Series is the “crown” of the NASCAR racing series, it will be the focus of this project.

To be competitive, NASCAR race teams must have large sums of money to purchase equipment and pay the salaries of engineers and team employees. The most popular way for team owners to obtain this money is to find a sponsorship that will help balance the cost of managing a race team. Mullin, Hardy, and Sutton (2000) define sponsorship as “the acquisition of rights to affiliate or directly associate with a product or event for the purpose of deriving benefits related to that affiliation or association. The sponsor uses this relationship to achieve its promotional objectives or to facilitate and support its broader marketing objectives” (p. 254).

Major corporations give race teams money to help offset operational costs. In return, teams paint their cars with the logos of the sponsoring organization and allow the sponsor to use images of the car and driver in marketing ventures. According to NASCAR.com, “While owners in the NASCAR garage typically won't divulge the specific dollar figures involved, it's been reported that Nextel [Sprint] Cup teams get between \$10 million to \$20 million from sponsors for the primary spots on their cars” (Cost and Value..., 2004, ¶ 1).

### *History of NASCAR*

The birth of NASCAR can be traced to William Henry Getty France. France was a race car driver from Maryland who wanted to move to Miami in an attempt to escape the cold winters of his native state. On his way to Miami, France stopped in Daytona Beach. Daytona was known throughout the auto racing community for its wide, long beach that allowed daredevil drivers to attempt to break land speed records. According to Clifton (1964), “The Land Speed Record, as defined here, simply means the fastest absolute speed ever recorded by a wheeled vehicle, within

the limitation of the official international rules” (p. xv). With his background as a mechanic, France opened a garage and stayed in Daytona (NASCAR, 2008a).

For years, Daytona Beach hosted *Speedweek*, an annual tradition that provided a solid source of revenue for local businesses. During the 1935 running of Speedweek, strong winds created dangerous conditions and prevented Sir Malcolm Campbell from making an attempt at the land speed record (Moriarty, 1998). According to Golenbock (1993):

In March 1935, with France in attendance, Sir Malcolm Campbell drove his supercharged V-8 to a land-speed record of 276 mph on the sands of Daytona Beach. The problem for Campbell and other land-speed racers was that though the Daytona Beach sand was wide, flat, firm, and long enough for most races, Campbell’s incredible speed made racing there too dangerous. He needed a longer, flatter, smoother, less windy course (p. 74).

After the event, Campbell and others felt that Daytona was no longer a safe place to pursue their racing records and began taking their cars to the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah to compete. The Salt Flats are a smooth dry lake bed with miles of open, flat space where land speed records still are challenged to this day (Golenbock; Moriarty).

According to Hagstrom (1998), Daytona business leaders struggled for 2 years to continue the Speedweek tradition in their city. With the land speed racers now competing in Utah, community leaders were worried they may forever lose the revenue associated with this event. France was approached by business leaders who asked him to organize the 1938 Speedweek celebration. He agreed and began the search for drivers and sponsors to help make the event successful. This event would be contested by stock automobiles, not the sleek, powerful land speed cars.

At France's first event, the July 4, 1938 Beach Race, sponsorships held an important role. France gathered many prizes to give to racers. Among the rewards were: a bottle of rum for each lap leader, a \$2.50 credit at a local clothing store, two cases of Blue Ribbon Beer, a box of Hav-a-Tampa cigars, a case of Pennzoil motor oil, and a \$25 credit toward purchasing a car at Dick Rose's used-car lot (Golenbock, 1993; Hagstrom, 1998). The idea of sponsorships was beginning to take hold. The race was considered a success and France began planning for another event to be held on Labor Day.

### *The Development of the NCSCC*

In the months leading up to the next race, scoreboards, grandstands, and loudspeakers were constructed to help race fans keep up-to-date with the race proceedings. The races grew in popularity each year until World War II put a temporary end to stock car racing (NASCAR, 2008a). When France returned from the war, he organized his own racing sanctioning body, the National Championship Stock Car Circuit (NCSCC), to help promote and organize events. In 1947, the NCSCC organized races at tracks throughout the Southeast, but trouble still followed the infant sport. Some track owners advertised exaggerated purses that were never paid to the winners; others left the track with gate receipts before the race concluded (Golenbock, 1993; Higgins, 1998b) According to Hagstrom (1998), "Stock car racing had a reputation of being disorganized at best, crooked at worst" (p. 28). France had one goal "to bring order to the mayhem—creating a points system to give each season a narrative arc that would hook fans and the media, standardizing the rules to create competitive balance and guaranteeing payouts to attract the top drivers. His vision was a sport for *everyman*" (Clarke, 2008, p. 16- italics added).

Determined to make auto racing a profitable enterprise, France invited a group of influential members of the racing community to the Daytona Beach Streamline Hotel in 1947.



The group wanted a racing series that would allow for competitive racing, parity among all entrants, and that would be open to anyone with a valid competition license, which could be obtained by paying a licensing fee (NASCAR, 2008a). It also was important, the group determined, that each fan recognize the car on the track as the car he or she drove to work on Monday. “Smart race promoters knew that Chevrolet owners wanted to cheer for the cars that looked like theirs, as did Ford owners. Brand loyalty brought customers to the tracks” (Gilliam, 1989, p. 41). Identifying with the cars on the track would help draw fans to the sport because they could easily see themselves on the track participating with the professional drivers. According to Clarke (2008), “Bill France’s vision of a sport for *everyman* was rooted in two fundamental myths: that NASCAR’s ‘stock cars’ were no different from the Fords and Chevrolets in the typical family garage, and that the drivers were no different from the average American” (pp. 20-21-italics added). With that simple meeting, NASCAR was incorporated. The new sanctioning body would guide the premier form of auto racing in America (Clarke; Martin, 2000; Sowers, 2000).

### *The Introduction of NASCAR*

While NASCAR began sanctioning races, an illegal Southern pastime was prepping some of NASCAR’s biggest stars, most notably Junior Johnson, for the competition they would face on tracks across the country (Golenbock, 1993). According to Menzer (2001), moonshiners would tune their cars to perfection and participate in midnight dashes across the countryside trying to outrun their competition – federal agents. The drivers carried gallons of illegal whiskey from the mountains to be distributed in the towns and cities of the south. Moriarty (1998) states that the cars had strong suspension components, the most powerful engines available, and extra storage space for the jugs of whiskey they carried. The moonshiners had nerves of steel and

skills that had been cultivated from years of outrunning the highly trained federal agents. Based on Good's (2005) historical analysis, "It didn't take long for discussions to turn to who had the fastest car and who was the best driver. Crude quarter- to half-mile ovals were dug into hillsides or fields to give drivers places to compete. Eventually, someone thought of selling tickets to spectators" (p. 3).

France, who recognized the driving talents of this population, believed that adding the diverse personalities of the moonshiners to his racing circuit would create excitement on and off the race track. "NASCAR reaped the benefits of its quirky cast of characters, who became folk heroes for their daring, showmanship, and plain ways" (Clarke, 2008, p. 21).

*Evolution of the NASCAR race car.* During the early days of NASCAR, competitors could race the same car they drove to the track (Sowers, 2000). The driver could recruit friends to attend the race and serve as the team. If the car needed repairs, new tires, or gasoline during the course of the race, these volunteers could perform the necessary tasks and help the racer return to the track (Miller, 2002). Cars had to remain stock, which means that special performance enhancing devices were illegal. This helped keep the cost to participate relatively low.

As Gilliam (1989) explains, "Dealers drove their cars to the tracks, picked up drivers, bet on the race, and win or lose, put the car back on the lot when they got home. Lee Petty won a 1948 race in a Buick Roadmaster borrowed from a friend. Tim Flock spotted a couple watching practice from their brand new 1949 Olds 88 and talked them into letting him race it. He finished third. In the early days even the most minor changes, such as wedging the springs to provide greater stability in the turns, resulted in disqualification if caught" (p. 41). Sowers (2000) mentions that Frank Mundy used a rented car, a common practice during the early days of the

sport, in March 1951 to finish in the 11<sup>th</sup> position during a race in California (p. 266). As safety became a concern, however, the cars needed to be purpose-built racing machines.

The years of using unmodified racing vehicles were coming to a close. According to Clarke (2008), “Catastrophic injury and fatalities hastened the cars’ departure from ‘strictly stock’ status. A rash of deaths from fire led to the development of the fuel cell, which greatly reduced the likelihood of an explosion on impact. The installation of steel roll cages reinforced the cars’ bodies and encased the drivers in a protective cocoon. Neither feature could be found on a showroom-model sedan” (p. 21).

The increased safety measures also increased the cost to race competitively. Instead of driving his car to the track and racing it, the driver now had to buy special engines, roll cages, tires, and safety equipment to make his car race ready. The cars, no longer street legal, had to be placed on trailers and pulled to the track. All of these factors led to increases in the cost to participate in the sport.

*The Motor City 250.* In 1951, Detroit, the home of America’s auto manufacturers, was prepared to celebrate its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary. France, knowing the price of competition was on the rise, used his best promotional skills to convince the manufacturers that their products needed to be represented in NASCAR. He developed the idea for an auto race, scheduled to be held at the Michigan State Fairgrounds, which would showcase the best automobiles Detroit had to offer. The Motor City 250 was held on August 12 and featured cars from each of the major manufacturers. Corporate sponsorship in NASCAR had arrived (Moriarty, 1998).

#### The Birth of NASCAR Sponsorship

The auto makers began to see the impact that NASCAR had on the sales of their street cars. This created a new philosophy about the importance of NASCAR. Detroit’s “Big Three”—

General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler—followed the philosophy of “win on Sunday, sell on Monday” (Higgins, 1998a). Golenbock (1993) states, “When in 1950, Joe Littlejohn drove his Olds 88 Rocket 98.840 miles an hour to win the pole [the first starting position] in France’s beach race, it gave a big boost to Olds 88 sales. No new cars were made during the war, but once the war ended, the car manufacturers used racing to sell and promote their products... The dealers’ slogan became: ‘Win on Sunday, sell on Monday’” (p. 72). In other words, the brand of automobile that found itself in Victory Lane on Sunday would find increased sales at the dealership as race fans would purchase the car they viewed as “the winner.” Hemphill (1997) gives another example, “It was the dashing and dependable ‘Fast Freddy’ Lorenzen, driving for Ford Motor Company, who brought to fruition the motto ‘Win on Sunday, Sell on Monday.’ Sales of Ford cars skyrocketed during Lorenzen’s reign” (p. 132). The “Big Three” began to supply race teams with special parts that would help their cars excel on the track, in effect, creating the first corporate sponsorships in NASCAR (Moriarty, 1998; Golenbock). According to McGee (2005), “The vast majority of support comes in the form of parts and research, which are provided by the Big Three behind the age-old idea of ‘Win on Sunday, sell on Monday.’ Ford, GM, and Daimler-Chrysler send everything from sheet metal to floppy discs full of information” (p. 1). The first person to take control of corporate sponsorship was Carl Kiekhaefer who fielded a team of five cars, sponsored by Mercury Outboards and Chrysler, for some of NASCAR’s biggest stars (Sowers, 2000). The beginning of corporate sponsorship in NASCAR marked a change in the way the sport would develop (Menzer, 2001).

### *The Changing Face of NASCAR Media Coverage*

Prior to corporate sponsorship, media coverage of NASCAR was scarce. The reporters who covered other sports were asked to pick up stock car racing as an extra assignment

(Hagstrom, 1998). Newspapers, typically small papers located in the South, featured short articles detailing who won a race and usually gave a few of the top finishing drivers (Hemphill, 1997). Some of the articles also would give a brief description of what happened during the race.

NASCAR's more important races, the Daytona 500 and the Southern 500, received more attention than other races, but the coverage was still minimal. However, as corporate sponsors began to involve themselves in NASCAR, media coverage began to increase.

In the early 1960s, ABC'S *Wide World of Sports*, NBC, and CBS all experimented with televising races. The broadcasts usually would include only a handful of laps, but it was the beginning of advanced coverage of the sport. "Now NASCAR had a regular role on TV, though it was little more than filler. Usually... a race would be shown as a 15- or 20-minute segment on 'Wide World' that would be edited to provide a quicker pace" (Gough, 2006, ¶ 7). During this time, most sponsors were related to automotive manufacturers and distributors of automotive supplies (Golenbock, 1993). As coverage of the sport began to expand throughout the 1960s and 1970s, and with the introduction of R.J. Reynolds in 1971, so did the variety of sponsors. Organizations such as Pepsi, Coca-Cola, Shoney's Restaurants, Coppertone, and Citicorp started to understand the power of NASCAR and began to affix their logos to the sides of the racing machines (Moriarty, 1998; Sowers, 2000). In an interview with Golenbock, Jim Foster, former president of Daytona International Speedway and friend of Bill France, Sr., said, "Once Winston came in and started using racing in their marketing and had almost instant success, then the beer companies got in, and as we progressed, other consumer companies started getting involved" (p. 84).

### *The Influence of Junior Johnson and Winston*

In 1971, NASCAR welcomed what would become its biggest ally. Junior Johnson, the same moonshine runner who raced through the mountains of North Carolina, was searching for a sponsor for his race team. Johnson visited R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company hoping the company would become the sponsor of his race car (Clarke, 2008, Sowers, 2000):

The meeting resulted in much more than anyone imagined. Instead of sponsoring Johnson's race team, RJR ended up sponsoring the entire series. Johnson's initial meeting with RJR executives prompted him to introduce those executives to NASCAR officials, which, in turn, began the relationship between NASCAR and RJR...The sponsorship was the biggest thing to happen to the sport up to that point. RJR, with its power to promote and advertise, brought NASCAR racing into the mainstream. With the sponsorship, the schedule was reduced from more than 50 events each year to just about 30—with no more than one race per week. The races that were eliminated were at small-town tracks, so only the bigger tracks—which could attract bigger crowds and make the series more professional—held races (Martin, 2000, p. 19).

Deciding to market the Winston brand of cigarettes, R. J. Reynolds and NASCAR decided to change the name of NASCAR's top series from the Grand National Division to the NASCAR Winston Cup Series. Supported by the marketing efforts of R. J. Reynolds, NASCAR's "modern era" began and would initiate a period of unbelievable growth for the emerging sport (Clarke, 2008; Moriarty, 1998).

Clarke (2008) explains the detail in which R. J. Reynolds promoted NASCAR:

RJR's marketing staff helped the sportswriters who covered NASCAR—some of them drawing the assignment by choice, others against their will. They compiled NASCAR's annual media guide, supplied reporters with race statistics, suggested topics for feature stories, hosted weekly conference calls with drivers, and arranged one-on-one interviews with the sport's personalities. They also set out an ashtray at each reporter's seat in the press box and stocked the room with cartons of RJR-brand cigarettes (p. 206).

### *Media Attention*

#### *Television Coverage*

In the 1970s, NASCAR began to attract more media attention. Television coverage grew from a handful of laps to complete events. In 1971, *Wide World of Sports* decided to air an entire race. Gough (2006) explains the results of the first race televised from start to finish:

For the first live, flag-to-flag telecast, 'Wide World' trained four cameras on the Greenville 200 in South Carolina on April 10, 1971. ABC told the drivers that they shouldn't crash because the network didn't want the race to stretch beyond the two-hour window. But with no crashes and only one caution flag, the 200-lap, 100-mile race took an hour and 19 minutes, and ABC had to scramble to fill the rest of the airtime (§ 12).

The event taught the television crew many things about coverage of NASCAR events and the quality and quantity began to improve.

At the 1976 Daytona 500, a television audience of millions witnessed the first live finish of a NASCAR race. In that race, two of NASCAR's biggest stars, Richard Petty and David Pearson, battled for the win in NASCAR's most prestigious event. As the two cars came out of

the final turn, they crashed into the front stretch grass. Pearson was able to restart his car and limp across the finish line to win the race. The incident garnered national attention (Moriarty, 1998).

Finally, CBS broadcast the 1979 Daytona 500 live from start to finish, the first time the event had been televised in its entirety. “The eastern third of the U.S.--saving, of course, sunny Florida--was hit by a severe storm on Feb. 18, leaving many in the viewer-rich Northeast homebound and craving for something to watch on TV” (Gough, 2006, ¶ 13). A large television audience had no idea what was in store for them. Donnie Allison and Cale Yarborough, who challenged each other the entire race, crashed on the last lap, allowing Richard Petty to win his sixth Daytona 500. As Petty took the checkered flag, Allison and Yarborough began to fight at the accident scene. Allison’s brother, Bobby, also stopped to join in the melee.

CBS’s coverage of the event, and the large snowstorm, guaranteed that many people, who would have never viewed a race, were sitting in front of their televisions to witness one of NASCAR’s biggest moments. According to Squier (2006), “They [CBS] had captured the essence of ‘The Great American Race’ and gained a prize beyond expectation ... a 10.5 ratings whopper for more than four hours of ‘taxi cabs running round in circles.’ The final half-hour scored a 13.5” (¶ 12).

*NASCAR’s partnership with ESPN.* In 1981, NASCAR created a partnership with ESPN to televise stock car racing. This relationship would help move NASCAR even further into the public eye. Gough (2006) documents the symbiotic affiliation between NASCAR and the cable television station by explaining, “As ESPN got rights to more races, it became required viewing for racing fans. But the fledgling network didn’t have distribution everywhere, so folks lobbied local cable operators to carry ESPN. Stock car racing seeded ESPN2, which started in the early



1990s. Fans had to lobby all over again for ESPN2. And there were more hours of NASCAR-related programming on ESPN2 because there was more time to tell a story” (§ 24 & 25).

NASCAR began to find itself in more places than ever before. Networks began to scramble to cover the sport.

*Newspaper coverage.* The excitement from the conclusion of the 1979 Daytona 500 impacted more than just television coverage. It spilled over to newspapers as well. The next day, people across America would pick up their newspapers to read stories about what had happened. The *New York Times* featured a story about the race on the front of its sports section (Clarke, 2008). “‘A lot of people got exposed to NASCAR that day,’ said Paul Brooks, senior Vice President of NASCAR” (Gough, 2006, § 17). The 1979 Daytona 500 marked the beginning of great change in the newspaper coverage of NASCAR (Moriarty, 1998).

Newspaper publications began to create special packages dedicated to the sport of NASCAR. In 1998, Astor examined how newspapers were keeping up with the demand for information about NASCAR. “Syndicates are stocking up on packages that cover the growing sport of stock car racing and over 500 newspapers have purchased the features since 1996” (Astor, 1998, § 1). Not only could NASCAR fans find coverage on more newspaper pages, they even could find NASCAR in the comic pages. “NASCAR racing has become so popular that there's now a weekly comic strip and editorial cartoons devoted to it. The editorial cartoons, which just entered syndication with United Media, are by Mike Smith of the Las Vegas Sun” (§ 24). Smith’s cartoons were found in newspapers across the country.

#### *The Next Generation of NASCAR Coverage*

A younger group of drivers began to replace the aging veterans who had promoted NASCAR through its formative years. These new drivers were well trained at marketing

themselves, their sponsors, and NASCAR. A new NASCAR had arrived. Beginning in 2001, NASCAR entered into a contract with FOX and NBC to cover races for 6 years (Sandomir, 1999). This contract made NASCAR even more accessible to the public.

Drivers began to find themselves in places they had never been before. For example, NASCAR racers and their pit crews were featured during a week of special programming on the game show, *Family Feud* (Fontana II, 2004). Additionally, competitors went on home shopping channels to promote memorabilia featuring their likenesses (Kasrel, 1997), and superstar drivers Jeff Gordon and Dale Earnhardt Jr. were featured on an episode of CNN's *Larry King Live* (CNN, 2004). According to Clarke (2008), "David Stremme was singled out as a member of the audience during a taping of *American Idol*. Jamie McMurray had a cameo on *The West Wing*, playing a NASCAR driver who riled the president's wife by kissing her in Victory Lane. And Dale Earnhardt Jr. appeared in a music video with Jay-Z" (p. 254).

During this time of great growth, even NASCAR's former marketing partner and series sponsor R. J. Reynolds was forced to relinquish its rights to the top series due to restrictions placed on tobacco companies by the United States government. The Master Settlement Agreement of 1998, a settlement between the tobacco industry and the states' attorneys general forced cigarette makers to promote only one sport, and banned promotional merchandise with cigarette brand names, billboard advertising, and sponsorship of events attended mainly by children. In 2003, with 5 years remaining on its contract, R. J. Reynolds agreed to allow NASCAR to search for companies willing to take over sponsorship of its top division (Clarke, 2008; Sports Illustrated, 1997). Cellular telephone provider Nextel signed on to sponsor the Cup series. "Nextel signed a 10-year, \$750 million deal with NASCAR last June [2003], the richest sponsorship in sports history" (Diaz, 2004, ¶ 6).

### *Alternative Form of Advertising*

In the 1980s, corporations began to search for ways to distance their marketing efforts from advertising. Johnson (2007) states that advertising was becoming too common and many companies were looking for something different to promote their products. According to Johnson (2007):

Ad messages are always competing to ‘cut through the clutter’ of all the other advertising messages. At the same time, consumers report through surveys that they are becoming increasingly annoyed with advertising. As one enthusiastic sponsorship user puts it, advertising is designed to intrude on a person's life to make them pay attention to the sales message. Sponsorships try to establish a relationship with that person to become part of the lifestyle rather than interrupt it (¶ 8).

Several factors made sponsorship of sports teams and events attractive to these corporations. Mullin et al. (2000) echo Johnson’s sentiments and explain the justification behind sport sponsorships and marketing programs in making the claim that:

By marketing through sport, a company attempts to reach its target consumers through their lifestyles...Corporate marketing executives of both large and small companies have found that linking their messages to leisure pursuits conveys these messages immediately and credibly. The rationale is that leisure is a persuasive environment through which to relate a sales message to target consumers. The association of the company or product with the event is also important, because sporting events are well accepted by the public and have a strong fan following. By

establishing a link with an event, a company shares the credibility of the event itself while delivering its message to a consumer who is apt to be relaxed and thus more receptive (p. 261).

Sponsorship offers an innovative way for organizations to promote their products to the public.

### *Fan Loyalty*

Performance Research, an independent sports marketing research firm, conducted a survey during the 1990s to give “corporate sponsors an objective view of NASCAR and its audience” (Hagstrom, 1998, p. 58). Performance Research asked 1,000 NASCAR fans to identify sponsors that are associated with the sport in some form. Without help, the fans were able to recall over 200 organizations as NASCAR sponsors.

Hagstrom (1998) explains other survey findings were equally as impressive:

Performance Research discovered that three out of four stock car racing fans consciously purchase products of NASCAR sponsors. In comparison, only half of tennis fans and golf fans have that same loyalty. As for fans of Major League Baseball, the National Basketball Association, and the National Football League, the Performance Research results indicate that roughly one in three—less than half the rate of NASCAR fans—purchase the products of their sport’s sponsors (p. 59).

Sowers (2000) notes, “Considering that a 1997 Performance Research Study revealed that 71 percent of Winston Cup fans say they’ll intentionally buy a sponsor’s product because of its involvement in the sport...it’s a safe bet that NASCAR will remain the premier advertising vehicle in sports for years to come” (p. 149).

Additionally, the Performance Research results indicate 60% of NASCAR fans maintain a higher level of loyalty for NASCAR sponsors' products. Most surprisingly, survey results found over 40% of fans changed brands intentionally when a company became a NASCAR sponsor (Clarke, 2008; Hagstrom, 1998; Performance Research, 1997).

### *Sponsorships In-Depth*

Barbara DiMaria, who supervised UPS' sponsorship of Dale Jarrett's race car, states sponsors are the life-blood of NASCAR (as stated in Phipps, 2005). Without the money received from sponsors, NASCAR teams and tracks would not be able to operate. DiMaria said, "Sponsors play such a huge role in the actual sport. Without a sponsor you don't have a team, and fans know that; they really embrace the sponsors" (¶ 4). The sponsors help offset the mounting costs of operating a Sprint Cup team or racing facility. Barry Lange, president of Sponsor Agency, a NASCAR marketing group, claims that NASCAR sponsorships cost companies at least \$10 million per year, while top teams can bring in around \$20 million per year (Wegner, 2004). The money from these sponsorships is used to buy equipment, build new race cars, pay salaries, and pay for all of the other activities that are necessary in running a race team. McGee (2005) explains the salaries of the drivers:

Typically, a driver is guaranteed a base salary, plus a percentage of what the team wins at the track, the numbers varying wildly from driver to driver and team to team. Current Cup rookies come in with base salary around \$400,000... But most drivers make much more than their team pay through a combination of sponsor appearance fees, sponsor incentive bonuses, straight endorsement fees, and merchandise sales. According to Forbes, Jeff Gordon made \$19.3 million in 2004. But according to NASCAR, he won only \$8.3 on the track. Actually, he probably

took home about 40% of those winnings. The remaining \$11 million came from salary, appearance fees, bonus incentives from his sponsors, and endorsement fees (p. 1).

*Logo placement.* When a racing fan steps onto the property around a race track, he or she is inundated with sponsor logos. Cornwell, Pruitt, and Van Ness (2001), state that because of “the obvious ability for race cars (and the safety suits worn by the drivers themselves) to deliver a myriad of advertising messages, sponsorships and the sport of auto racing have existed in a symbiotic relationship for decades” (¶ 7). Not only do the cars carry multiple sponsor decals, but also billboards, support vehicles, and the infield grass hold sponsor signage (Harshaw & Turner, 1999).

NASCAR fans are the most loyal of all sports fans in the number of sponsors’ products they buy. A Performance Research poll indicates that 71% of fans reported they “Almost always” or “Frequently” choose a NASCAR sponsors’ product over rival products simply because of the relationship with NASCAR (Performance Research, 1997).

According to Gilliam (1989), one good example of the loyalty of fans occurred in 1988. At mid-season, Lever Brothers Company’s Lifebuoy soap received a new wrapper. The Lever Brothers Company introduced the new package at a press conference prior to the 1987 Firecracker 400 event in Daytona. Dave Marcis, driver of the Lifebuoy soap Chevrolet, finished third in the race. In a postrace interview, Marcis facetiously said that he could have won the race if he had been driving a blue car. Lifebuoy took notice and changed the paint scheme of the car to dark blue with light-blue and white stripes. The car and its personable driver were so popular with fans that the Lever Brothers Company changed the packaging of its soap to match the colors on the car. Instead of the car matching the soap package, the package resembles the car.

Another example of fan loyalty happened in the mid-1980s. Kate (1992) describes how two of America's coffee companies were going head-to-head in advertising. Folgers and Maxwell House were trying to gain an advantage over the other. In the mid-80s, Folgers began sponsoring a car because Maxwell House was selling well in the South. Folgers' sales began to surpass the sales of Maxwell House. The only option left for Maxwell House was to sponsor a car. In his interview with Jim Foster, Golenbock (1993) found, "Tom Chambers [former CEO of Goody's Manufacturing Company] has publicly stated that the sales of Goody's Headache Powders doubled in a two-year period, and he credited it to auto racing" (p. 84).

#### *The Increasing Values of NASCAR*

NASCAR races, which were held primarily in the Southeast, have spread across the country. As sponsor dollars increased, new tracks were built in new markets all over the United States. Tracks are now located in Phoenix, Los Angeles, Kansas City, Chicago, and Las Vegas. NASCAR is the second-highest rated regular season sport on television, second only to the NFL, and is the highest rated motorsport series (Levine, 2004). Each event attracts an average of 125,000 spectators and all races are televised in 150 countries and related territories (NASCAR, 2008b).

A study conducted by the Sports Business Journal found Nextel, the series sponsor, received a total monetary value of \$243,997,201, over 31 hours of in-focus placement, and 6,315 separate detections during the 2007 season (Broughton, 2007). This means that if Nextel had to pay for each newspaper placement, broadcast mention, or on-air logo appearance, the company would have spent well over \$240 million dollars in 2007 alone.

*Sponsors placed on the car.* NASCAR sponsors find themselves in an interesting position because of the location of their logos. However, when a company sponsors a NASCAR team, it

gets more than the ability to place its logo on the car. Richard Childress, owner of three separate racing teams, says, “Putting your name on the car is a part of the deal, but how you activate the program and how you get the sponsor to stay involved – promotions, sweepstakes, hospitality—is just as important” (Cost and Value..., 2004, ¶ 3). The sponsors also get to put their logos in other places. Logos can be found on the uniforms of pit crew members, equipment in the pit area, and on the sides of the 18-wheeler transporters that carry the cars on the interstate. Roush Racing president Geoff Smith sells his sponsorship packages as a “platform of rights.” Smith says, “This isn’t just about paying \$10 million to put your logo on the hood of a car. You have to realize that this goes beyond just the car—it includes uniforms, transporters and the rights to use the drivers for company marketing purposes” (¶ 5).

What portions of the car can be sold to sponsors? Race teams will allow sponsors to place logos on most areas of the race car. NASCAR mandates that the race team must place the car number on the roof, as well as on the sides below the driver and right-side front windows. Decals for NASCAR sponsors, which make up the contingency program, must be located in the area around the front wheels. Martin (2000) explains the contingency program regarding how:

Teams must put contingency program stickers on their cars if they want to be eligible for bonus awards. Winning those awards is contingent on the driver having the company’s decal on the car and, in some instances, also using the company’s product...The catch is, the team must have those companies’ decals on its car in order to be eligible for the money. It’s a way for companies to advertise on most of the cars without dishing out money to just one team (p. 28).

Other than car numbers and contingency decals, NASCAR teams can place sponsor logos most anywhere else on the car.



*Primary sponsors.* Primary sponsors are the organizations with the biggest and most noticeable logos on the car. Because they have the best positions on the car, primary sponsors also must pay the largest sums of money to race teams. According to Martin (2000), “Teams must secure a good primary sponsor because the costs of equipment, travel, and personnel are just too expensive for a team owner to absorb by himself. Without a constant flow of cash, a team can’t hire the best employees or get the best equipment—and in racing today, those factors are keys to winning (p. 26).

The primary sponsor, however, receives more than its logo in the most prominent position on the race car. Primary sponsors ask for drivers to make appearances on behalf of the organization, spreading the word to race fans about the product that supports his or her racing efforts. Driver Mark Martin (2000) explains what this means for the driver:

When a driver makes an appearance, he shows up to sign posters, programs, and trading cards for fans or employees at supermarket grand openings, auto shows, conventions, car dealerships, fairgrounds, auto stores, or other venues.

Sometimes, sponsors also ask drivers to give a speech or host a question-and-answer session for fans or employees. It’s not obvious that being a race car driver requires public speaking skills, but with sponsors’ increasing involvement in the sport, public speaking and public relations are big parts of a driver’s life (p. 26).

While the primary sponsors receive the best placement and great incentives, other corporations can pay smaller amounts of money and receive various positions on the car.

*Associate sponsors.* Associate sponsors are not required to spend the same amount of money as primary sponsors; however, they are still able to have unique advertising and marketing abilities using the driver and his race car. The logos of associate sponsors are

“still on the car—and on every die cast collector’s car, in every photo of the car, and also on TV when the car is shown during races” (Martin, 2000, p. 28).

### *Sponsorship Benefits*

As mentioned, the sponsor of a race team is able to place its logo on the race car and is allowed to use the driver’s image in all promotions. The driver also may be required to make many personal appearances. Some drivers lift the morale of employees who work for the team’s sponsor. In 2006, NASCAR driver Greg Biffle was sponsored by the National Guard. Biffle visited the Walter Reed Army Medical Center to thank the injured soldiers for their service. The visit received great attention due to one soldier’s desire to stand with his favorite driver. At the session, “Biffle welcomed patients and family members to an autograph session, getting out of his chair to pose with them for pictures whenever they wanted one. Army Corporal Christopher Stickland rolled up and accepted an autographed poster. But that wouldn’t do. He slowly got out of his wheelchair and, with the help of his crutches, *stood* next to Greg Biffle for a photograph” (Rudl, 2006, ¶ 26). This story was a great public relations opportunity for Biffle and his sponsor, the National Guard.

The sponsor also is allowed to choose the colors of the car’s paint scheme. “A paint scheme on a race car refers to the way a car is painted and decorated...sometimes sponsors change that look for specific races, perhaps to market a specific brand of their product” (Martin, 2000, p. 29). The sponsor also has its logos on the uniforms of team members and on the side of the 18-wheeler that carries the race car from track to track (Cost and Value..., 2004). “The names of those same companies are mentioned by TV broadcasters throughout the race and post-race, by the drivers themselves. Still additional placement comes with the various on-screen graphics seen during a broadcast” (Broughton, 2007, p. 9).

In an interview with Hemphill (1997), Steve Saunders, field marketing manager for Coors beer, explains why Coors became involved with a NASCAR race team. In the interview, Saunders states, “We wanted exposure, media exposure, with a winning driver...so that is how we measured it...How many times Bill Elliott won, how many minutes and seconds the logo was seen on television, how many times pictures of the Coors car showed up in newspapers and magazines” (p. 160).

### The Growth of NASCAR Sponsorships

To understand how sponsorships have changed throughout the years, it is important to understand the development of sponsorship packages from each generation of NASCAR. In the early 1960s, Fred Lorenzen, one of NASCAR’s first famous drivers, was one of the first drivers to sign a corporate sponsor. He signed a contract with a Fayetteville, North Carolina Ford dealer to pay \$6,000 for the entire 29-race season. This amount equals almost \$200 per race (Cost and Value..., 2004). As the number of teams signing sponsors began to increase, so did the price of sponsoring a car. In the late 1980s, Junior Johnson signed a sponsorship with Budweiser for a price of \$3 million for the 30-race season. This figure equals around \$100,000 per race.

In November of 2000, UPS announced that it would become the primary sponsor of Dale Jarrett’s Fords. Although a dollar amount was never announced, many estimated the sponsorship was worth \$15 million per year. To run the entire 36-race schedule, this would equal around \$400,000 per race (Cost and Value..., 2004). In 2005, sponsors were paying teams between \$15 and \$18 million to become the primary sponsor (Packman, 2005, ¶ 1). In 2008, Dale Earnhardt Jr. signed a deal to drive a car with two primary sponsors that would share space on the race car. Mountain Dew Amp energy drink and the National Guard paid a combined amount estimated at

\$25-30 million to sponsor Earnhardt Jr.'s car (Lefton & Smith, 2008). This averages approximately \$800,000 per event on the 36-race 2008 schedule.

Times have changed in NASCAR. Increased media attention, the need for financial backing, and a change in the way America views sports have made this sport a corporation-driven entertainment event. Drivers have become a combination of fierce competitors and media-savvy product promoters.

### *Sponsorship Studies*

#### *Sponsorship Impact on Stock Prices*

Clark, Cornwell, and Pruitt (2004) discovered the impact of NASCAR sponsorship announcements on the stock prices of 24 corporations that sponsor teams. The results show “NASCAR sponsorship announcements were accompanied by the largest increases in shareholder wealth ever recorded in the marketing literature in response to a voluntary marketing program” (p. 281). The authors found auto racing sponsorships in the United States are estimated to be worth \$1.5 billion per year, and sponsors associated with the NASCAR Cup Series represent \$1.2 billion of that worth. For example, “Fueled by rapidly-growing popularity across the nation, new venues in cities such as Chicago, Indianapolis and Kansas City, and a revised 1999 television contract which placed all broadcast television and radio rights under the NASCAR umbrella, even second-tier NASCAR teams found themselves in the enviable position of commanding sponsorship deals worth millions of dollars each year (Clark et al., 2004, p. 283).

Also, to be sure that their investments were economically safe, sponsoring companies developed NASCAR tie-ins for an increasing number of products. This increased the publicity and attention that NASCAR received making the market for NASCAR sponsorships even higher.

## *Corporate Branding*

Companies were able to make their sponsorships more successful with tie-ins and by branding themselves with an association to the sport. According to Clark et al. (2004), “While probably every one of the companies analyzed in this study was involved in sponsorship activities outside of NASCAR and racing, the extraordinary emphasis that NASCAR sponsorships are given on sponsoring firms’ websites suggests that these companies are not simply sponsoring NASCAR teams; rather, they appear to be branding their products and services with the aura and mystique of NASCAR” (p. 284). Fans understand that sponsors are vital in the quest for speed. Branding products with the image of NASCAR helps companies communicate to the fans that purchasing a particular product will help the sponsor give more money for better engines, cars and testing. This increases fan loyalty (p. 284).

To conduct this study, Clark et al. (2004) analyzed the changes in stock prices of sponsoring companies over a 126-day time frame, beginning 25 trading days before and 100 trading days after a NASCAR sponsorship announcement. The study found a “strongly positive shareholder endorsement of the 24 analyzed sponsorships” (p. 289). The average stock increase for the 24 sponsorships was \$300 million. Using another formula and the year-end points totals for the 2002 racing season, the authors determined that a hypothetical sponsor signing with Tony Stewart, the 2002 champion, would have an increase in prices of almost 64% greater than the same sponsor signing with Mike Skinner, the lowest finishing driver who ran the full season (p. 292).

The study concludes that significant increases in the stock prices of 24 sponsors shows strong support for the idea that being involved in the fast-paced world of NASCAR is extremely positive. The average sponsor experienced an increase of over \$300 million in stock value. This

number alone is indicative of the rewards a sponsor has for becoming involved in NASCAR.

According to Clark et al. (2004), no other study of corporate sponsorships has shown an average stock increase anywhere near \$300 million (p. 295).

*Specific marketing campaigns.* After announcing their sponsorship, organizations involved in NASCAR use their budgets to create marketing programs centered on their motorsport efforts. According to Schlossberg (1996), Tide Laundry Detergent, whose parent company is Proctor and Gamble, used product tie-ins most of the years it has been involved in NASCAR. These marketing tie-ins are an excellent way for fans to get involved with NASCAR. If a fan buys a number of packages of Tide Detergent, he or she receives a mail-in order form to receive a free Tide die-cast replica toy. This marketing effort helped Tide receive placements in many media outlets (p. 119).

In 1998, Shell Corporation provided a resource guide to its gas station franchisees. The resource guide was designed to help franchisees leverage Shell's sponsorships of various race cars in terms of marketing, promotions, and hospitality. The guide includes several marketing tie-in ideas, all aimed at increasing recognition of Shell's presence in motor sports, including: driver autograph sessions, using race cars to benefit charities, Shell Motorsports gas station decoration contests, honorary pit crew member contests, and tours of race team facilities (Shell Corporation, personal communication, April 16, 2008).

As stated by Clark et al. (2004), "In an effort to ensure such large corporate investments would eventually prove to be economically viable, sponsoring companies sought to develop NASCAR tie-ins for increasing numbers and varieties of consumer products. In turn, this increased publicity and attention helped to drive the market for NASCAR sponsorships higher

still” (p. 283). The marketing programs developed by NASCAR sponsors help give increased media coverage to the sport and to their products.

*Sponsoring the winner.* Cornwell et al. (2001) studied the stock price of sponsors who were involved with Indianapolis 500 winners. Although the Indianapolis 500 is organized by another sanctioning body, the Indy Racing League, the results are still important to this research. Specifically, the study “presents an analysis of the share-price impact of sponsoring the drivers in the Indianapolis 500 mile race to assess the value of motorsports victories and participation within a firm’s sponsorship-linked marketing strategy” (§ 1). Because successful NASCAR drivers are featured more prominently in the media, it is important in this study to see how winning affects the sponsor’s stock. Companies may decide not to sponsor a driver who lacks a winning history.

The study was able to obtain stock reports of 28 of the race-winning sponsors from 1963 to 1998. The stock reports of 232 of the sponsors featured on the losing cars of the same 28 races also were obtained. These reports were analyzed separately to determine if winning the race caused a significant jump in the stock price. To make sure that prerace hype did not cause the stock prices to jump the week before the race, a variable was placed into the formula that calculated how the qualifying speed affected the stock price. Also, because dominant cars receive more attention, a variable pertaining to the margin of victory was also introduced to the equation (Cornwell et al., 2001).

Finally, the study found that winning a race does increase a company’s worth. “Viewed as a whole, the multiple-regression results for the aggregated winners sample must be described as impressive—particularly given the small sample size” (Cornwell et al., 2001, § 44). Interestingly, the researchers also discovered that if a driver had previously won the Indianapolis

500, the stock price did not increase as much as that of a sponsor of a first-time winner. “The positive and statistically significant coefficient for first-time winners clearly supports the a priori hypothesis that the victories claimed by first-time Indianapolis 500 winners led to more positive sponsorship wealth effects than did those collected by previous Indy champions” (§ 40).

*The case of STP.* Another interesting fact is that sponsors associated with the consumer automotive industry experienced larger stock price increases than did sponsors that had little to do with automobiles. STP Corporation, which produces consumer automotive products, received the highest stock increases. According to Cornwell et al. (2001):

Overall, STP’s sponsorship success record at the Indianapolis 500 should leave little doubt that motor sports sponsorships can yield significant benefits to the shareholders of sponsoring companies. Price increases of the magnitude observed for STP are almost certainly nonrandom in nature, and, as such, present very compelling evidence of the potential for closely linked and specifically targeted motorsports sponsorship programs to enhance the share prices of a given corporate enterprise (§ 50).

Cars sponsored by STP won four Indianapolis 500 races. Because the cars sponsored by STP were always competitive at Indianapolis, the company introduced a marketing campaign entitled “The Racer’s Edge.” The campaign turned out to be very beneficial to the STP Corporation and sales of STP increased.

During the early 1970s, several studies of STP Oil Treatment found that the product actually may do more harm to engines than good. Despite the warnings, sales increased and many attributed the good fortune to the motorsport sponsorship. Upon Andy Granatelli’s release as president of STP Corporation, *Time* magazine featured an article about the company’s growth



during his time at the helm. It included the importance of the marketing campaign centered on “The Racer’s Edge:”

Flamboyant, loquacious and abrasively opinionated, Granatelli's chief role at STP was that of promoter. He regularly lavished up to a quarter of the company's annual income on advertising, in which he and his wife Dolly played starring roles, and on sponsoring cars bearing the STP label and Day-Glo red colors in major auto races such as the Indianapolis 500. In ten years as president, he built STP sales from \$9,000,000 a year to almost \$100 million and expanded the line to include oil filters, engine-block heaters and anti-pollution devices (The Razor’s Edge..., 1973, ¶ 2).

Even with the controversy surrounding his company’s products, Granatelli used auto racing sponsorship to help cultivate the image of STP into a winner. Cornwell et al. (2001) contend, “The exceptional gains experienced by STP Corporation as related to motorsports wins suggest that sponsorship can be used as a persuasive medium. In this case, product value was demonstrated through sponsorship success. This finding suggests sponsorship may not be the mute, awareness-only communication medium once assumed” (¶ 53). Associating with a winner helps increase the awareness of a company’s product. It is possible that a company will see this and increase its budget for motorsport promotions and marketing.

*Sponsorship recall.* Harshaw and Turner (1999) examined the recognition rates of signage at race tracks by television viewers to determine what factors influence recall of sponsors’ messages. Much like racing teams, racing facilities are expensive to operate. Track owners depend on income from ticket sales, television fees, and sponsorships to help offset expenses. Race tracks are grouped into three categories. Superspeedways are oval tracks that are

longer than one mile in length, short tracks are oval tracks less than one mile in length, and road courses feature left and right turns and can be several miles in length (Hagstrom, 1998).

Race tracks typically are owned by corporations, not by NASCAR. When a NASCAR race is held at a track, the track owner pays a sanctioning fee to NASCAR. NASCAR manages the race itself, and the track owner manages the event. In addition to the sanctioning fee, the track owner must pay prize money to the drivers and race team owners and all expenses for hosting the massive crowds that attend NASCAR events. While revenue from tickets is the largest source of income for the track owner, naming rights to events, billboards, and other sponsorships help provide additional money for the owner (Hagstrom, 1998).

While exposure to advertising is voluntary, exposure to advertising within a television broadcast is involuntary (Harshaw & Turner, 1999). Sponsor logos on race cars and on billboards surrounding the track benefit from this involuntary exposure because viewers tune in to watch the event, not the advertising content. If the sponsor pays for a commercial, the viewer may change the channel while waiting for the event to return. However, a company placing its logo into the coverage of the event itself increases the likelihood that its message will be seen by viewers.

Harshaw and Turner (1999) placed participants into three different groups, with each group watching a different event on one of the different types of race tracks. The subjects completed a questionnaire about the perimeter signage seen during the television coverage of the events.

The researchers found that advertisements on larger tracks were more readily recognized by viewers. They also found that having more than two advertising locations increased the chance that viewers recognized the sponsoring company's logo. "Unlike other sport events that

have been studied (basketball, figure skating, and golf), NASCAR spectators are inundated with advertising signage on the vehicles, uniforms, and billboards. Therefore, television spectators engage in selective attention and retention when exposed to the advertising signage of NASCAR events. As a result, billboard advertisers should consider sponsoring more than one aspect of an event. Advertisers can enhance their recognition by television spectators by sponsoring racing teams, events, or prizes along with perimeter signage” (Harshaw & Turner, 1999, p. 40). While sponsors are able to place their logos directly into television broadcasts of a race, this project will be seek to determine whether sponsors are able to have their names located within the text of newspaper titles about the sport.

### *Agenda Setting*

The media play an important role in providing information to the public. The media have the ability to report whatever stories they see fit. It is because of this ability that media outlets can influence the public that views or reads news. Lang and Lang (1966) contend, “The mass media force attention to certain issues. They build up public images of political figures. They are constantly presenting objects suggesting what individuals in the mass should think about, know about, have feelings about” (p. 468). Newspapers and television broadcasts have powerful influence over the public in determining what becomes news. NASCAR sponsors may be able to find ways to convince reporters to include their products in stories. If they are able to do this, the agenda-setting role of the mass media will cause the public to form opinions about those products. Cohen (1963) suggests the media “may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about” (p. 13).

*News value of sports.* Journalists seek five things when determining what subjects will be included in their stories. If a story has conflict, hardship and danger to the community, something unusual, scandal, or individualism, it makes a newsworthy event and is more likely to be covered. News value is the newsworthiness of an event. When an event is determined to have great news value, journalists will be on the scene to get the story (Watson, 1984). In this context, NASCAR indeed does have a significant news value. Does corporate sponsorship increase this news value?

### *The Growth and Development of Sports Coverage*

#### *The Golden Age of Sports*

To understand how the news value of sports has changed over the years, it is important to see how sports were reported in earlier times. According to Pollack (2003), “Sports writers used to wear their hearts on their sleeves almost as a matter of course. The decade or so between the end of World War I and the beginning of the Great Depression was known as the Golden Age of Sports” (¶ 1). In this time period, sports writers were almost like drama critics. They watched the game, thought about what had happened, created opinions, and then wrote the story. Cheering in the press box was frowned upon because it interrupted the other writers’ concentration. Pollack explains:

Visiting a locker room was unimportant, except perhaps... for an expanded second-day angle. Turning a manager or a coach into a daily spokesman was considered a waste of time, because it was as rare then as it is now that he will say anything truly analytic or meaningful about the game (¶ 5).

It is important to note this change as it relates to NASCAR. Because of advanced media coverage, drivers, crew chiefs, and team owners are called upon for interviews. Usually, they are asked for interviews while the race is being run.

In the early days of NASCAR, if a reporter even showed up at the race, he would be there only to observe what had happened and write a story about it. If a well-known driver had won, the reporter may go to him and ask for a quote about the race. Now, with corporate sponsors adorning the team's uniforms, hats, and the car on the track, team members appear as they must talk to every member of the media to make sure their sponsor's message goes to the public. In interviews, team members refer to the name of their sponsor before mentioning what is happening in the race. The result is, basically, another advertisement within the race.

Gillis (2004) explains "sports news is such a valuable outlet that it has become a bargaining tool within negotiations between event rights owners and broadcasters" (§ 2). In the article, de la Fuente, an independent sports rights consultant who represents European football teams, is quoted as saying, "Sports rights owners identify news as a separate rights window. One of the things the broadcaster can offer is to give the property maximum news exposure. It reinforces the point that news is a commercial business these days" (as cited in Gillis, § 5).

Because sports news has become a commercial business, it is necessary to determine how this may impact the stories that are reported. Strauss (1998) asserts that television sports rights fees may destroy journalistic objectivity because of several factors. Cable and broadcast networks pay billions of dollars to gain the rights to televise sporting events. More and more media companies are stepping into the role of sports team ownership. This, of course, is an obvious conflict of interest. The media company could very easily convince its journalists to

heavily cover the sports team that it owns, or it can sway journalists away from reporting negative stories:

It is the rise of television rights fees—the money that broadcast and cable networks pay leagues and organizations for exclusive rights to broadcast events—that seems more likely to further undermine TV sports journalism. The big money can tempt networks into viewing the sports organizations they cover as marketing partners (¶ 6).

In the context of this project, it is important to address whether NASCAR sponsors influence the subject matter.

Sports are a money-making business. Beginning in 1998, ABC, CBS, ESPN, and Fox paid a total of \$17.6 billion for the rights to broadcast the National Football Leagues for eight seasons (Strauss, 1998). “CBS paid \$50,000 for the rights to televise the 1960 Winter Olympics [in Squaw Valley, California], or roughly \$278,000 in 1998 dollars. Compare that with the \$375 million that the network paid for the games in Nagano last winter” (¶ 7).

NASCAR is no different. When NASCAR signed a new contract with television networks in 2005, the price was 40% more than the previous contract the sanctioning body had with its broadcast partners (Gough, 2005).

Simons (1999) explains the increasing popularity of sports journalism. The increasing salaries of sports journalists, the size of newspaper staffs, and the rise of sports as a cultural phenomenon point to the new emphasis that is being placed on sports today. This emphasis shows an increase in the news value of sports. Randy Galloway, a popular sports writer in Texas, left the Dallas Morning News to work for its rival the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. Galloway had worked at the Dallas paper for 32 years and was the highest paid writer the paper employed.

However, the Star-Telegram was able to lure him away with a huge salary, between \$350,000 and \$500,000. “The high cost of buying marquee sportswriters like Randy Galloway is just another sign that sports, like business, have become one of the hottest, most competitive and sometimes even contentious fields in newspapering” (Simons, 1999, ¶ 5).

*Sports coverage.* There has also been a great increase in the amount of coverage sports are getting in newspapers. Simons (1999) reports, “According to a Project on the State of the American Newspaper analysis of 10 top regional papers, the percentage of total [space] devoted to sports jumped from 16 to 21 percent in the past generation...Sports agate alone has risen from an average of two columns to two pages” (¶ 5). An example of the sheer amount of coverage is found in Simons’ article. The Fort Worth Star-Telegram and The Dallas Morning News have sports staff of around 90 and both papers run 120-125 columns of sports coverage on Sundays, which is equal to around 20 pages. They also run about half that amount in their daily editions.

*Basking in reflected glory.* Cialdini et al. (1976) noticed a tendency, also known as basking in reflected glory, for people to associate with those viewed as successful, whether an individual had directly contributed to this success or not. According to the study, “People appear to feel that they can share in the glory of a successful other with whom they are in some way associated; one manifestation of this feeling is the public trumpeting of the association. Such a phenomenon is not hard to understand when the one wishing to share in another's success has been instrumental to that success” (p. 366). In terms of NASCAR and sponsorships, it is common for NASCAR sponsors to purchase advertisements in newspapers and magazines proclaiming their association with a winning driver or team. Through the use of public relations practitioners, sponsors work to ensure the public is aware that the driver was able to win due to the support they provided.

In the study, subjects were analyzed based on their support of the football team at the college they attended. In the first experiment, researchers monitored the attire of students on campus. The researchers found, “Mondays following football victories ranked significantly higher in school-of-attendance apparel wearing than Mondays following nonvictories” (Cialdini et al., 1976, p. 368). This result is much like the sponsors purchasing advertisements in major newspapers. The companies are seeking to associate their product with the image of a winner. The importance of this is highlighted in the study. According to Cialdini et al. (1976):

For example, if observers perceive a positive unit relationship (i.e., university affiliation) between a student and a successful football team, and if observers generally evaluate successful teams positively, then in order to keep their cognitive systems in balance, the observers would have to evaluate the student positively as well. Hence, we might expect the student to want to make the unit connection evident to as many observers as possible, in this case, through the wearing of university-identifying clothing. The process whereby one publicly seeks to associate himself or herself with a successful other, then, may be reinforced by the tendency of observers to respond in a similar fashion to associated stimuli (p. 369).

The companies that spend money to support NASCAR teams seek to cultivate the image that they are associated with winners and, without their support, the teams would be forced to the sidelines, unable to compete. In press releases and interviews after races, drivers typically thank their crews, families, and the sponsors who have made their success possible. Through this exercise the sponsors are associated with winners in stories, written and video, about the race. It



is the hope of the sponsors that this will lead consumers to evaluate the sponsor positively and support the product in the same way the product supported the fans' favorite drivers.

*Public relations shapes opinions.* Public relations practitioners play a vital role in creating news value and setting the agenda of the media. Fortunato (2000) studied the National Basketball Association (NBA) and the public relations strategies it used to convey messages to the public. The study consisted of interviews with several key figures in the NBA. The results found that public relations activities were responsible for many of the news stories reported by the media. Fortunato (2000) asserts that:

In the field of public relations, interacting with the mass media as the vehicle to reach an audience is critical because the media are often the main or only method for certain organizations to reach an audience. In this triangular relationship among public relations, mass media, and the audience, the mass media have power in two critical dimensions: (1) the power to potentially influence the public as studied in mass media effects research and (2) the power to perform a gatekeeping function through processes of selecting and framing issues that will be exposed to an audience (p. 482).

Often, the media select and frame messages that influence the audience without explaining any outside sources that may have contributed to the message. Public relations practitioners have the power to influence the content of the mass media, and, therefore, can work on behalf of their organization to increase favorable coverage through public relations efforts. The NBA, similar to NASCAR, uses several public relations techniques to change public opinion and behavior through messages from the media. The NBA President of Television, Ed Desser,

suggests “the NBA is a major factor in the agenda-setting process, and the league is very much an originator of many agenda-setting initiatives” (Fortunato, 2000, p. 484).

Public relations practitioners employed by the NBA act as advocates for the league and provide several information services to media members to aid them in creating stories about the league. Chris Brienza, NBA Director of Sports Media Relations, explains the importance of information services to Fortunato (2000) by describing how:

Information services also entail proactively providing the media with stories, or at least being sure to provide the media with the NBA perspective of a story.

Brienza explained, for example, the NBA uses video news releases where the NBA, “will buy the satellite time, produce video, and send it up on the satellite for any television station in the country to pull down to help them tell their story better” (p. 485).

The NBA offers sound bites to radio stations through special voicemail systems, box scores through fax, and historical and biographical information on the internet. The NBA understands the importance of framing stories to benefit the league instead of “operating at the mercy of the various mass media organizations’ interpretation of events” (p. 485).

In an article about NASCAR public relations practitioners, Swan (2008) finds “Big mainstream media grabs, where their drivers are featured outside the traditional NASCAR media outlets, are big for publicists, but Edwards [Jeff Gordon public relations practitioner, Jon Edwards] knows catering to the sponsor's ideal grabs are equally important. ‘From my standpoint our client is DuPont [a chemical and health care company], so *Oprah* would be good for Jeff, but it would be great for him to get exposure in *Science Magazine*. That would be more beneficial

for the sponsor” (p. 3). Public relations practitioners constantly are finding opportunities to help their clients find their names in the news. This helps generate great exposure for their sponsors.

Organizations also use public relations tools to get their products into the sports section. On television, organizations use video news releases (VNRs) to promote their products. Corporations send the VNRs free of charge to all news organizations. “In the context of sport, this often means a sponsor attempting to increase the media value it gets from its investment in an event or team” (Gillis, 2004, ¶ 9). If the content of the VNR is not newsworthy, it will probably not be shown. However, there are companies that work to make VNRs hold a strong sponsor presence while being very subtle. Most media sources tend to stay away from strong PR events, but if a company can provide a story that is newsworthy and not full of sponsor branding, the media outlet may pass the message along to the public.

*Public relations efforts in NASCAR.* NASCAR drivers, teams, race facilities, and the sanctioning body itself hire public relations practitioners to act as advocates for the organization or individual they represent. According to Hemphill (1997), “NASCAR had learned to do public relations like few other major sports endeavors in the country. Everybody had a PR staff, it seemed...and from most of them flowed a river of glossy press kits, standard press releases, faxes, managed interviews; anything that might get Winston Cup into the paper or on the air in a favorable manner” (p. 14). The practitioners use multiple public relations techniques to foster positive opinions of their employer in the news. One way that public relations practitioners influence mass media content is through the use of press releases. Press releases, or news releases, are news stories “written in print or broadcast style for use by a news medium” (Newsom, Turk, & Kruckeberg, 2000, p. 531). Public relations practitioners write the stories in

styles appropriate for each medium so that the media outlets will take the release and use it in a news story.

Another way to attract the attention of media is through the use of contests. According to Johnson (2007), Sterling Marlin, a two-time Daytona 500 winner, competed in a lawnmower race against his grandmother. Even though he did not win, the company's products became associated with the driver and were seen in media coverage of the event.

*Press releases.* NASCAR public relations practitioners include sponsors in press releases in hopes that these companies will receive added exposure in the media. One example is a press release written by NASCAR public relations practitioner Mike Arning. The release is about a new company that will sponsor a race car for Joe Gibbs Racing. Several sponsors receive mentions in the opening sentence. Arning writes:

Southern Farm Bureau Life Insurance Company of Jackson, Miss., has partnered with Joe Gibbs Racing and will serve as primary sponsor for the team's No. 18 Toyota Camry in six NASCAR Nationwide Series races in 2008 (Mike Arning, personal communication, November 29, 2007).

Not only did the new sponsor receive a mention, the Toyota Camry and Nationwide Insurance also earned placement in the press release.

Some NASCAR press releases include quotes that aid media members in the creation of stories. While these releases help media members write articles about drivers, the public relations practitioner has the opportunity to include the sponsor multiple times. In a release by Joe Crowley, a quote by driver J.J. Yeley includes his sponsor:

I think this Hall of Fame Racing and DLP HDTV team is going to get stronger and stronger as the season progresses...It's going to be very important for Hall of

Fame Racing, DLP HDTV and Toyota to go out and have a good showing (Joe Crowley, personal communication, February 5, 2008).

By including the team's sponsor in quotes made by the driver, the likelihood that the company's name will find its way into media reports is increased.

Fortunato (2000) explains the important role public relations practitioners play in shaping mass media content by commenting:

It is imperative for the public relations practitioner to understand that they are very much the power broker in the public relations, mass media, and audience relationship. It behooves the public relations practitioner to assist in the gatekeeping process of selecting and framing mass media content... It is the responsibility of the public relations practitioner to develop and implement strategies that do proactively advocate the organization they represent in the most positive manner (p. 497).

Through the use of multiple public relations activities, it is possible that NASCAR public relations practitioners have played an important role in mass media coverage of the sport. The public relations practitioners hired by sponsors work to convince media members to write profiles of team members, specifically drivers.

#### Research Questions

In the world of NASCAR, big business is a driving force. If corporate sponsorships did not exist, many teams would be forced to close due to the cost of competition. These corporate sponsorships make people aware of the sport through advertising, marketing and customer tie-ins, and public relations efforts. These sponsorship efforts increase fan involvement, which leads fans to seek more information about the sport. In this way, the value of NASCAR-related news

appears to have increased. In order to better understand the impact that sponsorship has had on NASCAR and coverage of the sport in newspapers, the following research questions are proposed:

RQ1A: Have the numbers of NASCAR-related titles increased in the *New York Times* and in what ways (if any) have they evolved since the sport's inception?

RQ1B: Have the numbers of NASCAR-related titles increased in the *Johnson City Press* and in what ways (if any) have they evolved since the sport's inception?

RQ2A: What indices of meaning emerged through an analysis of NASCAR-related titles in the *New York Times* based on Burke's propositions of indexing selected for the data analysis?

RQ2B: What indices of meaning emerged through an analysis of NASCAR-related titles in the *Johnson City Press* based on Burke's propositions of indexing selected for the data analysis?

## CHAPTER 2

### METHODS

#### *Research Rationale*

Drivers are compensated for mentioning and displaying the names of sponsors during television coverage of NASCAR events. Authors of previous research studies such as Clark et al. (2004) as well as Harshaw and Turner (1999) have investigated value and impact of these “mentions” during races and have found the advantages of becoming involved with NASCAR teams. Clark et al. found stock prices of companies that sponsor NASCAR teams jump significantly after a sponsorship announcement. Harshaw and Turner discovered that track signage can increase fans’ recognition rates dramatically. Much like involuntary exposure during a television broadcast, sponsors also may find themselves in newspaper and magazine articles, and photos of the cars and drivers may be prominently placed in these publications.

For example, after AMP Energy drink began sponsoring a car in 2008, driver Dale Earnhardt Jr. and the AMP Energy race car were featured on the cover of Sports Illustrated (Lefton & Smith, 2008). However, to date, no research has attempted to identify and describe the impact of corporate sponsors on print coverage of the sport. This project seeks to fill that void by analyzing whether there has been an evolution of coverage that has occurred in newspapers in regard to NASCAR.

#### *Unit of Analysis*

To determine if and how America’s newspapers have changed their coverage of NASCAR, the titles of articles written about the sport were analyzed in this research study. This study was restricted to a review of titles because the title is the first thing readers notice about an article. The title is what captures the attention and convinces people to read an article or

motivates them to move on to another article, thus impacting the way in which people perceive the sport. A word-by-word analysis of each article identified is too time consuming and, therefore, beyond the scope of this study. Additionally, newspaper titles were chosen because newspapers are the only medium that has covered NASCAR since its inception.

In this study, the titles of articles pertaining to NASCAR found in the *New York Times* and *Johnson City Press* were analyzed. The *New York Times* was chosen because, not only does it have the highest circulation of any 7-day newspaper in America (1.1 million on weekdays and 1.6 million on Sundays), it covers news events from across the country (BurrellesLuce, 2007). The *Johnson City Press* was selected because it is a regional newspaper located in Northeast Tennessee, a location where stock car racing has been popular since its infancy. Bristol Motor Speedway, which hosts two NASCAR Sprint Cup Series events each season, is located about 20 miles away, impacting regional interest in the sport. The *Johnson City Press* archives also were available on microfilm in the East Tennessee State University Library system.

### *Procedure*

Articles published in the *New York Times* and the *Johnson City Press* during February 10-28 in years covered were used in the research. This time frame was selected because this is the month when NASCAR experiences “Speedweeks.” “Speedweeks” is a 2-week span of preliminaries that lead up to the Daytona 500, the most popular race of the season. Many describe the Daytona 500 as NASCAR’s version of the Super Bowl (Janoff, 2008; Jewett, 2005; Kerschbaumer, 2001; Spencer, 2003). Because of the increased focus placed on this event and its position as the first race of the new season, newspaper coverage of NASCAR typically increases.

Articles found starting in 1950 in intervals of 5 years until the year 2005 were used. The year 1950 was chosen as the starting point for analysis because this was the first season when a



race was held in February. In addition, this project incorporated articles from the February time frame found in 2008 to ensure the most recent data available were included in the analysis. Both papers featured morning and evening editions during their respective histories. To prevent the results from being skewed, only articles in the morning edition were used in this research project. Typically, the articles found in the morning issues were new articles, while those found in the evening edition were repeated from the morning issue (which may lead to a duplication of data). The researcher analyzed the data from September 2007 to August 2008.

The *New York Times* articles in this research project were obtained through the “Advanced Search Feature” on the *New York Times* website. The word NASCAR was placed in the keyword search function. The Advanced Search also allows the user to search articles within a certain time frame. To research the *Johnson City Press*, microfilm was used. The *Johnson City Press* lacks a sufficient internet-based search engine, so articles containing the word NASCAR that appeared on the microfilm during the designated time frame were included. The researcher went to the E.T.S.U. library and reviewed microfilm to find the data used in this study. The researcher presented the subject of the study to the E.T.S.U. Institutional Review Board and received permission to conduct the project as it did not involve human subjects.

### Methodology

The titles of these articles were analyzed using Burke’s method of *indexing*. Thompson (1985) states, “as a work of discourse, the text preserves the properties of the sentence, but presents them in a new constellation, which calls for its own type of interpretation” (p. 13). Additionally, Cheney and Tompkins (1987) suggest that Burke’s system of indexing is helpful in determining the wide range of meanings found in a sample. These authors postulate, “In ‘*Fact, Inference and Proof in the Analysis of Literacy Symbolism*,’ Burke (1954/1964) cleverly outdoes

positivism, points to a route toward validity and reliability in interpretation, and advances a strategy for analysis with applicability to any research ‘text’” (p. 464). This approach is explained by Cheney and Tompkins as “moving through a progression of propositions” derived from Burke’s description of indexing.

### *The Propositions of Indexing*

There are several propositions suggested by Cheney and Tompkins (1987); however, not all of these propositions have been selected for this study. The propositions mentioned here are important to this study as they are best at analyzing the language (titles) and help generate meaning to assist in analyzing the growth and development of the sport. Any sponsor, driver, or track that receives its name in a title will receive added exposure. This exposure can, in turn, increase the value of NASCAR sponsorships.

### *All Social Inquiry Yields Texts*

The first proposition is that “all social inquiry yields texts” (p. 465). This proposition suggests that all texts are constructed by the on-going analysis of those performing them, and this also should be considered. Cheney and Tompkins argue “the role of language in lay and theoretical accounts of social phenomena must be acknowledged completely” (p. 465).

### *Words are Facts*

The second proposition asserts that “what is fundamentally true and verifiable for Burke is that *words* are facts” (Cheney & Tompkins, 1987, p. 465). This study will be used by the researcher to attempt to understand the meanings suggested by the language used in the article titles. According to the third proposition, researchers must understand that “the presence, absence, and arrangement of words in a text is [sic] a publicly accessible means of grounding analysis and interpretation” (p. 466). Breidenstein (1988) suggests, “The *selection* of language is,

in itself, an indicator of meaning” (p. 64). The fourth proposition is beyond the scope of this project and will not be used in this study.

#### *How Inferences are Made*

The fifth proposition is that “we make inferences when we comment upon ‘what goes with what’ in a text, considering ‘the company a word keeps’” (p. 466).

#### *Facts to Inference*

The sixth proposition of Cheney and Tompkins (1987) shows how “from the ‘facts’ of a text we make an inference” (p. 467). The evaluation of the “interpretations” generated by the researcher during this was made by a second researcher who was trained in Burke’s method of indexing. These propositions were used as the guide to interpret the meaning of the titles collected in the research.

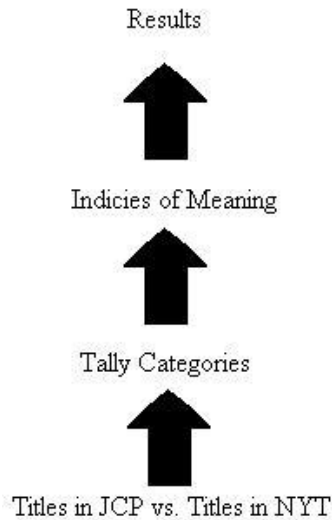
#### *The Process of Indexing*

The researcher did not create the categories into which the titles were classified. The growth and development of NASCAR led the researcher to use an inductive method of discovering indices through an analysis of the titles of related articles. Because the sport is constantly changing, it can be reasoned that new and different themes will appear. Based on the themes and subjects that emerged through the research, indices were created into which the titles could be classified. The titles were placed into categories based on their content (e.g., titles about drivers or titles about sponsorships). As opposed to using a word-by-word analysis, this study analyzes the title as a whole. Analyzing the title as a whole provides a context that is lost when the title is broken down word-by-word.

### *Emerged Indices*

The titles were first indexed, with Burke's suggested indices of meaning serving as a guide (facts, names and titles, terms of order and hierarchy, terms of order and hierarchy, terms for scenes, acts, attitudes, ideas, images, relationships). NASCAR-based indices are reported in the results and conclusion sections of the paper. When the analyses did not reveal any new categories, the research was considered complete.

*Emphases discovered.* The second step was to determine the emphases that were found in the categories. Burke's suggested indices include a group called "names." After reviewing titles from both the *New York Times* and *Johnson City Press*, certain names appear more often based on varying reasons. Some names appear more often because of success found during the running of events. Other names are associated with episodes of cheating, for example. The *Johnson City Press* includes many articles in 1990 about NASCAR driver, Ken Schrader. Schrader experienced a great deal of success in the preliminaries leading to the Daytona 500. For that reason, many articles (and titles) are about Schrader and his chances of claiming a win in the race. Emphases were determined based on a tally system. The titles from both papers were analyzed and counted. Each time a title fell into a specific index, it was noted. From these categories, the indices of meaning emerged. The indices provided the data that were analyzed to reach the conclusions found in this study. Figure 1 illustrates this process.



*Figure 1.* Depiction of the Process of Emerging Indices according to Burke’s Method of Indexing

*Changes over time.* The third step of the project was to determine the change of NASCAR coverage during the course of the sport’s history. Articles beginning in 1950 and ending in 2008 were analyzed. Many of the articles written in the earlier periods are short and concise, while the articles written in the latter time frames are descriptive and include sponsors in the text. For example, one *Johnson City Press* article from 1955 is entitled “Sets New NASCAR Mark” (*Johnson City Press*, 1955). The title does not tell who set the new “mark,” where the “mark” was set, or what comprises setting a new “mark.” A *Johnson City Press* article from 2008 about driver Dario Franchitti’s wife, Ashley Judd, shows that NASCAR articles now are about more than just the races. The article, “Judd’s Attire a Hot Topic in Garage” (*Johnson City Press*, 2008) shows not only a more descriptive and precise title, but it also explains the wide variety of topics that now are considered news in the NASCAR realm.

*Regional changes versus national changes.* The fourth step compared the titles found in the *Johnson City Press*, the smaller, regional paper, to articles found in the nationally-recognized *New York Times*. Is there a difference between the titles identified at the smaller paper and those

at the larger paper? The previously mentioned *Johnson City Press* title from 1955 about the “new NASCAR mark” leaves many questions about the event that actually happened. The *New York Times* title about the same event is “Flock Sets Auto Mark; Paces Stock Car Qualifiers With 130.293 mph” (*New York Times*, 1955). Readers of the *New York Times* know which driver set the record, what the record is, and the actual speed of the record. The more descriptive *New York Times* title gives the important information about the event. Readers may be more apt to read the article because they know exactly what it is about. Does this affect the opinions of the people reading the articles and change their views about the sport?

*Positive and negative connotations.* The fifth step was to determine if the title held a positive or negative connotation. Obviously, sponsors of NASCAR teams want their drivers to be held to high standards. If a sponsor’s driver is winning or participating in charity events, a positive impression of that driver is left on fans. In turn, the fans see the sponsor in a positive light.

Alternatively, if a sponsor is associated with a driver who is cheating or fighting, a negative view of that driver will be held by fans. As a result, the fans will view the driver’s sponsors negatively. For example, two different articles’ titles, the first in 2000 and the second in 2005, present driver Robby Gordon in a negative light. The 2000 title refers to a “shoving match” between Gordon and Tony Stewart. The 2005 title mentions an “illegal part” on one of Gordon’s cars. Incidentally, Gordon owned his own race team and race cars in 2005. Historically, his team also has had a difficult time securing sponsorship, which could be hypothesized as being rooted in his behavior. For this reason, the researcher attempts to determine how article titles with negative and positive connotations could impact a driver, team, or sponsor.

With these guidelines, the purpose of this study is to determine how media coverage of NASCAR has changed and evolved during the history of the sport. Additionally, the researcher seeks to find if and how any changes may have impacted fans' perceptions of the sport. The following chapters include a presentation of the data analyzed during the research. A discussion of these data and their importance in the growth and development of NASCAR also is included.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESULTS

The coverage of NASCAR appears to have changed considerably as the sport has evolved. During the early years, when newspapers did give coverage to NASCAR, it tended to be minimal. According to Hagstrom (1998), “For almost forty-five years, NASCAR was all but ignored by northern newspapers and magazines. The *New York Times* sent a reporter to each Daytona 500, but often that was the only race covered by the paper for the entire season” (p. 95). As interest in NASCAR grew, so did media (especially newspaper) coverage. When corporate sponsors entered the world of NASCAR, newspaper coverage began to increase and the content began to evolve. Today’s newspaper coverage is more in-depth than ever before. For example, it is not uncommon for correspondents to devote full pages in sports sections to NASCAR.

As described in Chapter 2, the purpose of this study is to address the following research questions:

RQ1A: Have the numbers of NASCAR-related titles increased in the *New York Times* and in what ways (if any) have they evolved since the sport’s inception?

RQ1B: Have the numbers of NASCAR-related titles increased in the *Johnson City Press* and in what ways (if any) have they evolved since the sport’s inception?

RQ2A: What indices of meaning emerged through an analysis of NASCAR-related titles in the *New York Times* based on Burke’s propositions of indexing selected for the data analysis?



RQ2B: What indices of meaning emerged through an analysis of NASCAR-related titles in the *Johnson City Press* based on Burke's propositions of indexing selected for the data analysis?

#### Propositions of Indexing

Cheney and Tompkins' (1987) first two propositions argue that all texts are constructed by an on-going analysis of those performing them and that words are "facts." Based on Cheney and Tompkins' delineation of Burke's propositions, all NASCAR-related titles in the study are considered facts and, therefore, are open to analysis. These propositions provide the theoretical framework by which NASCAR-related titles are analyzed in the two selected newspapers (the *New York Times* and the *Johnson City Press*).

The third proposition states that researchers must understand what is included in the title, what is not in the title, and the arrangement of the text within the title. It is important to understand why elements are included while others are left out. In the early history of NASCAR, the acronym NASCAR was not frequently used in the titles of newspaper articles. However, later in the time period analyzed, NASCAR was used frequently to reference the sanctioning body of this form of stock car racing. During the origin of the sport, NASCAR had not yet established itself as a thriving sporting organization. Titles may have excluded the acronym NASCAR because it was not well known and other terms, such as "stock car racing," may be easier for readers to understand. Therefore, newspaper titles did not include the name of the organization. After the sport gained wider recognition, the acronym NASCAR began to appear in newspaper titles.

During the formative years of the sport, specific drivers found their names in the text of titles more often than other drivers. These drivers enjoyed great success on the track and this

success translated to newspaper titles. While the names Petty, Pearson, Allison, and Waltrip were in articles, many other names were never included. The winning records of these drivers kept them on the sports page. Organizations looking to sponsor NASCAR teams would have been well-served to support these drivers.

The fifth proposition indicates that readers make inferences in regard to the context in which words are found within a text. The text ultimately guides what readers determine is meaningful. Drivers who enjoy great success and frequently find themselves included in titles have words with positive connotations associated with them. Rarely are words with negative connotations used to describe successful drivers. Conversely, drivers who struggle or find themselves in controversial situations either are not included in titles or have negative words used to reference them. Fans will support the drivers they see as successful or heroic, while less successful or controversial drivers may take be seen in a negative light. Companies looking to become involved in NASCAR are more likely to support the successful drivers. In addition, organizations benefit from having associations with the winning images of their drivers.

The sixth proposition states that readers form conclusions based on the language used in a text. In other words, how do the indices create meaning for readers and how are they revealed through the arrangement of language? If the word structure in a NASCAR-related title uses positive terms, readers are likely to support the subject of the title. In terms of a driver, positive words about the driver increase the fans' opinion of that driver. The value of the driver also increases with these positive opinions.

As discovered in the Performance Research (1997) study, NASCAR fans exhibit loyalty to sponsors of their favorite drivers. As the value of the driver increases, so does the cost of

becoming a sponsor of that driver because organizations seek to become associated with fans' favorites.

### Results for Research Question 1

The purpose of RQ1 (A & B) is to determine whether there is a change in the number of NASCAR-related newspaper titles and the evolution of those titles since the sport's inception. Regarding sponsorship, it is important for organizations to understand how their promotional emphases or company names may impact NASCAR fans. If a product's name receives mention within NASCAR-related titles, the organization may decide to continue the sponsorship of a specific team. Conversely, if the driver representing the same product is portrayed in a negative light in NASCAR-related titles, it may be in the best interest of the organization to seek another team to sponsor. For this reason, the purpose of the first research question is to determine any change in the numbers and evolution of NASCAR-related titles.

#### *New York Times*

RQ1A: Have the numbers of NASCAR-related titles increased in the *New York Times* and in what ways (if any) have they evolved since the sport's inception?

*Number of NASCAR-related titles in the New York Times.* When a search for NASCAR-related titles in the *New York Times* was conducted for the time period of February 10, 1950 through February 28, 1950 ("Speedweeks"), none were found. In fact, no titles referring to NASCAR were found *during the entire year*.

In 1955, two titles of NASCAR-related articles appear during Speedweeks (the unit of analysis for this research). One was about a new speed record, while the other invited the reader to learn more about a crash that sent six people to a local hospital.

From 1960 to 1980, never were more than two titles per year found during Speedweeks, and no NASCAR-related titles were found during 1985. Three titles were found in both 1990 and 1995. A total of six titles introduced articles in 2000.

A search for 2005 *New York Times* NASCAR-related titles found 18 titles. These titles deal with everything from race results and in-depth driver profiles to a contract NASCAR signed with Sirius Satellite Radio. In 2008, 21 titles were published during the February Speedweeks. These findings show newspaper coverage has been continuously emerging since the inception of the sport. The number of NASCAR-related titles during the Speedweeks are presented in Table 1. This table summarizes the number of NASCAR-related titles analyzed for each year included in the study regarding the *New York Times* and the *Johnson City Press*.

Table 1  
*NASCAR-related Titles Tallied During Each Time Frame*

| Year  | JCP* | NYT** | Total*** |
|-------|------|-------|----------|
| 1950  | 0    | 0     | 0        |
| 1955  | 2    | 2     | 4        |
| 1960  | 7    | 1     | 8        |
| 1965  | 7    | 2     | 9        |
| 1970  | 10   | 2     | 12       |
| 1975  | 10   | 1     | 11       |
| 1980  | 7    | 1     | 8        |
| 1985  | 12   | 0     | 12       |
| 1990  | 19   | 3     | 22       |
| 1995  | 25   | 3     | 28       |
| 2000  | 24   | 6     | 30       |
| 2005  | 33   | 16    | 49       |
| 2008  | 25   | 21    | 46       |
| Total | 181  | 58    | 239      |

Note: JCP= Johnson City Press, NYT= New York Times

As the results indicate, the titles of NASCAR-related articles in the *New York Times* have changed since the sport's inception. The most obvious result is the change in the number of NASCAR-related titles since 1950. As NASCAR received more attention in the late 1990s, NASCAR-related titles in the *New York Times* became more frequent. In 2005, the number began to experience a noteworthy increase, from zero in 1950 to 16 in 2005. By 2008, the

number of titles during Speedweeks was almost seven times what was found a little more than a decade prior (n = 21).

Additionally, the titles have become more descriptive over time. While not *every* title in recent years is more descriptive than those found in previous decades, overall, the titles do feature more colorful adjectives to explain the content of the article.

For example, a crash during a 1955 race was reported using a title separate from that of the race results title. The title of the article is “4-car Crash in Race Sends 6 to Hospital” (*New York Times*, 1955). This title appeals to those who are drawn to the danger of the sport by describing the crash and the subsequent trip to the hospital.

Similarly, a title written about a crash in 2000 is titled, “At Daytona, Crash Makes Case for Restricting Overall Speed” (*New York Times*, 2000). The title about the 2000 wreck notes that a solution must be found to prevent accidents from occurring in the future.

*Indices of meaning discovered in the New York Times.* There are several indices of meaning in the *New York Times*. For delineation of emerging indices in both papers, see the appendices (Titles may appear in multiple appendices). The first indice found includes titles that refer to “Daytona.” There are 12 titles specifically about the race or Speedweeks that refer to the event simply as “Daytona.” Interestingly, only two of these references occurred before 1990. Only one *New York Times* title in the analysis of the data includes the official name of the race, “Daytona 500.” Another title uses the term “500” to reference the race. As the event has become more popular, perhaps printing only the word “Daytona” is enough for most NASCAR readers to understand what event the author is writing about.

*NASCAR mentions in the New York Times.* Another indice of meaning found several times is the acronym NASCAR. NASCAR is found in 11 titles, with only one, a 1965 title,

occurring prior to 2005. In earlier articles, the racing vehicles are referred to as “autos” or “stock cars.” Those words are phased out, and the word NASCAR is used to refer to the sanctioning body that oversees the event. In one instance, the word NASCAR serves to describe the type of race vehicle used. The title “NASCAR’s Screech and Slam: It’s All Aerodynamics” refers to a technical aspect of the racing vehicle (*New York Times*, 2008). In most situations, however, it is used as the acronym to refer to the sanctioning body itself. Although NASCAR is an acronym for the sanctioning body, in certain instances, it appears to have become a Burkean word (or “fact”), synonymous and interchangeable with the type of car used during the races.

*Specific names in the New York Times.* A third indice that appears in five NASCAR-related titles is the surname “Earnhardt.” One title, “Dura-Lube Kmart 400: Labonte Tops Earnhardt” (*New York Times*, 2000) is about Dale Earnhardt Sr. The Earnhardt family is one of NASCAR’s most popular families. Ironically, Earnhardt Sr. lost his life during the final lap of the 2001 Daytona 500. The other titles refer to his son, Dale Earnhardt Junior. Although Earnhardt Jr. has not attained the same success on the track as his father, he has been voted by fans as the most popular NASCAR driver since 2003 (Sprint Cup Page, 2008). It is possible that the Earnhardt name is included in titles to entice NASCAR fans to read the articles that follow. This is especially important for sponsors and may explain the high cost of sponsoring Dale Earnhardt Jr.

*Controversial titles in the New York Times.* More recent titles appear to draw awareness of NASCAR-related racing outcomes by focusing on controversy. While sensational and controversial titles do not appear very often in the early development of the sport, there are several recent titles about controversial decisions or acts. One 1955 title, “4-car Crash in Race Sends 6 to Hospital,” appears to be an appeal to sensationalism (*New York Times*, 1955). In

comparison, several titles in 2008 alone referred to two drivers receiving warnings from NASCAR, and subsequently, being placed on probation, and NASCAR penalizing a number of teams for rules infringements. From these titles, it appears placing a focus on controversial topics could be one way to attract the attention of readers.

*Positive and negative connotations in the New York Times.* Most of the NASCAR-related titles discovered in the *New York Times* have positive connotations; however, there are a few titles that have negative connotations. Examples of positive NASCAR-related titles are, “Gordon Tops All-Star Cast in a Thriller at Daytona” (*New York Times*, 2005), and “Earnhardt Sets the Tone in a Qualifier” (*New York Times*, 2008). Both titles hold the drivers (Gordon and Earnhardt) in a positive light. According to the theory of basking in reflected glory, the sponsors of both cars also may be viewed positively because of their associations with winners (Cialdini, et al., 1976; Wann, Hamlet, Wilson, & Hodges, 1995).

Examples of articles with NASCAR-related negative connotations are “Problems for Bodine” (*New York Times*, 1995) and “Busch and Stewart on Probation” (*New York Times*, 2008). Both of these titles portray the drivers (Bodine, Busch, & Stewart) negatively. It would be important for the drivers’ sponsors to determine if this behavior has caused any negative feedback.

*Changes in indices of meaning in New York Times NASCAR-related titles.* The *New York Times* NASCAR-related titles have become more descriptive over time. While earlier titles were straightforward with exact details, recent titles use descriptive language, puns, or other language devices to catch the attention of readers. For example, a title from a 1970 competition is “Lund Captures 300-mile Daytona Race” (*New York Times*, 1970). The title explained what happened and summed up the action. A title from 2005, “Weary Johnson is Buoyed by Victory at

Budweiser Shootout,” used atypically descriptive language and included a sponsor reference (*New York Times*, 2005).

Another early example of this indice of NASCAR-related titles is, “Flock Sets Auto Mark; Paces Stock Car Qualifiers with 130.293 mph” (*New York Times*, 1955). The title gave all of the important information with straightforward language. An example from 2005, “Biffle Wins with Wild Ride as Rules of Road Change,” used alliteration and clever phrasing to attract attention (*New York Times*, 2005).

### *Johnson City Press*

RQ1B: Have the number of NASCAR-related titles increased in the *Johnson City Press* and in what ways (if any) have they evolved since the sport’s inception?

*Number of NASCAR-related titles in the Johnson City Press.* The number of NASCAR-related titles and corresponding articles that appear in the *Johnson City Press* is much higher than the number of titles that appear in the *New York Times*, possibly because of its location in the south, where NASCAR originated and evolved, and its proximity to the Bristol Motor Speedway, which is located in eastern Tennessee. While no titles were found during Speedweeks in 1950 in the *Johnson City Press*, two appeared in 1955. That number increased to seven in both 1960 and 1965.

Interestingly, the number of NASCAR-related titles dropped in 1980, when the Daytona 500 was held on February 17. The Winter Olympics, held in Lake Placid, NY, took place from February 14-23 of that year, which may account for the drop in coverage during that season (Findling & Pelle, 1996). The number of articles continued to climb throughout the years studied (with a few exceptions). The *Johnson City Press* location in the South and its close proximity to



a NASCAR track (Bristol Motor Speedway) probably led to a higher demand from subscribers to read about NASCAR.

The titles found in the *Johnson City Press* also have demonstrated changes similar to those found in the *New York Times*. While the number experienced a steady increase throughout the formative years of the sport, the number of NASCAR-related titles in the *Johnson City Press* featured a greater increase beginning in the 1990s. This increase is similar to the *New York Times* but not quite as continuous.

NASCAR-related titles in the *Johnson City Press* also have become increasingly descriptive throughout the time period. A 1955 title for an article about qualifying results simply states, “Sets New NASCAR Mark” (*Johnson City Press*, 1955). The title gives no indication about which driver set the new NASCAR mark, or for that matter, what consists of setting the new “mark.” A title from 2005 illustrates how titles have become more descriptive. The NASCAR-related title “Busch, Vickers Make up Youngest Front Row” describes which drivers were the fastest in qualifying and the fact that they have set a record for the two youngest drivers to occupy first and second starting positions in a Sprint Cup Series race (*Johnson City Press*, 2005).

#### *Indices of Meaning Discovered in the Johnson City Press*

*Specific location.* With the larger number of NASCAR-related titles in the *Johnson City Press*, there are more indices of meaning discovered in the research. However, many of the same indices from the *New York Times* are found in the *Johnson City Press*. The indice of meaning with the most tallies is “Daytona,” with 28. Unlike the *New York Times*, the word Daytona is used to draw attention to the race and related activities during Speedweeks. Interestingly, the race name, “Daytona 500” is referenced in 16 separate NASCAR-related titles. However, none

of the Daytona 500 emphases occur after 1990. The *Johnson City Press* used both, “Daytona” and “Daytona 500” until the 1990s, when “Daytona” became the only indice of meaning used to refer to the race.

*NASCAR*. The “word” or “fact” “NASCAR” is found in 14 titles throughout Speedweeks; however, only three mentions take place before 1990. NASCAR is used in each instance to refer to the sanctioning body and never to the type of racing vehicle used in competition. Most often, the indice refers to a decision the sanctioning body has made regarding punishing teams for cheating or rule changes that have been mandated for the race.

Additional references use the term NASCAR to note which sanctioning body oversees the Daytona 500. Two examples of this usage are, “NASCAR’s Daytona 500 Stock Car Race Takes Green Flag Today” (*Johnson City Press*, 1980) and “One Tough Customer...NASCAR’s Crown Jewel has Eluded Earnhardt” (*Johnson City Press*, 1990). It is important to note that in all *Johnson City Press* references, “NASCAR” is used only to describe the sanctioning body.

*Specific names*. Because the number of titles found in the *Johnson City Press* is far greater than the number found in the *New York Times*, it stands to reason that a wider selection of drivers would be included in NASCAR-related titles. In the *Johnson City Press*, two surnames are referenced more often than others. The surnames “Earnhardt” and “Jarrett” both are used 11 times throughout the course of the *Johnson City Press*. The Earnhardt name does not emerge until 1990 and the Jarrett name first occurs in 1995. Earnhardt is used to reference both Dale Earnhardt Sr. and Dale Earnhardt Jr., while Jarrett (when used alone) alludes to driver Dale Jarrett.

During certain periods, some surnames are used much more often than others. “Richard Petty” or “Petty” is found eight times throughout the course of the entire study. Petty was a very

successful and well-liked driver, having won a record seven Daytona 500s, 200 races, and the most popular driver award several times in the 1960s and 1970s (Sprint Cup Page, 2008). While Petty's name is found during Speedweeks, first as a driver, then as a team owner, one driver received all seven of his title mentions during a single year. In 1990, driver Ken Schrader had an eventful Speedweeks, winning the pole position as well as the Busch Clash exhibition race. His performance garnered strong media attention, and Schrader's name is an emphasis found seven times because of that attention.

*Controversial titles in the Johnson City Press.* Interestingly, *Johnson City Press* NASCAR-related titles about sensational events or controversy have remained present throughout the Speedweeks analyzed throughout this research. Early titles in this indice of meaning included, "Four-car Pileup Halts Florida Stock Car Race" (*Johnson City Press*, 1955), "37-car Pileup Mars Auto Race" (*Johnson City Press*, 1960), and "Driver Killed" (*Johnson City Press*, 1980). The titles all grab the reader's attention with such sensational topics. These titles continue with "Most Dangerous Races Set for Daytona Today" (*Johnson City Press*, 1985), "Stewart, Gordon in Shoving Match" (*Johnson City Press*, 2000), and "Waltrip Puts Scandal behind Him with Strong Qualifying Run" (*Johnson City Press*, 2008). The *Johnson City Press* has continually used these controversial headlines to grab attention.

*Positive and negative connotations in the Johnson City Press.* Positive and negative connotations can impact the way a driver's sponsors and fans support his or her performance. During the Speedweeks analyzed for this study, Dale Jarrett was mentioned in 11 titles. All of the titles but one refer to wins, success, and race results. The other title references Jarrett's car being damaged from a bump with Jeff Gordon during a practice session. Of the 11 mentions, 9 are positive.

In contrast, Tony Stewart is mentioned in eight titles, with five articles having negative connotations. Robby Gordon is referenced in five titles, all of which include negative connotations. Regarding fan and sponsor support, being the subject of five titles with negative connotations could seriously damage a driver's reputation and, therefore, future sponsorship opportunities.

*Changes over time in Johnson City Press titles.* The *Johnson City Press* titles featured several changes throughout the time periods of this research project. The titles became more descriptive and featured attention-grabbing strategies. A qualifying results article from 1975 is titled, "Donnie Allison Wins Pole Spot" (*Johnson City Press*, 1975). A title from 2000 is "Surprising Qualifying Lap Takes Heat off Pressley" (*Johnson City Press*, 2000) Race preview titles further illustrate the changes. A 1965 title is "New Record Predicted for Daytona 500" (*Johnson City Press*, 1965), while a 1970 title is "Final Warm-ups for Daytona 500" (*Johnson City Press*, 1970). These articles are straightforward and quickly explain the subject. Later titles include "Busch Clash: 50-mile Dash Should Test New Chevrolets" (*Johnson City Press*, 1995), and "Earnhardt Says His Streak Will End Today" (*Johnson City Press*, 2000). These titles feature more detail, and one even includes a product mention.

Another change is the emergence of qualifying results titles. Seventeen titles are about qualifying, with only two appearing before 1990. The *New York Times* only featured four qualifying titles during the identified Speedweeks. These titles not only show which driver qualified first, other titles are written about other drivers in the qualifying results. One title from 2008 is "Qualifying Rained Out" (*Johnson City Press*, 2008). This is a major change across the time frame of the titles. In the early days, qualifying received little coverage. In more recent times, qualifying rain-outs grabbed headlines. As coverage has increased, fans have come to

expect coverage of qualifying events. When those events are cancelled due to weather, the titles must explain what happened.

Another *Johnson City Press* indice of meaning is the increase of sponsor names placed directly into the text of the title. Fifteen articles feature sponsor names. None occur before 1975, with only four between 1975 and 1990. As sponsors have increasingly become necessary in the world of NASCAR (due to the costs associated with the sport), their appearance in the text of titles is even more important. Having a product's name directly in the title is beneficial for any sponsoring company when the connotation is a positive one. Sponsors receiving mentions in *Johnson City Press* titles are Permatex, Busch Beer, Goody's Headache Powder, Goodwrench, Dura-Lube, Kmart, Budweiser, Nextel, and Goodyear.

#### *Comparison of New York Times to Johnson City Press*

Although they have become increasingly descriptive over time, the *New York Times* titles tend to be less sensational and more simplistic than NASCAR-related titles in the *Johnson City Press*. When two titles about the same wreck from 2000 are compared, the difference is obvious. The previously mentioned *New York Times* title is "At Daytona, Crash Makes Case for Restricting Overall Speed" (*New York Times*, 2000). The *Johnson City Press* title, "Bodine Escapes Fiery Crash; Nine fans Injured as Truck Disintegrates," is much more descriptive (*Johnson City Press*, 2000).

Two additional examples further illustrate the difference between the national paper and the regional paper. The *New York Times* title about Derrike Cope's Daytona 500 win is "Cope Takes Flag at Daytona" (*New York Times*, 1990). The title is very simple. The *Johnson City Press* title, "Cope Pulls off Daytona Miracle," appealed to the reader by making the win seem miraculous (*Johnson City Press*, 1990).

The *Johnson City Press* titles are much more descriptive and sensational than titles in the *New York Times*. Several dramatic events are mentioned in titles of the *Johnson City Press*, but are never referenced in the *New York Times*. Among these titles are, “37-car Pileup Mars Auto Race” (*Johnson City Press*, 1960), “Green’s Car Burns in Daytona ‘500’” (*Johnson City Press*, 1960), “‘500’ Drivers up in Arms After Crash” (*Johnson City Press*, 1970), “Driver Killed” (*Johnson City Press*, 1980), “Harvick’s Bump Causes Wreck, Stirs up Tempers” (*Johnson City Press*, 2005), and “Harvick Nearly Ruins Martin’s Day Once Again” (*Johnson City Press*, 2005). The *Johnson City Press* gave attention to spectacular and controversial events that were not covered in the *New York Times*.

## Results for Research Question 2

RQ2A: What indices of meaning emerged through an analysis of NASCAR-related titles in the *New York Times* based on Burke’s propositions of indexing selected for the data analysis?

The purpose of RQ2 is to determine what indices of meaning appear most often in NASCAR-related titles according to mentions. In terms of sponsorship, companies want to associate the image of their product with the image of a successful driver, team, or event. By determining which indices occur most often, sponsoring companies have more information on which to make an informed decision on what is the best avenue for potential sponsorship efforts. If a particular driver, team, or event receives a great number of positive mentions, it would be beneficial for the company to link its product with that entity. For this reason, the purpose of the second research question is to determine which indices of meaning emerged through the data.

### *Most important indices found in New York Times*

*Specific races.* According to the research, three emphases occur most often in the *New York Times*. The emphasis Daytona is found in the text of 12 titles to reference the race itself.

According to the research, it appears that the race names and locations of NASCAR races receive a great deal of attention in the text of titles. The emphasis Daytona can be analyzed as an indice of meaning regarding specific races and specific locations. This is important because this means the race name is included in NASCAR-related titles. The Daytona 500 is one of only a few events on the Sprint Cup Series schedule that does not have an event sponsor. As the NASCAR circuit crosses the country, different race names and locations will appear in the titles.

In terms of sponsorship, this is important because organizations may wish to become associated with a racing event on the Sprint Cup Series schedule. By doing this, organizations have an excellent opportunity to find the names of their products written directly into the titles of NASCAR-related articles. This provides a chance for fans interested in the sport to become aware of the sponsors of the race. Another *New York Times* NASCAR-related title, “Dura-Lube Kmart 400: Labonte Tops Earnhardt,” includes the name of two organizations, Dura-Lube and Kmart (*New York Times*, 2000). These two organizations were given mentions in newspaper titles due to their relationship with a NASCAR event.

*NASCAR*. The acronym for the sanctioning body is mentioned in 11 *New York Times* titles. Throughout the history of the organization, the term NASCAR has come to represent the sanctioning body much in the same way NFL, NBA, and MLB have come to represent the other major sporting organizations. The sanctioning body is gradually stepping away from its southern roots and is slowly but surely becoming a powerful figure in the world of sports. Having a NASCAR-related name in the text of titles in the *New York Times* lends credibility to the organization and to the sport.

*Specific Names*. The surname Earnhardt is mentioned in five *New York Times* articles, more than any other specific name in the research data. As noted previously, several preliminary

events are held during Speedweeks. Dale Earnhardt Sr. and Dale Earnhardt Jr. have both enjoyed much success during these preliminaries (Sprint Cup Page, 2008). Because Speedweeks take place during the time periods studied in this research project, the Earnhardts have their name placed in the text due to their success in Daytona. As the Sprint Cup Series circuit moves from event to event, different drivers excel at different tracks. For that reason, the names in the text of titles will change each week depending on which drivers are having the most success.

Sponsors want to associate their products with consistent winners and the text of titles in the *New York Times* seems to indicate which drivers are experiencing the most success.

Earnhardt Jr. is currently one of the most popular NASCAR drivers and has several sponsors on his race car. Because Earnhardt Jr. enjoys such popularity and success, sponsors want to associate their products with his image. As drivers find success each week, sponsors of the drivers may find themselves in the enviable position of being associated with a winner.

Alternatively, some drivers never experience success and, therefore, are never featured in the NASCAR-related titles of continuously developing articles. These drivers receive less attention and many of them must struggle to obtain and maintain sponsorships. Other drivers find themselves in controversial situations like fighting or cheating. Unfortunately, drivers in controversial situations receive almost as much attention as successful drivers. The *New York Times* title, "Busch and Stewart on Probation," portrays both Kurt Busch and Tony Stewart negatively (*New York Times*, 2008). Sponsors of these drivers must take a close look at their sponsorship investment to determine whether or not the image of their product should be associated with these events.



*Most important indices found in Johnson City Press*

RQ2A: What indices of meaning emerged through an analysis of NASCAR-related titles in the *Johnson City Press* based on Burke's propositions of indexing selected for the data analysis?

*Specific races and locations.* Much like the *New York Times*, the *Johnson City Press* features a large number of titles that reference Daytona. Twenty-eight titles include the name of the city to hold the race. The analysis regarding the *Johnson City Press* indicates that the location or specific race name of races receive many in-text mentions during Sprint Cup Series race weekends. Depending on which track the series is racing, the emphasis of the title will change in terms of specific race name or location. However, the analysis of the units of analysis (NASCAR-related titles) supports location as an important indice of meaning.

Interestingly, there are a growing number of specific races and location titles that include sponsorship mentions in the *Johnson City Press* than in the *New York Times*. Sponsors should take into consideration that while sponsorship of a racing event may help the company's name make its way into the text of a *New York Times* title, it is more likely to find its name in the newspaper titles at smaller, regional papers. When developing sponsor plans, organizations would be wise to take this into account. While the circulation of the *New York Times* is larger than any other 7-day paper, receiving in-text mentions in smaller, regional papers throughout America may prove to be more beneficial.

*NASCAR.* This "word" or Burkean "fact" is found in 14 titles during Speedweeks. While the sport began and evolved in the south, only three of the mentions happened before 1990. It could be justified that fans in the south were already aware of NASCAR; therefore, the *Johnson*

*City Press* would use the term in its titles throughout the history of the sport. However, this is not true. Similar to the *New York Times*, the term did not come into consistent use until the 1990s.

Perhaps, although the sport enjoyed great popularity in the south, maybe it was not classified as one of the “major” sporting leagues. When attendance and television ratings started to increase, the papers began to include NASCAR in the text of titles. The term NASCAR is now found in-text and the sanctioning body receives attention based on this fact. Potential sponsoring companies may see this increase in status as a selling point to become involved with the sport.

*Specific names.* In the *Johnson City Press* a larger number of specific drivers receive their names in the text of NASCAR-related titles than in the *New York Times*. The names with the most mentions are Earnhardt and Jarrett. As previously mentioned, Earnhardt refers to both Dale Earnhardt Sr. and Dale Earnhardt Jr. These two drivers experienced a great amount of success in Daytona. Jarrett also found great success at the track, winning three Daytona 500s.

Other winning drivers, including Richard Petty and Jeff Gordon, receive a larger number of in-title mentions than do drivers without winning records. Ken Schrader received all of his mentions during a particularly successful 1990 Speedweeks. Because of his success, the seven titles providing mentions of him helped him to be perceived as one of the outstanding drivers in the 1990 Speedweeks, the only time he appeared as an emphasized driver.

Different drivers excel at different tracks, therefore causing the specific names highlighted to change at each event. However, the particular indice of meaning will remain consistent for successful drivers. Because successful drivers receive more attention, sponsors would be wise to associate their products with winners. This is most likely the reason why successful drivers, like the Earnhardts, are able to maintain sponsorships longer and for greater amounts of financial compensation than drivers who experience less exposure in NASCAR-

related titles. While sponsoring less successful drivers may be less expensive for sponsors, the chance of their name being used in the text of titles also is much less than if they associate with a more successful driver.

Additionally, with the tendency of the *Johnson City Press* to reference more sensational or controversial events, drivers are more likely to find themselves included and portrayed negatively if involved in one of these events. Two titles, “Harvick’s Bump Causes Wreck, Stirs up Tempers” (*Johnson City Press*, 2005), and “Waltrip Puts Scandal behind Him with Strong Qualifying Fun” (*Johnson City Press*, 2008) cast a negative image on these two drivers. Sponsors may find that loyal NASCAR fans reduce their support for a product that has its logo on the side of these drivers’ cars.

*Sponsors.* While a handful of *New York Times* articles did include NASCAR-related sponsor references, the *Johnson City Press* featured 15 titles with sponsors found directly in the text of the title. Most of these sponsors are supporters of race events and receive mentions in articles about the race. This indicates a prime avenue for sponsoring organizations to notice their name within NASCAR-related titles. Once again, sponsors should consider that product names may be located in the text of NASCAR-related titles in many smaller papers across the country. While being seen in the *New York Times* is considered a success for sponsoring organizations, being included in many titles in smaller papers across the country may be more beneficial.

Of course, the specific sponsors within this important emphasis will change each week depending on the location of the race and the sponsor that supports each individual event. However, companies looking to become involved in NASCAR should consider the impact of sponsoring an event. Few drivers’ sponsors are found within the titles of articles. Also, the behavior of individual drivers can impact public opinion of the sponsor that supports each driver.

When an organization promotes its products through support of a race, not only could the names of products be included in NASCAR-related titles, behaviors of race officials play a much less important role. Therefore, the chances of the product being held in a negative light are far less.

## CHAPTER 4

### DISCUSSION

In this study, the evolution of NASCAR-related titles in the *New York Times* and the *Johnson City Press* are explored. To understand any potential relationships between sponsorship of NASCAR entities and newspaper coverage, NASCAR-related titles from both papers appearing February 10 through February 28 (NASCAR Speedweeks) are analyzed. Data are analyzed using Burke's method of indexing to determine what print media changes have occurred during the history of the sport. Results indicate that NASCAR-related titles have not only grown in complexity throughout the history of NASCAR but have experienced increases in the number of titles appearing. Specific indices of meaning also appear in titles. These indices of meaning can be used to better understand how teams and sponsors can organize and implement motorsports marketing and sponsorship packages. Based on the findings from this study, this chapter addresses the following: (1) conclusions that can be drawn from the research, (2) key limitations of the study, and (3) implications for future research.

#### Evolution of NASCAR-related Titles

The titles of NASCAR-related articles have experienced a gradual evolution throughout the history of the sport. There are now more NASCAR-related titles in the media, specifically newspapers. According to Burke's indices of meaning, there are several types of titles invite and receive added attention (Burke, 1964). These indices of meaning are an indicator of what the fans are seeing in their newspapers. Sponsors will benefit by examining this type of information to determine how they could place their products' names in front of these loyal NASCAR fans.

### *Numbers of Titles*

The *Johnson City Press* consistently has more NASCAR-related titles. This could be attributed to the *Johnson City Press*' location in the south. Readers in this region are more aware of the sport because of its popularity in the southern states and are interested in articles about the sport. The number of NASCAR-related titles throughout Speedweeks is consistently higher than those of the *New York Times*. While the *New York Times* is a much more respected newspaper, and having a product mentioned in its pages is beneficial, companies may receive more benefit by having their products placed in smaller, regional papers like the *Johnson City Press*. This would give a broader range of coverage throughout the country.

*Titles grow to be more descriptive.* In addition to the actual number of NASCAR-related titles, these introductions to articles have grown to be more descriptive in both the *New York Times* and the *Johnson City Press*. These more expressive titles encourage fans to read more about the sport they follow. While both papers' titles did become more descriptive, the *Johnson City Press* NASCAR-related titles appear to be more descriptive from the beginning of the data analyzed. This could be because the readers of the *Johnson City Press*, located in the south where NASCAR emerged, had a greater knowledge base about the sport. Because of this, the *Johnson City Press* understands that the newspaper's readership is more knowledgeable and loyal to the sport.

*New York Times* readers may not originally have been familiar with the sport, so more basic terms may be used to help readers comprehend the sport. As NASCAR increased in popularity, and more people were exposed to the sport, the *New York Times* could experiment with more description and more elaborate phrasing. While NASCAR-related titles in the *New York Times* are not as descriptive as *Johnson City Press* articles, they are much more expressive

than they were originally. These titles may entice NASCAR fans to read the articles that follow instead of moving on to another story.

### *Controversial titles*

The NASCAR-related titles about wrecks, fights, and penalties have been found throughout the Speedweeks analyzed in this study. While the first controversial titles are about wrecks, the titles have evolved and are more often about fights between drivers or crews and the resulting penalties that NASCAR has placed upon those involved. The early sensationalist titles would give details about wrecks and use expressive terms to describe what had happened. As NASCAR worked harder to enforce rules mandating that all cars be equal in terms of performance, titles began to focus on penalties that were given to teams for breaking rules. These titles mention that teams have been penalized monetarily by having valuable championship points taken away or receiving lower finishing positions because of conduct on the track. These titles are disadvantageous to teams because of the stigma it attaches to them as “cheaters.”

Controversial titles also have evolved to include fights that take place between drivers. Sometimes these “fights” can be verbal, while other times they are literal hand-to-hand skirmishes. Other titles may mention drivers using their cars as weapons and ramming each other on the track. The 1979 Daytona 500 has been referenced as a turning point in NASCAR coverage (Gough, 2006). That race ended with the two lead drivers in a brawl on television. From the early days when moonshiners took their cars to the track to later times when drivers and crews fight on pit road after a race, it appears that newspaper titles include the details associated with negative connotations. Is it possible that race fans are attracted by these controversial situations? If so, do newspapers include titles describing the situation to help attract readers?

*The case of Reagan Smith.* Some controversial situations may be so talked about, however, that fans may become sympathetic with the parties involved, thus increasing their status. Although it did not happen during Speedweeks, one recent on-track happening left Sprint Cup Series rookie Reagan Smith's name in newspaper titles across the country. Smith, who had been struggling all season, found himself in a controversial position during the 2008 AMP Energy 500 at Talladega Superspeedway in Talladega, Alabama. Smith's team lacked a season sponsor and relied on associate sponsors to make it to each event (Fryer, 2008). During the final lap of the event, Smith found himself in second place, behind two-time Cup Series champion, Tony Stewart. As the cars raced to the finish line, Smith drove beside Stewart in an attempt to take the lead and his first career victory.

As Smith moved around Stewart, he crossed a yellow line that indicates an "out-of-bounds" zone at Daytona and Talladega. By making a pass below the line, Smith was penalized. Although his car crossed the line second, Stewart was awarded the victory (Fryer, 2008). The finish proved to be quite controversial and Smith's name was found in many titles in various newspapers across the country. A driver with little hope for a full-time sponsor suddenly became one of the most talked about drivers in NASCAR. While sponsors rush to support successful drivers, less successful drivers have a much harder task to earn sponsorship. However, in this occurrence, Smith's involvement in a last-lap controversy gave him much needed attention.

Five days following the incident, Smith's name was still in titles. An ESPN.com article entitled, "Smith Disagrees with Penalty, Would Have Wrecked Stewart," Smith explained that he believed NASCAR's decision was wrong. He continued by saying if he had known the outcome, he would have wrecked Stewart. An excerpt from the article highlights the importance of sponsorship and how the incident could benefit Smith:



Smith said so many drivers, crew members and fans felt he got a raw deal that ‘if I had a dollar for every one of them, we wouldn't have to get a sponsor for this race car for next year.’ Smith's future with Dale Earnhardt Inc. (DEI) is in jeopardy because he doesn't have full sponsorship to field a 2009 entry. John Story, the vice president for motorsports operations at DEI, said Sunday's controversy at least brought attention to a driver few fans or sponsors knew much about (Newton, 2008).

While teams would not prefer to be involved in controversial circumstances, rare situations like this one may create much-needed attention.

#### *Impact of Positive and Negative Connotations on Drivers and Sponsors*

These titles shed a positive light on certain drivers, while other drivers may be cast negatively due to certain events in which they are involved. Drivers who experience success on the track receive their name in titles describing the events. These positive titles give the sponsors of these drivers a chance to associate with a winner and for their products to receive this same recognition. While the drivers who consistently find themselves in Victory Lane also find their names in positive NASCAR-related titles, drivers who experience instability may find their names mentioned in a negative light. Drivers who have sponsorship may find themselves working hard to convince the company not to pull sponsorship support. Likewise, drivers who find themselves portrayed negatively and are already struggling to land sponsorship may find it even tougher to do so. Burke's method of indexing directs the researcher toward the indices of meaning that will emerge during a careful analysis of the data. In this study, NASCAR-related titles have been analyzed to determine which indices of meaning would emerge. After reviewing all titles, four indices were consistently used in NASCAR-related titles. Recognizing and

learning to understand these indices of meaning should be beneficial to organizations considering possible or continued sponsorship in NASCAR.

### *Indices of Meaning*

*Locations and specific race names.* The first index of meaning to emerge was locations and specific race names. During the Speedweeks studied, variations of “Daytona” appeared in both the *New York Times* and the *Johnson City Press*. The term was used in titles describing the event itself, titles about race results, and titles about drivers racing in Daytona. As the Sprint Cup Series crosses the United States, different locations and race names are featured as an indice of meaning. It would be important for organizations to include race entitlement in any sponsorship package they may consider involving NASCAR. By attaching a company name to a race, the chances of seeing that name in NASCAR-related titles is much higher.

The Daytona 500 is the most prestigious event on the calendar and has never featured a title sponsor. For this reason, many articles referred to the race simply as “Daytona.” Because of variations in the calendar and in the NASCAR schedule each season, events at tracks other than Daytona were included in some of the time periods. Included are races in Rockingham, North Carolina and Richmond, Virginia. The titles about these races include references to the specific race name. Sponsors included in these references are Dura-Lube, Kmart, and Goodwrench. Sponsorship of NASCAR’s biggest drivers is lucrative; however, it appears having race entitlement rights includes a much greater chance of having a sponsor’s name in NASCAR-related titles.

*NASCAR.* The acronym NASCAR was included in several titles in both publications. As the sport has grown, NASCAR has become the preeminent sanctioning body in stock car racing. With this growth has come increased visibility. While the NASCAR-related titles did not include

the “word” (“fact” in Burkean terminology) NASCAR in earlier years, the appearance of the word has increased in latter years. Fans have come to see NASCAR as the group responsible for the growth of the sport. Newspapers now acknowledge this fact by including the name in titles.

The increase in status makes sponsorship of NASCAR events, drivers, and teams more attractive for potential sponsors. Because NASCAR is seen as a top-tier sports organization, its races receive more attention. The drivers and teams also earn greater recognition than drivers and teams in other racing series. All of these factors combine to make NASCAR an important option for companies considering sports sponsorship.

*Specific names.* Many drivers find their names in NASCAR-related titles in both the *New York Times* and the *Johnson City Press*. The drivers who win races and have success are found most often. These drivers are seen in a positive light and, therefore, so are their sponsors. Becoming associated with one of these successful drivers would be highly beneficial to sponsoring organizations. Drivers who are routinely embroiled in controversy should be less attractive to potential sponsors. By partnering with these drivers, sponsors run the risk of having their products viewed negatively because of their support of controversial drivers.

Much like the locations and specific race names that change from week to week, the specific driver names will change as well. Drivers who have great success on certain tracks may not perform as well at others. The specific names in NASCAR-related titles will change; however, the more successful drivers will be included in titles more often than struggling drivers. While sponsorship of the less successful drivers and teams may be less expensive, organizations must determine whether the cost is in line with the lower amount of visibility.

*Sponsors.* The last indice of meaning is “sponsors.” The *New York Times* titles did not feature a great number of sponsors, while the *Johnson City Press* featured more titles that

included sponsor names. The majority of these mentions referred to the sponsors because of race entitlement. For organizations interested in having their products' names included directly in titles of NASCAR-related articles, entitlement of races appears to be the most beneficial form of sponsorship. Because of the *Johnson City Press*' location in the south, are the editors more prone to include sponsors because they better understand the influence sponsors have on the sport?

Becoming a sponsor of the top drivers or sanctioning body also is an important way to receive mentions in titles. Although not as common, titles are occasionally written to include sponsors of drivers and of NASCAR itself. One reason why more sponsors do not find their way directly into titles is simple. Newspapers make money by advertising and providing free advertising by placing a sponsor directly into the title is bad business for the newspaper. When new sponsors decide to sponsor either entity, titles may be written to reflect these new relationships. Also, sponsorship relationships that have extended for a great period of time, also receive more notice. However, if an organization is most interested in finding its name in the paper, race entitlement appears to be the most effective way to accomplish this.

#### *National Coverage Compared to Regional Coverage*

NASCAR-related titles in both papers have become increasingly descriptive during Speedweeks. However, throughout this period of time, the *Johnson City Press* titles are more sensational and descriptive than the *New York Times* titles. Because the *Johnson City Press* is a regional paper located in the south, where stock car racing began, are its titles more sensational and descriptive because the people in the region are already well-versed in the sport? Not only would the readers of the *New York Times* have been less aware of the sport because of the distance from the sport's main hub of activity, they may have thought stock car racing was a

curiosity that did not deserve a spot on the sports page. Therefore, editors may have paid less attention to creating titles for the articles, opting to give them simple titles.

Meanwhile, editors at the *Johnson City Press* understood that NASCAR was interesting to readers in the region. With a NASCAR facility in neighboring Bristol, the people of the region probably followed the sport and were much more understanding of the intricacies involved. Because they were more knowledgeable, editors may have felt that giving the titles more description would entice more readers to pick up their paper to learn about the latest happenings on the NASCAR circuit.

While NASCAR enjoys nationwide popularity and fans across the country are now familiar with the drivers, the research data did point out an interesting fact about how each newspaper refers to Dale Earnhardt Jr. in titles. The *Johnson City Press* refers to Dale Earnhardt Jr. in three titles by his nickname, “Junior.” The *New York Times* uses Earnhardt’s last name in titles. Because Earnhardt Jr. is one of the most popular drivers, does the *Johnson City Press* use his nickname because NASCAR fans in the region know more about him and feel that they “know” him on a personal basis? Is this the reason why sponsors prefer to associate with Earnhardt Jr.? Because of this feeling of a “personal relationship,” do fans trust him more than other drivers and purchase the products he endorses?

### *Challenges and Limitations*

This research study was limited due to the amount of data analyzed. The limited range of online newspaper search systems and available archived microfilm prevented the researcher from including more papers in the research. The time frame used also limited the number of titles available for research. While Speedweeks is one of the most important times of the season for NASCAR, how would other time periods change the research? Also, using more than just the

term “NASCAR” to search databases also may create more titles to analyze. How would the research data differ if drivers’ names, sponsors’ names, or terms like “Sprint Cup Series” were used?

### *Future Research*

For future research, different newspapers (preferably nationwide) and time periods should be studied. Each newspaper across the country probably varies in its coverage of NASCAR based on its proximity to the south or to a NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race track. By adding more papers, researchers may have a better understanding of the differences across newspapers with varying circulation. How do NASCAR-related titles in small, weekly newspapers compare to titles in larger, regional papers? How do regional papers compare to USA Today and other national and international newspapers?

Analyzing different time periods throughout the study also may help researchers understand how quickly changes occur. Are changes rapid, occurring from year-to-year, or are they more gradual like this study shows? Also, increasing the time period from Speedweeks to a full season may highlight many more indices of meaning. Such a project is beyond the scope of this research project but should be considered for future studies. Further analyses of the data included in this study will yield more indices, but the number also was beyond the scope of this study.

Also, more time should be devoted to how corporate sponsorships not only impact newspapers, but also how they affect television, radio, and even driver behavior. Drivers are wary of the sponsors they represent and sometimes change their behavior to appease the sponsor. A project that focuses on this phenomenon would be interesting. Also, interviewing reporters

about the changes they have experienced would provide insight into the impact sponsorships have had on media coverage of NASCAR.

*Applied Value.* Competition is higher than ever for drivers and teams to acquire sponsors and to keep those sponsors happy. As costs in NASCAR increase, drivers and teams must be responsive and ensure that these sponsors receive benefits for their investments. It will be important for drivers to behave appropriately and to earn success on the track. This will help their sponsors find their names in the newspapers. Additionally, organizations sponsoring lower-ranked teams may be better served by spending their money to become associate sponsors on bigger teams. Organizations with larger budgets should consider race entitlement if they want to find their products' names in the text.

*Heuristic Value.* With the increase in costs of NASCAR, it will be important to understand how sponsorships will be able to support the sport in the future. While sponsors presently are able to see a return on their investments, it will be crucial to understand if these returns will always exist. If not, NASCAR teams will need to think critically about how to bring in additional sponsors to support racing efforts.

It also will be important to determine the return sponsors get on their investment in other racing series like the National Hot Rod Association and the Indy Racing League. Sponsoring teams in these series cost less, and companies may find that the return on their investment is much better in these series. If this is the case, NASCAR must find a way to make the sport less expensive to attract sponsors to continue to return to the series. What does the sport's transformation mean and how has the sponsors' response to this transformation impacted the cost to do business in NASCAR? If the sponsors were giving less money, would teams find ways to spend less?

*The finish line.* NASCAR has become one of the most popular sporting series in the United States. Its popularity has skyrocketed in the past decade and the sport is receiving attention from places never before seen. Drivers are presenters at awards shows, have reality television shows, and are guests on game shows. Everywhere fans turn, images of their favorite drivers appear. When the image of that driver appears, it is usually associated with one of the many sponsors found on his car. Sponsorships have changed the sport more than anything. The budget that sponsorships provide allows for the large operation that is necessary to win in NASCAR today. Will sponsors continue to see the benefits of sponsoring NASCAR entities, or will they find alternative avenues to market their products?



## REFERENCES

- Astor, D. (1998). *The race is on to cover NASCAR*. Retrieved February 12, 2008, from Infotrac General OneFile database.
- At Daytona, crash makes case for restricting overall speed. (2000, February 19). *New York Times*. Retrieved July 7, 2008, from <http://www.nytimes.com>
- Biffle wins with wild ride as rules of road change. (2005, February 28). *New York Times*. Retrieved July 7, 2008, from <http://www.nytimes.com>
- Bodine escapes fiery crash; Nine fans injured as truck disintegrates. (2000, February 19). *New York Times*. Retrieved July 7, 2008, from <http://www.nytimes.com>
- Breidenstein, P.A. (1988). On the creation of organizational folk theories: An analysis of storytelling and language behavior (Doctoral dissertation, Purdue University, 1988).
- Broughton, D. (2007, December 10). There's value in being seen and heard. *Sports Business Journal*, 10(33), 9-11.
- BurrellesLuce. (2007). *Top 100 U.S. Daily Newspapers*. Retrieved March 23, 2008, from [http://www.burrellesluce.com/top100/2007\\_Top\\_100List.pdf](http://www.burrellesluce.com/top100/2007_Top_100List.pdf).
- Burke, K. (1964). Fact, inference and proof in the analysis of literary symbolism. In S.E. Hyman (Ed.), *Terms for order by Kenneth Burke* (pp. 145-172). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Busch and Stewart on probation. (2008, February 13). *New York Times*. Retrieved July 7, 2008, from <http://www.nytimes.com>
- Busch Clash: 50-mile dash should test new Chevrolets. (1995, February 10). *Johnson City Press*, p. 19.
- Busch, Vickers make up youngest front row. (2005, February 27). *Johnson City Press*.

- Cheney, G. and Tompkins, P.K. (1987). On the facts of “text” as the basis of human communication research. In J.A. Anderson (Ed.), *Communication yearbook/11*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Cialdini, R. B., Borden, R. J., Thorne, A., Walker, M. R., Freeman, S., & Sloan, L. R. (1976). Basking in reflected glory: Three (football) field studies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 34, 366-375.
- Clark, M., Cornwell, T.B., & Pruitt, S. (2004). The NASCAR phenomenon: Auto racing sponsorships and shareholder wealth. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 44(3), 281-296.
- Clarke, L. (2008). *One helluva ride: How NASCAR swept the nation*. New York: Villard Books.
- Clifton, P. (1964). *The fastest men on earth*. New York: The John Day Company.
- CNN. (2004). *Interview With NASCAR Drivers Dale Earnhardt, Jr., Jeff Gordon*. Retrieved February 13, 2008, from InfoTrac General OneFile database.
- Cohen, B. (1963). *The press and foreign policy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Cope pulls off Daytona miracle. (1990, February 19). *Johnson City Press*.
- Cope takes flag at Daytona. (1990, February 19). *New York Times*. Retrieved July 7, 2008, from <http://www.nytimes.com>
- Cornwell, T. B., Pruitt, S. W. & Van Ness, R. (2001). The value of winning in motorsports: Sponsorship-linked marketing. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 41. Retrieved February 17, 2008 from InfoTrac General OneFile database.
- Cost and value of team sponsorships, The. (2004). Retrieved February 17, 2008, from [http://www.nascar.com/2004/kyn/nascar\\_101/05/20/team\\_costs/index.html](http://www.nascar.com/2004/kyn/nascar_101/05/20/team_costs/index.html)
- Diaz, G. (2004). *With Winston gone, Nextel tries to put its name on NASCAR*. Retrieved February 27, 2008, from InfoTrac General OneFile database.

Donnie Allison wins pole spot. (1975, February 10). *Johnson City Press*, p. 6.

Driver killed. (1980, February 15). *Johnson City Press*.

Dura-Lube Kmart 400: Labonte tops Earnhardt. (2000, February 28). *New York Times*. Retrieved July 7, 2008, from <http://www.nytimes.com>

Earnhardt says his streak will end today. (2000, February 17). *Johnson City Press*.

Earnhardt sets the tone in a qualifier. (2008, February 18). *New York Times*. Retrieved July 7, 2008, from <http://www.nytimes.com>

Final warm-ups for Daytona 500. (1970, February 18). *Johnson City Press*, p. 16.

Findling, J. E., & Pelle, K. D. (1996). *Historical dictionary of the modern Olympic movement*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

'500' drivers up in arms after crash. (1970, February 21). *Johnson City Press*, p. 7.

Flock sets auto mark: Paces stock car qualifiers with 130.293 mph. (1955, February 25). *New York Times*. Retrieved July 7, 2008, from <http://www.nytimes.com>

Fontana II: News of note, schedule. (2004). Retrieved February 16, 2008, from <http://www.motorsport.com/news/article.asp?ID=166307&FS=Other%20series>

4-car Crash in race sends 6 to hospital. (1955, February 27). *New York Times*. Retrieved July 7, 2008, from <http://www.nytimes.com>

Fortunato, J. (2000). Public relations strategies for creating mass media content: A case study of the National Basketball Association. *Public Relations Review*, 26, 481-497.

Fryer, J. (2008, October 9). *Smith still smarting over Talladega defeat*. Retrieved October 14, 2008, from <http://license.icopyright.net/user/viewFreeUse.act?fuid=MTY3MDAyNA==>

Good, D. (2005, Fall). Car racing in Appalachia: A historical and cultural view. *Now & Then: The Appalachian Magazine*, 21, 3-4.

- Golenbock, P. (1993). *American zoom: Stock car racing from the dirt tracks to Daytona*. New York: Macmillan.
- Gordon tops all-star cast in a thriller at Daytona. (2005, February 21). *New York Times*. Retrieved July 7, 2008, from <http://www.nytimes.com>
- Gough, P. (2006). *Many starts and sputters: It has taken four decades for NASCAR to get its television setup just right*. Retrieved February 8, 2008, from InfoTrac General OneFile database.
- Gough, P. (2005). *NASCAR's motor running: Revs up eight-year, \$4 bil TV deal with 5 nets*. Retrieved January 27, 2008, from InfoTrac General OneFile database.
- Gilliam, G. (1989). *Racin': The NASCAR/Winston cup stock car racing series*. Charlottesville, VA: Howell Press.
- Gillis, R. (2004, August 10). Sponsors tune in to t.v. news values. *The Financial Times*. Retrieved February 25, 2008, from InfoTrac General OneFile database.
- Green's car burns in Daytona '500.' (1960, February 16). *Johnson City Press*, p. 10.
- Hagstrom, R. (1998). *The NASCAR way: The business that drives the sport*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Harshaw, C., & Turner, E. (1999). Assessing the recognition of perimeter advertising signage by television viewers of NASCAR Winston cup events. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 8(4), 35-41.
- Harvick's bump causes wreck, stirs up tempers. (2005, February 18). *Johnson City Press*.
- Harvick nearly ruins Martin's day once again. (2005, February 20). *Johnson City Press*.
- Hemphill, P. (1997). *Wheels*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

- Higgins, T. (1998a). Built for speed. In NASCAR (Ed.), *NASCAR: The thunder of America* (pp. 102-111). New York: HarperCollins.
- Higgins, T. (1998b). Life in the fast lane. In NASCAR (Ed.), *NASCAR: The thunder of America* (pp. 119-130). New York: HarperCollins.
- Janoff, B. (2008, February 4). NASCAR's 50<sup>th</sup> Daytona 500 offers golden opportunities. *Brandweek*. Retrieved September 12, 2008, from InfoTrack General One File Database.
- Jewett, L. (2005). Another racing season kicks off at Speedweeks. *Circle Track*. Retrieved March 23, 2008, from InfoTrac General One File Database.
- Johnson, C. (2007). Corporate sponsorship. *Encyclopedia of business* Retrieved August 3, 2008, from <http://www.referenceforbusiness.com/encyclopedia/Con-Cos/Corporate-Sponsorship.html>
- Judd's attire a hot topic. (2008, February 17). *Johnson City Press*.
- Kasrel, D. (1997). *Firms win with big buck NASCAR sponsorships*. Retrieved February 16, 2008, from InfoTrac General OneFile database.
- Kate, N.T. (1992). Make it an event. *American Demographics*, 14, 40-45. Retrieved February 21, 2008 from InfoTrac General OneFile database.
- Kerschbaumer, K. (2001, February 26). Fox Sports rolls into NASCAR. *Broadcasting & Cable*. Retrieved September 12, 2008, from InfotTrac General One File Database.
- Lang, K., & Lang, G. (1966). The mass media and voting. *Reader in public opinion and communication* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Free Press.
- Lefton, T., & Smith, M. (2008, February 18). How Junior went green. *Sports Business Journal*, 1.

Levine, S. (2004, March 12). The speed channels: After building a strong base on cable, move to broadcast nets ups ratings and fans. *Daily Variety*. Retrieved September 14, 2008 from InfoTrac General OneFile database.

Lund captures 300-mile Daytona race. (1970, February 22). *New York Times*. Retrieved July 7, 2008, from <http://www.nytimes.com>

Martin, M. (2000). *NASCAR for dummies*. New York: Hungry Minds.

McGee, R. (2005). *The cost of racing*. Retrieved July 21, 2008 from <http://msn.foxsports.com/nascar/story/3489526>

Menzer, J. (2001). *The wildest ride: A history of NASCAR*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Miller, G. W. (2002). *Men and speed*. New York: PublicAffairs.

Moriarty, F. (1998). *The encyclopedia of stock car racing*. New York: Michael Friedman.

Most dangerous races set for Daytona today. (1985, February 14). *Johnson City Press*, p. 20.

Mullin, B., Hardy, S., & Sutton, W. (2000). *Sport marketing*. Champlaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

NASCAR. (2008a). *NASCAR sprint cup series: 2008 media guide*. National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing.

NASCAR. (2008b). *Overview*. Retrieved March 6, 2008, from <http://www.nascarmedia.com/assets/default/2008%20NASCAR%20Overview.pdf>

NASCAR. (2008c). *NASCAR announces 2008 sprint cup series schedule*. Retrieved July 13, 2008, from <http://www.nascar.com/2007/news/headlines/cup/09/26/cup.schedule.2008/index.html>

NASCAR asseses pay per view options. (2001). *Multichannel News*. Retrieved April 1, 2008, from Infotrac General OneFile database.

NASCAR's Daytona 500 stock car race takes green flag today. (1980, February 17). *Johnson City Press*.

NASCAR's screech and slam?; It's all aerodynamics. (2008, February 12). *New York Times*.

Retrieved July 7, 2008, from <http://www.nytimes.com>

Newsom, D., Turk, J., & Kruckeberg, D. (2000). *This is pr: The realities of public relations* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.) Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Newton, D. (2008, October 10). *Smith disagrees with penalty, would have wrecked Stewart*.

Retrieved October 14, 2008, from

<http://sports.espn.go.com/rpm/nascar/cup/news/story?id=3634860>

New record predicted for Daytona 500. (1965, February 10). *Johnson City Press*, p. 7.

One tough customer...NASCAR's crown jewel has eluded Earnhardt. (1990, February 18).

*Johnson City Press*.

Packman, T. (2005, July). Financing a top-tier NASCAR team. *Popular Mechanics*. Retrieved

February 9, 2008, from

<http://www.popularmechanics.com/automotive/motorsports/1750692.html>

Performance Research. (1997). *Loyal NASCAR fans please stand up*. Retrieved March 4, 2008,

from <http://www.performanceresearch.com/nascar-racestat.htm>

Phipps, J. (2005, March 14). Tracking a good racing buy; Ads paying dividends in sport where fans value sponsors and ratings soar as young males flock to watch. *TelevisionWeek*.

Retrieved March 4, 2008 from InfoTrac General OneFile database.

- Pollack, J. (2003). A Natural History of Sports Reporting. *St. Louis Journalism Review*. Retrieved February 2, 2008, from InfoTrac General OneFile.
- Potter, S. (1980, February 10). Another Petty joins the races; Driving to win. *New York Times*, p. S15.
- Problems for Bodine. (1995, February 12). *New York Times*. Retrieved July 7, 2008, from <http://www.nytimes.com>
- Qualifying rained out. (2008, February 23). *Johnson City Press*.
- Razor's Edge at STP, The. (1973, October 15). *TIME*. Retrieved February 13, 2008, from <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,910820,00.html>
- Rudl, G. (2006). *Guard's NASCAR driver visits wounded warriors at Walter Reed*. Retrieved February 24, 2008, from [http://www.ngb.army.mil/news/archives/2006/10/101006-NASCAR\\_visit.aspx](http://www.ngb.army.mil/news/archives/2006/10/101006-NASCAR_visit.aspx)
- Sandomir, R. (1999, November 11). Fox and NBC acquire the rights to NASCAR's races. *New York Times*. Retrieved February 16, 2008, from <http://www.nytimes.com>
- Schlossberg, H. (1996). *Sports marketing*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Sets new NASCAR mark. (1955, February 23). *Johnson City Press*.
- Simons, L. (1999). Follow the ball. *American Journalism Review*. Retrieved February 22, 2008, from InfoTrac General OneFile database.
- Sowers, R. (2000). *The complete statistical history of stock-car racing*. Phoenix, AZ: David Bull.
- Spencer, L. (2003). Snoozer or super bowl?: In the end, the answer makes sense. *The Sporting News*. Retrieved September 12, 2008, from InfoTrac General OneFile database.
- Sports Illustrated. (1997). *On a winning track*. Retrieved February 3, 2008, from InfoTrac General OneFile database.



- Sprint Cup Page. (2008). Retrieved September 21, 2008, from <http://www.racing-reference.info/wc.htm>
- Squier, K. (2006). *The ignition switch: CBS' coverage of the '79 Daytona 500 turned America on to NASCAR, broadcaster*. Retrieved January 29, 2008, from InfoTrac General OneFile database.
- Stewart, Gordon in shoving match. (2000, February 17). *Johnson City Press*.
- Stotlar, D. (2005). *Developing successful sport sponsorship plans* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University.
- Strauss, L. (1998). Does money tilt the playing field? When covering becomes marketing. *Columbia Journalism Review*. Retrieved February 27, 2008, from InfoTrac General OneFile database.
- Surprising qualifying lap takes heat off Pressley. (2000, February 15). *Johnson City Press*.
- Swan, R. (2008). *Publicists: Cogs that make drivers well-oiled machines*. Retrieved July 21, 2008, from: <http://www.nascar.com/2008/news/opinion/07/18/rswan.publicists.jgordon.tstewart.cedwards/index.html>
- 37-car pileup mars auto race. (1960, February 14). *Johnson City Press*, p. 13.
- Thompson, J. (1985). Editor's introduction. In P. Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the human sciences*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Waltrip puts scandal behind him with strong qualifying run. (2008, February 11). *Johnson City Press*.
- Wann, D. L., Hamlet, M. A., Wilson, T. M., & Hodges, J. A. (1995). Basking in reflected glory, cutting off reflected failure, and cutting off future failure: The importance of group identification. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 23, 377-388.

Watson, J. (1984). *A dictionary of communication and media studies*. London: Edward Arnold.

Weary Johnson is buoyed by victory at Budweiser Shootout. (2005, February 13). *New York*

*Times*. Retrieved July 7, 2008, from <http://www.nytimes.com>

Wegner, J. (2004, November 21). NASCAR sponsorship can be expensive, but rewards for

companies could be great. *Omaha World-Herald*. Retrieved February 8, 2008, from

InfoTrac General OneFile database.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

#### Indicies of Meaning from NASCAR-Related Titles in the *New York Times*

##### Specific Names

1955NYT1- Flock sets auto mark; Paces stock car qualifiers with 130.293 mph  
1960NYT1- Roberts' auto sets qualifying record  
1970NYT2- Lund captures 300-mile Daytona race  
1980NYT1- Another Petty joins the races; Driving to win  
1990NYT2- Waltrip thriving on a subtler style  
1990NYT3- Cope takes flag at Daytona  
1995NYT1- Problems for Bodine  
1995NYT2- For all his winning, Rusty Wallace keeps losing  
2000NYT1- Rudd making a new start as a driver for the Yates team  
2000NYT2- Gordon's new role at Daytona: Underdog  
2000NYT4- Jarrett is ahead of field before Daytona starts  
2000NYT5- For Jarrett, third victory at Daytona is no breeze  
2000NYT6- Dura-Lube Kmart400; Labonte tops Earnhardt  
2005NYT1- Weary Johnson is buoyed by victory at Budweiser Shootout  
2005NYT2- Johnson edges Waltrip to win Daytona 500 pole  
2005NYT4- In Earnhardt camp, pressure is shifting  
2005NYT5- Earnhardt & Waltrip return to head of pack  
2005NYT6- At Daytona, Jarrett looks for a championship sequel  
2005NYT7- Busch champion Truex takes learning curve  
2005NYT11- Gordon tops all-star cast in a thriller at Daytona  
2005NYT12- Victory eludes Martin and Wallace one last time  
2005NYT16- Biffle wins with wild ride as rules of road change  
2008NYT1- Earnhardt gets a victory after two top rivals get a warning  
2008NYT4- Busch and Stewart on probation  
2008NYT5- Hendrick team has engine issues  
2008NYT8- Earnhardt sets the tone in a qualifier  
2008NYT14- Hendrick dominant, just not in 500  
2008NYT15- Newman foils Stewart and wins Daytona  
2008NYT16- In change, Busch puts teammate first  
2008NYT19- Victory for Kyle Busch  
2008NYT20- With eye on future, Petty team packs up  
2008NYT21- On day 2, Edwards surges past Hendrick pair to win

##### Specific Race/Location

1965NYT1- Daytona planning new race in 1965  
1970NYT2- Lund captures 300-mile Daytona race  
1975NYT1- Racing fans to stage Daytona festival today  
1990NYT3- Cope takes flag at Daytona  
1995NYT3- Real-life heroes also race far from Daytona

2000NYT2- Gordon's new role at Daytona: Underdog  
2000NYT3- At Daytona, crash makes case for restricting overall speed  
2000NYT4- Jarrett is ahead of field before Daytona starts  
2000NYT5- For Jarrett, third victory at Daytona is no breeze  
2000NYT6- Dura-Lube Kmart400; Labonte tops Earnhardt  
2005NYT1- Weary Johnson is buoyed by victory at Budweiser Shootout  
2005NYT2- Johnson edges Waltrip to win Daytona 500 pole  
2005NYT6- At Daytona, Jarrett looks for a championship sequel  
2005NYT11- Gordon tops all-star cast in a thriller at Daytona  
2008NYT13- Proven winner finally finishes first at Daytona  
2008NYT14- Hendrick dominant, just not in 500  
2008NYT15- Newman foils Stewart and wins Daytona

#### Sponsor

2000NYT6- Dura-Lube Kmart400; Labonte tops Earnhardt  
2005NYT1- Weary Johnson is buoyed by victory at Budweiser Shootout  
2005NYT7- Busch champion Truex takes learning curve  
2005NYT14- Sirius Satellite Radio wins broadcast deal with NASCAR  
2005NYT15- NASCAR welcomes liquor sponsors

#### NASCAR

1965NYT2- NASCAR approves 'fancy' engines; high risers, hemispherical heads sanctioned for '66  
2005NYT3- After overhaul, NASCAR does some fine-tuning  
2005NYT8- Next generation of NASCAR's ruling family puts new face on sport  
2005NYT13- NASCAR is taking its show on the road  
2005NYT14- Sirius Satellite Radio wins broadcast deal with NASCAR  
2005NYT15- NASCAR welcomes liquor sponsors  
2008NYT3- NASCAR's screech and slam?; It's all aerodynamics  
2008NYT7- Marketers are putting NASCAR on different kinds of circuits  
2008NYT9- NASCAR returns to basics in hope fans will return  
2008NYT17- NASCAR punishes several teams  
2008NYT18- NASCAR qualifying rained out

## Appendix B

### Indicies of Meaning from NASCAR-Related Titles in the *Johnson City Press*

#### Specific Names

- 1960JCP1- Brownie King among 11 fleet qualifiers at Daytona Beach
- 1960JCP3- World records keep falling at Daytona; Smith hits 146
- 1960JCP5- Junior Johnson cops first place in Daytona Beach '500'
- 1960JCP6- Green's car burns in Daytona '500'
- 1960JCP7- Richard Petty wins auto race
- 1965JCP2- Balmer's 168.350 top Daytona speed
- 1965JCP5- Johnson, Dieringer win 100-milers at Daytona
- 1965JCP6- Lorenzen wins Daytona 500
- 1970JCP3- Yarborough was picked up for speeding very early
- 1970JCP7- Cale Yarborough runs history-making race
- 1970JCP9- France admits that nobody is perfect
- 1970JCP10- Pete Hamilton wins Daytona 500
- 1975JCP1- Donnie Allison wins pole spot
- 1975JCP2- Banjo Matthews' fine touch to be present at Daytona
- 1975JCP6- Ingram wins Permatex 300
- 1975JCP7- Petty, Parsons set for Bristol race
- 1975JCP8- Parsons wins Daytona 500
- 1975JCP9- Petty strong favorite to take Richmond 500
- 1975JCP10- Richard Petty bags ninth win in Richmond 500 race
- 1980JCP4- Buddy Baker heads Daytona 500 field
- 1980JCP5- Baker finally wins at Daytona
- 1980JCP6- Waltrip likes pole spot at Richmond 400 race
- 1985JCP1- Bill Elliott smashes NASCAR mark
- 1985JCP2- Rudd hopes to atone for 1984 Clash crash
- 1985JCP3- Labonte dominates Busch Clash
- 1985JCP4- Waltrip hopes for breakthrough in Daytona 500
- 1985JCP5- Labonte ready to resume '84 success
- 1985JCP9- Elliott 'impressive' in qualifier
- 1985JCP10- Labonte hopes to keep starters in sight at \$1.2 million Daytona
- 1985JCP11- Elliott claims Daytona 500
- 1990JCP1- Schrader favored to lead qualifying for Daytona 500
- 1990JCP2- Schrader wins Daytona 500 pole position for third time
- 1990JCP3- Waltrip set to defend Daytona title
- 1990JCP4- Schrader runs away with Busch Clash victory
- 1990JCP5- Waltrip wins pole for Goody's 300
- 1990JCP6- Schrader, Earnhardt can increase stature
- 1990JCP7- Error in judgment knocks Schrader from pole position
- 1990JCP8- Petty fires up Daytona with look of yesteryear
- 1990JCP10- Schrader still figures to have shot at win
- 1990JCP11- One tough customer...NASCAR's crown jewel has eluded Earnhardt
- 1990JCP12- Petty says it takes more than skill to winning 500

1990JCP13- Cope pulls off Daytona miracle  
1990JCP15- Schrader's run spectacular, but short  
1990JCP17- Wallace anxious for a win  
1990JCP18- Rudd faces stern challenge  
1990JCP19- Martin hit with fine after Richmond win  
1995JCP2- Waltrip set for Daytona  
1995JCP3- Wallace's promise  
1995JCP4- Jarrett has many believers  
1995JCP5- Irvan struck by reality in Daytona  
1995JCP6- Jarrett claims pole in battle of Dales  
1995JCP7- NASCAR hits Johnson with record fine  
1995JCP8- Busch Clash looking good to Dale  
1995JCP7- New tires, no pole for Allen  
1995JCP11- Jarrett's ride temporary  
1995JCP13- Both Dales revved up for 125-mile qualifiers  
1995JCP15- [Jeff] Gordon anxious to add his name to Daytona elite  
1995JCP16- Earnhardt's hopes ride high again  
1995JCP17- Wallace winning but losing  
1995JCP18- Marlin turns in 'Sterling' effort  
1995JCP20- Wallace left frustrated again  
1995JCP21- Earnhardt's frustrations continue  
1995JCP22- Hero: Columbia hails Marlin  
1995JCP23- Wallace anxious to get on with business  
1995JCP24- [Jeff] Gordon claims pole for Goodwrench 500  
1995JCP25- [Jeff] Gordon dominates Goodwrench 500  
2000JCP3- Jarrett, Rudd to start on front row at Daytona  
2000JCP4- Jarrett, off, running  
2000JCP5- Surprising qualifying lap takes heat off Pressley  
2000JCP6- Earnhardt's 125 streak on the line  
2000JCP7- Earnhardt says his streak will end today  
2000JCP9- Stewart, [Robby] Gordon in shoving match  
2000JCP10- Elliott, Rudd win quiet 125s  
2000JCP11- Yates riding high as 2000 dawns  
2000JCP12- Bodine escapes fiery crash; Nine fans injured as truck disintegrates  
2000JCP14- New look, new title give Jarrett new perspective  
2000JCP15- Bump from [Jeff] Gordon damages Jarrett's car  
2000JCP16- Petty joins Dodge  
2000JCP17- Quotable Stewart always says plenty, pays price  
2000JCP18- Jarrett lives up to billing  
2000JCP19- [Jeff] Gordon picks up where he left off- sputtering  
2000JCP21- DuraLube/Kmart 400: Wallace Claims Pole  
2000JCP22- Jarrett, Parrott latest super team in NASCAR  
2000JCP24- Labonte outduels Earnhardt in DuraLube/Kmart 400  
2005JCP1- Defending champion Jarrett on Shootout pole  
2005JCP2- Demands taking toll on Busch  
2005JCP4- Martin, Wallace begin long goodbye

2005JCP5- Elliott back in Bud Shootout  
 2005JCP6- Johnson impressive in Shootout victory  
 2005JCP7- Illegal part puts [Robby] Gordon in early bind at Daytona  
 2005JCP9- Jarrett, Johnson lead field  
 2005JCP10- [Robby] Gordon trying to launch team, make Daytona  
 2005JCP11- Martin planning to enjoy himself during final year  
 2005JCP13- Distractions over, Johnson eyes prize  
 2005JCP14- Petty team likes new car engines  
 2005JCP16- DEI team hits stride  
 2005JCP17- 'Other' Earnhardt misses Daytona field by inches  
 2005JCP18- Harvick's bump causes wreck, stirs up tempers  
 2005JCP19- Harvick stirs up plenty of trouble  
 2005JCP21- All eyes on DEI  
 2005JCP22- Harvick nearly ruins Martin's day once again  
 2005JCP23- [Jeff] Gordon wins wild affair  
 2005JCP24- Martin, Wallace walk away empty in final Daytona 500  
 2005JCP25- Junior falls short, but he keeps field guessing  
 2005JCP26- [Jeff] Gordon win gives Hendrick chance to honor fallen friends  
 2005JCP27- [Jeff] Gordon still relishes victories  
 2005JCP29- [Robby] Gordon left to battle for qualifying spot  
 2005JCP31- Busch, Vickers make up youngest front row  
 2005JCP32- Biffle hangs tough for California win  
 2005JCP33- California leaves Earnhardt feeling flat  
 2008JCP1- Stewart, Busch told to avoid hostilities  
 2008JCP2- Junior gets 1<sup>st</sup> win with new team  
 2008JCP3- Busch, Stewart bring extra attention to Daytona  
 2008JCP4- Waltrip puts scandal behind him with strong qualifying run  
 2008JCP5- Junior impresses opposing drivers  
 2008JCP7- NASCAR puts Busch, Stewart on probation  
 2008JCP8- Engine trouble plagues Hendrick cars  
 2008JCP9- Gibbs glad to be back home again  
 2008JCP11- Earnhardt, Hamlin win qualifiers  
 2008JCP13- Waltrip's team riding high at Daytona  
 2008JCP14- Stewart leads 1-2 finish for Gibbs team  
 2008JCP15- Stewart calmly resumes his quest  
 2008JCP18- Stewart gets tough lesson in teamwork  
 2008JCP20- Robby Gordon appeals NASCAR's punishment, says he did nothing wrong  
 2008JCP22- Earnhardt hoping to break long losing streak in California  
 2008JCP24- Slow CoT [Car of Tomorrow] start got Roush and his team going

#### Specific Race/Location

1960JCP1- Brownie King among 11 fleet qualifiers at Daytona Beach  
 1960JCP3- World records keep falling at Daytona; Smith hits 146  
 1960JCP5- Junior Johnson cops first place in Daytona Beach '500'  
 1960JCP6- Green's car burns in Daytona '500'  
 1965JCP1- New record predicted for Daytona 500

1965JCP2- Balmer's 168.350 top Daytona speed  
 1965JCP3- Two 100-milers slated today at Daytona  
 1965JCP5- Johnson, Dieringer win 100-milers at Daytona  
 1965JCP6- Lorenzen wins Daytona 500  
 1965JCP7- 100-miler set at A-W (Asheville-Weaverville Speedway) today  
 1970JCP2- Daytona sees fast week  
 1970JCP5- Daytona 125's to be plenty fast  
 1970JCP6- Fast races on tap at Daytona today as qualifying runs set  
 1970JCP10- Pete Hamilton wins Daytona 500  
 1975JCP2- Banjo Matthews' fine touch to be present at Daytona  
 1975JCP4- Huge throngs are flocking to Daytona  
 1975JCP5- Daytona 500 set today  
 1975JCP6- Ingram wins Permatex 300  
 1975JCP7- Petty, Parsons set for Bristol race  
 1975JCP8- Parsons wins Daytona 500  
 1975JCP9- Petty strong favorite to take Richmond 500  
 1975JCP10- Richard Petty bags ninth win in Richmond 500 race  
 1980JCP2- Drivers preparing for Daytona 500 on Sunday  
 1980JCP3- NASCAR's Daytona 500 stock car race takes green flag today  
 1980JCP4- Buddy Baker heads Daytona 500 field  
 1980JCP5- Baker finally wins at Daytona  
 1980JCP6- Waltrip likes pole spot at Richmond 400 race  
 1985JCP2- Rudd hopes to atone for 1984 Clash crash  
 1985JCP3- Labonte dominates Busch Clash  
 1985JCP4- Waltrip hopes for breakthrough in Daytona 500  
 1985JCP6- Drivers wouldn't miss racing at Nashville  
 1985JCP7- Most dangerous races set for Daytona today  
 1985JCP10- Labonte hopes to keep starters in sight at \$1.2 million Daytona  
 1985JCP11- Elliott claims Daytona 500  
 1985JCP12- Daytona shows dangers, solutions  
 1990JCP1- Schrader favored to lead qualifying for Daytona 500  
 1990JCP2- Schrader wins Daytona 500 pole position for third time  
 1990JCP3- Waltrip set to defend Daytona title  
 1990JCP4- Schrader runs away with Busch Clash victory  
 1990JCP5- Waltrip wins pole for Goody's 300  
 1990JCP9- Cruise'ing Daytona; Movie is 'positive thing' for stock car racing  
 1990JCP12- Petty says it takes more than skill to winning 500  
 1990JCP13- Cope pulls off Daytona miracle  
 1990JCP14- Unlikely hero takes advantage of breaks to win Daytona 500  
 1990JCP16- Racing world in shock after Daytona race  
 1990JCP19- Martin hit with fine after Richmond win  
 1995JCP1- Busch Clash: 50-mile dash should test new Chevrolets  
 1995JCP2- Waltrip set for Daytona  
 1995JCP5- Irvan struck by reality in Daytona 1995JCP8- Busch Clash looking good to Dale  
 1995JCP10- Monte Carlos make statement in Busch Clash



1995JCP13- Both Dales revved up for 125-mile qualifiers  
1995JCP14- Chevrolet on a roll at Daytona  
1995JCP15- [Jeff] Gordon anxious to add his name to Daytona elite  
1995JCP24- [Jeff] Gordon claims pole for Goodwrench 500  
1995JCP25- [Jeff] Gordon dominates Goodwrench 500  
2000JCP3- Jarrett, Rudd to start on front row at Daytona  
2000JCP6- Earnhardt's 125 streak on the line  
2000JCP10- Elliott, Rudd win quiet 125s  
2000JCP13- Ready to go at Daytona  
2000JCP21- DuraLube/Kmart 400: Wallace Claims Pole  
2000JCP24- Labonte outduels Earnhardt in DuraLube/Kmart 400  
2005JCP1- Defending champion Jarrett on Shootout pole  
2005JCP5- Elliott back in Bud Shootout  
2005JCP6- Johnson impressive in Shootout victory  
2005JCP7- Illegal part puts [Robby] Gordon in early bind at Daytona  
2005JCP10- [Robby] Gordon trying to launch team, make Daytona  
2005JCP12- Daytona heats up as 18 drivers race for last four spots  
2005JCP17- 'Other' Earnhardt misses Daytona field by inches  
2005JCP32- Biffle hangs tough for California win  
2005JCP33- California leaves Earnhardt feeling flat  
2008JCP3- Busch, Stewart bring extra attention to Daytona  
2008JCP6- Quiet day at Daytona means NASCAR is doing things right  
2008JCP13- Waltrip's team riding high at Daytona  
2008JCP17- 'Push from Heaven' decides 500  
2008JCP22- Earnhardt hoping to break long losing streak in California

#### Sponsor

1975JCP6- Ingram wins Permatex 300  
1985JCP3- Labonte dominates Busch Clash  
1990JCP4- Schrader runs away with Busch Clash victory  
1990JCP5- Waltrip wins pole for Goody's 300  
1995JCP1- Busch Clash: 50-mile dash should test new Chevrolets  
1995JCP8- Busch Clash looking good to Dale  
1995JCP10- Monte Carlos make statement in Busch Clash  
1995JCP24- [Jeff] Gordon claims pole for Goodwrench 500  
1995JCP25- [Jeff] Gordon dominates Goodwrench 500  
2000JCP8- Winston Cup rookies not lacking in experience  
2000JCP21- DuraLube/Kmart 400: Wallace Claims Pole  
2000JCP24- Labonte outduels Earnhardt in DuraLube/Kmart 400  
2005JCP5- Elliott back in Bud Shootout  
2005JCP8- After season of change, Nextel Cup finds groove  
2005JCP15- Goodyear scrambles to fix tire problems on eve of qualifiers  
2005JCP20- NASCAR bellies up to the bar; Sponsorship dollars coming in from alcohol

## NASCAR

- 1955JCP1- Sets new NASCAR mark
- 1980JCP3- NASCAR's Daytona 500 stock car race takes green flag today
- 1985JCP1- Bill Elliott smashes NASCAR mark
- 1990JCP11- One tough customer...NASCAR's crown jewel has eluded Earnhardt
- 1995JCP7- NASCAR hits Johnson with record fine
- 2000JCP20- Complaints send NASCAR to tests
- 2000JCP22- Jarrett, Parrott latest super team in NASCAR
- 2005JCP3- NASCAR's new qualifying system has drivers' support
- 2005JCP20- NASCAR bellies up to the bar; Sponsorship dollars coming in from alcohol
- 2005JCP28- New NASCAR rules to debut
- 2008JCP6- Quiet day at Daytona means NASCAR is doing things right
- 2008JCP7- NASCAR puts Busch, Stewart on probation
- 2008JCP19- NASCAR penalizes 10 teams
- 2008JCP20- Robby Gordon appeals NASCAR's punishment, says he did nothing wrong

VITA

WESLEY M. RAMEY

- Personal Data:                   Date of Birth: June 25, 1984  
  Place of Birth: Kingsport, Tennessee  
  Marital Status: Married
- Education:                        Public Schools, Scott County, Virginia  
  B.A. Mass Communications, Carson-Newman College, Jefferson  
  City, Tennessee, 2005  
  M.A. Professional Communications, East Tennessee State  
  University, Johnson City Tennessee, 2008
- Professional Experience:        Coordinator of Media and Public Relations, Bristol  
  Motor Speedway and Dragway; Bristol, Tennessee, 2006-  
  Present  
  Tuition Scholarship, East Tennessee State University,  
  Communications Department, 2006
- Honors and Awards:            Lambda Delta Alpha chapter of Lambda Pi Eta, ETSU  
  Communications Department Honor Society  
  Carson-Newman cum laude graduate  
  Carson-Newman Dean's List