

DEWALT Team Gears up for Return to Southern 500

After finishing 13th at Richmond last week, Kenseth and the No. 17 DEWALT team move on to Darlington Raceway, the ‘track too tough to tame,’ where Kenseth will look for his first win and only his second top-five finish in 15 previous Cup races.

At Darlington:

Starts: 15

Wins: -

Top 5: 1

Top 10: 6

First time: 8/20/99 (37)

Last time: 5/10/08 (6th)

KENSETH AT DARLINGTON

This will be Kenseth’s 16th start at the historic Darlington Raceway, where he has six top-10 and just one top-five finish. Kenseth does boast two wins at Darlington in the Nationwide Series in 1999 and 2005, and he has led in six of his last seven starts there.

ON A ROLL AT THE LADY IN BLACK

Kenseth come into this weekend having scored top-seven finishes in his last three Cup races at Darlington. The streak includes a sixth-place finish there last season and his only top-five (3rd) finish there in 2006.

DOUBLE DUTY

For the third consecutive week, Kenseth will pull double duty. Last week he won the pole in a third-place finish at Richmond. This week he will look for his third Nationwide win at Darlington, where he led 35 laps last year and was leading late before having to pit with a loose lugnut.

QUOTING MATT...

“Darlington is a great race track, known for its history and unique layout. It’s very fast and narrow, and the biggest challenge is getting around there as fast as possible, without hitting the wall. Since they paved it, it’s a pretty difficult place to race. You need a really fast car and you have to have the track position at the end of the race.

“We had another tough race last weekend at Richmond, but the guys hung in there. We still have to get the cars better at these tracks and it’s something as an organization we’ll continue to work on.”

QUOTING DREW B...

“Darlington is much different than it used to be. It used to eat tires and be all about tire conservation, but with the new smooth pavement it is not as much about tires anymore. Both ends of the track are different, so the fast cars will handle well at both ends. Running close to the wall is what gave Darlington its name. It is pretty fast and the cars

run within inches of the outside wall at both ends of the track, which usually means you touch it at some point.

“Matt and I have worked together at Darlington a few times in Nationwide. Last year we were leading towards the end when we had to pit for a loose lugnut from first place.

“The types of tracks coming up have been good this year and historically for the No. 17. We can’t wait to get to them, and hopefully they will get us on a roll and it gives us time to work on the short track program for Loudon.”

FAST FACTS

This will be Kenseth’s 16th Cup start at Darlington, where he has an average finish of 18.5.

Kenseth has finished top 10 (3rd, 7th and 6th) in the last three races at Darlington, and 96 of his 138 laps led there have come in those three races.

Kenseth has two wins in the Nationwide Series at Darlington (‘99 and ‘05) and he has finished top 10 in 78.6 percent (11) of his 14 starts in the series at the track.

Kenseth is currently 12th in the Sprint Cup point standing, 254 points out of first.

Last Year at Darlington...

5/10/08

Started: 34th - Finished: 6th

At the track known as ‘Too Tough to Tame,’ and with a newly-paved surface, which yielded a new track-record average speed of 140.350 mph, the No. 17 team had its work cut out. After struggling with handling and speed in all four of the weekend’s practice sessions and turning in a 34th-place qualifying attempt, it did not look as though this would be the weekend Kenseth and crew would turn things around. Nonetheless, in true 17 team-fashion, they did. The crew worked on the DEWALT Ford throughout the race and Kenseth crept through the field as the race progressed. In the end, Kenseth scored a sixth-place finish in Saturday night’s Dodge Charger 500.