



FLORIDA

SATURDAY, AUGUST 1, 1998 □ THE TAMPA TRIBUNE □ SPORTS — 9

AUTORACING EXTRA

A closer look at motorsports

Martin avoids crash to win IROC points title

By Lisa Magenhorn

The 100-mile event took less time than its only caution on Lap 3.

A red-flag period lasted about 40 minutes after former Trans-Am champion Tommy Kendall brushed the outside wall of Turn 4, hitting 1996 Indy 500 winner A.J. Foyt's who was running in the pits and made heavy contact with the new energy-efficient barrier in Turn 4, sending his car jarring across the track and into the outside wall.

For a consecutive weekend at a major auto race, fans were injured by flying debris. Two men were crushed by scrapes and bricks at the infield race center and released. It took medical personnel at least 15 minutes to extricate Foyt from the car as his feet were stuck inside the wreckage. He was taken to Methodist Hospital and admitted for observation with a slight concussion. He is expected to be released today.

Winston Cup driver Jeff Burton, the race of Jeff Gordon's car trying to avoid debris from the accident and failed to return because of extensive damage to his car. He was not injured.

Despite the magnitude of the incident, Martin emerged unscathed.

"That can't be anything but luck," said Martin, who becomes the first to win an IROC race in his diamond-plate Speedway, led three consecutive championships. "For me, being from Michigan, the Indy 500 is more recognizable than the Daytona 500. So to win here is very nice. It's a dream come true. It's a lifelong quest."

German Grand Prix: Mika Häkkinen won his 11th Formula One lead over Michael Schumacher on the German's home circuit, had the fastest time Friday in practice for the German Grand Prix.

Engineering, said parts of the wall were damaged and a 10-foot section came loose. He said minor improvements, probably additional restraints, are planned.

"The kind of debris," Forbes said, "isn't going to be out on the track again."

Häkkinen, coming off his victory five days ago in the Austrian Grand Prix, has an eight-point lead over Schumacher heading into the race Sunday.

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Arute prefers life in the pits

Some say you can tell a veteran pit reporter by how close he is getting a hearing aid.

It's that the case, ABC's Jack Arute is as deaf as they come. The combination of engine noise and broadcast blaring with producer and six crew exchanges have taken a toll on Arute's ears while reporting auto races for ABC, the past 15 years. He often hears ringing or, sometimes, little at all. A recent audio test revealed he has lost 40 percent of his hearing in one ear.

So it goes when you're on the front lines of America's loudest sport. Where other sports announcers are perched on tall towers, Arute is in the middle of the action, inhaling exhaust and gas fumes, dancing around scrambling pit crews and extinguishing flames. A race often ends with his shoelaces catching fire and melt away while Indy Racing League driver A.J. Foyt's pit. Like a true veteran, Arute didn't flinch but rather dipped his flaming feet in a nearby bucket of water.

"The camera was only on the top half of me," said Arute, who will work the pits in today's Brickyard 400. "Too bad. It would have made a great demonstration."

In such acts of dedication that have made Arute one of the most recognizable and popular reporters in the business, Arute doesn't just speak to the go-karts, he demonstrates for the sport. It isn't unusual for Arute to pull out a chalkboard on pit road to explain chassis setup or draw a helmet with a hoting ball attached to a rope. Arute doesn't exactly do a Michigan a few years back to show that he had lost his ear, but he has lost it.

"I know I had hit it on the helmet when Bobby Rahal called me a few days later and said, 'You know, you're really right about that,'" Arute said. "That's when my job becomes rewarding, when I can teach someone something new."

Arute's knowledge and love for auto racing extends further than the beginnings of his 25-plus year broadcasting career. His family owns and operates a Connecticut track, where he used to be a promoter and driver. His desire to compete came to a halt last year when he flipped a friend's Legend car six times during a race.

Arute only remembers waking up in the hospital with cracked ribs and shocking news that doctors had discovered a benign tumor in his chest.

"I realized I don't need to be tampering with my livelihood," he said. "A long time ago, I accepted the danger involved in this sport, but that was when I was young and thought I was immortal. There's enough risk for me in what I do now with my job. Sometimes I'll see a guy trying to get close to the action in the pits, and I just want to turn to them and say, 'This is the most dangerous place in the world to be.' You've got to know what you're doing."

Arute obviously does. ABC anchor Gary Gerould says his co-worker takes pride in not knowing where the broadcast booth is at races, mostly because he dedicates so much time reporting in the garage and pits. He gets such an adrenaline rush on the job that the often flies out after a race still wearing his fluorescent ABC jumpsuit.

"I've been told I'm like a zombie on planes," said Arute, who also is a college football reporter for ABC. "I go through this decompression where it takes me like three or four hours to settle back down. This always happens when there's a guy next to me on the plane who wants to talk racing. Man, by that point, that's the last thing I want to do."

Other racing news: TNT will telecast the NASCAR Winston Cup Pepsi 400 at Daytona International Speedway on Oct. 17. The speedway's first network primetime race originally was scheduled for July 4 on CBS but was postponed because of wildfires in Volusia County. Because of prior programming commitments, CBS will not broadcast the race. It has a four-year contract with the Pepsi 400, however, and will make next year's race the first primetime network telecast in auto racing history.

► Lisa Magenhorn covers motorsports. She can be reached at (813) 259-3399.

Ricky Rudd, last year's 400 winner, hopes to kiss the bricks again today.

RUDD/400 marks anniversary of last victory

By Lisa Magenhorn

It's 12 months, 12 months of 18 starts this season, Rudd has failed to finish five races and sits 27th in the series points standings, 19 positions lower than his status entering the Brickyard last year.

He has posted just one top-five and 10 top-10 finishes since and appears ill-prepared to turn things around today. Rudd will start the 400 on the pole in his 20th race back from his starting position last year.

There is much more at stake today than a paycheck, though Rudd fondly remembers its importance. His 1997 Indy who generated \$27.1 million, the biggest payday in his 23-year racing career. With less than half of the 20-car Winston Cup season remaining, however, Rudd's record of at least one win in 15 consecutive seasons is in jeopardy. The driver-owner knows that Indianapolis is the perfect place to end the dry spell.

"From this point until the end of the season, we should get momentum," Rudd said. "I hate to predict we're going to start finishing top five or six races, but I feel like we'll make improvements from here on out."

Rudd has had his places to go in February, finishing third at Daytona and third the following week at Rockingham. His average start and finish have been 21st and 25th, respectively. But with the new Ford Taurus in his corner, Rudd believes those numbers will soon change.

"We're just now starting to see improvements on the track," he said. "At the start of the season, we were about a 20th-place car and now we're about a 10th in 12th place car, if we could just finish a race right now."

Colton Thompson Campbell and her husband, Gary, offered the second money Thursday to encourage someone to come forward with information about the March 18, 1988, killing of Thompson and his wife, Trudi.

"My wife accused me just being quiet for the rest of my life," Mrs. Campbell said. "It's been Gary and I 10 years to save for the anniversary of her passing. Money and Trudi."

Thompson would have been the 27th wedding anniversary of the Thompsons, who were divorced then in the driveway of their home in "exclusive Los Angeles homes."

"These things are old news and they're not charged with their lives. We haven't forgotten them and we know we'll be not going to work away from this," said Mrs. Campbell, her most questioning and her eyes filling with tears.

His family has been under, however, his case still is being investigated by Los Angeles County sheriff's deputies, who released limited details of her husband's death that he had been killed.

"I have a lot of guilt that I didn't report my wife to a cop," she said. "I don't know what I could have done. I just couldn't imagine it happening."

Death's Sgt. Mike Robinson, who joined the case last year, said Thompson had several phone calls in a year before his death that "he was in for his life."

Start your engines: Warm temperatures at the track Friday affected teams during the first round of qualifying for the Brickyard 400. Sessions of 18 teams started on their first-round attempts with the exception of rookie **Amy Holman**, who took one of her pre-qualifiers.

Eight teams failed to make the 43-car field, including **Denise Copi**, **Robby Gordon** and **Mark Brundage**.

Hughey Heat: Chevrolet driver **Randy Kuhn** posted the fastest lap 171.383 mph in the first Winston Cup practice Friday.

Wad Burtch was fastest (171.262 mph) followed by **Bole Burtch** (171.095). Pontiac driver **Bole Burtch** led at 189.223 mph.

—Lisa Magenhorn/Tribune Staff

Brickyard 400 lineup

(By No.) Driver	Team	Car	Speed
1. Rick Byrd	Chrysler	Chrysler	179.250
2. Jeff Burton	Chrysler	Chrysler	178.800
3. Dale Earnhardt Jr.	Chrysler	Chrysler	178.500
4. Tony Stewart	Chrysler	Chrysler	178.200
5. Jeff Green	Chrysler	Chrysler	177.815
6. Scott Pruett	Chrysler	Chrysler	177.500
7. Mike Wallace	Chrysler	Chrysler	177.000
8. Tony Stewart	Chrysler	Chrysler	176.800
9. Scott Pruett	Chrysler	Chrysler	176.500
10. Tony Stewart	Chrysler	Chrysler	176.200
11. Scott Pruett	Chrysler	Chrysler	175.800
12. Tony Stewart	Chrysler	Chrysler	175.500
13. Scott Pruett	Chrysler	Chrysler	175.200
14. Tony Stewart	Chrysler	Chrysler	174.800
15. Scott Pruett	Chrysler	Chrysler	174.500
16. Tony Stewart	Chrysler	Chrysler	174.200
17. Scott Pruett	Chrysler	Chrysler	173.800
18. Tony Stewart	Chrysler	Chrysler	173.500
19. Scott Pruett	Chrysler	Chrysler	173.200
20. Tony Stewart	Chrysler	Chrysler	172.800
21. Scott Pruett	Chrysler	Chrysler	172.500
22. Tony Stewart	Chrysler	Chrysler	172.200
23. Scott Pruett	Chrysler	Chrysler	171.800
24. Tony Stewart	Chrysler	Chrysler	171.500
25. Scott Pruett	Chrysler	Chrysler	171.200
26. Tony Stewart	Chrysler	Chrysler	170.800
27. Scott Pruett	Chrysler	Chrysler	170.500
28. Tony Stewart	Chrysler	Chrysler	170.200
29. Scott Pruett	Chrysler	Chrysler	169.800
30. Tony Stewart	Chrysler	Chrysler	169.500
31. Scott Pruett	Chrysler	Chrysler	169.200
32. Tony Stewart	Chrysler	Chrysler	168.800
33. Scott Pruett	Chrysler	Chrysler	168.500
34. Tony Stewart	Chrysler	Chrysler	168.200
35. Scott Pruett	Chrysler	Chrysler	167.800
36. Tony Stewart	Chrysler	Chrysler	167.500
37. Scott Pruett	Chrysler	Chrysler	167.200
38. Tony Stewart	Chrysler	Chrysler	166.800
39. Scott Pruett	Chrysler	Chrysler	166.500
40. Tony Stewart	Chrysler	Chrysler	166.200
41. Scott Pruett	Chrysler	Chrysler	165.800
42. Tony Stewart	Chrysler	Chrysler	165.500
43. Scott Pruett	Chrysler	Chrysler	165.200
44. Tony Stewart	Chrysler	Chrysler	164.800
45. Scott Pruett	Chrysler	Chrysler	164.500
46. Tony Stewart	Chrysler	Chrysler	164.200
47. Scott Pruett	Chrysler	Chrysler	163.800
48. Tony Stewart	Chrysler	Chrysler	163.500
49. Scott Pruett	Chrysler	Chrysler	163.200
50. Tony Stewart	Chrysler	Chrysler	162.800

PHI STOPS

NASCAR Winston Cup

Saturday 400

► **Site:** Indianapolis
 ► **When:** Sunday, 11 a.m.
 ► **TV:** ABC-Channels
 ► **TV:** ESPN (Sat. 1:30 p.m.)
 ► **TV:** Sports Illustrated (Sat. 1:30 p.m.)

► **Points standings:** Jeff Burton, 2,712; Mike Wallace, 2,650; Dale Earnhardt Jr., 2,600; Tony Stewart, 2,500; Scott Pruett, 2,400; Tony Stewart, 2,300; Dale Earnhardt Jr., 2,200; Mike Wallace, 2,100; Ryan Newman, 1,900.

► **Craftsman Trucks**

Points: Tony Stewart, 2,712; Mike Wallace, 2,650; Dale Earnhardt Jr., 2,600; Tony Stewart, 2,500; Scott Pruett, 2,400; Tony Stewart, 2,300; Dale Earnhardt Jr., 2,200; Mike Wallace, 2,100; Ryan Newman, 1,900.

► **Formula One**

Points: Mika Häkkinen, 62; Michael Schumacher, 54; Eddie Irvine, 32; Alexander Wurz, 17; Giancarlo Fisichella, 15; Jacques Villeneuve, 12; Heinz-Harald Frentzen, 8; Rubens Barrichello, 4; Mika Salo, 3.

► **NHRA**

Points: Tony Stewart, 2,712; Mike Wallace, 2,650; Dale Earnhardt Jr., 2,600; Tony Stewart, 2,500; Scott Pruett, 2,400; Tony Stewart, 2,300; Dale Earnhardt Jr., 2,200; Mike Wallace, 2,100; Ryan Newman, 1,900.

► **Next event:** Miller Lite 200, Aug. 16, Charlotte, N.C.

► **Points standings:** Scott Pruett, 2,712; Tony Stewart, 2,650; Dale Earnhardt Jr., 2,600; Tony Stewart, 2,500; Scott Pruett, 2,400; Tony Stewart, 2,300; Dale Earnhardt Jr., 2,200; Mike Wallace, 2,100; Ryan Newman, 1,900.

► **Next event:** Ford 200, Aug. 16, Charlotte, N.C.

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► **Points standings:** Scott Pruett, 2,712; Tony Stewart, 2,650; Dale Earnhardt Jr., 2,600; Tony Stewart, 2,500; Scott Pruett, 2,400; Tony Stewart, 2,300; Dale Earnhardt Jr., 2,200; Mike Wallace, 2,100; Ryan Newman, 1,900.

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