



Internet Sportsbook Shifts Gears For Daytona 500

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Sunday kicks off another Winston Cup season with the running of the Daytona 500, an event that racing fans everywhere have been anxiously anticipating. Considered the most exciting and important race of the season, NASCAR has the distinction of being the only sport whose biggest event occurs at the start of the season rather than the end. At BetWWTS we've been busy taking many aspects of this racing season into consideration when calculating odds for both the Winston Cup and the Daytona 500.

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The 2002 NASCAR season was one of the closest and most exciting in recent memory with the championship being decided in the last race. Sterling Marlin led the Winston Cup point standings for most of the year, but couldn't finish the season after suffering a broken vertebra in his neck with less than 10 races to go. This allowed Tony Stewart to capture the championship, which was quite a feat considering Stewart finished dead last in the 2002 Daytona 500. Perhaps the most compelling part of the 2002 season was the performance of the rookie drivers, who proved you don't have to be a veteran to make it into victory lane.

Jimmie Johnson won two races for Hendrick Motorsports and contended for the championship all year, finishing a surprising fifth. Ryan Newman may have only won one race last year, but the rookie sensation started on the front row nine times and finished in the top five 14 times during the season. This followed the outstanding 2001 performance by rookie Kevin Harvick who replaced the late Dale Earnhardt.

The question is whether any of this year's rookies have any chance of duplicating those feats. The two rookies that seem to tower above the rest are Greg Biffle, who will ride for Roush Racing in the #16 Granger car and Jamie McMurray, driving for Chip Ganassi in the #42 Havoline car. Biffle dominated the Busch series races last year en route to a championship and also had enormous success in the NASCAR Truck series. Jamie McMurray made a huge splash when he took over for an injured Sterling Marlin and went on to win at Charlotte in only his second Winston Cup start. McMurray now holds the distinction as the only rookie driver in NASCAR history to start the season already having a win under his belt.



Jeff Gordon had a poor year by his standards, recording only two wins and a fourth place points finish, but no doubt will compete for the championship again. He won the championship in 1995, 1997, 1998 and 2001, so if the trend continues could be his year. At BetWWTS.com we've listed Gordon as the early favorite to capture this year's Winston Cup Championship at 9/2 odds. No doubt others are hungry for their first championship including Mark Martin, who finished second in the points standings for the fifth time, and Sterling Marlin, who had victory within his grasp before injury cut his season short.

As for the Daytona 500, you may need look no further than the Dale Earnhardt Inc. cars of Dale Earnhardt Jr. and Michael Waltrip. Those two drivers have absolutely dominated restrictor plate racing at Daytona and Talladega over the last three years taking seven out of the twelve races run at those tracks and more impressively leading an unbelievable 52.8% of the laps run. Because of their past dominance, Earnhardt Jr. and Waltrip are BetWWTS.com's two favorites to win the Daytona 500 at 3/1 and 6/1, respectively. If the Earnhardt Inc. cars are going to be beat it could be by Jeff Gordon, Dale Jarrett or Sterling Marlin who've combined to win the race six out of the last nine years with Marlin winning in 1994 and 1995, Gordon winning in 1997 and 1999 and Jarrett winning in 1993, 1996 and 2000. Of course, a long shot could always emerge from the pack like Ward Burton, who shocked bettors last year with a win at 30-1 odds.

Here at BetWWTS.com we're all excited that NASCAR season will officially be getting underway. There's just something about the sport that captivates the public, whether it's the drivers, races or crashes, NASCAR's fan base continues to grow at an alarming rate. We only wish that we'd be in Daytona this weekend if Rusty Wallace crosses the finish line first. In case you didn't hear, Miller Lite has promised to distribute coupons for a free six-pack to every fan of legal drinking age in attendance at the race if Wallace drives the Miller Lite car into Victory Lane. If Wallace wins, then it really will be "The Great American Race," a terrific race followed by free beer, it doesn't get any better than that, unless you win your bet in the process.

To place your wager on the outcome of the Daytona 500, please use this direct jump link:

<http://www.betwwts.com/default.asp?Ktx=1864>

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