

Sprint Cup Commentary and Race Coverage



Saturday, February 4, 2012

Most Popular Drivers In NASCAR's Regional Touring Series
An Opinion

Staff Article

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November 26, 2011

By Donalde z Smith



Donalde z Smith

After five months of fan voting, (mid-July through November 20th) NASCAR posted the winners of the Most Popular Driver Award (MPD) in each of the six NASCAR Regional Touring Series (NRTS).

“The growing fan base of NASCAR’s Regional Touring Series is reflected in this year’s record voting for the Most Popular Driver Awards,” said George Silbermann, NASCAR vice president, regional and touring series. “It’s great to have the fans directly involved in the selection process for this prestigious award.”

The NRTS Most Popular Driver Award winners for 2011 are Chase Elliott, NASCAR K&N Pro Series East; Moses Smith*, NASCAR K&N Pro Series West; Jason White, NASCAR Canadian Tire Series; Jorge Arteaga, NASCAR Mexico Series presented by Toyota; Justin Bonsignore, NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour; and Jason Myers, NASCAR Whelen Southern Modified Tour.

Six days away from his sixteenth birthday, Chase Elliott is the youngest driver to win the MPD award this year. After NASCAR lowered the age requirement from sixteen to fifteen earlier this year, the second-generation driver from Dawsonville, GA, was the first fifteen-year-old to compete in the NASCAR K&N Pro Series East. Chase is the son of NASCAR Legend Bill Elliott. The elder Elliott won the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Most Popular Driver award sixteen times.

“It’s awesome,” Elliott said. “Just the support, the amount of votes is what really got me. Not only the votes for me, but there were a lot of guys who got a lot of votes. It’s just cool to know that you have that many supporters who are willing to vote so many times. I mean they didn’t just vote at the beginning, but they voted all the way through. I thought that was really cool. Obviously, a lot of Dad’s followers are supporting me, and I really appreciate that. I feel like I’ve gained some followers on my own, and hopefully I can continue to do that.”

↳ [Chase Elliott named Most Popular Driver in K&N Pro Series East](#)

Chase Elliott recorded three top-five and six top-ten finishes in the 2011 NASCAR K&N Pro Series East season. He finished

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ninth in the points.



Photo by Jeannie Broussal
Formula Mazda Podium - Infineon Raceway - August 2011

Moses Smith* won the MPD award for a fourth straight year. This season Moses finished third in the points standing. He finished second at the short track of All American

Speedway and the road course at Miller Motorsports Park.

"I am very excited to win the MPD award for the fourth year in a row," said Smith. "I want to thank all my Friends, Family, and Fans who supported me. I feel like this award really reflects them, and their dedication. Thanks again to all of you that voted whether it was just once, or daily. This award shows we are the biggest and strongest team out there!

Little known fact about the NASCAR driver is that Moses Smith Racing, LLC. (MSR) has taken over all support for the Standard FM rotary-powered race cars currently in use across North America, as well as the MSR sports racer, a full-bodied version of the Standard FM. This year Moses moved the manufacturing of the Formula Mazda to Motorsport Ranch in Cresson, TX (just southwest of Dallas). The move to a race track was part of Smith's three year goal for the growth of the Formula Mazda class.

In August 2011, twenty-three Standard Formula Mazda racers paired with the IZOD IndyCar Series for the Infineon Raceway weekend in the Sonoma Valley. Alan McCallum, who runs out of the Moses Smith Racing Shop, topped the podium on both Saturday and Sunday.

Jason White is a second generation driver. His father Marty White competed in the Nascar Modifieds and USAC supermodifieds series. Jason made his NASCAR Canadian Tire Series debut at SunValley Speedway on July 15, 2007. He went on to win the 2008 NASCAR Canadian Tire Series Rookie-of-the-Year Award. This year he finished eighth in the championship points standing with five top-ten finishes.

"This is such an honor for me," said White. "To have thousands of race fans take the time to cast their votes for me means a lot. Without all the race fans from coast to coast we wouldn't be able to do this," added White.

Jorge Arteaga of Aguascalientes, Mexico has won the Most Popular Driver award for the Mexican Series three straight times, from 2009 to 2011. During the 2010 racing season Jorge Arteaga was filmed for a reality TV series entitled "NASCAR Mexico 24/7". The series followed the behind-the-scenes happenings of NASCAR and was broadcast on Speed TV in Latin America. This might have helped increase his fan base.

"My passion has always been speed and racing, Arteaga said about his own racing roots. "When I was a kid, I raced motorcycles and more, and then, as I grew up, I became interested in NASCAR. When I was very young, I remember watching the Daytona 500 and I knew then I wanted to be in

that race someday, like those racers. I started doing some racing in Mexico, and fortunately the next year, NASCAR came to Mexico and began sanctioning races there, creating an opportunity for the sport to grow in my country."

ε [The Changing Face of NASCAR](#)

Justin Bonsignore has a strong karting background. His father and uncles own and operate one of the top kart racing shops and Justin went on to win six World Karting Association national titles. He made his NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour debut in 2007 with a top-five finish. He only ran one race that year, skipped 2008 and raced one race in 2009 (another top-five finish). Justin went on to win the 2010 Sunoco Rookie of the Year Award.

This year, Bonsignore finished the point standings in seventh with one win and seven top-five finishes. He earned his first career win at Riverhead, his home track and also captured the Stafford Fall Final pole for the second year in a row.

Jason Myers' family history is steeped with racing history. In 1957, Jason's great uncle Bobby Myers was tragically killed in a crash at Darlington Raceway in Darlington, S.C. while driving for Lee Petty. Seven months later, Jason's grandfather Billy died from a heart attack while leading a race at Bowman Gray Stadium. Jason's father, Gary Myers, is the second generation of Myers to compete at Bowman Gray Stadium. Gary ranks seventh on the stadium's all-time victory list with a total of thirty-eight (38) wins. Currently Jason and his older brother, Burt, represent the third generation of Myers racing.

Jason finished his 2011 season third in the championship point standings. He earned six top-five and twelve top-ten finishes. When Jason isn't racing, he enjoys golf and basketball.

The Most Popular Driver Award winners will be recognized at the NASCAR Night of Champions Touring Awards Gala on Dec. 10 at the Charlotte Convention Center's Crown Ballroom in the NASCAR Hall of Fame. While the event will not be televised, the banquet will feature live streaming video on www.nascarhometracks.com, with a one-hour pre-show. The banquet will be available online in English, Spanish, and French.

* In the interest of full disclosure, please note that Moses Smith is the writer's son.

You can visit the Most Popular Driver's websites at:

- ε [Chase Elliott](#)
- ε [Moses Smith](#)
- ε [Jason White](#)
- ε [Jorge Arteaga](#)
- ε [Justin Bonsignore](#)
- ε [Jason Myers](#)

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