

Fourth Annual Duncan Dash 5K attracts 67 runners for a good cause

By Todd Forrest
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The Fourth Annual Duncan Dash 5K went off without a hitch at Meeks Park on Saturday, March 21 with 67 participants running to support the Haven Project in honor of 12-year old Duncan Lawrence.

Blairsville's Thomas Mellendorf took home top honors, pacing the field with a time of 19 minutes, 21 seconds. Jessie Holbrook, another Blairsville native, was the overall female champion, clocking in at 26:14.

The male 2nd-5th overall finishers were Paul Anderson - Hayesville, NC (22:01), Chad Brooks - Andrews, NC (22:27), Raul Peneto - Murphy, NC (24:09) and Devin Gasaway - Blairsville (24:17).

The female 2nd-5th finishers were Noel Hyatt - Young Harris (26:46), Anna Hopple - Young Harris (28:35), Darlena Cochran (28:37) and Anna Chapman - Blairsville (30:14).

Peneto, who was fourth overall, was the Spirit Award recipient, placing first in his age group (45-49) with a time of 24:09. The Murphy, NC resident has been running for seven years and never misses



Thomas Mellendorf and Jessie Holbrook were the overall champions at last weekend's race. Photo/Todd Forrest

an opportunity to race for a worthy cause.

Caleb Hayden took home first in the male 11-14 age group, crossing the finish line at 37:14.

Hyatt placed first in the 11-14 age bracket and was the second overall female with a time of 26:46. Overall winners Holbrook and Mellendorf won the 15-19 age group.

The rest of the winners are as follows:
Ages 20-24 - Female: Madison Barnett (33:25).
25-29 - Female: Billie

Odom (52:52); Male: Jacob Anderson (30:52).

30-34 - Female: Hopple (28:35); Male: Paul Anderson (22:01).

35-39 - Female: Cochran (28:37); Male: Brooks (22:27).

40-44 - Female: Janice Schwartzberg (50:35); Male: Jarred Hand (44:31).



Duncan Dash 5K Spirit Award winner Raul Peneto. Photo/Todd Forrest

45-49 - Female: Denise Cross (30:48); Male: Paneto (24:09).

50-54 - Female: Catharine Dunlap (36:19); Male: Jeff Kenney (24:30).

55-59 - Female: Cindy Ryals (30:23); Male: Mike Masiello (29:28).

60-64 - Female: Sherry Pierson-Angerer (39:30); Male:

Bob Buckner (27:18).
65-69 - Male: Ronald Angerer (36:09).

70-74 - Male: George Southgate (32:50).

75 and up - Female: Patricia Duer (50:06); Male - David Turner (28:47)

Race times courtesy of Classic Race Services.



Joey Hintze (L) receives a high-five at the finish line. Photo/Todd Forrest



Noel Hyatt was the second overall female finisher. Photo/Todd Forrest



Second overall male finisher - Paul Anderson. Photo/Todd Forrest

Basketball: Hunter, Allison named All-State; Hill tabbed for All-Star game

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The Georgia Athletic Coaches Association released its All-State basketball teams and two Union County standouts earned recognition.

In addition, senior Anadelin Hill was chosen for the North Georgia All-Star Classic basketball game. Her coach, Union County's Crystal Beach, was also slated to lead the away team. Unfortunately, the March 14 contest was postponed.

Meanwhile, sophomore Ava Hunter and senior Pierson Allison picked up all-state nods from the GACA. Hunter was a first-team selection, Allison received second team honors.

Hunter led the Region 8-AA Champion Lady Panthers to their first Elite 8 appearance in 19 years, equaling the second most wins in school history with 23.

Her 16.3 scoring average was tops on the team, finishing as the only Union County player to average in double figures with nine 20-point games.

At 9.1 rebounds a night, she just missed averaging a double-double, despite record-

ing 13 games with at least 10 points and 10 boards.

Hunter notched two post-season double-doubles, including a 19-point, 13-rebound performance in the Elite 8. She also went for 25 and 14 in the Region semifinal victory over Putnam County.

She recorded season highs of 30 points and 20 boards during a dominating display at White County, leading the Lady Panthers to a come-from-behind victory in November.

Hunter also swatted a season-best seven shots in a 50-46 loss to Rabun County in January. She recorded five steals during a win over Oglethorpe County.

With 842 career points, Hunter is on pace to surpass 1,000 points by Christmas.

Allison, like Hunter, has started since his freshman year. He also led the Panthers to consecutive state playoff appearances, leading the way in scoring both seasons.

He scored 16 points a game as a senior and led the team by hitting his free throws at a 76% clip.

His 2.6 assists and 2.9 steals were also tops on the team while pulling down 3

boards a night from the point-guard position.

Allison recorded seven 20-point games, highlighted by a pair of 23-point performances vs Elbert County. He pulled down 10 boards to go with five assists and 21 points in a Battle of the States victory over Lumpkin County.

As a junior in 2018-19, Allison hit nine 3-pointers in a single game - tying a school record co-owned by Michael Ross and Blake Williams.

As for Hill, the senior wing finished her final season at 9 points, 6 rebounds, 2 assists, 2 steals and one block a game.

In the final two contests of 2020, Hill scored 14 vs Butler and 15 vs Early County, hauling in 8 and 10 boards, respectively.

Her 15/10 showing vs Early in the Elite 8 was her second double-double of 2019-20, following a 19/15 performance vs Elbert County - a season high in both categories. She also dished out five assists in that game, another season best.

Hill recorded 6 steals vs Social Circle and five vs West Hall. She also blocked three shots in five different games.



L-R: Sophomore Ava Hunter, senior Anadelin Hill and senior Pierson Allison. Photos/Todd Forrest

T.U.F. Athletes' BBQ postponed

In light of the current situation the T.U.F. Athletes' BBQ has been postponed until a later date. We will inform everyone of the new date as soon as we can.

Thank you for your support
T.U.F. Athletes
N(Mar25,21)CA



Trout stocking sites week of March 16-20, 2020

Fannin: Rock Creek and Rock Creek Lake
Union: Canada Creek, Suches Creek, Toccoa River, Winfield Scott Lake and Wildhog
Note: Information is subject to change. Please call the hatchery at 706-838-4723 for questions. Stay up-to-date with stocking and events through Facebook www.facebook.com/chattahoocheeforestnh. The hatchery also provides trout for the state. Please contact Georgia DNR for information on sites stocked by the state.

NASCAR 2020

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

NASCAR Racing Resumes May 9

NASCAR has suspended its season until the Martinsville race weekend of May 9-10. The decision came after conference calls between the sanctioning body and its team owners. It affects seven total races.

"We intend to hold all 36 races this season, with future rescheduling soon to be determined as we continue to monitor this situation closely with public health officials and medical experts," NASCAR President Steve Phelps said. "What is important now transcends the world of sports and our focus is on everyone's safety and well-being as we navigate this challenging time together."

"The health and safety of our fans, industry and the communities in which we race is our most important priority."

The expanded postponement now includes race weekends at Texas Motor Speedway, Bristol Motor Speedway, Richmond Raceway, Talladega Superspeedway and Dover International Speedway.

NASCAR first said it would run last weekend and this coming weekend without spectators, but reversed course and postponed the races at Atlanta Motor Speedway and Homestead-Miami Speedway.

Phelps said that series officials are looking "broadly at what our options are" but intend to run every points race and the All-Star race this season and are planning to reschedule postponed races before the playoffs so the season can end as scheduled at Phoenix Raceway.

During a teleconference, Phelps said there is the possibility of races being run without fans. He noted that many questions remain in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and such decisions will be based on what health experts that NASCAR consult with suggest.

Phelps later said that he hoped not to have doubleheaders during the playoffs at tracks that have had races postponed (Bristol, Texas, Martinsville and Talladega).

As for racing without fans, Phelps said: "Would we consider racing without fans at some point to get back racing more quickly? That's in the consideration set. I don't know. It's changing so rapidly and what it means for mass gatherings and what is that number. We'll work with our health officials and we're working with a number of infectious disease professionals that are going to help us through what that looks like and whether it makes sense to race without fans or have our first race be back with fans."

SHOULD MIDWEEK RACING BE CONSIDERED

The word postponement has been used rather than cancellation which implies that all racing will be rescheduled. Of course, this could all change if the current situation persists for much longer and more race events have to be pushed aside.

An article in Inside Circle Track by Richard Allen suggests that now might be the time for NASCAR's powers-that-be to review their scheduling.

The number of open weekends on the Cup Series schedule, not

to mention that of the Xfinity and Truck Series slates, are very limited. And when it is considered that one of those open weekends coincides with the Easter holiday, the number of openings on the racing calendar is even further reduced.

One potential solution to this scheduling difficulty could be that of racing midweek in prime time at some point during the 2020 season. This is an idea that has been kicked around for some time now but has not really been acted upon as some of the stakeholders involved (tracks and teams in particular) may be leery of holding a race on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday evening.

Obviously, these would have to largely be made-for-television affairs as the number of fans able to attend will, in all likelihood, be limited to those who live and work within a tight radius of the track itself. But when it is considered that much of the revenue for the sport now comes from television, this would open a whole new set of possibilities as the broadcast networks could fill time in the midweek when there might not be nearly as many live sports options to compete against. While tracks want to fill as many of their seats as possible, their main source of revenue is from television. With or without fans, the tracks are going to turn a profit.

Indications are that there will be significant schedule changes for the Cup Series in 2021 and we have already been given some insight into that with the condensing of Daytona's SpeedWeeks next February. The use of midweek races could allow the sanctioning body to get in as many races as possible while still reducing the amount of calendar used in so doing.

This scheduling situation we are now in has presented NASCAR with an opportunity to try some things within their schedule during this 2020 season that might serve as a preview for upcoming years. This might prove to be an opportunity to turn what looked like potential disaster into prosperity.

NASCAR officials simply had no choice but to curtail their 36-race schedule until the national emergency we are facing can be contained. With so many professional sports and public venues bringing their respective plans to a temporary standstill, the most important course of action is to insure everyone is safe while the virus is being eradicated in the coming weeks and months. It means sheltering in place whenever possible and avoiding contact with others until the virus has been defeated.

The larger well-funded NASCAR teams will no doubt keep their employees working over the next six weeks by preparing race cars and maintaining equipment. Some of the smaller teams that operate on week to week sponsorship may have to close their doors for a while until racing resumes.

There is a too common assumption that everyone who works at the highest levels of the sport makes big bucks, but that is not true.



NASCAR President Steve Phelps

The reality is that every team and garage is primarily populated with those living paycheck to paycheck. The shop employees and the ones that build the cars do not receive large salaries, and are hourly workers.

Crew chief Matt Weber has worked in the Truck Series and ARCA garage for nearly a decade. He captured an ARCA championship with Mason Mitchell in 2014. He currently works for Niece Motorsports.

And right now, he's starting to get nervous.

"Ultimately if this social distancing goes longer than two-three weeks it could get really bad for myself," Weber said. "I haven't been in a position to accumulate much in the way of savings the last few years due to the industry money crunch, and my need to stay employed meant taking what is offered."

"If we go past the May 3 time frame and don't have a definite date we are going back racing, I see things getting desperate for the industry as a whole, not just myself."

Drivers will spend time on simulators to keep their skills sharp, while pit crews will perform extended pit stop practices at their respective shops as they do each week.

Racing Joke: Daryl is placing some flowers on the grave of his dearly departed mother. He starts back towards his car when he notices another man kneeling at a grave. The man seems to be praying with profound intensity and keeps repeating, "Why did you have to die? Why did you have to die?"

Daryl approaches him and says, "Sir, I don't wish to interfere with your private grief, but this demonstration of pain is more than I have seen before. Who are you mourning? A child? A parent?"

The mourner takes a moment to collect himself, then replies, "My wife's first husband."

Racing Trivia Question: Where is the first Cup Series playoff race scheduled?

Last Week's Question: Where is Ryan Newman's hometown? Answer: South Bend, Indiana.
Gerald Hodges is a syndicated NASCAR writer and author. His books may be viewed and ordered online at Amazon.com. You may contact him by e-mail at: hodges@race500.com.