

Follow us on

-
-

Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2013 | 6:11 p.m.

[Subscribe](#) | [Today's paper](#) | [Customer care](#)

[Sign In](#) | [Register](#)

The Palm Beach Post

Breaking news starts here

Site Web

Web Search by YAHOO!

Updated: 10:52 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 23, 2013 | Posted: 8:13 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 23, 2013

Spectators seriously injured at Daytona as crash in Nationwide race sends tires, debris flying into stands



[More Palm Beach Sports Video](#)

Related

By Dave George

Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

DAYTONA BEACH — The danger of Daytona reached into the main grandstands near the finish line Saturday as parts of an airborne car tore through a steel safety-fence barrier and injured at least 33 spectators at the chaotic conclusion of a NASCAR Nationwide Series race.

"We transported 14 people off property and treated 14 at our on-track care center," said Joie Chitwood III, president of Daytona International Speedway, though complete details on the severity of the injuries were not available.

Dave Byron, spokesman for Volusia County, told the Associated Press that six people with serious injuries were taken to nearby Halifax Medical Center. Emergency personnel responded quickly after the frightening crash, carrying some people on stretchers to a string of about 10 ambulances. It was difficult to get an exact number on all those who may have sustained relatively minor injuries and left the track on their own.

The Orlando Sentinel reported that some fans were hit with debris 45 rows up in the stands.

Tony Stewart won the race, known as the Drive4COPD 300, by steering cleanly through the crash zone ahead of the rest of the scattering pack but he declined to celebrate in Victory Lane because of a lack of information on any who may have been seriously hurt.

"We've always known since racing was started that this is a dangerous sport, but it's hard," Stewart said. "It's hard when the fans get caught up in it."

The pileup started as Regan Smith, the race leader, attempted to block a last-second passing move by Brad Keselowski and got turned sideways into the wall. That set off a chain reaction that pinballed 10 more cars into each other and sent Kyle Larson's Chevrolet flying up into the fence. Larson climbed out of his car unhurt.

The violence of the crash, which sent a tire flying nine rows up into the stands and left an engine tangled and flaming in fence debris, was made worse by its proximity to the most heavily-populated portion of the stands. The tri-oval track at Daytona International Speedway is 2.5 miles long, with no seating available around most of the perimeter.

The Daytona 500, NASCAR's biggest race, is scheduled for 1 p.m. Sunday, a deadline that had track workers scrambling to repair a long stretch of fencing that was torn away by Larson's car, which had the front end sheared off. Chitwood said "we'll be ready to go racing" and seemed confident today's race would go on as scheduled.

Tragedy was averted in 2000 at nearly the same spot on the track when Geoff Bodine's vehicle disintegrated around him in a NASCAR truck race. Bodine suffered some broken bones and a concussion and no one in the stands sustained life-threatening injuries.

Track personnel prevent fans from standing along the fence during races, with a broad concrete walkway serving as a buffer between the fence and the stands. With cars speeding past in 190-mph packs, however, there are no guarantees.

"We don't anticipate moving any of our fans," Chitwood said. "With the fencing being prepared tonight to our safety protocols, we expect to go racing (today) with no changes."

More News

We Recommend

- Man punches doctor after he felt he waited too long in exam room, cops say (PalmBeachPost.com)
- Two accused of sex trafficking a 15-year-old girl in Palm Beach County (PalmBeachPost.com)
- To stop johns, West Palm Beach program tells truth about prostitution (PalmBeachPost.com)
- Man who died at polo club identified as 26-year-old horse groomer (PalmBeachPost.com)
- 25-year-old from Loxahatchee identified as driver who struck and killed teacher (PalmBeachPost.com)
- Officials say one of Palm Beach County's biggest coke dealers arrested as part of drug sting that nabbed over 20 (PalmBeachPost.com)

From Around the Web

- Kim Kardashian's Stunning Mini-Dress From the Red Carpet (StyleBistro)
- 325-Pound Man Breaks Into Lingerie Store and Things Get... Weird (First to Know)
- What's Going to Replace Stainless Steel Appliances (Oven Info)
- Restaurant owners: Turnover tables quicker with right wiping strategy (Tork USA)
- Vitamin D Affects Genes for Cancer, Autoimmune Diseases (HealthCentral.com)
- Wells Fargo's New Plan for Homeownership (YouTube)

[?]

Comments

If you would like to post a comment please Sign in or Register

Cancel

Edit comment

2 Comment(s)

Comment(s) 1-2 of 2



- Posted by reneontheisland at 8:22 a.m. Feb. 24, 2013
- Report Abuse

What a sad way to end a fun day for the fans and drivers. Cheers to Tony Stewart for being a stand-up guy and taking his win without the Victory Lane celebration. Hopefully the 500 will go off without any injuries, although we do love to see aggressive racing and a little bumping.



- Posted by jerseyjerry at 8:29 a.m. Feb. 24, 2013
- Report Abuse

Never sit at The corners of the Track or down low. Sit High and on the straight away's.

2 Comment(s)

Comment(s) 1-2 of 2

This ad is supporting your extension *Auto Refresh Plus*: [More info](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Hide on this page](#)