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THE PEOPLE'S SHIFT
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PERSONALITY PROFILE
MICHAEL CRAWFORD

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SUPER NATIONALS



*Karl Weber
in "Race For Riley"
featured on page 55*



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RACE REPORT

BY MIKE BURRELL



Corporations donated over \$70,000. Here, the group from Rolls Royce presents John and Riley Hospital with a check for \$10,000. Entries and other fund-raising activities brought the race's total to over \$100,000.

Race For Riley

Raises over \$100,000 for Local Children's Hospital



Held the Wednesday before the 15th Brickyard 400 in Indianapolis, the fifth edition of the Race for Riley raised over \$100,000 from corporate donations and entries in the variety of charity and competitive kart races. Since 2004 the Race for Riley, hosted by New Castle Motorsports Park and popular NASCAR/IRL driver John Andretti, has become the 'unofficial' beginning of the NASCAR weekend in Indianapolis.

"This event has become my kickoff for Brickyard weekend," stated two time Sprint Cup Champion Tony Stewart who was in attendance to sign autographs. "I'll be here every year. It just keeps getting bigger and better."

"I got my start in karting, racing with Mark Dismore," continued Stewart. "Mark has poured his heart and soul into this place and it shows."

In addition to signing autographs for the estimated crowd of 1,200, Stewart spent some special time with "Riley Kid" Cameron Holt. The eight year old Holt has terminal brain stem cancer, and is a huge Stewart fan. Seeing the simple joy

Mascots from the Indiana Pacers and Indianapolis Colts lead John Andretti in one of the Race for Riley charity races. For the record, Boomer the cat won.



John Andretti working the outside in the media race; note the large crowd in the background; great to see at any kart track!



Photos courtesy of DavidLeePhoto.com



Andretti poses with the TAG Senior podium.

on Holt's face when he met his hero brought the whole reason for the event into perspective.

The format of the Race for Riley includes a number of karting events throughout the day. Representatives from event sponsors such as Kroger Grocery, Rolls Royce, J.D. Byrider car sales, and General Mills cereals competed in a sponsor's race. Local and national media members competed against Andretti and each other for bragging rights in the press rooms (karting media members sit-out due to an "unfair advantage"), and for a donation to Riley.



Part-time IRL driver Jay Howard lends instruction to one of the sponsor race participants.

anyone can compete through an elimination format for a chance to race Andretti in the final. Additionally, there were six competitive karting classes offered - an opportunity to showcase good/competitive club level karting to potential newcomers to the sport and the media.

The surprise winner of the media race was Chad Leakey of the Knightstown Banner (NCMP's local newspaper) beating ESPN's Vince Welch to the line. John Andretti participated with the media, and usually plays a spoilers role by pushing or bump drafting.

Sixty-four competitive karters showed up on a Wednesday afternoon to fill the six classes of 125cc shifter, TAG sportsman, TAG Senior, Yamaha Jr. Sportsman, Yamaha Jr. Can, and Kid Karts. Although the fields averaged only about ten racers each, the competition (and more so, the demonstration "real kart racing") was excellent!

The top four in Yamaha Jr. Sportsman were separated by less than .3 of a second! Winner Karl Weber edged Austin Schoonmaker by .064 of a second with third and fourth places, Camden Speth and Kyle Tilley respectively, finishing side-by-side just behind the lead duo.



Everyone is trying to recruit karters up the next level.

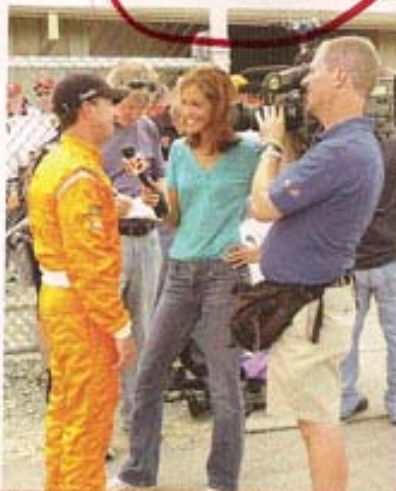
TAG Senior was even closer for second. With Jimmy Simpson winning, second and third (Ben Payne and Brandon Newey) finished in a virtual dead heat; Payne edged Newey by .001 seconds. Other classes, such as 125cc shifter, were not as close. Cole Mathewson destroyed the shifter field beating Jason Lee by over 9 seconds. However, most of the newly exposed to karting fans in attendance were very impressed with the speed and performance of



Tony Stewart always attends the Race for Riley, getting back to his karting roots and catching up with old karting rival Mark Donohue.



The finish of the Yamaha Jr. Sportsman race looks like a parade lap as 1-4 cross the line 2 by 2!



All four local TV stations, along with ESPN, print media, and radio attended the event interviewing Andretti, Stewart, and many of the karters and fans.

the TAG and shifter classes.

In addition to the on-track activities, there were plenty of off-track attractions too. Live radio broadcasts, the Army's rock wall, kart racing simulators, NASCAR showcars, r/c car racing, and more were available to entertain the throng of race fans throughout the day.

The Race for Riley serves as a shining example of how karting, both recreational and competitive, can be used to raise money for a worthy cause. When the day was complete and the checks and pledges were given to Riley Hospital over \$100,000 was raised to provide medical services and research to children with life threatening illnesses.

John Andretti summed up the event by saying, "It's not just about raising money. It's about raising awareness of what they (Riley) do for children. It's about having fun, and whether you win, lose, or tie today Riley's the real winner today." **NKN**

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