

# Logano wins third straight Martinsville pole

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

MARTINSVILLE, Virginia — The third time was the charm for Joey Logano. Then again, so were the first and second.

## NASCAR

The driver of the No. 22 Team Penske Ford dominated qualifying for Sunday's STP 500, topping the speed chart in all three sessions of Friday's knockout qualifying at Martinsville Speedway. The Coors Light Pole Award was the third straight for Logano at the .526-mile paper-clip-shaped short track, marking the first time a driver has won three consecutive poles at Martinsville since Jeff Gordon accomplished the feat in 2003-2004. Navigating the speedway in 19.513 seconds (97.043 mph), Logano claimed the top starting in a NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race for the 15th time in his career.

Logano, who was taken out of last year's Chase race when Matt Kenseth drove him into the Turn 1 wall, also is the third driver to sweep all three rounds in time trials since the group qualifying format was instituted at the start of the 2014 season. "I couldn't be more proud of these guys," Logano said of his team. "I say all the

time that Martinsville is the most important track to start up front, and that's when you've got to come here and really show what you've got.

"This is a nice little fire for us to get going. We've had a good season so far, but you want to break through and get some wins, and this pole is definitely going to help with some momentum."

Logano edged outside front-row starter Kasey Kahne (97.033 mph) by .002 seconds. The driver of the No. 5 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet hadn't enjoyed a top-five position on the grid since last October's Chase race at Talladega.

"It feels good," Kahne said. "The car was really fast, this Great Clips Chevrolet. The guys did a nice job in practice and in qualifying. I just kept getting better with my laps. We didn't make any adjustments. The car is fine. Just let me get my laps a little better. So we did that, and it was close.

"Joey just barely got us. But it is definitely a good starting spot. That was one of my goals today was to help out on pit road (by earning second pit selection). Pit road is huge here. We have the best pit crew for stops, than anyone, in my opinion. And if I can help them on pit road, my-



MICHAEL SHROYER | USA TODAY

NASCAR Sprint Cup Series driver Joey Logano during practice for the STP 500 at Martinsville Speedway on Friday.

self, and get a better spot, I think all that will be beneficial on Sunday."

Brian Vickers, who led Friday's opening practice at Martinsville, qualified third at 96.864 mph. Paul Menard (96.854 mph) was fourth, followed by Ryan Newman (96.736 mph) and AJ Allmendinger (96.676 mph).

Vickers was the only Stewart-Haas Racing driver to advance past the first round. Kevin Harvick and Kurt Busch, both former winners at the track, will start 19th and 23rd, respectively.

Denny Hamlin, one of the pre-race favorites, earned the eighth starting spot, but eight time Martinsville win-

ner Jimmie Johnson wasn't as fortunate. The six-time Sprint Cup champion squeaked into the second round by .007 seconds over Carl Edwards but couldn't improve beyond the 24th-place starting position.

The two leading drivers in the Sunoco Rookie of the Year battle, however, both

made the top 12. Chase Elliott will take the green flag from in 10th, with Ryan Blaney right behind him in 12th, as the Wood Brothers Racing team returns to Martinsville for the first time since 2011.

Dale Earnhardt Jr. experienced brake issues and qualified 21st.

## NCAA

Continued from Page B4

Syracuse coach Jim Boheim said the benefit of playing North Carolina twice already this season is knowing what to expect. Beyond that, he said now is not the time to try to experiment with how to play the Tar Heels.

"We played pretty well in both games, and still couldn't win," Boheim said. "We just try to do what we do better."

### Hield wins Oscar Robertson Trophy

A day after Michigan State senior guard Denzel Valentine was named the Associated Press Player of the Year, his Oklahoma counterpart evened the score.

Sooners senior guard Buddy Hield sat next to hoops legend Oscar Robertson as he received the United States Basketball Writers Association Oscar Robertson Trophy as the college basketball player of the year.

Hield, who enters Saturday's national semifinal against Villanova averaging 25.4 points per game this season, said he's not counting how many player of the year trophies he collects. The next game has the Oklahoma guard's full attention.

"I'm just focused on the game," Hield said. "I'm just locked in right now."

### Wright reflects on 'Nova's '85 crown

During his Friday press conference, Villanova coach Jay Wright described where he was when coach Rollie Massimino's Wildcats won

the school's only national championship in 1985.

Wright was an assistant coach and the assistant intramural director at University of Rochester in New York. He said he attended the Final Four semifinals in Lexington, Kentucky, but had to return to Rochester to run an intramural floor hockey competition. After finishing his intramural duties, Wright went to the women's soccer coach's house and sat on the floor to watch eighth-seeded Villanova defeat No. 1-seed Georgetown in the championship game.

"That was probably the most inspirational moment of my coaching career," Wright said. "To see a team make a dream come true like that and overachieve, it was magical. You say as a coach I would love to be able to do that."

Wright said he has regular conversations with Massimino, but his mind always returns to the 1985 championship.

### Final Four coaches

The four head coaches in Houston this weekend have a combined 17 Final Four berths.

North Carolina coach Roy Williams leads the group as he's making his eighth Final Four appearance as a head coach and has won two national championships (2005 and 2009). Syracuse coach Jim Boheim, who is making his fifth Final Four trip, is the only other coach at the Final Four with a national title on his resume as the Orange won it in 2003. Villanova coach Jay Wright and Oklahoma coach Lon Kruger have a pair of Final Four appearances apiece.

## Sox

Continued from Page B4

I'm not going to change, I'm going to stay the same."

The bullpen is not yet set. Carson Smith begins the season on the DL. The Red Sox will rely on Uehara and Junichi Tazawa in set-up roles. Uehara, who will be 41 on April 3, made just three Grapefruit League appearances while he dealt with general soreness. Tazawa posted a 4.14 ERA in 61 appearances after a 2.86 mark in 71 games in 2014.

All the buzz over the investments made in Boston are positive entering April. But last year's biggest ticket newcomers failed to deliver. One of them, third baseman Pablo Sandoval, enters the 2016 season with a \$17 million salary and a spot on the bench behind Travis Shaw.

Sandoval, who is entering the second year of a five-year, \$95 million contract, lost his job to Shaw in March, and Farrell made it official four days before opening day at Cleveland.

Sandoval caused some controversy when he reported for camp appearing to be well over his listed weight of 255 pounds. The Red Sox said they were not concerned about his weight, and principal owner John Henry said Sandoval's 17 percent body fat ratio is below the 21 percent of last season. But the way spring ended — Shaw winning the start job — said even more.

Ramirez will be attempting to play another new po-



KIM KLEMENT | USA TODAY

Boston designated hitter David Ortiz, who announced that this season will be his last in the major leagues, looks to provide plenty of offensive punch in 2016. The Red Sox open their season Monday at Cleveland.

sition for the second straight season after an abysmal performance in left field in 2015. He appeared adequate at first base in spring training but will be closely watched.

The Red Sox will rely on production from designated hitter David Ortiz, playing his final season of a stellar career for the Red Sox, and are also hoping for a healthy season for second baseman Dustin Pedroia. Those contributions should be bolstered by shortstop Xander Bogaerts and right fielder Mookie Betts, who both turned in strong seasons last year.

Rusney Castillo, who is entering the third year of a seven-year, \$72.5 million contract, entered spring training as the left fielder. But at the end of the spring Farrell said super utility man and left-handed hitter Brock Holt — Boston's only All-Star last season — would get the majority of at-bats there against right-handers in a platoon with right-handed hitting Young, leaving another high-priced player — Castillo — in a bench role.

"His importance on our team continues to grow with

each passing month just because of the versatility," Farrell said of Holt. "Setting that aside, he's a good player. There's the utmost confidence to put him at any one of seven positions on the field and that's a rarity. Not to mention that his at-bats are consistent. He's maybe one, if not one of our best, our top two or three baserunners on our club. He's grown in his own confidence, and he's done one hell of a job."

The Red Sox should be better. Expectations are the easy part.

Jahlas, Spencer Benton (a sophomore defensive end) and Matt Swoyer (a junior defensive back in 2015-16) — helped the woman once she got to shore.

Castro was arrested and charged with driving while intoxicated, according to a police incident report. Police said Castro's blood alcohol content was nearly twice the state's legal limit of 0.08.

safely to shore.

"That car completely sank in less than a minute, and if not for them jumping into the water and pulling the driver out, she would most certainly have drowned," witnessing officer Michael Schiltz said in a statement released by the South Padre Island Public Information Officer.

Three of the players —

## Radio

Continued from Page B4

Waterville native Chuck Begin, owner of Pine Tree Broadcasting, bought the four stations from Jocelynn Priestley of Bangor.

Priestley and husband Dan owned Waterfront Communications and the four stations but Dan died in September.

"We've known Chuck for years and I know he will put a lot of passion and detail into the stations that Dan loved so dearly. Chuck was born and raised in Maine and he understands the downeast and Bangor markets so much better than the big radio corporations which, frankly, don't get our Maine culture," Jocelynn

Priestley said in a news release.

"I'm quite confident that the stations will continue to thrive in such excellent hands," she added.

The stations broadcast from studios in Bar Harbor and Bangor.

Begin said in the release that it has been an "incredible year for us."

"This is incredibly exciting. I'm thrilled about our expansion into Bangor, especially since we're keeping these stations Maine owned and locally operated. I'm also thrilled about the partnerships we're forming with local businesses."

**Editor's note:** Larry Mahoney is employed by Learfield for its UMaine men's hockey radio broadcasts.

## Flowers

Continued from Page B4

"I have better velocity this year. I'm a lot stronger after working with [performance coach] Jon Lynch," said Flowers.

"I'm also stronger mentally. I have a lot more confidence. I know I can do it [be successful]. I knew I had a job to do [coming into the season]. I had to pull through for my team," Flowers added.

Bouchard said Flowers' boost in confidence is evident.

"She wants the ball. She was talented last year, but

she's even more talented this year, and that comes with maturity and age. She's been looking great," said Bouchard.

Flowers has been happy with her season to date but said, "there are a lot of things I still need to work on." Reducing her walks (40) is at the top of the list.

Flowers said Coutts, pitching coach Lynn Coutts and her team's solid defense also have been instrumental in her success.

She said her no-hitter was "exciting."

"They had beaten us twice and, in my mind, they weren't going to get a hit off me that day," said Flowers.