

# Teammates caught in competitive dilemma

BY GEORGE DIAZ  
ORLANDO SENTINEL

“NASCAR teammates” are words that don’t go very well together, unlike NASCAR shake and bake or even peanut butter and jelly.

There’s nothing smooth about it. It’s more of a business partnership, based on a team owner with lots and lots of cheese to spend and the ability to recruit multiple drivers.

This weekend in Phoenix, we could see this tenuous alliance play out in a very odd and possibly testy way. Seven drivers have one more chance to punch their race ticket to the Nov. 22 Final Four at Homestead-Miami. They include three sets of two teammates.

Blood Brothers, anyone? “Racing teammates is tough,” said six-time Cup champ Jimmie Johnson, who is out of the Chase mix. “There’s nothing easy about it.”

Consider these dicey dynamics: Brad Keselowski and Joey Logano will raise the Penske Racing banner with each in win-or-go-home mode. Kevin Harvick of Stewart-Haas Racing is in better shape, but what if teammate Kurt Busch — who also likely needs a win to advance — is up front

with Harvick at the end? Kyle Busch and Carl Edwards of Joe Gibbs Racing each may be crunching points while hoping to avoid playing crunch cars.

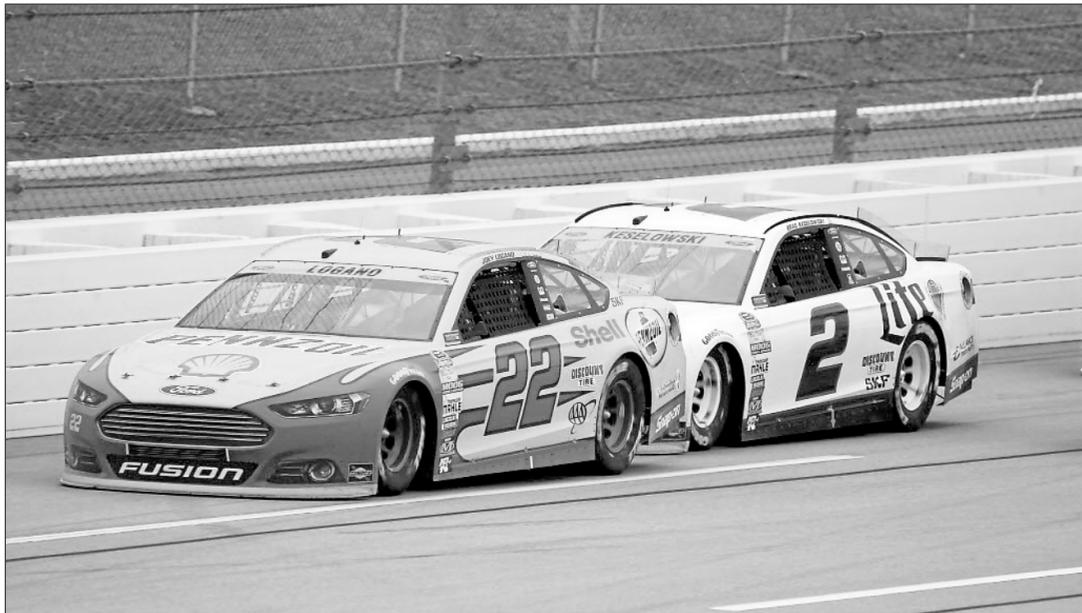
Most eyes will be on Logano and Keselowski. Logano has been the most dominant driver this season but got taken out by Matt Kenseth two weeks ago in Martinsville in a retaliatory deal, sending Logano into scramble mode. He had serious tire trouble in Texas this past weekend and finished 40th, putting him in an even more precarious position.

Keselowski had the most dominant car in Texas, leading 312 laps, but lost his edge at the end to Johnson, who denied Keselowski an automatic Final Four slot.

Neither Keselowski nor Logano has enough points to slide in without a victory.

“A good problem to have would be both cars running up front one, two,” Johnson said. “I assume that’s the direction things will go. But it’s not easy.”

“Then you get on the track. If you really are duking it out for the win, you’re supposed to leave your teammate an extra inch or two. Championship’s on the line; your career is on the line. It will be interesting to see how that goes; how everybody handles the pressure.”



Sprint Cup Series driver Joey Logano (left) leads Brad Keselowski during the Campingworld.com 500 at Talladega Superspeedway recently.

There will be plenty of that stuff, putting the NASCAR police on high alert for any potential manipulative shenanigans. Then again, everything seems to have settled down into a “Boys, Be On Best Behavior” mode in Texas after all the controversial bumping-and-grinding in previous weeks.

Driver codes were broken. Or maybe not. Depends on whom you ask.

“In car racing, everybody drives their car and you just have to do what you think is the best and what is the right thing to do at the time, and all of us have done all sorts of things,” Edwards said. “Some of them were right; some of them definitely weren’t right. You just have to go out there and race

everybody the way you want to be raced. In some ways you have to demand the same in return.”

It’s a simple answer to a complex question. Keselowski and Johnson had no issues at Texas because they’ve always raced each other hard without incident.

If Jeff Gordon, Johnson’s teammate, had been out there against Keselowski,

things may have spiraled out of control like last year at Texas. Ditto if it had been Keselowski and Kyle Busch.

You have to look at two things: the numbers on the cars and the storylines between them.

Now a third factor comes into play.

Are they teammates? And what will they be willing to do to win?



Boston Bruins left wing Matt Beleskey (right) controls the puck while Colorado Avalanche defenseman Erik Johnson defends during the second period at TD Garden on Thursday night. Colorado won 3-2.

## Duchene rallies Colorado by Bruins

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

BOSTON — Matt Duchene scored his sixth goal in the last five games on go-ahead wrister midway through the third period to help the Colorado Avalanche erase a two-goal deficit and earn a 3-2 victory over the Boston Bruins on Thursday night at TD Garden.

The Avalanche center finished off a pass from center Mikhail Grigorenko at 6:39 of the final period after center Ben Street forced a costly turnover from Bruins defenseman Kevin Miller.

Colorado (6-9-1) has now won eight consecutive games in Boston.

Swedish center Carl Soderberg, playing his first game back in Boston since leaving the team in free agency last June, and defenseman Francois Beauchemin also scored goals for Colorado, which is now 2-6-1 in one-goal games this season.

Goalie Reto Berra, who started in place of Semyon Varlamov after the Avalanche’s top netminder tweaked a groin injury during practice at nearby Boston University, made 25 saves.

Colorado defenseman Erik Johnson recorded his 200th NHL point on a second-period assist while veteran right winger Jerome Iginla, who also spent time with the Bruins, tallied an assist on Soderberg’s goal to move him into 37th place on the NHL’s all-time points list.

Defenseman Zdeno Chara and center Ryan Spooner each netted a goal for the Bruins (7-7-1), who opened their season-long five-game home stand with a loss.

Boston goalie Tuukka Rask, who had 27 saves, has given up 27 goals in seven games at home this season.

Chara kicked off a busy opening period with his second goal of the year on a blue-line slap shot in front of the left point, putting the

Bruins ahead 1-0 just over a minute in.

Avalanche coach Patrick Roy challenged the call after Berra was consumed by the scrum in front of the net, but the goal was upheld.

Boston capitalized on an early hooking penalty as Spooner went top shelf to double the lead 5:51 into the first, giving the Bruins their eighth straight game with a power-play goal.

Soderberg beat old teammate Rask for a high glove-side goal make it 2-1 at 12:08 of the first and Avalanche defenseman Francois Beauchemin evened the score at 2-2 on his goal with 28.2 seconds left in the period.

Colorado left winger Gabriel Landeskog received a match penalty and was ejected with 14:14 remaining in a scoreless second period after a cross-ice hit to the head of Bruins left winger Brad Marchand, who stayed in the game.

**NOTES:** Bruins D Dennis Seidenberg (back) was a game-time decision after participating in morning skate and pregame warm-ups before making his season debut Thursday. “He always works hard to get back, to be in top shape and he’s done that again this time,” Bruins coach Claude Julien said. ... Colorado G Semyon Varlamov (groin) missed his third consecutive game. ... Avalanche D Brad Stuart (back) was flown back to Denver to be re-evaluated. Colorado recalled D Zach Redmond from AHL San Antonio. ... Avalanche coach Patrick Roy told ESPN.com before Thursday’s game that he is in favor of bigger nets and smaller goalie equipment. “I think it will help the scoring,” the Hall of Fame goaltender said. ... Boston signed LW Jake DeBrusk, RW Zach Senyshyn and D Jeremy Lauzon to entry-level contracts. ... Thursday was Military Appreciation Night at TD Garden. The Bruins wore camouflage jerseys during warm-ups.

## UFC 193: Rousey takes next act to Australia

BY DAVE DOYLE  
THE SPORTS XCHANGE

Is Ronda Rousey’s “Buster Douglas moment” on the way?

The UFC women’s bantamweight champion seems an unstoppable force. Rousey (12-0), the biggest star in mixed martial arts, has become a household name in 2015, one of the most popular athletes during a year in which women in sports have commanded the spotlight like never before.

Rousey’s next act takes her to Melbourne, Australia, where she defends her championship in the main event of Saturday’s UFC 193 against former world boxing champion Holly Holm (9-0) of Albuquerque, New Mexico. The event will be held at the 70,000-seat Etihad Stadium, where the UFC hopes to break its single-event attendance record of 55,724, set in at UFC 129 in Toronto on April 30, 2011.

But while Rousey, of Venice, California seems as fo-

lucous as ever, signs of the strains of unprecedented MMA stardom have come to light.

A few weeks back, Rousey’s mother, Dr. Ann Maria Demars, a former world judo champion, publicly lashed out at Rousey’s head coach, Edmond Tarverdyan of Glendale, California calling him a “bad coach” and declaring “I would run him over with my car if there wasn’t a law against it.”

For his part, Tarverdyan, head of the Glendale Fighting Club, made news by filing for Chapter 7 bankruptcy, and claiming he made no income for the three-year period in which Rousey, his main claim to fame, rocketed to stardom.

Then, during a recent media teleconference promoting UFC 193, Rousey



Rousey

hung up when the first question involved her relationship with UFC heavyweight Travis Browne, who had been publicly accused of domestic violence in a previous relationship (an independent investigation commissioned by the UFC determined the evidence to be inconclusive, and Browne has not been charged).

While Rousey declined from speaking about the controversy swirling around her, she did admit she has felt under an unusual amount of pressure. But she also says pressure situations bring out her best.

“That’s the environment I do the best in,” Rousey said at a recent media event. “I know if me and Holly were fighting alone in some high school gym, I wouldn’t do nearly as well as if we had 70,000 people and all that pressure and cameras. I don’t get scared of how nervous I get and all the pressure and attention and the crowds and everything because I know in my heart

that’s when I do best.”

So with Rousey often being called a female Mike Tyson, is she being set up for a similar fall? Tyson was combat sports’ biggest attraction when he went to Japan in 1990 and lost to Buster Douglas, a 42-1 underdog, at the Tokyo Dome.

Of course, this could be where all the speculation ends, because Holm, like Douglas, is also a major underdog. As a three-weight-class champ who compiled a pro boxing record of 33-2-3, Holm figures to have a fighting chance against Rousey in the standup.

But Holm is also a relative newbie to mixed martial arts, having made the full-time switch just two years ago. While she has rarely been threatened in the cage, she has never faced anyone nearly on the level of Rousey. So most feel that barring a lucky punch, Rousey should be able to use her Olympic medalist-level judo game to take Holm down at will.

## Football

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er coach Nick Arthers believes containing the senior running back will be pivotal to the outcome of the rematch.

“When it comes down to it, they have one of the best running backs in the state in Will Bessey,” said Arthers. “I know he might have been a little sick in the first game and might not have been on top of his game, but he’s still going to be the focus this week.”

“We’ve got to stop him, but along with that, we’ve got to make sure we don’t focus on him too much and let one of their other guys who are just as athletic jump out at any given time and break one for a big gain.”

The Witches will be somewhat shorthanded for the rematch as two starters have been suspended from the team for the game, according to Brewer athletic administrator Dave Utterback.

But the work of playmakers such as Rogerson, Dylan Severance, Trey Wood and Danny Davis has been instrumental in the Witches’ success this fall, along with steady development along the line of scrimmage.

“On the offensive line, we’ve really done a good job of recognizing defenses, recognizing where teams are aligning, and then making adjustments to where they’re blitzing and where the linebackers are lining up,” said Arthers.

“Along with that we’ve just been making sure that our defense and our tackling has stayed at the highest level because that where we really shine, on the defensive side of the ball.”

**Class C: No. 2 Winslow Black Raiders (9-0) at No. 1 Old Town Coyotes (9-0), 7 p.m.**

These clubs were separated only by a coin flip, which Old Town won at the end of the regular season to gain home-field advantage for their first meeting of the season.

Old Town has been a prolific offensive club, averaging 38.3 points per game including a 38-7 semifinal win over No. 5 Foxcroft Academy of Dover-Foxcroft last weekend behind senior quarterback Jake Jarvis, senior wideout Andre Miller and junior halfback T.J. Crawford.

But an improved defense has been critical to the Coyotes’ quest for their first regional championship since 1991.

“Last year offensively we played well, averaging 32 points per game, but the problem was we were giving up 35,” said Old Town coach Lance Cowan. “That was our focus in the off-season, to get a defense that suited our talents. We figured out where we wanted to go, and then during the season, we figured out who played best in what position.”

“Late in the season we started to figure it out a bit, and we’ll see how well we figured it out this week against Winslow,” Cowan added.

Defending state champion Winslow brings a 20-game winning streak into the contest, with coach Mike Siviski’s club outscoring its opposition by a combined 428-27 this fall.

Quarterback Jake Trask and running backs Kenny Rickard and Nate St. Amant pace the Black Raiders’ offense, which is complemented by a defense that has

seven shutouts.

“The biggest thing with them is they’re a physical football team,” said Cowan. “They’ll push you around and move the ball that way, and that’s something we haven’t really seen a lot of, certainly nothing like these guys up front.”

“I think that’s our biggest challenge, and a challenge we’ve faced all year because we’re not the biggest team on the field each week. We don’t have the biggest guys, and that’s going to be the case this week but we’ll get after it with the same approach defensively we’ve had all year.”

**Class D: No. 2 Mattanawcook Academy Lynx (7-2) vs. No. 1 Maine Central Institute Huskies (9-0), 7 p.m. at Pittsfield**

Mattanawcook may face the toughest challenge of all — trying to defeat an opponent that handed it a 61-0 defeat during Week 4 of the regular season.

“Obviously the task is tall,” said Lynx coach Pat House, “but it’s been that way every game this year.”

MCI, meanwhile, faces the challenge of knowing it already has defeated MA by 61 points and not taking a second win over the Lynx for granted.

“It’s absolutely a challenge,” said MCI coach Tom Bertrand. “We’re happy we were able to be as dominant as we were when we played them the first time around, but we also totally understand and appreciate that this is the postseason and they’re a good football team and a program with some tradition, so we’re not taking them lightly at all.”

MCI followed up a dominant regular season when it averaged 51.9 points per game with a 76-27 semifinal

victory over No. 4 Orono as halfback Willie Moss contributed 200 rushing yards and five touchdowns during the opening two quarters.

“Our focus has been on one thing, and that’s getting a chance at that state championship, that gold ball,” said Bertrand. “We know we have to take of business each week, so every week has been just as important as the week before and the next week.”

Mattanawcook advanced with a 20-14 victory over No. 3 Mount View of Thorndike that avenged a regular-season loss to the Mustangs. Scott Jipson led the Lynx with 200 rushing yards and two touchdowns.

“Mount View is a very good team and a very physical team up front, and our kids brought that physicality with them Friday night,” said House. “That’s something we’ve definitely improved on.”

Mattanawcook’s biggest challenge against MCI similarly may be along the line of scrimmage, where the Huskies’ Curtis McLeod and end Dillon Pitts lead the way.

“The line sets the tone for their physicality,” said House. “Then they’ve got an awful lot of athletes behind them that can take advantage of their speed and athleticism once they have a gap, and Greg Vigue is a tremendous quarterback.”

**Class A: No. 2 Windham Eagles (7-2) at No. 1 Portland Bulldogs (9-0), 7 p.m.**

Both teams are coming off impressive semifinal wins, Portland 56-7 over No. 5 Bangor and Windham 28-0 over No. 3 Cheverus of Portland.

Portland, the lone undefeated Class A team statewide, shaded Windham 10-3 in their regular-season meeting at Fitzpatrick Stadium on Sept. 25.