

NASCAR hit with lawsuit

Diversity Motorsports claims racial discrimination

BY JONATHAN STEMPEL
REUTERS

NEW YORK — NASCAR was hit with a \$500 million lawsuit accusing the auto racing body of racial discrimination for preventing black-owned teams and drivers from competing, including in the Sprint Cup Series. Terrance Cox and his company, Diversity Motorsports Racing LLC, filed a lawsuit late on Friday in U.S. district court in Manhattan against NASCAR, its parent company, International Speedway Corp, and 18 teams, according to court records.

Johnson confounded by penalty

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

JOLIET, Illinois — Jimmie Johnson had mixed feelings about his 12th-place run in Sunday's Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 400 at Chicagoland Speedway. On the positive side, Johnson's No. 48 Chevrolet showed excellent speed in the opening race in the Chase for the NASCAR Sprint Cup. The six-time Sprint Cup champion led a race-high 118 laps, but he drew a pit road speeding penalty during a green-flag stop on lap 234 of 270, and that infraction cost Johnson a shot at victory. After serving a pass-through penalty, he fell to 18th in the running order but rallied to finish 12th.

"(I'm) very proud of this Lowe's team, everybody at Hendrick Motorsports," Johnson said. "We're digging. I'm just... I just can't believe I got in trouble down there leaving the pits. I feel terrible for these guys."

"It should have been a top-five day, but I will back down pit road (speed) even more and try not to make that mistake. Hats off to the team for our fast Lowe's Chevrolet. I just screwed up."

The penalty took Johnson completely by surprise.

"I'm making adjustments, and I was dumbfounded that happened," he said. "You can't argue it. Maybe a mistake on our part somewhere, definitely a mistake on my side, but I by no way, shape or form thought that I was speeding."

"I was probably the slowest down pit road all day just to try to avoid it — and got nailed. I will soak on it tonight and come back next week and be at 100 percent again and get ready to take this Lowe's car to Victory Lane."

Johnson leaves Chicagoland eighth in the Chase standings, but his position may be in jeopardy after his No. 48 Chevrolet failed post-race laser inspection station by a slight margin. If NASCAR imposes a penalty for the infraction, it will be announced later this week.

Logano has solid start

Joey Logano had a fast car at Chicagoland but just not quite fast enough to move through traffic and lead laps.

But the driver of the No. 22 Team Penske Ford took advantage of fresh tires on an overtime restart and surged from sixth to second in the final two laps, trailing only Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 400 winner Martin Truex Jr. at the finish of the opening race in the Chase for the NASCAR Sprint Cup. "Just overall very proud of what this 22 team was able to do all weekend," Logano said. "Brought a very fast race car, one that was capable of running top-three for sure. Just took us a while to get to that point."

Logano led only one lap, and that came during a cycle of green-flag pit stops late in the race. But Todd Gordon brought the No. 22 Ford to the pits under the final caution, and Logano took full advantage.

The plaintiffs are also seeking an injunction requiring the defendants to "fully integrate the African-American community."

In a statement, NASCAR said the lawsuit has no merit. "Diversity both on and off the track continues to be a top priority for NASCAR and its stakeholders," the organization said. "We stand behind our actions, and will not let a publicity-seeking legal action deter us from our mission."

The plaintiffs said they sued after NASCAR refused to let them field a team or join its Drive for Diversity program, and last year told

them to cease contact.

Citing NASCAR's website, the plaintiffs said none of the 48 drivers in the Sprint Cup, NASCAR's top racing series, is black, and only one of the 18 teams has partial African-American ownership. They also said only one driver in NASCAR's Xfinity Series circuit is black.

"Motorsports remain the most racially segregated sport in the United States," the complaint said. "NASCAR and ISC have been complicit in, and supportive of, the racially discriminatory environment that virtually excludes African-Americans from meaningful participation."

The lawsuit seeks \$75 million in compensatory damages and \$425 million in punitive damages.

Ronald Paltrowitz, a lawyer for the plaintiffs, said any funds would go toward groups that the plaintiffs sponsor to boost minority participation in motorsports.

Diversity Motorsports was founded by Cox, who is chief executive officer, and Bob Schacht of Bob Schacht Motorsports, and is based in Mooresville, North Carolina. NASCAR is based in Daytona Beach, Florida, and has a Manhattan office.



KIM KLEMENT | USA TODAY SPORTS

Denver Pioneers forward Danton Heinen competes during the semifinals of the 2016 Frozen Four against the North Dakota in Tampa, Florida, last April. Heinen is now trying to earn a roster spot with the Boston Bruins.

Ex-Pioneers standout on pace with Bruins

Heinen catching up to speed of NHL game

BY STEPHEN HARRIS
BOSTON HERALD

BUFFALO, New York — The ability to skate very fast is a great thing for hockey players, maybe the single most vital attribute on the skills checklist. But speed alone isn't enough to guarantee success. That speed has to be a means to achieve a bunch of different on-ice ends.

Providence Bruins coach Kevin Dean, who is running the NHL team's entry in a rookie tournament sponsored by the Buffalo Sabres, looks at first-year left winger Danton Heinen and sees a kid who can fly — and also play the game.

"I like everything," said Dean about the 21-year-old Heinen. "He's very smooth, but he does everything fast. Some of those smooth players, they're smooth because they're going three-quarters speed. But he's getting up and down the ice pretty quickly — and he's doing it under control, with his head up."

"That's why he makes so many plays, because he doesn't have to be contorted 100,000 ways to get going full speed. He can make plays at full speed and he's under control doing it. He's got great (hockey) IQ. He can really snap the puck. I think at his core he's a pass-first type of guy. It'll be good to see him this year."

Heinen, the Bruins fourth-round pick (116th overall) in the 2014 NHL draft, had 20 goals and 28 assists in 41 games last season for the University of Denver Pioneers. He opted to turn pro at season's end and had an assist in two AHL games for Providence. And now the solidly built, 6-foot-1 native of British Columbia has a real shot at playing this year for the big club in the NHL.

"Those guys that score at that level (the NCAA) generally transition well to the pro level — provided they can skate," Dean said. "If you can keep up, then your good hockey IQ lets you take advantage of situations."

Dean regards Heinen as more of a playmaker than a sniper.

"His playmaking ability is what I'm most impressed with," Dean said. "His vision, how he sees the ice and gets players the puck. I think he's one of those kids that the better players he plays with, the better player he'll be. He can deliver the puck to people in good spots (as) few other guys can do it."

"He'll be good here, but

"Wherever they want me to play, I'll do it. I think it was good for me to get a taste of right wing last season so I can have that versatility."

DANTON HEINEN

my guess is he'll be better as camp moves forward. I think as he goes to Boston he'll have the opportunity to turn some heads."

It helps Heinen's cause that he made the switch last season from his natural left wing position, to the right side, and was perfectly comfortable with the move.

"Wherever they want me to play, I'll do it," Heinen said. "I think it was good for me to get a taste of right wing last season so I can have that versatility."

Heinen was asked the standard which-NHL-player-are-you-like question — and he went with Montreal Canadiens star Max Paci-

oretty.

"I think a similar player I kind of play like is Max Pacioretty — a winger with a quick release, an offensive guy," he said.

Watching Heinen at the HarborCenter the last few days, it's clear that quick release is a priority.

"The game gets faster and faster, so you've got to get it away quick," he said.

"I've been working a lot on that. You have to get it away quick. It doesn't have to be as accurate as long as you get it away quick and maybe catch the goalie moving," he added.

The B's would love it if Heinen could emulate what Frank Vatrano did a year ago. Vatrano came to camp largely unsung, but emerged to consistently contribute at the NHL level. Expectations are probably somewhat higher coming in for Heinen.

"He's a good enough player, from what I've seen, that in my opinion at some point he's got a chance to help the Bruins," Dean said.

BRUINS NOTEBOOK: There were some personnel groupings of interest to Bruins fans for a rookie tourney game against the New Jersey Devils, including one forward line of Heinen, Colby Cave and Jake DeBrusk, and defense pairings with Matt Grzelcyk and Jeremy Lauzon, and Rob O'Gara and Jakub Zboril. Zane McIntyre was slated to play the full 60 minutes in goal. ... Defenseman Linus Arneson, who suffered a left shoulder injury in a practice session on Saturday, will miss these games. His status for the upcoming main training camp is uncertain. ... The Bruins play their NHL opener on Thursday, Oct. 13 against the Blue Jackets in Columbus, Ohio.

Irish's Kelly blames bad tweet on staffer

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

Notre Dame coach Brian Kelly pointed the finger at a staffer managing his personal Twitter account for "liking" a comment suggesting the Fighting Irish fire defensive coordinator Brian VanGorder.

"I have a number of people that manage my Twitter account," Kelly said during a Sunday teleconference. "Just obviously going through it, somebody unfortunately made a mistake as they were scrolling through, inadvertently hit it and just a mistake, an unfortunate mistake that was made by one of my staff members."

Kelly's official account, @CoachBrianKelly, liked a tweet from user @Kevin_Coughlan after Saturday's 36-28 home loss to Michigan State, in which Coughlan suggested Kelly shake up his coaching staff and fire VanGorder. Notre Dame has al-

lowed 32 points per game.

Kelly said execution, not scheme or personnel, is the problem. Kelly said firing VanGorder is "not even part of the conversation."

"I mean, this is not rocket science what we're talking about here. These are plays that we've got to continue to work on and fundamentally get better at," Kelly said. "There's not a question about scheme. There's not a question about who's leading it with Brian. This is about coaching, communicating and teaching the fundamentals and getting our young players, those that don't have a lot of experience, better at execution."



Kelly

Patriots

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Brady, had already thrown three touchdown passes when he was injured. Garoppolo will be assessed day-to-day.

Brissett, who was taken in the third round out of North Carolina State, made his NFL debut and led the Patriots on a touchdown drive on the first drive of the second half, with LeGarrette Blount scoring on 9-yard touchdown run.

McDaniels praised Brissett, who was 6-of-9 passing for 92 yards, on his approach.

"Jacoby is really a calm individual," McDaniels said on WEEI. "He's been that way since we brought him in for his interview and we tried to put him under pressure when we first brought him in here before the draft, and he didn't flinch then. He's a guy that is very difficult to fluster."

"He's young, he doesn't have much experience obviously, and he's learning every week and every day. But I thought his poise and composure yesterday showed. I didn't feel like he was rattled on the sideline when it was his opportunity to get in there. I felt like he handled the huddle, the line of scrimmage and some critical situations well."

For the quarter-and-a-half that Garoppolo was in, the Patriots gained 280 total yards and put up 21 points. With Brissett, who played the rest of the way, the team gained 185 total yards and put up seven points. With Garoppolo in the game, the offense averaged 7.62 yards per play; with Brissett, 5.47 yards.

After reviewing the game, it's clear how much the offense changed when the third-round pick was under center.

The biggest difference was that the offense suddenly became run-heavy. Not including the final kneel down, the Patriots ran the ball 24 times and attempted only 11 pass plays. When Brissett did throw, he rarely looked down the field and mainly threw to targets near the line of scrimmage, letting his playmakers go to work.

Brissett's air yards to completion (total passing yards minus yards after the catch) was 0.7, meaning he averaged less than a yard gained per throw. The best example of this was at 11:35 of the third quarter. Brissett's first completion of his NFL career went to Martellus Bennett for 37 yards. The pass, however, was caught four yards beyond the line of scrimmage and the tight end gained 33 yards after the catch.

The quarterback didn't prefer one side of the field over the other, as he threw to the right five times and to the left four. Like Garoppolo last week, when Brissett threw the ball, he had a lightning-quick release, averaging 2.21 seconds from snap to throw.

When he was asked to throw, things were simple for Brissett, who completed 6-of-9 passes for 92 yards. In his three incomplete passes, two were drops by Edelman and the other was due to the offense line as he got hit by Mario Williams.

The offense jumped on Blount's back with Brissett in the game. Blount ran the ball 10 times for 21 yards (2.1 yards per carry) with Garoppolo. With Brissett, he ran the ball 19 times for 102 yards (5.37 yards per carry).

With Brissett looking to be the starter on Thursday against Houston, the Patriots need to get better on third down. The team went 2-for-7 completing only 29 percent of third-down conversions, with the rookie under center.

Ortiz

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tice of what his franchise did for Jeter and said in March he was "proud" to be a part of it. As for his expectations from the Bronx crowd when his day came, Papi hoped they could appreciate his performance — and not take it too personally.

"Well, I've been able to get some big hits," Ortiz said earlier this year. "And with all the respect that I have for Yankees' fans, it's just business that

you've got to take care of."

Even with Papi's Hall of Fame credentials — it's going to be close five years from now — we can see how some may choose to stand up and boo Ortiz that day at the Stadium based on his PED positive from the survey-testing period in 2003. And that's fair, too.

Bottom line, treat Ortiz however you want Sept. 29 in the Bronx. But we're not likely to see another Papi anytime soon, and an adversary that unique, that entertaining, is worthy of recognition — at least until the game starts.

Majestix

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environment to play in," added Moyer.

"I've been here a few times in the summer but we had a lot of fun going to the Bernatchezes' and stuff and I had never been to UMaine," said UNC red-shirt freshman Catherine Hayden of Greenwich, Connecticut.

Senior Julia Young of Yorktown, Virginia said she was surprised by the turnout.

"I wasn't expecting this

many fans. It was great," said Young.

"We've had a wonderful trip, other than Boston. Once we got up to Maine, everything was fine," said 36th-year UNC coach Karen Shelton, whose team lost 2-1 Friday at Boston College.

Shelton renewed acquaintances with former coaching rival and UMaine athletic director Sue Tyler after the game. Tyler led the University of Maryland to its first NCAA championship in 1987 in her last game as the head coach when her Terrapins beat Shelton's Tar Heels 2-1 in overtime.