



Racing History Today

Vol. 2 Issue 2 2023





CONTRIBUTIONS

Founder: *Anthony Bristol*

Editor in Chief: *Anthony Bristol*

Layout Editor: *Chris Harris*

Writers: *Chris Harris, Luis Martínez*

Photographers: *Anthony Bristol, Chris Harris, Bill Green*

Cover photo: *Anthony Bristol*

Inside cover photos: Top - *Bill Green*; Bottom -
Anthony Bristol

*For any questions or comments please reach out
to us at info@bristolimages.com*



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Kyle Busch Wins the Geico 500 under Caution after Fuel Gamble and Late Race Wrecks

April 23, 2023 - Talladega Superspeedway, Alabama

By Chris Harris



Kyle Busch Celebrates after his win at Talladega

Photo by Anthony Bristol

Kyle Busch became the winner of the 2023 GEICO 500 at Talladega Superspeedway after nearly running out of fuel and taking advantage of a series of three incidents at the end of the race. By avoiding the first two wrecks, Busch was able to advance from just outside the top 10 to the front row, where he made a fuel gamble that ultimately led to his victory. While other drivers decided to pit for fuel, Busch stayed out, which allowed him to get the victory after avoiding the final wreck.

The action leading to Busch's win started to unfold on lap 184, when Joey Logano spun while trying to jump in front of Corey LaJoie in the third lane of traffic. The incident set up Busch in seventh place and took the race into overtime. On the first overtime restart, Noah Gragson got loose leading the outside lane after a strong push from the cars behind him. As Gragson moved up the track, Ross Chastain tried to make a pass through the middle but contacted Gragson's car, sending it into the outside wall. Busch then spun Kyle Larson, who had nowhere to go. Larson was knocked out of the race when hard contact with Ryan Preece bent the roll cage of the No. 5 Chevrolet. Under caution, several cars came to pit

road for fuel, including Chastain, who had been ahead of Busch. Being low on fuel himself, Busch decided not to come to pit road, even after his crew urged him to do so.

On the second and final overtime restart, Busch was the first car in the outside lane, with Bubba Wallace behind him. Ryan Blaney led the race from the inside lane, with Aric Almirola behind him. Ty Gibbs restarted behind Almirola and, like Busch, was questionable on fuel. When the green flag waved, Gibbs was out of gas and dropped to the apron of the track. The maneuver disrupted the draft and stalled the inside lane, giving Busch the lead from the surging outside lane. As the white flag waved, Wallace took the lead with a push from Brad Keselowski. With Blaney on his bumper, Wallace moved to the inside and then back to the outside to block, but got loose and spun out, taking several cars with him. When the caution flag waved, Busch was leading the race and had enough fuel to coast to the finish line, giving him his second career Cup Series win at Talladega. The win was also the second of the season for Busch and his 62nd Cup Series win overall. After the race, Busch said of his fuel

strategy: "You gotta take the track position when you have it and go give it what you can on the restarts and see what happens, and lo and behold, it worked out."

Ryan Blaney, who led the most laps at 47, also survived the wreck, finishing second. Chris Buescher finished third, followed by Chase Briscoe and Brad Keselowski. Teammates Keselowski and Buescher had finished Stage 2 in 30th and 36th, respectively, but managed to make the top five after surviving the late race wrecks. Briscoe also rebounded after spinning out on pit road early in the race and being stuck there when the right front part of his car made contact with the track.

Also notable was that Chase Elliott won Stage 1 in just his second race back after a snowboarding accident and nearly won Stage 2 before being beaten out at the line by Aric Almirola, who made a last-second move for the stage win. Elliott told his team over the radio that he saw the move coming but that "it ain't worth wrecking right here" just to pick up an extra stage point. The race was also the 800th start for Kevin Harvick, who became the 10th driver to achieve the feat. Harvick led 11 laps in the race and was running as high as fourth in the final laps, but had to pit for fuel after the first overtime restart and finished 21st.



Photo by Anthony Bristol



GEICO 500

NASCAR Cup Series at Talladega





GEICO 500

NASCAR Cup Series at Talladega



Photos by Chris Harris



Ag-Pro 300

NASCAR Xfinity Series at Talladega



Photo Credits: Top Row, Bottom Right - Anthony Bristol; Middle Center, Middle Right, Bottom Left - Chris Harris

2023 General Tire 200

ARCA Menards Series at Talladega



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Three-Pit Stop Strategy Prevails at Barber as Scott McLaughlin Takes the Checkered Flag

April 30, 2023 - Barber Motorsports Park, Alabama

By Chris Harris



Scott McLaughlin celebrates in Victory Lane after winning the 2023 Children's of Alabama Indy Grand Prix

Photo by Anthony Bristol

Scott McLaughlin got the win at Barber Motorsports Park in the 2023 Children's of Alabama Indy Grand Prix. His team's three-pit stop strategy proved to be the winning choice over the two-stop strategy of polesitter Romain Grosjean. After a late race pass for the lead, the fresher tires of McLaughlin allowed him to build a two-second lead over Grosjean and cruise to victory. On only two pit stops, Grosjean had to drive conservatively to save fuel and preserve his tires, while the three-stoppers could be more aggressive. Grosjean finished second after holding off a surging Will Power, who was also on a three-stop strategy. Power was unable to catch Grosjean with worn tires and in the dirty air and had to settle for third. Two-stoppers Pato O'Ward and Alex Palou finished fourth and fifth, respectively.

To start the race, Grosjean led the first 30 laps after a brief challenge on the opening laps by O'Ward and Palou. After his first pit stop, Grosjean gave up the lead to Josef Newgarden, who was on a three-stop strategy and had already pitted once. On lap 37, McLaughlin took the lead for the first time, just before Newgarden came in for his second pit stop. One lap later, after an incident that left Sting Ray Robb's car stalled near turn 9, McLaughlin and others on the three-stop strategy took the opportunity to pit, hoping the

caution flag would be thrown at a favorable moment. Indeed, race officials would wait until lap 39 to bring out the caution, which benefited the drivers who were on pit road at the time and didn't have to run a full out lap under green. The yellow did save some fuel for the two-stop drivers but hurt three-stopper Newgarden, who had pitted a lap earlier and thus made his whole stop under green.

On the lap 42 restart after the pit stop cycle, Grosjean led, followed by McLaughlin, O'Ward, Palou, and Christian Lundgaard. Grosjean again kept the lead throughout the run until his final pit stop on lap 60, when McLaughlin took over. Meanwhile, in third place, Josef Newgarden would hold up much of the field, including Scott Dixon, Will Power, Alexander Rossi, and Felix Rosenqvist, which gave the top two drivers a big lead. McLaughlin gave up the lead on lap 63 as he made his final pit stop, temporarily putting Will Power out in front. On lap 64, as Grosjean headed up the hill out of Turn 1, McLaughlin came out of his pit stop just ahead but on cold tires. After battling for most of the lap, Grosjean made a move to the outside in Turn 16 and was able to squeeze to the inside of McLaughlin in Turn 17 for the pass. The move put Grosjean in the lead once the top three drivers pitted.

Grosjean maintained the lead until there were 20 laps to go, just after running out of push-to-pass. Grosjean seemed confused about running out, asking his team over the radio, "My overtake is gone?" and didn't think he could defend against McLaughlin in that case. Then, making a critical mistake, Grosjean went wide in Turn 5, and McLaughlin capitalized, getting by in the straightaway between turns 7 and 8. From that point, McLaughlin sailed to victory unchallenged, almost two seconds ahead, with Grosjean in second and Will Power just behind in third.

When asked about the three-stop strategy after the race, McLaughlin called it a "happy driver strategy", referring to being able to drive full-throttle rather than having to hold back to save fuel. McLaughlin's win was his first of the season and his fourth overall in his IndyCar career. With his second-place finish, Grosjean was again denied his first IndyCar win after finishing second at Long Beach and being in the running for the win at St. Petersburg. When asked about his finish after the race, Grosjean said "It hurt; I'm going to be honest", mentioning getting unlucky with the caution flag and the three-stop strategy prevailing. Grosjean also congratulated McLaughlin for his win and remained hopeful, saying, "Our day will come."

Children's of Alabama Indy Grand Prix

NTT IndyCar Series at Barber Motorsports Park

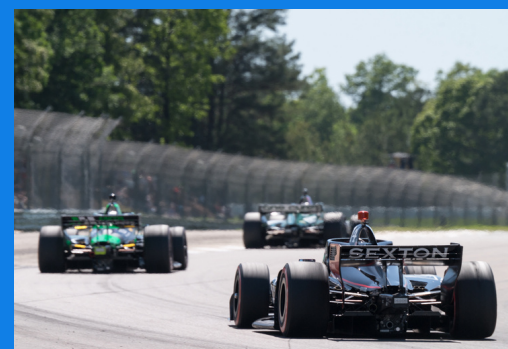


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Children's of Alabama Indy Grand Prix

NTT IndyCar Series at Barber Motorsports Park



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Indy NXT by Firestone Grand Prix of Alabama



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Children's of Alabama Indy Grand Prix

Extended Event Photos



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Photo by Chris Harris



107th
Indianapolis
500



107th Indianapolis 500

Race Weekend



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Photo Credits: Top - Anthony Bristol; Middle Left, Bottom Row - Chris Harris



Adam Driver - Honorary Starter



Drew Powell



Jordan Chiles



Jewel - National Anthem Singer



Stephanie Beatriz - Grand Marshal



Titus O'Neil



Larry O'Brien NBA Championship Trophy



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Newgarden Wins the 107th Running of the Indy 500 after Red Flag Controversy

May 28th, 2023 - Indianapolis Motor Speedway, Indiana

By Chris Harris



Josef Newgarden celebrates after winning his first ever Indianapolis 500

Photo by Anthony Bristol

Josef Newgarden won the 2023 Indy 500 after passing previous winner Marcus Ericsson on the final lap of the race. The win came after a series of red flags that stopped the race three times in the final 15 laps. The last of these came with three laps to go, after an incident on the previous restart left two cars disabled near the start/finish line. With the end of the race being so near, the move to throw the red flag was controversial because the drivers would be forced to restart on just one pace lap without being able to fully warm up their tires. Newgarden restarted second after the pace lap, with Ericsson ahead and Santino Ferrucci behind. He was able to get around Ericsson in Turn 2 and then maintained the lead through Turn 4, where he dove down below the apron to block a potential move for the lead. Ericsson was unable to get by, and Newgarden crossed the finish line less than one tenth of a second ahead. Ferrucci finished in third, followed by Álex Palou and Alexander

Rossi.

After a victory lap, Newgarden parked the No. 2 Team Penske Chevrolet on the yard of bricks and jumped out of the car, pumping both fists in celebration. As he made his way toward the grandstands, Newgarden unexpectedly climbed through an opening in the catch fence and went up in the stands to celebrate with fans. The Team Penske crew rushed over to the start/finish line to celebrate with their driver and climbed the fence before continuing the celebration on the victory podium. After Newgarden was given his victory ring and wreath, the celebrations concluded with the traditional drinking of the milk and kissing of the bricks.

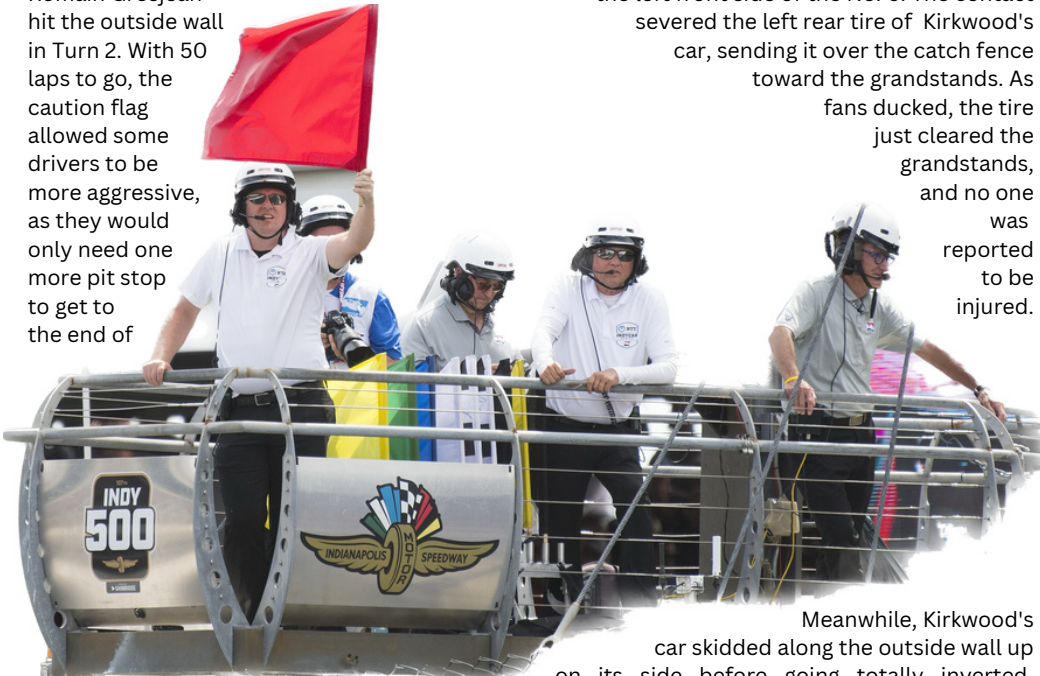
As a whole, the 107th Indianapolis 500 ran relatively smoothly for the first half of the race. Pole sitter Álex Palou and second-place starter Rinus VeeKay traded the lead for the

first 30 laps before Felix Rosenqvist would take the lead on lap 32, around the time of the first pit stops. The three drivers went on to lead most of the laps until lap 66, when Pato O'Ward took the lead for the first time. There was only one caution in the first half of the race, which came on lap 92, when rookie Sting Ray Robb tried to pass Graham Rahal to the inside in Turn 1. Robb lost control in the grass and hit the outside wall, ending his race.

The other main drama in the first half of the race occurred on pit road, where a few drivers had trouble maintaining control of their cars when exiting their pit boxes. The first of these incidents occurred when Katherine Legge spun and brushed pit wall, causing her to have to come back to pit road. Damage from the incident eventually ended the race for Legge, who was making her first Indy 500 start in 10 years. A similar thing happened on lap 95, when Rinus VeeKay lost control exiting pit

road, hitting Álex Palou. The incident severely hurt both drivers' chances of winning, as VeeKay was given a pass-through penalty, and damage to Palou's front wing forced him to spend more time on pit road. Fortunately for the two drivers, the incident occurred under caution, and neither car went a lap down.

After Arrow McLaren teammates O'Ward and Rosenqvist traded the lead for a while, the real action started after a caution on lap 150, when Romain Grosjean hit the outside wall in Turn 2. With 50 laps to go, the caution flag allowed some drivers to be more aggressive, as they would only need one more pit stop to get to the end of



the race on fuel. The patience exhibited in the early parts of the race disappeared as drivers became more desperate to get to the front.

On lap 157, Newgarden had made his way to the lead for the first time, with Ericsson and Ferrucci behind him for the green flag restart. Ericsson took the lead for a lap, before being passed by Ferrucci, who led until the final regularly scheduled pit stops. The crowd erupted in cheers in response to the pass, as Ferrucci was driving the Patriotic themed Homes For Our Troops car for A.J. Foyt Enterprises and was hoping to become the first Foyt Racing driver to win the Indianapolis 500 in 24 years.



Felix Rosenqvist hits the wall in an incident that would lead to the first red flag of the race

Photo by Chris Harris

With 17 laps to go, Pato O'Ward had made his way to the front to take the top spot among drivers in contention for the win. The drivers

ahead still needed to make a final pit stop, making O'Ward the effective leader. Behind O'Ward was Ericsson, followed by Rosenqvist and Newgarden. As the group crossed the start/finish line, Newgarden made a pass on Rosenqvist to the outside of Turn 1. Rosenqvist got loose in the dirty air from Newgarden's car and hit the outside wall, sending him spinning down toward the inside of the track. As Kyle Kirkwood came by, he was unable to avoid Rosenqvist's car and clipped the left front side of the No. 6. The contact severed the left rear tire of Kirkwood's car, sending it over the catch fence toward the grandstands. As fans ducked, the tire just cleared the grandstands, and no one was reported to be injured.

Meanwhile, Kirkwood's car skidded along the outside wall up on its side before going totally inverted. Fortunately, both drivers were okay. The red flag came out with 14 laps to go, stopping the race for the first time.

After the red flag lifted and pits opened, the last of the drivers who hadn't pitted came to pit road, leaving O'Ward as the leader, followed by Ericsson, Newgarden, Rossi, and Ferrucci. With nine laps to go, after the first attempt at a restart was waved off on the prior lap, Ericsson went by O'Ward before Newgarden passed them both in one move. O'Ward tried to retake second from Ericsson, going first to the outside and then back to the inside. O'Ward then lost control in the grass and made contact with Ericsson. While Ericsson escaped without damage, O'Ward hit the outside wall, ending his race. Simon Pagenaud and rookie Agustín Canapino were caught in the aftermath, ending the day for them as well. The red flag came out for the second time with six laps to go.

With 5 laps to go, Newgarden was in front, followed by Ericsson, Ferrucci, Rossi, and Palou. Almost immediately on the restart, before the cars had cleared the start/finish line, several cars got together toward the back of the pack, leaving the cars of Ed Carpenter and Benjamin Pedersen immobilized on the track near the flag stand. After a caution flag was thrown, the red flag was finally thrown with three laps to go. This allowed for track clean up and, after pace laps, would make the race a one-lap shootout for the finish.

Ericsson was deemed to be in front prior to the restart, which gave Newgarden the opportunity to make a last-lap pass for the win. That opportunity came in Turn 2, and Newgarden capitalized, getting his first Indy 500 win and team owner Roger Penske's 19th Indy 500 win.



Tony Kanaan signs autographs the day before the race

Photo by Chris Harris

After the race, the drivers had mixed reactions to the decision to throw the final red flag so late in the race. Newgarden, being the winner, was in favor of the move, saying that he "was happy they did it to give a good finish". He then added, "I've seen a lot of situations where it didn't go our way; today went our way, and I'll take it. I'll take it all day." Ferrucci, who finished third, said "I think IndyCar did the right decision" allowing a "green flag finish for the fans". Ericsson, on the other hand, was upset with the decision, saying in the post-race press conference, "I don't think that was a fair way to end the race", citing safety concerns and not having enough laps to properly warm up the tires. Rossi, though visibly disappointed with the outcome of the race for his team, said "you could see arguments to both sides", but added that he had "never seen a 'leave pit lane to a white flag' before".

On a final note, the 107th Indy 500 marked the last start for 2004 NTT IndyCar Series champion and 2013 Indy 500 winner Tony Kanaan. Kanaan made his final start driving the Arrow McLaren No. 66 Chevrolet, qualifying ninth. He finished on the lead lap of the race in 16th, battling his old friend Hélio Castroneves for 15th, just like if it were for the lead. Kanaan later told reporters that he told Hélio, "I [dropped] a tear because of that", and that Hélio had told him the same. Another notable moment in Kanaan's race occurred when he made a pass attempt on Scott McLaughlin by driving all four wheels of his car in the grass. Kanaan said of the move, "That was okay, right?" After the race, Kanaan also commented on what the Indy 500 meant to him, saying "it changed my life". Kanaan told the story of his promise to his dad that he would win it one day, the resulting struggles, and the relationships that were built along the way. Kanaan's message was that what really mattered was not his racing success but the ability to inspire people to do better, saying "hopefully I made a difference in this sport". To conclude, Kanaan said that he would "always be an IndyCar driver", an Indy 500 winner, and would always try to "make people aware of IndyCar the way they deserve to be."

The 107th Running of the Indianapolis 500 Presented by Gainbridge

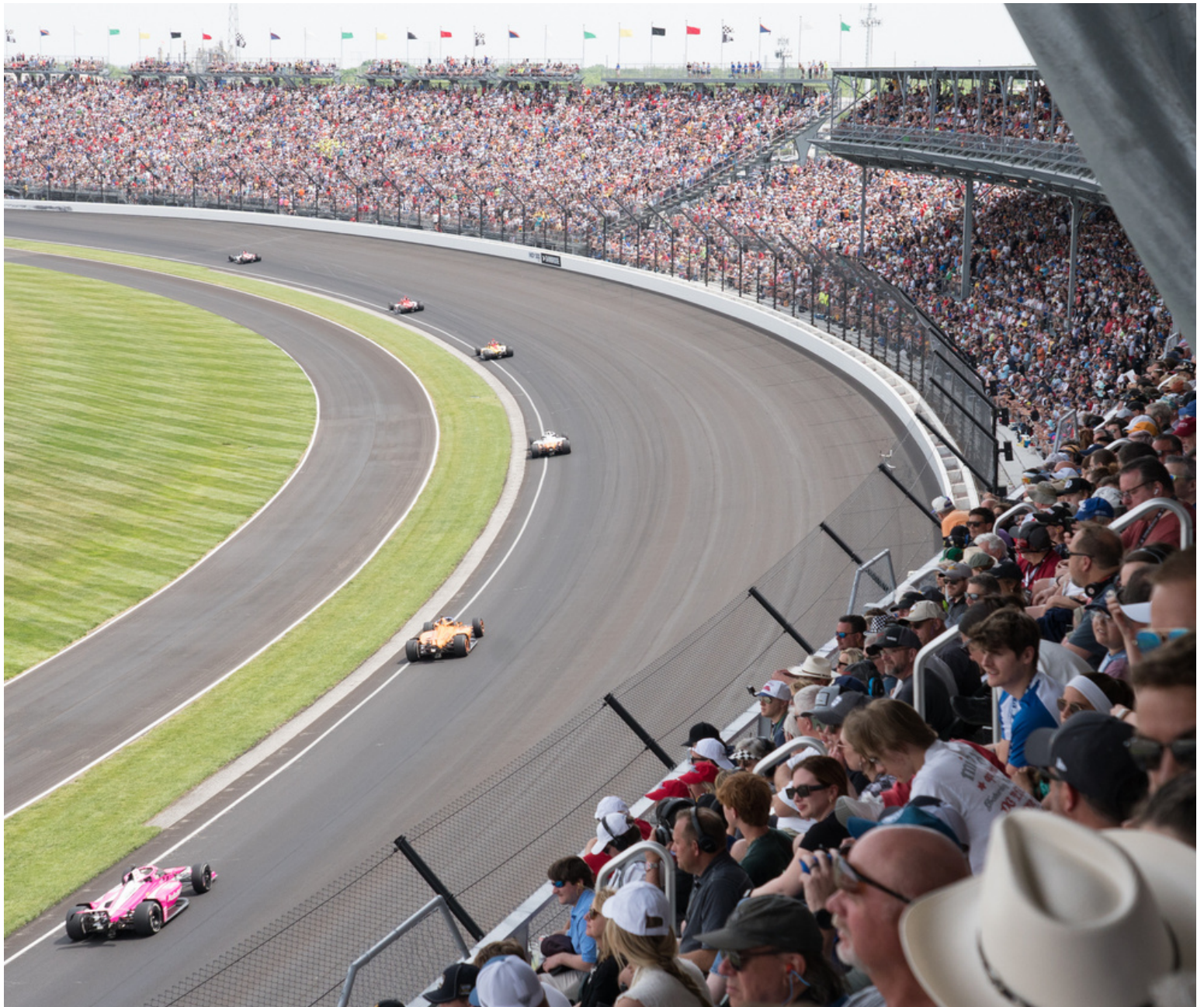


Photo Credits: Top - Anthony Bristol; Bottom - Chris Harris



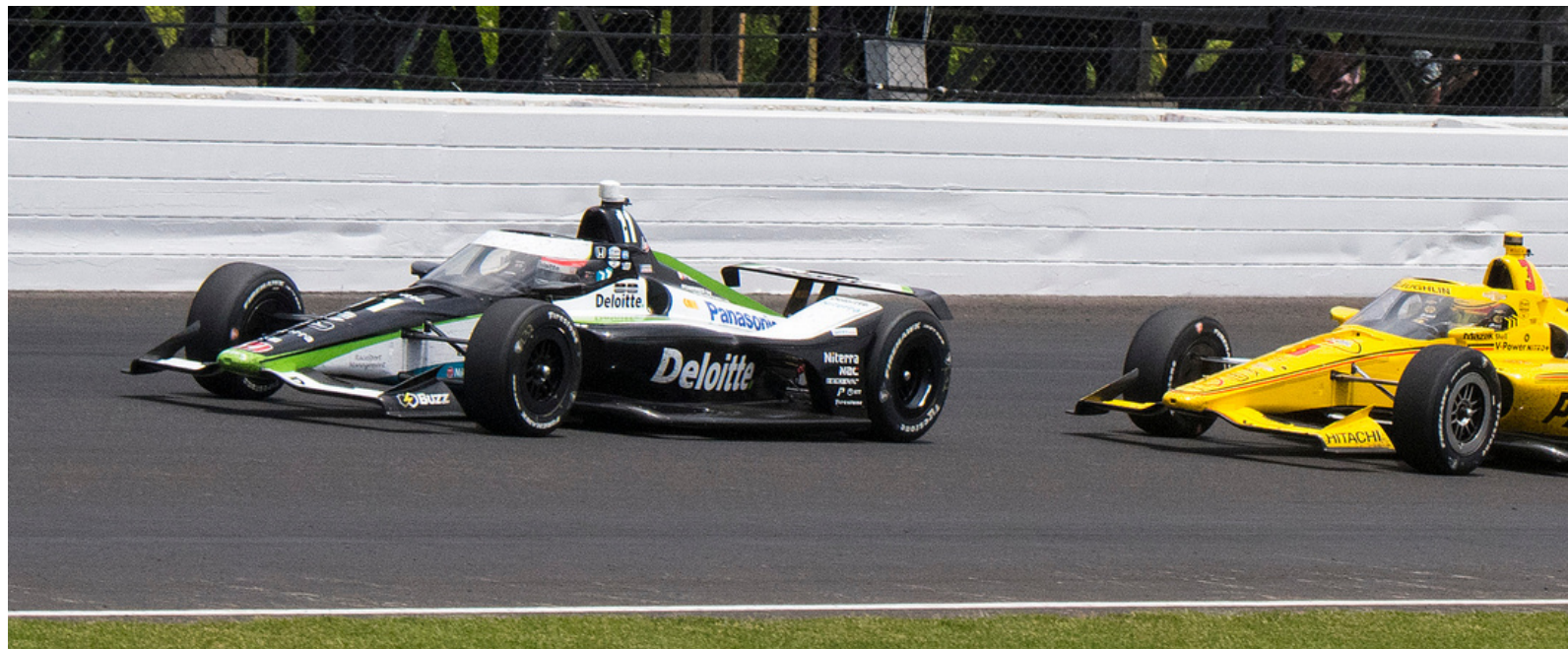




Photo Credits: Bottom Right - Anthony Bristol; Middle Right- Chris Harris

107th Indianapolis 500

Post Race





Photo Credits: Left Column - Anthony Bristol; Right Column - Chris Harris



107th Indianapolis 500 Fans



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