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Final-lap Daytona crash kills racing giant Earnhardt

Career highlights

- Winston Cup Championships: 7
- IRCA Championships: 3
- American Driver of the Year: 2
- Won record nine races at Talladega Superspeedway
- Owens record 14 victories in all forms of racing at Daytona Speedway
- Career pole positions: 22
- Career top 10 finishes: 265
- Career top 10 finishes: 464



Dale Earnhardt won the Winston Cup seven times.

By Dick Brinker
BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Dale Earnhardt, one of the great stars in auto racing history, died yesterday from injuries in a last-lap crash at the Daytona 500.

The seven-time Winston Cup champion known as "The Intimidator" for his aggressive driving had to be cut out of his car after slamming into the wall on the final turn of the race while fighting for position.

He was taken to the hospital accompanied by his son, Dale Jr., a young NASCAR star who finished second in the race. The elder Earnhardt's wife, Teresa, also was at the hospital.

"This is undoubtedly one of the toughest announcements I have ever personally had to make. We've lost Dale Earnhardt," NASCAR President Mike Helton said.

Earnhardt, 41, died instantly from head injuries, said Dr.

Steve Robinson, a physician at Halifax Medical Center.

"There was nothing that could have been done for him," he said.

The death comes at a time that driver safety issues are under increased scrutiny. Three NASCAR drivers were killed in accidents last season.

The accident happened a half mile from the finish of the NASCAR season-opener, won by Michael Waltrip.

Earnhardt, running fourth,

graced Sterling Martin's car, crashed into the wall at the high-banked fourth turn going about 100 mph, then was smacked hard by Ken Schrader.

"NASCAR has lost its greatest driver ever, and I personally have lost a great friend," NASCAR Chairman Bill France said.

SEE CRASH / A11

Coverage of the Daytona 500 and a more detailed look of Earnhardt's career: C1

Palestinians protest air raids in Iraq



Palestinian women flash victory signs and shout anti-Iraq slogans yesterday, joining 1,000 others outside Capas City in a protest denouncing the U.S.-British air strikes in Iraq last week. The protesters also expressed their support for Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, who has vowed to retaliate for the strikes. Story: A10

Vandals hit Mission San Xavier a 2nd time

By Kelly Lotz
SECOND OF TWO

For the second time in a week, the historic Mission San Xavier del Bac was vandalized.

Early yesterday, two plaster statues near the front door of the 30-year-old mission's tertiary chapel were broken and a third was damaged. A column of children's photographs on a bulletin board near the gift shop was torn to shreds.

The vandalism was discovered at 2 a.m. by Tohono O'odham police officers.

"It occurred while our officers were out on another call," Tohono O'odham Nation Police Chief Lawrence Seligman said.

"I know this is true because we checked once at 12 a.m. and

again at 2 a.m."

Seligman said he is concerned that people wanting to cause harm can easily monitor the comings and goings of officers in the dark since the rural area is only covered by brush and trees.

Even though the incident was similar to the first act of vandalism early last week, Seligman said Tohono O'odham investigators are keeping an "open mind" to catch the vandals.

The mission has an alarm system and the church's outer gate is locked every night, but the weak spot is the courtyard on the west side. Only a short adobe wall, which serves as a decorative device, blocks intruders.

SEE MISSION / A11

Clinton defends pardon of Rich

Critics find fault with op-ed column

By David Ho
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Former President Bill Clinton gave his fullest defense yet of the Marc Rich pardon yesterday but failed to silence critics who argue that political donations and connections helped the fugitive financier's cause.

"I want every American to know that, while you may disagree with this decision, I made it on the merits as I saw them, and I take full responsibility for it," Clinton wrote in an op-ed column in The New York Times.

The suggestion that I granted the pardons because Mr. Rich's former wife, Denise, made political contributions and contributed to the Clinton library foundation is utterly false.

Clinton also wrote that three well-known Republican lawyers who once represented Rich "reviewed and advocated" the case for his pardon. All three denied that assertion. "I was astounded," one said.

The former president's last-minute pardon of Rich, who has lived in Switzerland since fleeing a 1983 indictment on tax evasion and other charges, has prompted an investigation by federal prosecutors in New York and congressional hearings.

Investigators want to know if Rich bought his pardon by passing money through his ex-wife, Denise Rich, who has acknowledged making large contributions both to Hillary Rodham

Diamondback difficulties

Colangelo trying to remain upbeat in face of his team's financial woes

By Jack Magruder
ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Diamondbacks managing general partner Jerry Colangelo was among the guests at a baseball luncheon in Phoenix last week.

When Colangelo was introduced, the emcee said "I'll bet you are ready for this (new season)."

"Can we start now?" Colangelo said, to chuckles all around.

The recent problems with Colangelo's other sports entry, the Phoenix Suns, have been well-documented.

After Suns guard Andrei Kirilenko was accused of intimidating his former girlfriend while carrying a pistol, guard Jason Kidd was arrested on allegations of domestic violence. A few days after that, forward Clifford Robinson was arrested on charges of DUI.

It has been a trying 12 months for Colangelo, whose D'Backs struggled both at the gate and on the field last season.



Jerry Colangelo has seen his season struggle.

On his weekly radio program earlier this winter, Colangelo even hinted that he was getting hounded out, and that he might be ready to chuck it all.

But that was then. The Suns have won two straight, second-year forward Shawn Marion is emerging as a genuine star and it is baseball season again.

"Enthusiasm springs eternal," Colangelo said Thursday before leaving for Springfield, Ill., for a dinner with the governor of Illinois, George H. Ryan, to discuss a building project at the Italian-American sports hall of fame in Chicago.

"That's what's great about spring training and the whole bit. It's an exciting time."

On the opening of the D'Backs' fourth spring training in Tucson, critics would say — and have said — that such optimism is misplaced. Each of the D'Backs' projected opening day starters will be older

SEE COLANGELO / A11

More attacks feared



Thomas S. Wood / Utah State Dept. of Agriculture. A.A.A. Africanized bee removal specialists operations manager, examines a colony at a Northeast home.

Rains give rise to greater Africanized bee numbers

By Thomas Stauffer
SECOND OF TWO

The plentiful rains that have drenched the hills with wildflowers also have spawned a bumper crop of nasty Africanized bees, which have now infiltrated all 15 Arizona counties.

"We could be in for some very dangerous attack situations," said Tom Martin, who owns AAA Africanized Bee Removal Specialists. "We are looking at them as being time bombs."

Attacks from Africanized bees decreased the last two years due to near-drought conditions, which starved out smaller colonies, Martin said.

The conditions created smaller colonies that didn't produce extra honey to survive, while larger colonies with more work-

er bees and a propensity to store more honey survived, Martin said.

"African bees, by and large, are not prone to sting that much honey. However, there are those larger colonies that will store enough that they are good survivors," he said. "So we have more of these larger, more populous colonies that sting in much greater numbers and will be much more aggressive in protecting their honey stores."

The surviving colonies will reap the benefits of the more than 7 inches of rain recorded in the Tucson area since October, said Eric Erickson, director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Carl Hayden Bee Research Center at the University of Arizona.

SEE SWARM / A11

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A PUBLISHED NEWSPAPER
MAY 2001, No. 30

50136 00001 3