



Highlights and Happenings:

The 55th running of the Daytona 500 on FOX earned a 9.9 rating and 22 share, which is a 24-percent increase from 2012 and the highest rating for "The Great American Race" since 2008. According to FOX, ratings were up 91 percent in Chicago, 64 percent in San Francisco, 60 percent in Los Angeles, 59 percent in Boston and 43 percent in New York. The average rating for women between the ages of 18 and 34 grew by 16 percent. FOX said 21.4 million people were watching the final 15 minutes when **Jimmie Johnson**, driving the No. 48 **Lowe's** Chevrolet SS, won his second career Daytona 500.

In other television news, the SPEED network notched a 20-percent across-the-board ratings increase on Sunday. Notably, "Wind Tunnel," which featured an interview with **Rick Hendrick**, was up 20 percent, with the "Victory Lane" post-race show up 54 percent.

Johnson, **Hendrick** and crew chief **Chad Knaus** will be on hand today in Las Vegas for the **Lowe's** international sales meeting, where the trio will appear in front of more than 1,700 store managers. This afternoon, it was announced that [Lowe's will return as the full-season primary sponsor](#) of the No. 48 Hendrick Motorsports team for 2014 and 2015. Johnson, Hendrick and Knaus discuss the relationship [in this YouTube video](#).

The Daytona 500 drew more than 565,000 mentions in social media, the highest NASCAR-related volume seen since the [launch of the sanctioning body's Fan and Media Engagement Center](#) in Charlotte. The data eclipsed the previous single-day high by 440 percent.

While retaining its exclusive marketing rights within the sport, **Sprint** has worked with NASCAR to [improve at-track connectivity for fans](#). As part of its entitlement sponsorship renewal agreement, Sprint now provides tracks with the flexibility to have unbranded cellular towers from other wireless providers on premises during race events. All NASCAR tracks will now be able to offer Wi-Fi to all fans in attendance and can offer other cell carriers the option to provide the necessary equipment to boost their signal on property. Sprint service customers will continue to enjoy several premium benefits -- many for free -- unavailable to other customers of other carriers.

NASCAR recently unveiled a [new track drying technology](#) during Speedweeks in Daytona, aimed at speeding up the track drying process and improving the race-viewing experience for fans. Eventually, NASCAR expects an 80 percent reduction in track drying times.

Jimmie Johnson is a media darling this week. By the time he finally arrives at Phoenix International Raceway, the Daytona 500 champion will have made appearances in Daytona Beach, Fla., Charlotte, N.C., Bristol, Conn., New York, Dallas-Fort Worth, Las Vegas, Los Angeles and Phoenix. His media opportunities will have included multiple ESPN platforms, [Good Morning America](#), The Dan Patrick Show, Jim Rome, CNN Newsroom, Morning Express with Robin Meade, Michael and Kelly, [The Late Show with David Letterman](#), FOX Business, EXTRA, and more.

Rick Hendrick and **Dale Earnhardt Jr.** spent Tuesday in Washington, D.C., where they attended the **National Guard** Youth Foundation ChalleNGe Gala. Hendrick accepted the ChalleNGe Champion Award, which recognizes individuals, organizations or companies whose generous actions have had an immediate impact on the lives of ChalleNGe cadets. He also announced that Hendrick Motorsports will

auction a truck owned by President George W. Bush at Barrett-Jackson Palm Beach (April 4-6), with proceeds benefitting NGYF.

Emmy-winning entertainment journalist Kelley L. Carter [recounted her Daytona 500 experience](#) for ESPNW, touching on diversity, the “Danica Factor” and the differences in the fan experience from other sports. “Racing fans are rewarded for their loyalty,” she writes. “Before the flag goes down, fans can hang out on the field right next to the drivers and get right up front in the action -- so close you can almost touch the famous, fastest driving folks of all time.” Read her full story [here](#).

The Harlem Shake craze continues. After the **Pepsi MAX** version featuring **Jeff Gordon** [racked up nearly 5 million views](#) on YouTube, the No. 48 **Lowe’s** team [got into the act](#) after Sunday’s Daytona 500.

FOX featured Hendrick Motorsports in a [nearly five-minute Daytona 500 pre-race segment](#). The piece was filmed in January and included **Rick Hendrick** and all four of the team’s drivers.

Beginning in 2014, the Budweiser Duels will be run [under the lights in prime time](#). Historically, the 150-mile qualifying races have been run on Thursday afternoon leading into the Daytona 500.
