

# NEW MEXICO MOTORSPORTS

AUGUST 2016

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*Report* \$5



**WHO IS  
DAN  
BROCKETT?**

**RINGERS vs.  
REGULARS**

**GEOFF BODINE  
THOUGHTS ON  
CONCUSSIONS**





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Dan Brockett

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# Who is Dan Brockett?

By David Swope

Hometown:  
**Albuquerque**



**D**rifting is a driving technique where the driver intentionally causes loss of traction in the rear wheels while maintaining control for the entirety of a corner. This technique is called oversteering and is usually engaged by using the e-brake to initiate the drift. A car is drifting when the rear slip angle is greater than the front slip angle, to such an extent that often the front wheels are pointing in the opposite direction of the turn.

Competitions are held worldwide and are judged according to the speed, angle, showmanship and line taken through a corner or set of corners. Points are awarded for each category and the driver with the most points wins. Tandem drifting is where two cars are drifting at the same time with additional points awarded for how close the following car is to the lead car.

Usually, drift cars are light to moderate weight rear-wheel-drive, all-wheel-drive coupes and sedans equipped with a large range of power levels. There have also been all wheel drive rally cars that have been converted to rear wheel drive. Imports such as the Nissan 240SX feature heavily in drifting; however they are usually highly modified.

The Formula Drift Professional series, cars range from highly tuned Japanese automobiles reflecting the original styles of drifting, to all new age makes and models. Due to no power limit restrictions in the series, it is not uncommon for competitors to utilize a variety of different power plants. Popular variations of Chevrolet "LS" engines are often being seen bolted down to Japanese frames.

The New Mexico Drift scene got started at Sandia Speedway sometime around 2004. Road Racers started pushing the limit beyond what their tires would bear. Gary Lang hosted Drifting events that included Pro-Am qualifiers for Formula Drift. Will Fox, founder of Racing Southwest, and Andrew McGibbon created an event called the Drift Cross that combined Drifting and Auto Cross.

Today's Drifting events at Sandia Speedway are hosted by Whiskey Garage and its visionary, Dan Brockett. When I first met Dan, he was introduced to me as "Turbo" Dan. That was sometime around 2010 and I always assumed it paid homage to his ability to drive his turbocharged 240SX. I recently sat down with Dan to find out "who is Dan Brockett?"

**When did your love of cars and drift get started?**

"I really did not have much interest in cars until about 2002. I was into BMX and skateboarding. I bought a WRX and started doing auto cross, time attacks and track days at Sandia with Wallace Bow. The drift thing started at a Grip vs. Slip Day I went to at Sandia in 2007. I couldn't get the car to drift but I was hooked."

"I was frustrated because I could not get the car to drift. One night after League Racing at Albuquerque Indoor Karting, I couldn't even do donuts in the parking lot. My friend Tony told me to pump the tires up to 75 PSI and change the front alignment. I finally got the car to drift."

**Tell me about your Formula Drift career.**

"I competed for a full season in D1 in 2014 in both Pro1 and Pro2. In 2015 I only did Pro2 but finished 17<sup>th</sup> overall. I went into a professional motorsport with no budget, didn't have a solid team together. I basically did motorsports wrong. I was a rookie. What are you going to do?"



**What is the process to earn a pro license?**

"That is the kind of cool thing about drift. It is not like NASCAR, Indy racing or F1 where you start in Go-Karts at 3 years old and your parents pay \$30,000 per year for you to go racing. Basically, you get a rear wheel drive car and go to any of the Pro Am series events around the country. I think there are 6 or 7 of them that actually give licenses. You compete for a season in 4 to 5 events and the top 3 drivers from that season end up with a professional license. You have a much better shot at being a pro drifter than you do in any other motorsport."

**What is the impact of the Fast and the Furious movies? Did that bring people to the sport?**

"I think the movies are phenomenal. The first two brought people to the car shows. When I told people that I drifted, they would say, like "Tokyo Drift?" I would just agree. The newer movies are real movies now and less about the car scene."

**How did the Motorcycle Drift Car Battle videos on YouTube get started?**

"The first one came out in 2011. It was shortly after I had given Jim Guthrie that fateful ride that got him hooked. Nick & Ernie had come down with Matt Sanders

and wanted to shoot a drift motorcycle with a drift car. I showed them my car and they said "No Way" but Jim had just bought that shiny RX7. The video just exploded. It got 3-4 million hits in that first month."

"The second one happened because of the success of the first one. By this point Jim was competing in Formula Drift. He was at Irwindale and had a bad crash just two weeks before filming was supposed to start. He called me from the hospital bed and asked me if I wanted to go drive the Mustang and film the video. I said "yes I do." That is where "Officer" Dan was born. Lucky timing for me on that one"

"The third was shot in downtown Albuquerque. We had \$40,000 in permit fees for several locations around town. We rented out downtown for two nights in a row, Friday and Saturday night midnight till 6am. Crowd control was an issue. We got 200 plus noise complaints."

**Number four took you to Florida. What was Miami Speedway like?**

"It was great. I ran one round of Formula D there back in 2014. So I was kind of familiar with the track. I did not realize how steep the banking was on the NASCAR track was until we did the video.

**Continued next page**

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Continued from previous page

The body was leaning over so far that the body was touching the wheels causing them to smoke. People thought we were drifting the whole track. That 1500 horsepower Mustang was fast."

**Are there plans for a fifth Motorcycle Drift Car Battle?**

"We will be starting Drift #5 soon. Nick and Ernie want to get back to basics I have done some other drift videos in Japan. The one for Optima Batteries involved flying over there, buying a car, throwing parts at it, setting it up and competing at a drift event."

**What is Whiskey Garage?**

"Whiskey Garage started in 2009 with a Japanese Style sticker I made and started selling them. I made t-shirts and hats, selling them at events. It funded my racing career."

**What is the No Coast Drift Party?**

"In the drifting world there are all kinds of bashes. Bashes are different than other competitive drift events. They are fun. There is a bash on the West Coast that is called the All Star Bash. There is an East Coast Bash and Lone Star Bash. We don't have any coasts here. We have lots of beach but no ocean so we are No Coast."

Check out the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual No Coast Drift Party on September 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> at Sandia Speedway. An estimated 40 plus drivers are coming from out of state with camping, bands, bond fire, antics and all the stuff that goes with No Coast. Oh yeah, there will be drifting.

Follow Dan Brockett @thedanbrockett and Facebook.com/thedanbrockett



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# ROAD COURSE RINGERS vs. THE REGULARS

## Drivers give their take

Story By Isabel Gonzalez

Photos by: Brian DeGruchy/The Racing Experts

When it comes to the Sprint Cup Series road races, the topic of ringers vs. regulars might not be as relevant as it was before.

A decade ago, it was not uncommon to see ringers show up for the two road courses on the Sprint Cup schedule at Sonoma Raceway and Watkins Glen International.

Teams with smaller budgets would hire these specialists in hopes of getting a strong finish to maximize points earned. These drivers usually came from other disciplines of racing where road course tracks are standard.

This strategy produced some good results for teams with drivers such as Mark Donohue, Mario Andretti and Ron Fellows who left their mark as road-course experts.

Today, however, ringers don't seem to show up as often or make as big of an impact anymore. Ringers are no longer expected to finish top-ten or even top 20.

David Ragan, a regular in the Sprint Cup Series and driver of the No. 23 Toyota Camry for BK Racing, told The New Mexico Motorsports Report At Sonoma Raceway the sport has changed a lot throughout the years.

"I think ten, twelve, fourteen years ago, they could come into the Sprint Cup Series and be successful," he said. "The guys like Ron Fellows and Boris Said...had a lot of extensive road racing background, and they could really show well, but I think the field has gotten so competitive. They're going to struggle to run in the top 25 or top 30."

Ragan then said he thought it was the regulars who now have control of the tracks.

"I'm guaranteeing you'll see a Sprint Cup regular win the race," he said.

With this comment, Ragan correctly predicted the results for the 2016 Toyota/Save Mart 350 race at Sonoma.

The winner was a Sprint Cup Series regular, Tony Stewart, who also happens to have past success on road course racing.

Three non-regular drivers showed up at Sonoma: Patrick Carpentier, Dylan Lupton and Cody Ware, but Carpentier might be the only one who can truly be called a ringer.

While Ware and Lupton both have road-racing backgrounds, Carpentier came out of retirement for that weekend to drive the No. 32 Ford for Go Fas Racing.

From 2007 to 2011, Carpentier recorded 40 starts in the Sprint Cup Series. This year's race at Sonoma was his first premiere series start in five years.

He said that after racing for 27 years, he was just giving it his best shot and tried to enjoy himself. He started the race in 34th spot, eventually finishing 37th.

Both Lupton and Ware were scheduled to make their Sprint Cup Series debut that weekend, but only Lupton made it past qualifying round.

Ware was going to drive the No. 55 Toyota Camry for Premium Motorsports but he fell for short by 1.136 seconds, qualifying 41st overall.

Lupton said he saw Sonoma as an opportunity to begin looking ahead in his career and that if he got the chance to do a couple more races, he would take advantage of these opportunities to prove himself.



The 22-year old said he felt confident about his road course driving skills, but that he also wouldn't fully have an advantage at Spring Cup Series road races. This is because races like the 2016 Toyota/Save Mart 350 are longer than the K&N races and XFINITY races that we is used to, meaning he would have to approach them in a different way.

Lupton, behind the wheel of the No. 93 Toyota Camry for BK Racing, started the race on row 19 at the 38th position. He managed to climb a few spots to finish 35<sup>th</sup>.

The former NASCAR Next driver was not thrilled with his debut performance, saying he made a handful of mistakes that he could fix with more experience.

"Not what I wanted, not what I expected," Lupton said. "We all worked hard at BK Racing to get this car good. Sometimes you just miss it. We just have to go back to the drawing board and figure out what we did wrong and we can move on from there."

Lupton said he wished he had the chance to get more comfortable with his car. Not placing higher could have been lack of experience, but even ringers with more experience are not expected to finish very

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high at any of the Sprint Cup races, at least not as much as they did ten years ago.

Casey Mears, driver of the No. 13 Chevrolet SS for Germain Racing, said he thought the reason ringers weren't as competitive anymore was because Sprint Cup regulars have become more experienced with road racing these past few years and teams don't see the need to bring in a specialist anymore.

"The teams are building special purposed-built racecars now. Everybody has road-course cars," he said. "Some people used to take their oval cars and come here and just kind of convert them and knew it wasn't going to

be a good day for them because their guy didn't have a lot of experience. But those days are kind of gone."

During the 2015 season, the best finish on a road course by a ringer was Boris Said's 26th place finish at Sonoma while he drove the No. 32 car for the GO FAS Racing. The last top-ten finish he had at Sonoma was six years ago when he placed eighth.

Mears says that at this point in the history of the sport, anyone can be competitive at a road course, not just a specialist.

"The ringer thing is kind of gone as far as I'm concerned," he said.

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Story By Jim Costa – owner Yearwood Performance Center

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# Geoff's Journal: Thoughts on concussions, Dale Jr. and the return of Jeff Gordon

By Geoff Bodine, Driver Analyst

I first saw the news of Dale Earnhardt Jr. out of his racecar last week on the news. If you recall, this isn't the first time Dale Jr. is sidelined with concussion symptoms, as he sat out two races in October of 2012.

Over the years, NASCAR personnel, drivers, fans and the general public have become more aware of the effects of concussions and multiple concussions long-term.

Back when I raced in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, I know at one time, I had water splashed in my face and was told to "Keep going, keep going, what are you stopping for?"

It seems like awareness on this topic has become more known through football players, soccer players, fighters and boxers over the years. We take it for granted, but our heads are very fragile.

## Stepping Out of the Car

It doesn't matter the sport; any athlete wants to be participating, no one wants to sit out, but I give Dale Jr. a lot of credit. That's not easy to do.

I praised him for doing it in 2012 and I praise him again because he's a role model to a lot of kids. A role model is supposed to be a great example of how to conduct yourself, and he's showing the game isn't the most important thing, it's your health.

We're all wishing him well, and only time will tell if he gets back behind-the-wheel.

When I ran full-time, there was no NASCAR protocol for concussions. They have a good protocol now, where they rely on the words of the doctors involved. They used to check drivers for reaction times and memory, and I've been through some of the tests, but NASCAR will be monitoring this situation closely.

## Personal Experience with Concussions

My first head injury I can remember was in football, getting a knee to the head and getting knocked out.

Then in a modified racecar, a couple times, blew an engine and backed into a wall. I turned my head to see what I was going to hit, and that wasn't the right thing to do.

Another time at a racetrack in Seekonk, Massachusetts, a crazy car owner came over and sucker-punched me and knocked me out. That was a bad one. I couldn't remember where I was, I couldn't race that night.

We'd shake it off, potential head injuries, and



Driver Analyst Geoff Bodine  
Photo by Dante Ricci/The Racing Experts

keep going, and not think about possible consequences.

Soft walls help today, but hitting those can still produce injuries and concussions.

I'm very thankful I don't have any serious effects from all the hits I've taken over the years, not yet at least, and I pray to God I never do. My brother Brett stopped racing because doctors told him one more hit, and he may not wake up. He was very sensitive when he hit his head. Todd, our younger brother, was a little more sensitive than I was, but not as sensitive as Brett. I don't plan on hitting my head anymore, no matter what I'm doing. What I've noticed over the years, jumping off a bench or a three foot jump, my head hurts. I try not to jump off things anymore because of that.

## The Return of Jeff Gordon

I was Rick Hendrick's first driver, and I was thinking before Jeff was tabbed to drive the car, he would call me to fill-in, but he didn't, ha ha!

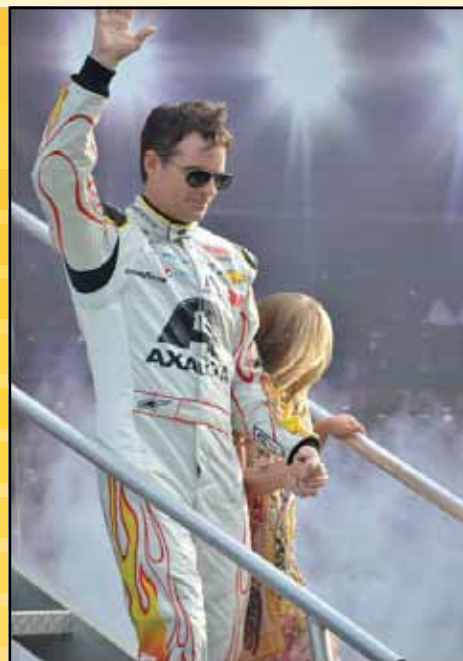
Jeff's been out of the car for only a few months, and it will be as if he hasn't missed a beat. When you look at his success at Indianapolis and Pocono, he's won multiple races at each track.

Realistically, he could win at both venues. He's not old and hasn't been removed long from the sport. Of course, aero packages are different from when he ran last year, but he will be fine. His mouth is watering, he's ready to show his competition who is boss.

## Final Thoughts

Concussions are a serious matter. I haven't heard or seen negative things about Dale Jr. sitting out, and I'm glad that's the case.

Whether he gets back inside the car or not, he will make the right decision.



Jeff Gordon walks with daughter Ella during driver introductions at Homestead-Miami Speedway prior to the start of the 2015 Ford EcoBoost 500 in November of 2015. Photo by Jeremy Thompson/The Racing Experts

A graphic for 'THE RACING EXPERTS.COM' featuring a checkered flag border and the text 'THE RACING EXPERTS.COM' in a stylized font. Below it is a photograph of several NASCAR race cars on a track, with the text 'NASCAR Coverage' in large, bold letters.

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AUG 6, SAT

YEARWOOD "TAKE IT TO THE TRACK"

Gates Open 6pm

AUG 12, FRI

YEARWOOD "TAKE IT TO THE TRACK"

Gates Open 6pm

SWDRA Bracket Challenge

AUG 13, SAT

HOT SUMMER NIGHTS: 8.5 OUTLAWS

Gates Open 2pm

Winners Challenge & Bracket Race Bonus

Points

JULY 26, FRI

YEARWOOD "TAKE IT TO THE TRACK"

Gates Open 6pm

NM Mopar Challenge

### SANDIA MOTOR SPEEDWAY

CLAY OVAL

AUGUST 6

BLAZING BATTLE NON WING SPRINTS

Racing Starts 6:30

AUGUST 20

CLASH OF CLAY WING SPRINTS

Racing Starts 6:30

AUGUST 27

SPEEDWAY SPECTACULAR NON WING

Racing Starts 6:30

SEPT 10

FALL FRENZY WING SPRINTS

Racing Starts 6:30

### SANDIA MOTOR SPEEDWAY

PAVED OVAL

AUG 26, FRI

ALL CLASSES & KARTS

Racing Starts 7pm

AUG 27, SAT

ALL CLASSES & KARTS

Racing Starts 7pm

SEPT 9, FRI

ALL CLASSES & KARTS

Racing Starts 7pm

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### NATIONAL HOT ROD ASSOCIATION

Mellow Yellow Series

AUGUST 5 - 7

NHRA NORTHWEST NATIONALS

Seattle, WA

AUGUST 18 - 21

NHRA LUCAS OIL NATIONALS

Brainerd, MN

AUG 31 - SEPT 5

NHRA US NATIONALS

Indianapolis, IN

SEPT 16 - 18

NHRA CAROLINA NATIONALS

Charlotte, NC

### NASCAR CAMPING WORLD TRUCK SERIES

AUGUST 17

UNOH 200

Bristol Motor Speedway

AUGUST 27

CAREERS FOR VETERANS 200

Michigan International Speedway

SEPTEMBER 4

CHEVROLET SILVERADO 250

Canadian Tire Motorsports Park

SEPTEMBER 16

AMERICAN ETHANOL E15 225

Chicagoland Speedway

### NASCAR - XFINITY SERIES

AUGUST 6

ZIPPO 200

Watkins Glen International

AUGUST 13

MID-OHIO 200

Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course

AUGUST 19

FOOD CITY 300

Bristol Motor Speedway

AUGUST 27

ROAD AMERICA 180

Road America

SEPTEMBER 3

HELP A HERO 200

Darlington Raceway

### NASCAR SPRINT CUP SERIES

AUGUST 7

CHEEZ-IT 355 AT THE GLEN

Watkins Glen International

AUGUST 20

PRO BASS SHOPS NIGHT RACE

Bristol Motor Speedway

AUGUST 28

PURE MICHIGAN 400

Michigan International Speedway

SEPTEMBER 4

BOJANGLES SOUTHERN 500

Darlington Raceway

### INDY CAR

AUGUST 21

ABC SUPPLY 500

Pocono Raceway

SEPTEMBER 4

GRAND PRIX AT THE GLEN

Watkins Glen International

SEPTEMBER 18

GRAND PRIX OF SONOMA

Sonoma Raceway

### FORMULA ONE

JULY 31

GERMAN GRAND PRIX

Hockenheimring

AUGUST 28

GRAND PRIX OF BELGIUM

Circuit of Spa Francorchamps

SEPTEMBER 4

ITALIAN GRAND PRIX

Autodromo Nazionale Di Monza

SEPTEMBER 18

SINGAPORE GRAND PRIX

Singapore Street Circuit

# RACING EVENT CALENDAR

**2016**

# Labor Day Bash

**R.O.D.S.**



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**SEPT. 2ND**

**JET CARS**

Gates Open 5 pm

Combo Race 6:30 pm

Show Cars run at 8 & 10 pm

**ALTEREDS**



**SEPT. 3RD**

Gates Open 10 am

Time Trials Noon

Show Cars run at

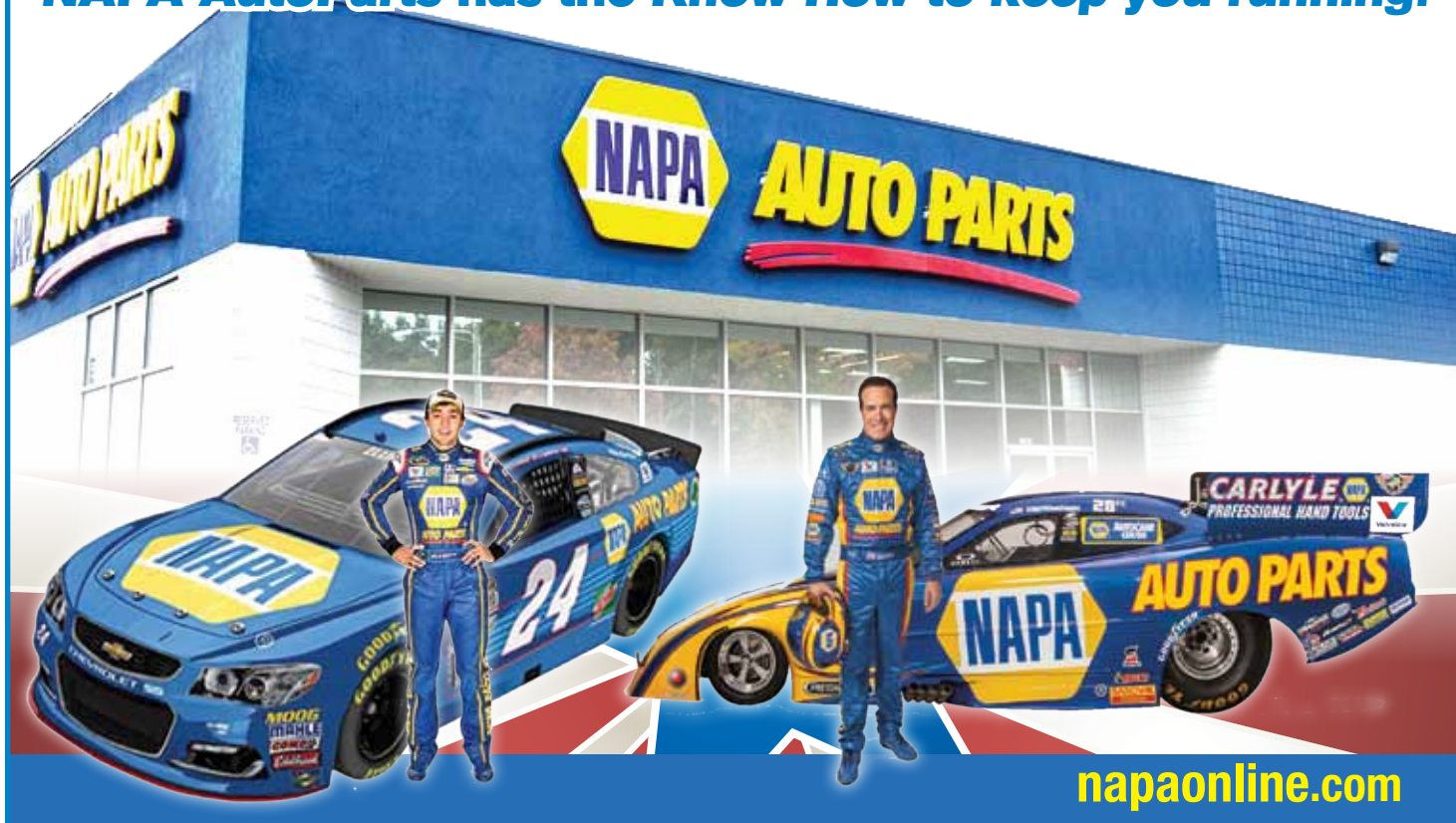
6, 8 & 10 pm



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