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Joey Logano

NASCAR'S RISING YOUNG STAR



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Joey Logano

NASCAR's Rising Young Star

By Geri Cofone Jeter

On May 24, Joey Logano turns nineteen. The youngest team member for Joe Gibbs Racing, he currently drives the #20 Home Depot Toyota in the Sprint Cup series and the #20 GameStop Toyota in the Nationwide Series. In just his third start in the 2008 Nationwide, he made history by becoming the youngest driver to win a series race. He was 18 years, 21 days old.

The Basics

Logano has been racing since 1996, when at the age of six he competed as a quarter midget racer. For the next three years, he won a series of division and regional championships in the Northeast.



However, Logano is not the only athlete in the family. His sister Danielle was a competitive figure skater who continues to skate professionally. To help further her skating career, the family moved to Georgia. This allowed Logano to take advantage of his new home's more liberal racing rules. (His home state of Connecticut maintains strict age restrictions for young racers.)



During the next few years, Logano raced Legend cars with great success, setting a track record for fourteen consecutive wins at Atlanta Motor Speedway, and winning a Lions National Championship. He was only ten.

More success followed as Logano moved up the ranks.

Nationwide Series

In 2008, Logano turned eighteen, making him eligible to compete in the NASCAR Nationwide Series. In his debut at Dover International Speedway,

he earned a sixth place finish. Less than one month later, Logano won the 2008 Meijer 300 at the Kentucky Speedway — only his third start in the Nationwide — making him the youngest winner in series history.

And there's more — in his first three races, he won the pole position; additionally, in nineteen starts, he had five top-five finishes. He has seventeen top ten finishes in his first twenty-four Nationwide races.

For the 2009 season, Logano is doing well with four top-ten finishes, two top-five, and a win in the Nashville 300 (making him the first eighteen-year-old to win two Nationwide Series races). Currently, he is in sixth place.

Sprint Cup Series

In his first full year in this series, Logano is driving for Joe Gibbs Racing. In doing so, he takes over the car previously driven by veteran Tony Stewart.



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When asked about his expectations for his first year in this challenging series, Logano says, "This is a huge learning year for me in the Home Depot Toyota." He says that his intention is to get used to the car and the various tracks during the first half of the season and go from there.

Although all of the teams have been unable to test before the season at tracks where the series will run because of a NASCAR ban on all testing

Currently, Logano, ranks 33rd in the standings. If he continues to improve throughout the year, he stands a very good chance of winning Rookie of the Year honors.

Italian Family Values

This close-knit family supports one another in true Italian fashion. When the family was preparing to move to North Carolina, Danielle said, "There better be an ice rink." Well, there wasn't

can to promote Italian culture.

Due to his youth and his sched-

ule, Logano still lives at home with his family in North Carolina. His dad travels with him on the road 100% of the time, his mom attends at least 80% of the races, and his sister Danielle attends whenever her schedule allows.

"I believe that family members should always be at the track," says his mom Deborah.

"Especially for someone my age," says Logano, "it's a big deal to have this moral support while I am on the road. It's rare, and I'm very fortunate. I couldn't be luckier."

All photos by Jeff Speer. To see more, go to www.JeffSpeer.com/Logano.



at sites hosting the Sprint Cup, Nationwide, Truck, East, and West series races, this has especially weighed heavily on Logano as the least-experienced Cup rookie.

"It's like going from high school to the NFL without any practice," says his dad Tom. "There was no 'spring training' for anyone."

one. So Tom built an ice rink (Extreme Ice Center) so his daughter could continue her career. Now, in addition to her performing schedule, Danielle has responsibilities at the ice rink.

Tom is also in the process of starting the local Italian-American club. It is still small, with approximately forty members, but he wants to do what he



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