

= Harley J. Earl Trophy =

The Harley J. Earl Trophy is the trophy presented to the winner of the premier ? and season @-@ opening ? event of the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) , the Daytona 500 . It is named after influential automobile designer Harley Earl , who served as the second commissioner of NASCAR . Earl has been known as the so @-@ called " father of the Corvette " and designer of the Firebird I prototype that adorns the trophy . The trophy is kept on display at the Daytona International Speedway , while a small replica is given to each Daytona 500 winner .

= = Description and history = =

The Harley J. Earl Trophy is named after General Motors car designer Harley Earl . Earl , the second commissioner of NASCAR , was the designer of the Chevrolet Corvette ; his Firebird I concept car provides the basis of the automobile that sits atop the trophy ; the car is often misidentified as Sir Malcolm Campbell 's " Blue Bird " land speed record car . Earl was a friend of NASCAR founder Bill France , Sr. , who named the trophy after him as a sign of respect .

The trophy is awarded to the winner of the annual Daytona 500 , known as " The Great American Race " , which acts as the season @-@ opening event for the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series (formerly known as the Nextel Cup Series , Winston Cup Series , and Grand National Series) , and is also considered the most prestigious and important event on the NASCAR schedule . The trophy is considered to be the most coveted award with which a NASCAR driver can be presented .

The Harley J. Earl Perpetual Trophy , the " official " version of the award , is housed at the Daytona International Speedway . It stands about four feet (1 @.@ 2 m) tall , five feet (1 @.@ 5 m) wide and is in the same triangular " tri @-@ oval " shape of Daytona International Speedway . It 's removed from its display once a year to appear in victory lane with the winner of the Daytona 500 . In 2010 , the trophy was removed from the Daytona International Speedway , transported to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and put on display alongside the Borg @-@ Warner Trophy ? awarded to the winner of the Indianapolis 500 ? in the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Hall of Fame Museum during the Indianapolis 500 race week .

= = The Trophy and the Award = =

Winners of the Daytona 500 through 1997 received the Harley Earl Award , a wooden trophy approximately three feet (0 @.@ 91 m) tall , adorned with silver figurines . Starting in 1998 , to celebrate the 40th running , individual winners of the Daytona 500 have been presented with a miniature replica of the Harley J. Earl Trophy , which was recreated by John Lajba , a sculptor from Omaha , Nebraska . Previously commissioned to craft a sculpture of Bill France and his wife , Ann France , for display in front of NASCAR corporate headquarters in Daytona Beach , Florida , Lajba 's work on each replica trophy requires six weeks of 12 @-@ hour days to create the Firebird I automobile , with all the work done by hand , before it gets plated in silver by A & J Plating , also located in Omaha . The first replica trophy , won in 1998 by Dale Earnhardt was originally on a marble base , but has since been switched to an acrylic stand , making it lighter . For the 2008 Daytona 500 , the 50th anniversary of the first race , the replica of the trophy , presented to winner Ryan Newman , was plated in gold rather than silver .

The replica trophies weigh 54 pounds (24 kg) , measures 18 inches (46 cm) tall , 22 inches (56 cm) wide and 12 inches (30 cm) deep .

= = Additional Daytona 500 trophies = = =

The Harley J. Earl Trophy is not the only trophy awarded at the conclusion of the annual Daytona 500 . The crew chief of the winning team receives the Cannonball Baker Trophy , named after the first commissioner of NASCAR ; the winning team owner is awarded the Governor 's Cup .

= = = Winners of the Harley J. Earl Trophy = = =

The most Harley Earl Awards and Harley J. Earl Trophy Replicas have been won by Richard Petty , often referred to as " The King " of NASCAR . Petty 's seven victories lead the four Daytona 500 wins of Cale Yarborough , and three each by Bobby Allison , Dale Jarrett and Jeff Gordon . Bill Elliott , Sterling Marlin , Michael Waltrip , Matt Kenseth , Jimmie Johnson and Dale Earnhardt , Jr. have won the Daytona 500 and Harley J. Earl Trophy twice ; twenty @-@ five other drivers have been awarded the trophy once . As of 2015 , Trevor Bayne was the youngest winner of the trophy when he won it at age 20 years , 1 day in 2011 ; Allison was the oldest winner (50 years , 2 months , 11 days) in 1988 .