

= Auto Club Speedway =

Auto Club Speedway , formerly California Speedway , is a two @-@ mile ( 3 km ) , low @-@ banked , D @-@ shaped oval superspeedway in Fontana , California which has hosted NASCAR racing annually since 1997 . It is also used for open wheel racing events . The racetrack is located near the former locations of Ontario Motor Speedway and Riverside International Raceway . The track is owned and operated by International Speedway Corporation and is the only track owned by ISC to have naming rights sold . The speedway is served by the nearby Interstate 10 and Interstate 15 freeways as well as a Metrolink station located behind the backstretch .

Construction of the track , on the site of the former Kaiser Steel Mill , began in 1995 and was completed in late 1996 . The speedway has a grandstand capacity of 68 @,@ 000 and 28 skyboxes . In 2006 , a fanzone was added behind the main grandstand . Lights were added to the speedway in 2004 with the addition of a second annual NASCAR weekend . Since 2011 , the track has hosted only one NASCAR weekend .

IndyCar returned to the track in 2012 with its season finale race ( a 500 @-@ mile night race ) ; the series previously ran a 400 @-@ mile race from 2002 to 2005 .

= Track history =

= = = Early history and construction = = =

On April 20 , 1994 , Roger Penske and Kaiser announced the construction of a racetrack on the site of the abandoned Kaiser Steel mill in Fontana , CA . A day after the announcement CART announced it would hold an annual race at the speedway . Three months later NASCAR President Bill France , Jr. agreed to sanction Winston Cup Series races at the speedway upon completion , marking the first time NASCAR has made a commitment to run a race at a track that had yet to be built . Community meetings were held to discuss issues related to the construction of the track and the local effects of events held . The local community largely supported construction of the speedway citing potentially increased land values and rejuvenation of the community . In April 1995 , after having toured the sister track Michigan International Speedway , the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the project . The California Environmental Protection Agency gave Penske permission to begin construction after Kaiser agreed to pay \$ 6 million to remove hazardous waste from the site . Construction on the site began on November 22 , 1995 with the demolition of the Kaiser Steel Mill . The 100 @-@ foot water tower , a landmark of the Kaiser property , was preserved in the center of the track to be used as a scoreboard . 3 @,@ 000 cubic yards ( 2 @,@ 300 m<sup>3</sup> ) of contaminated dirt was removed and transported to a toxic waste landfill . To prevent remaining impurities from rising to the surface , a cap of non @-@ porous polyethylene was put down and covered with 2 feet ( 0 @.@ 61 m ) of clean soil . Construction of the track was completed in late 1996 .

On January 10 , 1997 Marlboro Team Penske ' s driver Paul Tracy became the first driver to test on the new speedway . NASCAR held its first open test session on at the track from May 5 ? 7 . The official opening and ribbon cutting ceremony was held on June 20 , 1997 with the first race , a NASCAR West Series race , being held the next day .

= = California Speedway = =

The track was named the California Speedway from the time it was built through February 21 , 2008 when the Southern California Automobile Club ( Auto Club ) purchased the naming rights in a 10 @-@ year deal . Thus creating Auto Club Speedway .

= = = Expansion and additions = = =

With early success following the opening of the track , the speedway began to expand reserved grandstand seating along the front stretch with an additional 15 @, @ 777 seats . In May 1999 , an additional 28 skyboxes were added to the top of the main grandstand . In 2001 the Auto Club Dragway , a 1 / 4 mile dragstrip , was built outside of the backstretch of the main speedway . That same year , the infield of the speedway was reconfigured to hold a multipurpose road course . On April 24 , 2003 The San Bernardino County Planning Commission approved the changing of the speedway ? s conditional use permit to allow the installation of lights around the track . Later that year NASCAR announced a second annual Sprint Cup Series race at the track for the 2004 season , with the second race being run " under the lights " . NASCAR ran two weekends of racing annually until the 2011 season , when the track returned to a single annual race weekend .

In 2006 , the speedway 's midway , located behind the main grandstand , was overhauled . The new midway , called Discover IE FanZone , includes the addition of Apex ( a Wolfgang Puck restaurant ) , additional shade and lounge areas , a new retail store and an entertainment stage .

In March 2014 , Las Vegas based company Exotics Racing expanded to California by opening a new 1 @. @ 2 mile road course at the Auto Club Speedway .

= = = Configurations = = =

= = = Attendance problems = = =

Upon the addition of a second NASCAR weekend at the track in 2004 , attendance at the races dropped off dramatically , by as much as 20 @, @ 000 . With such a large attendance swing , drivers and media began to doubt if the track deserved two dates , even if the track was near Los Angeles , the nation 's second @-@ largest media market . Weather also became a concern with either extremely hot days or with rain threatening the races . All of this factored into NASCAR 's decision to remove a second race from the track with the realignment of the 2011 NASCAR schedule . Former track owner Roger Penske said the track may be located in a one @-@ race market . Track president Gillian Zucker cited bad weather windows and fans having other entertainment options as reasons for the attendance decline .

Effective in the 2014 racing season , the grandstand capacity was reduced from 92 @, @ 000 to 68 @, @ 000 . This was accomplished by removing approximately 12 @, @ 000 seats near Turn 1 and installing a hospitality area and a digital display showing speeds along the straightaway . In addition , seats were further reduced as a result of modifying average seat width from 18 inches to 23 inches . The capacity quoted does not include luxury boxes and infield seating , which when added up reaches a capacity of approximately 100 @, @ 000 .

= = = Name change = = =

On February 21 , 2008 , the Automobile Club of Southern California ( ACSC ) became the title sponsor of the raceway , making Auto Club Speedway the track 's official name . The naming rights deal will last for ten years and is worth an estimated \$ 50 to \$ 75 million . In addition to naming rights , the ACSC will have use of the facility for road tests for Westways Magazine and other consumer tests . The money will be used for capital improvements to the track .

= = = In pop culture = = =

The facility is often used for filming television shows , commercials and films . In 2000 , portions of Charlie 's Angels were filmed at the speedway , and in 2005 , portions of Herbie : Fully Loaded were filmed there . In 2007 , The Bucket List saw Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman drive a vintage Shelby Mustang and Dodge Challenger around the 2 @-@ mile ( 3 @. @ 2 km ) speedway .

A parody of the track was used in the 2006 Pixar film Cars . It is the venue for the Piston Cup tiebreaker race between the movie 's main character Lightning McQueen ( voiced by Owen Wilson )

, retiring veteran Strip " The King " Weathers ( voiced by Richard Petty ) and perennial runner @-@ up Chick Hicks ( voiced by Michael Keaton ) . The race is held at the Los Angeles International Speedway , which is a conglomeration of the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum , the Arroyo Seco in Pasadena where the Rose Bowl is located , as well as the Auto Club Speedway .

= = = Fatalities = = =

During the 1999 Marlboro 500 CART race , Canadian driver Greg Moore died in a crash along the backstretch of the track . It was determined that after sliding along the infield grass , Moore 's car hit the edge of oncoming pavement , which caused the car to flip into a concrete retaining wall . The incident prompted the track owners , ISC , to pave the backstretch of both Auto Club Speedway and its sister track Michigan International Speedway in an attempt to prevent a similar accident . Shortly after the crash , CART mandated the use of a head @-@ and @-@ neck restraint system on all ovals . The rule eventually became mandatory on all tracks .

On April 5 , 2002 , Ricky Lundgren was killed in a qualifying session for a motorcycle race .

On August 7 , 2004 , a police officer from San Diego , John Barr , died during an open track event after coming off his motorcycle .

On June 2 , 2005 , two men died while participating in an event sponsored by the San Diego Chapter of the Ferrari Owners ' Club .

On October 15 , 2010 , a 24 @-@ year @-@ old woman died while participating in a driving school at the track . The woman was driving a replica Indycar as part of the Mario Andretti Racing Experience when she lost control and hit the inside wall of the track .

= = Racing events = =

= = = Current races = = =

NASCAR Sprint Cup Series :

Auto Club 400

NASCAR Xfinity Series :

TreatMyClot.com 300

Shell Eco @-@ marathon Americas

= = = Former races = = =

NASCAR Sprint Cup Series

Pepsi Max 400 ( 2004 ? 2010 )

NASCAR Xfinity Series

CampingWorld.com 300 ( 2004 ? 2010 )

NASCAR Camping World Truck Series

San Bernardino County 200 ( 1997 ? 2009 )

NASCAR West Series ( 1997 ? 2006 )

CART

Marlboro 500 ( 1997 ? 2002 )

IndyCar Series

MAVTV 500 ( 2002 @-@ 2005 , 2012 @-@ 2015 )

Rolex Sports Car Series

Grand American 400 ( Sports Car Course ) ( 2002 ? 2005 )

IROC ( 1997 , 1998 , 2002 )

Super GT ( 2004 )

= = Other events = =

Red , White & Cruise ? A July 4 festival consisting of a car show , various family @-@ friendly entertainment and a fireworks show .

Epicenter 2010 at the speedway 's midway

Cardenas Festival ? The annual Cardenas Festival is held in the parking lot . This is a festival where all the company 's that sell food at the grocery store Cardenas give out free samples of new or upcoming food . There are also performances from many artists .

= = Track length of paved oval = =

The track length is disputed by CART and NASCAR that run at Auto Club Speedway . The NASCAR timing and scoring use a length of exactly 2 @. @ 000 miles ( 3 @. @ 219 km ) . The IRL timing and scoring use also a length of exactly 2 miles since their first race in 2002 . CART measured the track as 2 @. @ 029 miles ( 3 @. @ 265 km ) and used this length for timing and scoring between 1997 and 2002 .

= = Track records = =

The closed @-@ course practice and qualifying one @-@ lap records Arie Luyendyk had set in the run @-@ up to the 1996 Indy 500 at 239 @. @ 260 mph ( 385 @. @ 052 km / h ) and 237 @. @ 498 mph ( 382 @. @ 216 km / h ) respectively were improved by Maurício Gugelmin on September 27 , 1997 . He was clocked at 238 @. @ 869 mph ( 384 @. @ 422 km / h ) and 237 @. @ 498 mph ( 382 @. @ 216 km / h ) respectively .

After Juan Pablo Montoya had missed Gugelmin 's unofficial record in practice , Gil de Ferran set a new official one @-@ lap record at 237 @. @ 977 mph ( 382 @. @ 987 km / h ) during CART qualifying on October 28 , 2000 . There is a discrepancy in average speed recognised because CART did use a slightly larger track length . Under CART measurements , the speed was listed as 241 @. @ 428 miles per hour ( 388 @. @ 541 km / h ) . As of March 2012 , this is the fastest lap speed ever recorded at an official race meeting and the fastest ever lap on a closed racing circuit . The 2003 Indycar race was the fastest circuit race ever in motorsport history , with an average speed of 207 @. @ 151 mph ( 333 @. @ 377 km / h ) over 400 miles ( 640 km ) , topping the previous record average of 195 @. @ 165 mph ( 314 @. @ 088 km / h ) over 500 miles ( 800 km ) , which was set by the final CART race held in Fontana the preceding year ( again , the time was adjusted to reflect the discrepancy between the CART 's measured distance and the recognised distance ) .

NOTE : Because of CART 's discrepancy in calculating laps at the circuit ( 2 @. @ 029 miles versus 2 @. @ 000 miles ) , for consistency purposes , the one lap and 500 @-@ mile records are calculated with the standard 2 @. @ 000 mile distance for average speed purposes .

= = NASCAR Sprint Cup Series stats = =

( As of 3 / 20 / 16 )

\* from minimum 5 starts .

= = NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race winners = =

\* ? Race extended due to green @-@ white @-@ checker finish . \* \* ? Race shortened due to rain .

= = Open wheel race winners = =