

STARTING GRID
YOUR GUIDE TO THE WEEK ON THE NASCAR CIRCUIT



BUTCH DILL, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bob Jenkins, left, owner of Front Row Motorsports and Co-Owner Michael Jordan, of 23XI Racing, pose before Sunday's NASCAR Cup Series race at Talladega. The two owners are behind an antitrust lawsuit filed against NASCAR.

UNITED

Jordan, Jenkins standing firm in their fight against NASCAR

JENNA FRYER
Associated Press

TALLADEGA, Ala. — Michael Jordan arrived at Talladega Superspeedway about 30 minutes before the start of the playoff race and made his way directly to Bubba Wallace's pit stand for a quick visit with his guys.

The NBA great eventually made his way down pit road to Tyler Reddick's stand, where he sat on the wall and waited for Front Row Motorsports owner Bob Jenkins. Both NASCAR team owners have refused to sign NASCAR's charter agreement and last week filed a federal antitrust lawsuit against the stock car series.

The brief exchange Sunday was planned as a show of solidarity by the only two teams that chose not to accept NASCAR's terms for its new revenue-sharing model. 23XI Racing and Front Row want a jury to decide if NASCAR is, indeed, "monopolistic bullies" as the suit alleges.

Jordan said before the race the lawsuit is on behalf of all Cup Series teams; 13 organizations signed the charter agreement, with 23XI and Front Row the only holdouts. Many team owners have said they signed on deadline and under threat of having the entire charter system revoked.

"I think everybody should have an opportunity to be successful in any business and my voice is saying it hasn't been happening," Jordan told Fox Sports.

He said he had no intention of speaking with NASCAR chairman Jim France, who is named in the suit, while in Talladega over the weekend. The legal battle has become the

biggest talking point in NASCAR in the middle of its playoffs as the entire industry waits to see what happens next. NASCAR has declined to comment and France declined to discuss it at Talladega. NASCAR's court response could come as early as this week ahead of Sunday's playoff elimination race at Charlotte Motor Speedway.

Michael McDowell, who won the pole for Sunday's race for Front Row, defended Jenkins' decision to battle NASCAR. McDowell decided months ago he was leaving the team he's driven for since 2018 at the end of the season, but is supportive of what Jenkins and 23XI are trying to accomplish.

"Bob Jenkins is so dedicated to this sport," McDowell said. "He has spent millions and millions and millions and millions and millions of his own dollars to be in this sport and to be competitive. Nobody does that unless they're insane or super passionate.

"He's passionate about our race team and being competitive. It's been a steady progression and I feel like we're at a point now where we're a contender," McDowell continued. "There is nobody spending what we spend and performing how we perform. Nobody. And if he has to spend his own money, there is a problem."

Denny Hamlin, who co-owns 23XI Racing with Jordan and Curtis Polk, also defended taking the fight to court.

"It's been stated in statements by Michael Jordan that he loves NASCAR," Hamlin said. "We've obviously invested heavily in NASCAR

and reinvested what I got out of this sport as a driver back into it as an owner. Certainly, we love the sport, just would love to see change as well."

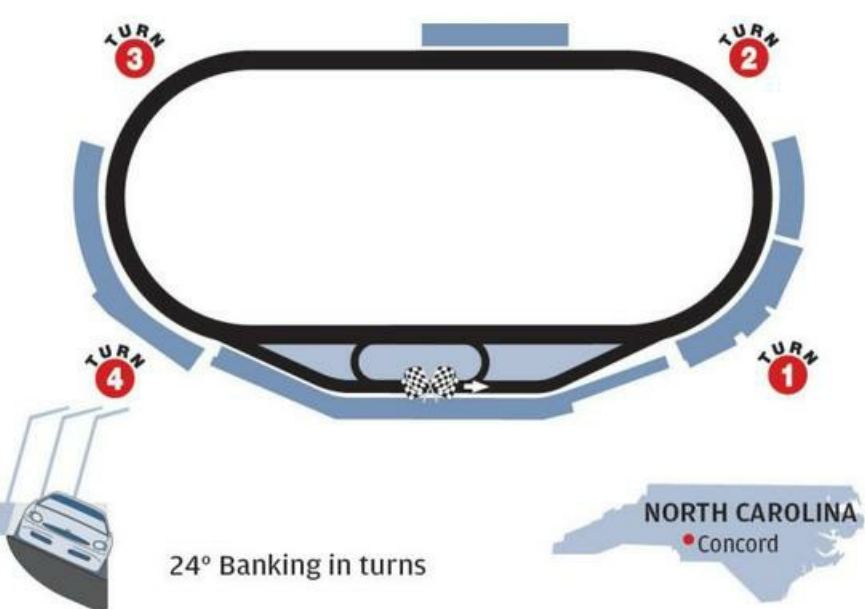
Asked if he thinks NASCAR has any appreciation for what Hamlin — who as a Charlotte Hornets season ticket-holder developed a relationship with Jordan and then persuaded Jordan to start a NASCAR team with him — and 23XI have done for the sport, Hamlin took a long pause.

"Probably not," he finally answered. Jordan is the highest-profile team owner in NASCAR, and one of only two who are Black. 23XI also has one of the most diverse teams in the garage, from driver Wallace to crew members and non-competition employees.

The lawsuit has raised another concern around the garage: Team owner Richard Childress said he was not sure if the agreement he signed is the same terms that, say, Hendrick Motorsports received — and if 23XI and Front Row eventually reach an agreement with NASCAR, will organizations that have already signed be guaranteed the same terms?

"I don't know what's going to happen because it's just so unprecedented in our sport," Trackhouse Racing owner Justin Marks said. "There's no historical precedent. I think in other cases like this, in other sports, you have collective bargaining unions. So it's just a very, very different setting. I think we have a blank slate and we can land anywhere. I think whatever comes out of this, I have to believe that it should affect everybody the same."

THIS WEEK'S CUP RACE



Bank of America ROVAL 400

Distance: 252.88 miles, 109 laps
Where: Charlotte Motor Speedway road course in Concord, North Carolina
When: 2 p.m. Sunday TV: NBC
Radio: Performance Racing Network
Last year's winner: A.J. Allmendinger

STANDINGS

NASCAR Cup Series

Table with 4 columns: Driver, wins, laps led, points. Lists top 30 drivers including William Byron, Christopher Bell, Kyle Larson, Denny Hamlin, Alex Bowman, Ryan Blaney, Tyler Reddick, Chase Elliott, Joey Logano, Daniel Suárez, Austin Cindric, Chase Briscoe, Ty Gibbs, Martin Truex Jr., Brad Keselowski, Harrison Burton, Ross Chastain, Chris Buescher, Bubba Wallace, Kyle Busch, Carson Hocevar, Todd Gilliland, Michael McDowell, Ricky Stenhouse Jr., Noah Gragson, Ryan Preece, Josh Berry, Austin Dillon, Corey LaJoie, Erik Jones.

Xfinity Series

UP NEXT
Drive for the Cure
250: Charlotte, N.C., 4 p.m. Saturday (CW)

STANDINGS

Table with 2 columns: Driver, points. Lists top 20 drivers including Chandler Smith, Cole Custer, Austin Hill, Sheldon Creed, Jesse Love, Riley Herbst, Sammy Smith, A.Allmendinger, Justin Allgaier, S.Van Gisbergen, Sam Mayer, P. Kligerman, Ryan Sieg, B. Jones, A. Alfredo, Brennan Poole, Josh Williams, L. Honeyman, P. Retzlaff, Jeb Burton.

Trucks Series

UP NEXT
Truck Series playoff race: Homestead-Miami, Oct. 26 (FS1)

STANDINGS

Table with 2 columns: Driver, points. Lists top 20 drivers including Corey Heim, C. Eckes, G. Enfinger, Ty Majeski, Rajah Caruth, Taylor Gray, N. Sanchez, Tyler Ankrum, Daniel Dye, Ben Rhodes, LayneRiggs, Tanner Gray, S. Friesen, Matt Crafton, Chase Purdy, Jake Garcia, D. Thompson, Bret Holmes, Bayley Currey, Ty Dillon.

All times Eastern

Biffle 'should get Medal of Freedom'

BRIAN LINDER
pennlive.com

The heroic efforts of NASCAR driver Greg Biffle in the wake of Hurricane Helene are not going unnoticed.

In fact, ESPN's Marty Smith, seems to have a pretty good idea about what should await Biffle when this is all over.

"Former NASCAR driver Greg Biffle should receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his ongoing and ceaseless heroic efforts in western North Carolina, using his helicopter and coordinating w/ others to save lives," Smith wrote on X. "Go to @gbiffle

to see his amazing effort. Thank you Greg."

For those that missed it, Biffle, who is also a pilot, has been using his personal helicopter to fly emergency relief missions to deliver supplies to victims of the storm in western North Carolina.

Biffle has shared some of his runs on X, and the guy has flown into some tight spaces to help save people.

"Trees. Canyons. Power Lines," he wrote in a post on X along with a video of him landing in a narrow strip of open grass in an otherwise heavily wooded area. "Glad this little beast of a helicopter can

make it to the areas unreachable by larger aircraft."

Biffle shared a second video explaining the landing in the tight space that shows folks on the ground using a mirror to signal to the helicopter.

"The mirror that caught our attention well over a mile away," he wrote. "Only way we were able to find someone stranded in the mountain at bottom of steep canyon. 6 attempts to land due to difficulty but we got there — got him a chainsaw, Epipens, insulin, chicken food, formula, gas, 2 stroke oil, and sandwiches pre-made from Harris Teeter before

we left."

Biffle is also reportedly dropping off Starlinks to the victims so they can access the internet.

Many in NASCAR have pitched in to help, but Biffle's effort has been amazing.

The 54-year-old was named one of NASCAR's 75 Greatest Drivers in 2023 and is up for induction into the NACAR Hall of Fame.

Not alone

Hendrick Motorsports and Joe Gibbs Racing also flew their helicopters to areas in western North Carolina.

JGR collected water and non-perishable food items at its race shop in Huntersville to be delivered by one of the team's haulers. JGR posted on social media that it is continuing to accept financial donations online, which should be titled as "Hurricane Relief."

Hendrick's aviation team also had been flying out to western North Carolina to support hurricane relief efforts since Sept. 29 and planned to continue as long as the critical needs exist. HMS has been working with organizations like Samaritan's Purse and Atrium Health to distribute resources to the people.