

# NASCAR BIDS AN ACTION-PACKED FAREWELL TO AUTO CLUB SPEEDWAY'S SUPERSPEEDWAY —SHORT TRACK REPLACEMENT PROMISED

BY JAN WAGNER / AUTOMATTERS & MORE / AUTOMATTERS.NET

We were treated to an exciting NASCAR twofer in Fontana on Sunday, February 26, thanks to a lot of rain and even a rare dusting of Southern California snow on Saturday—which led to the elimination of practice, qualifying and Xfinity Series racing. Fortunately, I had believed the dire weather forecasts that predicted a 100 percent chance of rain on Saturday, so I did not make the long drive from my home in San Diego for that exercise in



futility. Nevertheless, it was still freezing cold on Sunday, when I did go. Both races were action-packed—more so than usual for Cup Series races on the ultra-wide superspeedway. Kyle Busch survived the melee of the nine-car “Big One” during the Second Stage restart of the Cup Series race (lap 86 of 200) and went on to win—setting a record for his 19 race-winning NASCAR seasons in a row and, in so doing, breaking a tie with “King” Richard Petty’s record of 18.

The Xfinity Series race—won by John Hunter Nemechek—finished at night, under the lights.

I had to shoot it as best as I could with gloves on, since by then my fingers were numb. Despite my wearing a big down-filled parka to mitigate the effects of the cold, by the second race my legs were shaking. I have not had to do that in about 50 years, since back when I lived and shot auto racing in Alberta, Canada.

I hope the promised new short track replacement for the two-mile Auto Club Speedway’s superspeedway (1997-2023 RIP) is actually built. The back straight, with no grandstands and where much of the on-track action happens, is too far away from the grandstands overlooking the pits on the other side of the track for the fans to be able to see it well. The promised new reconfiguration to a short track, by 2025 or 2026, will provide much better viewing for fans and press photographers alike, and should also promote much more on-track action.

I have the longest superzoom lens that Canon makes for their relatively new RF mirrorless mount and cameras (100-500mm), but that did not provide quite enough reach, so I needed to heavily crop the photos of the action that I could barely see on the back straight. Luckily the photos were not further degraded by the usual blurring, hot weather haze rising from the track. Nevertheless, it was difficult for me to see the telltale signs of incidents shaping up before they happened, so that I could try to shoot them.

For results, video highlights and complete reporting about the Cup Series and Xfinity Series races this past weekend, visit and click around the NASCAR website at nascar.com. ■

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