



Bowyer Wins Seventh Annual Prelude to the Dream *St. Louis Children's Hospital Captures Team Competition at Eldora Speedway*

ROSSBURG, Ohio (June 8, 2011) – The box score says that Clint Bowyer led all 30 laps in Wednesday night's Prelude to the Dream all-star dirt Late Model race at Eldora Speedway, but the native of Emporia, Kan., had to fend off strong charges from J.J. Yeley and Aric Almirola to finally capture a victory in the prestigious race that's a who's who of racing's elite.

After finishing second in the past two Prelude to the Dream events, Bowyer sealed his first Prelude triumph by .531 of a second over Yeley, a former USAC champion who has logged numerous laps at Eldora.

"It's just so much fun to be able to come here and compete," said Bowyer, whose victory was presented live to the entire nation on HBO Pay-Per-View®, with the net proceeds from the telecast supporting four of the nation's top children's hospitals. "What an awesome racetrack. I've always loved this place and I'm very proud of Tony Stewart and everybody behind him that makes this event awesome. There's a lot of hard work to put on something like this, and we are very lucky to have him put forth the effort."

Stewart, owner of Eldora Speedway and a three-time Prelude victor, finished 20th in the race he created in 2005.

"We had another first-time winner tonight. That's what the fun part is," said Stewart, a two-time NASCAR Sprint Cup Series champion. "Watching Marcos Ambrose win his heat race and Jason Leffler win his heat race in their first time being here – that's the stuff that makes you smile, and it's fun to watch all these guys have a good time."

The race was a team event. There was still an individual race winner in Bowyer, but there was also a race within the race, with the field broken up into four teams, each representing a children's hospital:

- **Team Levine:** Jimmie Johnson, Denny Hamlin, Bill Elliott, David Reutimann, Austin Dillon, Ray Evernham and Cruz Pedregon.
- **Team Atlanta:** Ryan Newman, Carl Edwards, **Bowyer**, Ken Schrader, David Gilliland, Leffler and Ron Capps.
- **Team St. Louis:** Kyle Busch, Kasey Kahne, Bobby Labonte, Justin Allgaier, Kenny Wallace, Ron Hornaday and Ricky Carmichael.
- **Team Dallas:** Tony Stewart, Tony Kanaan, Matt Kenseth, Brian Vickers, Ambrose, Almirola and Yeley.

Each hospital received a donation, with the payout breakdown as follows:

- Winning team received 30 percent of net proceeds raised from the pay-per-view telecast.
- Second-place team received 25 percent of net proceeds raised from the pay-per-view telecast.
- Third- and fourth-place teams each received 20 percent of net proceeds raised from the pay-per-view telecast.

The finishing positions of the top-five drivers from each team were added together, with the lowest team score winning 30 percent of the net money raised. The cumulative efforts of Busch (fourth), Allgaier (fifth), Carmichael (sixth) and Kahne (10th) put Team St. Louis on top. Team Atlanta finished second, while Team Dallas and Team Levine finished third and fourth, respectively. As a result, Team Atlanta will receive 25 percent of the net money raised, and Team Dallas and Team Levine will each receive 20 percent of the net money raised.

Complete event information can be found in the Prelude to the Dream online media kit at www.TrueSpeedMedia.com.

CLINT BOWYER, (2011 Prelude to the Dream Winner):

You won last year as a car owner, but what's it mean to finally win the Prelude to the Dream?

"It's just so much fun to be able to come here and compete. What an awesome racetrack. I've always loved this place and I'm very proud of Tony Stewart and everybody behind him who makes this event awesome. There's a lot of hard work to put on something like this and we are very lucky to have him put forth the effort."

The track conditions were a lot different than last year. How did that change tonight?

"That's dirt racing, since you never know what the conditions are going to be and Mother Nature plays a big role in that. It's been 95 to 100 degrees here for over a week. Under those conditions, it's going to take the moisture out of it and it is what it is. That's dirty racing."

Does winning in your own car make it even more special?

“Absolutely. I’ll tell you, what makes it special is the tremendous amount of work. With the weather that we’ve had, the guys have been driving back and forth and doing a lot of things that you wouldn’t normally do. Just proud of their effort to make the car perform as well as it did.”

TONY STEWART, (Finished 20th; Owner of Eldora Speedway):

Can you talk about your overall thoughts on tonight’s event?

“It’s awesome. We had another first-time winner tonight. That’s what the fun part is. Watching Marcos Ambrose win his heat race and Jason Leffler win his heat race in his first time being here. That’s the stuff that makes you smile and it’s fun to watch those guys have a good time.”

What did you think of the crowd here tonight?

“We had an awesome crowd. We’ve had really hot weather this week and these race fans have stuck around. The Midwest in the summer when it’s hot like this can get brutal and these fans stuck it out. There were people who sat in the stands all day today in the heat. We’ve just got great race fans here at Eldora.”

JIMMIE JOHNSON, (Finished 18th; 2010 Prelude to the Dream Winner):

Talk about starting from the back and what kind of challenge that was for you tonight?

“The track conditions were a lot different (than last year). These conditions take a little more experience. Last year was a little more forgiving and more grip. But I had a blast. Finally understood about how to pass some cars about 10 laps into it and started working my way forward. I had a great night.”

You beat Clint (Bowyer) in one of his cars last year but the roles were reversed this year with the car owner getting the win.

“It’s pretty cool for this team. These guys work awfully hard week in and week out and built us some brand new cars to come out here and win back-to-back years. I know Clint is awfully happy as a car owner.”

CARL EDWARDS, (Finished 15th; 2007 Prelude to the Dream Winner):

How was your race?

“The race was OK. We were a little too loose. The big thing is this is all for a good cause. I had fun. These guys (the crew) are so much fun to race with.”

You and this crew really seem like you have a lot of fun together.

“I wish it was a hundred-lapper and we’d have time to work on the car. Again, I really like these guys a lot. They work hard, and we came here to win.”

TONY KANAAN, (Finished 27th; 2004 IZOD IndyCar Series Champion):

Was it as much fun this year as it was last year?

“I had fun again. I learned a little bit more this year. Last year, we finished the race. This year, we had a little bit of a problem. It’s so much fun, and I have to thank Tony (Stewart) and the Eldora staff so much for inviting me again. I became a big fan of dirt racing last year. It was my first time in the car. This year was my second time in the car, so I’ve already talked with the guys on the team about testing over the winter. Hopefully, I’ll get a little bit better before next year.”

What happened that put you out of the race?

“Somebody bumped me into the wall, and when I hit the wall it broke the suspension. It’s just the way dirt racing is, but it’s a lot of fun.”

Are you used to getting dirt in a racecar?

“No, not at all. This (driving) suit is going to have to retire, now, from IndyCar. But I’m going to frame it and hang it up on the wall just like this.”

KYLE BUSCH, (Finished 4th; 2009 NASCAR Nationwide Series Champion):

Can you talk about your race tonight?

“The race was good. We ended up qualifying well but that ended up getting us in a bad spot for the heat race. We only finished third in the heat to get our qualifying time back, which would have put us out front to start. We started 10th and worked our way up through there. You could pass the most on the restarts and I gained the most positions on the first one right at the green flag, and then I got a couple more on a few other restarts. But, you could only make ground on one or two on the first corner and then you had to get to the top and just start to run the momentum. It’s so hard to turn underneath somebody because all of the grip is up at the top, where it was fast. Just had to ride and wait for a caution and try to make some moves there. We raced (Aric) Almirola, which was cool. Started racing with Justin Allgaier and we were slip-jobbing each other for a few corners. That was probably the most exciting part of the night for me. But, unfortunately, we just didn’t quite have enough. We ran in line there at the finish but nobody could get by each other.”

You made some exciting moves, dive-bombing down into some of the turns early in the race. But did you end up not being able to do that as the track wore in?

“You could go down there at the beginning part of the race because there was still a little bit of moisture. But as soon as I would run around there and pick up some dust, and the dust would settle back down, it would just be slick. You would be running back over dust again and you wouldn’t go anywhere.”

RON HORNADAY, (Finished 26th; Four-time NASCAR Camping World Truck Series Champion):

You just completed your first Prelude to the Dream. What are your thoughts on the event?

“Can we come back tomorrow and do it again? This was such a great time. I just wish it didn’t take me so long to figure out how to get the car around the track. My brakes locked up there in the feature and I spun out. Other than that, I just tried to make smooth laps and had a really good time racing here. This place is really banked and I’m glad it was as slick as it was. I can’t imagine going around here at full speed. It was pretty special driving up to this place and seeing all the campers and people everywhere. That means a lot to all of us racers. When people come out and support a cause like this event, it makes you as a racer want to go out and put on your best performance.”

AUSTIN DILLON, (Finished 8th; Two-time NASCAR Camping World Truck Series Winner):

You’ve raced in a lot of events during your career. How does the Prelude to the Dream stack up?

“Ah, man, it was a blast. I can’t believe it. I had fun. It got pretty racy out there. I just had to slide people to get past them. I just want to thank everyone at Bass Pro Shops and Jack Links for helping me get here. This is an awesome opportunity and I’m glad we got to come out here and raise money for a great cause and some wonderful hospitals. I really had to do something to get somewhere. I thought I’d make it interesting and start sliding people and see where we could go. I had a great race with (Ryan) Newman. That was awesome. I might have gotten (David) Reutimann a little mad when I slid him, there. I cut it a little close, but he screwed up coming off turn four, so I just went for it. I had a blast and really enjoyed it. Hopefully, I’ll get to come back next year and try it again.”

RICKY CARMICHAEL, (Finished 6th; G.O.A.T – Greatest of All Time):

As a professional racer, you participate in number of unique events. Racing a dirt Late Model on a banked, half-mile track has to be a special experience. Describe your night.

“First of all, I want to thank Tony Stewart and everybody involved with this event for inviting us. I’ve got to thanks Austin Dillon, (crew chief) Shane (McDowell), everybody at TDR (Team Dillon Racing). I made way too much work than I needed to for them today. The biggest thing about tonight was that I made it happen when the sun went down and the lights came on. This is just a great cause. I have two kids myself and, fortunately, they are healthy. To give money back to kids that are ill, it makes me feel great. We are the luckiest kids in the world. I say ‘kids’ and I’m 31 years old. It’s fun and I was just glad that I wasn’t in the wall when it counted. I’m disappointed I made these guys work so hard early tonight, but I’m thankful for the opportunity.”

Last year, in your first Prelude, saying you struggled would be an understatement. Tonight, you battled right around the top-five throughout the feature event. What was the biggest difference?

“I had a great coach in Austin (Dillon), and the whole team really helped me tonight. I think Austin could have won, but he had to start so far back. I started sixth and finished sixth, but just being here another year and knowing what to expect was big for me. I only tested once since last year, so I guess just time. People don’t understand how hard this is. Just being able to do it last year, and then come back this year, the familiarity was so much better. Hopefully, we can keep gaining on it next year.”

RON CAPPS, (Finished 17th; Three-time NHRA Funny Car Championship Runner-up):

Can you talk about your overall thoughts on tonight’s event?

“I only got passed a couple of times, so that’s a bonus for me. For the last couple of years, I fought and fought. I thought I forgot how to drive, but these Kennedy Motorsports folks, Chad Ruhlman and all the guys, make me look good. It was fun. To take a drag racer and put him out there like that. I can go high, I can go low. I’m racing with Jimmie Johnson. I’ve got Carl Edwards around me, I’m almost passing guys like that. It was so much fun. I’m out here racing with guys I love to watch on TV. I finished fourth one year, but this one felt so much better. You know, it’s all courage if you can get up on the wall. I’m just not good enough to do that, so I tried it accidentally in the one heat, tore a little bit of the spoiler off. But the guys fixed it and had it ready to go. And after that, they did something to the car and they told me what the car was going to do and they were absolutely right. I’m loving this. I’m a drag racer who gets to race on dirt once a year like this. And, we’re raising money for kids. It just doesn’t get any better than that.”

CRUZ PEDREGON, (Finished 19th; Two-time NHRA Funny Car Champion):

Can you talk about your overall thoughts on tonight’s event?

“I had fun. I had a lot of fun. It’s always a lot of fun. To do this right, when I ran sixth here two years ago, I ran about 10 races, and that’s what you have to do just to run in the middle of the pack, here. Tonight, I wasn’t where I wanted to be as far as the feel of the car. I got into the wall during one of the hot lap sessions. I got into a slick spot where they watered the track and hit the wall pretty hard and had to miss the next session. I had a good time. We’re in one piece. I just know to ratchet it up a notch. It’s a big difference. You need to run some during the season. We’re all competitors out here, even though we’re running in different venues. We all want to do well. I was looking for a top-10, but it was a good time, and it’s an honor to race some of the top names in racing out there. For one race, about 25 laps of practice in all, I guess I did pretty well on that scale. I’m looking forward to coming back again next year.”

RYAN NEWMAN, (Finished 9th; 2008 Daytona 500 Winner):

How was your race?

“We didn’t get the greatest starting spot, but we improved on it. I’m proud of all the effort. In the big picture, it’s awesome to come out here and do what we do here. It’s an honor to represent the U.S. Army and have an opportunity to race for a good cause and help a children’s hospital. We just didn’t get the finish we wanted, but if anybody who walks out of here upset about how they did in the event should never be invited back. It was cool to set fast time. I beat a lot of good drivers, a lot of good teams. I’m really proud of Ernie Davis Racing. Everybody here put together a good racecar. It was a fast Chevrolet.”

JUSTIN ALLGAIER, (Finished 5th; 2008 ARCA Champion):

How was your race?

“It was an interesting night, for sure. These guys did a great job. Can’t thank them enough. Raymond Childress, Ronnie Stuckey and all the guys. Had a great car. In the feature, there, I actually thought we were going to be pretty good. I think Ambrose lost a spoiler, came back across and we hit him. I’ve never done a wheelie in a dirt Late Model before but I did tonight, so that was quite interesting. Huge thanks to Brant for coming on in this one. It was an awesome race. I give Tony a lot of credit for what he does here. Hopefully, we definitely raised some good money for the kids, so that makes it all a good night.”

J.J. YELEY, (Finished 2nd; 2003 USAC Triple Crown Champion):

Can you talk about your race tonight?

“It was a ton of fun. I had to grab a spare helmet out of the trailer. I had to find an old uniform that barely fits. It’s a lot of fun to come back and be a part of this event. It’s obviously for great charities and great causes. It’s very evident because there were a lot of superstars who showed up here to race tonight. I won the second hot lap group. We qualified pretty well. It seems, from the previous Preludes, the key to being good in the feature is just starting up front. The racetrack just got slippery and because there’s not a lot of experience out there, the racetrack doesn’t get very wide, which makes it very difficult to pass. I got a good start, got by Almirola and whoever started inside of me there and, for a while, I thought I had something for Clint, but he was just really good tonight. It beats going to any golf tournament any day of the week, and then some. Any time you can go play in the dirt, and for a good cause, it’s a thrill to just be here.”

ARIC ALMIROLA, (Finished 3rd; Two-time NASCAR Camping World Truck Series Winner):

Can you talk about your race tonight?

“To qualify sixth, to run second in my heat race and finish third in the feature, what an awesome night. Clint Smith brought me an awesome car and I had fun. From the time I got off the airplane, I had an absolute blast. I do every year, but when you run well, it makes it all that much more fun. To come out here and run with so many guys with so much dirt experience, and this being my sixth race ever on dirt, this is just awesome. I think my best finish before was eighth, and I couldn’t even see the lead all night. So, tonight, to be able to see the lead and kind of dice it up and race with the leaders and maybe have a shot at winning if something happened to Clint and J.J., I felt like I had an honest shot at winning the race. That’s what every racecar driver dreams about and to come here to the Prelude with all these guys, that’s what I was hoping for.”

RANDY BERNARD, (President and CEO, INDYCAR):

Can you talk about your overall thoughts on tonight’s event?

“This is the second year I’ve attended the Prelude to the Dream at Eldora Speedway, and I can’t say how impressed I am by not only the crowd but the facility that Tony Stewart has. It’s so neat to see the fans come out to support drivers from various racing disciplines that come together to support four deserving charities. We’re especially proud to have Tony Kanaan in the event for the second straight year. Tony Stewart and his staff do a great job every year, and I can’t wait to come back next season for the same exciting on-track action.”

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