



Associated Press
Jimmie Johnson edged Jeff Gordon to win the 2007 title.

2007 standings



Driver	Points	W/ T-10
1. Jimmie Johnson	6,723	10/24
2. Jeff Gordon	6,646	6/30
3. Clint Bowyer	6,377	1/17
4. Matt Kenseth	6,298	2/22
5. Kyle Busch	6,293	1/20
6. Tony Stewart	6,242	3/23
7. Kurt Busch	6,231	2/14
8. Jeff Burton	6,231	1/18
9. Carl Edwards	6,222	3/15
10. Kevin Harvick	6,199	1/15
11. Martin Truex Jr.	6,164	1/14
12. Denny Hamlin	6,143	1/18
13. Ryan Newman	4,046	0/15
14. Greg Biffle	3,991	1/11
15. Casey Mears	3,949	1/10
16. Dale Earnhardt Jr.	3,929	0/12
17. Jamie McMurray	3,556	1/9
18. Bobby Labonte	3,517	0/3
19. Kasey Kahne	3,489	0/8
20. Juan Montoya*	3,487	1/6
21. J.J. Yeley	3,456	0/3
22. Reed Sorenson	3,275	0/6
23. David Ragan*	3,251	0/3
24. David Stremme	3,163	0/3
25. Elliott Sadler	3,140	0/2
26. Robby Gordon	3,014	0/2
27. Mark Martin	2,960	0/11
28. David Gilliland	2,924	0/2
29. Tony Raines	2,920	0/1
30. Johnny Sauter	2,875	0/2
31. Dave Blaney	2,781	0/4
32. Jeff Green	2,704	0/3
33. Ricky Rudd	2,622	0/1
34. Paul Menard*	2,496	0/0
35. Kyle Petty	2,312	0/1
36. Scott Riggs	2,135	0/1
37. Joe Nemecek	2,117	0/1
38. Brian Vickers	2,065	0/5
39. David Reutimann*	1,878	0/0
40. Sterling Marlin	1,752	0/0



Driver	Points	W/ T-10
1. Carl Edwards	2,966	4/15
2. Kevin Harvick	2,168	2/12
3. David Reutimann	2,095	0/6
4. Dave Blaney	2,056	0/5
5. Jason Leffler	2,033	0/6
6. David Ragan*	2,010	0/4
7. Bobby Hamilton Jr.	1,983	0/2
8. Marcos Ambrose*	1,887	0/3
9. Stephen Leicht	1,866	1/3
10. Greg Biffle	1,845	0/8
11. Clint Bowyer	1,839	2/10
12. Regan Smith	1,820	0/5
13. Mike Wallace	1,819	0/0
14. Matt Kenseth	1,761	2/9
15. Casey Mears	1,738	0/11
16. Shane Huffman	1,727	0/4
17. J.J. Yeley	1,698	0/0
18. Scott Wimmer	1,694	0/8
19. Steve Wallace	1,636	0/0
20. Kyle Krisloff*	1,577	0/1



Driver	Points	W/ T-10
1. Ron Hornaday	3,982	4/22
2. Mike Skinner	3,928	5/20
3. Johnny Benson	3,557	4/19
4. Todd Bodine	3,525	2/16
5. Rick Crawford	3,523	0/18
6. Travis Kvapil	3,511	4/12
7. Ted Musgrave	3,183	1/15
8. Matt Crafton	3,060	0/10
9. Jack Sprague	3,001	1/10
10. David Starr	2,921	0/5
11. Brendan Gaughan	2,876	0/8
12. Erik Darnell	2,875	1/8
13. Dennis Setzer	2,851	1/6
14. Terry Cook	2,568	0/4
15. Willie Allen*	2,524	0/1
16. Tim Sauter*	2,497	0/1
17. Mike Bliss	2,186	0/10
18. Chad McCumbee	2,172	0/1
19. Ken Schrader	1,913	0/3
20. Joey Clanton*	1,670	0/5

* rookie

2007 year in review

Feb. 18

Daytona 500
Daytona International Speedway

Kevin Harvick passes NASCAR bridesmaid-for-life Mark Martin on the final lap of a green-white-checked finish and wins his first Daytona 500 by two-hundredths of a second. A week that started with an illegal additive in the fuel tank of Michael Waltrip's car ends with Clint Bowyer sliding across the finish line on his roof.

Feb. 25

Auto Club 500
California Speedway

A less-than-full grandstand sees Matt Kenseth lead more than half the laps and hold off Hendrick Motorsports teammates Jeff Gordon and Jimmie Johnson. Mark Martin takes over the points lead.

March 11

UAW-Daimler Chrysler 400
Las Vegas Motor Speedway

After a week off for the series, defending Nextel Cup champion Jimmie Johnson scores his first victory of 2007 by nearly three seconds over teammate Jeff Gordon. Hard tires and a reconfigured track produce several wrecks and many driver complaints.

March 18

Kobalt Tools 500
Atlanta Motor Speedway

Jimmie Johnson nearly squeezes Tony Stewart into the wall with three laps left to take his second straight win.

March 25

Food City 500
Bristol Motor Speedway

Kyle Busch wins as the snub-nosed, rear-winged Car of Tomorrow makes its debut. Afterward, he says "it's not very fun to drive." Jeff Gordon might be the only one laughing: He takes over the points lead from Mark Martin, who true to his word sat out the race as he embarks on a part-time schedule.

April 1

Goody's Cool Orange 500
Martinsville Speedway

Jimmie Johnson and Jeff Gordon beat and bang their way to the finish. Johnson prevails by 0.65 seconds for his third win in four races.

April 15

Samsung 500
Texas Motor Speedway

For the third time since 2005 Matt Kenseth gets passed for the lead on the last lap. This time, the spoiler is Jeff Burton, who closes to within eight points of series leader Jeff Gordon.

April 21

Subway Fresh Fit 500
Phoenix International Raceway

Jeff Gordon pulls away from Tony Stewart and becomes the first Cup driver to win from the pole at Phoenix. The win ties him with Dale Earnhardt in career victories with 76.

April 29

Aaron's 499
Talladega Superspeedway

Jeff Gordon wins his second straight and passes seven-time champion Dale Earnhardt on the career victory lists. Fans at Talladega — where Earnhardt had some of his biggest triumphs — celebrate Gordon's 80th win by showering him with beer cans.

May 6

Crown Royal Presents The Jim Stewart 400
Richmond International Raceway

Another week, another Hendrick victory. This time, it's Jimmie Johnson, who puts Hendrick in Victory Lane for the seventh time this season. Dale Jarrett fails to qualify and misses his first Cup race since 1994.

May 13

Dodge Avenger 500
Darlington Raceway

Let the history books show that Jeff Gordon wins his 78th career Cup race in a rain-delayed event. But the big news is off the track: Three days earlier, Dale Earnhardt Jr. announces he will leave Dale Earnhardt Inc., his late father's race team, at season's end.

May 19

NASCAR Nextel All-Star Challenge
Lowe's Motor Speedway

Kevin Harvick comes up big again in another race with a huge payday. The Daytona 500 winner came from fourth to first in the final segment and took home \$1 million.

May 27

Coca Cola 600
Lowe's Motor Speedway

Casey Mears gambles on fuel to win his first career Cup race. With the NASCAR season only in its fourth month, all four Hendrick drivers have won Cup events this season. Kyle Petty finishes third to get his first top-5 finish in 10 years.

June 4

Autism Speaks 400
Dover International Speedway

Martin Truex Jr. gets his first career win in this Monday race. Michael Waltrip races for the first time since the Daytona 500 and former NASCAR chairman Bill France Jr. dies at age 74.

June 10

Pocono 500
Pocono Raceway

Jeff Gordon wins the rain-shortened event, which mercifully covers only 106 of a scheduled 200 laps. Three days later, Hendrick Motorsports announces that Dale Earnhardt Jr. will drive for the team in 2008.

June 17

Citizens Bank 400
Michigan International Speedway

Hey! It's a Carl Edwards sighting! The Roush Fenway Racing driver wins by nearly four seconds and breaks a 52-race winless streak.

June 24

Toyota/Save Mart 350
Infineon Raceway

Juan Pablo Montoya keeps his fenders on, saves his fuel and becomes the first foreign-born driver to win a Cup race since Canadian Earl Ross captured a Martinsville event in 1974. NASCAR later takes 100 points from both Jeff Gordon and Jimmie Johnson after inspectors find improper modifications to both of their front bumpers.

July 1

Lenox Industrial Tools 300
New Hampshire International Speedway

Richmond native Denny Hamlin takes two tires on his final stop to win his first race of the season after bad pit work and mechanical problems cost him four earlier victories.

July 7

Pepsi 400
Daytona International Speedway

You thought the Daytona 500 was close? This finish under the lights was even tighter: Jamie McMurray beats Kyle Busch by 0.005 seconds — about the width of a fender. The win snaps McMurray's 166-race winless streak that dated back to 2002.

July 15

USG Sheetrock 400
Chicagoland Speedway

Tony Stewart leads 105 of the final 112 laps and breaks a 20-race winless streak. Jeff Gordon's points lead over Denny Hamlin grows to 303 points.

July 29

Allstate 400
Indianapolis Motor Speedway

Tony Stewart and Kevin Harvick battle all day. With 10 laps left, Stewart shoves Harvick out of the way to win at his home-state track for the second time in three years.

Aug. 5

Pennsylvania 500
Pocono Raceway

Kurt Busch snaps a 51-race winless streak in a race that saw Dale Earnhardt Jr. get a rare start from the pole and Robby Gordon sit out. NASCAR suspends Gordon for ignoring its orders the day before at the Busch Series race in Montreal.

Aug. 12

Centurion Boats at The Glen
Watkins Glen International

Lots of drivers leave the Glen with battered race cars and hurt feelings. Kevin Harvick and Juan Pablo Montoya go nose-to-nose after a wreck, and Tony Stewart leaves with the big trophy after race-leader Jeff Gordon spins with just two laps left.

Aug. 21

3M Performance 400
Michigan International Speedway

Rain delays this event twice and forces NASCAR to run on a Tuesday for the first time in the modern era that started in 1971. A crowd of about 10 sees Kurt Busch win his second race this month.

Aug. 25

Sharpie 500
Bristol Motor Speedway

A resurfaced Bristol produces two- and three-wide racing for the first time in years. But fans

yawn at the lack of bumping and banging and can barely rouse themselves when winner Carl Edwards does his post-race back flip.

Sept. 2

Sharp AQUOS 500
California Speedway

Jimmie Johnson wins, Ricky Rudd separates his shoulder in a vicious crash in his 900th career Cup start, and Dale Earnhardt Jr. is all but assured he will miss his second Chase in three years.

Sept. 8

Chevy Rock & Roll 400
Richmond International Raceway

Jimmie Johnson wins his sixth race of the season and jumps from sixth to first in the points because of new Chase rules that award bonus points to victories. The Chase field is set: Johnson, Jeff Gordon, Tony Stewart, Carl Edwards, Kurt Busch, Kyle Busch, Kevin Harvick, Jeff Burton, Matt Kenseth, Denny Hamlin, Martin Truex Jr. and Clint Bowyer.

Sept. 16

Sylvania 300
New Hampshire International Speedway

Clint Bowyer was the only Chase driver without a win, either in 2007 or for his career. He wins the pole and the race and rockets from 12th to fourth in the standings. Jeff Gordon ties Jimmie Johnson for first.

Sept. 23

Dodge Dealers 400
Dover International Speedway

Carl Edwards survives a 10-car wreck and two red flags to win, but he later loses 25 points when NASCAR inspectors find that the right rear of his car is too low. Jeff Gordon takes over the points lead, but four other drivers are within 20 points.

Sept. 30

LifeLock 400
Kansas Speedway

Two-rain delays extend the race to six hours, and Greg Biffle wins under yellow even though Clint Bowyer was ahead of him on the track. When it's all over, Jimmie Johnson leads Jeff Gordon in the standings by six points.

Oct. 7

UAW-Ford 500
Talladega Superspeedway

The Car of Tomorrow makes its superspeedway debut, and Jeff Gordon wins to retake the points lead. Only Jimmie Johnson (six points back) and Clint Bowyer (63 back) are within 154 points of Gordon.

Oct. 13

Bank of America 500
Lowe's Motor Speedway

Can Jeff Gordon really pull off a Drive for Five? The four-time Cup champ overcomes a balky fuel pickup in the final laps and wins his second straight.

Oct. 21

Subway 500
Martinsville Speedway

Jimmie Johnson's win coupled with a third place by Jeff Gordon pulls Johnson to within 53 points of his Hendrick teammate. Two other teammates are getting along less well: Roush Fenway driver Matt Kenseth flinches when Carl Edwards pretends to punch him after the two tangle on the track.

Oct. 28

Pep Boys Auto 500
Atlanta Motor Speedway

Here comes Jimmie Johnson. After taking two tires with seven laps left, he earns his second straight win and trims Jeff Gordon's points lead to nine.

Nov. 4

Dickies 500
Texas Motor Speedway

Jimmie Johnson outduels Matt Kenseth and takes the points lead away from Jeff Gordon. Gordon, who finishes seventh, trails by 30. No other driver is within 180 points.

Nov. 11

Checker Auto Parts 500
Phoenix International Raceway

Jimmie Johnson wins his fourth straight, something no driver has done since Jeff Gordon did it in 1988. The victory is Johnson's 10th of the season. Gordon, who trails by 86 after coming home 10th, concedes the season crown to his teammate.

Nov. 18

Ford 400
Homestead-Miami Speedway

Jimmie Johnson just needs to finish 18th or better to win the 2007 title. He places seventh to become the first driver since Jeff Gordon in 1997-98 to win back-to-back Cup championships.

Predictions

Dustin Long's 12 picks to make the Chase



1. JEFF GORDON
He had one of his best seasons last year and still didn't win the title. That's enough motivation for this season.



7. DALE EARNHARDT JR.
Shouldn't have the engine woes with new team but might be a year away from contending.



2. CARL EDWARDS
Roush's COT program improved last year after a late start testing. Also, Edwards returned to Victory Lane for the first time since 2005. He's ready.



8. MATT KENSETH
Ever steady, he should record another top-10 but needs to be stronger to contend for crown.



3. JIMMIE JOHNSON
Going for a three-peat. He and crew chief Chad Knaus know what to do in the Chase, winning five of the last 15 Chase races. If they're close, watch out.



9. KURT BUSCH
Ran well late last season along with teammate Newman. Should carry that into this season.



4. KEVIN HARVICK
Several blown tires hurt him in the Chase. If his team avoids those problems, this might be his year.



10. CLINT BOWYER
Looking to build upon last year's strong season. Odds are he'll be good again.



5. RYAN NEWMAN
Finished well last season and the addition of new crew chief Roy McCauley could return this team to the front.



11. DENNY HAMLIN
His stock will rise or fall based on Toyota's performance.



6. TONY STEWART
If Toyota engines are strong and last, he could be much higher.



12. JAMIE MCMURRAY
Roush program improving and he's with same crew chief for second year; it's time to break through and make the Chase.

OTHERS TO WATCH: Kyle Busch, Jeff Burton, Greg Biffle, Martin Truex Jr., and Casey Mears.

Last year's picks

- Kevin Harvick
- Kasey Kahne
- Tony Stewart
- Jeff Gordon
- Matt Kenseth
- Carl Edwards
- Jimmie Johnson
- Kurt Busch
- Dale Earnhardt Jr.
- Jeff Burton
- Casey Mears
- Clint Bowyer

Last year's actual finish

- Jimmie Johnson
- Jeff Gordon
- Clint Bowyer
- Matt Kenseth
- Kyle Busch
- Tony Stewart
- Kurt Busch
- Jeff Burton
- Carl Edwards
- Kevin Harvick