

# DENNY HAMLIN

## Going for Quality, Not Necessarily Quantity, in 2010

LAS VEGAS (Feb. 24, 2010) ☐ With only a handful of NASCAR Nationwide Series commitments on his slate for 2010, Denny Hamlin's mantra for the season can be summed up quite simply: ☐"Quality, not quantity."

Hamlin will make his first Nationwide Series start of the year when he straps himself into the No. 20 Interstate Batteries Toyota Camry for Joe Gibbs Racing (JGR) in Saturday's Sam's Town 300 at Las Vegas Motor Speedway.

The 29-year-old fulltime driver of JGR's No. 11 FedEx Toyota Camry in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series is hoping for just the kind of quality run this weekend ☐ with a slightly better ending, of course ☐ enjoyed by the No. 20 Nationwide Series team last Saturday at Auto Club Speedway in Fontana, Calif., where Joey Logano qualified the car on the pole and thoroughly dominated the race, leading 130 of 152 laps before getting shuffled back during a wild and crazy green-white-checker finish and sliding sideways across the finish line in fifth place.

What Hamlin certainly *isn't* looking for is the kind of roller-coaster day he experienced at Las Vegas a year ago, when he started the No. 20 Interstate Batteries Toyota fourth, spun out in the early going, recovered to lead seven laps, got penalized twice for speeding on pit road, lost a lap, earned the lap back, and moved into the top-10 before a late-race accident relegated him to a 21<sup>st</sup>-place finish in a wild, crash-filled Sam's Town 300.

This weekend, the No. 20 team comes to Sin City with plenty of momentum on its side after Logano's dominating performance at Fontana. And Hamlin, the proud native of Chesterfield, Va., is looking forward to his first chance to work with fellow Virginian and new JGR No. 20 Toyota crew chief Kevin Kidd, who hails from clear across the Old Dominion State in the tiny hamlet of Tazewell.

Early indications are that Kidd, who spent the last four seasons as engineer on Elliott Sadler's No. 19 car at Richard Petty Motorsports, has picked up right where highly successful No. 20 Nationwide Series crew chief Dave Rogers left off. Rogers, of course, left late last season to take over JGR's No. 18 Sprint Cup entry driven by Kyle Busch, but left behind a legacy that included the 2008 Nationwide Series owner championship and followed up with another strong season in 2009 that featured five wins and six pole positions.

Kidd and Logano opened the season at Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway two weekends ago with a solid seventh-place finish after qualifying the No. 20 car sixth. Then, last weekend at Fontana, the No. 20 was absolutely the car to beat before the late-race calamity that ultimately saw defending series champion Busch and JGR's No. 18 Toyota rally for the win.

Hamlin is back in the No. 20 Toyota for the first time since last season's penultimate race at Phoenix International Raceway in Avondale, Ariz., where he qualified on the pole, led 91 of 200 laps, but finished just 12<sup>th</sup>. He's driven JGR's No. 20 car in 101 of his 119 career Nationwide Series starts, including full-season stints in 2005 and 2006, and has seven of his nine career Nationwide Series wins and 11 poles driving the No. 20 car.

While Las Vegas hasn't been all too kind to Hamlin in four previous starts at the 1.5-mile oval (his best finish of sixth came in 2006), Hamlin hopes to turn all of that around this weekend by making a fresh start during the first of his precious few Nationwide Series races for 2010. And he'll settle for nothing but a quality result for the Interstate Batteries team.

***Denny Hamlin, Driver of the No. 20 Interstate Batteries NASCAR Nationwide Series Toyota Camry at Las Vegas Motor Speedway***

**Is Las Vegas like any of the other mile-and-a-half tracks on the circuit, and how do you approach it?**

☑Las Vegas is similar to Charlotte but without the transitions going into the corners. A lot of the pavement is relatively the same. The tires are relatively the same, so our set-ups are going to be pretty close."

**How do you approach a race weekend like Las Vegas, when you're pulling double duty?**

☑It's a little more track time, but I like concentrating on the (Sprint) Cup cars as much as I can. We've cut our schedule way back on the Nationwide side in recent years, which makes it one of those races where we can go for broke and try to win."

**Are you looking forward to being back in the Joe Gibbs Racing Nationwide Series program?**

☑Yeah, I haven't had a chance to work with (crew chief) Kevin Kidd, yet, but I've heard really good things about him. The JGR Nationwide cars are always strong, so I'm looking forward to going for the victory. It'll be neat to have Interstate Batteries on the No. 20 Toyota. Interstate's had a long association with Joe Gibbs Racing, so hopefully we can put them in victory lane."

**Las Vegas Motor Speedway is a track that's certainly seen its share of changes in recent years. Does it make the experience more enjoyable for you, as a driver?**

☑For me, I think the biggest improvements we've seen at Vegas are two different things. The infield: they've done a great job with the garage area being fan accessible to the drivers, and there's a lot of entertainment there within the infield. The second is the tire that they've brought to Vegas. Last year, it was a little softer tire and it gave the cars more grip. We ran faster speeds, and it seems the racing was as good as it's ever been there. I'm really excited about going back there and seeing what they've got for us this year."

***Meet the No. 20 Interstate Batteries / Joe Gibbs Racing Team***

**Primary Team Members:**

Driver: Denny Hamlin

Crew Chief: Kevin Kidd

Car Chief: Nate Bellows

Engine Builder: Mark Cronquist

Engine Tuner: Dan Bajek

Spotter: Curtis Markham

### Over-The-Wall Crew Members:

Gas Man: Chris Webb

Front Tire Changer: Terry Spalding

Catch Can Man: Brian Larson

Front Tire Carrier: Aaron Schields

Windshield: Matt Lucas

Rear Tire Changer: Chris McMullen

Jack Man: T.J. Ford

Rear Tire Carrier: Matt Tyrell

### Road Crew Members:

Truck Driver: George Hoult

Tire Specialist: Ryan Martin

Mechanics: Matt Ashbrenner, Ben Chase

Shock Specialist: Joel Weidman

### **The Car**

**Chassis No. 2073:** This car has been one of the true workhorses of the JGR Nationwide Series stable the last three seasons, having served as primary car for eight races and back-up chassis on dozens of other occasions. Denny Hamlin debuted No. 2073 at Auto Club Speedway in Fontana, Calif., in February 2007, qualifying fourth and finishing eighth. Tony Stewart next drove this car at Atlanta Motor Speedway in Hampton, Ga., in the March 2007 race, qualifying fourth and finishing 10<sup>th</sup>. Hamlin was back in 2073 in the April 2007 race at Texas Motor Speedway in Fort Worth, qualifying sixth and finishing second to Matt Kenseth after leading 49 of 150 laps. Aric Almirola took a turn in No. 2073 at Kentucky Speedway in Sparta in June 2007, where he qualified 21<sup>st</sup> and finished sixth. In 2008, Stewart drove the car to a dominating victory at the February race at Fontana, qualifying second and leading a race-high 135 of 150 laps along the way. Stewart was back in it at the April 2008 Texas race, where he qualified sixth and finished 10<sup>th</sup>. Next up for No. 2073 was the June 2009 race at Dover International Speedway, where Joey Logano qualified on the pole, led 87 laps, and finished second to Brad Keselowski. Brad Coleman drove its next race at Iowa Speedway in Newton, qualifying fifth and finishing 13<sup>th</sup>. Hamlin then drove No. 2073 at its last outing at Dover last September, qualifying fourth and running well until an accident 12 laps from the finish left him in 27<sup>th</sup> place. The car underwent a major rebuild during this past offseason.

### **Denny Hamlin's Las Vegas Nationwide Series Box Score**

Year	Event	Start	Finish	Status/Laps	Laps Led	Earnings
2009	×Sam's Town 300	4	21	Accident, 196/209	7	\$23,645
2007	Sam's Town 300	16	12	Running, 200/200	0	\$31,050
2006	×Sam's Town 300	2	6	Running, 206/206	1	\$50,858
2005	Sam's Town 300	18	12	Running, 200/200	0	\$31,350

× Race length extended due to green-white-checker finish.