Heritage Speedway

1979 Daytona 500

Focus object or destination in the Hall:

1979 Daytona 500, Heritage Speedway

Grade Level: Grades 4 - 8

Lesson Objective: Students will understand the importance of national media coverage for NASCAR and its direct economic impact on race teams.

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies:

Emphasis on Theme #7 –This theme provides for the study of how people organize for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services, and prepares students for the study of domestic and global economic issues. In schools, this theme typically appears in units and courses dealing with economic concepts and issues, though it is also important for the study of the economic dimension of other social studies subjects.

NCSCOS Objectives: Social Studies, Grade 4, Competency Goal 6:

The learner will evaluate how North Carolinians apply basic economic principles within the community, state, and nation.

Objective 6.03: Categorize the state’s resources as natural, human, or capital.

Social Studies, Grade 5, Competency Goal 5:

The learner will evaluate ways the United States and other countries of North America make decisions about the allocation and use of economic resources.

Objective 5.01: Categorize economic resources found in the United States and neighboring countries as human, natural, or capital and assess their long-term availability.

Social Studies, Grade 8, Competency Goal 8:

The learner will evaluate the impact of demographic, economic, technological, social, and political developments in North Carolina since the 1970s.

Objective 8.01: Describe the changing demographics in North Carolina and analyze their significance for North Carolina’s society and economy.
Vocabulary: heritage, human resources, natural resources, capital resources, sponsorship, logo, corporate headquarters

Materials/Supplies: sponsorship logos from various products
Pre-Visit Activity

Tell the students that today they will learn about one of the most famous moments in NASCAR racing history. The story is fascinating and the effect was lasting. This is the story of the 1979 Daytona 500.

The 1979 Daytona 500 marked the first time that the “great American race” was broadcast live flag-to-flag. In case you don’t know the meaning of the term flag-to-flag, it is racing slang for beginning to end. The winner of the race, Richard Petty, has never received the attention normally due to the winner because of the famous fight between Cale Yarborough and the Allison brothers. The day dawned ominously under gray and cloudy skies and the race was delayed. The race proved to be monumental for many reasons. A young driver, Dale Earnhardt, Sr., was among the field that day. An early race miscue involving Yarborough, Bobby Allison, and Donnie Allison resulted in all three drivers spinning out on the backstretch near turn two. On the last lap, as Allison and Yarborough battled for the lead, they banged together, spun into the wall, and disabled both cars. They were out of the race! Richard Petty, a distant third, motored past the scene to win the race. Donnie’s brother, Bobby, stopped by later to offer Donnie a ride back to the pits. An infuriated Cale Yarborough ran up to Bobby’s car, tried to implicate Bobby in the accident, and took a swing at Bobby with his helmet. Immediately Allison jumped from his car and responded to Yarborough’s actions while his brother Donnie tried to separate the two. It was all caught live on TV and changed NASCAR forever.

The race is famous in NASCAR circles but also in the world beyond. The weather on that particular February day was more than ominous in parts north of Daytona Beach. The entire eastern seaboard was hit by a ferocious snow storm and people were stuck at home. The drama of the fight between the Allisons and Yarborough brought interest from a group of people who had never before known or cared about NASCAR. Suddenly, it wasn’t just a Southern, red-neck sport. It was exciting and nerve-racking. New enthusiasts attached themselves to specific drivers as if they were Hollywood royalty.

NASCAR leadership had something new to dangle in front of corporate sponsors. The race viewer demographics began to change dramatically in 1979 and anyone who wanted a whole new audience needed to jump on board. One very important change in the demographics was the significant increase in female viewers. This created opportunity for corporations to get their products in front of the female audience.

Ask students to interview an adult female, i.e. mother, aunt, older sister, grandmother, etc. about the type of laundry detergent that she uses to wash clothes. Questions should include:

1. What brand do you usually buy?
2. Why do you use that brand?
3. If you don’t have a favorite brand, how do you make your selection?
4. Ask if you might bring the container, when it is empty, to your classroom.
Gather the containers from each student who brings one and ask the students to review what they learned about the person’s buying habits. Next, compile the data to analyze buying patterns and discuss with the students.

Tell the students that Proctor & Gamble (P&G) is the maker of Tide laundry detergent. P&G decided to sponsor Darrell Waltrip’s race car in 1988. The entire car was wrapped in the Tide colors and logo. They also placed the race car on the Tide laundry detergent box. This sponsorship provided a great amount of money for Waltrip’s racing team and he won many races while driving with the Tide sponsorship. P&G continued their sponsorship of race cars until 2005.

Other effects of the large viewership of the 1979 Daytona 500 included more live television coverage of NASCAR races. The ultimate question was which came first, the sponsorship or the race? If TV network executives could demonstrate a large viewership and detail viewer demographics, then sponsorships were an easy sell to certain corporations. NASCAR had now taken the giant leap to become a national sport.

Introduce the vocabulary listed in the overview of this lesson. These words are very important to student understanding of the learning standards.
Visit to the NASCAR Hall of Fame

This activity is a scavenger hunt that requires the students to find the answers on Sunoco Glory Road (2nd floor), the Hall of Honor (3rd floor), and Heritage Speedway (4th floor). The hunt begins with the cars found on Glory Road.

Answers to questions 1 – 3 are found on Glory Road

1. What color is Richard Petty’s #43 car located on Glory Road? Answer: Petty blue
2. What is the name of the soft drink found on Darrell Waltrip’s #11 car? Answer: Mountain Dew
3. Who was the sponsor of the black #3 car that belonged to Dale Earnhardt? Answer: Goodwrench

Answers to questions 4 – 6 are found in the Hall of Honor

4. Who was the sponsor of Junior Johnson’s car found in the Hall of Honor? Answer: Holly Farms Chicken
5. Who was the sponsor of Richard Petty’s #43 car located in the Hall of Honor? Answer: STP
6. What are the colors of Richard Petty’s #43 car located in the Hall of Honor? Answer: red and blue (Note: the red is the STP red and the blue is Petty blue)

Answers to questions 7 – 9 are found on Heritage Speedway in the area of the 1979 Daytona 500

7. After locating the Miss Winston uniform in the case behind the 1979 Daytona 500 wreck, name the corporation behind Winston. Answer: RJ Reynolds
8. What corporate name is found on the cell phone located in that same case? Answer: Nextel
9. What image did P&G put on the Tide detergent box? Answer: a race car
Post-Visit Activity

This activity can be divided and various tasks assigned to individual students or to small groups.

Ask students to answer the questions listed about these drivers:

1. Richard Petty
2. Junior Johnson
3. Darrell Waltrip
4. Dale Earnhardt, Sr.

Name of driver:

City and state where driver lives:

Name of sponsor:

City and state of sponsor’s corporate headquarters:

Year this sponsor started with driver named above:

Picture of sponsor’s logo:

Ask students to research the following corporations in regard to their sponsorship of NASCAR’s premier series now known as the Sprint Cup Series: RJ Reynolds, Nextel, and Sprint. Ask the students to include a picture of the logo for each corporation and to find out the dollar amount given to NASCAR by each sponsor.

After the students have the answers to the questions above, ask them to share with their classmates. Also ask them to create a summary of the information in a form that is easiest to understand, i.e. narrative, charts, graphs, etc.

In conclusion, ask the students to review the definitions of human, natural, and capital resources. Which type of resource is NASCAR? Discuss.