



Auto Racing Writers & Broadcasters Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
29 November 2009

2009 AUTO RACING ALL-AMERICA TEAM SELECTED

BURBANK, Calif. – The 2009 All-America Auto Racing Team has been chosen by the nation's motorsports press with a surprise and a shocker coming out of the final totals.

Just two drivers are contenders this year for the Jerry Titus Award -- the team's Driver of the Year, both of them dominating the vote in their category. One is not all unexpected but the other is a high surprise and they stand just two votes apart in the final tally. Who those two are is not revealed until the All-America ceremonies in Brownsburg, Ind., on Jan. 16 but they will come from among the eight drivers named to the First Team by the voting members of the American Auto Racing Writers and Broadcasters Association.

Two former Titus winners are on the team this year -- Indy Car champion Dario Franchitti (2007) and NHRA Top Fuel driver Tony Schumacher (2006, 2008), both bidding to repeat this year after winning their categories.

The Titus, given in remembrance of the late racer/journalist, signifies the top vote-getter on the All-America team regardless of category, is announced at the conclusion of the annual AARWBA banquet, which is open to the public. One driver from each of seven categories is elected to the First Team, one more to the Second Team, and all drivers receiving at least five percent of the vote (minimum five votes) earn honorable mention.

Schumacher won his seventh NHRA Full Throttle Top Fuel championship this year, his sixth in a row. With his 5-win season he won his seventh selection as an All-America in the Drag Racing category, every one of them First Team.

Franchitti was last selected when he won the IRL Indy Car championship in 2007 when he. After a year racing stock cars, he returned to the IRL in 2009 to win it again and also rejoin the All-America team for a fifth time, his second as a First Team member.

The shocker came in the Stock Car category where Jimmie Johnson, on the heels of his unprecedented fourth straight Sprint Cup, and sentimental favorite Mark Martin, virtually split the vote with the ageless Martin coming out on top in the balloting by just two votes. It is Martin's 15th time as an All-America, his fifth on the First Team. It is the eighth time Johnson has made the team.

Donny Schatz also scored a championship four-peat this year in the World of Outlaws Sprint Car series. It was not his only quadruple as he also won the prestigious Knoxville Nationals for a fourth consecutive year in addition to 12 wins on the WoO circuit. Winning the Short Track category, this also becomes Schatz' fourth straight year as a First Team All-America.

In the Road Racing category, drivers racing as teammates in the same car are voted on as a single entity resulting in the Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series' Daytona Prototype champions Jon Fogarty and Alex Gurney winning First Team honors. Their four victories made them the most winning pair in Daytona Prororypr history. It is the third time as an All-America and the second on the First Team for both.

In Touring Series it was another 50-plus veteran, NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series champion Ron Hornaday, atop the tally after his six-win season. It is Hornaday's fourth All-America selection, each of them First Team.

The vote in the At Large category produced IRL Indy Lights champion J.R. Hildebrand as the First Team choice on the strength of his 4-win season. Hildebrand was last on the team in 2006, a first-team selection that year as the Formula Ford 2000 Champion.

Information on the All-America Banquet is available at www.AARWBA.org. The banquet and ceremony is open to the public. --Rocky Entriken

FIRST TEAM

OPEN WHEEL: Dario Franchitti
STOCK CAR: Mark Martin
ROAD RACING: Jon Fogarty/Alex Gurney
DRAG RACING: Tony Schumacher
SHORT TRACK: Donny Schatz
TOURING SERIES: Ron Hornaday
AT LARGE: J.R. Hildebrand

SECOND TEAM

OPEN WHEEL: Helio Castroneves
STOCK CAR: Jimmie Johnson
ROAD RACING: David Brabham/Scott Sharp
DRAG RACING: Ashley Force Hood
SHORT TRACK: Joey Saldana
TOURING SERIES: Parker Kligerman
AT LARGE: Frank Manzo

HONORABLE MENTION

(At least 5% of the vote)

OPEN WHEEL: none
STOCK CAR: Kyle Busch, Tony Stewart
ROAD RACING: Gil deFerran/Simon Pagenaud, Luis Diaz/Adrian Fernandez
DRAG RACING: Larry Dixon, Mike Edwards, Robert Hight
SHORT TRACK: Levi Jones, Brad Kuhn
TOURING SERIES: Justin Lofton
AT LARGE: Travis Pastrana/Christian Edstrom