



RAISING THE LEVEL OF NASCAR AWARENESS

Photos courtesy of The Motorsports Decisions Group

The drivers of NASCAR teams may be most noticeable on the track, but in the garage it's the crew chief who shines. The elements that helped build the sport of NASCAR — performance, reliability, leadership, teamwork and vision — are also the founding elements of the Crew Chief Club (CCC). From its association in developing curriculum for the NASCAR Technical Institute to sponsoring programs created to honor the skills and talents of pit crew members, the club plays an important role in promoting and advancing vehicle technology.

Founded in 1998, CCC is a significant factor in heightening awareness of NASCAR as a sport. Founding members include: Larry McReynolds, crew chief of the Richard Childress Racing No. 31

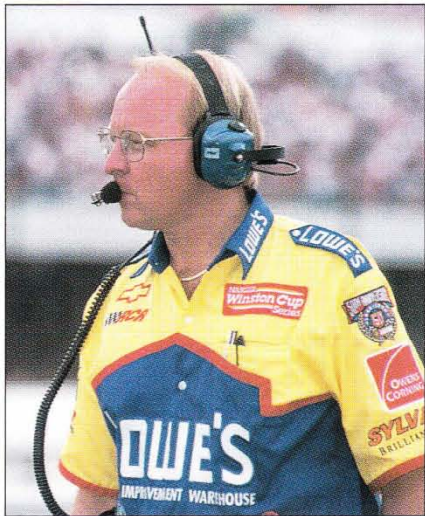
Lowe's Chevrolet and driver Mike Skinner; Jimmy Makar, crew chief of the Joe Gibbs Racing No. 18 Interstate Batteries Pontiac and driver Bobby Labonte; Todd Parrott, crew chief of the No. 88 Quality Care/Ford Credit Taurus and 1999 NASCAR Winston Cup Series champion Dale Jarrett; and Robin Pemberton, crew chief of the Penske Racing South No. 2 Miller Lite Ford and driver Rusty Wallace.

CCC's founding members were joined this year by four new members, who represent the younger generation of current NASCAR Winston Cup Series crew chiefs: Tommy Baldwin, crew chief of the Bill Davis Racing Caterpillar Pontiac and driver Ward Burton; Jimmy Elledge, crew chief of the Andy Petree Racing Square D

Chevrolet and driver Kenny Wallace; Ryan Pemberton, crew chief of the Jasper Motorsports Jasper Engines & Transmissions Ford and driver Robert Pressley; and Greg Zipadelli, crew chief of the Joe Gibbs Racing No. 20 Home Depot Pontiac and driver Tony Stewart, 1999 NASCAR Winston Cup Series Rookie Of The Year.

The existence of the organization is significant because crew chiefs are the second-most interviewed and talked-to people in NASCAR. They not only call the shots on racing strategy, they also call the shots on the car.

"This club makes a very big statement as to how far the role of the crew chief has come in this business, especially in the eyes of the public," said McReynolds.



CCC founding member Larry McReynolds, crew chief of the Richard Childress Racing No. 31 Lowe's Chevrolet and driver Mike Skinner, is one of the most respected men in the garage area. McReynolds' wrench turning career began in 1975 and after 11 years of toiling as a general mechanic for a variety of teams, he landed his first crew chief position with King Racing in 1986. McReynolds' methodical approach to his crew chief responsibilities earned him selection to the Copenhagen/Skoal All-Pro Team for five straight years (1991-1995), an all-star who's who selection of NASCAR Winston Cup Series crew members.

Below: CCC founding member Robin Pemberton is crew chief of the Penske Racing South No. 2 Miller Lite Ford and driver Rusty Wallace. He has realized wins as head wrench at Roush Racing for driver Mark Martin, and at Team SABCO with Kyle Petty. In 1995, Pemberton assumed his current position with Penske Racing South and Wallace. He has experienced more than half of his career wins as crew chief for Wallace.



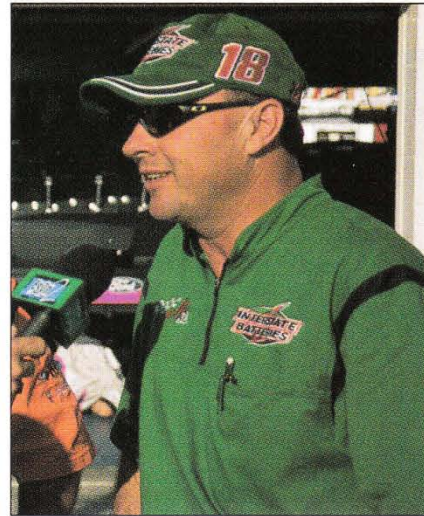
"I feel very flattered to be a member of the Crew Chief Club, knowing how many good crew chiefs there are in NASCAR Winston Cup Series racing. The four founding members combined have a lot of years under our belts. We felt that the company has grown to where we could look at adding new members, and what better group to look at than the young guys? We've added a great group of individuals who are doing a great job. By no means are any of them young to motorsports, but they are relatively new to the position of crew chief in NASCAR Winston Cup Series racing. We're proud of what they've accomplished with their respective teams and are looking forward to working with each of them."

CCC is playing a major role in promoting and advancing automotive technology. The group has been providing technical assistance to NASCAR and Universal Technical Institute (UTI) in the development of curriculum for the NASCAR Technical Institute, which debuts in 2002. Currently, NASCAR Elective courses are offered at UTI's Texas campus (see related story on page 48).

"CCC has played a large role in creating a curriculum for automotive/NASCAR technology at UTI," said Mike Bauer, VP/GM for The Motorsports Decisions Group, coordinators of all CCC activities. "The goal of the program is to attract people to the automotive technician industry, and to develop entry-level technical talent that the teams can draw from. CCC members are serving as consultants on the curriculum for those courses and helping on developing lesson plans for UTI."

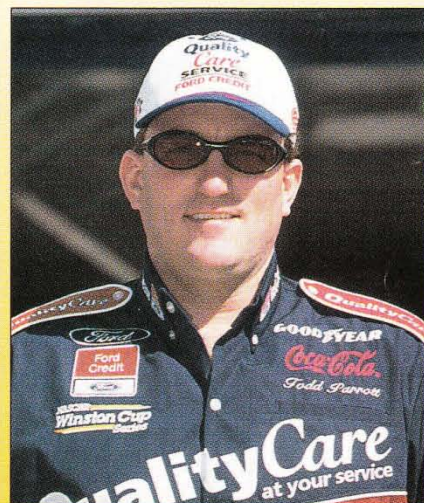
Having a pool of talented motorsports technicians to draw from is a critical factor in the success of any NASCAR team. No one understands this better than a NASCAR crew chief.

"There's no question that there's a shortage of qualified NASCAR mechanics," said McReynolds. "Certainly what has created this is the fact that most



CCC founding member Jimmy Makar is crew chief of the Joe Gibbs Racing No. 18 Interstate Batteries Pontiac and driver Bobby Labonte. He has been a crew chief with Joe Gibbs Racing since its inception in 1991, where he oversaw the development of an entire race team from its infancy. Once Makar's team was a proven winner, Joe Gibbs Racing took on the challenge of developing an in-house engine program. Under Makar, the number of wins and poles have grown in accordance with the team's growth.

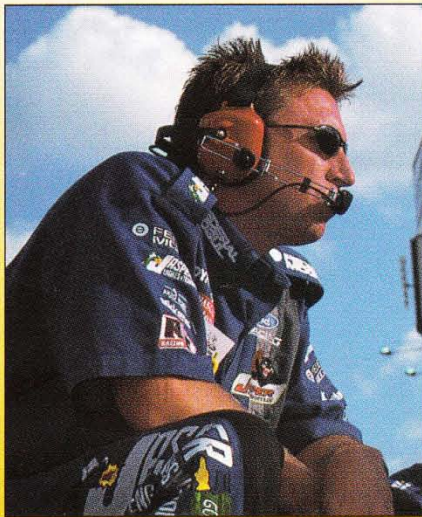
Below: Todd Parrott, crew chief of the No. 88 Quality Care/Ford Credit Taurus and 1999 NASCAR Winston Cup Series champion Dale Jarrett, has been with Robert Yates Racing since 1995. When his father Buddy served as crew chief for Richard Petty, Todd was there with his father when Petty scored his 200th victory at the Firecracker 400 in 1984. Hard work, perseverance and dedication best describe the manner in which Parrott has achieved his phenomenal NASCAR success.





Jimmy Elledge became the crew chief for the No. 55 Square D/Cooper Lighting racing team in 1999, the team's first full year of operation. Elledge has grown up around racing, and his father, Terry, is a highly respected NASCAR Winston Cup Series engine builder. His career includes experience as a driver in the NASCAR Winston Racing Series, when Elledge was also a full-time employee at Richard Childress Racing.

Below: Ryan Pemberton, crew chief of the No. 77 Jasper/Federal-Mogul Ford and driver Robert Pressley, joined Jasper Motorsports at the end of the 1999 season after spending the previous three years with MB2 Motorsports and driver Ernie Irvan. Pemberton began his racing career at Roush Racing in 1988 and was voted an All-Pro Mechanic that year. He comes from a racing family: brother Robin, is well known as Rusty Wallace's crew chief; brother Roman works at Jasper Motorsports; and, brother Randy, is a reporter for the Inside NASCAR TV show.

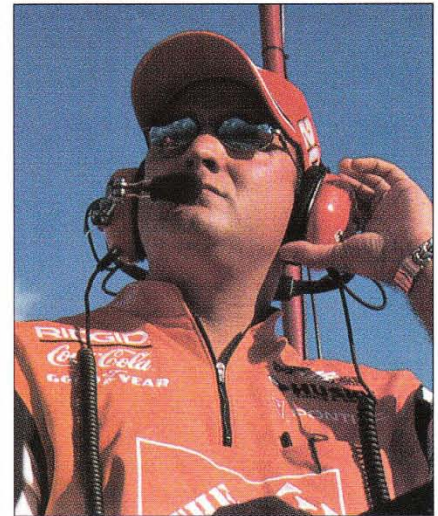


teams instead of having eight to 10 mechanics, now have 15-20 mechanics per race team. Just over 10 years ago you had 15-20 competitive NASCAR Winston Cup Series teams and another 10 or 12 that would show up and try to race — now you've got 40-plus NASCAR Winston Cup Series teams that on any given day are capable of winning races. The demand for good NASCAR team members has really increased in the last couple of years."

In addition to having a part in increasing the pool of NASCAR talent to draw from, CCC plays an important role in promoting and advancing vehicle technology. The group also sponsors programs created to honor the skills and talents of current pit crew members, including The Chase Racing All-Star Program.

"The Chase Racing All-Stars are all-stars of the pit crew," said Bauer. "Each position is judged within the pit crew itself, so you've got tire changers, tire carriers, jack man, gas man, catch-can man — the whole pit crew. We have a panel of judges who are voting on the top crew guys. It's a way to promote and build excitement and awareness of the crew members. We are involved in a professional sport and these guys are athletes, they're very skilled in their positions — we want to honor the best."

Honoring the best has always been part of what NASCAR racing is about. And, while the driver is the star, the crew chief is the team leader. As the sport of NASCAR racing has expanded and the level of auto technology has increased, TV and media coverage of NASCAR racing has expanded exponentially. As a result, today's fans want to get more and more focused on the technical side of stock car racing. As NASCAR racing continues to grow, there is no doubt that crew chiefs, and CCC, are playing a significant role in the growth of the sport of NASCAR racing. ●



Just as his driver was a rookie in the NASCAR Winston Cup Series last season, so too was Greg Zipadelli in the role of crew chief for Home Depot Pontiac driver Tony Stewart. But after knocking off three wins, two poles, 13 top-five and 21 top-10 finishes en route to finishing fourth in the season-ending point standings, the pair looked more like NASCAR veterans rather than rookies.

Below: Tommy Baldwin, crew chief of the No. 22 Caterpillar Pontiac and driver Ward Burton, took over crew chief responsibilities for Bill Davis Racing late in the 1998 season. Before moving to the NASCAR Winston Cup Series, Baldwin was one of the most successful young crew chiefs in the Featherlite Modified Series, NASCAR Touring. In 1999 his leadership helped earn Burton a place in the top 10 drivers of the year, at ninth place. This year Baldwin's impact on the team culminated when Burton won the Mall.com 400 at Darlington Raceway — his first NASCAR Winston Cup Series win since 1995.

