

DAYTONA 500 PREVIEW

LAST DASH

FOR A NASCAR LEGEND

JEFF GORDON ON POLE FOR HIS FINAL DAYTONA 500

After enjoying one of the most successful careers in motorsports, Jeff Gordon announced earlier this year that 2015 would be his last season to be a full-time NASCAR Sprint Cup driver.

And NASCAR couldn't have scripted a better way for him to say goodbye.

Gordon recorded the best lap time in qualifying to earn the top starting position in Sunday's Daytona 500, cementing his place as the most compelling driver when the new NASCAR season opens with its marquee event at 1 p.m.

Eastern on Sunday.

"I can't think of anything cooler than to start this season, the Daytona 500 — my final Daytona 500, my final full season — on the pole," Gordon said after qualifying. "It's going to be pretty important for me to be on that pole when it all starts."

TEAMMATES STARTING AT THE FRONT

Gordon edged out his Hendrick Motorsports teammate, Jimmie Johnson, for the pole. That means Gordon will start the race next to his longtime mentor, and Hendrick will lock out the front row of Sunday's race.

Johnson didn't miss the historic significance

of starting the race alongside Gordon, who will be in his 23rd and final Daytona 500.

"To start next to him in his final Daytona 500, it's really cool. Depending on how the results turn out, it could be a bigger storyline yet," Johnson said.

DATE: Sunday, Feb. 22

TIME: 1 p.m. Eastern

TV: Coverage begins noon Eastern on FOX

ON POLE: Jeff Gordon, Chevrolet



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Jeff Gordon and his crew chief, Alan Gustafson, along with Jimmie Johnson and his crew chief, Chad Knaus, pose with the Daytona 500 Pole Award and Front Row Award after qualifying for the 57th Annual Daytona 500 on Feb. 15.

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