



CHARLOTTE MOTOR SPEEDWAY NCWTS RACE PREVIEW:

Previous Charlotte Winner Crafton Returns to the Queen City to Defend the Ohio "Ice Palace"

Sandusky, Ohio -May 17th, 2011 - Matt Crafton, driver of the No. 88 Menards/Mullican Great Lakes Flooring Chevrolet Silverado, returns for his ninth NASCAR Camping World Truck Series start at Charlotte Motor Speedway on Friday, May 20th with ThorSport Racing. With two top five finishes and seven top ten finishes here – capped off with a best finish win in 2008 – the current Series points leader is ready to return to the Queen City of Charlotte with the No. 88 Sandusky, Ohio-based crew.

ThorSport Racing is the only Ohio-based NASCAR team...dubbed the "Ice Palace" by Krista Voda on a Setup show for SPEED Channel in Daytona of this year due to its chilly weather and icy conditions. The No. 88 Menards Chevy team is used to the questions on operating competitively outside of the NASCAR hub city of Charlotte.

Crafton, who holds one of the longest relationships in the Series with the same sponsor and same race organization at ten years strong, likes to hear the questions. "They aren't new questions, I've heard them my whole career at ThorSport Racing and we've never really given it a second thought," said the veteran driver. "We've heard things like, 'You have to be in Charlotte to be successful.' 'There are no equipment suppliers or people in Ohio.' 'What about the wind tunnel or technology?' 'How can you win a championship from somewhere other than the heart of racing?' All valid questions, but all questions we've either answered or solved in a really humble way – quietly – through great people, partners, technology and track performance over the last few years as we've hit our stride."

"With all due respect, I love Charlotte. This is my adopted city, after being from California and driving for a team from Sandusky. We have so much momentum this year, coming off a great season last year - my teammate, Johnny Sauter, and I being third and fourth in points; me winning at Charlotte in 2008; and doing pretty well the first six races this year. Many of our extended families and friends live here, and it's a place to pay homage to our racing forefathers, just as Daytona is for all of us racers. ThorSport Racing opens a brand new, 100,000-sq. ft. race facility in Sandusky in August, though, and it's a source of huge pride in where we've come from and to in ten years. We can't wait to celebrate with our Ohio family and NASCAR fans everywhere. This continues to be a great year. But we'd like to prove, in a subtle, humble way of sorts - that you don't necessarily have to live and work here as a team, to be successful & win championships in this business."

Bringing the Great Lakes to the East Coast

The No. 88 Menards/Mullican Great Lakes Flooring Chevrolet will sport a hood featuring the Great Lakes by Mullican brand. Offering an array of hardwood floor options for buyers, the line is available at Menards locations across the country. Visit www.menards.com for more information.

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“I’m looking forward to this race and having Great Lakes by Mullican on the hood. I spent two extra days in Sandusky with my guys after racing Toledo on Sunday in the ARCA Racing Series. It gave us a chance to connect over the Charlotte truck, and it also gave us the mental gains to prepare for this week. Every week is a big race week, but our 1.5-mile program is dominant this year. I’d like to come back and really see if we can get this truck in Victory Lane again.”

Race Stats:

Charlotte Chassis: 32 – last used in Homestead 2010

Crew Chief: Bud Haeefele

Starts: 8

Top 10: 7 Top 5: 2 Win: 1 (2008 NCWTS)

Current Driver Points Standing: 1st

N.C. Education Lottery 200

Friday, May 20th, 2011

Race Broadcast: 7:30pm (NCWTS Setup Show on SPEED); 8:00pm Race on SPEED,
MRN & Sirius NASCAR 90

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Photo Credit: Ronda A. Greer (RAG) Photography 2010

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