

## Getting to know Paul Menard, the newest addition to Richard Childress Racing's stable of drivers

In August 2010, Richard Childress Racing announced that they would be expanding their Sprint Cup program into a four-team organization. Enter veteran Sprint Cup Series driver, Paul Menard. Embarking on his fifth season of NSCS competition, the Eau Claire, Wis., native will drive the No. 27 Menards Chevrolet Impala.

Menard began his full-time Cup career with Dale Earnhardt Inc. in 2007, moving to Yates Racing for the 2009 season. He remained with that group for 2010, which now competes under the Richard Petty Motorsports banner, finishing the season 23<sup>rd</sup> in the point standings. He has eight career top-10 finishes in NASCAR's elite division and claimed the pole position at Daytona International Speedway in July 2008. In the Nationwide Series, Menard has one win, 60 top-10 and 19 top-five finishes in seven years of running at least a limited NNS schedule. In 2011, Menard will drive the No. 33 Chevrolet for KHI in seven Nationwide Series events.

There is no doubt that Menard is comfortable behind the wheel of a car, but what does the 30-year-old like to do off the track?

"During the season, I really try to get outside as much as I can," said Menard. "I like to spend time on the lake, shooting guns at the range and dirt biking. My favorite activity in the off season is definitely skiing. I try to take a couple of trips each year with friends and family."

Menard has been feeding his need for speed since he was eight-years-old. He started in go-karts and graduated to ice racing at the age of 15. When asked what his favorite memories in racing were, he replied, "probably go-kart racing as a kid. It was great because we would race for the championship at our home track in Eau Claire. On our off weekends, we would travel around in my uncle's motorhome and hit special events."

It is evident that family has always been very important to Menard. Though he says he didn't think it was fun at the time, his favorite childhood memory was spending Saturdays and Sundays cutting firewood in the woods with his dad, brother (JR), Uncle Larry and cousin Charlie. "Time spent with family was a big part of my childhood."

Relaxing at home in between race weekends includes time with his two cats, Taaj (a Savannah) and Blaze (a rescue). "They're polar opposite of each other, but are good buddies."

People would be surprised to know that Menard and girlfriend Jen enjoy spending their free time cooking. "We love to cook," he said. "We enjoy trying out new recipes and when all else fails, we have our old favorites."

When asked what one thing that he is afraid of is, Menard answered, "failure." That fear, however, is far from his mind as he begins his inaugural season with RCR. "Everything has gone absolutely great with the transition to RCR," commented Menard. "The team is building awesome race cars and I am very excited to get this season started. Our goal is to contend for a spot in the Chase this year and I am confident that we will."