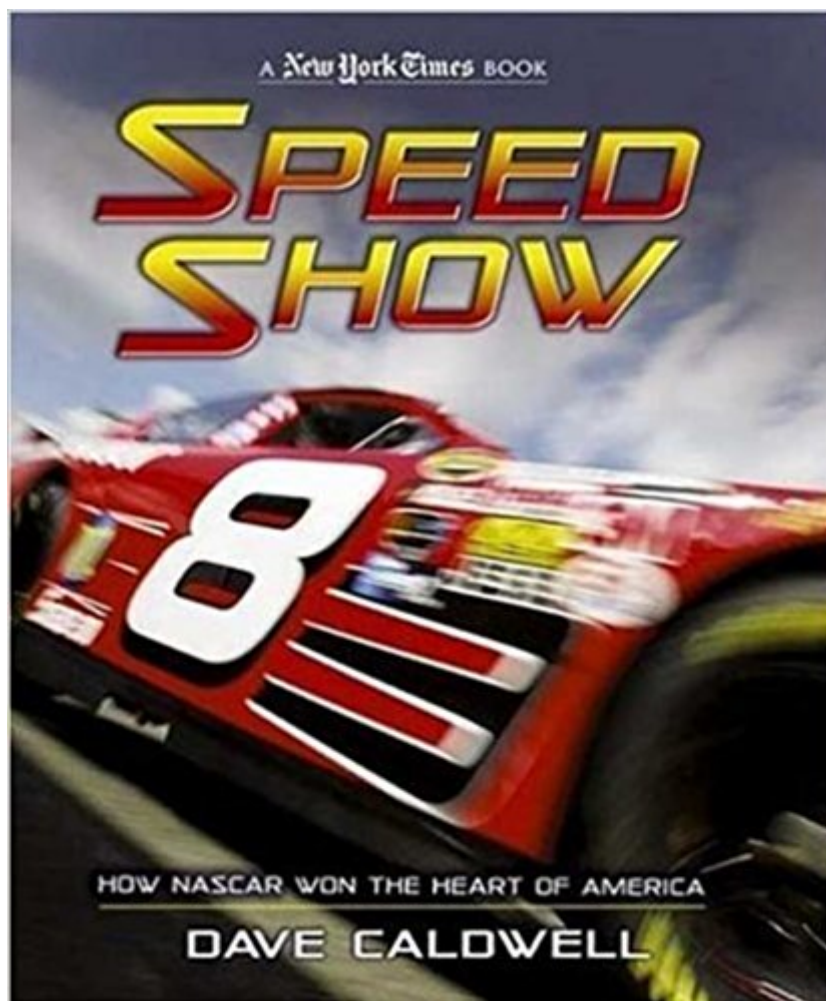


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# New York Times Speed Show: How NASCAR Won The Heart Of America



## Synopsis

Daytona Beach, Florida, 2001. Sportswriter Dave Caldwell watches from the stands as a black Chevrolet pulls ahead in the final laps of the Daytona 500. In an instant, it's over. The car smashes into a wall at 175 miles an hour, killing one of stock car racing's most loved drivers. The death of Dale Earnhardt inspired an outpouring of grief, drawing new fans to the sport and driving NASCAR to the top of the sporting industry. From its roots during Prohibition to today's die-hard fans, Dave Caldwell weaves together his firsthand observations as a NASCAR reporter with excerpts from The New York Times archives to give readers an inside look at the spectacle that is America's new favorite pastime.

## Book Information

Series: New York Times

Hardcover: 126 pages

Publisher: Kingfisher (October 25, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0753460114

ASIN: B008SM06F6

Product Dimensions: 7.8 x 0.6 x 9.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 1 customer review

Best Sellers Rank: #7,449,941 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #30 in [Books > Teens > Sports & Outdoors > Motor Sports](#) #652 in [Books > Children's Books > Sports & Outdoors > Motor Sports](#) #3404 in [Books > Teens > Education & Reference > History > United States](#)

Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 5 and up

## Customer Reviews

Grade 6 Up  
• This concise history of NASCAR racing and its recent surge in popularity starts with the author's eyewitness account of Dale Earnhardt's fatal crash at the 2001 Daytona 500 and the aftermath of the tragedy, both of which Caldwell covered for the New York Times. Subsequent chapters cover the basics of stock-car racing, from qualifying through the races and the championship point system; the technological side, featuring the cars and other equipment; the creation and development of NASCAR and its leading personalities; the relationship with the fans; marketing; and the outlook for the future. Caldwell's text is enjoyably readable, in spite of his

tendency to jump abruptly from one topic to another. The sport's lack of diversity is offset by featuring information on female and minority drivers and the association's efforts to attract a more diverse audience. The book is well documented and enhanced by excellent color photos. Offsets provide more in-depth detail, such as notes on multiple championship winners, biographical info, and historical events. A minor error results from a poorly worded explanation of the points system, but otherwise this is an accurate effort. Overall, this is a comprehensive look at the NASCAR phenomenon for beginners, and it has more than enough visual appeal to please longtime fans.

—Jeffrey A. French, Willoughby-Eastlake Public Library, Willowick, OH Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

**Children's Literature** This is interesting in that it allows the reader to look for more information and to further their research without being relegated to books or Web sites. *Speed Show* makes a good nonfiction book for any library collection. With plenty of text, ample photographs, and lots of information, this remarkable book will appeal to anyone, NASCAR fan or not. School Library Journal The book is well documented and enhanced by excellent color photos...Overall, this is a comprehensive look at the NASCAR phenomenon for beginners, and it has more than enough visual appeal to please longtime fans.

I admit that I'm a very unique type of NASCAR fan. I love the drivers, love reading about them, checking out the standings, and perusing all the gossip about their personal lives. I don't actually like watching the races. See, how odd is that? Sure, occasionally I'll stumble into a room where the race is on television (thanks to my mom and stepfather, who are NASCAR fanatics), but other than that I won't waste hours sitting down to watch cars drive in endless circles. But, okay, yes, the crashes are kind of cool! I was always a Dale Earnhardt fan. The number three car got my vote every time. When he died in a crash at the Daytona 500 on February 18, 2001, I was devastated--as were thousands upon thousands of NASCAR enthusiasts around the globe. The thing about NASCAR is that its devout fans come from every walk of life, from every part of the world, and they are a dedicated, loud-mouth bunch of people. They're also a family. When one of their "own" dies, as on that day when the racing world lost Dale Earnhardt, everyone mourned. Even fans who didn't like Earnhardt (and by that I mean they dared to cheer for another driver, like Jeff Gordon or Tony Stewart), sadly and publicly grieved the loss of a legend. Although I now root for Dale Earnhardt, Jr. in the number eight car, I still remember his father with pride. I still look for memorabilia with that number three. I still read books like *SPEED SHOW*, which discuss NASCAR, its history, and the

mark it's made on the racing world. Filled with numerous facts, figures, and full-color photos, SPEED SHOW is sure to delight any and all NASCAR fans, regardless of age. The legacy of "The Intimidator" lives on today, as well it should. For an easy-to-read, fact-filled history of NASCAR, its drivers, and its fans, SPEED SHOW is the book you need. Reviewed by: Jennifer Wardrip, aka "The Genius"

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