



Written by [Isabel Lyman](#) on July 1, 2009

## NASCAR's Homeschooled Star

Adding to the historic nature of the victory, Logano, all of 19 years old, became the youngest NASCAR winner ever. He did it at the New Hampshire Motor Speedway in Loudon, and even overcame a crash to do so. Blowing by the competition, which included Dale Earnhardt, Jr. and Jeff Gordon, Logano made Home Depot (his car's sponsor) and Joe Gibbs Racing (the outfit he drives for) very proud, as he went to Victory Lane at the Lenox Industrial Tools 301.



Actually, it was the ingenious pit strategy of Joey's experienced crew chief Greg Zipadelli that ensured the win for the team. Sensing that rain was imminent, Zipadelli kept Logano on the track while all the other drivers went to their pits for fuel and tires. With everyone else pitting, Logano's #20 car (which was formerly driven by Tony Stewart) took over first place, just before the rains came and the race was called.

After his victory, Logano told the Associated Press: "Obviously, it's not the way you want to win your first race, in the rain. But 20 years down the road, when you look in the record books, no one will know the difference. A win is a win, and I'll take them any way I can."

Despite their small numbers, homeschoolers have been steadily making a mark on the national sports scene.

Last week, two formerly homeschooled brothers from the University of Oklahoma - Blake and Taylor Griffin - were drafted to the NBA. Blake, in fact, was the number one draft pick. In 2007, Tim Tebow, a University of Florida quarterback and a product of a Christian homeschool, won the Heisman Trophy. Tebow almost won it again last year.

So Logano is in excellent company when it comes to this type of milestone for the homeschooling community. But this wunderkind's accomplishments are still in a class of their own.

He has been racing - starting in the quarter midget cars category - since he was six years old. He won his first national title at age seven. When he wasn't driving, little Joey was playing hockey. Baseball and basketball were likely too mild for his fast-paced tastes.

His attitude toward education was equally as unconventional. Logano, whose hometown is Middletown, Connecticut, was homeschooled by his mother, Deborah, since his elementary school years. When asked by a Hartford Courant reporter if he felt his single-minded devotion to racing had caused him to miss out on more normative childhood experiences, Logano responded by saying, "I don't feel like I'm missing anything by not going to school. I feel like I learn more that way (being homeschooled)."



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Nor did his social skills suffer. The constantly-smiling Logano is a fan favorite; he recently earned the most number of votes in NASCAR's 2009 Sprint Fan Vote. A fellow driver kiddingly nicknamed Logano "Sliced Bread," as in the greatest thing since.... While in New Hampshire, preparing for the big race, Logano took a time-out from the track to visit patients at a children's hospital.

Having the support and funds to confidently develop his talents, from an early age, might be the greatest gift Logano's parents bequeathed him. And, having been schooled apart from Uncle Sam's dreary brick-and-mortar model certainly gave him the freedom to develop the poise and self-control needed to become a world-class driver. One hopes that Logano - now a highly-regarded member of the modern chariot world's elite - can use his opportunity for good.

But no doubt about it, "Sliced Bread" is destined to continue slicing through the competition in years to come.

*Photo: AP Images*



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