

ROAD TO SAFETY

Lessons Learned At NASCAR Help To Make Us All Safer

(NAPSA)—The accelerated safety initiative begun by NASCAR in the wake of Dale Earnhardt's death has led to a number of safety advances in extreme sports safety.

"We want to maintain our focus, day in and day out, on safety," said NASCAR Vice President George Pyne.

Earnhardt's death, following the fatal crashes the previous year of drivers Adam Petty, Kenny Irwin Jr. and Tony Roper was the catalyst for a series of safety moves. In fact, NASCAR has introduced more safety regulations this year than any other in its 54-year history.

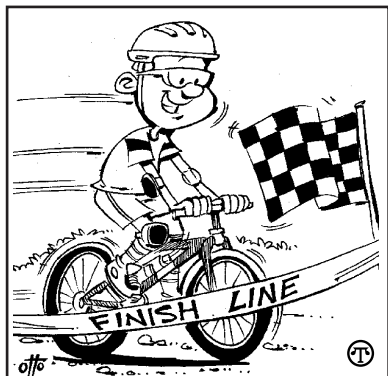
First and foremost, all drivers must wear head and neck restraints. One of them is the new head and neck restraining system—a semi-hard plastic collar and helmet-latch device that protects the driver's neck and spine during high-speed crashes. One of NASCAR's brightest young stars, Jeff Gordon, credited the device for his survival from a crash similar to the one that killed Earnhardt.

Motorist Safety

Interestingly, many of the plastic material lessons learned on the race track over the years have brought us stronger safety helmets, plastic air bags, and stronger nylon seat-restraint systems.

The new head restraint system is made with durable, lightweight composite plastics. Today's kids' helmets and safety gear are being made out of similar lightweight plastics that can help save their lives and protect their dreams of competing like their heroes on the NASCAR circuit.

It's now estimated that 95,000 children sustain head injuries every year. But they're not dri-



Safety lessons learned on the race track are helping reduce the risk of injury to young cyclists.

ving race cars. They're playing sports, riding bikes, skate-boarding and rollerblading. Plastic safety gear, such as safety helmets, help to protect kids from the very real dangers they face each day from unintentional injuries. A helmet can reduce the risk of brain injury while riding a bike by 85 percent.

The best thing to come out of auto racing's worst year last year is having the spotlight focused on safety. Perhaps nothing helps kids better to see the importance of safety gear in saving lives than having a hero like Jeff Gordon use plastic safety gear to help save a life.

Safety learned on the race track is also helping our troops on active duty. Many of the racing driver suits, made from a special fire-resistant plastic fabric are similar to those protecting our special ops personnel in Afghanistan now. That "take it for granted," common material plastic is helping save lives on the NASCAR circuit and at home with our families every day.