

Dale Earnhardt Jr.

Full Name: Ralph Dale Earnhardt Jr.

Birth date: Oct 10, 1974

Marital Status: Single

Hometown: Kannapolis, N.C.

Resides: Mooresville, N.C.

Dale Earnhardt Jr. is a third-generation driver in a family forever connected to the sport of stock-car racing, and while his innate ability behind the wheel comes from Earnhardt DNA, his competitive driving style and keen business sense are all his own. His flair for originality and common-sense charisma have helped propel him to one of the most popular figures in sports. Race fans have selected him six times as the winner of NASCAR's Most Popular Driver award, joining Bill Elliott as the only drivers to win it six consecutive seasons since 1956. His appeal is not limited to race fans, as he has appeared often on Harris Interactive's annual polling of America's Top 10 Favorite Athletes, frequenting the list with such names as Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods, Brett Favre and Derek Jeter.

The 2009 season marks Earnhardt's 10th in NASCAR Sprint Cup Series competition. Through 2008, the native of Kannapolis, N.C., has amassed more than \$53 million in career winnings and 18 victories, including the 2004 Daytona 500. His 18 victories tie him for 36th on NASCAR's all-time race winners list. He also has six non-points wins (three in the Gatorade Duel, two in the Budweiser Shootout and one all-star victory) and eight pole positions.

Earnhardt is the only third-generation NASCAR champion, achieved when he won the 1998 and 1999 NASCAR Nationwide Series titles. He follows his legendary father, Dale Earnhardt Sr., a seven-time Cup champion and winner of 76 races. His grandfather, Ralph Earnhardt, was the 1956 NASCAR Sportsman champion, and in 2007 was inducted posthumously into the National Dirt Late Model Hall of Fame. Both his father and grandfather were selected among NASCAR's 50 Greatest Drivers of all time in 1999. The three Earnhardts combine for 10 NASCAR championships.

Until 2008, Earnhardt's career as a full-time driver was solely within the confines of the family-owned business, Dale Earnhardt Inc., in which he accumulated 39 victories in the Nationwide and Sprint Cup Series from 1998-2007. But the 2008 season marked one of significant change, as Earnhardt made the boldest decision of his young career by signing with renowned team owner Rick Hendrick to drive the No. 88 Chevrolet for Hendrick Motorsports. High-powered sponsorship deals soon followed, as Pepsi-Cola's AMP Energy brand and the Army National Guard agreed to a co-primary sponsorship with Hendrick Motorsports to partner with Earnhardt and the No. 88 team.

With a successful driving career in motion, Earnhardt's role as team owner and businessman has enjoyed its own ascent. In 2002, JR Motorsports consisted of only six employees and a street-stock Camaro raced at the local short tracks. Today it encompasses a full stable of cars that compete in the Nationwide Series and local weekly late model divisions. In July 2007, Earnhardt announced a partnership deal with Hendrick Motorsports -- under the JRM banner with Hendrick Motorsports engines, chassis and vehicle engineering support -- to field two Nationwide Series race teams. In

2009, the No. 88 Chevrolets will run a full schedule, and the No. 5 Chevrolet is scheduled to compete in seven events, with Earnhardt behind the wheel for four races.

Earnhardt's first turn at ownership began with Chance 2, a team started in 2002 and jointly operated with Dale Earnhardt Inc. With that team, Earnhardt was co-owner of the 2004 and 2005 Nationwide Series championship teams with driver Martin Truex Jr. Truex's accomplishments mirrored those of Earnhardt, who dominated the 1998 and 1999 Nationwide Series seasons, winning two championships, 13 races and more than \$3 million. As a driver, he has an additional nine Nationwide Series victories in 34 starts since 1999, and his 22 total victories tie him for seventh on the all-time Nationwide Series win list. Fans and media selected him as one of the top-three Nationwide Series drivers of all-time in a 2006 NASCAR poll.

Earnhardt continues to garner worldwide media attention. He has appeared on more than 150 magazine covers and has been featured in high-profile publications such as Rolling Stone, GQ, Men's Journal, Sports Illustrated, People magazine and TV Guide. He has been a guest on "60 Minutes," "The Late Show with David Letterman," "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno," "Late Night with Conan O'Brien," "The Today Show," "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart," "The Jimmy Kimmel Show," "Good Morning America," "Live with Regis and Kelly" and "Larry King Live."

In its October 2008 issue, BusinessWeek magazine named Earnhardt to their top 100 most influential people in sports, ranking him 38th overall. The Charlotte (N.C.) Observer listed him among the top-10 most powerful people in NASCAR in 2007. In recent polls and surveys, he received a top-five "Q" rating among all athletes and rated among the top-five athletes in corporate endorsements by Forbes magazine.

With crossover appeal unmatched by any other athlete, his eclectic taste in music is reflected in the diverse list of artists that have featured him in their music videos, including Jay-Z, Staind, Sheryl Crow, Three Doors Down, Trace Adkins, O.A.R., the Matthew Good Band and Nickelback. He has played cameo roles in major motion pictures "Talladega Nights" and "Cars" and was the subject of an episode of MTV's "Diary" and VH1's "Driven." In 2001, he added best-selling author to his résumé with "Driver 8," a documentation of his rookie season in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series. The book landed on the New York Times best-seller list for 17 weeks, and online retailer Amazon.com named "Driver 8" the top-selling sports book of the year.

Earnhardt's business savvy extends beyond the track. In 2006, Earnhardt started Hammerhead Entertainment, a one-stop-shop production company that has produced shows for multiple national television networks, including "Back in the Day" on SPEED Channel, and "Dale Jr. – Shifting Gears" on ESPN. "Shifting Gears" was a five-part documentary in 2008 that chronicled Earnhardt's move to Hendrick Motorsports and gave unique insight into the chaotic world of "Little E." In April 2008, Earnhardt extended his entrepreneurship into the Charlotte entertainment scene, as he opened Whisky River, an uptown bar and nightclub located in the Charlotte EpiCentre.

Earnhardt's hobbies include hanging out at home, listening to music and computer gaming. He has a small golf course, go-kart track and a vintage Western-style town on his property near Mooresville, N.C.