



High hopes for Jeff Gordon



Former NASCAR champion Jeff Gordon (right, with team owner Rick Hendricks) is second in the standings despite not winning a race. (John Clark/NASCAR This Week photo)

Jeff Gordon's hometown could be considered Vallejo, Calif., where he was born, or Pittsboro, Ind., where he grew up.

Based on his record there, Indianapolis Motor Speedway is another place where Gordon feels right at home. He has won NASCAR's annual visit to the Brickyard a record four times. (As an aside, Gordon has won five times at Infineon Raceway, the track closest to his birthplace.)

Gordon's most recent Indy victory occurred in 2004. In the five races since then, though, Jimmie Johnson has won three times and Tony Stewart twice. Forty-eight races have passed since Gordon's last victory anywhere. He won at Texas Motor Speedway on April 5, 2009.

Still, a winless Gordon is better than most drivers who have won multiple races this year ... literally. Gordon, 38, ranks second in the Sprint Cup point standings, trailing only Kevin Harvick, and has more top-five finishes (10)

than any other driver.

"Our team's been consistently running up front," said Gordon. "We just haven't had the car to win or all the pieces as a team to get ourselves into victory lane.

"At times we've had the car. For whatever reasons -- blame it on me, blame it on incidents, I don't like to point fingers -- but we haven't gotten to victory lane. ... We think we've got some things up our sleeve for Indy, but I'm sure that's what a lot of guys out there are thinking."

Only five drivers -- Richard Petty, David Pearson, Bobby Allison, Darrell Waltrip and Cale Yarborough -- have ever won more races at NASCAR's highest level than Gordon. Three more victories would put him ahead of everyone except Petty and Pearson. But it's been "82 and holding" ever since the 2009 Texas victory.

Some have speculated that the end of Gordon's career is near. He disputes this.

"Man, I do (feel old) when I get out of that race car and everything aches," he said, "but no, I mean, I'm still enjoying the sport very, very much. I feel like I'm way more comfortable with where I'm at in the sport today. That's fun. I like all the years of experience that now I get to benefit from.

"The only thing I'd change right now is getting some of those wins back. It's tough. It's very competitive. We know we've got to pick up the pace."

Monte Dutton has covered motorsports for The Gaston (N.C.) Gazette since 1993. He was named writer of the year by the National Motorsports Press Association in 2008. His blog NASCAR This Week (<http://nascar.rbma.com>) features all of his reporting on racing, roots music and life on the road. E-mail Monte at nascar_thisweek@yahoo.com.

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SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Are You Due a \$250 Check?

Did you receive a \$250 check from the government? Chances are that means you're in the no-man's land of the doughnut hole -- also called the Medicare Part D coverage gap -- along with the 300,000 others who also received the check. The money is to help with drug costs.

The Medicare coverage gap works like this: You must spend \$2,830 for your deductible and drugs. Once you reach amount, the doughnut hole kicks in, and there's no more help until you pay \$4,550 out of pocket. Then your coverage starts again. Once you hit that amount, the government will send you a check for \$250 in about six weeks.

Thankfully, this amount is going to go up. Until 2020, the Affordable Care Act dictates that the doughnut hole will get smaller and smaller until it disappears. And soon those who get Medicare and who are in the doughnut hole will be able to get a 50 percent discount on certain medications.

Meanwhile, if you're in the

doughnut hole, there are a few ways to get help. Ask your doctor if you can switch to generics. Find out if any drug companies are offering help with the cost of your drug at the Patient Assistance Program. Put that name in the search box at www.medicare.gov. Also check the state program. If your income is very low, call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 for help programs.

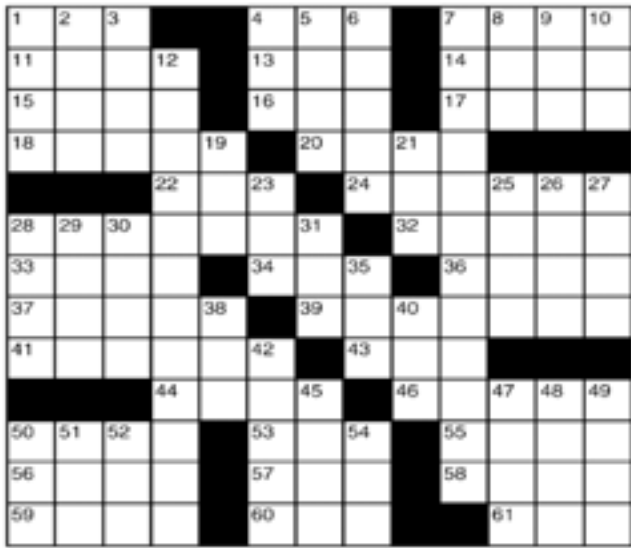
Beware the scammers, as usual. They're trying to convince seniors that the check won't arrive without an application, which the scammers will fill out for a fee. Meanwhile, they'll ask for your personal information, bank account number and Social Security number. Don't fall for it. If anyone approaches you with this offer, report them. Call 1-800-633-4227 (the Medicare number) as well as your local police.

Matilda Charles regrets that she cannot personally answer reader questions, but will incorporate them into her column whenever possible. Write to her in care of King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475, or send e-mail to columnreply@gmail.com.

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King Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1 Trophy room, maybe
 - 4 Recede
 - 7 Bloke
 - 11 Oil cartel
 - 13 The Red or the Black
 - 14 Inauguration recitation
 - 15 "Arrivederci"
 - 16 Faux --
 - 17 Secondhand
 - 18 Wash the pots
 - 20 Potter's oven
 - 22 Pinch
 - 24 Its capital is Riga
 - 28 Twisted treat
 - 32 Existence
 - 33 Ireland
 - 34 Talk on and on
 - 36 Get up
 - 37 Blazing
 - 39 Round pegs in square holes
 - 41 "Am I my brother's --?"
 - 43 Sock part
 - 44 Related (to)
 - 46 Shrivel
 - 50 Unite
 - 53 Gripe repeatedly
 - 55 Frat party garb
 - 56 Reed



- instrument
 - Hot tub
 - Break suddenly
 - 59 Traps
 - 60 Conger, for one
 - 61 Mag. staffers
- DOWN**
- 1 Medics
 - 2 Grand tale
 - 3 In the vicinity
 - 4 Kreskin's claim
 - 5 Duck's prominence
 - 6 Pesto ingredient
 - 7 Makes
 - 8 Owns
 - 9 Noshed
 - 10 Third degree?
 - 12 Bedspreads
 - 19 Occupation, for short
 - 21 Science room
 - 23 Mrs. Al Bundy
 - 25 Henry --
 - 26 "Meet Me -- Louis"
 - 27 Quite some time
 - 28 Pinnacle
 - 29 Widespread
 - 30 Ontario
 - neighbor
 - 31 Flee from a crime scene
 - 35 Morsel
 - 38 "A mouse!"
 - 40 Boar's mate
 - 42 Clean the suds off
 - 45 Back of the neck
 - 47 Region
 - 48 "Zounds!"
 - 49 Siestas
 - 50 Trot
 - 51 Japanese sash
 - 52 Charged particle
 - 54 8 pts.
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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

	9		5					7
	2	7			4		9	
5				2		6		
2					1		8	5
		8	6					9
	3			9		4		
	4		9		7			2
			3	1				6
9				4		1		

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ★★

★ Moderate ★★ Challenging
★★★ HOO BOY!

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Solution time: 21 mins.

Answers

King Crossword

Answer

Weekly SUDOKU

ALL MY CHILDREN
Liza told Tad that Damon kissed her. David didn't do anything to help Ryan after he collapsed from head pain. Madison asked Greenlee to give Ryan a chance to move on. Marissa turned to Caleb after she failed her bar exam. Scott and Annie began planning their wedding. Caleb decided to stay in Pine Valley. Ryan was diagnosed with a brain aneurysm. Wait to See: Angie gets some shocking news.

AS THE WORLD TURNS
Vienna escaped before Margo could question her about Barbara's disappearance. Iris told Gwen that she found religion and asked if she could be a part of her granddaughter's life again. Carly wasn't sure what to make of the kiss she saw between Craig and Lily. Lily found it hard to put on a brave face at Molly's bridal shower. Wait to See: Blackthorn asks Janet out on a date.

THE BOLD AND THE BEAUTIFUL
Hope decided not to go away for college. Brooke told Ridge the truth about the night of the party, hoping it would put an end to Steffy's blackmail. Nick and Aggie made love for the first time. Rick and Amber reminisced about all the good times they shared together. Someone tampered with Brooke's welcome-back video. Wait to See: Hope confronts Brooke about the scandal.

DAYS OF OUR LIVES
Chad was devastated when his mother, Madeline, died after falling off the pier. Hope drugged Bo's coffee and prepared to set him on fire. Rafe stole Nicole's coded diary and began to decipher it for clues. Daniel saved Bo's life while Hope stood in the shadows. Vivian was determined to put an

Soap Updates



Stephanie Gatschet stars as "Madison" on "All My Children"

end to Maggie and Victor's friendship. Wait to See: Hope tells Bo her true feelings for him.

GENERAL HOSPITAL
Dante gave Jason a gun before his meeting with Franco. Elizabeth's baby was kidnapped. Claire found herself attracted to Sonny. Johnny broke away from Brook Lynn's kiss and said that he was in love with Olivia. Warren went on a rampage at the hospital with a gun. A guilt-ridden Patrick weighed the pros and cons of telling Robin about his affair. Wait to See: Claire wants to carry Sonny's child.

ONE LIFE TO LIVE
Dani was hopeful about an experimental cancer treatment for her mother. Langston said goodbye to Markko at the airport. Viki and Charlie's plan backfired. Jessica was worried that Ford was the father of her baby, while Natalie feared that Brody was her own baby's daddy. Eli drugged Rex after he followed him to Boston. Layla's mother agreed that Evangeline should be taken off life support. Wait to See: Bo pulls over Inez for reckless driving.

THE YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS
Nikki accepted Victor's marriage proposal. Tucker agreed to let Jack run Jabot alongside Ashley. Malcolm's fiancée, Sofia, was one of Tucker's employees. Jack asked Abby to join forces with him to overpower Victor. Nikki admired Billy's devotion to Victoria. Abby made another spectacle of herself at Nikki and Victor's engagement party. Wait to See: Chloe has a Cinderella fantasy.

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Salome's Stars

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Avoid adding to the tension around you. Even a well-meant reaction against something you perceive as unfair could be misunderstood. Let things calm down, and then talk about it.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) It's a good time for romance for unattached Bovines, and a good time for reinforcing the bonds between partners. Children's needs are important during the latter part of the week.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) A compliment from a surprising source sends you wafting way up into the clouds, where -- sorry to say -- your view of what's going on is obscured. Come on down and face some reality.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Even a family-loving person like you sometimes can feel you're at the end of the line with contentious kinfolk. But things can work out. Remember that it's better to talk than walk.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) A job-related move might hold more positive surprises than you'd expected. Go into it with confidence, and look for all the advantages it offers. Then decide what you'll do with what you find.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) Driving yourself too hard to get something done on a deadline you set up can backfire. Ease into a more realistic finish date, and add more breaks to your work schedule.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) Your sense of humor can brighten any dark period, and your laughter can dispel those gray clouds swirling around you. The weekend presents a surprising but welcome change.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Be careful about the words you use, especially in touchy situations. The old Chinese saying that the spoken word is silver, but the unspoken gold could well apply here.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) Some facts could emerge to shed light on unresolved past problems.

What you learn also might help explain why a once-warm relationship suddenly cooled down.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) Don't let your pride get in the way of checking into what could be a great new opportunity. Get the facts first, and worry about procedure and protocol later.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) A health problem in the family might have other relatives assuming that, as before, you'll take over the health-care duties. Surprise them and insist they share in the caretaking.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) A series of changes can be unsettling, but in the long run, it can pay off with new perspectives on what you plan to do. Keep your mind open to the possibilities that might well lie ahead.

BORN THIS WEEK: You might be under a "royal" sign, but you have a wonderful way of embracing everyone as an equal.

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