

NewsFlash from The Joie of Seating ~ Custom Race Seats – Concord, NC

Busch Series Driver Making Safety His Business: LaJoie Not Taking a Back Seat

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Two-time Busch series champion Randy LaJoie has competed in just two events this season, but he's still getting plenty of seat time.

A few years ago, LaJoie began manufacturing seats for race cars, and his company - The Joie of Seating - is starting to capture much of the market, from weekend short tracks to Nextel Cup teams.

LaJoie has come up with a stamped, molded aluminum seat that fits 95 percent of a driver's body that he says, 'has revolutionized the aluminum seat market.'



LaJoie, who will be driving the No. 37 car in today's Yellow Transportation 300 Busch series race, estimates 30 percent of the Nextel Cup, Busch and NASCAR Craftsman Trucks series teams are using his seats, including the Evernham Motorsports and Robert Yates Racing teams.

'There are too many race car drivers today at the local levels that are not safe,' said LaJoie, 45. 'Since 2001, since Dale Earnhardt died, lives have been saved by better seats, softer walls, but it has not filtered down quick enough to the Saturday night racers.'

'I've made several trips around the country, and my next job is going to be teaching people how to put their seat belts in the cars, how to mount the seats, why you need a good seat, why you need a strong seat. That's going to be my second stage in life.'

Veteran Nextel Cup driver Elliott Sadler gave Lajoie's seats a ringing endorsement.

'Randy did a great job listening to NASCAR the way he builds his seats,' said Sadler, who has been using LaJoie seats for four years. 'He builds them really, really stiff. They don't give. He uses your shoulders to hold you in instead of your ribs, and he was one of the first to do that.'

'I've had a few crashes and they held up pretty good for me. He's a driver and understands the comfort you've got to feel inside the car.'

LaJoie came up with his design through personal, painful experience.

'If you do get in a crash, the energy absorption is more,' he said of his seat. 'It's not only more comfortable, but I've done stuff with my stampings to make it very strong. I've learned myself, because I've been a crash test dummy for quite a few years, and I know I feel a whole lot better on Monday mornings since I started stiffening my seats than when I would bounce all over the place.'

'I didn't know what happens until you start looking at some of these videos and you see how much movement you have in the car.'

Once he got NASCAR's attention, LaJoie started hitting up the local short-track drivers.

'We've got kid seats patterned after my kids when they were 11 years old,' said LaJoie, who has two teenagers racing in North Carolina. 'We have a lease program, because one year I had to build my 11-year-old three seats because he had outgrown them.'

'It's not really fair for the parents when the kids outgrow the seat, they have to buy another one. I've got a lease program, so where they outgrow it, you give it back and I give them another one.'