

**Remarks Honoring the 2013 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Champion**  
*June 25, 2014*

*The President.* Hello, everybody. Please have a seat. And welcome to the White House. Welcome to all of you and, most of all, it's great to welcome back the six-time NASCAR Sprint Champion, Mr. Jimmie Johnson. Give him a big round of applause.

We've got some big NASCAR fans here today, including some Members of Congress. And I want to recognize Rick Hendrick, the owner of Hendrick Motorsports, Crew Chief Chad Knaus, as well as Brian France, and the entire NASCAR community.

Now, everybody knows I'm a Chicago guy, and usually, when we do these sports events, I make some crack about how the football team is not as good as the '85 Bears or the basketball team is not as good as the Bulls. But today I can't really say anything because Jimmie Johnson is pretty much the Michael Jordan of NASCAR. [*Laughter*] Like Mike, Jimmie has won six championships in 8 years. He won a few titles, took a 2-year break, decided, you know what, it's not that interesting, and then got back to winning again. And now opposing drivers are saying things like, unfortunately, we're driving during the Jimmie Johnson era. He's the best there ever was.

So these days we've got a lot of kids, all across the country, who want to be like Jimmie, and why shouldn't they? He is the only driver to make the Chase all 10 years it's been in existence. He won his "Six Pack" faster than anybody in NASCAR history. This season, he is chasing his seventh title, which would tie him with Dale Earnhardt and "The King," Richard Petty, for the most ever. And as Chad once said, he can do things with a race car that most mortals cannot. And Chad should know, because he has been Jimmie's crew chief for 13 years. And while sometimes, the two might sound like an old married couple—[*laughter*]—sniping at each other over the radio, Jimmie knows that without Chad and Rick and the entire team at Hendrick Motorsports, he'd be just another mortal making left turns. And that's why Jimmie brought along the over-the-wall guys from his pit crew to share in today's celebration.

I will say, by the way, I love watching the pit crew. I don't know how you all do it, but it is amazing. And to see the teamwork and athleticism, it's just remarkable. And that's the kind of teamwork and leadership that has made Jimmie a champ not only on the racetrack, but off it.

Since 2006, the Jimmie Johnson Foundation has donated almost \$7 million toward grants and resources for public schools and charities like Ronald McDonald House and Habitat for Humanity. He is running a Wellness Challenge to encourage his fans to get healthy and get in shape, which Michelle is very happy about. He met some of our brave wounded warriors before this event and obviously is grateful for their sacrifice.

And this spring, Jimmie joined in the Ban Bossy campaign to help encourage leadership among young girls. Jimmie caught some flak, I understand, for doing it, but he is the father of two girls, and he understands how important it is for us to lift up our young women and make sure that they know they can do the same stuff that any boy can. So as somebody who is accustomed to being criticized once in a while, I just want to give you some advice: Keep at it. [*Laughter*]

*NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Champion Jimmie Johnson.* Thank you.

*The President.* Do what you think is right, and you're right on this one.

For Jimmie, it also means giving back to his community, being a good husband to his gorgeous wife Chani, and his daughters, Evie and Lydia, and of course, dominating the track. And this year he is back at it. He has already got more wins than any other driver, so maybe we should just make it easier on everybody, give the number-48 car a permanent White House pass. [*Laughter*] Don't take my parking spot. [*Laughter*]

*Mr. Johnson.* Yes, sir. [*Laughter*]

*The President.* And no burnouts in the Portico. [*Laughter*] So I just want to say to the entire team, to Hendrick Motorsports, to Chad, to the pit crew, most of all, to Jimmie Johnson: Congratulations. Keep up the great work.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:03 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Brian Z. France, chief executive officer and chairman, National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR); and Michael J. Jordan, former guard, National Basketball Association's Chicago Bulls.

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