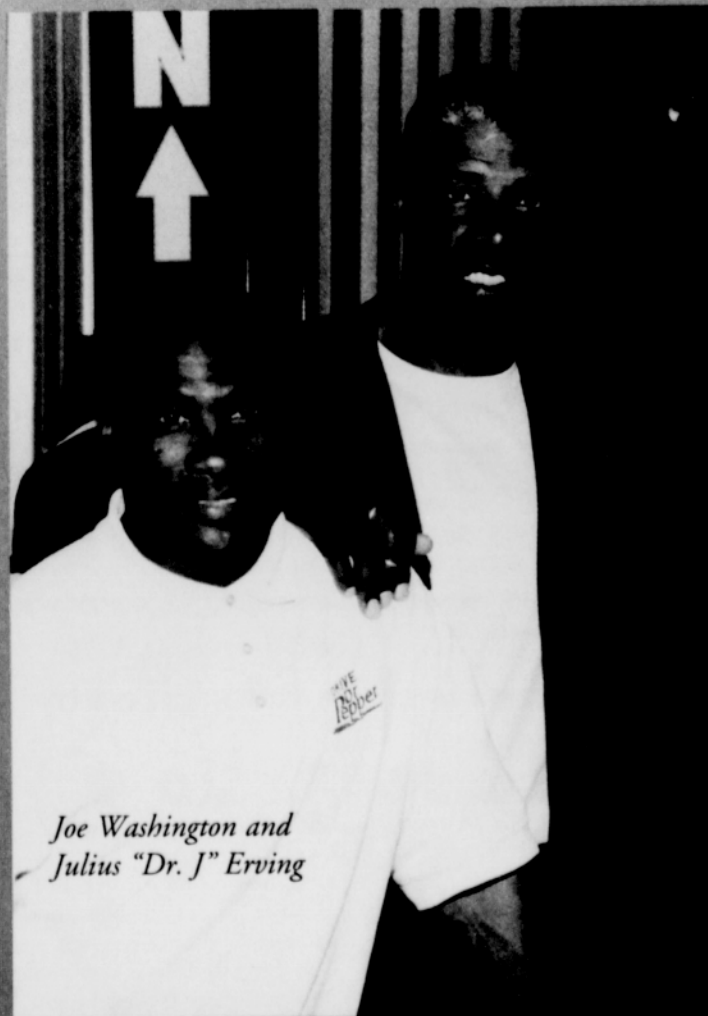


# Racing To The Top.

## The Washington/Erving Team Set High Goals in NASCAR Racing

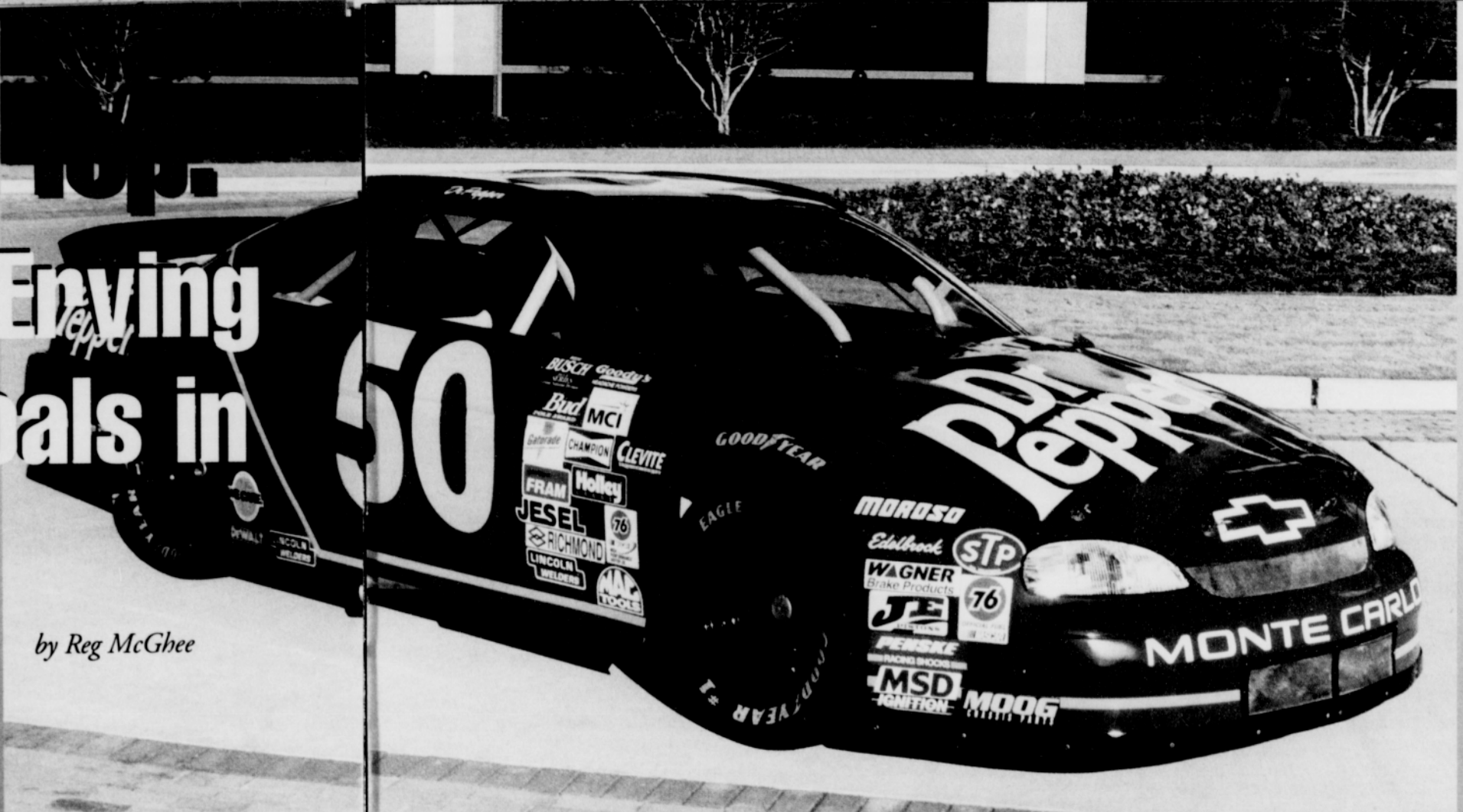
by Reg McGhee



Joe Washington and Julius "Dr. J." Erving

After a successful NASCAR stock car race, the media usually swarms around race car drivers Jeff Gordon, Dale Earnhardt, Mark Martin or Rusty Wallace — all well-known, top-notch drivers. All white.

So more than a few heads have turned this year with the increased media interest shown in Dr. Pepper's #50 car. It recently posted its first top ten finish in its second year on the Busch circuit — NASCAR's equivalent of the minor leagues. In fact, a few race veterans were a bit upset by the recent attention shown by HBO, FORTUNE and VIBE magazines to a second-year team without a big name driver. But there is something very "big name" about the team; it is owned by Washington Redskins' former NFL running back Joe Washington and legendary basketball superstar Julius "Dr. J." Erving. Moreover, it is noteworthy when an African American team cruises into the inner racing circle with a mission to win, and to win big. Along with co-owners Fields Jackson, Jr., a North Carolina businessman, and Philadelphia businessman Asa Murray, this African American-owned racing team is focused on breaking into the top ten point standings in NASCAR's Busch racing series. They've already made history as the first wholly-owned, African American team with a regular presence in stock car racing since the days of the legendary Wendell Scott, the only black driver to win a Winston Cup. That's a tall order to fill. African Americans, Hispanics and Asians have had little presence in the \$1 billion stock-car racing industry, the fastest growing segment of the economy. NASCAR is the second



Fields Jackson with Mr. & Mrs. Jackson

highest-rated sport on television, trailing only pro football, and attendance at Winston Cup events is up 63% since 1990. Retail revenue is expected to exceed \$1 billion this year, up from only \$80 million in 1990.

Competitors in the NASCAR Busch Series race on the same tracks as the more well-known NASCAR Winston Cup drivers.

**Wendell Scott won the Grand National (now Winston Cup) in 1963. He is the only African American to do so.**

(NASCAR is an acronym for the National Association of Stock Car Auto Racing). The series is considered preparation

for the coveted Winston Cup, using lighter-bodied Chevys, Fords and Pontiacs with less horsepower than the Winston Cup cars. The Busch races are held on Saturdays; the Winston Cup cars race in front of millions on Sunday afternoons, prime time for TV racing fans.

Both Washington and Erving are keenly aware of the significant step they took into the professional auto racing circuit when they pioneered their team last year. "The timing was simply staring us in the face," Washington explained in a recent telephone interview, noting that it has been 25 years since Scott's retirement.

"Julius and I wanted to do ... something distinguished, something that people would remember us by," Washington stated. "This is one of the most exciting team sports," he continued. "It's not hard to get the bug. Being in the pits on race