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Lost Speedways Along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts of the Southern United States

Abstract

Stock car racing migrated from the mountains and the piedmont region of the Carolinas to become a nationwide phenomenon. Today's NASCAR races are held in established locations in fan-friendly speedways. However, in the early days of the sport, many smaller communities hosted NASCAR races, often only for a single year. Many of these race tracks that were located in small communities, often along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, are now gone. These 21 lost speedways of the coastal region of the southern United States are profiled here.

Introduction

Stock car racing in the United States started in the 1930's and 1940's in the mill towns of the American South where young men were faced with few choices, and limited excitement, other than their involvement with illegal moonshining. Moonshiners adapted their cars (i.e., their delivery vehicles) by adding extra power, suspension support, and precision handling in order avoid law enforcement while taking their illegal liquor to market. Wanting to prove the superiority of their cars, these young men started racing these cars against one other. Eventually, local entrepreneurs would carve out dirt tracks from the red clay soil of the

Carolinas to host races. The growing sport of stock car racing became more formalized and offered entertainment and a form of escape for these working-class communities (Pierce, 2001; Klein, 2023).

In the late 1940's, Daytona Beach garage owner and race promoter Bill France brought together a group of car owners/drivers, race promoters, and auto manufacturer reps to try to create some formal structure to stock car racing. The result was the creation of the National Association for Stock Car Racing (NASCAR) with the first race run on the beaches of Daytona Beach, FL in 1948 (Pierce, 2001; Davis, 2009). Immediately, many local race tracks were built or expanded with the hopes of participating in the growing sport of auto racing in the 1950's.

Many early race tracks were actually converted horse racing tracks or fairgrounds locations that already offered parking and grand stand seating. Furthermore, these tracks were already configured as one-mile or half-mile oval tracks that were conducive for auto racing (Katen, 2022). Over time, many of these tracks gave way to functionally-designed race tracks such as Atlanta Motor Speedway, Darlington Raceway, Daytona International Speedway, Talladega Superspeedway, and many others. This evolution in track design, including the lengthening of speedways and the resulting increases in speed, meant that many of these older and shorter tracks used in the first two decades of NASCAR would be closed and their land often repurposed for industrial, commercial, or residential development.

While American stock car racing may have grown out of the mill towns and moonshiners of the 1930's and 1940's, it has become a nationwide phenomenon with national and regional racing series in all parts of the United States. Today, over half of NASCAR's national and regional races are held in the southern United States. Over the years, many of these races were held in

towns along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts, including Norfolk, Myrtle Beach, Savannah, Jacksonville, Tampa, Pensacola, Mobile, and others (Fielden 1992a; 1992b). Today, many of these tracks have been closed, most recently, Myrtle Beach Speedway in 2020 after 60+ years of operation (Shoemaker and Blondin, 2020).

The closing of a race track means the shuttering of a location that may have historical significance. For example, Myrtle Beach Speedway (formerly Ramo Speedway) hosted the NASCAR Grand National Series (1958-1965) and NASCAR Busch Series (now known as the Xfinity Series) from 1988 until 2000 (Shoemaker and Blondin, 2022). The track has the rare distinction of having hosted all four generations of Petty drivers (Lee, Richard, Kyle, and Adam) and three generations of Earnhardt racers (Ralph, Dale, siblings Dale Jr and Kelley) (The Fourth Turn, 2017; Edge, 2010). The land will be repurposed for commercial and residential development (Shoemaker and Blondin, 2022).

The purpose of this manuscript is to examine the lost race tracks along the coastal communities of the southeastern United States and Gulf Coast region and to preserve their history so that new residents may appreciate the impact their towns had in the evolution of NASCAR in the United States. First, these lost race tracks will be identified by examining the historical records of NASCAR. For each track, information about its NASCAR history will be presented. With a primary focus on the coast, this study will include speedways located approximately 100 miles inland into the Coastal Plains region.

The Distribution of NASCAR Racing Around the United States

As previously noted, NASCAR provided formal structure to the fragmented industry of stock car racing in the United States in the late 1940s. The inaugural race season of NASCAR consisted of eight races in its 'strictly stock races' held in the following locations (Fielden, 1992a):

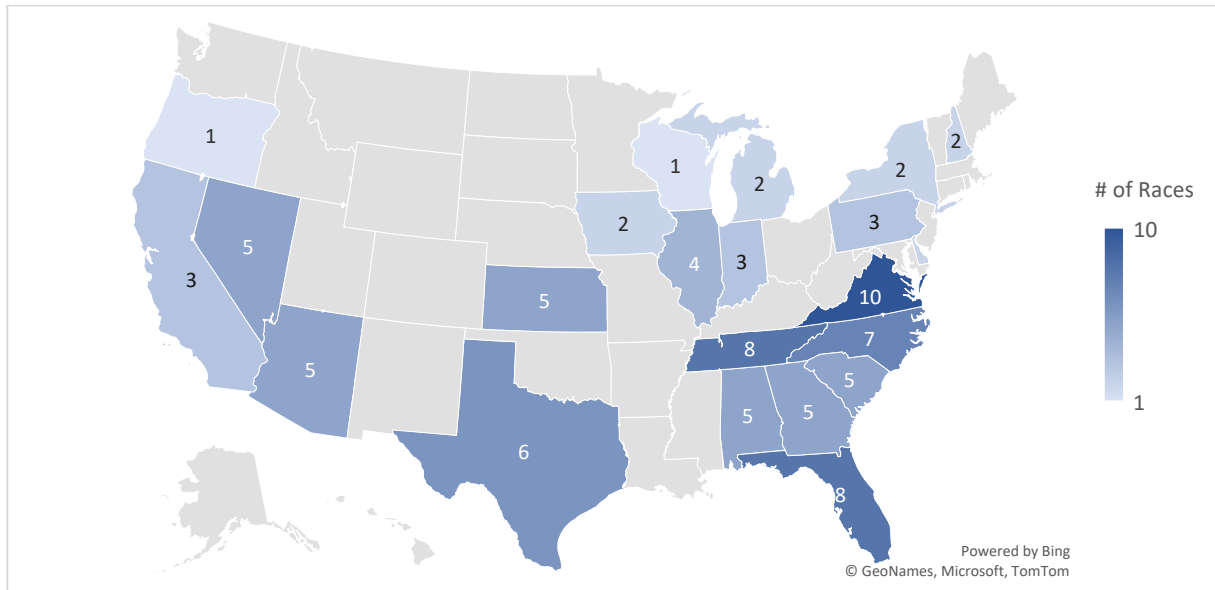
- **Race #1:** Charlotte Speedway (Charlotte, NC)
- **Race #2:** Beach and Road Course (Daytona Beach, FL)
- **Race #3:** Occoneechee Speedway (Hillsborough, NC)
- **Race #4:** Langhorne Speedway (Langhorne, PA)
- **Race #5:** Hamburg Speedway (Hamburg, NY)
- **Race #6:** Martinsville Speedway (Ridgeway, VA)

- **Race #7:** Heidelberg Speedway (Pittsburgh, PA)
- **Race #8:** North Wilkesboro Speedway (North Wilkesboro, NC)

Of the above locations, only Martinsville (2 dates) and North Wilkesboro (All-Star race) remained as active NASCAR speedways in 2024 (NASCAR, 2024a). While Daytona Beach and Charlotte remain host cities for NASCAR, the tracks used for the 1949 inaugural season no longer exist. This fact illustrates a central point to this study: *to preserve the history of lost coastal speedways that have hosted NASCAR Cup races over the years.*

NASCAR National Racing Series – 2024 Season

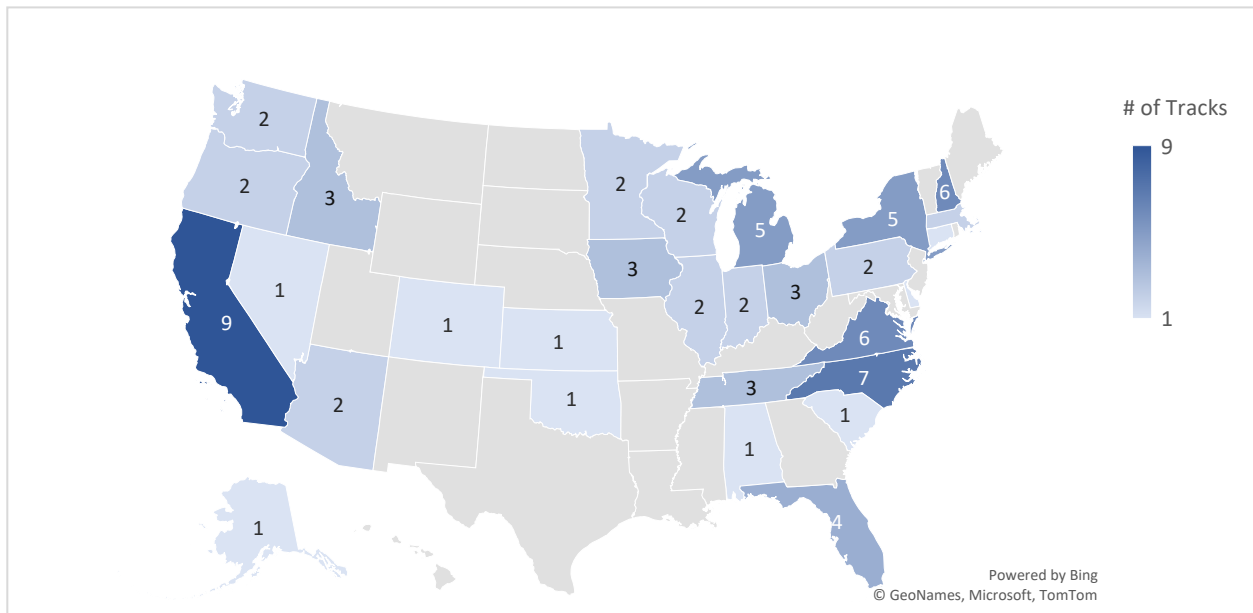
There are three sanctioned NASCAR national racing series: (1) NASCAR Cup Series; NASCAR Xfinity Series; and (3) Craftsman Truck Series (NASCAR, 2024b). Some race tracks, like Talladega or Daytona Beach, host two races per year. In fact, 7 of 10 tracks (70%) that host two NASCAR Cup Races are located in the southern United States. Overall, NASCAR conducted over half of its races for its three national race series in the southern and southeastern United States in during the 2024 season. This information is presented visually in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Number of NASCAR National Series Races Hosted by State (2024)

Source: Original.

NASCAR Regional Racing Series – 2024 Season

NASCAR sanctions three regional racing series with races run across the United States and Canada: (1) NASCAR Advance Auto Parts Weekly Series; (2) ARCA Menards Series; and (3) NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour. In total, 88 local race tracks hosted a NASCAR regional racing series in 2024 (NASCAR, 2024c). These regional tracks are presented visually in **Figure 2** using the heat-mapping feature in Excel. Given the geographic focus on this manuscript, the Canadian tracks (7 in all) were not included and mapped in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2: NASCAR Regional Race Host Tracks by State (2024)

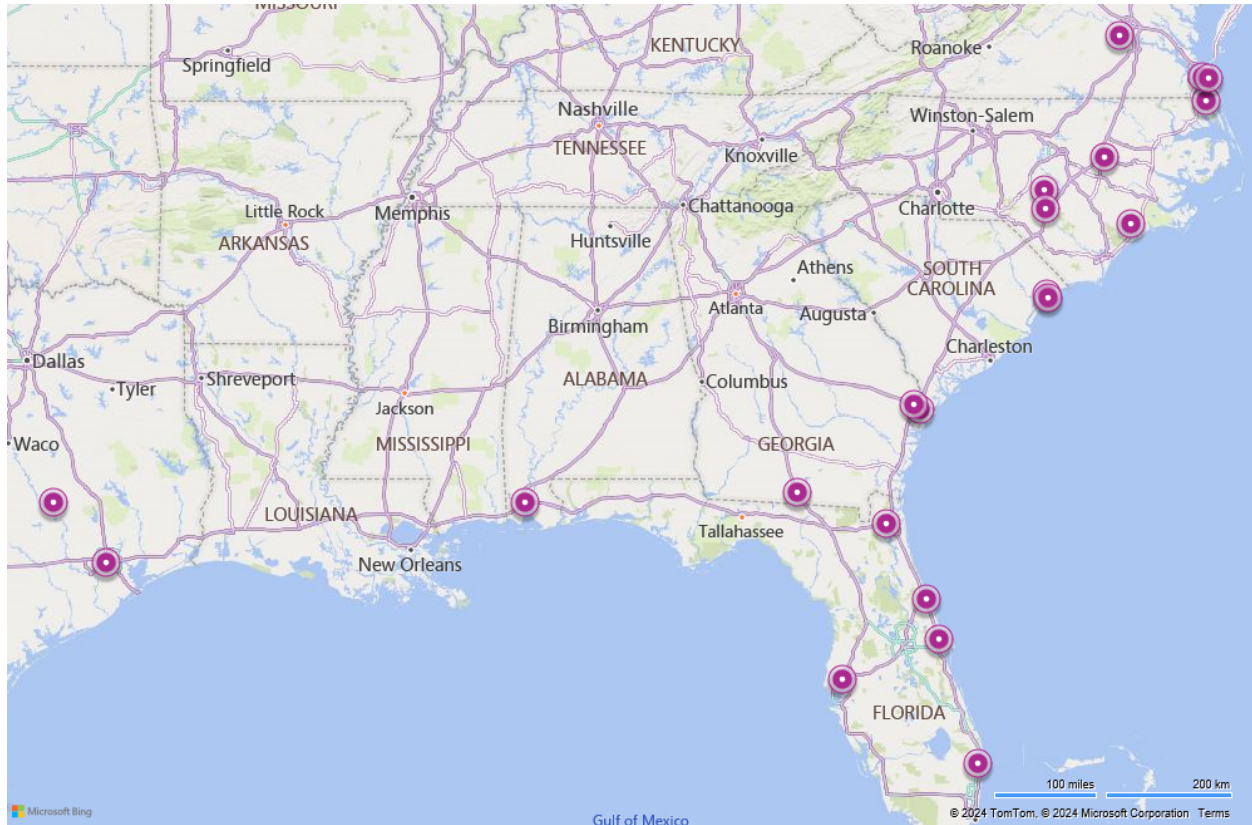
Source: Original.

Lost Speedways of the Coastal Regions

Approximately a third of the world's population lives in a coastal region. While coastal communities comprise about 10% of the land mass of the contiguous United States (e.g., excluding Alaska and Hawaii), they are home to 40% of the U.S. population. Over the last 50 years, the population in coastal counties has increased by 40 million people (NOAA, 2024). This population growth can lead to the repurposing of land and the possible loss of a local speedway. In the sections that follow, the race tracks that (a) no longer exist, and (b) hosted NASCAR's premiere racing series (i.e., the Grand National Series), are presented.

This analysis is broken down state-by-state beginning in Virginia and progressing south down the Atlantic coast and west over the Gulf Coast region ending in Texas. Data was collected from a variety of courses, including Fielden 1992a; Fielden, 1992b; Fantasy Racing

Figure 1: Lost Speedways of the Southern Coastal Region



Source: Original.

Virginia

As previously noted, the state of Virginia hosted one of the original eight races in the 1949 inaugural season of NASCAR. For the 2024 season, NASCAR ran its national racing series in Richmond and Martinsville. There are three lost speedways in the coastal region of Virginia that have hosted NASCAR races over the years. In addition, Langley Speedway (Hampton, VA) hosted the Grand National Series from 1964 to 1970 and remains active today. Interesting historical facts for these lost raceways in Virginia are presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Lost Speedways of the Virginia Coastal Area

Speedway	Historical Notes
Princess Anne Speedway Norfolk, VA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track hosted a single NASCAR Grand National race in 1953. First-place money was \$1,000. The race was won by NASCAR Hall of Famer Herb Thomas but also featured 3 other Hall of Famers: Lee Petty; Buck Baker; and Curtis Turner (Fantasy Racing Cheat Sheet, 2024). Herb Thomas was the driver of “The Fabulous Hudson Hornet” and was the actual inspiration for the Disney character “Doc Hudson” in the movie <i>Cars</i>. Track closed in 1954 (The Third Turn).
Norfolk Speedway Virginia, VA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track hosted NASCAR Grand National races in 1956 and 1957. First-place money was \$850 in 1956 and \$900 in 1957. Race winners were Billy Myers (1956) and NASCAR Hall of Famer Buck Baker (1957) (Fantasy Racing Cheat Sheet, 2024). The Myers win was 1 of 2 career wins for the driver. Unfortunately, Billy Myers suffered a heart attack and died while racing in a Modified event at Bowman Gray Stadium in Winston-Salem, NC in 1958 (Historicracing, 2024). Track closed in 1958 (Auto Racing Records, 2024).
Southside Speedway Midlothian, VA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track hosted a total of 4 NASCAR Grand National races in 1961, 1962, and 1963. First-place money ranged from \$550 to \$1,010. In the 1961 race, NASCAR Hall of Famer Junior Johnson led all 150 laps to win the race. Other race winners include Jimmy Pardue (1962), Jim Paschal (1963), and NASCAR Hall of Famer Ned Jarrett (1964) ((Fantasy Racing Cheat Sheet, 2024). Unfortunately, Jimmy Pardue died during a racing tire test drive at Charlotte Motor Speedway in 1964 (Samples, 2001). Track closed in 2020 (The Third Turn).

North Carolina

North Carolina hosted three of the original eight races in the inaugural 1949 season of NASCAR. North Carolina remains a hub of stock car racing with approximately 90% of NASCAR team garages are located in Concord, Kannapolis and the surrounding communities in North Carolina. Most race teams welcome visitors for a behind-the-scenes look at race car preparation and offer viewing areas, museums, or team stores. (Explore Cabarrus, 2024; Project543, 2024). There are five lost speedways in the coastal region of North Carolina that have hosted NASCAR races over the years. Interesting historical facts for these lost raceways in North Carolina are presented in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Lost Speedways of the North Carolina Coastal Area

Speedway	Historical Notes
Wilson Speedway Wilson, NC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track hosted a total of 12 NASCAR Grand National races between 1951-1954 and 1956-1960. 10 of 12 races (83%) were won by drivers who were eventually voted into the NASCAR Hall of Fame: Herb Thomas (3 wins); Buck Baker (2 wins); Junior Johnson (2 wins); Ralph Moody, Lee Petty, and Joe Weatherly (1 win each). Fonty Flock won the remaining two races (Fantasy Racing Cheat Sheet, 2024). Fonty Flock's brothers Tim (NASCAR Hall of Fame) and Bob were also successful race drivers. Track closed in 1989 (The Third Turn).
Harnett County Speedway Spring Lake, NC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track hosted a NASCAR Grand National race in 1953. First-place money was \$1,000. NASCAR Hall of Famer Herb Thomas led all 200 laps to win the race. The race included other NASCAR Hall of Famers Tim Flock, Lee Petty and Curtis Turner (Fielden, 1992a). Curtis Turner remains the only NASCAR driver to win two consecutive races from the pole leading every lap (NASCAR Hall of Fame, 2024). Track closed in 1970 (Speedway and Race History, 2024).
Jacksonville Speedway Jacksonville, NC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track hosted NASCAR Grand National races in 1957 and 1964. First-place money was \$1,000 in both years. NASCAR Hall of Famers Buck Baker (1957) and Ned Jarrett (1964) were race winners. The 1964 race was race # 62 in the season, with Richard Petty and David Pearson each starting 61 of the 62 races that year. The 62-race season is the largest number of single-season races ever contested in a NASCAR season (Fielden, 1992b). Track closed in 1965 (The Third Turn).
Champion Speedway Fayetteville, NC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track hosted a total of 4 NASCAR Grand National races in 1958 and 1959. First-place money ranged from \$600 to \$630. The track hosted the inaugural races of the 1958 and 1959 NASCAR Grand National Seasons. Bob Welborn won a race in both seasons. Other race winners included NASCAR Hall of Famers Curtis Turner (1957) and Rex White (1958) (Fielden, 1992a; Fielden 1992b). Bob Welborn was a 3-time NASCAR Convertible Series champion and a 2024 nominee for membership in the NASCAR Hall of Fame (NASCAR, 2024d). Track closed in 1959 (Auto Racing Records, 2024).
Dog Track Speedway Moyock, NC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track hosted a total of 7 NASCAR Grand National races between 1962 and 1966. NASCAR Hall of Famers Ned Jarrett (4 wins) and David Pearson (1 win) won races as did Dick Hutcherson and Jimmy Pardue. Pearson drove the car of owner (and NASCAR Hall of Fame member) Cotton Owen (Fantasy Racing Cheat Sheet, 2024). David Pearson and Cotton Owens both hailed from Spartanburg, SC. Track closed in 1966 (The Third Turn).

South Carolina

Darlington Raceway in Darlington, SC (approximately 80 miles inland from the South Carolina coastal community of Myrtle Beach) was the first superspeedway to host a NASCAR race back in 1950. A local businessman, Harold Brasington, turned a cotton field into a paved superspeedway. Rather than building an oval-shaped track, the track was designed as an egg-shape to preserve a small pond the property (Davis, 2009). There are two lost speedways in the coastal region of South Carolina that have hosted NASCAR races over the years – and both are located in the Myrtle Beach area. A third track in Sumter, SC (then known as Gamecock Speedway) hosted a NASCAR race in 1960 and remains active today. Interesting historical facts for these lost raceways in South Carolina are presented in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Lost Speedways of the South Carolina Coastal Area

Speedway	Historical Notes
Coastal Speedway Myrtle Beach, SC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track hosted NASCAR Grand National races in 1956 and 1957. First place money was \$950 in 1956 and \$1,000 in 1957. The inaugural NASCAR Grand National Race in 1956 attracted a field of 20 cars, including 5 NASCAR Hall of Famers: Fireball Roberts (race winner), Buck Baker, Ralph Moody, Lee Petty, and Herb Thomas (Fielden, 1992a). Gwyn Staley won the 1957 race. Unfortunately, Staley was killed a year later in 1958 in a crash during a NASCAR Convertible stock car race at Richmond International Raceway (Motorsport Memorial, 2024c). Track closed in 1958.
RAMBI/Myrtle Beach Speedway Myrtle Beach, SC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track hosted 9 NASCAR Grand National races from 1958 to 1965. 6 of these 9 races were won by drivers who were later elected to the NASCAR Hall of Fame: Dale Jarrett (3 wins); Buck Baker; David Pearson; and Joe Weatherly (Fantasy Racing Cheat Sheet, 2024). The track later hosted the NASCAR Busch Series (now known as the NASCAR Xfinity Series) from 1988 to 2000. The track has the rare distinction of having hosted all four generations of Petty drivers (Lee, Richard, Kyle, and Adam) and three generations of Earnhardt drivers (Ralph, Dale, siblings Dale Jr and Kelley) (The Fourth Turn, 2017; Edge, 2010). Track closed in 2020 (The Third Turn).

Georgia

Georgia is home to Atlanta Motor Speedway, one of the super speedways built in the first 15 years of NASCAR. The track regularly hosts two weeks of racing in the NASCAR Cup annually. There are three lost speedways in the coastal region of Georgia that have hosted NASCAR races over the years – and two of them are located in the Savannah area. The remaining lost track is located inland in Valdosta, GA. Interesting historical facts for these lost raceways in Georgia are presented in **Table 4**.

Table 4: Lost Speedways of the Georgia Coastal Area

Speedway	Historical Notes
Savannah Speedway Savannah, GA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track hosted a total of 10 NASCAR Grand National races in 1962-1964 and 1967, 1969, and 1970. 8 of the 10 NASCAR races (80%) were won by a driver who was eventually voted into the NASCAR Hall of Fame: Richard Petty (3 wins); Ned Jarrett (2 wins); and Bobby Isaac; Bobby Allison, and Joe Weatherly (1 win each) (Fantasy Racing Cheat Sheet, 2024). The 1962 race, held on St. Patrick's Day, was dubbed the St. Patrick's Day 200. Track closed in 1981 (The Third Turn).
Oglethorpe Speedway Pooler, GA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track hosted NASCAR Grand National races in 1954 and 1955. First-place money was \$1,000 in both years. Race winners were Al Keller (1954) and NASCAR Hall of Famer Lee Petty (1955) (Fantasy Racing Cheat Sheet, 2024). Keller is noted for being the only driver to win a premier NASCAR race at the wheel of a vehicle not built in the United States. Keller drove a Jaguar during a 1954 race organized NASCAR at the Linden Airport in NJ. In fact, almost half of the race field drove foreign cars in that event (Motorsport Memorial, 2024a). Track closed in 2021 (The Third Turn).
Valdosta 75 Speedway Valdosta, GA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track hosted NASCAR Grand National races in 1962, 1964, and 1965. All 3 races were won by an eventual NASCAR Hall of Fame member: Ned Jarrett (1962); Buck Baker (1964); and Cale Yarborough (1965) (Fantasy Racing Cheat Sheet, 2024). Both Ned Jarrett and Buck Baker have sons (Dale Jarrett and Buddy Baker, respectively) who were also voted into the NASCAR Hall of Fame (NASCAR, 2020). Track closed in 1968 (The Third Turn).

Florida

As previously noted, NASCAR was born out of discussions held in Daytona Beach, FL in 1948. The second-ever NASCAR race was held on the beach-and-street track of Daytona Beach (itself a lost speedway known as the ‘Daytona Beach Road Course’). Annually, NASCAR hosts races in both Daytona Beach and Homestead-Miami Beach, FL. There are five lost speedways in the coastal region of Florida, on both the east and west coasts, that have hosted NASCAR races over the years. An additional race track, Five Flags Speedway (Pensacola, FL) hosted a NASCAR race in 1953 and remains active today. Interesting historical facts for these lost raceways in Florida are presented in **Table 5**.

Table 5: Lost Speedways of the Florida Coastal Area

Speedway	Historical Notes
Daytona Beach Road Course Daytona Beach, FL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track hosted a total of 10 NASCAR Grand National races in between 1949 and 1958. 4 NASCAR Hall of Famers won races on this course: Tim Flock (2 wins); Red Byron; Cotton Owens; and Lee Petty. Other winning drivers include Marshall Teague (2 wins), Paul Goldsmith, Bill Blair, and Harold Kite (Fantasy Racing Cheat Sheet, 2024). 2-Time winner Marshall Teague was both a car owner and car driver. Track closed in 1958 (The Third Turn).
Palm Beach Speedway West Palm Beach, FL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track hosted a total of 7 NASCAR Grand National races between 1952 and 1956. NASCAR Hall of Famer Herb Thomas won 4 of these 7 races while fellow Hall of Famers Richard Petty and Tim Flock also recorded wins at Palm Beach Speedway (Fantasy Racing Cheat Sheet, 2024). Track closed in 1987 (The Third Turn).
Titusville-Cocoa Speedway Titusville, FL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track hosted a single NASCAR Grand National race in 1957. First-place money was \$850. The race was won by NASCAR Hall of Famer Fireball Roberts. The field featured a number of fellow NASCAR Hall of Fame members: Curtis Turner; Ralph Moody; Lee Petty; and Joe Weatherly. In all, 5 of 15 racers (33%) were eventually named to the NASCAR Hall of Fame (Fielden, 1992a). Track closed in 1958 (Motorsport Magazine, 2024).

Speedway	Historical Notes
Golden Gate Speedway Tampa, FL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track hosted a single NASCAR Grand National race in 1963. First-place money was \$780. The race was won by NASCAR Hall of Famer Richard Petty. The field featured a number of fellow NASCAR Hall of Fame members: Joe Weatherly; Maurice Petty; Buck Baker; Rex White; Ned Jarrett; and Fireball Roberts. In all, 7 of 24 racers (29%) were eventually named to the NASCAR Hall of Fame (Fielden, 1992a). Maurice Petty, along with his brother Richard Petty, is one of 4 pairs of brothers elected to the NASCAR Hall of Fame (Jenson, 2024). Track closed in 1984 (The Third Turn).
Speedway Park / Jacksonville Speedway Jacksonville, FL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track hosted a total of 8 NASCAR Grand National races in 1951, 1952, 1954, 1955, 1961, and 1964. 7 of the 8 NASCAR races (88%) were won by an eventual NASCAR Hall of Fame member: Herb Thomas (2 wins); Lee Petty (2 wins), Wendall Scott; Ned Jarrett; and Buck Baker (one win each) (Fantasy Racing Cheat Sheet, 2024). Wendall Scott was the first African-American driver to win a NASCAR Grand National Race on December 1, 1963 (part of the 1964 season). Track closed in 1973 (The Third Turn).

The Special Case of Walt Disney World Speedway. Almost all of the lost speedways identified here were built in the 1940s to 1960s with one notable exception: *Walt Disney World Speedway*. This speedway was built in the mid-1990's to host the Indy Race League (IRL), which was then in a dispute with rival racing league (and more-established league) the Championship Auto Racing Teams (CART). The inaugural IRL race was held at Walt Disney World Speedway in 1996 with annual races until 2000 (Bonkowski, 2021). The track also hosted the NASCAR Truck Series in 1997 and 1998. After that, the speedway was used for race team practices as well as NASCAR driving schools before being closed in 2015. The speedway was demolished in 2015 to allow for additional parking at Walt Disney World Resorts (Racing Circuits Info, 2024). Incidentally, IRL and CART eventually reunified in 2008 (Bonkowski, 2021).

Alabama

Alabama is home to Talladega Superspeedway, the longest oval race track in NASCAR at 2.66 miles. Since its opening in 1969, the track has a reputation for being a very fast race track.

In fact, NASCAR Hall of Famer Buck Baker was the first to break the 200 mile-per-hour barrier at the track in 1970 (Jenson, 2020). The track regularly hosts two weeks of racing in the NASCAR Cup Series per year. There is a single lost speedway along the coast of Alabama (Lakeview Speedway in Mobile, AL) that hosted two NASCAR races in 1951. Interesting historical facts about Lakeview Speedway are presented in **Table 6**.

Table 6: Lost Speedways of the Alabama Coastal Area

Speedway	Historical Notes
Lakeview Speedway Mobile, AL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track hosted a pair NASCAR Grand National race in 1951. First-place money was \$1,000. The first 1951 race was won by NASCAR Hall of Famer Tim Flock but also included his two brothers Bob Flock and Fonty Flock (also the race promoter). The field featured a number of NASCAR Hall of Fame members: Herb Thomas; Lee Petty; Curtis Turner; and Fireball Roberts (Fielden, 1992a). The second 1951 race was won Frank Mundy with Tim Flock finishing second (Fielden, 1992a). In addition to racing cars, Frank Mundy (a.k.a. Francisco Eduardo Menendez) was a motorcycle racer, stunt driver, and airplane pilot (Motorsport Memorial, 2024b). Lakeview Speedway was built around the outside of Cochran Lake. With the lake in the infield, many crashes resulted in drivers actually ending up in the lake (Speedway and Road Race History (2024). Track closed in 1953 (The Third Turn).

Texas

Since 1997, Texas Motor Speedway (Forth Worth, TX) has been a regular stop on the NASCAR schedule. Also, NASCAR added an annual stop at the Circuit of the Americas (COTA), a road course located outside of Austin, TX in 2021 (Fantasy Racing Cheat Sheet, 2024). However, NASCAR was racing in Texas as early as 1969 at the now-abandoned Texas World Speedway in College Station, TX. Though the track is approximately 145 miles from the coast, its significance as the largest abandoned or lost speedway justify its inclusion in this analysis. Meyer Speedway in Houston, TX is also recognized as a lost speedway in the coastal region of Texas that hosted a

NASCAR race in 1971. Interesting historical facts for these two lost raceways in Texas are presented in **Table 7**.

Table 7: Lost Speedways of the Texas Coastal Area

Speedway	Historical Notes
Texas World Speedway College Station, TX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track hosted a total of 8 NASCAR Grand National race between 1969 and 1981. All 8 races were won by drivers who were eventually voted into membership of the NASCAR Hall of Fame: Richard Petty (3 wins); Buddy Baker; Bobby Isaac; Benny Parson; Darrell Waltrip; and Cale Yarborough (Fantasy Racing Cheat Sheet, 2024). The track introduced superspeedway racing to the state of Texas. But, ultimately, it was replaced by Texas Motor Speedway. Track closed in 2017 (The Third Turn).
Meyer Speedway Houston, TX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track hosted a single NASCAR Grand National race in 1971. First-place money was \$2,200. The race was won by NASCAR Hall of Famer Bobby Allison and included fellow Hall of Famer Richard Petty (Fielden, 1992b). Bobby Allison, along with this brother Donnie Allison, is one of 4 pairs of brothers elected to the NASCAR Hall of Fame (Jenson, 2024). Track closed in 1979 (The Third Turn).

Concluding Remarks

Throughout history, many local race tracks have ceased operations for a variety of reasons, including competitive pressures from neighboring tracks or the sale of the racetrack's property for redevelopment. Businesses routinely eliminate products for a variety of reasons, including under-performance and/or a desire to redeploy resources. Ultimately, the owner of a race track owns real estate and, decided to operate a race track on that property. At some point, particularly in locations that are experiencing population growth and increasing land values – such as communities along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts of the United States – land owners may choose to exercise their ownership rights as property owners and redeploy the assets in their investment portfolio. Yes, this may mean the loss of a speedway. But, as the owners of private property, that is their prerogative.

Race fans in these coastal communities still have access to many local, regional, and national race tracks and racing series. The lost speedways profiled above did reach a pinnacle in their operations by hosting races at the highest level of NASCAR, the main sanctioning body for stock car racing in the United States. Still, that feat did not make the tracks invulnerable to competitive pressures or competing voices on how to best use the land on which they sat.

In the twenty-one track profiles offered above, there is a consistent pattern of NASCAR Hall of Fame drivers competing (and winning) races in these far-flung coastal locations that were often far away from major media markets and media attention. The fans in attendance got to see racing at its finest. Their personal memories will live on. It is hoped that the historical notes offered above aid in this process and help preserve the contribution auto racing made to the entertainment mix in many coastal communities over the years.

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