

## **NASCAR draws line at branding hall of fame**

In a sport famous for slapping sponsor names on every available inch of sheet metal and fire-retardant racing suit, it appears **NASCAR** has finally found something it doesn't want to sell.

The historic moment comes deep on the 63rd page of a contract between NASCAR and the city of Charlotte to build a NASCAR Hall of Fame in the city by the end of the decade.

"Neither party shall sell any naming rights or presenting sponsorship for the HOF (e.g. 'The XYZ Company NASCAR Hall of Fame' or 'The NASCAR Hall of Fame presented by ABC Company') without the other party's prior approval."

Yes, it's true. The folks who this year will bring you the "Banquet 500 presented by ConAgra Foods" and the "Bass Pro Shops MBNA 500" don't want a bunch of corporate names getting in the way of the clearly stated "NASCAR Hall of Fame."

"We think that would probably go beyond the bounds of good taste," said **Mark Dyer**, NASCAR's vice-president of licensing.

The deal contains dozens of such clauses, each spelling out exactly how the NASCAR name and brand may be used to promote and market the \$107.5 million Hall of Fame. Indeed, some have likened the pending partnership to a marriage, and the agreement between the city and the stock-car association often reads like a prenuptial agreement:

- The only outdoor advertising allowed at the hall when it opens in 2009 will be that of exclusive NASCAR partners.
- The Hall of Fame logo will belong to NASCAR, but must include the word "Charlotte." In the event things go sour and the parties end up divorcing, NASCAR gets custody of the logo—but Charlotte is allowed to retain the rights to its own name.
- NASCAR will provide archival material and has final approval over all exhibits at the hall, which will be run by the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority, the public agency that also operates the city's convention center, a 1950s-vintage arena and a civic auditorium.