



BOBBY HUTCHENS: Director of Competition

Birthdate:	April 15, 1960
Birthplace:	Winston-Salem, N.C.
Hometown:	Winston-Salem, N.C.
Residence:	Lexington, N.C.
Spouse:	Sharon
Children:	Taylor (8/8/90) and Trey (5/20/98)
Education:	North Carolina State University – Class of 1982 (B.S. – Mechanical Engineering)

Bobby Hutchens was named director of competition for Stewart-Haas Racing on Nov. 14, 2008. He comes to the race team owned by two-time NASCAR Sprint Cup Series champion Tony Stewart with a resume full of title-winning experience earned during a lifetime spent in motorsports.

Hutchens is a racer, plain and simple. It's all he's ever wanted to do, and he's been involved with racing from the time he was a small boy. As a mechanic, driver, engineer and manager, there isn't a side of the sport Hutchens hasn't seen.

His story is unique and begins with his birth into a racing family in the NASCAR hotbed of Winston-Salem, N.C., on April 15, 1960. His father, Bud Hutchens, and his grandfather, Claude Hutchens, were both racers, with Claude having competed in the very first race in 1948 at the historic Bowman-Gray Stadium in Winston-Salem.

From the time he can remember, Bobby Hutchens was at the racetrack with his family, and he had dreams of being a NASCAR driver after high school.

Hutchens graduated first in the Parkland High School class of 1978 and was ready to go racing before his mother encouraged him to attend college at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, N.C.

"I won't say she forced me," Hutchens said, "but she pretty much put me in the car and made sure I got to Raleigh to go to college. Thank God she did, otherwise I wouldn't be where I am today by any stretch of the imagination. I wanted to go racing and didn't think I had time for college, but once I got through the first semester, I saw the big picture and decided I was going to use it as a springboard to a career."

After graduating from N.C. State in 1982 with a mechanical engineering degree, Hutchens had an employment opportunity from a company deeply involved in racing – and turned it down.

"I had a job offer from General Motors after I graduated to go to work in Detroit on the V6 Buick program," Hutchens said. "At the time, I felt that was too far away from NASCAR if I wanted to get anywhere with it."

Instead, Hutchens took a job as a product engineer with AMP Inc., which allowed him to stay in North Carolina – and stay involved with racing on the weekends.

From 1982 to 1988, Hutchens was a product engineer by day and a racer on the nights and weekends until he went full-time into NASCAR in December 1988.

He was hired by Richard Childress Racing (RCR) and became one of, if not the first, college-educated engineer to work full-time for a NASCAR team.

While Hutchens was already a rare breed as an engineer on a NASCAR team in the late 1980s, he became more of an anomaly by spending an incredible 20 consecutive years at RCR. While rapid turnover is commonplace in the NASCAR world, Hutchens stayed year after year at RCR and was there for four of the late Dale Earnhardt's Sprint Cup Series championships (1990, 1991, 1993 and 1994). Hutchens won 56 Sprint Cup races at RCR with drivers such as Earnhardt, Kevin Harvick, Robby Gordon and Jeff Burton, including victories in the prestigious Allstate 400 at the Brickyard in 1995 (Earnhardt) and 2003 (Harvick) and the Daytona 500 in 1998 (Earnhardt) and 2006 (Harvick).

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“Being around Dale Earnhardt and Richard Childress, I feel like I’ve been around one of the greatest racing schools in the world,” Hutchens said. “Learning how to win championships, learning how to keep a team together and learning what it takes to work day in and day out to succeed.”

Hutchens, who was part of Earnhardt’s historic No. 3 team at RCR that won 10 consecutive Twin 125s for the Daytona 500 (1990-99) and three Budweiser Shootouts (1991, 1993, 1995), did just about everything for the team during his two-decade tenure.

After working as an engineer from 1989 to 1992, he moved to shop foreman from 1993 to 1998 before being named general manager for RCR. He became director of competition in 2001 prior to being promoted to vice president of competition in 2004. By 2005, he was named vice president of research and development and his expertise helped RCR to six victories that season – five by Harvick and one by Burton – which was the most in one season for RCR since Earnhardt won six events in 1993.

By 2007, Hutchens accepted an appointment as general manager of Earnhardt-Childress Racing Engines before leaving RCR in August 2008 to become vice president of competition at Dale Earnhardt Inc.

In his new role with Stewart-Haas Racing, Hutchens will work closely with Darian Grubb, crew chief for Tony Stewart’s No. 14 Office Depot/Old Spice Chevrolet, and Tony Gibson, crew chief for Ryan Newman’s No. 39 U.S. Army/Haas Automation Chevrolet.

“This is a start-up program, you might say,” Hutchens said. “We’ve brought in a lot of people from a lot of different racing venues. We’re trying to match all of them up and utilize them to the best of our ability and make them the most efficient with the goal being to win races and championships.”

While a lot has changed since Hutchens first broke into NASCAR with RCR in 1988, he sees a lot of similarities between the RCR championship teams of the 1990s and the newly formed team at Stewart-Haas.

“There are parallels between the two companies,” Hutchens said. “Back in those days, everyone was a racer. They did it because they loved racing and loved winning. We have people here at Stewart-Haas who are racers. We’ve assembled a group that eats, sleeps and breathes racing day in and day out. I think a lot of people have gotten away from that recently and it has become more of a job and more about making a buck than it was about bringing the trophy home. Our group at Stewart-Haas is similar to those RCR teams – a group of people who love racing and want to succeed.”

Despite having a successful career as a team member, Hutchens has never lost his love for driving and still competes in the NASCAR Whelen Southern Modified Tour.

“It’s always been a side hobby,” Hutchens said. “My job has always come first. I always joke that I keep the ‘dually’ full of gas and my racecar ready, so if I have a chance I can just hop in the truck and go the racetrack when I have some free time. There have been years I didn’t run any and there have been years I’ve run a full schedule. I’ve had a good time racing throughout the years.”

For something that is considered a hobby, Hutchens has built quite a resume. He has seven feature wins at the famous Bowman Gray Stadium where his grandfather and father competed, including two victories in 2008. Hutchens also finished third in points at Bowman Gray in 2006 and 2008.

In the Southern Modified Auto Racing Teams (S.M.A.R.T.) Series, Hutchens scored three feature wins and finished in the top-three in points in 1989, 1991, 1993, 1994 and 1995.

However, perhaps what is most impressive on his driving resume are three awards: 1994 S.M.A.R.T. Most Popular Driver, 2008 NASCAR Whelen Southern Modified Tour Most Popular Driver and the 2005 Bowman Gray Sportsmanship Award.

“I’m probably most proud of those,” Hutchens said.

Hutchens resides in Lexington, N.C., with his wife, Sharon, and his two children, Taylor and Trey. In his spare time, while not racing, he coaches youth football, basketball and baseball.